

THE OJIBWA - MISSIONARY ENCOUNTER AT RAINY LAKE MISSION

1839 - 1857

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of Graduate Studies

The University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

© Michael R. Angel

July 1986

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ISBN 0-315-33898-9

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MICHAEL R. ANGEL

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
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It must be well known unto you that myself and colleagues have endeavoured to Christianize the Lac la Pluie Indians for these last ten years. But we have met with little or no success amongst them, and may say with the Jewish prophets of old "behold this people is a stiff necked people." They are (the Indians) wholly given to idolatry ...

Rev. Peter Jacobs to George Simpson
Fort Francis, July 2, 1849

Ogimaubinas of the River Indians called on me this morning and told me the result of their council held among themselves this Fall. He spoke in a friendly manner and said that the Indians of the Lake of the Woods would not consent to receive your instruction ... We River Indians gave in to their views ... Our relative (the Missionary) can remain in the fort. He has a custom which he has embraced. We gently bar our door against him ...

Rev. Allan Salt
Fort Francis Diary
October 29, 1855

PREFACE

The primary purpose of this thesis is to analyze the historical circumstances surrounding the establishment, work and ultimate closure of the Methodist Mission at Rainy Lake during the years 1839 - 1857. From one viewpoint the thesis is a study of the local Ojibwa response to the encroachment of Euro-American society, and in particular, their response to the Methodist missionaries. For this reason there is a considerable emphasis on the ideas and practices of Ojibwa religion. The thesis will argue that Ojibwa society in the region around Rainy Lake and Rainy River during the early and mid-nineteenth century was not in a state of disintegration as has sometimes been asserted. Because the social structures of the society were strong, and because their religious beliefs appeared to be confirmed, the Ojibwa had no reason to seek alternate worldviews. Nor did they feel compelled to accept these beliefs in return for technological assistance. In so far as it is possible, the reactions of both individuals and groups of Ojibwa to the Methodists will be presented, and an attempt will be made to place them within the larger context of other groups of Ojibwa.

From another viewpoint the thesis is a study of a neglected chapter in the westward expansion of the Methodist Church during the middle part of the last century. Most of the attention of historians has been concentrated on the missions staffed by the more prominent European missionaries, or on the controversies which existed between the Methodists and Hudson's Bay Company officials. Although the primary

focus of this portion of the thesis is on the work of the Methodists among the Indians, it is impossible to entirely separate this work from their relationship with the Hudson's Bay Company and their rivalry with the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless, the emphasis remains on the ideas and work of the Methodists among the Rainy Lake Ojibwa.

Finally, this thesis is a study of the work of the three native Ojibwa missionaries, Henry B. Steinhauer, Peter Jacobs, and Allen Salt, who served the Methodist mission at Rainy Lake during this period. In order to comprehend the events at the mission and the actions of the native missionaries, it is necessary to understand the socio-economic and religious backgrounds of both the missionaries and the people with whom they were working. In other situations native missionaries have been able to serve as "bridge figures" or cultural brokers, since they were able to operate as insiders in both cultures. In fact, Steinhauer, Jacobs and Salt all acted as cultural brokers in other places and at other times in their missionary careers. Although they were not able to function in this capacity while at the Rainy Lake Mission, a detailed analysis of their role can nevertheless provide us with a better understanding of the factors which led to the continuing rejection of the mission and Christianity by the majority of the Rainy Lake Ojibwa.

My work on this topic has been made possible by a number of individuals. I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Jean Friesen who first introduced me to the exciting new field of ethnohistory and the general topic of Indian-missionary encounters. She has both provided me with some much-needed guidance and borne with me as I have

learned to use new techniques and shed some of my ethnocentric preconceptions. I am also indebted to Professor Jennifer Brown of the University of Winnipeg and Leo Waisberg, the Ethnohistorian for the Grand Council Treaty #3 Association of Ojibway Chiefs. Both of them have helped me considerably with their encouragement, assistance and materials. Professor Donald Smith of the University of Calgary has generously made available a considerable amount of source material on Peter Jacobs. Victor Lytwyn's maps add significantly to an understanding of the area under discussion. My research has been made much easier through the kind cooperation of the archives staff, at Provincial Archives of Manitoba, the United Church Archives in Toronto, and the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa, and the library staff at the Elizabeth Dafoe Library. The J. S. Ewart Memorial Fund greatly assisted me in undertaking this latter research. Last, but not least, I would to thank my wife Barb, who first suggested that I re-undertake graduate work, and who now knows more about the Rainy Lake Mission than she ever intended or wanted. Her proofreading skills have been invaluable, and both she and my children have shown the patience of Job.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Christian missionaries played a pivotal role in the continuing encounters between Euro-Americans and Indians in North America. Although the missionaries were not always part of the earliest contacts, the fact that their primary objective was to change the religion and lifestyle of the Indians makes the history of their work particularly valuable to an understanding of the interaction of the two cultures. An extensive amount of historical and anthropological literature exists on the encounters which took place between Euro-Americans and Native North American Indians. John Webster Grant, in his recent study of these encounters in Canada, Moon of Wintertime, has traced the changing attitudes of missionaries towards the Indians, and the changing attitudes of scholars to the study of these intercultural contacts.¹ Unfortunately, most of the early histories of Christian missions among the Indians were at best ethnocentric, focusing on the lives, work and issues of Euro-American society to the detriment of the study of Indian society. The latter was seen primarily as a background to the work of the Euro-Americans. John Carroll's classic study of Methodism, Case and His Contemporaries, an example of an early denominational history,² is useful to later historians for the wealth of detail it provides. However, it was written primarily to highlight the accomplishments of the early Methodist preachers and vindicate their methods. Subsequent histories of Christian denominations and missionary efforts in both Canada and the United States continued to follow the same basic approach for quite some time. Biographies of individual missionaries, while

sometimes providing more detail concerning the activities that went on, are even less reliable since they were intended to be primarily inspirational works.³

It was not until well into the 20th century that a number of denominational histories appeared which made greater attempts to analyze the sources critically and to provide a somewhat more balanced picture of the work of the early missionaries. A. Morice's 1910 study of Roman Catholic efforts,⁴ J. H. Riddell's 1946 history of the Methodist Church,⁵ and T. C. B. Boon's 1962 history of the Anglican Church in the west,⁶ provide an introduction to the work of the three main denominations that attempted to establish Indian missions in Western Canada during the 19th century. Boon, in particular, paid considerable attention to the work of some of the native missionaries involved and gave them credit for their contributions. Nevertheless, the works of these writers continue to be primarily narrative accounts written from the viewpoint of the particular religious denomination. While they are infinitely more useful than the earlier hagiographies, they continue to accept the basic underlying assumptions of the missionaries, and to present their vision of the reality of the time as an accurate portrayal of the events and the circumstances which surrounded them. In particular they assumed that the missionaries played a central role in bringing "civilization" to western Canada, and that the work of the missionaries among the Indians had positive effects in the sense that the missionaries helped the Indians to adjust to the new society which was developing. These views were shared to a considerable extent by early historians such as A. S. Morton⁷ and later by George

Stanley,⁸ who, while having a secular emphasis, accepted the basic presupposition that the Indian and Metis societies were primitive. Such historians continued to express the view that missionaries played an important role in the formation of a new frontier society which balanced European "civilization" and Indian "barbarism".

During the past several decades scholars have slowly begun to look more closely at the complex relationships that existed between Indians, missionaries and other Europeans, and to analyze more precisely the role that the missionaries played in the encounter between Europeans and Indians. By using the methodologies developed by anthropologists, sociologists and geographers, historians are now able to examine the relationships in terms which go beyond the old dichotomy of "civilization" and "savagery". In one of the earliest works, the Rev. A. N. Thompson in his 1962 thesis, examined what he felt was an on-going conflict between Anglican missionaries and the Hudson Bay Company, based on their differing concepts of society in Rupert's Land.⁹ His work was to some extent paralleled by Professor W. H. Brooks' 1972 study of the role of Methodism in the west during the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Brooks does not concentrate on the missionary-Indian encounter, but it does play a significant part in his work. While most subsequent authors have tended to agree with the interpretation that missionaries and fur traders were in conflict, at least one recent writer, J. Goossen, has argued that in her 1975 case study of the Stanley Mission, at least, the missionaries and the Hudson's Bay Company were so interdependent that they were forced to cooperate, not compete, when working with the Indians.¹¹ Much earlier, in 1952, F. Pannekoek took a different

approach when he concentrated on the agricultural missions of the Protestant churches in the Canadian west.¹² Pannekoek was critical of these missions for what he felt was an overly simplistic response to the nomadic lifestyle of the Indians. Several other theses have looked at the role of the missionaries as agents of cultural change. J. Usher, in her 1968 study of the Rev. William Duncan's Church Missionary Society settlement at Metlakatla, examined the attempts of an Euro-American missionary to create a model Victorian village among a group of West Coast Indians.¹³ In 1975 E. Graham used part of her thesis as the basis of a book which focused on the work of Anglican and Methodist missionaries among the Indians of southern Ontario,¹⁴ while B. Gainer, in 1978, undertook a similar study of the work of Roman Catholic missionaries in the Canadian west.¹⁵ Graham acknowledged that the missionaries were agents of change on the one hand, but argued that they also helped the Indians to preserve some aspects of their culture and to develop a new identity. Gainer argued, that contrary to the commonly accepted view, Catholic missionaries were, generally speaking, as eager to have Indians accept European "civilization" along with Christianity as their Protestant counterparts were. Thus, they were not as culturally relativist as generally believed.

Two recent theses which examine the interaction between European missionaries and Indians in Northern Canada during the latter part of the nineteenth century, are methodologically significant. M. McCarthy, in her study of the mission philosophy and practices of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate among the Athapaskans, found that the Oblates made few adaptations to their Euro-American version of Christianity. The

Athapaskans, while accepting Catholicism, continued to maintain their own culture relatively intact, and to varying degrees attempted to syncretize Christian and Indian religious ideas and practices.¹⁶ K. Abel, in her ethnohistorical study of the Dene response to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Church Missionary Society, attempted to look at both sides of the cultural interaction. She argued that although the Dene became Christian, they "made active choices on the basis of a strong cultural tradition", rather than being passive recipients of a new religious tradition.¹⁷

Several theses have focused specifically on the work of Christian Indians or mixed-bloods who served as native missionaries among their own people or among other Indian bands. K. Pettipas, for instance, has described the work of Henry Budd, a prominent nineteenth century native Anglican missionary and examined how his work reflected the views of the Church Missionary Society.¹⁸ D. Smith analyzed the dominant role played by Peter Jones in the Mississauga's reception of Methodism and European civilization in Upper Canada during the early nineteenth century.¹⁹ More recently V. Fast outlined the work of a number of native missionaries in her exploration of the encounters between missionaries and Indians,²⁰ while I. Mabindisa examined in depth the work of one of these men, Henry Bird Steinhauer, among the Cree.²¹ Smith and Mabindisa both stressed the Methodist background which helped to shape the Christian sensibilities of these two prominent Native missionaries, and demonstrated how they were able to use their unique status to convince other Indians to accept both Christianity and Euro-American society.

Although these recent works have considerably altered our

understanding of the contacts between missionaries and Indians, there is still work to be done in this area. During the past two decades historians and anthropologists, often using tools and approaches developed to analyze contemporary societies, have begun to examine and to attempt to reconstruct Indian society and its institutions as they may have existed at the time of contact. The works of such diverse scholars as C. Bishop, A. I. Hallowell, H. Hickerson, R. W. Dunning and E. Rogers have greatly increased our knowledge of Ojibwa society.²² Although their works have been subjected to some valid criticisms, these scholars have established a foundation upon which the structure of Ojibwa society can be more readily analyzed. The publication of R. Berkhofer's Salvation and the Savage has had a similar liberating effect on the study of Christian missions.²³ Recent historians have, to varying degrees, started to accept Indians as active participants in the mission encounter, while other scholars have begun to analyze the role of traditional religion in Indian society both before and following contact with Euro-American society. C. J. Jaenen,²⁴ and more recently, J. Morrison²⁵ have established new frameworks for studying the encounters between French missionaries and Algonquians. It is possible to use these frameworks in the analysis of other encounters such as the one at Rainy Lake.

