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Presbyterian Missions to Indians in Western Canada

James Codling
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_codlingj@csl.edu

PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS TO INDIANS

IN WESTERN CANADA

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by

James Codling

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Approved by Quentin Wesselschmidt
Advisor

Erich Kiehl
Reader

Thomas Manteufel
Reader

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PREFACE

In 1976, I was appointed as missionary to the Indians at Keeseekoowenin and Rolling River, in western Manitoba. This appointment came a month prior to graduation from Knox College (a Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada). I had received no specific preparation for Indian work. That summer the Mission Board provided two short courses that were to prepare missionaries for their work. Toronto Institute of Linguistics provided an interdenominational linguistic training course under the auspices of and staffed by the Missionary Alliance Church. The course was based on work by Eugene Nida and William A. Smalley in cultural anthropology and provided a good linguistic background. However, it did not provide an adequate linguistic background for my work with Canadian Indians.

The second course was a missionary orientation course that was held in cooperation with the United Church of Canada. Its purpose was to help missionaries to adjust to a different culture. It had an ecumenical flavor, and liberation theology was acceptable to some of the leaders. I felt that the courses were actually set up for overseas missionaries, although some of the experiences were adapted for my use.

When I arrived at my mission field I found that the missionaries who had preceded me stayed at the mission on the average of two years and no service had been held at the Rolling River Reserve for quite a while. I also found that the missionary at the neighboring reservation (and nearest Presbyterian Church) had taken a call to pastor another church. As a result, I became the interim-moderator for that reservation as well.

My Indian churches lacked spiritual leaders, church services were not well attended, morals were poor, and spiritual needs were great. I found that the Presbyterian Church in Canada, which had voted to implement a five year plan for emphasizing Indian work, did not really have an established missionary program. Mission Board reports leaned toward the church growth school approach which left Indian missions that could not support themselves, a limited future.

The mission policy described by Dr. John Moir in Enduring Witness was imperialistic.[1] It was a policy that was concerned with growth. The policy demanded centralization for efficiency and was concerned about numbers more than individuals. I also found that the theology of the Presbyterian Church in Canada was not consistent with

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[1] John Moir, Enduring Witness (Toronto: Presbyterian Publcations, 1975, p.158.

its Presbyterian roots. It had lost its theological integrity, and that affected its theology of missions.

Part of the problem was cultural. The tribal elders had power on some reserves to insist upon cultural norms even when they were not Christians. The white culture, on the other hand, looked down on the Indians as second-class citizens. The problem was partly historical. Many bad habits, influences, and experiences, had created a barrier to Christianity.

Because of my experiences working with Indians in the Manitoba mission, at Prince Albert National Park, and in Regina, Saskatchewan, I have seen that there is a spiritual need that the Presbyterian church was not meeting. I have been convinced that the problem has theological roots, and I approached my study with that presupposition. I am indebted to Walter Donavan and Steven Howe, whose insights as long-term missionaries to Indians helped me to formulate my thoughts and to the Indians of my missions who gave me insights into ministering to Canadian Indians.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This paper seeks to explain the success and failure of Presbyterian missions to Indians in western Canada. It attempts to discover if there has been an authentic engagement between the Gospel of Christ and the cultures of these Indians. The focus is on the theology of missions and its application. The question of Christian relationship to culture is an important issue.

The problem that the Presbyterian Church in Canada faced in its missions to Indians was theological. The Christian faith challenged an Indian religion. It was theology that determined how the religion of the Indian should be approached by Presbyterian missions, how the Indian should accept the Christian faith, and how the Indian should be accepted by the Christian church. The purpose of this work is not to write a paper on comparative religions. Rather, it is to discover an effective way to relate the Christian faith to a unique culture.

Theological outlook is reflected in mission policy. This was demonstrated in a negative manner by a "fatalistic"

form of Calvinism that would not support William Carey[1] and in a positive manner by David Brainerd[2] in his mission to Indians in the "American Colonies." It is the theology behind the mission that determines the personnel and the responsibilities of such personnel. This theology ultimately determines the success or failure of the mission.

Value

Mission work among the Indians has been difficult for Canadian churches. The worth of that work has been questioned. By studying the history of Presbyterian missions, reasons for successes as well as failures will become apparent. This paper will demonstrate the integrity of Presbyterian theology in missions to Indians. Such information is vital to any continuing mission to Indians. It should also provide helpful suggestions for other missions and missionaries as they continue such a ministry.

Many Indians are frustrated by the society in which they live. They do not understand their past and they have little hope for the future. They look for answers in their Indian religions and liberation theology. They

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[1] William Carey, An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1961), p. iii.

[2] David Brainerd, The Life of David Brainerd, ed. Johnathan Edwards (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983) pp. 7, 45, 93. Brainard said, "Thus I did, as it were, rest on God that he would surely promote that which was so agreeable to his own will." pp.313-314.

blame the white man and his church. A study such as this paper will clarify difficulties caused by misunderstandings. It will add to an understanding that will aid in the missionary endeavor and demonstrate to the church its role in such an effort. It will provide an answer to liberation theology as it challenges Reformation ideals on evangelism.

Because the world has no hope without Jesus Christ, Christians have a responsibility to evangelize. Instead of making Christians give up, failures should teach us and also help us to be patient in the Lord; even small successes should encourage. Many questions are being asked about missions to the Indians from both inside and out side of the church and from both the white man and the Indian. These questions have great implications for any mission and have theological roots. Therefore, this topic is timely and necessary.

Description of Theological Issues

The Canadian Presbyterian mission to the Indians of Western Canada was "established in the year 1866, after ten years deliberation in the church courts."[3] The slow beginning is indicative of the kind of success that Presbyterians would have in their mission.

This paper will show the effect this slow beginning had on Indian missions. It will also show the theological

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[3] A. B. Baird, "Our Indian Mission, A Review," Presbyterian Record, (1893):146.

and cultural reasons for such a beginning and the effect of Presbyterian theology on this mission. The history of this mission will address theological issues such as: What effect church union had on Indian missions and if Presbyterians in Canada have been consistent in following a Calvinistic-Presbyterian theology of mission. It will also discover the effect Presbyterian missions had on Indian culture and the effect Indian culture had on Presbyterian missions.

Procedure

A description of the spiritual-cultural state of Plains Indians before Presbyterians arrived will demonstrate the effect of their church on Indian religion and culture. By looking at the historical roots of Presbyterian missions a theology of missions will be developed. Then this study will discover ways in which Presbyterians followed that theology or departed from it and the end results of their policies.

This study will determine the effect of Presbyterian missions on Indian culture and how its theology has been adjusted to meet that culture by studying the Indian cultures in contact with Presbyterian missions. The reaction within the church toward the Indian mission will be presented to show how cultural ideas determined its theology of missions and how that theology was applied. In addition the church's attitude toward Indian mission work will be discussed by

comparing kind and amount of support for Indian missions to the support given to foreign missions. This will bring theology to the practical level of that which is practiced by church members in general.

Indians of Western Canada

The main tribes that Presbyterians served were the Cree, the Saulteaux, and the Sioux. The Cree were an aggressive tribe that depended on the moose, deer, and buffalo. Their hunting, fishing, and trapping demanded a nomadic life style.[4] They traveled by snowshoe or toboggan in the winter and birch bark canoe in the spring, when the lakes and rivers were free from ice. They inhabited the aboreal forests of Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. In the prairies, the Plains Cree adopted the horse and became efficient horseback hunters. It was among these Cree that the first Presbyterian mission was opened by James Nisbet.

The Saulteaux were cousins of the Cree and actually were Plains Ojibwa. Although they too loved hunting and trapping, they depended upon the gathering of wild rice for food. They lived in western Ontario and southern Manitoba. It was with these Indians that Lord Selkirk "carried out his

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[4] Edward Ahenakew, "Health Conditions among the Indians," in Rupert's Land (Middle Church: Indian School Press, 1893), p. 103. Ahenakew claimed, "Movement insured clean land."

promise of making a treaty."[5] They liked the settlers that he brought to the territory of Rupert's land because these settlers traded for meat, rather than furs like the company traders. This contact eventually developed a desire on the part of the settlers to begin a mission among these Salteaux. George Flett founded the second Presbyterian mission among this tribe.

The Sioux or Dakota were actually not Canadian Indians but immigrants who fled north after "Custer's Last Stand." Many members of this tribe decided to stay in Canada even though the government would not give them treaty status.[6] When one band moved to Fort Ellice, a mission at Prince Albert was in place to serve them. Some of the Sioux had their own pastors, such as Solomon Tukansaicy from the American Presbyterian Mission.[7]

Other tribes were affected by the missions but work among them was temporary. An example was the Blackfoot, who were continually at war with the Cree. One pioneer claimed, "They came to pillage and murder, but as they afterward ack-

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[5] George Bryce, Manitoba: Its Infancy, Growth, and Present Condition (London: Sampson Law, Marston, Searle, and Remington, 1882), p. 258.

[6] Dee Brown, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), pp. 392-394.

[7] Solomon Tunkansaicy, Letter in Presbyterian Record,(February 1879):11.

nowledged were restrained from firing."[8] They used the horse and depended upon the buffalo in the same way as the Cree. Because they lived farther west than the Cree, they were less affected by missions, but when smallpox broke out among them Presbyterian missionaries were there to help. "Providentially we had a little vaccine matter and we vaccinated all the people young and old before they left."[9]

Pre-Mission History

Not all Indians were considered good prospects for evangelism. Early missionaries met resistance from certain tribes and looked to the northwest to find more receptive tribes:

> The Chippewas, who are the Indians living in this locality, are not those most easily adapted to the reception of Christianity. It is said that the Sioux and Natsitkutchin, that is to say, those of the northwest, are much more humane; such as in the north the Assiniboin, the Pawnee, the Gros Ventres, the Black feet, the Sarsi, the Arapaho, etc.[10]

History would show that this statement was optimistic and perhaps a little naive. Still the need for the Gospel was great.

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[8] Edna Kells, Elizabeth McDougal Pioneer (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, n.d.), p. 29.

[9] James Nisbet, Letter in Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church,(January, 1871):40. Also see James Nisbet, Letter in Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, (April 1871): 100.

[10] Grace Lee Nute, Documents Relating to North West Missions 1815 - 1827 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1942), p. 175.

The first white man on the plains was Henry Kelsey. He wrote of the Indian's religious state:

> Those that they reken chiefly for gods are beast and fowl. But of all beast ye buffalo and of all fowls ye voulter and ye eagle which they say they dream of in their sleep and it relates to them what they shall say when they sing [sic].[11]

Most of these Indians had no contact with the Christian religion and they did not know what it taught. Those who did, received it through non-Presbyterian missions or through trappers, some of whom may have been their husbands, as in the following case:

> I am under moral obligation not to dissolve the connection if she is willing to continue it. Ever since my own mind was turned effectually to the subject of religion, I have taken pains to instruct her in the great doctrines and duties of Christianity. My exertions have not been in vain.[12]

Unfortunately, the trappers and traders did not usually worry about religious matters. They were hard men who lived a hard life. They came to depend on their own skill and strength--not on God. The church was far away, and the whites they met were often rough men who did not practice the Christian faith. These men were not a positive influence on the Indian religion. "When a Scotchman married a squaw he was the superior person of the house. He continued

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[11] Henry Kelsey, "Tales of Western Travellers," Saskatchewan History 2 (1949), 23. Also Kelsey Papers (Public Records Office of Northern Ireland), pp. 22-23.

[12] George Bryce, Notes and Comments on Harmon's Journal (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press, 1883), p. 6.

Christian after his fashion. She continued pagan."[13] Some whites played on the superstitious beliefs of the Indians.

> About 1802 one of the hunters in his employ complained about having poor fortune in hunting. He complained that whenever he fell upon the trail of some animal he was followed by an evil spirit. As he approached the animal, the evil spirit, just before he had come near enough to take aim, with a terrible voice frightened both himself and the game.
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> . . . Harmon undertook to exorcise the demon. He took several drugs, mixed them, sealed them in white paper, tied them to the stock of the hunter's gun, and told him to throw the paper behind him toward the alarming voice when he heard it, and that would stop the spirit's tongue. He further warned him not to look behind him, but to pursue the animal and he would undoubtedly kill him. His remedy succeeded, and Harmon, while rising to a high position of regard among the Indians, at least commends our appreciation as having had a knowledge of human nature.[14]

It is unfortunate that men like Harmon would encourage a superstition and make his own belief appear syncretistic when he had an opportunity to teach the truth.

Even more harmful was the practice of the first missionaries who Christianized Indian beliefs. This was common among the French Roman Catholics.[15] Indian terms, which had other meanings, were used to explain Christian doctrine, and pagan practices were allowed to continue with the blessings of the church. By the time Presbyterian missionaries

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[13] James Ernest Nix, Mission Among the Buffalo (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1960), p. 12.

[14] Bryce, Harmon. p. 4. Bryce's Comment on Harmon's understanding of human nature disregards the doctrine of original sin. A true understanding must begin with that doctrine.

[15] Robert MacDonald, "The Owners of Eden," Canada 2 (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1974) p. 55.

arrived, "Christian beliefs (had) been curiously combined with many of the old ways which persist under the veneer of Christianity."[16] The white man introduced some physical elements into the lives of Indians resulting in a negative influence. Smallpox ravaged the Indian population. Its effect was only estimated in pre-mission times but was clearly shown when an epidemic spread through the Saskatchewan area in 1871:

> I gave him [his interpreter] leave of absence to take her [his wife] and the family again to the settlement where they now are. The commencement of the same disease required that the wife of the manager of the firm and other work should be taken to the settlement, at the same time, where she still is.[17]

The effect on the Indians was greater. The Indians who lived near the mission were able to get some vaccinations, but the best method to control the disease seemed to be isolation:

> Providentially we had a little vaccine matter, and we vaccinated all the people young and old before they left. . . . The Indians resolved to break up camp and disperse for greater security, and in a few days all were off to lakes and woods. They earnestly requested that I would use my influence to prevent people travel travelling between Carlton and the place where the disease continues.[18]

Before the missionaries were present with the vac-

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[16] James Stevens, Sacred Legends of Sandy Lake Cree (Toronto: McClelland & Steward, 1971), p. 40.

[17] James Nisbet, Letter to the Home and Foreign Record (April, 1871):100.

[18] James Nisbet, Letter to the Home and Foreign Record, (January 1871):40.

cine there were many deaths amongst the western Indians. The problem was so serious that many tribes were drastically reduced in numbers.

Along with disease, alcohol had a disastrous effect on Indians. In 1819 Sev Dumoulin, a priest, wrote that the best thing for the Indians was "l'exclusion du rum."[19] This product destroyed the moral character of the Indian. However, whiskey trading was a lucrative business so the white traders were not about to give it up. "An upriver steamboat from St. Louis brought us sixty barrels of good, blue-ribbon whiskey that Kipp had ordered."[20] This was for trade to the Indians across the border in Canada. "We loaded the wagon with the alcohol and struck northward on the many-furrowed Indian trail that closely paralleled the foot hills of the mountains."[21]

The white man brought much that would cause a change in the Indian culture. Iron tools, guns, and horses were positive contributions for making hunting and travel easier. Unfortunately, the negative influences were more obvious in the lives of Indians:

> The advent of the railway train . . . has brought the civilization of the white man and that of the Indian (if the nomad can be said to have a civilization) into

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[19] Nute, Documents, p. 173.

[20] James Willard Schultz, Blackfeet and Buffalo: Memoirs of Life Among the Indians (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), p. 39.

[21] Ibid., p. 65.

> close proximity. . . . How can the Indian stand before the temptation of the billiard table and the saloon.[22]

The railway brought the white hunter to whom the "rapid decrease of the buffalo,"[23] was attributed. The tribes depended upon the buffalo for food, clothing and shelter. When the great herds were destroyed so was the Indian way of life.[24]

The railway was encouraged by a change in government. As British North American colonies matured, a desire for self-rule developed on the part of many colonists which was to culminate in 1867 in the formation of the Dominion of Canada. Because this new government had the power to change their lives the Indians were apprehensive:

> Recent events have added to their previous dissatisfaction. In all past time they have regarded the Hudson's Bay Company as the highest representatives of the Queen. Now a rumor reaches them that a power greater than the company will soon be here to treat with them for their lands.[25]

Agriculture and a different concept of land ownership brought great changes for the Indian. White settlers were farmers who cleared the wooded areas in which animals

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[22] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, London, June 19-24,1906 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1906),p. 219.

[23] John McDougall, George Millward McDougall: The Pioneer, Patriot, and Missionary (Toronto: William Briggs, 1888), p. 50.

[24] W. J. Rattray, The Scott in British North America (Toronto: MacLear and Company, 1880), IV, 1057.

[25] John McDougall, McDougall, p. 150.

lived. Indian livelihoods depended upon trapping and hunting, but these could not be done near white settlements. "After white settlers came to the neighborhood they [Indians] moved away."[26] With the farmers came the surveyors who divided the land into sections of six-hundred forty acres.

This upset the Indian who felt that the land was theirs. It caused a crisis, especially with the half-Indian Metis who chose their land so that it bordered a river, assuring easy access to water and to transportation.[27] The lack of sensitivity on the part of the Canadian government later led to the Riel Rebellions. The official policy recognized the validity of only the white culture. The Indian and Metis ideas on how land should be used were not considered. Western Canada was undergoing great change when Presbyterians became interested in missions to the Indians.

Indian beliefs and culture were influential enough to have an effect on white men who came to the prairie. The Selkirk settlement, which had a Scottish Presbyterian population, had to deal with the negative influence of Indian

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[26] Presbyterian Church in Canada, "Appendix" to Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 23-28, 1880 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1880), p. 82.

[27] Ministere Des Afaires Indiennes et du Nord Canadien, Lieu Historique National de Batoche (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1973), p. 3,4.

religious practices.

> The heathenistic and blasphemous practices of conjuring over sick persons, it is to be lamented, still manifests itself from time to time in the settlement. It is therefore notified that any settlers who will hereafter dare to admit such devilish rites into their houses shall be banished from the colony and the pretending conjurers tried for their lives.[28]

Indian culture had been shaped by the land to which these new settlers came. Many customs had to be adopted for survival, but some settlers did not know how to separate the heathen religion from lifestyles that they needed in order to live in their new land.

The Indians had many values to teach settlers such as social honor and reverence for life and nature:

> In comparing the two societies it is notable that the whites who joined Indian tribes rarely wished to return. Not only were they welcomed but were honoured, and in many cases made chiefs. But the Indian who went to live with white society in early days, seldom remained: he felt regarded as less than human.[29]

Presbyterian missions had to face the problems of instances where pagan religion and Indian culture were separable. How could religion be changed without destroying the culture? How could an Indian accept the Christian religion without giving up his culture?

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[28] George Bryce, Original Letters and Other Documents Relating to the Selkirk Settlement (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press Printing, 1889), p. 4.

[29] MacDonald, Owners of Eden, p. 189.

CHAPTER II

EARLY MISSIONS

Red River Settlement

The first noteworthy desire for a Presbyterian mission was expressed by Lord Selkirk, who brought settlers to Rupert's Land through the English "Hudson's Bay Company." After visiting his project Selkirk wrote back to Canada:

> Still we often think of the happy times we had in Canada, or the Red River Settlement, and we wonder if the times will come in this place when we shall enjoy the society of Christian friends as we did in those. Let us hope and pray that we may before long, have many Christian Indians settled around us, and that will afford us more joy than all the comforts we have left ever did.[1]

The settlers understood his dream. "His Lordship's motives must have been what we have stated; namely, the civilizing and evangelizing of the natives."[2]

Often great men have great visions and great abilities, but when they die their successors are unable to continue their work. When Lord Selkirk died many people felt that the settlement would also die:

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[1] Lord Selkirk, Letter, Presbyterian Record, June 1867, p. 230.

[2] Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State (London: Smith, Elder, 1856), p. 19.

> I do not understand why in Canada it is generally believed that neither the mission nor the colony will be permanent. It is true that we have lost a great deal through the death of Lord Selkirk, and that we have in his place a Mr. Colvile, who seems to be very niggardly, but the agents here seem not to be at all perturbed by it.[3]

This comment demonstrated how people in upper and lower Canada (now Ontario and Quebec) viewed the West. They saw it as a territory to exploit rather than a responsibility or heritage that could be nurtured to bring out its full potential. Churches of Upper and Lower Canada demonstrated this attitude by failing to respond to pleas from the Red River colony by sending the colony a Presbyterian minister.

The Scottish settlers were Presbyterian and therefore had a desire for Presbyterian worship. James Sutherland came as a minister in 1815. Unfortunately, rivalry between the Nor-West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company caused the forceful deportation of two hundred settlers including Sutherland by the Nor-West Company which did not want a settlement. The next minister to come to the colony was a Church of England clergyman who was sent after Lord Selkirk's death in 1819.

The Presbyterians wanted a pastor of their own denomination. After a long period of time without a pastor, they finally were able to call Mr. Black. When he came, in 1851, "railroads extended only a few miles beyond Chicago

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[3] Grace Lee Nute, Documents Relating to North West Missions 1815-1827 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1942) p. 324.

. . . so that his journey across the great prairie was by stage-coach."[4] Black's mode of transportation was indicative of the difficult work to which he was going. Still the need was great and he was successful.

As the work expanded, Mr. James Nisbet was called to join Black. Together they developed a vision to evangelize the Indians. They called for a mission,[5] and eventually it was agreed that Nisbet could go as a missionary. This led to problems because the Saskatchewan exploration itself would take much time and the Red River settlement would be left with only one minister. Black wrote that such a situation "would be nothing less than suicidal."[6]

Yet, the next year it was finalized. After three years at Red River, Nisbet accepted the call to "labor among the American Indians." At the same time Black called for help. Nisbet "must have his place supplied. We are now on the lookout for a missionary."[7] However, Black was not the only one expecting help. Nisbet wrote of what he had hoped would take place:

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[4] "Red River Colony Period 1812-1851," Minutes of the 36th Synod of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1919 (Winnipeg: Douglass-McIntyre Printing, 1919), p. 17. Also see Appendix A, p. 164.

[5] John Black, Letter in Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, September 1864, p. 250.

[6] Ibid., p. 279.

[7] John Black, "The American Indian Mission," Home and Foreign Record, January 1865, p. 4.

> When I entered on the work it was with the full expectation that I would be joined by one or two additional missionaries so soon as a commencement would be made. It was frequently declared on the floor of the Synod that, were a mission to the heathen actually entered upon, there would be no lack of funds.
>
> One additional missionary is essential to the carrying on of the work. Had there been two missionaries from the commencement, one of them might have given particular attention to the language of the people; but my occupations have been so multifarious and distracting that it has been utterly impossible for me to make the language a study, so that I am still under the necessity of employing an interpreter--not by any means the most satisfactory method of communicating with people.[8]

Nisbet made his plans with these expectations in mind.

Diligent preparations had to be made. Nisbet was going to set up a mission hundreds of miles west of the Red River settlement and even many miles from any trading post. He talked with all the explorers and traders who passed through the settlement, going to or coming from the Territories. From them, he gained firsthand knowledge of the country and of the Indians who lived there. His work in assisting Reverend Black and the use of his carpentry skills had given him a good reputation. The people of the settlement made sure that he had all the animals, seed, and equipment that would be necessary in building the mission and ensuring its success.[9] Black wrote about Nisbet's preparations and the settlement's support:

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[8] James Nisbet, Three and a Half Years of an Indian Mission (Prince Albert: n.p. 1869). p. 9.

[9] Robert D. Dunning, A Century of Presbyterianism in Saskatchewan 1866-1966 (Prince Albert: St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 1966), pp. 8-9.

> Circumstances render it unavoidable that Mr. Nisbet should not proceed to Fort Pitt till next spring, but he is making diligent preparation for the work.[10]

Prince Albert Mission

Nisbet wished to set up a permanent mission from which missionaries could go out and to which converted Indians could come. "I am perfectly convinced that the plan we have laid out for the mission is the proper one, if we seek for permanency to our work--educate the young and do what we can to induce families to settle."[11] This was similar to plans adopted by other missions: "Naturally the first work for each missionary was to get a house built and establish himself."[12]

Black was in full agreement with the plan and he pleads, "As a church we must now stand fairly committed to what we have long contemplated laboring for the conversion of the `poor Indians.'"[13] Professor Baird pointed out that this mission operation was the "germ of the industrial school system which had quite a success in Indian mission

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[10] John Black, "The American Indian Mission." p. 4.

[11] A. B. Baird, Letter in the Presbyterian Record, May 1895, p. 263. He quotes Mr. Nisbet (1869).

[12] J. A. Mackay "The History and Present State of Church Work Among Native Races in Rupert's Land." Centenary Addresses, (Winnipeg: Rupert's Land Celebration, 1922, p. 73.

[13] John Black, Letter in the Presbyterian Record, June 1875, p. 63.

work."[14]

The distance to the Red River settlement from the mission and the difficulty of transporting goods as well as the desire to teach the Indians to raise crops demanded that Nisbet establish a farm. He saw himself as a pioneer missionary. He did not have the support staff of modern missions societies. His job was, therefore, to establish a mission that would provide for spiritual and physical needs of the Indians. His hope was that other missionaries would join him and the mission base would serve as a support structure to meet their needs also. The problem was that this was not the type of mission that the Presbyterian church understood.

The vision of the church was that its missionaries would go out and preach the Gospel which would quickly Christianize and civilize the Indians. They did not want to invest a lot of time or money into the mission. They did not wish to be responsible for the Indians but to receive God's blessing (and a stronger church) for helping to convert them. They were more willing to support overseas missions where populations were larger and the chances of success were greater. Many Presbyterians equated civilization with Christianity and looked more favorably on missions to the more civilized nations. This view of mis-

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[14]A. B. Baird, "Industrial School System." Presbyterian Record, November 1895, p. 263.

sions that wants success without responsibility or a long term commitment is "imperialistic."

The imperialistic view of missions came into conflict with Nisbet's in 1873. Nisbet was attempting to set up a permanent mission at Prince Albert. He worked a farm and set up buildings but this led to problems. A Mr. Bell circulated a report in the Western Observer, February, 1872, that discredited Nisbet's work. Although he never saw the mission, Bell claimed to get his information from authorities. His report claimed that Nisbet was making a profit from the mission and that he "worked a great deal on the farm and buildings, but not much among the Indians."[15] Bell never checked the source of his information. In fact much of it was based upon hearsay; yet it caused furor in the church. Such allegations had to be investigated.