For many years the standard secondary work on Ojibwa religion was R. Landes' Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin.²⁶ Unfortunately Landes' work was based on twentieth century practices and did not provide a good historical background. A. I. Hallowell's study of conjuring in Ojibwa society,²⁷ another classic work, while providing scholars with a much

better understanding of the Ojibwa worldview, still did not attempt to provide an historical perspective. While C. Vecsey has attempted to do this in his recent study of Ojibwa religion,²⁸ Vecsey continues to use contemporary Ojibwa society to describe and make judgements upon past practices. Two other recent works have attempted to describe Ojibwa religion from markedly different perspectives. J. Grim has compared Ojibwa and Siberian shamanism,²⁹ while B. Johnson has published a book on Ojibwa ceremonies from the insider's viewpoint.³⁰

Unfortunately, none of these studies are totally satisfactory from the viewpoint of a historian analyzing a particular society during a specific time period. While they do give us some clues as to what to look for, and help us to better understand some of the descriptions of practices and ceremonies, it would be dangerous to make too many historical assumptions on the basis of these secondary works. Fortunately there are a number of first-hand descriptions of nineteenth century Ojibwa beliefs and ceremonies. However, much of our knowledge of Ojibwa religious life is dependent upon the accounts of Euro-Americans since traditional Ojibwa societies were not literate. The contemporary accounts of Euro-American observers such as J. G. Kohl, F. Hoffman, and H. B. Schoolcraft, and of captives such as J. Tanner, provide a particularly good source for an historical understanding of Ojibwa religion.³¹ They provide us with a considerable amount of factual detail and reasonably sympathetic descriptions of the people and practices they observed. Their work was complemented by the observations of some of the traders³² and the missionaries.³³ The latter descriptions were generally very biased, and written with little

knowledge of, or sympathy for the Ojibwa worldview. While there were a number of histories of the Ojibwa written by Christian converts such as Peter Jones and George Copway, their descriptions of Ojibwa religion were generally written to show the advantages of the Christian religion over the one they had abandoned.³⁴

It is difficult, therefore, but not impossible, to analyze the missionary-Ojibwa encounter from the respective viewpoints of both groups. This thesis will attempt to describe one such an encounter which took place between several Methodist missionaries and a number of bands of Ojibwa in the Rainy Lake region during the mid-nineteenth century. It is hoped that a better understanding of the events will help to clarify the nature of such encounters, and that it will add to our knowledge of Ojibwa society and religion during this period.

FOOTNOTES

¹ John Webster Grant, Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984). For a similar overview of the missionary-Indian encounter in the United States see Henry W. Bowden, American Indians and Christian Missions, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). James Axtell and James P. Ronda's Indian Missions: A Critical Bibliography, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978) discusses changing approaches to the subject, and identifies some of the seminal work in the field of mission history over the past several decades.

² John Carroll, Case and his Contemporaries, 5 vols., (Toronto: Wesleyan Office, 1867-77). Other denominational histories of Methodism which still should be consulted are George Frederick Playter's The History of Methodism in Canada, (Toronto: Wesleyan Printing Establishment, 1869), J. E. Sanderson's The First Century of Methodism in Canada, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1908) and F. C. Stephenson's One Hundred Years of Canadian Methodist Missions: 1824-1924, (Toronto: Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1925). Like Carroll's work they are primarily useful for the original source material which they contain that is often unavailable elsewhere. Particularly useful in this regard is George Cornish's Encyclopedia of Methodism, 2 vols., (Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1881) since it contains detailed information on individual mission stations and missionaries. George Findlay and W. W. Holdsworth's History of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, 5 vols., (London: Epworth Press, 1921-4) unfortunately reflects the fact that the Canadian missions played a minor role in the total Methodist missionary effort with the result that only passing references are made to the Canadian missions.

³ James Evans has probably had more biographies written about him than any other single Protestant missionary, but without exception they can best be described as hagiographies. Egerton R. Young's Apostle of the North, (Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1899) and John Maclean's James Evans: Inventor of the Syllabic System of the Cree Language, (Toronto: Methodist Mission House, 1899) were both written by fellow Methodist missionaries with the purpose of casting Evans into a heroic mould. Lorne Pierce's James Evans, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1926) and Nan Shipley's The James Evans Story, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1966) continue in the same tradition. While Shipley makes use of original source material, her work intermingles historical fact and fiction in equal amounts. It has thus been left to academics such as William Howard Brooks "British Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Activities in the Hudson's Bay Company Territory, 1840-1854", Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society, Vol. XIX, Nos. 1 & 2 (March-June, 1977): 57-74 to challenge the superhuman, saintly image of the man.

⁴ A. G. Morice, History of the Catholic Missions in Western Canada: from Lake Superior to the Pacific, 1659-1895, 2 vols., (Toronto: Musson Book Co., 1910).

⁵J. H. Riddell, Methodism in the Middle West, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1946).

⁶T. C. B. Boon, The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962).

⁷A. S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71, 2nd Edition, Edited by Lewis G. Thomas, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

⁸G. F. G. Stanley, The Birth of Western Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960).

⁹Arthur N. Thompson, "The Expansion of the Church of England in Rupert's Land from 1820-1939, under the Hudson's Bay Company and the Church Missionary Society", Ph.D diss., Cambridge University, 1962.

¹⁰William Howard Brooks, "Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century", Ph.D diss., University of Manitoba, 1972.

¹¹Jaye Goossen, "The Relationships of the Church Missionary Society and the Hudson's Bay Company in Rupert's Land: 1821-60, with a Case Study of the Stanley Mission under the Direction of the Rev. Robert Hunt", Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1974.

¹²Fritz Pannekoek, "Protestant Agricultural Missions in the Canadian West to 1870", Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1970.

¹³Jean Usher, "William Duncan Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia", Ph.D diss., University of British Columbia, 1968.

¹⁴Elizabeth Graham, Medicine Man to Missionary: Missionaries as Agents of Change among the Indians of Southern Ontario, 1784-1867, (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1975).

¹⁵Brenda J. Gainer, "Catholic Missionaries as Agents of Social Change among the Metis and Indians of Red River, 1818-1845", Master's thesis, Carleton University, 1978.

¹⁶Mary Martha McCarthy, "The Missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate to the Athapaskans, 1846-1870: Theory, Structure, and Method", Ph.D diss., University of Manitoba, 1981.

¹⁷Kerry Margaret Abel, "The Drum and the Cross: An Ethnohistorical Study of Mission Work among the Dene, 1858-1902", Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, 1985.

¹⁸Katherine Ann Pettipas, "Henry Budd: A Native Victorian Missionary in Rupert's Land, 1840-1865", Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1971.

¹⁹Donald B. Smith, "The Mississauga, Peter Jones, and the White Man: the Algonquin's Adjustment to the Europeans on the Northshore of Lake Ontario to 1860", Ph.D diss., University of Toronto, 1975.

²⁰Vera Kathrin Fast, "The Protestant Missionary and Fur Trade Society: Initial Contact in the Hudson's Bay Territory, 1820-1850", Ph.D diss., University of Manitoba, 1983.

²¹Issack K. Mabindisa, "The Praying Man: the Life and Times of Henry Bird Steinhauer", Ph.D diss., University of Alberta, 1984.

²²Several scholars whose discipline was anthropology have contributed significantly to the study of present and past Ojibwa. A. Irving Hallowell's The Role of Conjuring in Saulteaux Society, (New York: Octagon Books, 1971), first published in 1942, has remained a classic in its field. While this study and others by Hallowell deal primarily with the Lake Winnipeg region, they provide an indispensable introduction to the world view of the Ojibwa people. In a series of articles beginning with "Changing Settlement Patterns of the Cree-Ojibwa of Northern Ontario", (Southwestern Journal of Anthropology) 19 (1963): 64-88, Edward S. Rogers provided subsequent scholars with new means of determining who the indigenous people in the region were, and which territories they actually occupied. R. W. Dunning, in Social and Economic Change among the North Ojibwa, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959) provided an early attempt to analyze the social organization of the Ojibwa through the use of a combination of field data and historical records, although Dunning's study concentrated on the contemporary communities.

It remained for Harold Hickerson, The Chippewa and their Neighbours: A Study in Ethnohistory, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970) and Charles A. Bishop, The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: An Historical and Ecological Study, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974) to employ what began to be referred to as an ethnohistorical approach. That is, they used library and archival materials, and historiographic methods to study Ojibwa culture as it existed in the past, and to analyze the historical factors which helped to determine the changes that occurred.

²³Robert F. Berkhofer, Salvation and the Savage, (Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1965).

²⁴In his early study of French-Amerindian cultural contacts entitled: Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), Cornelius J. Jaenen attempted to understand both groups within the context of their time. In "Amerindian responses to French Missionary Intrusion, 1611-1760: A Caegorization". Religion/Culture, Canadian Issues/Themes Canadiens VII (1985): 182-197, he attempted to analyze the reasons for Amerindian conversions. Jaenen set forth four reasons for positive responses and an equal number of reasons for negative responses.

²⁵Kenneth M. Morrison, "Discourse and the accommodation of Values: Toward a Revision of Mission History", (Journal of the American Academy of Religion) LIII/3 (Sept. 1985): 365-382. Morrison uses historical

documents to attempt to reconstruct "the process of religious dialogue" through the use of the findings and methods of several disciplines.

²⁶ Ruth Landes, Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968).

²⁷ A. Irving Hallowell, op. cit.

²⁸ Christopher Vecsey, Traditional Ojibwa Religion, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1983).

²⁹ John Grim, The Shaman: Patterns of Siberian and Ojibway Healing, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983).

³⁰ Basil Johnson, Ojibwa Ceremonies, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982).

³¹ W. J. Hoffman's study of the Midewiwin, "The Midewiwin or 'Grand Medicine Society' of the Ojibwa". Annual Reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 7:143-300, remains one of the most exhaustive treatments of the subject to this day. While it contained many of the current biases of ethnologists, it is filled with massive amounts of descriptive detail. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, the American Indian agent at Sault Ste. Marie, used his Ojibwa wife as a source of many of his "facts" about Ojibwa life and customs, but Schoolcraft was particularly determined to stress the negative features. A believer in the single creation theory of mankind, he was determined to show that the North American Indians had become degenerate through their wanderings. Schoolcraft's work therefore is important more in that it helped to influence other writers, than in what it can tell us about the Ojibwa. Johann Georg Kohl, a German traveller, in his book, Kitchi-Gami: Life among the Lake Superior Ojibway, 1860 Reprint Edition, (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985), exhibited, by contrast, a remarkable empathy for Ojibwa beliefs and practices, and saw value in many of their religious practices.

John Tanner's A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner during 30 Years Residence among the Indians of North America, 1830, Reprint edition, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1956) provides another perspective for understanding Ojibwa practices and customs.

³² David Thompson's Narrative of his Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812, edited by J. B. Tyrrell, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1916) and Sixteen Years in the Indian Country: The Journal of Daniel Williams Harmon, 1800-1816, edited with an introduction by W. Kaye Lamb, (Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1957) both contain fairly extensive, but superficial descriptions of Ojibwa religion from the viewpoint of fur traders who were probably more religious in their own society than most of their compatriots.

³³ James Evans, in his diary, mentions that he was at work on a description of the history and beliefs of the Indian people, but it was

never published. Thus, we are left with his comments as revealed in his journals and letters. While these do contain a few fairly extensive descriptions of Ojibwa ceremonies, the comments of Evans and his Euro-American fellow missionaries were limited -- no doubt due to the fact that they saw little or nothing of value in Ojibwa society.

³⁴Peter Jones, History of the Ojibway Indians, (London, 1861) and George Copway, The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation, 1850, Reprint edition, (Toronto: Coles, 1972) were both written from the viewpoint of Ojibwa from what is now Southwestern Ontario. Warren, William W., History of the Ojibwa People, 1885, Reprint edition, (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984), was written by a mixed-blood resident of what is now Minnesota. All three men spoke Ojibwa and thus were able to gain access to traditional Ojibwa lore in a way that Euro-Americans could not. All three were written with a view to awakening an interest in and concern for their brethren. While they must be read with care, often they can provide the reader with invaluable information which cannot be found in any other source.

CHAPTER TWO: OJIBWA SOCIETY BEFORE THE MISSIONARY

Kochejeeng (Couchiching) as it was known by the Ojibwa, or Lac la Pluie and Rainy Lake, as it was successively known by the French and English, is part of what today is called the Boundary Waters region -- a series of lakes and rivers which stretch from the bottom of Lake Superior to Traverse Bay on the Lake of the Woods.¹ In his 1806 description of the region, Dr. John McLoughlin reckoned that the distance between the two points was approximately 200 leagues, while the distance from the northern point, Sandy Lake, to the southern, Vermillion Lake, was about 150 leagues. By canoe, the normal mode of travel, it would have taken more than two weeks to cross the region from one side to the other. To the north of the main waterway the country forms a part of the Canadian Shield, while to the south the land gradually opens up into parkland and then prairie. According to McLoughlin the country was "... in general mountainous, especially towards the North, where it is likewise more swampy. The lakes and rivers are innumerable ... [and] it is allowed by them [the Ojibwa] and by all travellers that at least a fifth if not a fourth of the country is under water".² Dr. John J. Bigsby, who travelled through the region with David Thompson in 1823 described the general region as "... a rugged assemblage of hills, with lakes, rivers, and morasses, of all sizes and shapes ...".³ It was this interlocking series of rivers and lakes which served as the transportation routes for the Ojibwa and later the Euro-American fur traders and early settlers.

Rainy Lake was described by numerous visitors as being a large lake approximately 50 miles long, with low, rocky shores which were broken by

numerous swampy bays and the occasional sandy beach. The land surrounding the lake was composed of rocky hills rising to a height of about 500 feet, on which scrawny stands of timber stood. It was, as many observed, a forbidding looking place. However, the valley of the Rainy River "afforded a very delightful contrast to the barren shores of Rainy Lake ...".⁴ The river at its source was a broad, swift-flowing stream, which was interrupted two miles from its source by Chaudiere Falls, thirty-three miles later by Manitou Rapids and five miles later still by Sault Rapids. These falls and rapids were favourite meeting spots for the Ojibwa in the region who gathered there to fish for sturgeon, and plant their gardens in the small meadows alongside of the river. In the next seventy-five miles the river gradually broadened out before emptying into the Lake of the Woods. The land alongside the river rose in several terraces or plateaux, each covered with lush vegetation, large stands of deciduous trees and small meadows. As successive Euro-American observers, including Sir George Simpson, were to note, it was the most promising area for future agricultural enterprises since the soil was alluvial, and the weather conditions very similar to areas of Upper and Lower Canada. At various points along its length Rainy River was joined by other, smaller streams from the south, which were used by the local Ojibwa as transportation routes. Further back, to the rear of the terraces on the north side the land became rocky and swampy once more. Inland, among the numerous lakes and rivers to the north of Rainy Lake, the land was not so fertile and the weather more severe, so that life was more precarious. Even there, however, the Ojibwa had adapted to their environment, and under normal circumstances

were able to lead to a subsistence existence.

The country provided the Ojibwa with most of their needs. The forests supplied the large birch trees that could be used for the Ojibwa canoes and dwellings, as well as maple trees which were tapped for their maple sugar sap. Blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, bearberries and other wild berries grew in abundance on the rocky slopes left bare by fires. In the fertile meadow ground alongside the Rainy River and on the islands of the Lake of the Woods the Ojibwa had planted gardens for generations. Similar, though smaller, gardens were also planted on the shores of some of the lakes to the north. Wild rice was plentiful along the banks of the rivers and in the shallow bays of the numerous lakes in the regions. Although extremes in water levels sometimes caused crop failures, the Ojibwa were normally able to supply both their own needs and those of the Hudson's Bay Company traders. The rivers and lakes were full of sturgeon, pike, whitefish, trout and pickerel. Ojibwa fishermen used a variety of methods to catch fish throughout the year, and even in difficult years were usually able to depend upon them as a food staple. McLoughlin noted in his 1806 report that a variety of large and small animals which existed in the region in the early nineteenth century were used by the Ojibwa for food and clothing. He reported that the forests contained moose, elk, reindeer (caribou), and bear, as well as a number of smaller animals such as lynx, wolves, foxes, and rabbits. Even with the apparent depletion of some of these larger animals, the Ojibwa were left with game birds such as partridge, and water fowl such as ducks, geese, and water hens. The marsh lands provided a natural habitat for beaver, muskrat and other small

furbearing animals such as otter and mink. While the beaver had declined in numbers due to over-trapping and perhaps disease, there are no records that other furbearing animals did likewise.

Socio-Economic and Political Organization of the Ojibwa

The Indian people who resided in the region around Rainy Lake during the nineteenth century regarded themselves as Anishinabe (Anicinabek), which meant "The People". However, the fact that they were known to Euro-Americans by a variety of names resulted in the confusion that existed then and continues to the present day.⁵ The three most common names that were used to describe the Rainy Lake natives during the nineteenth century were "Ojibwa or Ojibway", "Chippewa" and "Saulteaux". All three, along with Anishinabe, continue to be used to varying degrees today. The first two names were variants of "ocipwe" or "otchipwe" which is usually thought to have originally referred to the puckered seams of their moccasins. Ojibwa and Ojibway reflect a slight difference in spelling, the former being the usual spelling today, although the Ojibwa writer William Warren preferred Ojibway, as do such contemporary Canadian organizations as the Council of Ojibway Chiefs. Chippewa is the variant of "ocipwe" which is still commonly used today in the United States. Saulteaux or Saulteurs (the name referred to the rapids near which the people lived) was a name originally given to those Ojibwa who lived near Sault Ste. Marie, and later came to be applied to the Woodlands Ojibwa living in Northwestern Ontario and Eastern Manitoba. In order to ensure uniformity this thesis will use the term "Ojibwa", except when direct quotes are used.

Who were these Ojibwa, and where did they come from? While the

precise answers to these questions are not vital to this particular study, it is important to fully comprehend their understanding of themselves, and the feelings of the fur traders and missionaries about them. Misunderstandings concerning Ojibwa society not only coloured the views of contemporary Euro-Americans, but continue to colour the views of many present day commentators. At the time of Euro-American penetration into the interior of the North American continent, European society was characterized by relatively sophisticated socio-political structures dominated by units known as nation states. In describing the historical development of these societies it is easy to focus one's studies around people of these units. While languages, religion, and social customs may have differed within nation states, the concept of the nation state provides a convenient conceptual basis around which investigation can be pursued. Indian society, by contrast, presents no such easy means of differentiating socio-political units. As a result contemporary observers and present-day scholars have adopted a variety of means of differentiating the sub-units of Indian society, with the result that there is considerable confusion over the use of terminology.

Although popular usage still considers the Ojibwa to be a tribe, as will be seen, such political concepts are really meaningless for a people who never organized beyond the band level. Tribes, as M. Fried has pointed out, are mainly a creation of Euro-American society which wanted a convenient way of dealing with the Indian people.⁶ Linguistically the Ojibwa belonged to the Algonquian language family, which occupied most of the North-east part of the continent, parts of the central and sub-artic, and much of the northern plains. The Ojibwa

and Cree languages were the main sub-groups in the Algonquian family, but it must be remembered that while all Ojibwa spoke basically the same language, there were substantial regional differences in usage.

Culturally the Ojibwa people in general belonged to the group known as the "Eastern Woodlands" people, although some of the Rainy Lake people occasionally made brief forays into the plains region. While it is possible to make some generalizations according to cultural areas, the vast size of the Eastern Woodlands area means that numerous variations in cultural practices took place, so that it is imperative that we look at the specific situation whenever possible. Finally, it must be remembered that none of the Indian societies were static, so that contemporary descriptions of Ojibwa society must be placed within their geographical and historical context.

According to the creation myths which formed part of the Midewiwin ceremonies, the Ojibwa believed that their forefathers originally "lived on the shores of the Great Salt Water" in the east, but had gradually moved west until they had reached their present location.⁷ Subsequent historians such as H. Hickerson⁸ and C. Bishop⁹ have argued that the original Ojibwa were initially located in the Great Lakes region around Sault Ste. Marie where they played a major role in the early French fur trade. However, they do agree with Warren that after 1680, when the nature of this trade changed, the Ojibwa gradually spread out from their heartland, splitting into two divisions with the Northern Ojibwa moving north of Lake Superior and along through the Shield. According to Warren "... a large band early occupied a village at Rainy Lake" where they came into contact with some Assiniboines with whom they made peace.

Later they joined the Southern Ojibwa in intermittent wars against the Dakota.¹⁰ According to this interpretation, the southern division of Ojibwa had moved into the part of Wisconsin near the island of La Pointe, and slowly advanced westward, battling the Dakota for the game-rich parkland country. It was during this period that the Southern Ojibwa began to develop larger and more collective forms of village life centered around the Midewiwin religious movement.

Although the various versions of this interpretation are now disputed by some ethnohistorians, the exact origin and composition of the Ojibwa people does remain a subject of considerable controversy.¹¹ Early ethnologists in the region had at first assumed that the Ojibwa in the region had always been there. Warren's historical accounts were thought to be unreliable since they were based solely on oral evidence. However, a number of scholars beginning with Hickerson,¹² followed by Bishop¹³ and A. Ray¹⁴ began to argue that there was solid evidence that the Ojibwa did in fact gradually replace the Cree in the shield regions west of Lake Superior during the eighteenth century. According to this thesis the Cree gradually vacated the region because of poor trapping due to declining animal populations, and their place was taken by bands of Northern Ojibwa. Although Hickerson and others make extensive use of the reports of the early explorers in the area in order to justify their theory, their work has recently been challenged by yet another group of other scholars who argue that the present-day Northern Ojibwa "... are the descendents of those people known at contact under a variety of names, who already resided in the boreal forest north and west of Lake Superior".¹⁵ Greenberg, Morrison and others argue that since the early

explorers and the people they encountered used "tribal" designations in a variety of ways scholars have to be careful how they are interpreted. They point out, for instance, that the term "muskegoo" which is often used to refer to the Swampy Cree, was also used to refer to bands of Ojibwa -- a point on which Warren would have agreed, since he mentioned the muskegoo as being one of the groups of Ojibwa near Rainy Lake. Without a clear understanding of the historical development of these usages, scholars are liable to assume mass movements of peoples and create large culture areas where none existed.

Even if we accept the fact that the Ojibwa in the Rainy Lake region may have descended from various independent bands who had resided in the area before contact with Euro-Americans, we are still left with the question as to their relationship with other groups of "Ojibwa". Hickerson has argued that the Ojibwa to the south of the Boundary Waters region have a much more cooperative society based on larger socio-political units than their Northern Ojibwa neighbours. He has provided us with a variety of ways of classifying present day Ojibwa according to large culture areas, based presumably on a variety of historical, linguistic and cultural factors. Hickerson divided the Ojibwa people into four main groups: the Northern Ojibwa whom he equates with the Saulteaux, the Plains Ojibwa or Bungi, the South-eastern Ojibwa who occupied the Great Lakes region, and the South-western Chippewa. However, the fact that there is still no agreement among scholars can be seen by the fact that the recently published Handbook of American Indians contains entries for the South-eastern Ojibwa, the South-western Chippewa, and the Northern

Ojibwa.¹⁶ The Saulteaux are included as a separate grouping, although the Bungi are not. The individual bands around the Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods regions continue to be included in two, sometimes three of the separate cultural areas. Obviously they did not and do not fit neatly into broad classification schemes. The reasons for this will become more clear as we examine the socio-political and economic basis of their life during the nineteenth century.

Ojibwa society has often been described by Euro-American anthropologists as classless, egalitarian, and lacking in complex forms of organization.¹⁷ Generally speaking this is an accurate description of Rainy Lake society, although some distinctions need to be made. Nuclear families formed the primary unit of society, although in most instances small groups of families joined together for hunting and social purposes to form loosely organized bands under the informal leadership of a head man or "chief". In both the Lac Seul and Rainy Lake regions the size of these bands, as judged by fur trade censuses and missionary reports, would appear to average between twenty to thirty members, although some sources indicate some bands numbered over one hundred. Since membership in the bands was based on kinship ties, the chief was usually the senior member of the kinship group, although sometimes he attained his position as the result of hunting or trapping ability. Since the fur traders liked to be able to identify the leader of such bands, they sometimes declared one of the band members to be chief. One of J. Cooper's informants from Rainy Lake suggested that originally the Ojibwa had no chiefs. "Only since the Hudson's Bay Company came have there been chiefs, the best hunter being made

chief."¹⁸ In actual fact the Ojibwa response to changing circumstances meant that a number of different types of chiefs emerged during the nineteenth century. However, it is not possible to generalize from region to another. While war chiefs played an important leadership role among the Ojibwa in the American territories to the south, there is no extensive evidence to suggest that this was the case in the Rainy Lake region.¹⁹ In fact, as will become apparent, their place appears to have been taken by religious figures who often assumed strong leadership roles. Although there was some movement towards the development of principal chiefs whose influence extended beyond their individual bands, such chiefs, like their band counterparts, had no coercive authority and were not authorized to speak on the behalf of the people. Even as late as 1872 a member of the Sanford Fleming Expedition complained that the influence of the chiefs was "... indirect, undefined, wholly personal and confined to a particular group they live with ...".²⁰

Every Ojibwa was a member of a totemic clan which took its name or symbol from an animal. Members of a particular clan were considered to be blood relations and as such were subject to the various kinship obligations that existed. Clans were exogamous and patrilineal. That is, members of the same clan were not allowed to marry, and descent was claimed through the father. The combination of the kinship system, totemic clans and marriage between cross-cousins meant that marriages usually took place between individuals in different bands. This, and the fact that clan members separated by great geographic distances were still considered kinsmen, provided a certain sense of unity among the Ojibwa. This is well illustrated by the fact that the Rev. Peter

Jacobs, who was a member of the Reindeer clan from Rice Lake in Upper Canada was recognized as a kinsman by members of the Reindeer clan from Rainy Lake. Jacobs' experience also highlights the strong kinship orientation of Ojibwa society. The Ojibwa kinship system differed from that of Euro-Americans in several ways. For instance, specific names were used for relationships between male and female children and their uncles, aunts, and cousins of both sexes. Elaborate codes of behaviour for the extended family were developed with regard to teaching responsibilities, gift-giving, sexual relations and even social intercourse. These kinship responsibilities and rules of conduct had important implications for the attempts of Christian missionaries to impose their beliefs on the Ojibwa, and had particular implications for the native missionaries who sometimes found themselves caught between the demands of the two cultures.²¹

The Ojibwa were largely dependent upon a hunting, fishing and gathering economy, although this economy had gradually become more intermeshed with the fur trade economy of the Euro-Americans in the region. Not only had the Ojibwa adopted some aspects of Euro-American technology such as metal utensils, firearms and traps, but their seasonal round of activities had been adapted to meet these changing conditions. Moreover, social and economic aspects were frequently intertwined as Euro-American traders and Ojibwa women married "according to the custom of the country" and produced offspring that, to varying degrees, began to adopt some of the traditions of both cultures. Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that the Ojibwa were totally dependent upon the fur trade for their existence. Bishop is certainly correct in stating that "... the network of posts, hunting group

settlements, and trade relations formed an intricate web of socio-cultural affect and effect".²² However, he places too much emphasis on the reports of the traders, when he attempts to assess the situation which existed in the early nineteenth century. According to Bishop the Ojibwa became increasingly dependent upon the traders for their existence following the period of intense inter-company rivalry and the depletion of much of the animal population which supplied the Ojibwa with furs and food. This hypothesis has come under considerable scrutiny in recent years. It certainly does not apply equally to all the Ojibwa under our consideration, as will be seen.