The Presbyterian church appointed Reverend William Moore of Ottawa to investigate the report. Moore was thorough and interviewed all who were concerned. He found Nisbet innocent of the charges which were made against him. Nisbet had done all he could to make sure that the mission and its personnel were above reproach. He, "strictly forbade anyone in the employment of the mission to trade with the Indians, and even offered to increase the pay of the men

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[15] Rev. William Moore, Report on the Condition and Working of the Prince Albert Presbyterian Church in Canada to the Indians, Presbyterian Church in Canada, January 3, 1873, pp. 4-5.

out of his own pocket . . . rather than that they should eke out their wages by trading or any such course."[16]

Moore was given the task of making recommendations about the future of the mission. This was not an easy job for someone from a city in Ontario who had recently been introduced to the problems of the Indian mission. A noteworthy recommendation was that the the farm was no longer to be part of the mission. The Presbyterian church accepted the recommendation because it reflected the will of the church. Presbyterians did not see the necessity of investting in a long-term project. They saw their duty as providing missionaries to evangelize the Indians. It did not include maintaining a farm. Other decisions to establish more missionaries were more pleasing to Nisbet because that could accomplish his ultimate goal: "We trust we have been enabled to lay a pretty broad foundation for future operations."[17]

As part of his report Moore included a summary of the mission policy of the Presbyterian church. He saw that there was a difference between the ideas of the mission board and its missionary.

> The Reverend Mr. Nisbet regards himself simply as a pioneer whose duty it was to prepare a way for others by establishing a home and a base of operation and

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[16] Ibid., p. 8.

[17] James Nisbet, "Appendix H" in Moore's Report, p. 50. "We trust we have been enabled to lay a pretty broad foundation for future operations."

> supply in some advantageous position, and at the same time to do such evangelistic work in the immediate vicinity of the mission required or offered opportunity for. Whereas it seems to have been the opinion and expectation of the church at large, whatever may have been the understanding with the members of the then existing committee, that this work was to be chiefly of an evangelistic character, and the erection of buildings, and church, though necessary to the comfort of the missionary and permanence of the work, was only to occupy a comparatively small portion of his time and attention.[18]

The difference existed because of the way missions were seen by the Presbyterian church. The Presbyterian Church did not have a plan for missionary activity. The missionary was sent out with the expectation that he would know what to do. As in the case of Nisbet, even though the mission committee that sent the missionary to the mission field may have agreed with his ideas, a new committee did not have to agree because there was no set policy.

The church's imperialistic attitude was shown when Moore was appointed, like a General Assembly "leget" to investigate and make judgements on behalf of the church. Another imperialistic attitude that was shown by that incident was the need for conquest. The church was upset that the work at Prince Albert was going so slowly, and it was especially upset when Bell's article claimed: "Not one Indian converted."[19] The people wanted quick results for their support.

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[18] Moore, Report, pp. 18-19.

[19] Ibid., p. 8.

The Prince Albert mission demonstrated many of the difficulties that would have to be overcome in developing a successful mission. Besides the conflict with the church, Moore's report stressed the enormity of the work. Even preparation to go to the mission field was a major task. Skills such as language study were, as Nisbet bemoaned, necessary in effective evangelism.[20] There was a need for missionaries to share in the task and expand the mission to new areas. There was also a need for support on the part of the church. It cost to send missionaries to western Canada and it cost to support them.

Nisbet was aware of the task that faced him in converting the Indians.

> The great majority of the Indians are nothing but wandering savages still; and it is our desire to bring some of them to the knowledge of the Gospel--the blessings of which you all enjoy so fully."[21]

He felt that the Christian religion was not to be treated lightly. He did not rush anyone into conversion. Nisbet recognized that religion could have become a game with the Indians. He wanted them to understand their decision. This was the reason why he stressed educating the Indians and this was the reason he tried to provide a library to encourage learning: "I would also be thankful for the means of

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[20] Nisbet, Three and a Half Years, p. 9.

[21] James Nisbet, "Letter to Sabbath School Children" Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, June, 1967, p. 230.

procuring a small congregational library."[22] His convictions showed themselves in his cautious attitude. When someone came to him for baptism he had to be sure of his faith before he gave the sacrament.

> The father, although not a Christian himself, asked me to baptize his boy, who had just recovered from a dangerous illness. I did not think it proper to baptize the child then, but in the month of May last year, the whole family visited the mission, and at that time the mother made a profession of her faith in Christ and was baptized, and at the same time the boy."[23]

Geography caused another problem. The severe weather conditions, lack of medical care, and the amount of work required were hard on the health of the mission staff:

> At the same time, the manager himself had been suffering from pain in the chest from January last. We continued to hope that the means for recovery that we were using might be effectual, but in this we were disappointed, and in October I was compelled to allow him to go to the settlement for medical advice. On account of these drawbacks, I have not been able to do much directly among the Indians as I would have wished."[24]

Finally, in September 1874, the health of the Nisbets was so poor that they had to return to the Red River settlement where they died the next month within eleven days of each other.

Although there was much that hindered missions to

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[22] Canada Presbyterian Church, Acts and Proceedings of the Canada Presbyterian Church, Toronto, June 21-26, 1873 (Montreal: J. Lovell, 1873), p. 87.

[23] James Nisbet, Letter in Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, June 1872, p. 8.

[24] James Nisbet, Letter in Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, April 1871, p. 100.

the Indians, the missions grew mainly because some individuals became convinced of the gospel and its need among Canadian Indians. Much of this early dedication came from one family who had a desire to bring the Gospel to these native Canadians.

Growth of Missions

The type of mission that existed in western Canada demanded a special kind of missionary. Michael Coleman's thesis on American Presbyterian missions showed that thirty-one out of thirty-two missionaries to Indians whom he studied had grown up in rural areas or small towns. This "intensified their conviction that agriculture was a way of life especially pleasing to God."[25] On the other hand those who brought the Gospel to the Indians in western Canada were traders and trappers; Metis (half Indian, half white) and Indians or men like Nisbet who worked closely with them.

Alexander Ross had an interest in Indian missions. Although he had an Indian wife, he was not inhibited from calling Indians, "Indolent and lazy vagabonds; who live upon the inhabitants by pilfering and cheating, but otherwise very peaceful, unless when furnished with spirits, when

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[25] Michael Coleman, Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes Toward American Indians 1837-1893, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1895), p. 100.

they become very troublesome."[26] He knew their need for the Gospel and felt, "The missionaries have not done much to civilize or Christianize the Indian."[27]

He saw that the "ultimate aim of all missions (was) to change the condition of natural man. It has always been a matter of remark here that Indian converts have been too easily, if not hurriedly, admitted to church privileges."[28] He was interested in converting the whole man, and his years as a fur trader gave him some insight into the difficulty of the task. His wife was a devout Christian who had a great influence upon her children. Her son wrote from the University of Toronto, "Better far give me my mamma with her Christian meekness, her kind affection, her motherly heart."[29] Between that couple they were able to rear a family that would inspire the evangelization of the West. Their daughter, Henrietta, married the prairie's first Presbyterian minister: "One of my sisters, Henrietta, has

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[26] Alexander Ross, Letters of a Pioneer (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press, 1903), p. 10. Also see George Bryce, Early Days in Winnipeg (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press, 1894), p. 1.

[27] Ross, Letters, p. 10.

[28] Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State (London: Smith Elder, 1856), p. 56.

[29] James Ross, Letter from the University of Toronto, 1856, Ross Family Papers, Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, quoted by Dr. Peter Neufeld, "Bring Christ to the West: Mary Ross Flett" MS. Minnedosa, Manitoba Library.

married to our beloved pastor, Reverend John Black."[30] Daughter Mary married George Flett, whose father was a Hudson's Bay Company trader and whose mother was a first cousin to Saulteaux chiefs. Flett was the interpreter for Nisbet at the Prince Albert mission, and he was instrumental in securing the mission site that Nisbet wanted for that work. It was also their Indian heritage that enabled the Fletts to found the mission at Keeseekoowenin (Okanais) in 1873. George was cousin to chief George Bone who gave the reservation its name. Another daughter, Sally, married James Cunningham who joined the Fletts to start a school. James taught there until 1875 when he was succeeded by another Ross, Annie, a niece who had been adopted by the Fletts.[31]

Other missionaries, although not related to the Ross family, had a similar background which helped them to understand and relate to the Indians. John Mackay was a plainsman who also assisted Nisbet and knew the Rosses. Both he and his wife came from the Old Kildonan colony, which was part of the Red River settlement. Mackay was attuned to the Indian way of life. "John Mackay's knowledge of the Indian language and the Indian manner of life, his powerful physique and well known prowess as a plainsman made

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[30] William Ross, Letters of a Pioneer: Alexander Ross (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press, 1903), p. 11.

[31] The Centennial History Cmmittee Our Story to 1984: Rural Municipality of Strathclair. (Winnipeg: Inter-Collegiate Press, 1984), p.11.

a splendid right-hand man for Mr. Nisbet in all his undertakings."[32] His effect as an evangelist was lauded by Nisbet:

> Although I have not made personal visits to the plains, every time that Mr. Mackay (my interpreter) goes to the plains for provisions--he reads, talks, and prays with such as are willing to listen, so that the mission and its objects are now more well known among the various Indian camps--some of them apparently seeking the way of salvation.[33]

Mackay's experiences prompted Nisbet to write, "I am fully satisfied this going to minister on the plains in hunting season would be the best way to reach the greatest number of the Cree tribe."[34] When these Indians decided to accept the Christian faith it was Mackay whom they asked to come and show them the way:

> In his last sensible moments he [an old Indian man] asked Mr. Mackay to tell his sons and his friends that with his dying breath he charged them to attend to "religion," to give themselves to Christ and not to delay about it, to make all haste therein; that he was sure that the white man's religion is the "true" one and they must follow it.[35]

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[32] Rev. R. G. MacBeth, "A Historical Retrospect" Letter, Prince Albert Daily Herald, Sept. 6, 1924, United Church of Canada. Church Histories, Letter 4, St Andrews College Library, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

[33] Nisbet, Three and a Half Years, p. 3.

[34] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 23-28, 1875 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1875), p. 229.

[35] Canada Presbyterian Church, Acts and Proceedings of the Canada Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, June 20-25, 1872 (Montreal: J. Lovell, 1872), p. 262.

Many of the Cree to whom Mackay talked were truly seeking salvation, for in 1880 it was reported:

> A year ago, the chief called all his councillors and head men to decide what steps should be taken to secure a teacher from their own denomination. He then sent for Mr. Mackay. Mr. Mackay could not give them any definite assurance; but promised to let his brethren know, and to do what he could for them. Last winter a second council was held, and the old Chief Mistawasis himself was sent as a delegate to Mr. Mackay to urge their request for a minister.[36]

Their determination paid off, for finally Mackay, himself, was ordained and came as missionary to their reservation. His great influence was shown by the reaction of the Mistiwasis band during the Riel Rebellion of 1885. The Indians accompanied their minister to Prince Albert and offered their services against the rebels.[37]

Another Metis missionary who was a friend of the Ross family was James Tanner. He was a travelling missionary along the Red River in the 1860s. Later he became an unpaid itinerant missionary on White Horse Plains even though the Hudson's Bay Company's acting governor, Eden Colville, prevented him for a time. The Indians needed an evangelist who would persistently meet them where they were.

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[36] Presbyterian Church in Canada, "Appendix" to Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 23-28, 1880 (Toronto: Thorn Press 1880), p. 82.

[37] William Greg, Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Toronto: G. Blake and Robinson, 1892), p. 215.

Tanner's persistence filled the need.[38] Often missionaries would have to face obstacles in their evangelistic work. If they did not have the quality of persistence, they would give up too soon and their work would not succeed.

A second evangelistic attribute was shown in Solomon Tunkansaicy, who worked among the Sioux Indians. "As he (did) not either speak or write the English language there (was) great difficulty in obtaining detailed information in reference to his work."[39] It was not necessary that all pastors be able to speak English, but it was necessary that a pastor be able to communicate the Gospel. Tunkansaicy was concerned for his people and realized the need to get out and visit. "I hope to be able to travel among the Sioux after New Year. I wish, if possible, to visit them all at the different reserves. With God's help I will do all I can among my country people."[40]

Other Indian men like John Thunder at Pipestone reservation were not ordained but preached the Gospel because it was needed. Their conviction was described:

> The preacher is about ninety-five years of age. He was once a worshipper of unknown gods--a great medicine

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[38] George Bryce, "Sketch of the Life of John Tanner, a Famous Manitoba Scout. A Boarder Type," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, April 26, 1888, (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press, 1888), p. 4.

[39] Acts and Proceedings, 1880, p. 83.

[40] Solomon Tunkansaicy, Letter in the Presbyterian Record, September 1899, p. 40.

> man; and when he first heard the preachers of the Gospel, it cut him to the heart. He did not wish to lose his own religion; but he saw the folly of it, and now he is in love with Christ, and has enjoyed communion with Him for many years.[41]

Indian teachers like Donald McVicar and John Black at Cote reservation had a similar conviction. They spread the truth as they taught school.

These early missions had many valuable lessons to teach about the Indian work. When missionaries were effective, two qualities were present. First, the Gospel was related by people who understood the Indian and could use his language to help him understand the Gospel. Secondly, the missionary was willing to take the Gospel to the Indian where he was, on his own ground.

The Presbytery of Manitoba recognized the importance of that first quality and called for a means of finding Indian pastors as well as giving them proper training:

> Where as the Presbytery of Manitoba has become deeply impressed with the importance of raising a body of native Missionaries for the effective prosecution of Christian work among the Indian tribes of the province and the neighboring territories; whereas, it is necessary for this end that young men and boys, whose gifts and character would point this out as suitable for Christian work . . . should be sought out and properly educated.[42]

The Presbytery took their overture to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada:

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[41] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Hamilton, June 20-25, 1878 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1878), p. 190.

[42] Ibid., p. 190.

> That instruction be given to missionaries to select and encourage promising young men and boys that they may prepare and qualify for carrying on Christian work among their own people . . . and, further, that the General Assembly devise some means by which such young men and boys may be properly educated and prepared for the successful prosecution of the work of the Lord.[43]

The recommendation was good because the Indian youth knew the language and culture of their people and could be more effective in teaching the Gospel:

> Teaching in the mother tongue, and using the mother tongue as a bridge to a world language is a perfect example of an important principle: that there is no conflict between helping integrate a people's own special way of life, on the one hand, and giving them access to the way of life of the larger society, on the other.[44]

Unfortunately many good recommendations are not carried out because there are no suitable plans to achieve the goal or there is not enough interest to see that the goal is achieved. Both reasons may have caused the failure of the recommendation. Although there was no opposition to the recommendation, neither was there a plan developed to carry it out. Pastors were encouraged to find Indian youths who would make good ministers but nothing was mentioned about a special program to train them.

Also the recommendation was made for, but not by the Indians. They had no part in its formulation. Strangely enough not all wanted an Indian pastor. "Not withstanding

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[43] Ibid., p. 190.

[44] Charles E. Hendry, Beyond Traplines (Toronto: Miracle Press, 1969), p. 62.

the acknowledged excellence of their missionary, the Rev. S. Tunansaicy, the desire seems general to have a white minister in his place."[45] The reason for that statement may be jealousy on the part of certain members of the tribe or it may be an Indian method of feeding a white ego. The person who recorded the statement must have had a feeling of white superiority in order to accept those feelings without questioning whether it was really a white minister the Indians wanted or just a younger man or someone who was not so hard on them. It was important to have clergy, whether Indian or not, who were prepared to identify themselves with their Indian congregations and learn their language and culture.[46]

Nisbet was keenly aware of the limitations he had because he did not know the Cree language. He wrote, "In the absence of my interpreter, I can do but little among the Indians."[47] When the missionaries knew the Indian languages, missionary endeavors seem to have been successful.

> The majority of our missionaries are now able to use the Indian language with some facility in personal

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[45] Presbyterian Church in Canada "Appendix" to the Acts and Proceedings, Winnipeg, June 24-29, 1887 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1887), p. 12.

[46] Hendrey, Beyond Traplines, p. 55.

[47] James Nisbet, Letter in the Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, February 1871, p. 41.

> dealings if not in preaching, and the general testimony is that superstition is loosing its hold.[48]

The missionary needed a quality, after the example of Paul (1 Corinthians 9:20 - 22), that would help him to relate to the Indians so that he could bring them the Gospel.

The second quality--being willing to take the Gospel to the Indian--was perhaps more difficult for Presbyterians to understand. People who were nomadic could not be ministered to from one building. The missionary had to take the Gospel message where the Indian was. One mission was described as following the nomadic tribe. "When the Indians left the settlement, the missionary closed the church and school and travelled with the people in their camps as from place to place they went, hunting and fishing."[49] While settled at Keeseekoowenin, George Flett traveled out in a field over three hundred miles in extent. His own description gave some idea of the travel that was involved:

> Left Okanase on June 7th with Mrs. Flett. Shoal Lake, Fort Ellice on the 11th. Fort Pelly on the 17th - 200 miles from leaving Okanase. 20th to reserve south of Ft. Pelly, Crow Stand. 24th headed home. Services at Shoal Lake, home on Dominion Day, July 1.[50]

Even though the Indians were nomadic, there were

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[48] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to the Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 24-29, 1892 (Toronto: Thorn Press,1892), p. 24.

[49] John MacLean, The Hero of the Saskatchewan (Barrie, Ontario: Barrie Examiner Printing and Publishing House, 1891, p. 25.

[50] George Flett, Letter in the Presbyterian Record, September, 1879, p. 325-326.

times of the year when the tribes liked to get together. Mrs. John Bone described the type of services that appealed to Indians in the late nineteenth century. She said that camp meetings were combined with a social occasion when different tribes or reservations could get together, renew old acquaintances, and hear preaching from the Bible.[51] Young and old would remember those meetings and look forward to next year's. The Indians would even cross the American-Canadian border to attend. "Two bands of American Indians, with their missionaries, were present, and an equal or larger number of Canadian Indians from Garden River, and other Indian settlements swelled the number to a goodly host."[52] If the church could be flexible, there were ways and means available to bring the Gospel to the Indians. Still, these people were different from Europeans and they demanded understanding and a unique ministry.

R. Handy insinuates that the late attempt to become involved in missions was detrimental to the establishment of the Presbyterian church among the Indians.[53] Others felt that Presbyterians met with "incredible success" even though

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[51] Interviews by the author with Mrs. John L. Bone, August 24, 1982, translated by Gordon Blackbird and Mrs. Joe Boyer.

[52] John McDougall, George Millward McDougall: The Pioneer, Patriot, and Missionary (Toronto: William Briggs, 1888), p. 55.

[53] Robert T. Handy, A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 348.

they started late. That success could be attributed to the attitude that the Scots had toward the Indians:

> Unlike most churches who looked upon Canadian Indians as pagans to be converted to Christianity and thus to be snatched from Satan's hitherto unchallenged control, it seems Presbyterians viewed prairie residents..Indians, Metis, and Caucasians..simply as people among whom many might benefit from an encounter with Jesus Christ. And many then certainly could; still could! Thus it comes as no great surprise that Presbyterian Missionaries were as often Metis or Indian, as white.[54]

What is surprising is that there were so few white missionaries! The church colleges claimed to have an evangelical background that should have provided many missionaries who would have gone onto the mission field. "For the half century of its existence Knox College has had two distinctive features, orthodoxy in theology, and aggressiveness in mission work. Whatever the future may bring, old Knox has always stood for evangelical theology of a pronounced type."[55] The description of Manitoba College is no less impressive:

> The mission work, indeed is ever present to the minds of all connected with the college. The professors are missionaries, who preach almost every sabbath. The students are missionaries, who go out to destitute fields, within reach, during the session.[56]

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[54] Dr. Peter Neufeld, Bringing Christ to the West: Mary Ross Flett, Unpublished manuscript in Minedosa library, Minedosa, Manitoba, 1967 , p. 3.

[55] Rev. Dr. R. H. Warden and the Committee of the Executive of the Twentieth Century Fund, Historic Sketches: Presbyterian Church in Canada (Toronto: Murray Printing, 1903), p. 90.

[56] Ibid., p. 95.

James Cunningham was a student at Manitoba College.

In 1905 a YMCA branch within Knox College renewed interest in missions so that forty of the fifty-four students sent to northern Ontario that year came from the Knox College Missionary Society[57] and in 1907 a class on evangelism was added to the Knox curriculum. The same missionary society had supported High McKeller as missionary to the Indians.[58] The students at Knox were interested in missions as were students at other Presbyterian schools. It was at these schools where the most learned theologians taught and where, it was assumed, Presbyterian doctrine was taught. A logical conclusion is that their theology had an effect on missions.

Still there were complaints that the church did not support missions to the Indians:

> It only remains to be added, that churches have been remiss, and that the Presbyterian Church has been the greatest offender. We did not begin Indian missions till 1866. We have prosecuted the work since, in a hesitating, half-hearted sort of way. Last year we spent between $60,000 and $70,000 in foreign missions. Of this amount about $6,100 was spent in the northwest and a large percentage of this amount was for buildings, and who among our young men will volunteer for Indian service. Let the ranks of the present missionaries be recruited.[59]

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[57] John S. Moir, Enduring Witness (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1975), p. 190.

[58] Ibid., p. 156.

[59] James Robertson, "Missions in the North West" in the Presbyterian Record, July 1886, p. 89.

Over the next five years (to 1891) more was spent on missions to the Indians, but expenses also increased so that, "Methodists report the number of missionary laborers among the Indians to be forty-five, and the amount expended for the year $48,110, fully three times as much as the Presbyterian Church for the same year."[60] It seems from the beginning the Presbyterian mission was not well supported. John Black wrote back to the East from Old Kildonan to raise support:

> I am not satisfied with regard to our churches' position in regard to missions. We are doing nothing directly to spread the Gospel among those that are without. We are leaving the high places of the field to other communions; and what is worse, there are places of the field left uncultivated and uncared for altogether because we and others are not doing our share of the work.[61]

Black stated his theological basis for missions:

> Still there is another branch of the church's work in which we clearly fail. We have no heathen mission. If "missions are the chief end of the Christian Church," then so far, at least, we fail in our chief end. We are incomplete, we lack one essential part of a church's equipment, we do not fully implement our great commission.[62]

This was a theology tied to his Presbyterian as well as his national heritage:

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[60] "Mission Report" in the Presbyterian Record, July 1891, p. 89. The Mission Report in the Presbyterian Record, June 1875, p. 47, gave the amount spent as $3,189.

[61] John Black, Letter of April 7 in the Home and Foreign Record, September 1864, p. 250.

[62] Ibid., p. 250.

> Let this be the distinction of the year 1864. Let it begin with the work of heathen missions. And first of all, let it acknowledge the claims of the heathen of our own country--of B.N.A. I for one would not have you think in the meantime of any other field. Other fields may be, indeed, more promising but that is not the question. Providence clearly points out this field as ours.[63]

Although such a work was bound to take effort and involve expense, Black was confident of the benefits. It "would call forth, by God's blessing, a spirit of liberality among our people which could disappoint all our fears and make us glad and thankful."[64] He saw that there would be a balance between cost and theological duty. His desire was to make the church see that its purpose in God's plan was to include Indian missions.

The outlook was promising in 1887 because the General Assembly was held in Winnipeg. Here western problems, including missions to Indians, were clearly presented to the church. Unfortunately, any optimism was short lived for in 1892 only forty percent of Canada's Indians had been converted.[65] Six years later the mission report to the General Assembly stated that it had been:

> Three years since any new missions were opened among the Northwest Indians. A year ago we were able to report that all our missions were manned, but this year we regret to be obliged to say to the Assembly: on

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[63] Ibid., p. 251. Also see G. L. Mackay, From Far Formosa (New York: F. H. Revell, 1896), p. 201. Mackay argues it was the Presbyterian's heritage!

[64] Black, Letter, September 1864, p. 250.

[65] Mackay, From Far Formosa, p. 201.

> account of the less amount of funds . . . we have been unable to carry on the work at Lakesend.[66]

Poor funding, a lack of missionaries, and the attitude of the church seemed to continually plague the missions effort. In 1917 the missions report stated that no new work had been started for sixteen years while other denominations had been very active. Such a statement may have over-emphasized the work of other denominations but it accurately recorded the lack of support that the Presbyterian church gave its missions. Theological and sociological reasons in the following chapters give some answers. It was a time of discouragement, which was summed up by a statement of one unnamed elder: "Do you think the church wishes to keep up the work?"[67]

One reason for the discouragement was that foreign missions seemed to be progressing while Indian missions seemed stagnant. There were numerous volunteers who were willing to go overseas and there was adequate funding for them, but there was neither personnel nor money for Indian work. This trend has resulted because of a mind-set that sees North American culture as an ideal. North Americans

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[66] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 24-29, 1898 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1898),p. 175.

[67] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 19-24, 1917 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1917),p. 37. The report said, "We should expand the Indian work while 20,000 pagans remain in our land and several reserves are without Gospel privileges or schools for their children."

have refused to look at their own countries to see the needs. Instead they have romanticized the overseas work and felt they can do much to help these people. It was a mixture of ethno-centric thought which believed their culture was better than any other, and Imperialism which believed in looking to where they would have the most success. Abernathy Presbytery recognized the preferential treatment overseas missions received and asked that, "Indian work be placed on the same footing as work on the foreign field, and missionaries receive the same generous treatment and moral support as our foreign missionaries."[68] It is obvious that Indian missions were not receiving the same support as overseas missions.

Moir claims that this difference was because of the imperialistic missions policy of the Presbyterian church.[69] "Go where you will have success--go where the work is easiest" is the motto of this type of evangelism. Romantic views of other lands draw these types of evangelists.

This chapter has shown how imperialistic evangelism has affected the Indian mission and missionaries. The

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[68] Presbytery of Abernathy, Presbytery Records, (Abernathy, Saskatchewan: N.p., Sept. 13, 1910), p. 125.

[69] John Moir, Enduring Witness. Also letter received from John Moir, Scarborough College, University of Toronto, Feb. 20, 1988: "Canadians of most of the major churches were more attracted by and receptive to missions elsewhere in the British Empire . . . than by the Indians or Inuits, or even the small ethnic minorities in Canada, such as the blacks in Nova Scotia," p. 158.

mission grew because of a few dedicated men and women who saw a need and did not worry about the hardships. They saw the work as a long process of teaching and nurturing the Indians so they could grow in faith. The church did not have the same view. Presbyterians wanted results and they supported that which gave them results. They supported overseas missions. This attitude, which wants short term goals and counts success in terms of numbers, is typical of imperialistic evangelism. It was an attitude which was not part of the early Calvanistic missions from which Presbyterianism traced its roots.

CHAPTER III

PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS AND THEOLOGICAL TRADITION

Calvinistic Roots

Presbyterians trace their theological position back to John Calvin and the Reformation. Their Westminster Confession of Faith is a creedal statement that is acceptable to the Reformed churches. The Presbyterian Church in Canada claims to be a Reformed Church. It uses the Westminster Confession and has a Presbyterian heritage.

Kenneth Scott Latourette claimed that theology affected missions. He stated, "Several of the early leaders of Protestantism disavowed any obligation to carry the Christian message to non-Christians."[1] Some felt "that the end of the world was so imminent that no time remained to spread the Gospel through the world."[2] Others felt that the New Testament command to spread the Gospel to every creature was only for the original disciples. These were not Calvin's beliefs, but his theology also had an affect on the mission of his church. Therefore, if Presbyterian theology did not produce or at least encourage an active missions

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[1] Kenneth Scott Latourette, Three Centuries of Advance (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937), p. 25.

[2] Ibid.

program, part of the blame must belong to Calvin--unless the Presbyterian church has departed from his theology.

Calvinistic Doctrine

There are many Calvinistic doctrines that people have found difficult to understand or believe. Some of these doctrines have been regarded as hindrances to missions. They often became hindrances because of a misinterpretation of the doctrine.

Some Calvinists have equated predestination with determinism. That development created problems for missions. "If the elect, when saved, were certain to preserve their new life, as extreme Calvinists declared, then preaching to induce men to repentance and faith was quite useless."[3] If it was useless it would not make any sense to send out missionaries for that useless task.

When William Carey tried to gain support for his mission, he had to overcome the problem of determinism. "The hyper-Calvinism of the day had convinced many that the conversion of the heathen would be the Lord's own work in His own time."[4] At a ministers' fraternal meeting in 1785, John C. Ryland is reported to have replied to Carey, who raised the issue of overseas missions, "Sit down, young man,

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[3] Kenneth Scott Latourette, The Great Century (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939), p. 431.

[4] Steven Neill, A History of Christian Missions (New York: Penguin, 1977), p. 261.

when God wants to convert the heathen, He'll do it without your help or mine."[5] It was not J. C. Ryland that received the label as being anti-missions. Calvinism received that label. What has been forgotten was that Ryland's son, John, was one of Carey's close friends. When the Baptist Missionary Society was constituted, John was on the appointed committee.[6] Even more important was the fact that Carey himself was from the Calvinist tradition. He wrote, "I applied to Mr. Ryland Sen. [senior] to baptize me: he turned me over to his son, who, after some time baptized me at Northampton."[7] Calvinists were working against Calvinists with different opinions of how God's sovereignty was to affect missions.

The problem resulted from a distortion in theology. "A distorted doctrine of divine sovereignty can stifle the missionary spirit and program."[8] When Christians refuse to accept the responsibility to evangelize because of the doctrine of election, or when they equate the elect with churches in Europe and North America, they will not support missions. Calvin never claimed to know who was elect and

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[5] William Carey, An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1961), p. 3.

[6] Ibid., pp. 4, 18.

[7] E. Carey, Memoir of Dr. Carey (Boston: Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1836), p. 12.

[8] G. Verduin, "Does Our Theology Hamper Our Missions?" Reformed Journal, June 1958, pp. 3-4.

who was not. He pleaded for all souls until they died.

"Calvin's view of the heathen world (was) based on two doctrines, that of man's creation in God's image and that of common grace."[9] He taught that by creation all men have a knowledge of God and a germ of religion.[10] "The human mind by natural instinct possesses some sense of a Deity."[11] Even though there has been a great departure from truth and righteousness, the heathen still have "many good gifts the Lord has left in human nature, even after it was deprived of the knowledge of the true God."[12] Through these gifts, God has provided a means by which the Christian can communicate to the non-Christian. However, communication is not enough. Calvin believes in the sovereignty of God. He calls on Christians to pray "for all people in the whole earth,"[13] because their salvation depends upon God's grace.

"The knowledge of divine election, far from inhibiting missionary spirit and activity, actually stirs it

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[9] S. M. Zwemer, "Calvinism and the Missionary Enterprise" God-Centered Living (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1951), p. 59.

[10] John Calvin, Calvin's Institutes, translated by F. L. Battles (MacDill AFB, Florida: MacDonald, 1974), I; 3:1.

[11] Institutes, I; 3:1, 2.

[12] Institutes, II; 2:13-15.

[13] Institutes, III; 20:36, 40.

up."[14] The certainty that God was carrying out His plan made the work of the missionary meaningful, even when the work was slow and there were few conversions. It was believed that God would make the preaching of the word effectual unto salvation in the hearts of the elect.[15]

The sovereignty of God and the effort of man were never separated by Calvin. He writes, "Act so that God may be more strong [sic]."[16] The circumstances affected the action that God may require, but action was imperative. Calvin wrote to Mme. de Cary, "If because of the confession you have made of your Christianity, murmurs and threatenings rise up against you, you must bear in mind to what you are called, which is . . . we must render to the son of God the homage which belongs to him."[17] He wrote to the Duke of Longueville, "His glory ought to be more precious in our eyes than a hundred thousand lives, we have no excuse for not confessing the truth of his Gospel when he has made us acquainted with it, as it is a sacrifice which he strictly

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[14] P. Y. DeJong, Crisis in the Reformed Churches (Grand Rapids: Reformed Fellowship, 1968), p. 147.

[15] Morton Smith, Reformed Evangelism (Mississippi: Multi-Communications, 1975), p. 8.

[16] John Calvin, "Letter to Leyer" quoted in Jean D. Benoit "Calvin the Letter Writer," in John Calvin, ed. G. Duffield (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), p. 90.

[17] "Letter to Mme. de Cary," John Calvin, p. 90.

requires of us."[18] Calvin knew that the sovereignty of God did not give anyone the right to do nothing. Sacrifice was required of Chris-tians. They must be a witness to the truth of the Gospel.

Calvin felt that God required him to share in spreading the Gospel. It made him feel that he was doing his duty to God when he was able to help those who served as missionaries in other lands: "I have been unwilling to fail in acquitting myself of a part of my duty . . . it is of some comfort and a kind of relief for me to endeavor, if I can in any way aid you in your struggle."[19] Calvin believed that (because of the sovereignty of God) Christians had a responsibility to spread the Gospel and an ability to meet the problems of their mission.

Because his world was ruled by Roman Catholic princes, Calvin's view of evangelism and God's sovereignty were expressed in the context of presenting the Gospel to a hostile world. He realized that the missionaries that were sent out from Geneva would be persecuted, but he was convinced of the need of evangelism even in the face of persecution:

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[18] John Calvin, "Letter to De Longueville," J. Bonnett trans., Letters of John Calvin 4 vols. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1858, 4: 63.

[19] Calvin, Letters, 3: 419.

> St. Paul boasts that his bonds have contributed to the advancement of the Gospel and expects that in his death the name of Jesus will be exalted. The reason is that when we are persecuted we are called by God to maintain his cause, being, as it were, his attorneys; not that he has need of us or that we are proper for that, but since he does us the honour to employ us therein, it is not his will that we should lose our pains.[20]

Calvin saw that true evangelism would face difficulties and persecutions. His explained that the church continued to grow during this time of persecution because of divine sovereignty. "In the midst of so many losses, which were not far short of ruinous, yet the Church never ceased to expand more widely."[21] It was when the church seemed its weakest that the power of God was seen. God's sovereignty over the work of evangelism is expressed in two ways: "Yet we must struggle, and we must do so not in our strength but in that of Christ, who not only commits us to battle but also equips us with the arms necessary for victory."[22] First, God's call to do His work was a commitment that the Lord made for his children. Secondly God equipped His chosen people for their victory. Calvinists had a doctrine that could stand persecution and failure because they believed that God would use their work even when they did not see great results.

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[20] Letter from John Calvin to Brethren of France, November, 1559, in J. Bonnet, Letters of John Calvin, reprint of selected letters ed. (Carlisle, Penn.: Banner of Truth Trust, 1980), p. 224.

[21] John Calvin, Concerning Scandals trans. John W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 46.

[22] Ibid., p. 27.

This gave them enthusiasm for their evangelical work because they realized that they were working for a sovereign God who could make their work effective even when they seemed so helpless. Their work was to present the Gospel; the conversion of sinners depended on God.

Evangelism was a necessary element of the church:

> By His preaching the Kingdom of God is lifted up on the earth and established, and in no other way does God rule over men. Thus it is evident, how wretched is the state of men without the Gospel.[23]

Calvin believed that preaching the Word was vital for the conversion of non-believers:

> We must also observe the saying, to believe through the word; which means the faith is born of hearing, because the outward preaching by men is the instrument by which God draws us to faith. Hence it follows that God is, strictly speaking, the Author of faith and men are the ministers by whom we believe as Paul teaches in 1 Cor. 3:5.[24]

His description made evangelism a duty of the Christian minister and a mark of the church. Calvin criticized the Roman Catholics because they did not preach the Gospel:

> No-one can be a successor of the Apostles unless he uses his labors for Christ in preaching the Gospel. Whoever does not fulfill the role of teacher cannot rightly use the name of Apostle: this is the priesthood

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[23] John Calvin, Commentaries, vol.1: A Harmony of the Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke, trans. A. W. Morrison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), p. 146. [Mark 1:14.]

[24] John Calvin, Commentary on St. John, trans. T. H. L. Parker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; 1973), p. 142. [John 17:20-23.]

> of the New Testament, to slay men by the spiritual sword of the Word, as a sacrifice to God.[25]

Calvin also balanced the duty to evangelize with the sovereignty of God:

> Christ, in sending Apostles, does not resign all His role to them, as if He ceased to be the Master of His Church. . . As Christ gave the Apostles a commission which, relying on human powers alone they could not face, He fortifies them with the confidence of His heavenly protection. Before promising that He would be with them, He had said that He was the King of heaven and earth, who governed all things by His hand and order. So we must read the pronoun I with emphasis, as if He had said, "If the Apostles wished to perform their tasks with energy, they must not look to their own resources, but rely on the power enjoined upon Him under whose banners they campaign.[26]

Calvin found great comfort in knowing that Christ was in control of his missionary effort. Knowing that God was sovereign encouraged confidence and enthusiasm in evangelism.

Calvin saw that the doctrine of election could give his ministers confidence to preach the Gospel:

> Here, indeed, is a remarkable basis for confidence. For if we believe in Christ through the teaching of the Gospel, we should not doubt at all that we are already gathered with the apostles into His faithful protection, so that not one of us shall perish.[27]

This doctrine had two implications for evangelism. First it assured Christians that they had been called by God.

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[25] Calvin, Commentaries, vol. 3: A Harmony of the Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke, trans. A. W. Morrison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973),p. 251. [Matthew 28:19.]

[26] Ibid., p. 255. [Matthew 28:20.]

[27] Calvin, St. John, p. 146. [John 17:20-23.]

by God. Because they knew they were elect they should feel that they had to spread God's word as He commanded. Secondly, it taught that election was a mystery that depended upon the will of God.

> The fact that some arrive at faith and others remain dull and obstinate happens by His free election; for, in drawing some and passing over others, He alone distinguishes between men whose state is equal by nature.[28]

Because no man could know if another was elect or not the Gospel was to be freely offered to all. Calvin explained that Christ, "offered Himself as a teacher indiscriminately to all, and gave the same mandate to His Apostles."[29]

It was the grace of God that would bring about results from preaching. Calvin credited grace with the success enjoyed by Paul:

> For they knew that it was not so much by their own words, as by the power of the Spirit, that the hearts of so many men were converted to believe. They were able to conclude from this that they were protected by the outstretched hand of God, and that could increase their confidence a great deal.[30]

God's grace also determined the missionaries view of the heathen world. God did not leave the world without a witness:

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[28] John Calvin, Commentaries, vol.2: A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke, trans. T. H. L. Parker (Grand Rapids:Eerdmans, 1973), p. 21.

[29] Ibid., p. 23. [Matthew 11:25.]

[30] Calvin, Commentaries, vol. 7: The Acts of the Apostles, trans. John W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), p. 118. [Acts 14:1.]

> Wherever they turn their eyes, upwards or downwards, they are bound to fall on living and indeed countless, reminders (imagines) of God's power, wisdom and goodness. For God has not given obscure hints of His glory in the handiwork of the world, but has engraved such plain marks everywhere, that they can be known also by touch by the blind.[31]

Calvin saw that blood-relationship and religion were common factors among the people of the world:

> For blood-relationship and the same origin of birth ought to have been a bond of mutual agreement among them; but yet religion is the thing which most unites men or separates them. And from that it follows that those, who are so at variance with religion and the worship of God, have deviated from nature. Because from whatever place they have sprung, or whatever region of the world they inhabit, yet there is one creator and father of all, who must be sought by all with common consent. And certainly neither the distance between places, nor territorial boundaries, nor diversity of customs, nor any cause of separation among men, makes the slightest difference to God Himself. In a word, he wished to teach that the order of nature was violated when religion was torn to pieces among them.[32]

Common grace gave men that desire to seek for God even when their religion was corrupt.

God's grace also provided for man's welfare. God appointed governments to rule over and protect His people:

> But there is no doubt that Paul first of all showed that men are placed here, as in a theatre, to be spectators of the works of God, that he then spoke about the providence of God, that reveals itself in the whole government of the world.[33]

The fact that there were governments keeping the peace, building roads, and encouraging commerce aided the spread of

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[31] Ibid., p. 118. [Acts 17.]

[32] Calvin, Acts, Vol. II, p. 117. [Acts 17.]

[33] Calvin, Acts, Vol II, p. 117. [Acts 17.]

the Gospel. God was in control of worldly governments and He could use them in the spread of the Gospel.

Calvin's eschatology influenced his desire to spread the Gospel. "Christ is . . . affirming that the Gospel (which all would have thought was to be banished from its own home in Judaea) would be published to the furthest ends of the earth before the last days of His coming."[34] Calvin believed that the Gospel must be spread through the world before the return of Christ. He called for patience from people as they waited for that day, and called on ministers to prepare the people for the end. "So the Children of God must arm themselves with patience and maintain an unbroken constancy of truth."[35] That patience must not be misconstrued to mean that Christians are to do nothing because the more the Kingdom grew on earth the more the opposition would grow. "The more pressingly God offers Himself to the world in the Gospel, and invites men into His kingdom, the more boldly will wicked men belch forth the poison of their

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[34] John Calvin, Comentaries, vol. 3: A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke, trans. T. H. L. Parker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 73, 656. Calvin, Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 1: On the Book of Genesis, trans. John King (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984 reprint), p. 465: "He requires his Gospel to be preached everywhere in the whole world, for the purpose of restoring it from death to life."

[35] Calvin, Harmony of the Gospels, vol. 2, p. 75.

impiety."[36] Calvin saw the need for an increasing number of missionaries to minister to people and to oppose the wicked men.

Calvin's Missions

Calvin's theology not only allowed the spread of the Gospel, but it insisted upon that work. He demonstrated the far reaching vision which he had for the missionary task by encouraging the establishment of a settlement and mission in Brazil. "On Tuesday 25 August . . . M. Pierre Richen and M. Guillaume Charretier were elected as ministers to the new islands (Brazil)."[37] The Huguenot leader, Admiral Coligny, believed that a colony of Protestant emigrants could be free from persecution there. They could establish themselves and evangelize the natives. A number of Huguenots went, but the governor of Brazil, Villegagnon, turned against the Calvinists and the survivors had to return to Europe.[38] Other attempts to evangelize in the New World were prevented because Geneva had no colonies and Calvin's contact with non-European countries was limited.

Calvin had more success in evangelizing the Slavic

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[36] Calvin, Comentaries,vol 12: Commentary on Hebrews and I and II Peter, trans. W. B. Johnson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), p. 361.

[37] Philip Hughes, The Register of the Company of Pastors at Geneva in the Time of Calvin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966). p. 317.

[38] Ibid., p. 28.

countries.[39] He showed great interest in the mission to Poland. He wrote about it, dedicated his commentary on Hebrews to its king, and encouraged missionaries to go there in 1556.[40]

When the Dutch navy was victorious at Nieuport, the world was opened to the Reformed church and they started their missionary effort. The church went hand in hand with Dutch commerce. They established work in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the East Indies, and they translated the Bible into Malay. The Calvinists even established missions in the world of Islam, in the sixteenth century.

The Calvinistic missionary zeal continued in the next centuries with men like Morrison in China, Paton in the South Seas, Livingston in Africa, and Brainerd and Eliott in North America. To these men Calvinism was a missionary program.

Missionary Problems Because of Calvinism

Two theological extremes that developed in churches rooted in Calvinism have become hindrances to missions. In William Carey's denomination, sovereignty was stressed until responsibility vanished. "Faith ossified into fatalism."[41]

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[39] J. Hoogstra, American Calvinism (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 10.

[40] Bonnet, Calvin's Letters, 1: 243.

[41] S. P. Carey, William Carey (New York: Hodder & Staughton, 1923), p. 10.

This digression from Calvinism led to the idea that there was no use in evangelization. The hyper-Calvinists believed God would save without their efforts. They would not need to go out and evangelize. God would will that certain people would be saved and it would occur. They believed that there was no need to have any missions because God was sovereign.

Many churches that claimed affinity to Calvin gave up his theology because they felt it was too harsh. In North America this proved a hindrance to missions.

> The stress of New England liberalism . . . brought in a strong element which journeyed far from historic Calvinism. Extreme humanists not only abandoned the doctrine of election, but also rejected the sovereignty and even the independent existence of God.[42]

Channing wrote in 1809 against Calvinism: "A large number, perhaps a majority, of those who surname themselves with the name of Calvin, have little more title to it than ourselves."[43] Channing was happy because many Calvinists had given up the idea of retribution.

When God's right to judge his creation is not accepted by people, they will feel that no one will be damned. There will be no urgency to evangelize. "It is not too much to say that without a coherent eschatology it is not

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[42] Latourette, The Great Century, p. 434.

[43] W. E. Channing, Channing's Works (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1877), p. 465.

possible to do effective evangelism."[44]

Eschatological Motivation for Missions

One of the more recent drives behind missions has been eschatological. There has been a push to evangelize the non-Christian people of the world because of the urgency of the coming end of time. One view saw that the world was coming to an end so Christians better get to work to save the heathens. Another believed that the world could not end until the Gospel had been preached to all nations. Both views caused a resurgence in the missionary effort of North American churches.

Early Protestant-Calvinist missions took place in New England under the influence of Jonathan Edwards. He took a post-millennial view where:

> It is often foretold and signified, in a great variety of strong expressions, that there should be a time come, when all nations, through the whole habitable world, should embrace the true religion, and be brought into the church of God.[45]

This was to come about by "the propagation of his gospel, and the power of his spirit communicating the blessings of it."[46]

Edwards believed that at the end-time:

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[44] Michael Green, Evangelism in the Early Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 276.

[45] Johnathan Edwards, Works of Johnathon Edwards, vol. 5: Apocalyptic Writings, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 329.

[46] Ibid., p. 330.

> It is probable that there would be an hundred thousand times more, that will actually be redeemed to God by Christ's blood, during that period of the church's prosperity that we have been speaking of, than ever had been before, from the beginning of the world to that time.[47]

Edwards felt that John Brainerd's work with the Indians was a sign of the end times: "A very great awakening and reformation of many of the Indians in the Jerseys, and Pennsylvania, even among such has never embraced Christianity before."[48]

He lists events of a hopeful aspect of the state of religion: "The accounts of Mr. John Brainerd gives, March, 1748, of the religious concern at Cape May; in the account Mr. Strong gives of the state of religion among the Indians at Cranberry."[49] "The pious and charitable disposition of a number of gentlemen in Boston and the zeal they show for the promoting of the gospel among the Indians."[50] It must be concluded that Edward's eschatology gave a positive theological emphasis of missions to Indians. His post-millennial view provided a rational and motivation for missions.

Another eschatological view expressed by Cotton Mather also made Indian missions a priority. He encouraged

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[47] Ibid., p. 343.

[48] Ibid., pp. 363-364 and see p. 449.

[49] Ibid., p. 285.

[50] Ibid., p. 286. Also see James H. Moorhead, "Between Progress and Apocalypse: A Reassessment of Millennialism in Amerian Religious Thought, 1800-1880," Journal of American History 71 (December-March 1984-5): 527.

Indian missions in the 18th century. "Our neglect of Christianizing the eastern savages has been punished."[51] To William Ashurst, December 10, 1712, he writes, "We have employed visitors to go into all the villages of our Indians."[52]

He writes to Robert Miller, May 28, 1725:

> It appears plain to me that the Second Coming of our Lord will be at and for the destruction of the man of sin. . . . It appears plain to me, that at the Second Coming of the Lord, there will be the terrible conflagration which the inspired Peter has described, and all the prophets with open mouth, and one mouth, have warned us of, and from which none shall escape except the elect, that by the angels are caught up to meet the Lord. It appears plain to me, that the promised rest for the Church of God on earth, and the good things of the Latter Days (particularly that reign of Universal Righteousness which the excellent spirit of my Miller is laboring for) will be in that New Earth which is to take place after the coming of the Lord, and the burning of the world.
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> I cannot find any inhabitants for the New Earth except those faithful ones who shall be caught up at the descent of our Saviour, and changed like Enoch and Elias and made sinless. . . . And I do not think that these apprehensions are at all to supersede or discourage such struggles for the Kingdom of the Lord ruling in the midst of His enemies, as Mr. Miller has done so much to animate. I again say, let us be found so doing. And if we do not gain our point, our God

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[51] Cotton Mather, Letter to James Woodside, Feb. 13, 1719, in Selected Letters of Cotton Mather, ed. Kenneth Siherman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), pp. 274-275.

[52] Cotton Mather, Letter to William Ashurst, Dec. 10, 1712, in Selected Letters, pp. 126-127.

> from the Machine of Heaven will shortly do more than we have looked for.[53]

John Cotton explained his interest in converting the Indians:

> It is true there may be doubt that for a time there will be no great hope of any national conversion, till Antichrist be ruined, and the Jews converted; because the church (or temple) of God, is said to be filled with smoke, till the seven plagues (which are to be poured upon the anti-Christian state) be fulfilled.[54]

It should be seen that "millennialism seems to have remained a deep and enduring element of their intellectual tradition, even after Calvinist theology itself had begun falling away."[55]

A similar effect was not seen in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. In regards to the millennial issue, it sparked missionary interest in other churches, Presbyterians answered, "This millennial reference (Revelation 20) is not a description of the present, nor a blueprint for the future, but a word of assurance to the suffering servants of

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[53] Cotton Mather, Letter to Robert Millar, May 28, 1725, in Selected Letters, pp. 405-406. Also see Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals 1596-1728 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 320-349. 62

[54] John Cotton, John Cotton on the Churches of New England, ed. Larzer Ziff (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 272-274.

[55] Ruth H. Bloch, "The Social and Political Base of Millennial Literature in Late Eighteenth-Century America," American Quarterly, 40 (September 1988): 386.

the Son of Man."[56] There is little urgency caused by the usual a-millennial position of Canadian Presbyterians. "The thousand years spoken of in verses 2, 3, 6, 7, do not refer to a specific time."[57] The urgency of individuals is consumed in the unity of the church.

Indeed, Presbyterian ministers have been taught to regard the eschaton in the new creation as only meaningful inside the church. There is an "insistence that the new thing that is called the church is in fact the new creation. . . . The holy city from God is the church."[58]

The high view of the church expressed itself in a high view of its ministers. Part of faith was "accepting persons of ministers as Christ's representatives, even if they are doing poorly."[59] There could be no confusion of minister and laity; at the same time the responsibility of the laity is lost. The result is that Canadian Presbyterians never saw the urgency of missions to the Indians. Instead, they found comfort in their church. Although they offered that comfort to Indians who would adjust to their

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[56] Articles of Faith Committee, Presbyterian Church in Canada, An Historical Digest of the Work in Articles of Faith 1942-1967 (Don Mills: Presbyrterian Church in Canada, 1967), p. 85

[57] Ibid., p. 89.

[58] David Hay, "Systematics Lecture," March 17, 1975, at Knox College, Toronto.

[59] David Hay, "Systematics Lecture Ministry," March 31, 1975.

church, they insisted that the Indian become part of the whole body. Individual appeal and eschatological gain were not emphasized.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada had lost the missionary urgency that came with a coherent eschatology. Its theology of evangelism developed as the church developed and grew through church unions and emigration to British North America. The colony became the country of Canada in 1867. Its people wished to develop a viable nation and they looked to the western territories as a land of opportunity.

The government of Canada followed an English pattern of a constitutional monarchy. When Canada became a nation, its government was modeled on Great Britain's. There were differences caused by the new country, and one of the differences was that Indians inhabited Canada. The Indians were the responsibility of the federal government. Therefore, the Presbyterian church was to have close contacts with the government as it worked with Indians.

"The relationships in which the Canadian church stands to the Indians is peculiar. The success of our efforts to obey Christ's command to evangelize the world must be profoundly affected by the wisdom or otherwise of the government in dealing with them as wards of the state."[60]

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[60] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Ottawa, June 21-26, 1890 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1890), p. 29.

The close connection it had with the government, as well as the emphasis on the earthly church, created an attitude of imperialism in the Presbyterian church. Both church and state wished to extend their influence over the West. The government wished to establish its goal over its inherited territories. The church wished to use the West as an opportunity for growth.

CHAPTER IV

A SEARCH FOR A THEOLOGY OF MISSIONS

Presbyterian Doctrine of Government

Imperialistic evangelism developed from Presbyterian theology and it continued to develop as the influences of the world worked on that theology. Such beliefs as theology of church and state, church government, and ministers all had an affect on missions. Influences from the movement for church union and the prevalent theologies of the day, like liberalism and neo-orthodoxy, also shaped the direction of missions in the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The Canadian Presbyterian view of government helped to shape mission policy. The doctrine of church government and church-state relations developed because of the historic events that led to a united church in 1875 and again in 1925.