Leo Waisberg has gone so far as to argue that Rainy Lake Ojibwa society was not a subsistence economy in the classic sense of the word. He points out that during the nineteenth century the bands in the region began to diversify their economy by growing vegetables in response to the declining natural food supply and the additional demands of the fur trade companies for food. Ojibwa garden plots containing mainly Indian corn and potatoes, but including other vegetables, existed throughout the Rainy Lake and Rainy River regions and into the Lake of the Woods region. Although the ecological situation was not as favourable as further south where Ojibwa harvests were considerable, the Rainy Lake Ojibwa were much more fortunate than their Northern Ojibwa brethren.²³ This difference in circumstances, may help to explain the different responses to the Methodist missionaries by the two groups.

Bishop and others have emphasized the large scale socio-economic problems faced by the Northern Ojibwa during the nineteenth century as large game supplies and fur bearing animals became scarce. While there

is a temptation to extend this thesis to the Ojibwa of Rainy Lake, such an attempt cannot be justified. In the first case, as Waisberg argues, the references to dislocations of game and fur supplies do not refer to a permanent situation, but rather to the population cycles of the animals involved. When low points in these cycles corresponded with years of poor wild rice and vegetable harvests such as in 1840 and 1849, the Ojibwa (and indeed the fur traders) had problems in finding a sufficient food supply. However, the documents concerning Rainy Lake suggest that problems caused by the loss of wild rice crops due to abnormally high water levels were more damaging to the local economy than the supposed disappearance of the animal population. Although there was a general decline in the number of beaver pelts traded in the region, this was compensated for by larger catches of other small animals. Hudson's Bay Company records for the mid and late nineteenth century indicate that, except for a few bad years, their fur harvests for the region continued to be good and sometimes exceptional. Moreover, while there were bad years, on the whole, deer, bear and cariboo did not disappear from the region. In fact, Waisberg has documented evidence from various sources indicating that there were herds of cariboo in the Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods regions right into the early twentieth century.²⁴ In 1936 Cooper's informants mentioned that, while cariboo were no longer present at either Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods, they had been in the recent past, and both moose and deer could still be found at the Lake of the Woods.²⁵

If food supplies had not become as depleted as often has been suggested, how then does one account for the numerous contemporary

descriptions of starving Indians that can be found in the literature of the period? Mary Black-Rogers suggests in a recent paper, that the vocabulary used by observers and participants needs to be understood in the context in which it was being used. In the context of the fur trade, trader's references to "starving Indians" most likely referred to the fact that the Ojibwa were forced to hunt for food rather than trapping furs for sale to the traders. In the case of the missionaries, the references were often embellished in order to exaggerate the "terrible state" that the heathen Indians were in before their conversion. In addition, it must be remembered that since the missionaries and most of the traders never left the forts in the winter, few of them had any first-hand experience with the Ojibwa during the winter months when food shortages were most likely to occur. Often Indians whom they had presumed dead, turned up in the spring to trade. The Ojibwa themselves contributed to this image of themselves as in desperate need of help, for they were likely to use meetings with Euro-Americans to plead for what the Euro-Americans took to be charity. However, this "pity me" approach needs to be seen within the larger context of the role that gift-giving played within Ojibwa society. To "pity" another meant to establish a relationship with the person to whom the gift was given.²⁶

The grim pictures of the starving Indians which can be found in the public documents of fur traders and missionaries should also be compared with the private statements of individuals such as the Rev. James Evans, who upon arriving at Rainy Lake for the first time recorded his impression of the local Ojibwa in his diary. They were, he observed,

"... naked and painted but fine looking fellows -- whose plump and greasy skins shew that they have skill to hunt and game on which to exercise it ...".²⁷ While Evans' description was made during the late spring when food would have been more plentiful, it hardly describes a people who were in a desperate socio-economic condition.

Since an understanding of the Ojibwa's seasonal round of activities is important for interpreting the contemporary descriptions of them, a more detailed look at these activities is warranted. Spring was probably the most significant season of the year for the Ojibwa. In early spring (March/April) they gathered together in bands to tap the sugar maple trees, and process it for sugar or sugar candy. In May and June they congregated along the rapids of various rivers in the region and fished for the sturgeon which spawned there. Many of the families, particularly those along sections of the Rainy River would, at this time plant gardens of Indian corn, potatoes, and occasionally pumpkins and squash. Spring was also the time that families from Rainy Lake, from both sides of the Rainy River, from the Lake of the Woods region, and sometimes from as far away as the Lac Seul region brought their winter's catch of furs to Fort Frances. There, in the fields alongside the fort, they would concentrate in huge gatherings numbering as many as 1,500 people for social, political and religious, as well as economic (trading) reasons. It was a time for socializing, games, gambling and celebrating. Often young men, fresh from expeditions against the Dakota, boasted of their prowess and exhibited the scalps of their enemies.²⁸ Religious ceremonies played a key role in these activities. The Rev. Peter Jacobs contended that Rainy Lake was "the centre of

heathenism" and described how Ojibwa from hundreds of miles around came with their gifts to be initiated into the rites of the Midewiwin.²⁹ His contention is supported by similar descriptions by other Methodist missionaries such as the Rev. James Evans and the Rev. Allen Salt, by Catholic missionaries such as the Rev. Antoine Belcourt, and by various secular observers such as Henry Hind and George Grant.

During the summer months the Ojibwa dispersed to various spots to tend their gardens, to pick berries when they were ripe, and to work as wage labourers for the fur traders. In late summer and early fall some of them would return to fish for the whitefish and pickerel that were running at that time of year, and to hunt for the wildfowl which were migrating south. Generally speaking, summer was also an occasion when young people could seek out eligible mates for marriage. In the early fall (late August, September), the Ojibwa began to harvest the wild rice crops, and families with gardens harvested these as well. Supplies were cached in preparation for the winter. Then in late fall, they would pick up their winter supplies from the traders, and disperse in small family groups for the winter season.³⁰ It appears that the Rainy River Ojibwa recognized the rights of families to particular hunting and trapping territories, in much the same manner as certain wild rice bays, maple stands, berry areas and fishing spots were all recognized. However, scholars are not agreed as to whether or not these family territories were hereditary.³¹ When cache supplies were abundant and big game easy to obtain more time could be spent on trapping, but following poor rice harvests, or during severe winters, the Ojibwa were forced to concentrate on finding food, while neglecting their trapping.

During normal winters their needs were met by caribou, deer and bear supplemented by the food which had been placed in caches. When there was a shortage of big game they were forced to hunt for smaller animals such as rabbits, to do more ice fishing, and to rely more on their food caches when these were plentiful. Any scarcity of big game also affected their clothing needs since they depended upon caribou and deer for most of their clothing. As a result they sometimes were forced to rely on rabbits and other small animals for both food and clothing. While this latter practice was by no means a serious hardship, it was often used by the missionaries as evidence of the desperate condition of the Ojibwa.

The preceding outline of activities should not be taken as a strict calendar of events that was followed every year. The Ojibwa, like most similar groups, followed a lunar calendar. They named the months of the year according to some natural event which usually occurred. Thus, for instance, September was the Moon of Wild Rice. However, they sometimes had difficulties in keeping track if the weather was not consistent. As Kohl noted, this could lead to comical disputes among the leaders -- but at times it could lead to miscalculations which had serious consequences for the people involved.³² While the Ojibwa existence was dependent to a large extent on their ability to predict the course of nature, their existence, for the most part, was a satisfactory one. While they might have wished to take advantage of certain Euro-American innovations, they had no desire to alter the fundamental nature of their lifestyle.

Religious Beliefs of the Ojibwa

Religion was basic to the social fabric of the early Ojibwa, as it was for all North American Indians before their contact with Euro-Americans. It permeated every aspect of their lives, to the extent that it is impossible to discuss Indian societies without making reference to their religious beliefs. They were what Mircea Eliade has termed "homo religiosus".³³ As such, they were radically different from the Euro-Americans whom they encountered, and even more removed from most present-day scholars who study them. It is this difference in worldview which makes any understanding of their religious beliefs and practices both difficult and necessary.³⁴

Hultkrantz points out in his recent work on American Indian religion, that the study of Indian religion has gone through a number of phases beginning with the accounts of Christian missionaries such as the Jesuits and their Protestant counterparts.³⁵ While their observations were coloured by their own religious ideas, they were usually keen observers of the Indian way of life, and in the case of the Jesuits, well versed in Indian languages. This initial work was followed in the nineteenth century by the studies made by amateur ethnologists such as Edwin D. Denig and Henry R. Schoolcraft, both of whom had married Indian women and lived among the Indians for many years.³⁶

Towards the end of the nineteenth century American anthropology began to develop as a profession with the establishment of the Bureau of Ethnology. Numerous monographs on the religion of various Indian tribes were published by both professionals and dedicated amateurs. From 1892-1925 Franz Boaz and his followers dominated the study of

American Indian religion. Researchers laid stress on detailed field research which tended to describe the ceremonial or cultural aspects of the religion at the expense of religious ideas. Often the study of myths and ceremonialism was considered primarily in terms of folk-lore, with religious ideas as a purely secondary interest. Two of the men who did most to further the study of Indian religions per se were Robert Lowie and Paul Radin. Their work on the Plains and Woodlands Indians had a seminal effect on future researchers.³⁷ Whereas Lowie treated religion as one aspect of the wider cultural context, and was loath to generalize, Radin's work is full of intuitive insights gleaned from a study of the accounts of rituals and myths.

In the immediate post-1925 period, anthropological research in Indian religion declined considerably. In part this was a result of the feeling that most "pure" Indian cultures were gone, so that field studies concentrated on other aspects of Indian life. Nevertheless, the social-psychological approach begun by Ruth Benedict did lead to a number of significant studies. Scholars such as Rev. John Cooper, Diamond Jenness, Irving Hallowell and Harold Hickerson produced valuable studies on various aspects of Woodlands Indian religion, while Ruth Underhill drew upon her work on Indians in the southern United States to produce the first general study of Indian religions.³⁸

More recently, anthropologists have again begun to emphasize the examination of Indian religion. Studies such as those by John Epes Brown, Dennis and Barbara Tedlock and Sam Gill have stressed the positive contributions of Indian religious ideas to contemporary society.³⁹ Hultkrantz is typical of a new phenomenological approach to

Indian religion which helps to place it in the larger context of world religions.⁴⁰ During this latter period there has been a growing interest in the reconstruction of American Indian religious history through the use of archaeological remains, documentary records and oral history. Such studies have examined both pre-contact Indian religion and its interaction with Christian beliefs. A. Irving Hallowell, Ruth Landes, Elizabeth Graham, and Christopher Vecsey have each contributed studies of Ojibwa religious beliefs from markedly different perspectives.⁴¹ Jennifer Brown and Robert Brightman's introduction to their edition of George Nelson's 19th century first-hand observations of Ojibwa and Cree religious beliefs and practices, provides a thorough review of the literature.⁴²

Historians have been much less open to the study of Indian religion than their anthropological brethren. Partly, one suspects, this was a result of the concentration on the study of North American history from the perspective of the Euro-Americans. The corollary of this was that Indian religious beliefs were of interest only to ethnologists and folklorists. Because they were considered to be merely quaint, it was felt that they had had no real influence on the actions of men or tribal groups. In addition, it was difficult for the historian to analyze the specific religious beliefs of individual Indians in the same way that it was possible to do for European religious thinkers, since specific primary sources do not exist. Nevertheless, using recent ethnohistorical approaches, it is possible to reconstruct such beliefs much more accurately than hitherto thought, and it is possible, through an understanding of the general nature of the Indian worldview, to

extrapolate what some of the beliefs of particular people or bands would probably have been, and thus to attempt an explanation of the reasons for their actions in particular situations.

In the section that follows, Indian religion will be described in terms of the Indian worldview, their concepts of God and gods, their major rites of passage and similar religious ceremonies, and the role of religious leaders in Indian society. Ideas, beliefs and practices common to most Indian religions will be discussed first, followed by a more in-depth examination of Ojibwa beliefs and practices. Since most of the studies are not done by historians it is difficult to place such beliefs and practices within their precise historical context, although an attempt will be made to indicate the general time period and concentrate on those beliefs and practices current during the nineteenth century in the general region around Rainy Lake.