The early Presbyterian missions to British North America resulted from settlers asking their mother churches in Scotland to provide pastors. This they did. In time a number of churches grew up. Each had the characteristics of the founding Scottish church. Although the differences between the churches were enough to keep them separate in Scotland, wide spaces, few people, and another government

made separation impractical in Canada. In fact, in Pictou, the group of Scottish settlers who called for a minister in 1784 purposely left off the name of a Presbytery. In this way the appeal could be given to any Presbyterian body that might respond to their plea.[1]

The state supported church in Scotland was the Kirk or Church of Scotland. In 1712 lay patronage was reimposed on the country of Scotland. In this system a lay patron, usually the largest land owner, could appoint the minister of the local church even against the wishes of the congregation. In the past the government had supported the state church. In this case it was the state church supporting the state. Secession churches gradually broke away from the Kirk. They refused to accept government aid and emphasized a separation of church and state.[2]

The effect on missions in North America was surprising. The secession churches, which were accustomed to the voluntary system of church support, were better adapted to meet colonial conditions than the established Church of Scotland. More of their ministers were willing to accept the rigors of frontier church life; they adapted themselves more readily to the conditions with which their churches

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[1] Neil G. Smith, "James MacGregor and the Church in the Maritimes," in Enkindled by the Word, ed. Neil G. Smith (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1966), p. 10.

[2] James Thompson, "Proudfoot and the Secession Churches," in Enkindled by the Word, pp. 31-32.

would have to survive.[3] In the Maritime Provinces it was these mission churches that grew. The Kirk grew in the cities.

The problem with missions to Indians developed along with the development of Presbyterianism in Canada. It was not until 1852 that the Free Church sent John Black to the Red River settlement and not for another decade before he and his new assistant, James Nisbet could convince the church of the need for Indian work. Black saw the need soon after arriving at the settlement, "I cannot lead my people in prayer for the extension of the kingdom unless we have some mission ourselves out amongst those who are not yet Christians."[4] Nisbet indicates some of the frustration that he had in convincing the church of the need:

> With you, we must sincerely regret that the principal object of my recent visit to Canada has not been realized; but we do not give up hope that the establishment of a mission to the Indians exclusively will yet be attained. We are sorry that Mr. Duff is not to be sent to us, but far are we from grudging the Columbians the little help you are about to send them.[5]

Nisbet was persistent and he wrote again the next year:

> With the reasons for my visit to Canada, and my attendance at last synod the committee (foreign missions)

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[3] Smith, "James MacGregor," p. 15.

[4] Roderick George MacBeth, "An Historical Retrospect" Daily Herald Prince Albert, Monday, Sept. 6, 1924, p. 6.

[5] James Nisbet, Letter, The Home and Foreign Record of the Canadian Presbyterian Church, Nov. 1863, p. 109.

> and the church are already familiar. I am sorry that the object has not been attained, but I hope yet to see a mission to the Indians "exclusively" established by our church.[6]

He knew that there were numerous openings for work among the Indians.

Nisbet had graduated from Knox College in Toronto which was the Free Church seminary. Thus it was logical for him to expect help from that church. The problem was that its pastors and congregations were not used to the idea of raising or giving money to support missions. When the Free Church separated from the Kirk in 1843, it did not accept the voluntarist conception of church and state. The church was not opposed to accepting government funds and tended to look to the state rather than to themselves for finances.[7]

Because the new land of Canada had a different government, new ideas, and new needs, government money was not available. The only way that Indian missions could survive was through self-support. The Indians did not have money. Economic conditions in Scotland were poor and its churches were not able to give to Canadian missions.[8] It was up to the Canadian churches or the pastor/missionary himself to

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[6].James Nisbet, Letter, Presbyterian Record, April 1864, p. 278.

[7]Thompson, "Proudfoot," p. 34.

[8]Paul Harrison, "Robert Burns" in Called to Witness. ed. W. Stanford Reid (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1975), p. 151.

meet the needs. The congregations and clergy did not follow a plan of stewardship; missions suffered accordingly. When the missionary had to worry about his support, the work of evangelism was hindered. As a result, problems arose such as that of Nisbet's mission. The special situation of the missionary was described:

> The work of educating and Christianizing Indians is very difficult. The Indian missionary or mission teacher needs more than most, to strike the roots of his faith deep down to the everlasting springs, where no surface drought will affect him.[9]

Even with good support the missionary had to be a special type of person because of the difficulties he faced.

Church Union and Indian Missions

The secession churches of Ontario had organized under the leadership of Principal Proudfoot of London Academy. They were named the Missionary Synod and, as their name indicated, had a positive view toward missions. In 1861 they joined with the larger Free Church to form the United Presbyterian Church. Knox College was kept as the church seminary. That union pointed to the future because it was not long before all the major Presbyterian bodies in Canada were discussing union. In 1875 the first general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada was held. The Kirk became part of the union but also brought its negative

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[9] A. B. Baird, Feb. 3 Letter from Edmonton Presbyterian Record, March 1886, p. 101.

attitude toward support for missions.[10]

The new church seemed embarrassed by the Indian mission. The Indians were Canadians, yet they spoke another language. They were primitive, yet there was nothing mysterious about them--they lived in the Canadian territories. The Indian work did not seem to fit into either home or foreign missions.

When the organization for church union was formulated, the Foreign Missions Committee was made responsible for the mission. This caused problems for the mission because the committee had no mission plan and no desire to have that responsibility. An 1878 overture to the General Assembly about Indian missions was referred to the Western section of the Committee on Foreign Missions where it appears to have been lost.[11] In 1882 it was reported that the missionary at Prince Albert was to receive his grant directly through the convenor of the Home Missions Committee. Still in 1889, it was the Foreign Mission Board that controlled the Indian mission and they complained: "We have not been able and have all along recognized our inability,

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[10] W. Stanford Reid, "John Cook and the Kirk in Canada," in Enkindled by the Word, p. 28, "Showed little interest in foreign missions."

[11] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Hamilton, June 20-25, 1878 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1878), p. 190.

to respond to all the calls addressed to us."[12] Five years later Prince Albert Presbytery suggested, "that management of Indian work within our bounds, be transferred to Home Missions."[13]

In 1906 the Synod of Saskatchewan recommended that there be one committee for Indian work in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and a superintendent be appointed for the work.[14] The Synod saw that Indian work did not receive the attention that it needed from the foreign missions committee. The problem was intensified in 1908. The committee introduced a new format for reporting Indian mission work. Instead of a report from each mission, all reports were summarized for the for the Acts and Proceedings. That action effectively dismissed personal interest and individual needs of the different mission stations. It made the individual missions unimportant and gave more power to the committee. It was a step toward centralization and a sign of an imperialistic attitude toward Indian missions.

In 1913 Indian missions became part of "Home Missions," but the committee in charge still had difficul-

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[12] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Toronto, June 20-25, 1889 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1889), p. 68.

[13] Minutes of the Presbytery of Prince Albert, Prince Albert, Nov. 9, 1904, (Prince Albert: n.p. 1904), p. 46.

[14] Synod of Saskatchewan, Minutes, Regina, Nov. 6, 7, 8, 1906, (Regina: n.p., 1906), p. 12.

ties.[15] In 1916 there was a shortage of money and a cut back in home missions. The resulting policy was that the church assumed no responsibility for buildings or farms or equipment, but confined its support to the salaries of workers.[16] This policy sounds legitimate except when one takes into consideration the buildings which were available: "In the eyes of the East, a house badly out of plumb, resting on decaying logs, doors and windows inviting all the winds of heaven to enter, is good enough."[17] But in the harsh climate of the West, good buildings were a necessity, not a luxury. Without proper living conditions a missionary would not survive.

Life was hard for the missionaries and their families. Many did not last more than a few years in the mission. In 1867, after only a year at Prince Albert, it was reported that Mrs. Nisbet and Mrs. Mackay "have not been very strong, having suffered from over-exertion."[18] Seven years later, Mr. Nisbet had to bring his wife back

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[15] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Toronto, June 21-26, 1913 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1913), p. 6.

[16] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Winnipeg, June 25-30, 1916 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1916), p. 6.

[17] Synod of Saskatchewan, Minutes, Saskatoon, Nov. 8, 9, 10, 1908, (Saskatoon: n.p., 1908), p. 16.

[18] J.Nesbit, Letter in Home and Foreign Mission Record, Oct. 1867, p. 373.

to Kildonan, Manitoba because of her ill health.[19] They both died within a mounth. In 1894 Dr. MacLeod, Mrs. Wright, and Thomas Shield had to resign on account of their health. The next year at Mistawasis reserve, "F. O. Nichol felt obliged to resign upon the death of his young wife, and now the Rev. A. W. Lesis, who made a beginning with great energy, finds himself constrained by the failure of his wife's health, to follow a similar course."[20] In 1897 it was Mrs. Lockhart who had to give up her work because of ill health. In 1905 Rev. M. Swartant, "after a few days illness he was cut down in the midst of his days."[21] An influenza epidemic struck in 1919 and at the Cecillia Jeffrey school:

> It invaded the school and every pupil contracted the disease though in only one case Mr. Matthews, who contracted the disease, developed pneumonia and succumbed.[22]

Death and illness were always problems in missionary work. The difference in Canadian Indian missions was that the missionaries' work and death were never given the

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[19] "Mission Report, in" Presbyterian Record, Feb. 1874, p. 38.

[20] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, London, June 20-25, 1895 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1895), p. 119.

[21] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Kingston, June 25-30, 1905 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1905), p. 116.

[22] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Hamilton, June 21-26, 1919 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1919), p. 26.

respect or the attention that overseas work received. If Indians had been cannibals, perhaps they would have drawn more attention. Instead, climate and living conditions took ministers' lives. If these men had died in service in some other country they would have been heroes. Instead, their lives were lost in Canada without notice or recognition.

As the church grew and became more centralized, the missionaries to Indians became less known and less important to the church. Missionaries and missionary teachers were scarce. The lack of support for their work served to limit the number who were willing to do such ministry. It was also indicative of the attitude that the ministry was not important in the eyes of the church. The lack of support demonstrated the policy of imperialistic evangelism.[23]

Church Government and Its Effect on Missions

The Presbyterian churches that joined together to make the Presbyterian Church in Canada all had governments based on a court system. The highest court became the General Assembly; under it were synods and under synods were Presbyteries. Presbytery was made up of teaching elders (pastors) and corresponding ruling elders (lay leaders) from churches in a designated area. All pastors and elders had equal chance to express themselves and to

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[23] John S. Moir, Enduring Witness, (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1975), p. 158.

make policy. No one ordained elder was to be above another. This doctrine of ministry influenced the policy which the church had towards training pastors, so that all pastors received the same training and the same courses. The equality was so stressed that the committee on Articles of Faith had to make excuses to provide for leadership: "Assemblies and councils must of necessity have presidents and executives and provide opportunity for the hearing of leaders of outstanding quality."[24]

This feeling of equality amongst all pastors created problems for the Indian missions. First, it left the missionaries untrained for many of the tasks that were necessary for their survival. Knox College has not provided a course in missions. The graduate of this "church" seminary who was sent to a reservation would not have any philosophy of missions to help him deal with difficult situations. The Presbyterian church was hesitant to change its policy in training its pastors. In Quebec, in 1980, there were two theological training centers for Presbyterian, francophone (French speaking) students. One, Presbyterian College, was recognized by the church but had no francophone Presbyterian students. The other was not recognized but had a number of part-time students:

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[24] Presbyterian Church in Canada, An Historical Digest of the Work in Articles of Faith 1942-1967 (Toronto: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1968), p. 35.

> The Principal at the Presbyterian college brought in a request for money to support an "official" French-language training center. Financial support was given to the institution which has none of our students, while the centre with all of our potential (French-speaking) students got none![25]

This example demonstrated the reluctance of the church to change its policy on training pastors. The culture of the Indians demanded that missionaries receive special training, but the Presbyterian church was slow to make any changes.

The mission board has now recognized the problem and has provided a summer's preparation at the Toronto Institute of linguistics and a "missionary orientation." The former is to provide the missionary with the tools he will need to learn another language when he is immersed in that language. The course is largely ineffective for missions to Canadian Indians because on Presbyterian reservations most young people use English as their first language and the pastor does not have a chance to practice and learn the Indian language. The latter is ecumenical and approaches missions from the position that missions have become the problem for non-white cultures. Candidates have been discouraged from thinking that their mission was to convert the heathen because such an attitude might harm their culture.

Secondly, the new missionary was largely unsupervised. Mission Board policy was never to have two

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[25] Ross H. Davidson, "Tale of Two Institutions," Presbyterian Record, May 1982, p. 34.

missionaries in the same charge at the same time. The board would not send a new missionary to a charge that was still occupied so that there would be no opportunity for the inexperienced man to learn from the experienced.

Alexander Ross addressed a similar situation over one hundred years ago:

> We have seen enough of this (green missionaries) to convince us that such appointments will result in failure, and do more harm than good in such a case.[26]

Ross felt that good training and experience under a veteran missionary were a necessary part of a new missionary's "theological education." The new missionary would be able to continue the programs of the experienced missionary and would not have to learn through mistakes. He would also be able to encourage and support the experienced man and while he was learning he would be part of a team. He could see the strengths that he needed and be encouraged to strengthen his own pastoral abilities.

From the earliest date, the church had been warned that special preparation was necessary for an effective ministry to Indians:

> It takes even the man of business a year or two after his arrival to be conducted and instructed, step by step, before he is fit to be a common Indian trader; how much more, then, the missionary, the spiritual guide?[27]

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[26] Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progresss and Present State (London: Smith Elder, 1856), p. 316.

[27] Ibid.

John MacLean explained why many of the trappers like Flett and Mackay had success as missionaries: "Trading with the Indians gave him an insight into Indian character and supplied the means for acquiring a slight knowledge of the Indian language by which he could engage in conversation."[28] While these men were missionaries, the church recognized that the evangelistic efforts had been, ". . . prosecuted more satisfactorily than ever before, for the missionaries [had] a better knowledge of the Indians and their languages."[29] Still the church did not encourage such training.

When Nisbet went to Prince Albert, he expected his church to send another missionary to work with him. When a missionary finally was sent, he questioned if too little was done too late:

> It is well that the church has at last instructed its committee to send a second missionary to this place, a thing that ought to have been done five years ago; it would have been economy, so far as the special work of the mission is concerned.[30]

Three years later, when Rev. H. McKellar came to take charge of the mission he warned:

> It is most desirable that the Indian mission should not be allowed to drop by our church, because I believe

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[28] John MacLean, The Hero of the Saskatchewan (Barrie, Ontario: Barrie Examiner Printing and Publishing House, 1891), pp. 5-6.

[29] Canada Presbyterian Church, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings of the Canada Presbyterian Church, Toronto, June 20-25, 1871 (Montreal: J. Lovell, 1871), p. 32.

[30] James Nisbet, Letter in Home and Foreign Mission Record, May 1872, p. 136.

> that there has been no period in the history of the Cree Indians of the Saskatchewan valley more suitable and encouraging for the prosecution of missionary work among them than at present.[31]

The lack of support and preparation which he received caused him to question the church's intentions regarding Indian missions.

The lack of supervision given to church workers often led to resignations, "We are sorry to report that our native worker at Kildonan Cannery and Douglas Cove felt impelled to resign owing to the lack of proper supervision."[32] The church had seen the need for supervision. In 1881 it appointed James Robertson as superintendent of missions. He had served in Winnipeg since 1869 and had become familiar with the problems and needs of the West.

Although he did much to recruit men for the field and to encourage the Christian faith in the West, Indian missions were only a part of his work. He also had many hindrances that made it difficult to make Indian missions a success. The first was the physical difficulty of travel. Distances and lack of transportation made it impossible to get to the remote reservations. Teaching and pastoral duties allowed only limited time to be spent giving supervision or encouraging support and missions. The Indian

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[31] Rev. Hugh McKellary, Letter in Presbyterian Record, Jan., 1875, p. 92.

[32] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 19-24, 1917, (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1917), p. 38.

missions also needed financial support and that was hard to come by.

Theological Change

A theological development in the church at this time made Robertson's job more difficult because it challenged the need for missions. If there was no eternal punishment, then there would be no need to save people and no need for evangelism. Presbyterian ministers had begun to accept that doctrine and to attack the Westminster standards.

George Paxton Young, professor of philosophy at Knox College until his resignation in 1871, took a position that caused him to leave the Presbyterian church. He could not accept the theology of eternal retribution, yet he taught at the church's seminary and influenced many young ministers.[33] That may be one reason why Robertson joined, ". . . several Canadian candidates for the ministry at Princeton, because of the low standards at Knox College."[34]

D. J. MacDonnell, who preached at Young's funeral, also encouraged the liberal trend toward "universal salvation." He was taken to trial in the church courts over his views in 1876. Although Principal MacVicar of Presbyterian College condemned MacDonnell's position, leaders of Knox

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[33] Ibid., Enduring Witness, p. 174.

[34] Ibid., p. 159. [35] Ibid., p. 174.

College, Queens, and Manitoba College all defended him. The case ended in 1877 when MacDonnell signed a compromise statement, but his position had not changed. In 1889 he introduced a resolution calling for a change in the confessional standards to "some briefer statement of truths which are considered vital."[35] The motion lost 8 to 4 but most members refused to vote. The church was in a poor theological position. Doubt and lack of confidence seemed to determine the theological position of the day. For missions it meant a lack of support.

For theology it meant there was a void. The void was filled with John Edgar McFadyen. He was a higher critic who had been fired from the seminary at Aberdeen, Scotland. Higher criticism had gained acceptance among Presbyterian clergy when John Campbell of Presbyterian College escaped prosecution, ". . . in favor of a typically Canadian compromise statement about Scriptural inspiration."[36] McFadyen arrived at Knox College in 1898 and, after 13 years and nine books, higher criticism was widely accepted by Canadian Presbyterians.

The harm that higher critics could do to evangelism was shown in a statement by A. C. McGiffert. He argued, "It is hardly possible in the light of Galatians 1:19,22 to suppose that Paul did such evangelistic work in Jerusalem as

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[36] Ibid.

he is represented as doing in Acts 9:28 sq."[37] Liberal thinking had gained such influence in Canada that McGiffert was honored at Presbyterian College in Halifax (Pine Hill) in 1906 and received his Doctor of Laws degree from Queens University in 1919. When the critics discredit biblical evangelism and are still given teaching positions and honors by Canadian Presbyterian institutions of higher learning, mission work will suffer.

Another theological challenge for missions came in the twentieth century. "Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr were widely read; neo-orthodox emphases on divine transcendence, human sinfulness, the atoning work of Christ and the centrality of the Bible received increased attention in the life of the churches."[38] Neo-orthodox theology countered the familiar concepts of liberals and conservatives. It answered many of the issues of life and death which had

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[37] Athur Cushman McGiffert, A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 265. Also McGiffert, Martin Luther (New York: The Century Co., 1911), p. 21. McGiffert questions Luther's conversion experience.

[38] Robert T. Handy, A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 409.

risen with the depression and the world wars.[39] When Barth's disciple, Walter Williamson Bryden used his position at Knox College to educate ministerial students in Barthian thought, it quickly became an important force in deciding the direction of missions. By the time Bryden had become principal of Knox College, neo-orthodoxy had become the theology of the college and the Presbyterian Church in Canada.[40]

1925: A Tragic Year for Indian Missions

In 1925 Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists, merged to form the United Church of Canada. Some Presbyterians refused to enter the union and remained in the continuing Presbyterian church called the Presbyterian Church in Canada. When this church reaffirmed adherence to the Westminster standards, W. W. Bryden feared a return to rational orthodoxy. Through his teaching position, he was able, instead, to turn the church to pietism. He said, "I thought that the Presbyterian church, through a new dependence upon God because of its difficulties and weakness,

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[39] Walter Williamson Bryden, "The Holy Spirit and the Church." Crisis Christology Quarterly (Dubuque: Dubuque Presbyterian Press, Fall 1944), 2, 16. "The Serious soldier and the anxious parent perhaps best recognize that one's own resources, qualities, and achievements provide but poor comfort and pitiable recompense in the final hazards and tagedies of this life."

[40] This is still the theological position at Knox College.

might return to a simpler, stronger and more evangelical preaching."[41]

This led to attacks on Presbyterian "orthodoxy," especially against difficult confessional statements such as election. The Westminster Confession of Faith is the standard which summarizes Reformed doctrine for Presbyterians. Yet, in 1948 the Articles of Faith Committee published a statement:

> . . . which is definitely not the doctrine held by the Westminster Confession of Faith. This doctrine, is not only not held by the Confession, it would seem rather to be contrary to the Confession of Faith. Its whole concept of election is anti-Reformed and rejects the historic position of Presbyterianism.[42]

Their statement was followed by a paper in which they stated, "thus we reject the doctrine of limited atonement."[43] These documents challenged the authority of the confession. By rejecting its creed the Presbyterian church moved away from the orthodox Reformed position.

Many evangelical churches have rejected the doctrine of limited atonement and have had an effective mission outreach. However, for the Presbyterian church the denial of that doctrine has caused a conflict in their system of

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[41] W. W. Bryden, Why I am a Presbyterian (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1945), p. 118. Also Allan L. Farris, "The Fathers of 1925," in Enkindled by the Word, pp. 78-81.

[42] W. Stanford Reid, "Dr. Reid's Reasons for Dissent From the Statement on Election and Predestination," Digest, p. 65.

[43] Articles of Faith Committee, Election (Toronto: 1970), p. 3.

theology which has had an effect on missions. The Presbyterian Church in Canada still used the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms that taught a sovereign God. When the doctrine of specific atonement was removed but belief in a sovereign God remained, many could not rationalize the fact that more were not turning to God.

Missions methods and personnel were often blamed as was the case with Nisbet and the Prince Albert mission. The task of evangelism was given to the minister who, it was assumed, was trained to be an evangelist. The place of the lay people was merely to invite people to church to hear the Gospel and support missions financially. The Presbyterian church had attempted to make its missionary work more effective by centralization. Hired staff and church boards became part of a hierarchical church structure. Finances and church concerns for Indian work were channelled through the church offices and neither ministers nor lay people felt part of that work.

Instead of feeling that some of the Indians were chosen by God and it was a Christian duty to evangelize them, Presbyterians were confused about what they could do or if anything that was done would be worthwhile.

The neo-orthodox position created problems for missions in three ways: First, it challenged the Bible's validity as a witness to the acts of God. F. W. Dillistone, who was a lecturer in systematic theology at

Knox College, wrote: "The glory of God in the 'signs' is seen only by the eye of faith. There is no 'sign from heaven.'"[44]

Secondly, neo-orthodoxy reduced the authority of scripture to the same level as authority of preaching. Because the ministerial office "has the same power as in the Old Testament,"[45] the preaching recorded in the Bible has no more authority than modern preaching. Authority became what individuals were willing to assign to the Bible. That limited concept of authority allowed for other witnesses to the revelation of God outside of the Bible.

Neo-orthodoxy harmed the mission to Indians because it took away certainty in an absolute authority. It allowed Indian Spiritualism as a valid means of witness from God. It led to a synthetic view on the part of pastors who could say, "Ecology, community, and spirituality are three areas where native beliefs have already provided a leaven to help us rethink our own beliefs."[46]

Thirdly neo-orthodoxy created a lack of confidence.

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[44] F. W. Dillistone, "The Note of Crisis in the Fourth Gospel." Crisis Christology Quarterly, Fall 1944, p. 36.

[45] David W. Hay, Systematic Theology Lecture, Knox College, March 31, 1975. Dr. Hay studied under Barth for his last semester at the University of Bonn. See also Charles Calwell Ryrie, Neo-orthodoxy (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), pp. 60-61.

[46] Doug Goodwin, "Solitudes No Longer," Presbyterian Record, May 1982, p. 17.

Presbyterians were uncertain about what they could do for Indians:

> During these years the churches were moving from social perfection to social pragmatism, from conflict over absolute principles to the acceptance of a mixed economy, from a concern for abstract justice to concern for practical welfare.[47]

Neo-orthodoxy encouraged a vague theology which had implications for the mission of the church. Even though the task of the church was that, "each and every member of the church is personally commissioned to be active in the church's work, spreading the Gospel among all men."[48] Each and every member could interpret this in his own way as to how he should support missions.

The church refused to take a stand against "fraternal societies" because of the "vagueness of the church's teachings."[49] That same vagueness would not allow Indian beliefs and customs to be questioned. No theological position was established to respond to Indian problems of alcoholism or broken families. The church was not prepared to meet the challenge of a resurgence of old Indian beliefs. The response of the church has been acceptance. Vague theology meant a lack of direction in

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[47] John W. Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era: The First Century of Confederation, History of the Church in Canada no. 3 (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972), p. 155.

[48] Articles of Faith Committee, Historical Digest, p. 72.

[49] Ibid., p. 16.

missions.

In 1925 union was a challenge to Presbyterian orthodoxy, but neo-orthodox theology was the means by which the Presbyterian Church in Canada changed its theological stance. On the other hand, although neo-orthodoxy took away from the power of missions, it could not have the sudden impact on the Indian missions that "union" had. In 1924 there were 128 self-sustaining, Presbyterian charges, 881 preaching points, and 188 ministers in Saskatchewan. In 1926 there were eight self-sustaining charges, forty-nine preaching points, and twenty-five ministers.[50] Most of the Presbyterian churches and its Indian missions joined the Union Church.

The effect of 1925 was to make survival the object of Presbyterians in Western Canada. This meant less time, money, and energy were available for Indian work. Because the western Presbyteries had the greatest interest in Indian missions, the smaller numbers meant a big drop in support. For reservations such as Pasqua, the changes were too much. In 1930 the church was closed. Other reservations like File Hills and Round Lake joined with the United Church of

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[50] Dunning, Century of Presbyterianism (Prince Albert: St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 1966), p. 30. The Synod of Alberta was reduced to 29 ministers. Rev. R. J. Burton, ed. Synod of Alberta "Growth" (n.p., synod of Alberta History Committee, 1968), p. 12.

Canada.[51]

The Presbyterians tried to retain their Indian work by publicizing their position on home missions: "Presbyterians have always been tolerant and believed in fair play and justice, and the rights of minorities."[52] On many of the reservations that reputation was well known. John Thunder, an Indian pastor, wrote:

> We are Presbyterians and what else may come there is only one road, the road where our Savior found us in. Please find enclosed here $10.00 - ten dollars - to be used in the expenses of the formation of the Presbyterian Church.[53]

He and his reservation wished to remain in the Presbyterian church. The $10.00 proved their commitment because the Indians had very little money to give. Even though the Presbyterians no longer had to look after the physical and spiritual needs of thirty bands of Indians, besides all the children in their schools, they had trouble supporting their missions. The reduced size of the Presbyterian Church in Canada meant there were fewer people to give support to Indian missions.

Another blow to Indian missions came from the

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[51] Annual Report of the W. M. S. Western Division, United Church of Canada, 1925, p. 82.

[52] Presbyterian Church Association, "Why You Should Remain Presbyterian." Toronto: Broadsides, 1924-25.

[53] John Thunder, "A Message from an Indian Reservation," Letter to Mr. MacNamara, April 3, 1925. United Church Materials: Church Histories, St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

reduction in the number of Indians who called themselves Presbyterians. There were fewer missionaries needed and fewer to encourage each other. The Indian work became less visible to the eyes of the church. The Indians used to have fellowship with other Presbyterian tribes. When some of these became members of the United Church, the Indian Presbyterian became a smaller minority in a white church. It was discouraging to the Indian Christian who had less opportunity for fellowship.[54]

The shift away from orthodoxy was gradual; under the influence of liberal and neo-orthodox theologians evangelism gave way to acceptance. Spiritual programs gave way to social programs. What did not change was the imperialistic attitude of the church which was demonstrated by the desire for union and centralization, a willingness to compromise, and thinking that equated large numbers with success. Without the confessional standards to help develop goals, the mission emphasis turned to making good citizens out of the Indians.

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[54] Appendix B, C, D., pp. 165-167.

CHAPTER V

"CIVILIZING" THE INDIANS

Changing the Indian

For the Presbyterian church civilization meant "white culture." Indian culture is quite different. In order to civilize the Indians, Presbyterians felt they had to change the Indian culture to resemble their own. Their policy states one way in which they could achieve that goal:

> The Presbyterian Church pledges itself, as far as it may be in its power, to cooperate with the authorities in promoting the social improvement and the temporal well being of the Indian, whilst, in common with other churches, seeking to bring them under the holy influence of the Christian religion.[1]

The emphasis in this policy was influence, not conversion. When "holy influence" replaces conversion, socializing has replaced evangelism.

Socializing or civilizing the Indians had long been an aim of Presbyterians in Canada. Even Alexander Ross felt that this was the best way to convert the Indians. "Though undoubtedly Christianity be the end, yet civilization is

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[1] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Hamilton, June 23-28, 1886, (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1886), p. 45.

nevertheless the best means."[2] He even went so far as to to suggest, "the postponement of spiritual instruction till the heathen are in a great measure independent of temporal aid, can ever enable merely human eyes to form a correct view of the religious state of aboriginal converts."[3]

The church gave the "civilizing" process even more importance when the 1890 General Assembly reported: " The only hope of the Indian race is that it should be finally merged in the life of the country."[4] Some disgust was shown, in this century, for the poor attempt at civilizing the Indian in the nineteenth century:

> Until recent years (some 50 years ago), the Presbyterian Church did little to help the Indian to adapt himself to the new order of things brought about by the coming of the white people to the west.[5]

The goal of Presbyterians was to change the Indian so that he would accept the standards of white society and would be acceptable to people from that society.

The responsibility for change was always with the Indian. "They can, if properly guided, make a worthwhile contribution. But, if they are neglected they may become

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[2] Alexander Ross, Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State (London: Smith Elder, 1856), p. 323.

[3] Ross, Red River Settlement, p. 322.

[4] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to the Acts and Proceedings, Ottawa, June 21-26, 1890 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1890), p. 31.

[5] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Our Non-English Speaking Canadians (Montreal: n.p. 1917), p. 3.

a serious problem in the days ahead."[6] This ethnocentric attitude, although not representing "Calvinism at its best,"[7] does come from its theology. "In Calvin's conception man is saved to character rather than by character."[8] Calvin emphasized the law as a guide to Christian life: "James will not allow any to be regarded as justified who are destitute of good works."[9] Mission boards presupposed that "the individual achievements were inseparable from the out ward signs of Christian sanctification."[10] They felt that Indian tribes needed to be civilized as well as Christianized.

Michael Coleman has made a study of this phenomenon of American Presbyterian missions and discovered that their mission policy was, "That the preaching of the Gospel is the most powerful agency to give a barbarous or savage people

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[6] The United Church of Canada, Committee on Missionary Education, No Vanishing Race" The Canadian Indian Today (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1955), p. 46.

[7] Kristin Herzog, "The La Flesche Family: Native American Spirituality, Calvinism, and Presbyterian Missions," American Presbyterians, 65 (Fall 1987): 223.

[8] Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scriner's Sons, 1970), p. 351.

[9] John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (MacDill AFB, Florida: MacDonald Publishing, n.d.), III, XVII, 12.

[10] Herzog, "La Flesche Family," p. 223. This is not what Calvin sees as good works, Institutes III, 18, 1.

the blessings of civilization."[11] Such a statement makes civilizing the goal and reduces evangelism to a means to achieve that end.

The attempt to civilize non-Christian people was a temptation on the part of missionaries. The imperialistic-ethno-centric missions policy was a result of that temptation. That policy became common in missions to Indians because their religion was tied closely to their way of living, which was quite different from white culture. The influx of white settlers made the cultural differences more apparent. As settlements grew, missions increasingly became agents of change. The church saw civilizing the Indians as part of its Christian duty.

Change in western Canada not only had an effect on lives of Indians but it was also the cause of the Riel Rebellion. In 1884 Louis Riel organized the Metis in rebellion and hoped that the Indian tribes would join them. The Metis were half-Indian and had a lifestyle that was similar to the Indian. Common grievances such as land claims and destruction of hunting grounds should have made the two groups allies but many Indians did not join in the rebellion.

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[11] Michael Coleman, "Not Race, But Grace: Presbyterian Missionaries and American Indians, 1837-1893," Journal of American History, 67, (June 1980): 43. Coleman quotes the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Board of Missions, Annual Report (1846), 11-12. Although written about American policy a similar attitude existed in Canada.

The main reason for staying out of the conflict was the influence of the missionaries. Chief Star Blanket said, "My religion teaches me to pray for deliverance from my puny conspiracy and rebellion."[12] The Chief's brother indicated to a government official that he had the courage and enough reasons to go to war:

> It was not because they had no cause for complaint of this treatment of them, nor yet because they were afraid of the consequences of being rebels, that they remained neutral, but naming his missionary, said, "That was the man that kept us quiet, and yet it was not he but the religion that he taught us."[13]

This was not an easy decision. Pressure was put on all the tribes to join the rebellion and to make a choice for or against:

> Last spring an opportunity came. We were approached with guns and asked to take up our guns against the white men. We were dared to do so, but I said in my heart I want to keep his law, as I have embraced with law of God he worships. I shall not go with you nor shall any of my people.[14]

The fact that more Indians did not join in the rebellion witnessed to the influence of the Presbyterian missions.

John Mackay's influence was such that during the rebellion his band not only was loyal, "Although they were

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[12] E. Palmer Patterson, The Changing People: A History of the Canadian Indians (London: Collier MacMillan, 1971), p. 43.

[13] Ibid.

[14] John MacLean, Hero of the Saskatchewan (Barrie, Ontario: Barrie Examiner Printing and Publishing House, 1981), p. 27.

only a few miles from Riel's headquarters, but accompanied their minister to Prince Albert and put their services as scouts."[15] Unfortunately the church was more interested in the fact that the Indians were civilized enough to remain at peace than the fact that some of them had become Christians. The 1885 Assembly made a special point to recognize that it was the influence of Protestant Christianity that kept the Indians from war. The church hoped, "that this unhappy rebellion may prove a strong incentive to all our churches to renewed and more vigorous evangelizing efforts among the Indian population of the Dominion."[16] This desire to evangelize the Indians to keep them at peace was an ethnocentric rather than a spiritual motive. The purpose of evangelism should have been to save the lost Indian, not to save the white culture.

Missionaries had some success in influencing the Indians to modify their lifestyle. But more influence could be exerted if their work began with the children. To accomplish that goal the church became involved in an educational program.

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[15] William Greg, Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Toronto: G. Blacke & Robinson, 1892), p. 215.

[16] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 22-27, 1885 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1885), p. 55.

Education of the Indians

Education has been an evangelistic tool since the Middle Ages.[17] It has been so effective that Danker wrote, "It has been noted that educational evangelism reaps a bountiful harvest in converts."[18] The Presbyterian church accepted the philosophy that it was important to educate the Indian. In fact, it was a necessity:

> They live in little communities surrounded by white men, and no scheme that can be devised can keep them from learning the white man's language and his ways. The question is, under what auspices shall they learn? It is of highest importance that in the days of their tutelage they should be preserved as much as possible from the operation of harmful influences which in later days they may become wise enough to understand and strong enough to resist.[19]

Methodist missionaries agreed: "As men of our race have taught them to eat of the bitter fruit of knowledge, of good and evil, be it ours to lead them to the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations."[20] The church school could teach Indians the best things from white society.

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[17] J. Moorman, The Grey Friars in Cambridge (Cambridge: University Press, 1952), p. 107. Moorman describes educational evangelism: Schoolboys, "are kept with them against their will until they make profession."

[18] Wiliam J. Danker, Two Worlds or None: Rediscovering Missions (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), p. 145.

[19] Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, 1890, p. 23.

[20] Thompson Ferrier, Indian Education in North West (Toronto: Department of Missionary Literature of the Methodist Church in Canada, n.d.), p. 39.

Nisbet believed that education was necessary for the Indian's well being. He felt a burden of not being able to give his students enough instruction:

> I have been relieved from the task of teaching for the present by a young English gentleman, who came to spend the winter in the neighborhood, and who volunteered to perform that duty till spring, when he returns to Manitoba. With him, the Children are making good progress, as he is able to devote the whole day to them, whereas I was able to give only one part of each day.[21]

Another reason why Presbyterians became involved in education came from the Indians themselves. Many of them wished to learn to read and write:

> A number of adult Indians, who desired to know more of the Bible, but could not read the Cree version . . . attended a night school taught by Mr. McVicar, and they are not only able to read and write their own language but to master the contents of the word of God.[22]

A third reason for the emphasis on education was that schools were effective in helping Indian children to adapt to a white culture. This reason gained importance because of a relationship the church maintained with the federal government. Although the British North America Act granted provinces the jurisdiction over education, education of native Canadians was the responsibility of the federal government. When compulsory education was included in the Indian Act of 1896, the federal government was forced to

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[21] James Nisbet, letter in Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Toronto, June 25-30, 1876 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1876), p. 135.

[22] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 24-29, 1892 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1892), p. 26.

become involved in education.

The federal government encouraged the church to become involved in Indian education. Travel was difficult and facilities on the reservation were poor, but the church was there and the missionaries were interested in educating the Indians. By working together the goals of both groups could be satisfied. The problem was that the government's purpose was not to evangelize the Indians but to educate them to be productive citizens. Because this philosophy was already present in the policy of civilizing the Indians, Presbyterian schools were able to accept socializing the Indians as a chief goal:

> Whereas it is most important that the work of civilizing and Christianizing the Indian population be more vigorously and adequately prosecuted than at present, whereas the Indians are the wards of the dominion government, that government is under obligation to initiate, maintain, and encourage all means necessary to secure this end, whereas it is most desirable that all should cooperate . . . the Synod's Foreign Missions Committee be requested to make representation to the federal government and approach . . . to first have the federal government grant more adequate aid and on some definite and equitable principle for the erection of suitable buildings and the maintenance of Indian pupils; secondly, request the government to use its influence to keep the Indians on their reserves and ask officials to assist in securing the attendance of Indian children at the schools that may be opened.[23]

Besides the concerns of finances and school attendance this report mentioned denominational arrangements.

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[23] Record of the Minutes of Regina Presbytery, Regina, Saskatchewan, Sept. 13, 1888, p. 111. These records are in United Church Material: Church Histories, St. Andrews College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

These three concerns indicated the direction of Indian education and the way that Indian children were to be "civilized and Christianized."

The church set up day schools, boarding schools, and industrial schools in cooperation with the government. The boarding schools were set up in central locations so that the facilities could service a number of children. Many reservations were too small to maintain a school. "The School at the Reserve has been kept open for a portion of the year, but owing to the very small attendance, it seems probable that it will be found necessary to close it."[24] As a result, such schools as Roseau school at Fort Pelly had to close. In 1884 Birtle school was built as a boarding school to take children from a number of reservations. When the church found how effective it was, other day schools were closed and the children were sent to boarding school, "Owing to the establishment of the Birtle School we have closed the day school on Bird-tail Reserve."[25] Not only the church found boarding schools efficient. "The superiority of boarding schools today in educational and industrial features is seen in the fact that the government has

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[24] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Toronto, June 20-25, 1889 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1889), p. 83.

[25] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, London, June 20-25, 1895 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1895), p. 18.

declined to establish any more day schools."[26]

The major advantage of the boarding school was that it took the child away from the negative influences of home:

> As has already been shown by the good results of the Rev. Hugh McKay's labors at Round Lake, the true solution of the Indian problem is to be found in such boarding schools as these. And both the church and the government will show their wisdom in encouraging them as far as possible, in that, they are removed from the degradation and barbarism of their pagan homes, and brought for a lengthened period, without interruption, under the purifying and elevating influence of divine truth in a Christian home. Not much can be done with the old: Our great hope is in the young and when they have been trained in such as these our work among them as a foreign mission committee will soon cease.[27]

By taking the children out of the "uncivilized" environment the church hoped to be able to make great changes.

Under these conditions many children became Christians and were able to take their faith back to their reserves:

> We are especially delighted to know that the Home Missions Board has made it possible for Rolling River Reserve to have a permanent place of worship, realizing what it means to those graduated from our schools to go home and find a church.[28]

Those young people did not always maintain a Christian life once they left school, but the fact that the school could bring them to a point where they could make a profession of

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Halifax: June 19-24, 1888 (Toronto:Thorn Press, 1888), p. 15.

[28] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Winnipeg, June 25-30, 1922 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1922), p. 45.

faith meant it was having some success.

Along with the successes, boarding schools had problems. It was always difficult to find and maintain a good staff. "Frequent changes in staff at the school during the past year have hindered our pupils from making the steady progress we would have liked."[29] The Indian people did not like the idea of a boarding school. They felt that taking their children away from them was cruel and tyrannical.[30] They did not like the fact that their children were losing their culture. Children were made to speak English. Administrators felt that if children from different tribes spoke their own tongue it would cause dissention, thus they were whipped or slapped when they did not speak English.[31] Also the children were forced to learn and speak English so that they would be able to get along in the English culture.

The policy was effective but when children were removed from their parents it raised a theological question. The parent-child relationship was important to the Presbyterian covenant theology. How could the covenant relationship of the Father and the Son be taught to children who were forcibly taken away from their parents? Boarding

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[29] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, St. John, New Brunswick, June 19-24, 1894 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1894), p. 23.

[30] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Toronto, June 21-26, 1902 (Toronto: Thorn Press,1902), p. 150. Also see Charles E. Hendry, Beyond Traplines (Toronto: Miracle Press, 1969), p. 25.

schools were not able to meet the needs of the church or its Indian parishioners.

There was a conflict between Indian parents who wanted their children closer to home and the missionaries who were convinced that education was going to be need for the Indian's social, economic and spiritual welfare. The missionaries were put in "a bad light" by fighting with the parents. The result was that the church recommended, in 1902, that Indian children should be sent to public schools.[32]

Denominational competition caused some stress, which was, "Not only hurtful to the schools, but demoralizing to the parents as well."[33] Many of the parents took advantage of such competition for mercenary ends. They would play one church against another in hopes of getting more by sending their child to the church's boarding school.

Finances were always a problem. The government gave the church grants and subsidies for each Indian child in

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[31] Hendry, Beyond Traplines, p. 23. Also interview with Gordon Blackbird (former student) August 23, 1982.

[32] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, London, June 19-24, 1906 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1906), p. 150.

[33] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, St. John, June 24-29, 1904 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1904, p. 110. Also interview with Steven Howe (Coordinator for Indian Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Canada), August 17, 1982.

school. Gradually expenses increased and the government assumed more control until finally the government took over the boarding schools. Centralization, increased white population, and bussing provided a viable alternative to the boarding school education. At the boarding school, farm and school industry received as much emphasis as schoolwork because it was felt that civilized people should know how to be good workers.

Although some felt this was a good education, others felt it was not. A couple at Keeseekoowenin Reserve drove their grandson to a white school by wagon each day so that he would receive the best possible education.[34] When the government realized all the problems of boarding schools, they closed down the schools. They were willing to build day schools but would not continue to run boarding schools.

The same philosophy that taught that children should be separated from their parents taught that the Indian Christian should be separated from the tribe. In this way the tribe's powerful cultural influence would have little control over the Indian Christian. To accomplish this isolation, Indian converts were settled in Christian villages.

Sev Dumoulin, a Roman Catholic priest, wrote:

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[34] Interview with Gordon Blackbird, August 1982.

> Les sauvages sont disposes a etre insturits des qu'on leur en donnera le moyen; le plus grand moyen, apres l'exclusion du rum, c'est de les reunir en vilages.[35]

The effect of those villages was described: "We now like the word of God, and we left off getting drunk, left off adultery, cast away our wives--married one, cast away our rattles, drums, idols, and our bad heathen ways."[36]

The industrial schools had a shorter history. These schools were started with the idea that they would train Indians to be able to work in industry as mechanics or technicians. By 1905 it was, "becoming more and more generally believed that the industrial school system is a mistaken policy, and that the boarding schools could be made to secure all the educational advantages." A 1907 Protestant conference made seven recommendations that encouraged government support and showed a move toward training Indian boys in agriculture[37] so that in 1910:

> The Indian Department . . . have abandoned the idea of fitting the Indian boys for becoming mechanics, an idea which found expression in the Industrial schools; and

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[35] Grace Lee Nute, Documents Relating to North West Missions 1815-1827 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1942), Jan. 1819, p. 173.

[36] Rev. T. C. B. Boon, "St. Peter's Dynevor: The Original Indian Settlement of Western Canada," Papers: Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba (Winnipeg, 1954), Series III, No. 7.

[37] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 20-25, 1907 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1907), p. 163.

> have resolved to concentrate their efforts in preparing them for working on the farm.[38]

Industrial schools were closed.

The educational policy once more turned to rely upon day schools: "Further it looks as if the Day School which was regarded as a failure among the Indians was about to occupy an important place in their education."[39] The church began to give the government more control of education on the reservations. In 1914 it was agreed that the government would maintain day schools, and the Women's Foreign Missionary Society become responsible for the maintenance of the boarding schools.[40] Yet they asked the government to supply the equipment. A few years later the church asked the government to appoint inspectors, "with suitable educational training and experience," or to use public school inspectors.[41] The federal government was not serious enough about its responsibility to make sure that a quality education was offered. The church was no more responsible. It gave its responsibility to the government.

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[38] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Halifax, June 24-29, 1910 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1910), p. 138.

[39] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Ottawa, June 25-30, 1911 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1911), p. 121.

[40] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Woodstock, June 22-27, 1914 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1914), p. 5.

[41] Minutes of the Synod of Saskatchewan, Regina, 1921, p. 22.

The Synod of Saskatchewan made the following recommendations to the government:

> 1. . . . securing attendance of children at boarding and day schools, but especially in the case of day schools.
> 2. . . . request that steps be taken by the department of Indian Affairs to provide means of conveyance for children on reserves where there are day schools and long distances to come to school.[42]

The way was prepared to replace the boarding schools and return to day schools.

Day schools were actually the first schools that the Presbyterians set up to educate the Indians. Nisbet had attempted to teach and "for a short time [I] had six Indian youths learning the syllabic characters."[43] In 1879 Lucy Baker came west to teach at the Prince Albert Mission school. As Prince Albert grew and the Cree Indians moved to Mistiwasis reservation, Miss Baker turned her attention to the Sioux, who had settled near the city. She used her work with the children to gain the confidence of their parents and to be able to teach the Gospel to all of them.[44] The day schools often had trouble maintaining the twenty-

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[42] Ibid., p. 30. Also 1923 Minutes, p. 19. "After a certain stage has been reached the day school will take the place of the boarding."

[43] James Nisbet, letter in the Home and Foreign Record, May 1868, p. 199.

[44] Priscilla Lee Reid, "Lucy Baker," in Called to Witness, ed. W. Stanford Reid (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1975) pp. 80, 81.

five students necessary for a government grant[45] and were poorly supported. It was only because of the missionaries and teachers like Miss Baker or Mr. Cunningham, who were very dedicated, that day schools were able to continue. Boarding schools had better finances because they were able to control attendance and get their grants. They also had ability to acculturate the children; therefore, they found more support from the church.

The federal government found day schools more economical. When the provinces had established a good educational system, Indian children were integrated into that program. Also reservations were becoming more interested in education and in maintaining their culture. Many reservations requested that schools be built on their land and be under their control. The government complied, but the Presbyterian church no longer had any involvement in Indian education apart from boarding houses where Indian children could stay while attending school. If the purpose of Indian education was evangelical and not cultural, then the direct Presbyterian involvement in education should have continued as long as there was a need. Because the evangelical goal was confused with the desire to "civilize," when government support disappeared and government philosophy

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[45] The governement required an average attendance of twenty-five before they would give a grant. This was difficult to maintain because of the nomadic, hunting lifestyle which kept families away for certain times of the year.

changed, Presbyterians stopped administrating schools for Indian children.

The desire to make good citizens out of the Indians expressed itself in missions policy and education. The church felt it was doing what was going to be most helpful for the Indians. It hoped the goals of evangelism could be achieved by civilizing the Indians. Even though the Presbyterian church had good intentions, its policy and educational practice put it at odds with the traditional Indian way of life. This conflict caused some problems for Indian missions.

CHAPTER VI

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS AND MISSIONS

Opposition to Presbyterian Missions

Difficulties were caused by inter-church competition. However, many of the problems came because of inter-church cooperation and its modern outgrowth--the ecumenical movement. Both the competition and cooperation had an effect on Indian missions.

The ecumenical movement is not a new concept. Lord Selkirk saw good ecumenical relations as necessary in settling the West. Even though Selkirk was tolerant, the early missionaries found that Roman Catholic priests were their enemies. A Methodist minister writes:

> The man of sin is powerfully represented in this country. There are five priests to one Protestant missionary . . . by them the Sabbath is desecrated, polygamy tolerated, and the Bible ignored. Their churches are the toy shops where poor heathen get their play things, such as idols, beads, and charms.[1]

Lord Selkirk had no desire to convert the Roman Catholics. In fact, he made a request for a priest "to

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[1] James Earnest Nix, Mission Among the Buffalo (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1960), p. 12.

bring the Metis back to religion."[2] These Metis were usually half French and half Indian and, therefore, he felt they were under the spiritual jurisdiction of the French Roman Catholic priests. Although he wanted good ecumenical relations, he was aware that there could be difficulties with the Roman Catholics. He warned against "the unfortunate results of a different course . . . when there are many priests animated more by a partisan spirit than by religion."[3]

The Roman Catholics were no less suspicious of Presbyterian zeal. The Bishop of Quebec wrote to his priests:

> Although Mr. Halkett, Lord Selkirk's brother-in-law, assured me that this man [new Presbyterian missionary] had orders to confine himself to the Protestants . . . I believe that you will do well to be on guard against the fanatical zeal with which this kind of person is sometimes seized.[4]

Ths. Destroimaisons, a Roman Catholic priest, was "on guard." He reports:

> The Hudson's Bay Company's fort is to be left vacant; it is said that the Protestant minister is to have it. If such a thing does occur, it is greatly to be feared that it will retard the progress of Christianity somewhat. We shall do everything in our power, however, to guard against this evil.[5]

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[2] Grace Lee Nute, Documents Relating to North West Missions 1815-1827 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1942), p. 18.

[3] Ibid., pp. 260-261.

[4] Ibid., pp. 293-295.

[5] Ibid., p. 329.

The Protestant missionaries learned that the priests did not act ethically to gain their converts; specifically: "when a child is born in a Protestant family, a female agent enters the tent, fondles the infant, and then, professing to show it to their friends, carries it to the priest, who baptizes the babe."[6] When the parents were away, "Without saying anything to anyone, they baptized the little children, and it was only afterward that we heard from the bigger children what the priest had done."[7] Such actions, as well as a difference in theology, turned Presbyterian missionaries against Roman Catholic priests.

The priests were hostile toward Protestant clergy:

> The priest paid a visit to the trader and made enquiries concerning us; the trader told him what our business was, upon hearing this, the priest anathematized us, and threatened him with a similar fate if he dared to assist us in any way.[8]

Their opposition was deliberate and well organized. They built schools and churches to rival the Presbyterians. The federal government had control of buildings that were to be erected on the reserve. The commissioner tried to remain impartial between the churches and would grant building permits if the tribe requested it. At Hurricane Hills

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[6] Nix, Mission, p. 12.

[7] John Hines, The Red Indians of the Plains: Thirty Years Missionary Experience in the Saskatchewan (Toronto: McCleland, Goodchild & Stewart, 1916), p. 80.

[8] Ibid., p. 57.

reservation the Roman church again practiced deceit by saying the Indians had requested that they build a church. When the Indians heard this, "the chief and head man sent a protest to the commissioner . . ."[9]

More conflict with the Roman Catholics came in the area of education. Because the government gave grants according to the number of Indian students in school, and because education was an effective means of converting children,[10] the Catholics built a rival educational system. They not only competed for students, but built schools in areas that would rival the Presbyterian schools. An 1887 report tells that the Presbyterian school at Stony Plains was flourishing

> until two or three months ago when a rival school was opened on the reserve by the Roman Catholics of St. Albert Mission. The Indians had, through their council, formally and unanimously asked for the opening of our school and they made no request, they expressed no wish, for the rival school.[11]

The Prince Albert mission experienced the same type of conflict. Miss Baker wrote of her concern:

> A convent was opened in the autumn by five nuns. As there are no Catholic children here, except a few French half-breeds, it may well be called a Jesuitical

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[9] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Hamilton, June 25-30, 1899 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1899), p. 139.