If we are to understand the Indian worldview we have to set aside our own ideas regarding place, time, and ultimate reality. As Eliade explains, "there is no other way of understanding a foreign universe than to place oneself inside it, at its very center, in order to progress from there to all the values that it possesses".⁴³ North American Indians, before their contact with Euro-Americans, lived in a sacralized universe. Since nature was seen as a divine creation, the world was impregnated with sacredness. For them the universe "lived" and "spoke"; its very existence was proof of its sanctity. Indians perceived none of the boundaries between the natural and the supernatural that exist today, since in their minds the two were indissolubly linked. However, space was not homogeneous -- there were interruptions in it, and some

parts were qualitatively different than others. These special places -- often found at the top of a mountain, in a glen in the forest, or in a cave, were felt to be specially endowed with "mystery" or what Rudolph Otto called the "Holy". Other spaces had to be "consecrated" or made holy before they could be used. Many of the Indian rituals and ceremonies centred around these concepts of place and of a sacred universe. An equally important aspect of space was the Indian idea of the "centre" which helped define the universe and the individual's place in it. Thus, for instance, each house was built around a focal point so that it would be the centre of the universe. By extension, each village was built in a similar manner. By having a firm idea of the centre rooted in the rhythms and rituals of daily life, the individual was able to "centre" himself in the universe.

Similarly, the Indian concept of time was totally different from our own in that time was viewed in both temporal and sacred terms. Temporal time measured the everyday events in the lives of individuals, and as such was chronological. Sacred time, however, was the "re-creation" of sacred events which took place in the mythical past and simultaneously in the present. The retelling of the myth of the creation of the world by Nanabozho and the Earth Divers caused this sacred event to be re-enacted. Thus sacred time could not be measured in chronological terms. There was, nevertheless, a connection between temporal and sacred time, which was made possible through the performance of religious rites. It was for this reason that Indians refused to live simply in the historical present, since temporal time was constantly being broken and renewed by sacred time. Since the

universe could be recreated and renewed through the telling of the sacred myths, sacred time was considered to be even more "real" than ordinary or temporal time.⁴⁴

Fundamental to the Indians' worldview was their relationship with nature. As has been indicated previously, theirs was a worldview which did not recognize a dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, between the natural and the supernatural. Every aspect of their existence was infused with a sense of the supernatural to the extent that they had no concept of the "natural" nor of natural forces. Everything was caused by some "person", although "person" in the Ojibwa sense must not be confused with the limited meaning that we give to the term.⁴⁵ This feeling of oneness with nature has been called "participation mystique" by Lucien Levy-Bruhl in his study of what he termed primitive cultures. Levy-Bruhl attributed this "primitive" way of looking at the universe to a non-logical or non-rational mode of thinking.⁴⁶ Certainly the Indian form of conceptualization was non-rational, but this view of the universe was based on a set of logical principles once their basic premise was accepted. According to Indian beliefs there was an underlying unity in reality and thus in life. This meant that all the elements of creation including humans, animals, plants, inanimate objects and what Euro-Americans would term impersonal forces were governed by the same forces and subject to the same "laws".

The human person, in Ojibwa belief, was not a being set apart from the rest of creation by his superior attributes. Rather, humans shared similar attributes with a number of other classes of "persons". Each

individual human person was a composite of several material and non-material attributes centred around body and soul. Since both the body proper and its psychic extensions (blood, hair, spittle, fecus) were considered to be part of the individual person, these extensions were given special protection so that the individual would not be harmed. Likewise the person's image or shadow was considered to be an extension of the person, and care was taken to protect it as well. A vitally important extension of a different sort was the person's name or names. Each person was given a name at different stages throughout life, the most important of which were the ones given at birth and at puberty. Since these names were felt to express the essence of the person, they were usually kept secret and accorded the same protection as the other extensions of the body.

Although the Ojibwa believed that the human person was composed of body and soul, they differed with many other Indians in their conception of the latter. Most Ojibwa believed that each person had two souls. The first of these, termed the ego-soul by Hultkrantz, provided intelligence, memory and emotion. It was thought to be located in the heart, and could only leave the body for short periods of time without causing illness and ultimately death. The second soul was a travelling or free soul which had its home in the brain. It could and did leave the body for long periods of time -- either during dreams and visions, or when the person needed to see at a distance as during a hunt or battle. Both souls were believed to have an existence apart from the body, and certain powerful persons were believed to be able to take other bodily forms for long periods of time. These beliefs in the

multiple attributes of the human person influenced the Ojibwa attitude towards outsiders and helped shape many of their beliefs regarding illness and sorcery.⁴⁷

The same attributes which were applied to human persons were also applied to the other classes of persons in the Algonquian universe. These common attributes were based, however, on behavioural characteristics and forms of social organization rather than anthropomorphic characteristics or outward appearances. Thus humans, animals and Manitous were all related even though they differed in their physical characteristics.⁴⁸ While human persons possessed more power than most animals, they were definitely less powerful than the Manitous or mythical beings who played such an important part in both Ojibwa creation stories and their daily life. Since these other classes of persons were felt to be related to man they were addressed in such terms and frequently replied in like manner. Thus, the Manitous were often addressed as "our grandfathers" as a mark of the respect that they were accorded. Animals were often addressed as "brother" or "sister", particularly in instances where the individual had entered into a special relationship with some guardian spirit as a result of a dream or vision.

The social relations that existed between the various classes of persons were a very important part of the Ojibwa worldview. This was particularly true of the relationship between humans and Manitous. While "Manitou" is the Ojibwa term, there is difficulty in finding an equivalent Euro-American term. Some scholars define the word as meaning guardian spirit or god, while others use the alternate Ojibwa term "our

grandfathers" suggesting powerful figures from a mythical past. However, in our discussion the term will be used in a somewhat wider context since there was little that was thought or done that was not connected with one or more of the Manitous. Manitous personified the various natural forces and life circumstances, as well as certain natural places, things or persons. Since Manitous possessed spiritual powers the Indians were careful to ensure that they were treated properly and given their proper due. Only in this way could various "natural" disasters be avoided -- and even then the capricious nature of certain Manitous caused problems from time to time for human "persons". As a result the social relations that existed between Manitous and other persons were central to the everyday life of all Ojibwa. The Ojibwa universe was filled with numerous Manitous, each one with a particular role or roles to play. However, only a few of the more important types and figures need be described at this point in order to provide a general idea of their worldview. While there was and still is some dispute whether or not their idea of a High God or Supreme Being was related to that of the Manitous in general, for structural reasons, this concept will be treated in a separate section.⁴⁹

Foremost among the Ojibwa Manitous was the figure known as Nanabozho. The central figure in numerous myths, he was viewed at various times as human, hare, wolf, demigod, culture hero, trickster, and buffoon. In short he was a composite figure with many diverse and often contradictory characteristics: at one end the same time powerful and helpless, wise and stupid, moral and devious.⁵⁰ As culture hero he created the present world, helped teach the Ojibwa various important

life skills, and served as a model and ideal. As trickster he was seen as a greedy and cruel manipulator who broke the rules of Ojibwa society and engaged in numerous ribald adventures. A similar figure in Cree myths was the figure called Wesukechak (Wisahketchahk).

A number of Manitous were associated with the various Ojibwa ceremonies -- usually as messengers or visitors. The most important of these was Mikinahk the turtle. Among both the Ojibwa and their Cree neighbours, he usually served as the messenger at Shaking Tent ceremonies. He was considered to have a ribald sense of humour, be a good story-teller, and have a desire for tobacco. Several of the important Manitous were connected with what we today term natural forces. The Four Winds were felt to dwell in the four corners of the world where they were responsible for the changes in the weather and the seasons. In Ojibwa cosmology they were usually considered to be brothers (sometimes of Nanabozho) with individual personalities. While the Four Winds generally could be relied on to act in certain ways, like humans they were sometimes capricious -- often with disastrous results for their human relatives. In addition to the Four Winds themselves there were various Manitous that inhabited the air and the sea. Among these was the Underwater Manitou or Sea Serpent who took the form of either a sea lion or great lynx -- both of which possessed a great horn. In either form the Serpent was a creature which inspired both terror and reverence. It had great powers over the animals of the water and the land; as well as causing dangerous rapids and storms which sank canoes. The Thunderbirds were seen as counterforces to the Underwater Manitous. Powerful members of the hawk family, they manifested themselves in the

form of lighting and thunder. Their powers were sought against the Underwater Manitou, against individuals who had transgressed moral codes, as well as in war and when seeking medical cures. In addition they were sometimes seen as the messengers of the Four Winds.⁵¹

Although the Underwater Manitou controlled the water and animals and the Thunderbirds controlled the animals of the air, each species had a Manitou who was responsible for the protection of the animals of that particular species. While every species had a "Keeper" or "Master", some of them played a greater part in the life of the Ojibwa than others.⁵² Thus, for instance, the keepers of the deer and bear were particularly important since deer were essential to the food and clothing needs of the Woodlands Indians, while bears were associated with certain "manners" and rituals. Each of the keepers had certain talents or powers associated with particular needs and were thus called upon for help in times of need. Since they had and frequently used the power of metamorphosis they need not appear in the outward appearance of the animal they protected. Thus, the Ojibwa were cautious in all their relationships for fear of inadvertently angering a keeper, or encountering one who was bent on revenge for some past wrong.

In addition to the "Keepers" of the animals, each Ojibwa and Cree had a particular "Keeper" or guardian Manitou known in Cree as a "Pawakan" and in Ojibwa as a "Powagan". Guardian Manitous usually appeared to their human counterparts in a dream or vision (usually at puberty) at which time the two entered into a lasting relationship. The Powagan provided the human person with various forms of aid in times of need, and in return was presented with gifts of tobacco, food and goods.

As such, the relationship was a vital one which in many ways exemplified the complex relationships which existed between human persons and Manitous. What was different in the Human-Powagan relationship was the fact that the relationship was enduring rather than passing. While such relationships were normally based on love and respect, the guardian Manitous could sometimes prove to be demanding and unpredictable, particularly if they were neglected. One of the things that particularly troubled some of the Ojibwa who considered becoming Christians, was the thought of having to give up their guardian Manitou.

Another figure who played a major role in the religious beliefs of both the Ojibwa and the neighbouring Cree was a cannibalistic figure known as Windigo who was usually associated with winter and famine.⁵³ Sometimes the Windigo took the form of a monster who fed upon human beings, sometimes that of an ice skeleton, and sometimes people themselves could become Windigos. Generally speaking the concept of the Windigo as a giant monster was common to both the Cree and Ojibwa of Rupert's Land, although Brown and Brightman suggest that this may well be a historical development. Individuals could become a Windigo if possessed by the spirit of the Windigo, if a Windigo appeared to them in a dream or vision, or if they were bitten by one. In addition shamans sometimes used sorcery to metamorphize a healthy person into a Windigo. Persons who became depressed and suffered hallucinations were thought to be Windigos who might turn into cannibals and eat their own relatives. For this reason the relatives or members of the community had the right to kill such a person since it was felt that the person had ceased to be human. Usually the person felt to be a Windigo was chopped up and

burned in order to melt the creature's heart and prevent its resurrection. David Thompson, in his account of the Ojibwa mentioned the case of a Weetego (Windigo) in the Lake of the Woods region. According to the account a young man was possessed with the desire to eat his sister, so a council was called, he was sentenced to death, killed by his father, and his body was burned.⁵⁴

In any discussion of Indian religion and worldview the question of whether various pre-contact Indian tribes were polytheistic or had a belief in a high god or supreme being is likely to provoke controversy. Early anthropologists in particular were apt to conclude (often as a result of their own evolutionist beliefs) that Indian belief systems were animistic and represented a simple stage in the development of religious beliefs which culminated in the more complex monotheistic religions. However, with the abandonment of the evolutionary approach for other more multi-facted approaches, a number of scholars have contended that certain tribes did in fact have a form of belief in a supreme being in addition to the collection of Manitous or individual gods. Hultkrantz, for instance, contends that there is no sharp dichotomy between montheism on one side and polytheism on the other, but rather a gradation of belief.⁵⁵ He feels that the Ojibwa did believe in a distant all-powerful Supreme Being who was ultimately responsible for creation, but with whom it was impossible to communicate. Thus, intermediary figures were necessary. They possessed powers given from on high and acted as messengers, albeit sometimes capricious ones, between the Supreme Being and man. The Supreme Being remained remote and unapproachable. In fact, some commentators equate the concept of a

Supreme Being more with a feeling of awe and power than with a personal god.⁵⁶

There is also a continuing debate as to whether or not the idea of Supreme Being in the Ojibwa belief system is a pre or post-contact phenomenon.⁵⁷ Regardless of when the belief originated, by the nineteenth century the Ojibwa had a belief in some form of a Great Spirit who was responsible for all things. Cooper felt that there definitely was a pre-contact belief in a Supreme Being, who was more of a "Master" than a "Maker" or "Creator". Although called Kitche Manitou by the Christian missionaries, this Supreme Being was more properly seen as the "Master of Life" -- that is, the Manitou who was the Master of meat, food, health, life and death. In Cooper's view, the belief took on more Christian connotations following the period of contact.⁵⁸ Somewhat akin to the Kitche Manitou, and more definitely an adaptation of Christian beliefs, was the Indian belief in Matci Manitou or the evil spirit. While pre-contact Indian beliefs had been basically non-dualistic, by the nineteenth century, even those Ojibwa who had only brief contact with Euro-Americans, now believed in good and evil forces in nature. Problems were no longer seen simply as the mischief of the Culture Hero, but as the result of an Evil Spirit.⁵⁹

The numerous Manitous or intermediaries between the Supreme Being and human persons played a pervasive role in the life of Indian people. All existence, to the Ojibwa, was filled with different Manitous since Manitous ranged from major spirits such as Nanabozho the Culture Hero, to such natural spirits as the Thunderbirds and Four Winds, to the Masters of the Animals, to personal spirits found in animate and

inanimate objects. Indians were able to communicate directly with these Manitous, and indeed did so frequently. They not only sought the direction of these Manitous in major events such as before hunting or war parties and during major rites of passage, but also for help in such activities as communicating with departed friends, or in locating lost objects. In the Indian worldview these Manitous were persons who had many of the same characteristics as human persons, but considerably more power. Communication with the Manitous followed set patterns depending upon the class of Manitou being addressed and the occasion.

Prayers, songs, offerings, taboos and rituals involving fasting, sweat baths, smoking, dreams and visions, all played an important part in the ceremonial life of the Ojibwa. Prayer was generally seen as a form of verbal communication with the various Manitous. As such, the form varied with the occasion and the Manitou being addressed, although Ojibwa prayers were usually short and repetitive. Generally, however, prayers were either intercessory or uttered in thanksgiving. A common theme that ran through all prayers was the concept of "pity me" since the Ojibwa felt that the Manitous were most apt to come to the aid of someone whose plight was desperate.⁶⁰ The concept of "pity" was based on a feeling of inadequacy in relation to supernatural persons, rather than a feeling of innate guilt or remorse for past wrongs. The ultimate objective of the prayers was to forge a lasting relationship between the individual and his guardian Manitou. Certainly Indians had no concept of sin as it was conceived of by Euro-Americans, and thus felt no need for repentance.⁶¹ Nevertheless, some forms of illness were felt to be caused by the misconduct of the sick person or a close relative.

Serious crimes such as murder, incest or sorcery were felt to produce illness. When the cause of an illness could not be determined by other means, the patient was sometimes asked to confess some past crime which has been committed but not previously admitted.

Music played a particularly important part in Ojibwa religious ceremonies, just as it did in Methodist religious ceremonies. The Ojibwa felt that songs were a means of supernatural communication so they were employed during all major events in the lives of the people. The Ojibwa sang at the birth of a child, the death of an elder, before hunting and war parties and upon their return, and in connection with the administering of medicines. Such songs were generally acquired through visions, and as such were considered the personal property of the visionary who alone could sing them. While melody and rhythm were important in Ojibwa music, it was the words which gave the songs their power. Songs used during the different Midewiwin ceremonies were recorded in mnemonics on birth bark strips. Each level of the society had their own songs which were used during the initiation ceremonies. Still other songs celebrated the myths and oral traditions of the people. Songs were usually accompanied by drumming and sometimes by dancing. Dancing, however, was usually reserved for more ritualized ceremonies, such as for instance, the Scalp Dance, which so horrified the Methodist missionaries at Rainy Lake.

Dreams and visions were somewhat more complex, but equally acceptable and common means of communicating with the Manitous. According to the Ojibwa, dreams were journeys of the soul while visions were visits from some Manitou.⁶² For the Ojibwa it was important for

boys to seek out visions and through them establish relationships with their personal Manitou. While girls did not deliberately seek them out, this did not preclude them from receiving visions -- usually in connection with the onset of menstruation. Throughout their life most Ojibwa of both sexes continued to have visions associated with important events, trials, and celebrations. However, some individuals, both male and female, were deemed to have special gifts or powers in this regard, and were thus noted as seers. It is for this reason that Radin contended that the majority of Indians were "unreligious" in the sense that they passively accepted what was told them, while a smaller group of individuals who possessed gifts, were involved in searching for answers and passing down traditions.⁶³ For most Indians, religion was a very practical experience connected with their daily existence. Only a few shamans were concerned with the larger issues of finding the meaning of life.

The use of tobacco and the pipe were other elements which played an important part in the religious or ceremonial life of the Ojibwa. The Ojibwa believed that Nanabozho had made tobacco so that man would have something to offer to the various Manitous who depended upon humans for their supply of it. Tobacco offerings were scattered on the waters or left in sacred places. It was smoked during ceremonial occasions. Since tobacco was not native to the Rainy Lake region, it assumed a particularly important role in relations with Euro-Americans. Even missionaries soon realized that gifts of tobacco had to be given before discussions could be entered into with the Ojibwa. While the Methodists did their best to provide plugs of tobacco as gifts before addressing

groups of assembled Ojibwa, they were less willing to take part in smoking the pipe which was passed around. As Rev. Allen Salt noted, such an action would signify their acceptance of pagan religious practices.

The use of sweat lodges and fasting were two other forms of religious rituals that were common. Sweat lodge ceremonies usually centred around the Midewiwin rites, although sweat lodges were used on numerous other occasions as well. Both the sweat lodge ceremonies and the deliberate abstinence from food were concerned with spiritual cleansing and prayer, in addition to being concerned with bodily well-being. The stones, the water, and the heat of the sweat lodge all contributed to the power of healing which the participants endured in carefully set out rituals, while the fasting helped to induce visions, which in turn allowed the individual to communicate with the Manitous. In fact the Ojibwa believed that it was mainly as a result of extreme privation on the part of the person seeking a vision that the Manitous would take pity on him and reveal themselves.

All Algonquians, including the Ojibwa, made religious use of numerous objects which they felt had taken on sacred powers. Thus, for instance, the sacred drums used for dancing were believed to have powers that transcended their mere ability to provide rhythm. Although the drum dance was adopted from the Dakota late in the nineteenth century, different types of drums had been used by the Ojibwa before that time for other religious ceremonies such as in the shaking tent and midewiwin lodge. Certainly Methodist missionaries in the 1840s already considered Ojibwa drums to have religious significance.⁶⁴ The most important of

the Ojibwa's sacred objects were the items commonly called "medicine bundles". Probably no other aspect of Indian religion is so misunderstood. The bundles were generally made up of a collection of seemingly disparate articles: some bits of tobacco and sweetgrass, a few pebbles, feathers, a claw, along with a piece of cloth. To the Indians who put them together they were an essential part of their existence, providing them with assistance in all aspects of their life, but to the Euro-Americans they were nothing more than junk, or objects of superstition.

In order to understand the significance of medicine bundles it is necessary to remember that in the Indian worldview external appearances did not express the essence of either persons or objects. The materials collected in the bundle were usually revealed to the person in a dream or vision as having special powers or holiness which went far beyond their outer form. Thus, the Ojibwa relied on them for help with his hunting, in battle, in determining alliances, and a host of other decisions which he might have to make. Treated with proper care and reverence they allowed him to communicate with the Manitous who governed his existence. The medicine bundles, along with the drums, and sacred birchbark scrolls also played an important role in the Midewiwin ceremonies which will be discussed later in greater detail.

Religious ceremonies connected with important events in the life of the individual were particularly important to Ojibwa. These rites of passage were conducted at appropriate stages of the individual's development, beginning with the naming ceremony following the birth of a child. Among the Ojibwa an old man or woman who was felt to have

communicated successfully with the Manitou was asked to bestow a name on the new child. Normally the name was derived from an incident or character in a dream or vision. By bestowing a name on the child the elder was felt to be bestowing the blessings of the Manitou. At the ceremony which was held for this purpose, the elder recounted lessons learned during the vision quest he had gone through, and great quantities of food were consumed so as to ensure that the child would be provided for until such time as the child was able to fast for his/her own blessings. A special relationship existed between the child and the person who had bestowed the name. Later in life the individual would assume additional names at important stages in his/her life.⁶⁵

The next important ceremony in the life of the individual was the puberty vision quest. At approximately twelve to sixteen years of age the Ojibwa boy would go off to a secluded spot which was considered to be holy. Here he would fast and humble himself in hopes of obtaining a vision. Such fasts, while generally lasting a few days, might under some conditions last for weeks if a desired vision was not forthcoming. The goal of the vision or dream was to be able to communicate with a Manitou who would then become the boy's guardian helper. Not only would he receive advice and direction in the vision, but he would develop a personal relationship with a powerful helper or "Powagan" who would remain with him throughout the rest of his life. Vision experiences thus gave both knowledge and power. Therefore the recipient of the vision usually did not relate his vision to anyone at the time, although he might do so later in life at other occasions such as the naming ceremonies. All youth took part in these vision quests but not all

youth were equally successful in receiving visions, just as later in life some individuals were felt to have greater visionary powers than others. Although some girls also underwent vision quests, they more commonly received guardian helpers during the period of their first menstrual isolation period.

The final major rite of passage at which the Ojibwa invoked the aid of Manitou was at the death of an individual. Like other Algonquians they believed that the soul and the body were separated at the time of death, while at the same time believing there was another life after death. The dead were usually buried with a few belongings in shallow graves over which low "houses" were erected. Unlike Christians, the Ojibwa did not believe that the quality of the afterlife was connected with the quality of life on earth. Since retribution for evil deeds was felt to take place during one's life, life in the next world was generally felt to be pleasant. Although most scholars feel that the concepts of a "heaven" for the good people and "hell" for the bad was the result of Christian influences, some such as Hultkrantz argue that they were a natural development from an already established dualism.⁶⁶ Generally speaking, however, the only problem to be faced by the departed person was the journey itself, which took the form of obstacles that had to be overcome.

Ojibwa tales often speak of the soul of the recently dead having to cross a river over which a log was placed, and on the other side of which was the land of the dead. Later tales sometimes elaborate the trials of the journey and add the concept of separate resting places for whitemen and Indians. Thus, for instance, several of the Ojibwa who

spoke to the Rev. Allen Salt told him variations of the story of separate heavens for whitemen and Indians. The Ojibwa in the region of the Sault had at one time participated in large annual, ritualistic "Feasts of the Dead", but there is no record of them being held among the Rainy Lake Ojibwa. During the nineteenth century the rites of the Ghost Midewiwin appear to have served a similar function for the Rainy Lake Ojibwa, but there does not appear to be any connection between the two ceremonies.

During the life of individual Algonquians there were numerous other opportunities and occasions which required particular rituals or ceremonies to be carried out. Some of these were related to the person's sex, such as the purification rites and taboos connected with menstruation. Others were connected to specific events or seasonal activities, such as the rituals related to hunting or war. Almost all of them, in some way or other, centred around the desire of the people to improve communication with the Manitous that played such an important part in their lives. Over the passage of time a number of these ceremonial rituals became particularly important to the Woodlands Ojibwa. While the ceremonies varied over time, and according to locality, they helped to form a common thread of belief among most of the Ojibwa. Two of these ceremonies were particularly significant to the life of the Rainy Lake Ojibwa, and will therefore be considered in some detail.

The most pervasive of the ceremonies was the one called the "Shaking Tent", "Conjuring Lodge" or "Jeesukawin" ceremony. Hallowell described this ceremony as "an institutionalized means for obtaining the

help of different classes of spiritual entities by invoking their presence and communicating human desires to them".⁶⁷ The person who conducted the ceremony was generally known as a "djessakid" (various spellings are used), by the Ojibwa, and as a "conjurer" by most Euro-Americans.⁶⁸ The Ojibwa believed that djessakids learned their skills from the Manitous rather than from human teachers. Unlike the metais or Mide priests, djessakids did not form brotherhoods, but instead were individual practitioners who worked alone. Although all Ojibwa religious leaders appealed to the Manitous for their power, djessakids sought to predict events, while metais and wabenos sought to propitiate them. While most Algonquians at some time in their life experienced dreams or visions in which they communicated directly with the Manitous, djessakids were believed to have special powers in this regard. The special spirit guardians of the djessakids were themselves felt to be particularly powerful.

The ceremony itself was a serious matter and was conducted according to specific rituals and taboos -- despite the humorous undertones of much of the conversation. To begin with, the tent or lodge was constructed away from human habitation, or if this was not possible, rituals were performed to cleanse the area for the ceremony. Usually five to ten poles were driven deep into the ground and then bent towards the middle, forming a circle of approximately four feet in diameter. The poles were covered with birchbark or skins and a medicine bundle was suspended from the apex. The Rev. Allen Salt mentioned that in one case the Ojibwa at Rainy Lake even borrowed an oilskin from the voyageurs to use as a covering for the tent. The djessakid purified

himself with a sweat bath before entering the tent. Often he entered the tent without clothes and with his hands tied. Meanwhile, the people assembled outside tossed tobacco offerings into a fire while waiting for the Manitous to arrive. After awhile the Four Winds arrived causing the tent to shake violently and the dogs to bark. The Four Winds were in turn followed by "Mikinahk" the turtle, who usually served as the chief messenger. A variety of other spirits, depending upon the locality and the individual djessakid, also arrived, although their presence was only made apparent by their voices. The assembled people would begin to ask various questions when the tent began to shake. The Manitous would reply, answering the questions in a variety of different languages, offering remedies and prescribing actions to be followed, and performing various errands for members of the assembled crowd. The ceremony as such usually started in the late evening and usually went on into the early hours of the morning.

Because of the nature of the ceremony, many Euro-Americans who witnessed it believed that the djessakids were either possessed or charlatans or both. Numerous explanations were advanced as to how the djessakids managed to shake the tent and project their voices.⁶⁹ Christian missionaries saw in them dangerous rivals or agents of the Devil who must be destroyed. Often they were automatically equated with sorcerers, even when it was clear that the djessakids made no attempts to work magic for evil purposes. For the Ojibwa, the ceremony not only provided them with the chance to meet immediate needs such as finding lost objects and determining the location or arrival time of friends and relatives; but it also provided them with the opportunity to speak with

the Manitous and thus prove to themselves the power and concern that the Manitous possessed. In this sense it served to prove to the participants that their worldview continued to have validity. While the ceremony underwent many changes it continued to be followed by many of those Ojibwa who later became Christians.