[10] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and proceedings, Winnipeg, June 24-29, 1887 (Toronto: Thorn press, 1887), p. 18. "Efforts of Roman Catholics to attract the children to the industrial school."

[11] Appendix, 1887, p. 10.

> proselytizing institution. . . . We are trying to hold our children. . . . Christians in the East cannot be too zealous in putting forward every exertion to mould the character of the young people in the Northwest.[12]

In light of the Catholic competition, action was called for "which might be effective in counter-acting the adverse influence which these encroachments were fitted to exert on the work of the church in that region."[13]

Approval was given to a proposal of Dr. Jardine to establish a school and General Assembly authorized him to proceed at once to raise funds for the purpose. This was all that Dr. Jardine hoped for, but it was not going to give him the support which Roman Catholic schools received and it was going to make raising support his first priority.

The Catholic church was willing to spend the money which the Presbyterians were always lacking, and they were able to provide sufficient teachers so that they were capable of offering a quality education. Roman Catholics were using education to strengthen their mission growth. Where Presbyterians were failing, Roman Catholics were taking over. Presbyterian workers argued:

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[12] Priscilla Lee Reid, "Lucy Baker," in Called to Witness, ed. W. Stanford Reid (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1975), p. 75. Miss Baker wrote this in 1883.

[13] Acts and Proceedings, 1887, p. 45.

> The surrender of the school and its possible occupation by our strongest rivals in Indian mission work would be a serious blow to both the efficiency and the prestige of our work in the West.[14]

However, it was hard to raise support for missions schools. Perhaps the Presbyterians did not realize that the efficiency and prestige of their work in the West depended on taking the financial responsibility for keeping their schools open.

Another problem arose because of government actions. A Saskatchewan Presbytery claimed that there was a dual government policy in dealing with the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches that favored the former. The Presbytery was upset because the Regina Indian School was closed without notification to the synod of Saskatchewan but the rival Catholic school was still in operation.[15]

Cooperation

Presbyterians did not have the same difficulties with other Protestants. They saw that the work was large and that more could be accomplished by cooperation. When there were conflicts, it was usually because churches were so slow at sending missionaries or so poor at maintaining

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[14] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, St. John, June 24-29, 1904 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1904), p. 42.

[15] Presbytery of Qu'appele, Records of the Presbytery of Qu'appele, Qu'appele, May 10, 1910, (Qu'appele, Saskatchewan: n.p., 1910), p. 293.

the work that they started.[16] An example of cooperation was the transfer of Stony Plains Reservation to the Methodists in 1894. The reason for the transfer was:

> The number of Protestant Indians on the reserve, never very large, was not likely to increase, and there was no hope of establishing a strong mission such as would require the undivided attention of a missionary.[17]

A new sense of ecumenism has developed in this century. It showed itself in 1925 with the formation of the United Church of Canada. Although many Presbyterians stayed out of union the ecumenical spirit continued to grow. The seminaries of the church are part of a consortium of schools which include Roman Catholics as well as other denominations. The Knox College Missionary Society is a member of and supporter of the Ecumenical Society. It is only logical that the cooperation continue once the missionary is out in his mission field.

This cooperation is demonstrated each year at ecumenical Indian conferences where missionaries from different denominations come together to share ideas. The positive aspect of these conferences is that missionaries may find

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[16] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Montreal, June 23-28, 1880 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1880), p. 82. "Other denominations have sought to find entrance among them, but they evince a strong desire to obtain the means of grace from those who first brought them the light."

[17] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, St, John, June 19-24, 1894 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1894), p. 21.

some support and gain some new insights into their work. The negative aspect is that these ideas and helps are often tied to the trappings of syncretism or liberation theology inherent in some of these other denominations. The result is that the missionary goes back to his work confused or struggling because he has so much to sort through before any ideas can be usable to him.

The Ecumenical Action Committee supports a position which demonstrates a conflict with Christian doctrine.

> Their prayers and ceremonies of past generations are coming back to us, and we feel their strength and see our people today beginning to give up the alcohol and drugs that keep us from communicating with the natural powers that are around and in us. Once again our religion is uniting us with our religion of the past.[18]

Such positions are not compatible with evangelism.

The ecumenical flavor of modern missions represents the imperialistic missions policy. The Presbyterians have been willing to cooperate in missions with those who have proven to be the historical enemies of Presbyterian missions. They have given over some of their work to other churches so that they can feel free from the financial burden of a difficult work and from the responsibility of ministering to a small group of Indians. The cooperation has been economical and has given them a good image among Christian churches but it has not been evangelical.

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[18] Darelle Dean Butler, "The Sacred Pipe an Aid to Prayer," B. C. Ecumenical News, Sept. 1981, p. 7.

The attitude of cultural superiority cannot be ignored in Presbyterian missions. In the eighteenth century the British administrators recognized that the French missionaries were encouraging their people to intermarry with the Indians. To counteract that influence the British Crown instructed its officers:

> You Shall give all possible encouragement to intermarriages between His Majesty's British Subjects & them for which purpose you are to declare in his Majesty's Name, that his Majesty will bestow on every white man being one of His Subjects, who Shall marry an Indian woman, Native & Inhabitant of Nova Scotia, a free gift of the Sum of 10 Sterl: & 50 Acres of Land, free of quit Rent for ye Space of 20 Years, and the like on any White Woman being his Majesty's Subject who Shall Marry an Indian Man, Native & Inhabitant of Nova Scotia, as aforesaid [sic].[19]

Even with that incentive, there were not many takers while the Spanish in Latin America and French in North America intermarried, British subjects did not have the same inclination. The reason may have been cultural. The British were not prepared to give up or change their British culture, not when suitable wives from the same British heritage were available.

The theological demonstration of their superior attitude is the insistence that people come to church, the church does not go to the people. The centrality of the church building has been a hindrance to Indian missions.

The western Canadian Indian culture was based on a

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[19] J. B. Brebner, "Notes and Documents," Canadian Historical Review, 1982, p. 34-36, Quoting Public Archives of Canada, Nova Scotia, E. 1, No. 6, p. 139, June 19, 1719.

nomadic way of life. The Indians were not farmers but hunters. As the buffalo moved or their game became scarce they would move their camp to a new location. When the Europeans immigrated and tried to start farms, they disrupted the hunting, trapping culture that existed in the West.[20] The problem that this caused for missions was that when the missionary had established himself and built a house and church, the Indian may have to move. This was the case with the Mistiwasis band. "After white settlers came to the neighborhood they moved away and are now settled upon a reserve north of Carlton, about 70 miles from Prince Albert."[21]

The settlers moving west chose to make their homes in places near the missions. These locations, on a well traveled route or river made them accessible and desirable. Unfortunately, the new homesteads did not help the missions. Because farming and industry are not compatible with hunting and trapping, the Indians moved away.

The ethnocentric feeling in the Presbyterian church was demonstrated in the development of white congregations alongside the Indian missions. As the Indians moved away from Prince Albert they left a void in the Christian

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[20] Alfred Campbell Garrioch, First Furrows: A History of the Early Settlement of the Red River Country (Winnipeg: Stovel Co., 1923), pp. 30-32.

[21] Appendix, 1880, p. 82.

community which was filled by whites. At the same time, many Indians were not made to feel welcome in the white churches.[22]

Some people were happy when treaties were signed and Indians began to live on reservations. They felt the Indians would be a captive audience for the preaching of the Gospel. Unfortunately, most of the reservations were not large enough or rich enough to support a mission. Thus, the missionary had to depend on support from the Presbyterian mission board which was always short of money.

The reservations did not stop the nomadic lifestyle of the Indians, nor did they give the missionary a stable population with which he could work. Cities offered attractions for the Indian young people. The prospect of easy money and freedom from the structure of the tribe encouraged many to move away. City life was not always as good as it seemed, however, and moves were not permanent. Indians moved often. This phenomena caused exaggerated populations in major cities, but it did not allow the traditional church to serve the migrant Indians. The Presbyterian church was not financially prepared to establish the type of work that could meet the needs of these people. There is no ministry that follows the Indian from the reservation to the city and back. Such a ministry needs ministers who will stay in a

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[22] Howard L. Harrod, Mission Among the Blackfeet (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), pp. 122-124.

mission point for a long period of time and have the ability to maintain contact with parishioners wherever they may be living.

Unfortunately, ministers do not remain on reservations very long.[23] Although all of the factors of isolation, support, and preparation help to decide whether a pastor will stay or leave, the Presbyterian church adds another factor, the call system. Once a new graduate has served for two years with the mission board he is free to take a call from a church to be its pastor. Because of a shortage of pastors in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, many churches are looking for pastors. They present calls to the pastor on the reservation. When frustrations, loneliness, and cultural difficulties of working on a reservation are compared to a comfortable church and a fine stipend, the temptation to leave is great.

The white culture had adopted different ways of worshipping God that were distinct to different denominations. The conflict between these denominations, and the traditions within the Presbyterian church itself, caused difficulties for the missionary and his mission. A greater problem to

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[23] Robert D. Dunning, Century of Presbyterianism in Saskatchewan 1866-1966 (Prince Albert: St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 1966), p. 18. He explained that the missionaries who followed Nisbet at Prince Albert "remained in the field only one or two years at the most." Also the last four missionaries to Keeseekoowenin served two years apiece, which was their appointment from the mission board. See Appendix E, p. 168.

missions was the Indian culture and its religion.

CHAPTER VII

CULTURE: A PROBLEM FOR INDIAN MISSIONS

Cultural Anthropology

Missionaries to the Indians have tried many different means of relating the Christian faith to Indian culture. Eugene A. Nida lists three common anthropological techniques that can be used.[1] First was the belief that, if missionaries could just understand the culture, they could change it. Second, there was the belief that by equating the Old Testament experience of the Jewish people with the indigenous religious traditions they could provide the essential contact and basis for the proclamation of the Gospel. Syncretism, a third view, has been followed by the Roman Catholic Church.[2] "They allowed for a carefully planned series of adjustments so the people could be led progressingly towards acceptance of their beliefs, with the least disruption of native cultural values."[3]

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[1] Eugene A. Nida, "The Role of Cultural Anthropology in Christian Missions" in Readings in Missions Anthropology, ed. William A. Smalley (New York, Practical Anthropology, 1967), pp. 307-309.

[2] Peter Duignan, "Early Jesuit Missionaries: A Suggestion for further Study," American Anthropologist, 6 No. 4 (August 1958), pp. 728-732.

[3] Ibid., p. 728.

When the Gospel met non-Christian religions, the question of anthropology became important. The liberal position is described as "one of cultural openness and positivism."[4] Bengt Sundkler claims:

> Traditional theological categories such as "national religion" and "general revelation" were reinterpreted and deprived of their eschatological elements in order to leave room for the findings of "comparative religion" or "the science of religion."[5]

This separation from eschatology was shown in the Presbyterian Church in Canada in an earlier chapter. When Karl Barth challenged the points of contact with non-Christian religions, he challenged the attempts of missionaries to subtract ideas and concepts from Indian religion to help build the church.[6] In Canadian missions that challenge did not have a great effect because early missionaries had already adapted many elements of Indian religions. What did affect Canadian missions was the existentialist view that love is the key to missions.

Love has been a major motivation of liberation theology. Its ethic is based on love. The problem was that this view allowed each decision to be unique. Therefore, as Christianity was brought from European to Indian culture,

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[4] Bengt Sundkler, The World of Missions (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), P. 51.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Karl Barth, Nein! Antwort an Emil Brunner (Munchen: C. Kaiser,1934).

the new culture demanded a new decision on what was right. The Indian culture was quite different than the white culture. The Indians' religion was an integral part of their culture. This relationship added validity to the ethnocentric philosophy of changing Indian culture in order to evangelize. Some aspects of their culture made Christianity seem reasonable and other aspects made it unacceptable. Because of the desire to remain "Indian", the relationship of religion to Indian culture has been a great obstacle that missionaries have had to overcome in order to reach the Indian people with the Gospel.

The Indians of Canada did not share a common religion. Distance and unique situations demanded different beliefs. "Having no written language and being scattered over so extensive a country it is hard to find out what is orthodox."[7] There were some common beliefs that did allow missionaries to teach Christian truths:

> Belief in one God was universal, though names and legends might vary from tribe to tribe. The Great Spirit might be called the Great Mystery, or the master of life. . . . Lesser deities were subordinate to him, symbolic only, and again differed among tribes. They were usually keyed to features of nature such as sun, water, and the four winds, or to good and evil. The

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[7] Presbyterian Church, Our Non-English Speaking Canadians, (Montreal: n.p., 1917), p. 5. Also see Diamod Jenness, The Indians of Canada (Toronto: National Museum of Canada, 1955), p. 171.

> sun, often mistaken by whites as an object of worship was his chief symbol, the smile of the Great Spirit.[8]

Because the Indians also believed in one God, this major concept of the Judeo-Christian faith was easily accepted. Early missionaries took the Indian name for the great spirit, Gichi-Manitoo, as the Indian name for the Christian deity.[9]

The nomadic lifestyle and tribal structure gave the Indian a background that made the Old Testament understandable. Some missionaries found the similarities between Indian and Jewish religions uncanny:

> It seems to me that there was a time when these people were in closer touch with the people of the East than they are at the present time, and had a more accurate knowledge of certain religious observances in the Old Testament than they had at the time of which I am writing.[10]

Sometimes Indian customs followed the Old Testament pattern more closely than the Europeans. "The cities of refuge established as asylums for alleged criminals by the Cherokees in the manner of the Israelites were called 'white

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[8] Robert MacDonald, The Owners of Eden, Canada II (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1974), p. 54. Lewis Spence, Legends of the North American Indians (New York: Multimedia, 1975, p. 126. "Dakota Indians worshipped a deity whom they addressed as Waukeon (Thunder-bird)."

[9] MacDonald, Owners of Eden, pp. 55-56.

[10] John Hines, The Red Indians of the Plains: Thirty Years Missionary Experience in the Saskatchewan (Toronto: McCleland, Goodchild & Stewart, 1916), pp. 102-103.

towns'."[11] Some people went so far as to claim that the claim that the Indian language was related to Hebrew.[12] A school of thought developed that made use of such similarities as a foundation on which to build the Christian message. The missionary made use of parallels between Old Testament and Indian religious beliefs or practices. He would point to these similarities as a way of relating the Christian faith.

The Indians were familiar with the concept of a spiritual world. They spent time attempting to communicate with the spirits and to gain their assistance. They believed that a spirit or soul resides in every body. One received the soul when born, and it was strengthened by such devotion as fasting. The Indian would fast in order to gain protection from the spirits of the world.[13] The devotion and prayer that are seen as signs of a mature Christian are common among Indians even before they become Christians.[14] "They believe that there are also evil spirits. They believe in a future life, and that in such future life

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[11] Daniel G. Brinton, Myths of the Americas: Symbolism and Mythology of the Indians of the Americas (New York: Steiner Books, 1976), p. 189.

[12] Ethan Smith, View of the Hebrews (New York: Amo Press, 1977. Reprint of 1823, Smith & Shute), pp. 84-87.

[13] Non-English Speaking Canadians, p. 7.

[14] Ibid., p. 9. "His Prayers are in Earnest."

they shall find an abode." [15] Christian beliefs are paralleled by legends of good and evil figures. The Sioux had a story similar to the Christ story, and other tribes used a cross as one of their heraldic symbols.[16]

The Indians still practiced a non-Christian religion because some of the similarities worked against the spread of the Gospel. These convinced the Indians that they did not need to change their faith: "Surely," they (the Indians) puzzled, "the God of which you tell us and the Great Spirit must be one and the same. How is it, then, you wish us to give up our beliefs?"[17] Spence, on the other hand, saw that Christians could be convinced of the legitimacy of Indian religion. He warned Christians not to confuse a sense of reverence with the fear and superstition that controls the Indian.[18]

The Roman Catholics, although not convinced of the legitimacy of Indian religion, were not afraid to adopt certain features in order to make Catholicism more appeal-

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[15] Ibid., p. 6. Also see Appendix F, p. 169.

[16] MacDonald, Owners of Eden, p. 56.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Spence, Legends, p. 140. "This was due principally to the stage of culture at which he stood, and in some cases still stands." Also see George J. Mountain, The Journal of the Bishop of Montreal (London: Seely, Barnside & Seely, 1845), p. 154. He adds that Indian religious practices are "tangible proofs of imposture, delusion and darkness."

ing. The Jesuit philosophy of missions included the belief that the church could adopt customs from pagan cultures. It was believed that these created similarities would make Christianity more acceptable. They believed they could change the church in order to convert the world:

> The failure of Christian missions today is not a failure to convert the world to the church; but a failure to convert the church to the world.[19]

It was claimed that "many Celtic legends were transcribed into vivid prose sagas by monks as they adapted Christianity to a Celtic tribal society."[20]

Pope Gregory I (A.D. 601) was convinced that accommodation was an important means of conversion:

> We must refrain from destroying the temples of the idols. It is necessary only to destroy the idols, and to sprinkle holy water in these same temples, to build ourselves altars and place holy relics therein. If the construction of these temples is solid, good, and useful, they will pass from the cult of demons to the service of the true God; because it will come to pass that the nation, seeing the continued existence of its old places of devotion, will be disposed, by a sort of habit, to go there to adore the true God. It is said that the men of this nation are accustomed to sacrificing oxen. It is necessary that this custom be converted into a Christian rite. On the day of the dedication of the temples thus changed into churches, and similarly for the festivals of the saints, whose relics will be placed there, you should allow them, as in the past, to build structures of foliage around these same churches. They shall bring to the churches animals and kill them, no longer as offerings to the devil, but for Christian banquets in name and honor of

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[19] H. Van Straelen, The Catholic Encounter with World Religion (New York: Newman Press, 1981), p. 22.

[20] J. O'Neill, "Celtic Europe," National Geographic, May 1977, p. 582.

> God, to whom, after satiating themselves, they will give thanks. Only thus, be preserving for men some of the worldly joys, will you lead them more easily to relish the joys of the spirit.[21]

Attraction to Christianity

One attraction to Christianity was the material gains that were available. Because the white man had wealth and material goods, the Indian felt that he could share in the wealth by accepting his religion. John Black saw that in 1870, "The Indian view of salvation is very often a willingness to accept the white man's religion provided the consideration offered is sufficient."[22] Missionaries were wary of how serious some of their converts were for they feared, "that the chief power prompting them is the hope of some worldly gain."[23] Even the sacraments could provide material benefits. Missionaries were approached by warriors so that they might be baptized, because they looked upon baptism as a powerful medicine that would help them to "conquer any enemy whatsoever."[24]

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[21] Nida, "Cultural Anthropology," pp. 308-309. Nida quotes from Pope Gregory I, Regula Pastoralis.

[22] George Bryce, John Black, the Apostle of the Red River; or How the Blue Banner was Unfurled on Manitoba Prairies (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1898), p. 99.

[23] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Brantford, June 25-30, 1893 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1893), p. 34.

[24] Jules B. Billard, ed., The World of the American Indian (Washington: National Geographic Society, 1974), p. 296.

Unfortunately, missionaries may have encouraged such thinking with their imperialistic missions policy. It was important for them to civilize the Indian. To force the Indian to live a moral life, conditions were formed which allowed the Indian to receive clothing from the mission if he made certain moral changes or lived up to a certain moral standard.[25] The Indians looked at the white man's religion as a way to gain wealth. Halkett claimed that the French Roman Catholics taught that conversion was for temporal rather than spiritual gain.[26] These early beliefs that the Indians had about Christianity were hard to change.

It must have been a sad day when some "Elders approached the Indian mission committee requesting to be paid for conducting prayer meetings."[27] This should have been a sign that it is the spiritul change of conversion and not the social change of civilization that should have been been stressed:

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[25] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, London, June 22-27, 1896 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1896), p. 23. four conditions were stated which had to be met to receive clothing.

[26] John Halkett, Historical Notes Respecting the Indians of North America (Millwood, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1976), pp. 71-73., pp. 225-227.

[27] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, London, June 19-24, 1906 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1906), p. 222.

> Following closely on the acceptance of the Spiritual blessings of the Gospel came the desire for temporal progress and development. Christianity must ever precede real and genuine civilization. To reverse this order of proceedings has always resulted in humiliating failure among the North American Indians.[28]

Even the Indian view of heaven was sensual. It was to be a place where, "the Indian's love of hunting would be fully satisfied."[29] Indians recognized that this was not the white man's conception but rationalized the difference by claiming that there would be separate heavens for white and Indian to match the different life that they were to live. That syncretistic view of religion allowed the Indian to adopt Christian ideas while maintaining their old beliefs.

Many Indians adopted Christianity for the wrong reasons. They were encouraged to do that because of the imperialistic missions policy. They could remain nominal Christians because of that policy and their ability to borrow and rationalize the Christian beliefs.

Hindrances to Christianity

It was fear that kept the Indian tied to his old beliefs. This fear was encouraged by the medicine men. They liked their position and preyed upon the superstitions

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[28] Egerton R. Young, Canoe and Dog Train Among the Cree and Saulteaux Indians (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1903), p. 184.

[29] John MacLean, The Hero of the Saskatchewan (Barrie, Ontario: Barrie Examiner Printing and Publishing House, 1981), p. 7.

of their people:

> The being who exercises the greatest influence over the minds of the Indians is the conjurer, or medicine man, who, uniting in himself the offices of oracle and physician, turns the superstitions and sufferings of his countrymen to his own profit.[30]

Sickness was not associated with natural causes. "These poor people consider all diseases to be occasioned by an evil spirit, sent into the afflicted person by some other conjurer, at the instigation of a secret enemy."[31]

The sick person would go to the medicine man for healing. An important group of persons were herbalists; some of the herbs that they used did have some practical value. Although these people could give some help through their medicines, the main purpose of the medicine man was to summon spiritual help. A more accurate title for these Indian priests would be "mystery" or "magic" men:

> [He] was to suck impure spirits from the body of his patient. To do this, he needed the assistance of his own spirit helpers. He summoned them with rattles, whistles, drums, and songs. Each spirit responded in a different way.[32]

This procedure was described by the Bishop of Montreal as a type of sorcery:

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[30] Sarah Tucker, The Rainbow in the North (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1853), p. 11.

[31] Ibid. Also see George Bryce, Original Letters and Other Documents Relating to the Selkirk Settlement Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press, 1889), p. 4, for a description of conjuring in the white community.

[32] Zenon Pohorceky, Saskatchewan Indian Heritage: The First 200 Centuries (Saskatoon: Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan, 1970), p. 50.

> Two specimens were given me of the instrument which is sent through the air to carry sickness or death to its appointed mark. They are small pieces of bone, about the length of a man's thumb, ornamentally carved: one of them is sharply pointed at both ends; the other is of an oblong form, with projections at the corners. . . . The Indians believe that it actually enters the person of the victim by an invisible aperture, after which, it was stated by one of my informants, that it returns through the air to the conjuror.[33]

Because the medicine man had the power to give curses and take them away, he had a great deal of power over his people: "The sufferer who has been struck can only be disenchanted by another conjuror, and it is for this process that the aid of the conjuror is perhaps most frequently invoked."[34] It was a power that was believable even to white men. W. T. Thompson, a surveyor, tried their medicine and conjuring when he was sick. "Next morning I was better, whether it was due to the incantations or the brew, I cannot say."[35]

When the so-called civilized white man was willing to try the medicine man's cure, the medicine must have been very convincing and influential:

> The converts who have formerly been engaged in this craft, do not always shake off every remnant of the old habitual awe attached to their mysteries and of the strong imaginative fascinations which have acted on the excited mind. They sometimes appear to shrink instinctively from the mention of the subject. One of the two whom I specially mentioned told me that he knew the

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[33] Mountain, Bishop of Montreal, pp. 145-146.

[34] Ibid., p. 146.

[35] W. T. Thompson, "Adventures of a Surveyor in the Canadian North West," Saskatchewan History 3 (1950): 89.

> power of sorcery to be all worthless falsehood; but it had formerly a strong hold upon his mind.[36]

Because of that strong hold the medicine men were in demand.

Some tribes had different classes of medicine men. The lowest class could provide magic for hunting expeditions or love affairs--they depended upon dreams induced by fasting. Others, who were supposed to receive their powers directly from the thunder god during manhood rites, had power to bring calamities on enemies or avert evil. The latter group of men were highly respected. The position of the medicine man was aspired to by many young men: "One of them told me that his father advised him, when a youth, to train himself to become a conjuror, as the best speculation in which he could engage."[37]

Their reputations grew as they gained experience, and with that grew their prestige among members of their tribe. Edward Ahenakew described his uncle's position as medicine man:

> Before he adopted Christianity, like his brother, chief Ahtahkakoop, he had been well up in the ranks of those who belonged to the secret society of medicine men, called Mitawewin. This alone was enough to give a man standing amongst Indians, who valued such things.[38]

Because of this prestige, a conjuror could become chief,

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[36] Mountain, Bishop of Montreal, p. 145.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Edward Ahenakew, Voices of the Plain's Cree (Toronto : McClelland and Stewart, 1973), p. 144. Also see Edward Ahenakew "Story of the Ahenekews," Saskatchewan History 18 (1964): 17.

creating a situation which was very difficult for missions. "Piapot is the most cunning and unprincipled of the chiefs with whom we have to do. He is a great 'medicine man' and conjuror, and knows that his occupation will go as soon as his people become enlightened."[39]

They did not like the challenge that Christianity gave to their position and saw the missionary as an enemy.[40] To maintain their position they would blame disease or disorder on the missionary. "Any contact with the white teacher or missionary is regarded as dangerous. Thus, the process of Christianization will be very slow."[41] If the missionary was allowed to visit the sick, he was not allowed to say much. Even in visiting sick children, "Our voice could scarcely be heard by reason of the noise made by the old people of the house, who seemed to be alarmed at seeing the white man pray by the side of the sick boy."[42] They equated well-being with following their religion: "I teach him our religion, and if he attends to what I say he will be

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[39] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Winnipeg, June 24-29, 1887 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1887), p. 10.

[40] Young, Canoe and Dog Train, p. 222. Also see Edward Ahenakew, "Story of the Ahenakews," p. 17 about their position.

[41] George Bryce, Holiday Rambles between Winnipeg and Victoria (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press, 1888), p. 51.