The Midewiwin or Great Medicine Society, as it is often called, referred both to the society and to the ceremonies that were carried out. The original purpose of the Midewiwin was to help the individual relate to the divine, but in practice it went beyond this to outline a code of conduct for its members, and above all, to teach them the means of staying healthy, since this was necessary for their survival. To the Ojibwa ill health or disease often had a religious cause since it normally resulted from communication problems with some Manitous, the breaking of a taboo, or the action of an unfriendly sorcerer -- although diseases could also be caused by what we would term natural causes. While regular medical problems could be dealt with by normal "medicine men", the Midewiwin offered a means of solving more serious problems. Although it is hard to determine exactly what effect the epidemics of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had on the Midewiwin, the fact that the Rainy Lake region was hard hit by the epidemics is no doubt significant.

Unlike the Shaking Tent ceremony, which was common among both the Cree and Ojibwa, the Midewiwin was primarily confined to the Ojibwa. According to Hickerson and Bishop the Midewiwin arose among the group of Ojibwa who moved south from Sault Ste. Marie.⁷⁰ There it gradually replaced the annual Feast of the Dead as a major religious and social

institution. Although there is some evidence to suggest that it may have also replaced the Shaking Tent ceremony among the more eastern Ojibwa, both ceremonies co-existed in the Rainy Lake region. The Midewiwin, as it was practiced in the Great Lakes region and southwest of Lake Superior was described by a number of early missionaries and other observers such as Peter Jones, William Warren, Johann Kohl and Walter Hoffman. Of the various nineteenth century observers at Rainy Lake, only Allen Salt has left a description, and that is very brief. The Midewiwin is now generally conceded to be a post-contact development which melded traditional Indian beliefs and rituals with Christian ones, although there still continues to be some controversy regarding its origin. S. Dewdney, for one, has suggested that the Midewiwin arose more as a reaction to the growing power of traditional religious leaders, than as a reaction to Christianity.⁷¹ Nanabozho was generally acknowledged to be the founder of the Midewiwin, but his role in the ceremonies was gradually replaced by Kitchie Manitou. In the Rainy Lake region, Manitou was represented by his messenger called Oskabewis who reported on what had taken place.⁷²

Whatever the precise origin, the Midewiwin offers an excellent example of the syncretic ability of Indian religion to maintain elements of traditional cultic practices while incorporating new ideas into them -- without destroying the basis of the original practices. Some scholars have expressed surprise that such a communal religious cult should spring up among the very individualistic Ojibwa whose previous religious ceremonies had been centred around the individual or at most the family. Although the Shaking Tent ceremonies did bring together

groups of people to a communal event, they did not require that the participants be part of a society or association in the same way that the Midewiwin did. There is no doubt that the growth of the Midewiwin thus helped to signal the growth of new socio-political units among the Ojibwa, at the same time as it was introducing new religious practices. While it never encompassed all Ojibwa, it did provide those in the regions around Rainy Lake (and far beyond) with a central event by which they were able to stress their common heritage.

Membership in the Midewiwin was open to all who desired to belong. All that was necessary was that the person go through the initiation rites, pay the required fees, and maintain secrecy regarding the rituals and beliefs. Members were recruited from a variety of sources. People who were ill, and had not been cured by other types of Ojibwa medical practitioners might seek to join in hopes of being cured. However, it was not required that the recruit be ill; people could join who simply wished to ensure a healthy life for themselves or their children -- usually as the result of a dream experience. Membership in the Ghost Midewiwin, was also possible through the use of surrogates, for those already dead. Prospective members would hold a feast for close friends and Metais or Mide priests, where they would describe the signs leading up to the decision to join, and if these were considered favourable, then the applicant was told to prepare special offerings or presents in the form of skins and other valuables. The applicant would then be initiated at the next ceremony, which was usually held in the spring at the annual gatherings. The Midewiwin had from four to eight degrees of membership, each degree conferring on the member additional medical

knowledge, and as a result requiring additional fees.⁷³ In later years in the Rainy Lake region, members would go through the Midewiwin in successive years, advancing each year. Lower levels were composed simply of patients who had been cured, while more advanced members took on some of the ritual duties of the ceremonies. In the top ranks were the mide priests or metais.

Central to the Midewiwin society were the Midewiwin ceremonies which were conducted each spring in a large specially constructed lodge. The initiates underwent a complex set of rituals which usually lasted four days. Many of these rituals, such as the taking of sweat baths, the tobacco offerings and dog sacrifices, the feasting and dancing, were based on earlier Indian practices. The central feature of the initiation rite was the ritual slaying of the initiates. The metais would use the power obtained from their medicine bags to blow upon the initiates, or pointed the skins of various animals at them, causing them to expire. They were then revived in the same fashion -- symbolizing the long life and immortality that the new members would enjoy. Following this, the initiates were instructed in the various forms of knowledge which were appropriate for the particular degree or level into which they were being initiated. Such secrets involved the arts of healing, hunting and withstanding the powers of witchcraft practiced by others. Another part of the ceremony involved the use of shells or "migis" which were used to "typify the illness and wickedness in man, which he is enabled to expel by zealous exertions, and due attention to his religious duties".⁷⁴ The Midewiwin ceremony used sacred scrolls on which were drawn characters which Hoffman suggested served as a

mnenomic device for the sacred songs which were sung during the medicine dance. While the above ceremonies caused many observers including early anthropologists such as Hoffman to claim that the metais were charlatans or at best magicians, the metais did not deliberately set out to deceive their audiences since they believed in the power of the rituals that they were performing.

The growth of the Midewiwin is significant for a number of reasons. While individuals continued to communicate with the Manitous on their own, there was a growing belief that membership in the society was important to a successful life on earth and a happy afterlife.⁷⁵ Although the Shaking Tent ceremony co-existed with the Midewiwin in the Rainy Lake region, the latter ceremony provided the Ojibwa with a more communal, tribal religion which was better able to deal with new developments that were occurring in Ojibwa society. It also provided a more complex means of ensuring inter-tribal loyalty and common traditions, as well as developing Indian leadership. And, it served as a more sophisticated means of dealing with both the ideas and the sicknesses brought by the Europeans. European missionaries rightly viewed it as a serious rival for the hearts and souls of the Indians, and as with the Shaking Tent ceremony, made efforts to suppress it whenever and wherever possible.

While other religious ceremonies were practiced by the Woodlands Ojibwa they never reached the same level of acceptance of either the Shaking Lodge or Midewiwin ceremonies. Some, such as the Wabeno movement, attracted attention for a short period of time, and then gradually decreased in popularity or disappeared. Hoffman suggested

that it probably arose as a degraded form of the Midewiwin. However, Vecsey has attributed the Wabeno movement's initial popularity to the decline in game population during the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century.⁷⁶ The ceremonies were conducted at night rather than during the day, allowing the Wabenos to employ fire in their special rituals. Wabenos claimed that these rituals gave them powers to cure illness, as well as to produce charms which would bring success in love, war and hunting. It was the night time ceremonies and the claims relating to love which caused outsiders to accuse the Wabenos of participating in wild orgies. For a time the Wabenos vied with traditional religious leaders, but their success proved limited, and their influence waned, although Cooper reported that they were still active in the Lac Seul region.⁷⁷ Other movements such as the Shawnee Prophet were direct responses to Euro-American society and religion.⁷⁸ While the Shawnee Prophet had a considerable influence on the Ojibwa in Michigan Territory during the early 1800s, his beliefs do not appear to have had much influence in the Rainy Lake region.

The average Ojibwa maintained a relatively independent religious life in the sense that he/she communicated with the Manitous with a minimum of assistance from religious figures. However, at the same time, it was recognized that some individuals had special powers with regard to such communication. Thus, as has been pointed out, these individuals were sought out at ceremonial occasions, or when there was a special need. Their guidance might be asked at a naming ceremony, they might lead a ritual prayer before a hunt, they might be asked to determine the location of a missing kinsman, to help cure an illness, or

to revenge a wrong. They received their supernatural gifts as a result of visions or fasts, rather than from any type of formalized training. Any leadership roles that they possessed came mainly from their personal powers which they exercised on behalf of other people. While it is asserted by Hultkrantz and some others that women did not generally play a role as religious functionaries in Indian society, Hoffman, Cooper, Landes and Hallowell all provide instances of women in Ojibwa society who have had special powers and acted as religious functionaries.⁷⁹

The Indian religious leaders or functionaries were first termed medicine men and conjurors by the early Jesuits, who wanted to distinguish those individuals who purported to use supernatural powers to cure the sick, and who, they felt, had mastered certain tricks which were used to fool other tribesmen. The Methodist missionaries of the nineteenth century continued to use the term conjuror for all forms of religious leaders, although some of them also used the term "metais" to describe some individuals. More recent scholars have continued to use a variety of terms, often interchangeably, to describe Indian leaders. A few scholars, such as Underwood, Hultkrantz and Grim have attempted to stress the functional differences in roles played by religious leaders.⁸⁰ While medicine men were concerned primarily with disease and used their powers for healing purposes, shamans and conjurers were more prophets or diviners of the future.⁸¹ Underhill contends that normally the powers were used for good, although occasionally they were used to punish an enemy, or seek retribution for a wrong. While in most Indian societies the work of the shamans and conjurers was done for the prestige or power gained, rather than for any material reward, in the

Rainy Lake region, there was considerable emphasis placed on the material rewards given to the conjurors. In other respects Rainy Lake follows the common pattern in that the shamans (or conjurors) were usually respected and sought out by other members of the community. However, in all Indian communities, there were rivalries amongst different shamans, and in some cases evil shamans were feared by their people because these shamans had the power to do harm.

According to Hultkrantz and others there was a gradual transition from medicine man or shaman to that of priest in some areas during the 18th and 19th centuries. With the introduction of the Midewiwin, Wabeno and other societies in some of the Ojibwa bands, religious figures began to carry out specific rituals at permanent sites using standardized cult objects.⁸² These priests banded together in fraternities, training became a requirement for performing cult duties, and a body of religious knowledge was passed on. At the same time priests began to charge for their services. In thus receiving knowledge and powers which were not available to the average Ojibwa, and in charging for their services, the "metais" or Mide priests began to think of themselves and be perceived as a separate class. However, such an assertion is difficult to substantiate with the documentation that is available for the Rainy Lake region. Nevertheless, with the rise of these new religious functionaries, along with the added competition of Christian missionaries, the traditional rivalry amongst religious leaders was no doubt heightened, and with this rivalry came increased efforts to emphasize special rituals, ceremonies, and practices as the most effective way of communicating with the Manitous.

While such distinctions and categories can help us to understand the shifts in roles that were taking place, they have to be used with some caution, since they are Euro-American concepts and categories which have been imposed on the Indian worldview. Another way of considering these religious functionaries, is to use Ojibwa names and categories. While this method also has pitfalls, it can provide us with a better grasp of how the Ojibwa viewed themselves. Cooper, for instance, in his description of early 20th century Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake Ojibwa, suggests that there were roughly six types of "medicine men" with some minor differences between the two regions.⁸³ The "Nibikiwinini" or sucking man used a piece of bone or wood to suck offending particles out of the patient. The "Maskikiwinini" or herbalist used roots and herbs to achieve his cures. The "Onotchikewinini" or foretelling man used fasting to achieve his powers, while the "Djesikiwinini" used the shaking tent to communicate with the Manitous. The "Metewinini" or metais belonged to the upper ranks of the Midewiwin and used supernatural powers to effect his cures, where more traditional means had failed. Finally, the "Wabino" ate fire and danced the fire dance in order to gain his powers. Although Cooper's distinctions applied to the twentieth century, they provide us with tools to analyze nineteenth century documents. Using his distinctions and descriptions it is possible to identify some of the different classes of religious leaders and determine how they related to each category.

As has been shown, the life of the Ojibwa people was shaped by a number of major rituals and ceremonies. Generally speaking these

ceremonies can be divided into three main categories: those which centred around health concerns, the curing of illness, and the practice of sorcery; those which centred around the different rites of passage through which each individual passed; and those which were performed in connection with seasonal tasks related to securing food. In every case the emphasis of the ritual or ceremony was on communicating with the Manitous, and either maintaining their friendship or securing their favours. While ordinary Ojibwa were able to perform some of these rituals and ceremonies, others required the special powers, and in the case of the Midewiwin, the special knowledge of religious functionaries. When the Ojibwa were confronted with the claims of the missionaries, it was natural that they would view the Methodist missionaries in terms of the categories and powers of the religious figures that existed in their own society.

FOOTNOTES

¹Allen Salt, Journal, 1854-5, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, p. 9. Salt's journey or diary exists only in typescript form, having been transcribed by Fleetwood K. McKean of Parry Sound, Ontario. The journal contains numerous typographical errors, but the unusual spelling of the word Couchiching is the result of Salt's form of Ojibwa orthography and the fact that he was no doubt transcribing Rainy Lake Ojibwa words in terms of his own Southeastern Ojibwa dialect. "Couchiching" probably refers to the outlet of the lake rather than to the lake itself, as Salt suggests. It was at this outlet that the Ojibwa gathered each year, and the traders later built their forts.