[42] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Kingston, June 22-27, 1891 (Toronto: Thorn Press,1891), p. 34.

all right."[43] These conjurors recognized in Christianity a challenge to their teaching and their position of power in the tribe.

The medicine man held an important position in the tribe and he guarded it zealously. He was custodian of the legends of his tribe and with his stories would create an atmosphere of mystery. "His charms, his incantations, his medicine-bags, all play their part in giving him and his family a controlling influence in the affairs of the tribe."[44] He taught a religion of fear which centered around the "machinations of Matchi-Manitou. This fear even took precedence over the adoration of Gitche-Manitou (the great spirit)."[45] The medicine man gained power as an agent of the evil spirit.

It was fear that caused the Indian to equate religion and power. They did not see their gods as just or unjust nor even Matchi-Manitou as an evil god:

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[43] Ibid.

[44] George Bryce, Manitoba, Its Infancy, Growth and Present Condition (London: Samson Law, Marston, Searle, and Remington, 1882),p. 179. Also see George Bryce, Holiday Rambles between Winnipeg and Victoria (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press, 1888), pp. 47-48.

[45] Bryce, Manitoba, p. 178. The government discouraged medicine men but they still had their influence and practice, "but not openly. . . . One man on the reserve has a reputation for his ability to concoct love potions." James Stevens, Sacred Legends of Sandy Lake Cree (Toronto: McClelland & Steward, 1971), p. 9.

> But for the more immediately cogent reason that, unless placated by the stream of sacrifice, they will cease to provide an adequate food supply to man, and may malevolently send destruction upon the neglectful worshippers.[46]

Schoolcraft quoted the explorer G. H. Pond on his experience with the Sioux:

> I have never been able to discover from the Dakotas themselves the least degree of evidence that they divide the gods into classes of good and evil, and am persuaded that those persons who represent them as doing so do it inconsiderately and because it is so natural to subscribe to a long cherished popular opinion.[47]

The divinities that the Indians believed in should have been described as heartless. However, a heartless god was also to be feared. The Indians, who "make their lives so largely dependent on the workings of the heartless manichism [worker of evil]"[48] had a religion of fear.

Lesser divinities played an important part in Indian religion and they were invoked after the great spirit:

> Ordinary prayers were always addressed to "our father (ilcon-aniu) first, then to the sun and the moon, next to the sacred pipes, and finally to the earth and stone. After these, anything else could be invoked by prayer.[49]

The fact that they believed in a number of lesser divinities was not easy to transfer to the Christian faith. Part of

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[46] Spence, Legends, p. 103.

[47] Brinton, p. 83.

[48] Bryce, Manitoba, p. 179. Also see Bryce, Holiday Rambles, pp. 47-48.

[49] Ahenakew, Voices of Plain's Cree, p. 47.

the reason for the Indian belief was that the Manitou seemed far off. "Manitou, himself, never comes to a man in a dream."[50] Their deity "was the personification of the mysterious powers or forces operating in man's environment."[51] The Indians were at the mercy of these gods with no way to escape their judgements unless the powers, "mercifully yielded to entreaty and consented to overlook the transgression."[52]

Their daily customs demonstrated that fear which came from their religion. Bryce described how they would rush under cover when it thundered because they felt it was a god at work.[53] A better example of their fear was described when a skull was unearthed:

> I pointed my pipe to the sky supplicating the aid of the great spirit "Keche Mannato" and then down to earth supplicating the bad spirit "Muche Mannato" to protect my family, my friends, and myself, from the wandering and perhaps angry spirit of that skull, which had been disturbed from its resting place.[54]

The tension that existed between good and evil resulted in fear of spirits and of the spiritual with no assurance that their good god had power to overcome the evil.

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[50] Fine Day, My Cree People (Invermere: Good Medicine Books, 1973), p. 20.

[51] Jesse Jennings, Plainsmen of the Past; A Review of the Pre-history of the Plains, (Np:n.p., 1948), p. 171.

[52] Ibid., p. 174.

[53] Bryce, Manitoba, p. 177.

[54] Hines, Red Indians, p. 74.

Fear led to habits, and habits to customs which kept the Indian from the Christian faith. Their dances, morals and syncretism are part of a unique culture that repelled Christianity.

Indian Culture: A Challenge to Presbyterian Missions

The most important dance of the plains Indians was the sun dance. Leslie Spier claimed that the common ceremony has grown chiefly by inter-tribal borrowing.[55] It was a demonstration of being Indian and a uniting force among the plains Indians. The sun dance was also called the thirst dance "because they [the dancer] thirst themselves, when they think of their vows."[56] No water was taken all evening. This was a type of sacrifice, to be thirsty for their vows. Not only was it cultural but it had religious meaning. Many neighboring bands could join together for these occasions, stories would be told, and vows would be made.

Often different tribes had different elements in their dances but a common element was torture.[57] It was this element that made the dance disdainful to the Christian

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[55] Leslie Spier, "The Sun Dance of the Plains Indians: Its Development and Diffusion." Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 16, p. 453. Also see Appendix G and H on pp. 170-171.

[56] Charles Marius Barbeau, Indian Days on the Western Prairies (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1965), p. 192.

[57] Spier, "Sun Dance," p. 473.

missionaries. "In the old days, they used to cut the sinew off of the children, and the missionaries thought it was cruel."[58] In the Blackfoot sun dance, the Indians "cut off their fingers and tied the portion amputated to the sun dance pole. 'O sun, pity me, I give you my body and my blood.'"[59]

Even though torture is no longer part of the sun dance, there is still a question of how much of the tradition of the dance could be accepted by the church and how much of it is detrimental to the growth of the Christian faith.[60]

Another custom that arose from fear and superstition was the wearing of tokens or amulets. These could be attached to clothing or suspended by cords around the neck:

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[58] Barbeau, Indian Days, p. 192.

[59] J. A. MacKay, "The History and Present State of Church Work among Native Races in Rupert's Land," Centenary Address (Winnipeg: Rupert's Land Celibration, 1922), p. 22.

[60] Annette Potvin, "The Sun Dance Liturgy of the Blackfoot Indians," Master of Arts thesis, Department of Religious Sciences, University of Ottawa, 1979. Although Potvin suggests that parallels between the sun dance and Christianity "provide an excellent basis for transfer," Ahenakew, in "Story of the Ahenekews," p. 22, says they have no elevating effect. Also as Sunday is the day of the dance the dance works in opposition to church services. A. E. Hannahson, "An Indian Dance in the North West," Presbyterian Record, October 1894, p. 267.

> These were objects they had seen in their visions, or that their guardian spirit had prescribed for them . . . They possessed the same value and received the same reverence as the crucifixes which many Indians have substituted for them today.[61]

This custom was hard to give up because the Indians believed in the power of the spirits. New converts often kept, "the rattle chain, some bad medicine," and other things that missionaries had asked them to give up.[62] Barbeau recorded a discussion that describes how tokens were used to represent spirit powers:

> "What are these images for?"
> They answered: "These are our spirit images, they are gods." and their medicine-man tried to explain in the best way he could.
> The white man [a preacher] had a half-breed interpreter. He told the Indians, "Make a big fire and burn all these images. . . ."
> "How could we do that? Ask him if he has got a god that possesses more power than these gods." The spirit man [preacher] said, "These images are only animal heads. If you die with them, you will never go to another country above."[63]

The tokens and images represented the spirit powers and the Indians feared these spirits even though it made no sense:

> They speak freely of the folly of having such gods as the north wind and the thunder, and stones and buffalo bones. They see that these are only creatures and that it is right to worship only one Great Spirit. While speaking with the people in the meetings you would think they were all in the balance and about to give up

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[61] Jennings, p. 276

[62] Hines, Red Indians, p. 298.

[63] Barbeau, Indian Days, p. 101.

> their paganism and embrace the light of the Bible, but they go out and are still the same pagans.[64]

There were many spirits that could work against each other, and each had its own symbol. Dogs were frequently used as religious symbols: "Dogs were supposed to stand in some peculiar relation to the moon, probably because they howl at it and run at night."[65] Still, this should neither be too strange nor given too much emphasis because the dog was the only domestic animal of the Indian, for many tribes, until the horse was introduced. Christianity and its symbols were easily added to the Indian religion but did not easily replace it.

If an Indian's guardian spirit failed him in a crisis, he would throw away the symbol of that spirit. That seems to have been the Indians' experience with Christianity. They wore its symbols, but the symbols failed. Many Indians looked to new religions to provide what they wanted. New religions took many of the things that the missionaries taught and adapted them to a uniquely Indian religion.[66]

Roman Catholic practices were often imitated by

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[64] Hugh McKay, "Incidents of Indian Work in 1891-92", Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Montreal, June 24-29, 1892 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1892), p. 215.

[65] Rev. R. J. Burton, ed., Synod of Alberta "Growth" (Edmonton: Synod of Alberta History Committee, 1968), p. 143.

[66] Stevens, Sacred Legends, p. 6. "Christian beliefs have been curiously combined with many of the old ways which persist under the veneer of Christianity."

Indian customs. Instead of candles, tobacco was offered in support of a petition. Instead of a cross, Indians would bury red ochre for protection.[67] When the Indians accepted the Roman symbols, they often transferred their fears and hoped that the white man's tokens would give them more power. They were still afraid of the spirits but their ability to syncretize made it easy to borrow from Christian churches. Roman Catholic use of symbols and tokens encouraged the syncretism.

The most influential syncretistic movement was the ghost dance or soul society. This movement was started in the nineteenth century by Wovoka, a Christian-educated Paiute sheep-herder, who claimed to have visited the next world and had returned as the Messiah with promises of a regenerated earth populated by Indians.[68] He said, "All Indians must dance, everywhere, keep on dancing. Pretty soon in next spring Great Spirit come. He bring back all game of every kind."[69] This dance was a trance-like ceremony that was accompanied by continuous wailing.

The growth of this Paiute religion was the result of the influence of Christianity on the weakening old tribal religion. The new religion was a blending of old and

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[67] MacDonald, Owners of Eden, p. 55.

[68] C. Frank Turner, Across Medicine Line (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 1973), p. 257.

[69] Dee Brown, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee (New York: Bantum Books, 1972), p. 390.

new. It served as a Pan-Indian "rather than a tribal or white man's religion."[70] Because of this difference it became a social force that could have an affect on problems that came with the white man, such as alcoholism. Although these ceremonies may have started as Christian,[71] they developed as a non-Christian religion:

> Notwithstanding that it has picked up certain Christian terms, it appears to be a decided return to heathenism --possibly heathenism's dying effort. The society believes that the Messiah will come . . . he will bring back with him all the Indian dead, that on his return the whole region will be filled with game and become the Indian's happy hunting ground. Those, however, who are to enter in, must have the sign of the cross painted red on their face.[72]

The return to old Indian religions and customs, and the growth of new Indian religions was an Indian reaction to the imperialistic missions policy that kept Christianity a white man's religion. Indian leadership was not developed within the church; nor was there encouragement to make Christianity an Indian religion through the establishment of an Indian Presbytery.

Tribal structure was a cultural factor that hindered the development of leaders for the Indian churches. "Cultural nationalism involves the reaffirmation of the primacy

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[70] Hazel W. Hertzberg, The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971), p. 12.

[71] Dee Brown, Bury My Heart, p. 409.

[72] Mission Board, "Pipestone - Soul Society," Presbyterian Record, December 1898, p. 112.

of the tribe. Indian peoples regard tribal culture as extremely important, because it signifies their uniqueness as a separate group."[73] Totemism was a system of kinship and descent that differed from tribe to tribe.

Female descent prevailed among the Algonquins of the Southeast but not among those of the northwestern provinces. Different tribes gave various amounts of power to their women. Their society was not matriarchal, although it was often matrilineal. Sometimes women could choose the chief and dispose of him, but men held the tribal offices and they did the speaking.[74] It was the father who gave away the bride.[75] And when the chief gave orders, the women obeyed.[76] The chief and his councillors were the government for the tribe.

Whereas women were not allowed to lead service in white Presbyterian churches, the mission board bent the rules of church polity for Indian congregations. There, in 1925, at least three women appointed by the mission board

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[73] J. A. Long and Menno Boldt, "Self-Determination and Extra-Legal Action: The Foundation of Native Indian Protests," Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism, 15(1988): 112.

[74] Billard, ed., The World of the American Indian, p. 129.

[75] Ibid., p. 291.

[76] Ibid., p. 264.

were leading church services on reservations.[77] This was a double standard. It reflected an imperialistic attitude by allowing women to have spiritual oversight in Indian congregations but not in white congregations. The Presbyterian Church in Canada now accepts women elders and ministers. Although this action made more leadership available for Indian churches, it has allowed women to hold offices which have been traditionally a male privilege. The actions of the Presbyterian church have continued the process of tribal and family breakdown on the reservation.

Although, as has been shown, the breakdown of the family was not desirable, some of the tribal disintegration may have been natural:

> It [Christianity] tends to weaken the ancestor cult which makes for family solidarity. In congregations, new social groups are formed which may conflict with existing kinship groups. Converts are taught that loyalty to their faith must take precedence over loyalty to their chief. Christians are forbidden to share in certain traditional observances which make for tribal solidarity.[78]

The tribal structure and customs among Indians were recognized as an obstacle by the Presbyterian mission committee:

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[77] Letters, "Re Status of Deaconesses," Correspondence File, Presbytery of Kamsack, 1923-1925, United Church Archives, St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Miss Latimer, Miss Reissenholt, and Miss Lawrence all took church services on mission fields.

[78] Charles E. Hendry, Beyond Traplines, (Toronto: Miracle Press, 1969), p. 21.

> There are undoubtedly communities in other lands in which the missionaries of our church are at work; where it is possible to evangelize the people and develop in them a very considerable degree of Christian life without interfering with their language or changing materially their means of livelihood; but that method cannot be pursued among our Indians.[79]

The church was embarrassed that Indians would be satisfied to live a life below the poverty level. The Indian's value system made him appear lazy. Two or three families lived together, "this keeps all poor, the lazy just staying at home while the more industrious go out and hunt for food."[80]

It was also embarrassed that it had not been able to change the moral standards of the Indian tribes:

> The reports all speak of the low moral standards existing on most of the reserves. Lax marriage laws are given as the main cause, and the wish is expressed that marriage, according to the Indian custom, might be absolutely forbidden. Where it has been possible to have the marriage ceremony performed in the church, it has invested it in the Indian mind with a new dignity, solemnity, and obligation.[81]

Differences among churches caused two problems for Presbyterian missions. First, there was the interference and opposition of the Roman Catholic church. Secondly, the church

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[79] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Ottawa, June 21-26, 1890 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1890), p. 22.

[80] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Halifax, June 19-24, 1900 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1900), p. 182.

[81] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Winnipeg, June 25-30, 1922 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1922), p. 47.

compromised its evangelical position to be part of the ecumenical movement.

The feelings of cultural superiority that the whites had toward Indians created a problem because they encouraged missions to try to change the Indian culture rather than to change individuals. Indians had many beliefs that were similar to Christian beliefs. Sometimes these could provide a common ground through which the missionary presented the Gospel. More often, they hindered the conversion of Indians. Indians liked Christianity because it offered many advantages. Their syncretistic religion could accommodate many Christian ideas and remain heathen.

Presbyterian missions were faced with a religion that was closely related to its culture. Medicine men, dances, symbols, and superstitions were very hard for the Indian to give up. It was the new Indian religions that allowed Indians to keep their customs and add Christian ideas. Indians wanted to remain Indian, and when missions tried to change them they resisted. The missionary needed to maintain the integrity of his faith and at the same time apply that faith to the Indian culture.

An attitude toward culture, more suited to Calvinistic theology was to recognize that the Indians did have certain gifts from God. The problem was that these people were not able to use their gifts as they were intended because of a sinful nature. The reformation doctrine of the third use of the law

had an answer to anthropological difficulties. John Warwick Montgomery pointed out that love was only a motive not a rule for Christian action. The proper content of the action must come from God's law. He went on to establish the third use of the law as "an essential preservative for the entire doctrine of sanctification." [82] That is, only by taking the third use of the law seriously could Christians take regeneration and sanctification seriously.

The missionary's job should have been to discover and develop the full potential of his congregation by freeing his people from the bondage of sin. No Indian church that did not have Indian leaders could have reached that potential. Therefore, the Presbyterian attitude should have included the goal of an indigenous church. Only by involving the Indian people in the leadership role could the church hope to become culturally acceptable while maintaining its integrity.

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[82] John Warwick Montgomery, Crisis in Lutheran Theology (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1973), 1: 126-127). He quotes Horatius Bonar in God's Way of Holiness.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Young Christian Indians have a difficult life because they not only have to relate their faith to today's societal-moral standards, but they have to struggle with their identity as Indians. Where alcohol is a temptation for most young people, it is part of life for the Indian youth. The Indian youth who does not drink is teased by peers and siblings. He is even accused of not being Indian. Sexuality on reservations presents many problems. Young people are taught by example. Friends and parents express their sexuality outside the bonds of marriage, whether this is just looking at pornography or actually living with someone else's spouse. The youth know these actions are not right according to their Christian belief, but because the practice is so wide spread it is hard to resist.[1]

The last two generations of Indians have learned to expect the government to look after them. Even working on the reservation, under government grants, teaches the Indians that they do not have to work hard to receive good pay. "Fewer than one out of ten of Canada's Indian popu-

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[1] Interview with Ernie Blackbird, July 29, 1978.

lation are educated beyond the secondary school level, future Indian leadership at the tribal, provincial, and national levels will issue disproportionately from this group of individuals."[2] Since there is no direct injunction against not working for a living, unemployment has become a standard that is most appealing to young Indians on the reservation. Generally because peer pressure is so great and faith is so weak, the young people accept societal-moral norms even when they know they are wrong. The only ones who can stand against that pressure are those committed to the Christian faith and those who have a supportive family.

The attempt to "civilize" the Indian has not worked. The imperialistic missions policy has not worked in Canada. Dedication, persistence, and involvement have provided success in missions to Indians. Unfortunately, these qualities have only been present in a few missionaries. To convert the Indians as a race the qualities need to be present in the church as a whole.

Christianity was made believable by the work of early missionaries. Their lives exemplified Christian love, and they served their congregations with great energy. One Indian man described their influence on his faith:

> Jesus Christ touched my heart, and I also embraced his religion: and have made him my chief from that day

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[2] J. A. Long and Menno Boldt, "Self-Determination and Extra-Legal Action: The Foundation of Native Indian Protests," Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism 15(1988): 111.

> unto this. I owe a great debt to my old missionary who recently left us, Mr. Steinhauer: he and other missionaries have done me great good, and have also done a great and grand work for my people.[3]

The missionary added a stability and influence that created a desire to accept God's will. The mission board recognized the influence that the missionary had on his people:

> The continuity of the work depends far more on the missionary who meets the Indian and speaks to him the Word of Life than on the committee that from a greater or less distance directs the work.[4]

Because it knew this, the church should have done more to encourage pastors to stay in their mission field.

This paper has shown that the success of the Presbyterian mission to the Indians cannot be credited to a missions policy or even the church. The success must be credited to a few individuals who dedicated their lives to mission work. These missionaries were trained under and held to Presbyterian doctrine. Therefore, the doctrine itself can not be blamed for the failures of the Indian missions.

The problem for the Presbyterian Church in Canada was with the application of doctrine and the movement away from the orthodox position. Liberal and neo-orthodox

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[3] John McLean, The Hero of Saskatchewan (Barrie, Ontario: Barrie Examiner Printing and Publishing House, 1981), p. 27.

[4] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, London, June 19-24, 1906 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1906), p. 217.

attacks on Presbyterian confessional standards put the integrity of Presbyterian missions in question. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has moved away from its evangelical position so that it now cooperates with non-evangelicals in Indian work.

Regeneration preceeds sanctification in the Reformed order of salvation.[5] By trying to civilize the Indian before conversion, the Presbyterian church was not consistent with its theology. The morals and lifestyle that were considered civilized should not have been expected without the acceptance of Christ. The goal of the mission should not have been the civilizing of the Indian; rather it should have been his conversion.

This paper has described the missions to Indians in western Canada as an imperialistic mission. This portrays an attitude and philosophy which has caused problems for Presbyterian work among Indians. The imperialistic attitude has been shown from the beginning of the Indian work by the lack of enthusiasm for Indian missions. Because of the desire and work of a few devoted people the mission began, but it was not well supported. James Nisbet's desire to build a self-supporting, industrial mission was rebuffed and eventually industrial schools were abandoned. The Indian and Metis pastors who were once an integral part of Indian

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[5] Harris Franklin Rall, "Sanctification," in The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1939), p. 11.

work seemed to disappear so that "the greatest need we have in our churches today is for native leadership."[6] Still, little has been done to change the present methods of church career development or for developing an indigenous church:

> The selection, training, and development of the personnel required for work with native peoples cannot be handled within the conventional theological seminary and must look to the use or creation of new educational resources, including those being developed by native peoples.[7]

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has demonstrated its imperialistic attitude by its good support of overseas missions in places like India and China. The romance of distant, exotic places and the large concentrations of heathens in those places made good targets for imperialistic missions. The apparent degree of civilization these cultures possessed is also most appealing to the imperialists who never like to be too far from civilization. The "wild Indians" in the wilderness of Canada lived in small, scattered villages and the Indian missions have been looked at as being second-rate because the work was close to home.

Imperialists in the church were ethnocentric. Although new missionaries were given instruction on the importance of recognizing the Indian culture, the history and the policy of the Presbyterian church demonstrates that

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[6] Dale W. Kietzman, Christian Leadership in Indian America (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), p. 11.

[7] Charles E. Hendry, Beyond Traplines (Toronto: Miracle Press, 1969), p. 91. Also see Christian Leadership, p. 61.

Presbyterians are middle-class people with an appreciation for a conservative church service and a Scottish accent. The twofold goal--to civilize as well as evangelize, led to the attitude that:

> The only hope of the Indian race is that it should be finally merged in the life of the country. We cannot afford to perpetuate separate nationalities and separate languages within our borders.[8]

This study has discussed some common attitudes toward the Indian culture. A major attitude stressed the superiority of the white culture and wished to change or civilize the Indian. The ethnocentric group held to this policy. Another group sought to learn Indian beliefs and build the Christian faith on that foundation. A third point of view has become popular in the Presbyterian church through its ecumenical relationships. That view has accepted the validity of the Indian culture and tried to "Christianize" its religious practices. This is the syncretistic or adoptionist view of culture.

A fourth attitude toward culture, more suited to Presbyterian theology, recognized that the Indians did have certain gifts from God, but they were not used as they were intended because of man's sinful nature. The missionary was to discover and develop the full potential of his congregation by freeing them from the bondage of sin. No Indian

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[8] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Appendix to Acts and Proceedings, Ottawa, June 21-26, 1890 (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1890), p. 31.

church that did not have Indian leaders could have reached that potential. The Presbyterian attitude needed to include the goal of an indigenous Indian church. Unfortunately, an indigenous church was the goal of the ecumenical movement also. The difference was theological.

The close relationship that the Presbyterian church had with the government directly affected Indian work. Government officials had much work to do and the distances to the reserves were great. They saw that on the reservations there were highly educated, honest men whom they could get to record statistical information. When the minister did government business, the church became an extension of the government in the eyes of the Indian. That impression was negative and it put the missionary in a position where his ethics could be compromised. The Indian impression of the government was that it represented law and authority which were resented. It was difficult to present the Gospel to the Indian when the church was associated with the negative impression of the government. The cooperation with the government often was detrimental to evangelism. When the church discovered that the government might try to scatter Indians as farmers on the plain rather than encourage village life in the valley, they did not proceed to build a place of worship at Lakesend so "as not to prejudice the

efforts of the government."[9] This was a strange action considering that village life was more conducive to the growth of the church.

The Presbyterians cooperated with the government in education and an attempt to socialize the Indians. This caused problems for evangelists. The Indians wished their own identity and culture, but because the church was responsible for imposing a new culture upon them they reacted against the Christian faith. New pan-Indian religions were developed to include some Christian ideas, but for many this meant that the Christian faith was rejected as representative of white culture.

Church budgets are strained and missions to Canadian Indians still need support. Indian churches in western Canada are not well attended and professions of faith are few. The same question is being asked today as was asked one hundred years ago.[10] "Are missions to Indians worthwhile?" If the missions policy remains imperialistic, the answer will be that it is not worthwhile. If the Presbyterian Church in Canada keeps moving away from its evangelical foundations, the mission will have no purpose. The work among the Indians will never be able to conmtinue on the

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[9] Presbyterian Church in Canada, Acts and Proceedings, Winnipeg, June 23-28, 1897 (Toronto:Thorn Press, 1897), p. 164.

[10] A. E. Hannahson, "An Indian Dance in the Northwest," The Presbyterian Record, October 1892, p. 268.

same scale it had before the union of 1925 and the closing of Presbyterian schools. It will continue, however, as long as there are people who are dedicated enough to make some sacrifices. Indians have changed since the time of Nisbet and George Flett. They have been affected by the modern world, but two things remain the same. They still wish to remain Indian and they still need salvation. Balancing these two needs is the task of the missionary as it has always been. This paper has shown the need and how a Presbyterian mission attempted to meet that need. It has shown the problem of imperialistic missions and the problem of losing evangelical integrity. It has shown the problems that the missionary has in relating his faith to the Indian culture and the problem the Indian has in accepting Christianity.

This paper is a challenge to modern missions philosophy that demands numerical success. It is a challenge to the church to accept its responsibility to minister to all needy people within its bounds. It presents the case of Indian missions so that the work may be renewed.

Application

In order to meet the spiritual needs of Canadian Indians the Presbyterian church must be willing to make changes in three areas: style of ministry, theology of missions, and cultural anthropology. If it doesn't make a change away from the present trend in theology and

syncretism, the needs of the Indians that it now serves will not be met and Presbyterian churches on the reservations will close.

If the Presbyterian Church in Canada wishes to make the Indian churches Presbyterian it must develop an indigenous church. This means that they must support and encourage a church that is led by Indians. To develop such a church there must be an Indian Presbytery which is separate from the control of white ministers and congregations. Young people must be chosen from every Indian congregation to be given special training and attention so that they will become spiritual leaders.

Hopefully many of the young men will become pastors with the same standing as any other Presbyterian minister. This does not mean giving them the same courses at a seminary. In fact, it means that a new program of training Indian pastors must be developed in the same way that French Canadian pastors have developed their own theological training. The Indian must not spend long periods of time away from his culture. Thus the training periods should be for a short time. Also the Indian pastor will need spiritual refreshing so the training should be carried on throughout the year. The courses must be practical and Biblical with the more theoretical problems left for advanced studies. There must also be some form of access to a professor or helper who could be on call to give advice and

support to the Indian worker.

The development of an Indian Presbytery would be more consistent with Presbyterian theology as it would give the Indian leaders more responsibility in their own spiritual welfare. The present form of church government on many reserves resembles an Episcopalian structure with the superintendent of missions or a dominant pastor from a nearby church serving as its bishop.

Presbyterian theology cannot afford to be watered down by the syncretistic bent of the ecumenical movement or Indian religions. Indians must be taught the meaning of the sacraments and given a chance to learn doctrine in Bible study and church services. On the other side, white Presbyterians must regain the evangelical fervor that characterized early Reformed churches. Biblical views of eschatology and evangelism must be taught in their churches. Classes in evangelism and missions must be taught in their seminaries.

The Presbyterian church is afraid to venture out on its own to develop programs for Indian work. For this reason it relies on ecumenical work and conferences. Presbyterians should not share in such ventures with Roman Catholics or people from non-confessional and liberal churches such as the United Church of Canada. These programs are only counter productive. There are some things that could be done with other churches that could help to

develop a church which is more indigenous.

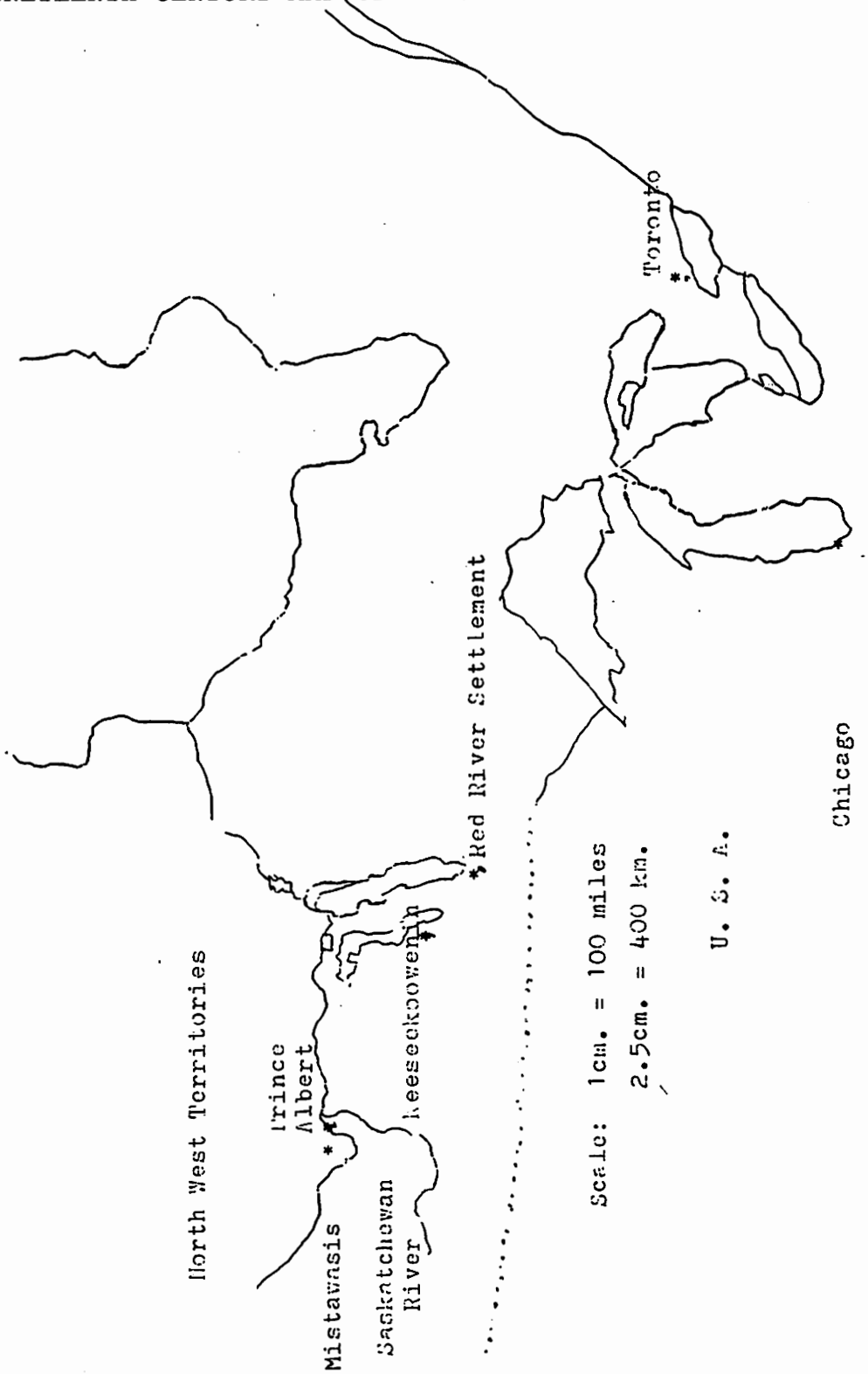
The Indian church should be able to develop its own style of worship. This would include songs and hymns. Gregorian chants are not as appealing to Indians as is music of the Gaithers. If the Presbyterian church wishes to do things in cooperation with other churches they should work on hymn books which would add to an Indian style of worship.

Indians want to be proud of their Indianess and their culture. Even more important to them than an Indian presbytery or their own hymn book is having the knowledge that other Presbyterians respect their culture. The church could signal their respect by making language learning a priority in the education of any missionaries who will be going out to work among the Indians. The present Toronto Institute of Linguistics training provides a good basis but their needs to be some specific training in the language that the missionary may encounter.

By respecting the Indian culture enough to learn about it and learn the Indian language the church will make its first step in transforming that culture. By giving the Indian churches the responsibility for their own future the church will develop hope for the future. By regaining its Reformed theological perspective the church can develop a theology of missions that is consistent with its theology and that can change the lives of some Indians to make them brothers in Christ.

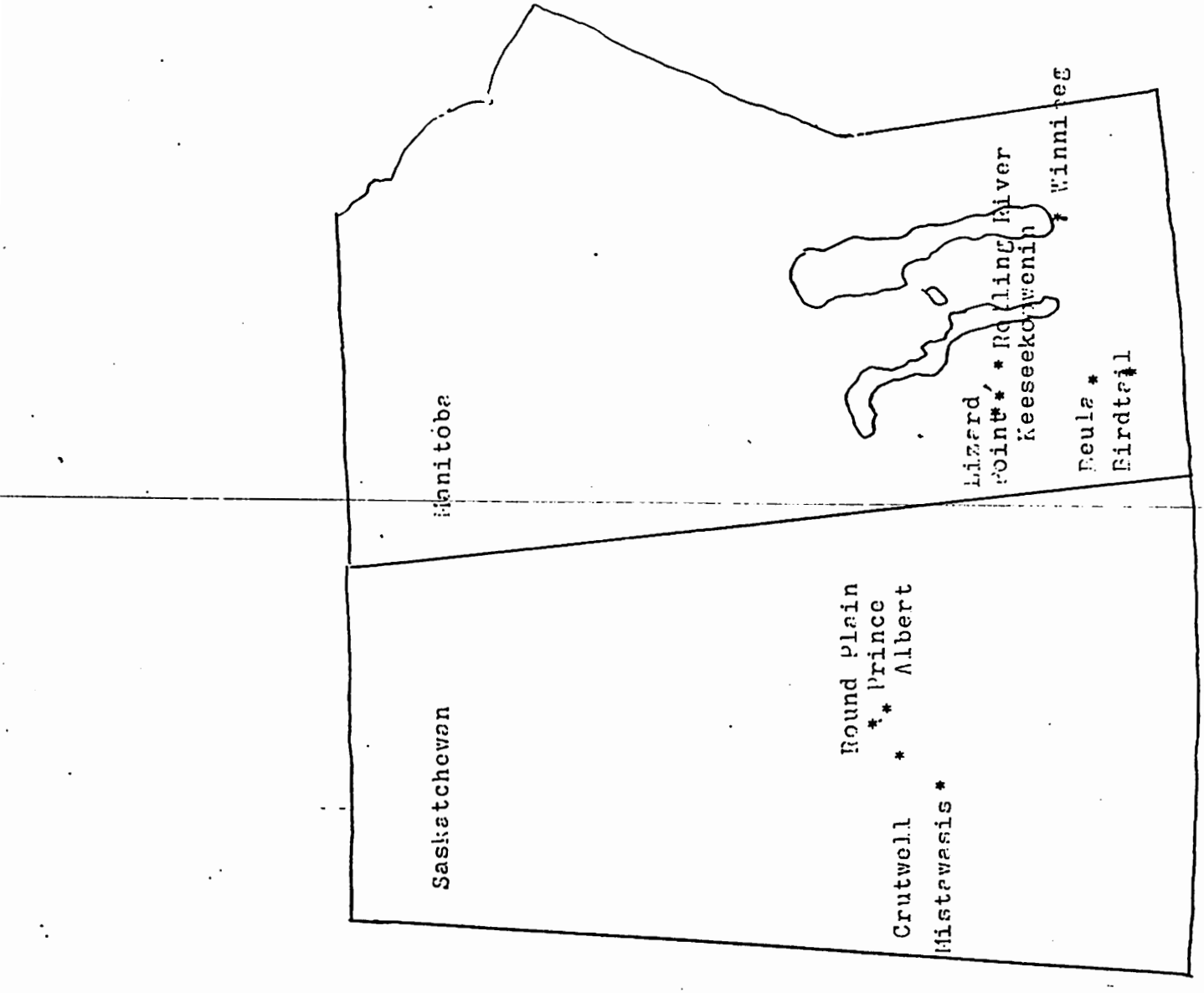
APPENDIX A

NINETEENTH CENTURY MAP OF PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS



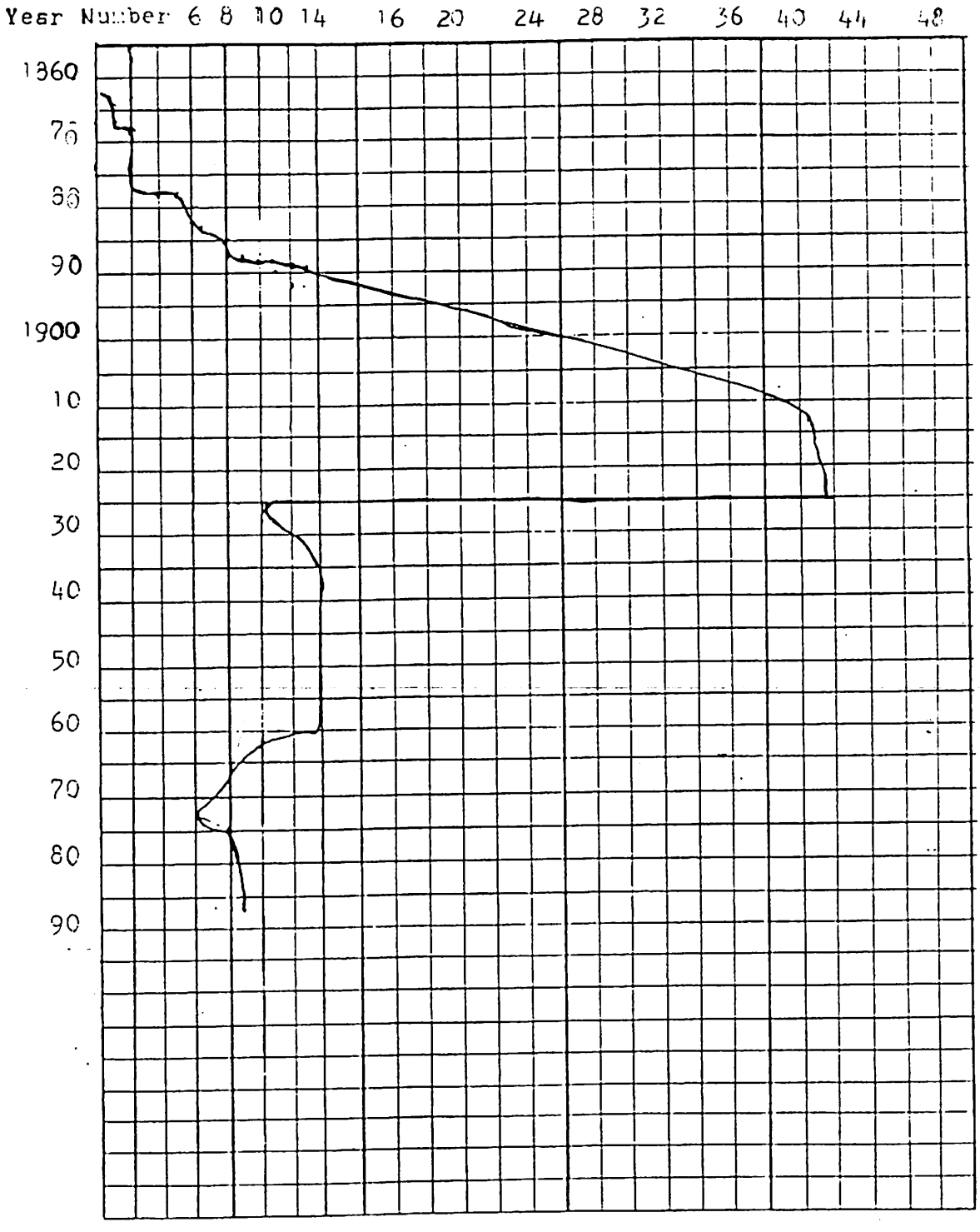
APPENDIX B

MODERN DAY PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS IN SASKATCHEWAN AND MANITOBA



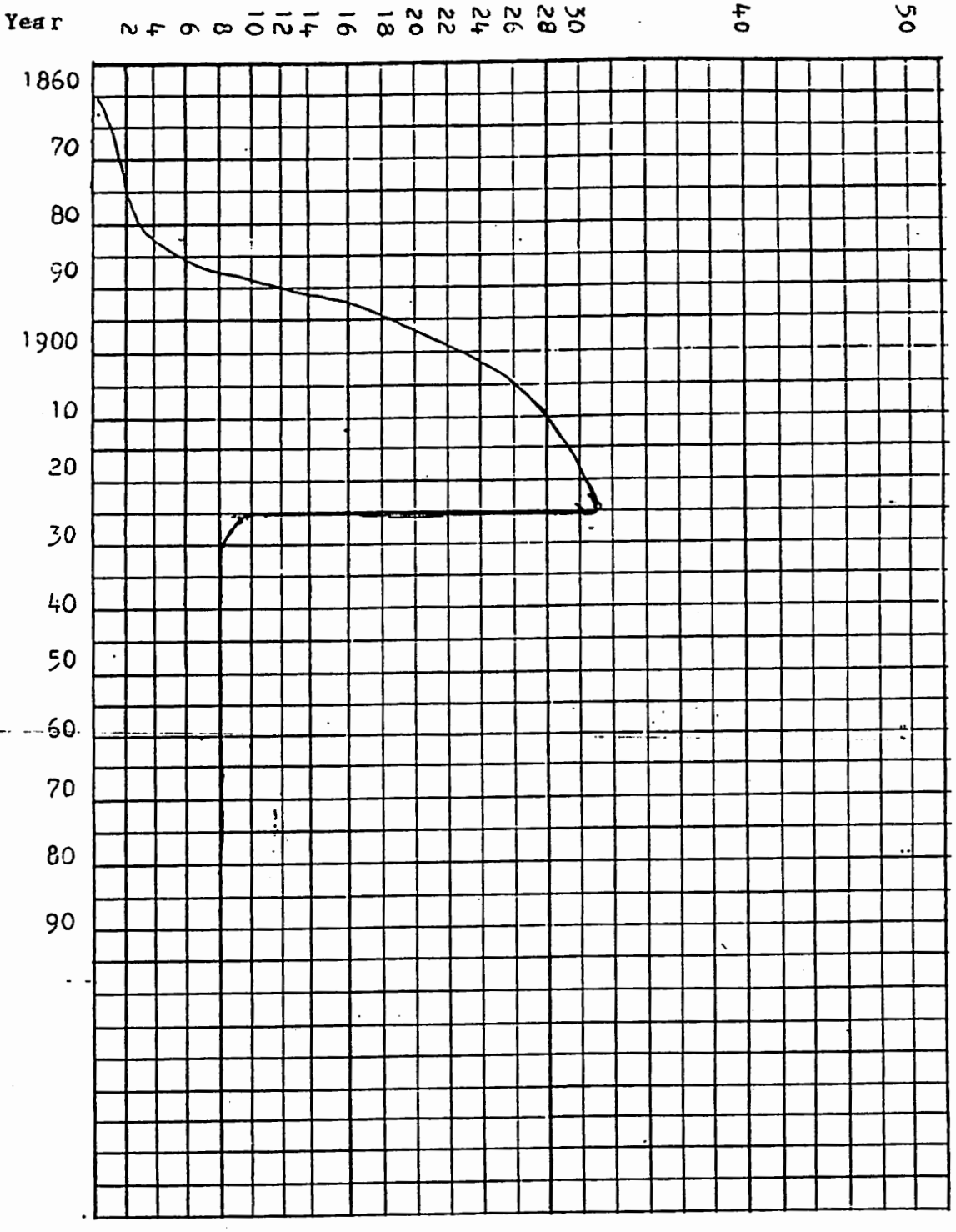
APPENDIX C

NUMBER OF PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONARIES IN INDIAN WORK



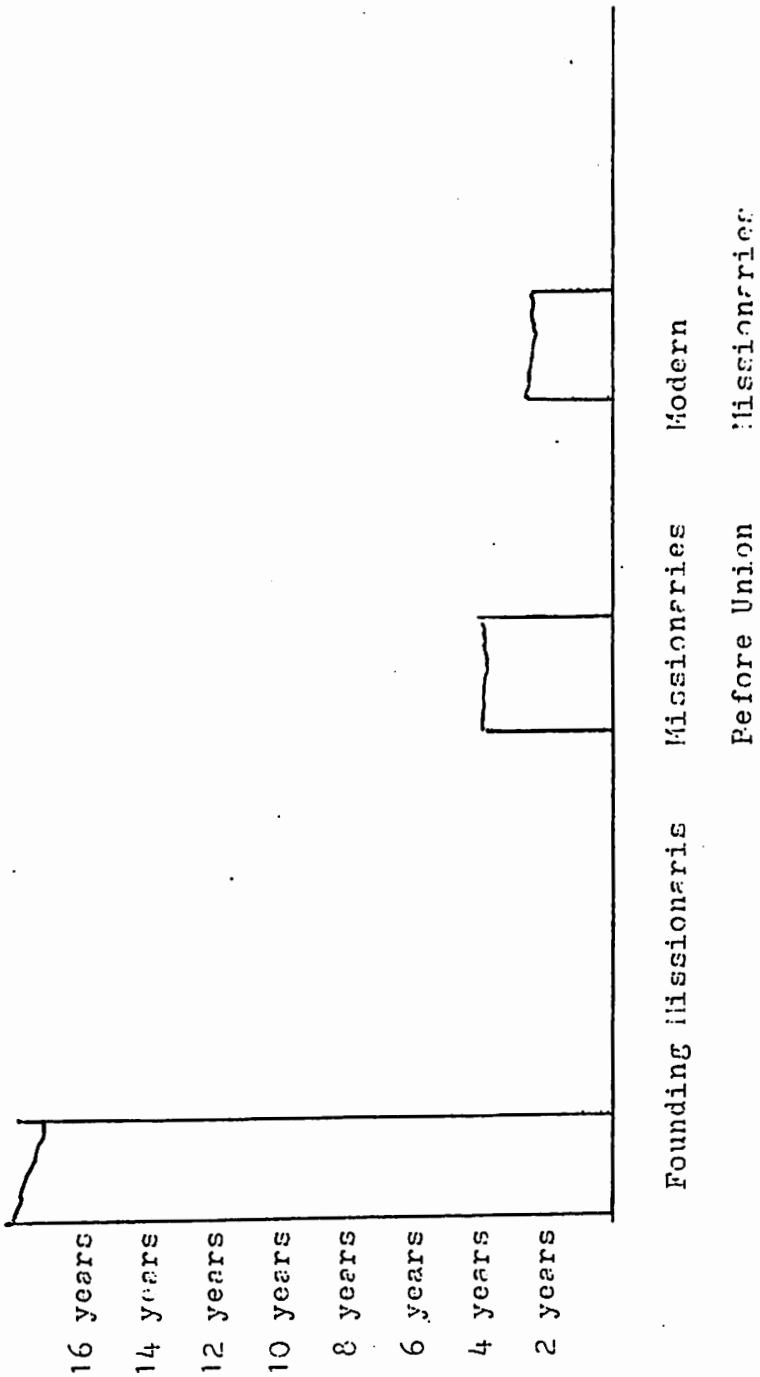
APPENDIX D

NUMBER OF RESERVATIONS SERVED BY THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



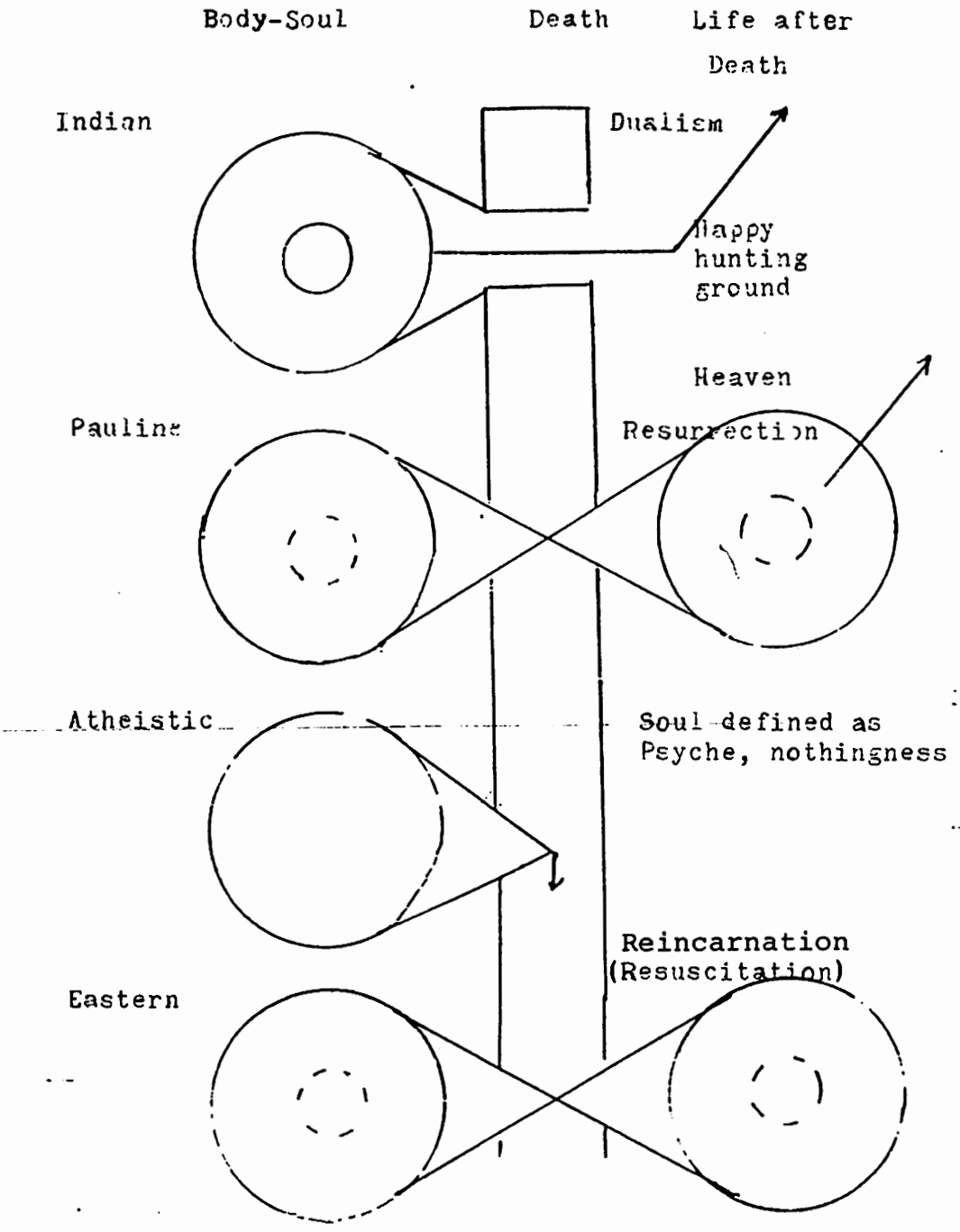
APPENDIX E

A COMPARISON OF LENGTH OF STAY IN INDIAN MISSIONS



APPENDIX F

SOUL CONCEPTS COMPARED



APPENDIX G

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN TRIBAL SUN DANCES

	Cree	Salteaux	Sioux
Center Pole Activities			
Scouting	X		
Returning Scouts met	X		
Riding Double	X		
Men Tree-fellers	X	X	X
Counting coup	X		
Center Pole Decorated			
Brush bundle	X	X	
Called "nest"	X	X	
Buffalo skin			X
Cloth	X	(X)	
Center Pole Raised			
Coupled tipi poles	X		
Magic or prayer	X		
Mounting pole	X		
Dance lodge			
Roofed	X		
Alter			
Buffalo skull	X	X	?
Excavation	X		
Screen	X		

APPENDIX H

DANCE

	Cree	Salteaux	Sioux
Sustained by pole	X	X	
Torture	X	X	X
Pleger tortured			X
Objects suspended	X	X	X
Animals led	X		
Flesh sacrifice	X		
Warrior's fire	X		
Blessing spectators	X		
"Thirsting-dance"	X	X	

The chart was adapted from Leslie Spier, "The Sun Dance of the Plains Indians: Its Development and Diffusion." Anthropological Papers American Museum of Natural History vol. XVI, pp. 466, 473 and from Rev. A.E. Hannahson, "An Indian Dance in the North-west." Presbyterian Record, October, 1893. Although Spier did not indicate that the center pole was decorated by the Salteaux with cloth, the practice of using cloth of different colors is now practiced.

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