²John McLouglin, Papers, 9, Public Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

³Dr. John J. Bigsby as quoted in: Grace Lee Nute, The Voyageur's Highway: Minnesota's Border Lake Land. (St. Paul, Minnesota: Historical Society, 1941), 35.

⁴Henry Houle Hind, Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 ... 1860. 2 vols. Reprint Edition: (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), v. 1, 80.

⁵There have been numerous attempts to trace the variants of the name; one of the most complete is the following one prepared by Ives Goddard for E. S. Roger's article on the Southeastern Ojibwa in volume 15 of The Handbook of North American Indians. (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1978), 768-770.

⁶Morton H. Fried, The Notion of Tribe. (Menlo Park, Calif.: Cummings Publishing Co., 1975).

⁷William W. Warren, History of the Ojibway People. 1885. Reprint Edition: (St. Paul, Minnesota: Historical Society Press, 1984), 89-90.

⁸Harold Hickerson, The Chippewa and their Neighbours: A Study in Ethnohistory. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 65-74.

⁹Charles A. Bishop, The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: an Historical and Ecological Study. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), 7-9.

¹⁰Warren, op. cit., 183-4.

¹¹Adolph M. Greenberg and James Morrison, "Group Identities in the Boreal Forest: the Origin of the Northern Ojibwa". Ethnohistory, 29 (1982): 75-102.

¹²Hickerson, op. cit.

¹³Bishop, op. cit.

¹⁴Arthur J. Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

¹⁵Greenberg and Morrison, op. cit., 91.

¹⁶The Handbook of North American Indians. (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 197?) is a planned twenty volume set intended to provide "an encyclopedic summary of what is known about the prehistory, history, and cultures of the aboriginal peoples of North America ...". Volume six which covers the Subartic, and volume fifteen which covers the Northeast, both contain articles on the Ojibwa people. These include: Charles A. Bishop, "Territorial Groups Before 1821: Cree and Ojibwa"; Edward S. Rogers and J. Garth Taylor, "Northern Ojibwa"; and Jack H. Steinbring, "Saulteaux of Lake Winnipeg" in volume six; plus Edward S. Rogers, "Southeastern Ojibwa" and Robert E. Ritzenthaler, "Southwestern Ojibwa" in volume fifteen.

¹⁷See Robert E. Ritzenthaler, "Southwestern Ojibwa" op. cit., 753. See also R. Landes, Ojibwa Sociology. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937) and Harold Hickerson, "The Southwestern Chippewa: an ethnohistorical study". American Anthropological Association Memoirs, 92 (1962) for arguments for and against the theory that Ojibwa society in the Rainy Lake region was "atomistic".

¹⁸John M. Cooper, Notes on the Ethnology of the Otchipwe of Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake. (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1936).

¹⁹See James G. E. Smith, Leadership among the Southwestern Ojibwa. National Museum of Man Publications in Ethnology, no. 7, 16-20.

²⁰George M. Grant, Ocean to Ocean: Sanford Fleming's Expedition through Canada in 1872, being a Diary kept during the Journey from the Atlantic to the Pacific ... 1873. Reprint Edition: (Toronto: Coles, 1979).

²¹Landes, op. cit. explains the Rainy Lake Ojibwa kinship system as it existed in the early twentieth century. While there is some disagreement as to whether the system of cross-cousin marriages has changed over the years, her description provides a good introduction to the complexities of Ojibwa kinship organization.

²²Bishop, op. cit., 138.

²³Leo G. Waisberg, "An Ethnological and Historical Outline of the Rainy River Ojibway". An Historical Synthesis of the Manitou Mounds Site on the Rainy River, Ontario, Vol. 1, Archaeological and Ethnological Evidence, ed. William C. Noble. Manuscript. National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Regional Office, Cornwall, Ontario, 123.

²⁴Leo G. Waisberg, conversation with author, regarding his examination of original source materials relating to the presence of game in the Rainy Lake region.

²⁵Cooper, op. cit., 20.

²⁶This should not imply that both the Ojibwa and Euro-American traders and missionaries suffered hardships when a combination of ecological factors resulted in a shortage of food. It is well to remember, however, that the Euro-Americans were equally dependent on animal and produce harvests as their Ojibwa neighbours.

²⁷James Evans Papers and Letters. Diary. n.d., University of Western Ontario Archives. London, Ontario, 19-21. (Microfilm).

²⁸Salt, op. cit., 41.

²⁹Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Foreign Missions, Correspondence, 1840-1850. United Church Archives, Victoria University, University of Toronto, Toronto. (Microfilm). Peter Jacobs to the Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, London, from Fort Frances, July 21, 1848. (Hereafter cited as WMMS).

³⁰Leo Waisberg, op. cit. provides a full description of the seasonal round of activities, as does an earlier work on the Quetico Ojibwa by Emerson S. Coatsworth, The Indians of Quetico. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957).

³¹Harold Hickerson, "Land Tenure of the Rainy Lake Chippewa at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century". Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology, vol. 2, no. 4, Washington, is the most extensive treatment of the subject. Ruth Landes also treats the subject extensively from the viewpoint of the early twentieth century in her study of Ojibwa sociology.

³²Johann Georg Kohl, Kitchi-Gami: Wanderings round Lake Superior. 1860. Reprint Edition: (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, 1956), 120.

³³Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion. 1957. Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), 14-16.

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³⁵Ake Hultkrantz, The Study of American Indian Religions. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983).

³⁶Henry B. Schoolcraft, Personal Memoirs of a Residence of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes of the American Frontiers ... 1851. Reprint Edition: (New York: AMS Press, 1978), is the most appropriate of the works for our purposes.

³⁷Both Lowie and Radin published far too many to works cited here. Lowie's The Religion of the Crow Indians. (New York: American Museum of Natural History, Anthropological Papers, XXV/2, 1922) and Radin's The Winnebago Tribe. (Washington: Bureau of American Ethnology, 37th Annual Report, 1923) are particularly significant.

³⁸ John M. Cooper, The Northern Algonquian Supreme Being. (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1934) and Diamond Jenness, The Ojibwa of Parry Island, their Social and Religious Life. (Ottawa, National Museum Bulletin, no. 78, 1935), as well as the previously cited works of Hallowell and Hickerson, are indispensable to the student of Ojibwa religion. Ruth Underhill, Red Man's Religion: Beliefs and Practices of the Indians North of Mexico. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965) synthesizes a great deal of material but sometimes leaves the impression that there were more commonly held beliefs than likely existed.

³⁹ John Epes Brown, "Roots of Renewal" in Seeing with a Native Eye, Edited by W. H. Capps. (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); Dennis Tedlock, ed., Teachings from the American Earth. (New York: Liveright, 1975) and Sam D. Gill, The Religious Character of Native American Humanities (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1977) are representative of the type of new studies which have begun to appear on American Indian religions. It may be significant that all the works are produced by scholars working in departments of religion, rather than anthropology as was formerly the case.

⁴⁰ Ake Hultkrantz, The Religions of the American Indians, 1967. Translated by Monica Setterwall. American edition: (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

⁴¹ A. Irving Hallowell, The Role of Conjuring in Saulteaux Society, 1942. (New York: Octagon Books, 1971); Ruth Landes, Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968); Selwyn Dewdney, The Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); Christopher Vecsey, Traditional Ojibwa Religion. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1983) and John Grim, The Shaman: Patterns of Siberian and Ojibway Healing. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983).

⁴² Jennifer Brown and Robert Brightman provide a thorough review of the relevant literature in their introduction to the edited works of George Nelson, a nineteenth century fur trader with an uncommon interest in Indian religious beliefs and practices.

⁴³ Eliade, op. cit., 165.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 68-113.

⁴⁵ Hallowell, op. cit.

⁴⁶ Lucien Levy-Bruhl, Primitive Mentality. 1923. Translated by Lilian A. Clare. American Edition: (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966). Levy-Bruhl essentially argued that non-literate people did not view the world in a "rational", Cartesian manner. Their identification of causation could better be described as "mystical", and scholars could only understand the worldview of such people if they accepted the epistemology of the people they were studying. Only then would their actions make sense.

⁴⁷ Sorcery can be defined as "the use of magical paraphernalia by an individual to harness supernatural powers ordinarily to achieve evil ends". Such a definition does not imply any doubt concerning the efficacy of such magical practices, as long as the sorcerer has a belief in his or her own techniques, and the patient or victim has a belief in the sorcerer's powers. Nor should the definition be seen to carry any derogatory connotations.

⁴⁸ Vecsey, op. cit., 62-72.

⁴⁹ Hultkrantz, The Religions of the American Indians. op. cit., 15-26, 38-9.

⁵⁰ Vecsey, op. cit., 85-6.

⁵¹ Ibid., 75.

⁵² The nature of the relationship between Indians and these Keepers of the Game is examined by Calvin Martin, Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). Martin's novel thesis that the Indians believed that the keepers were responsible for the decline in game and thus reacted against them, is discussed in a companion volume edited by Shepard Krech, Indians, Animals, and Fur Trade: A Critique of Keepers of the Game. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981).

⁵³ See Morton I. Teicher, Windigo Psychosis: A study of a Relationship between Belief and Behavior among the Indians of Northeastern Canada. (Seattle: University of Washington, 1960).

⁵⁴ J. B. Tyrell, ed. David Thompson's Narrative of his Explorations in Western America: 1784-1812. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1916), 181.

⁵⁵ Hultkrantz, The Religions of the American Indians. op. cit., 25-6.

⁵⁶ John Epes Brown, The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian. (Wallingford, Pennsylvania: Pendle Hill Pamphlet CXXXV, 1964).

⁵⁷ Hultkrantz, The Religions of the American Indians. op. cit., 22-3.

⁵⁸ Cooper, The Northern Algonquian Supreme Being. op. cit., p. 67+.

⁵⁹ Vecsey, op. cit.,

⁶⁰ David Mandelbaum, The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical and Comparative Study. 1940. (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1973), 232.

⁶¹ Hultkrantz, The Religions of the American Indians. op. cit., 135-6 suggests that the widespread Indian practice of having different

locations for "good" and "evil" people in the next world or life, is also indicative of a dualism which prefigured contact with European ideas. Although they did not have an idea of retribution after death, such beliefs helped to discourage anti-social behaviour.

⁶²Vecsey, op. cit., 123.

⁶³Paul Radin, "An Introductory Enquiry in the Study of Ojibwa Religion". Ontario History Society. Papers and Records VXII (1914): 210-11.

⁶⁴WMMS, op. cit., (Microfilm Box 25, Roll 13). William Mason to WMS Secretaries, Aug. 11, 1841.

⁶⁵Vecsey, op. cit., 111.

⁶⁶Hultkrantz, The Religions of the American Indians. op. cit., 136.

⁶⁷Hallowell, op. cit., 9.

⁶⁸The term "conjuror" was first used by the French Jesuit missionaries of New France who believed that certain powerful Indians were able to master a number of incomprehensible tricks which they used to help them cure the sick or communicate with the spirits. The Methodist missionaries continued to hold the same prejudices concerning the role and activities of these Ojibwa religious functionaries.

⁶⁹George Nelson is a good example of an Euro-American who was fascinated and mystified by the religious ceremonies of the Ojibwa and Cree. However, it is quite likely that other Euro-American traders of his kind were similarly involved. Certainly Metis who professed to be Roman Catholic are reported by Mason, Salt and others to have partaken regularly in such ceremonies.

⁷⁰Hickerson, op. cit., 51-63. See also his "Notes on the Post-Contact Origin of the Midewiwin". Ethnohistory, 9(4): 404-423.

⁷¹Dewdney, op. cit.

⁷²The exact ceremonial procedures are difficult to determine since the descriptions vary greatly according to major sources such as Hoffman, Kohl, Cooper and Landes. Quite likely different bands had slightly different rituals which varied over the passage of time. It is also not possible to place complete trust in the versions reported since the ceremonies were secret and not likely to be freely shared with outsiders.

⁷³Kohl, op. cit., 49.

⁷⁴Cooper, Notes on the Ethnology of the Otchipwe. op. cit., 26.

⁷⁵See Hickerson, op. cit. 57-8 regarding the importance of the Midewiwin as a force for "tribal" cohesion. Further evidence of this role will be given in the chapter on the Rainy Lake Mission.

⁷⁶Hoffman, op. cit., 366 and Vecsey, op. cit., 192.

⁷⁷Cooper, Notes on the Ethnology of the Otchipwe. op. cit., 10, 26.

⁷⁸There appears to have been few instances of Rainy Lake Ojibwa becoming involved in the messianic movements that were common to many other Indian groups. Neither hostile or friendly prophets with syncretic religious ideas seem to have arisen among them.

⁷⁹Underhill, op. cit., 51-62 deals extensively with the role of women as religious functionaries.

⁸⁰Underhill, op. cit.; Hultkrantz, op. cit.; and Grim, op. cit.

⁸¹Underhill, op. cit., 95.

⁸²Hultkrantz, op. cit., 125.

⁸³Cooper, Notes on the Ethnology of the Otchipwe. op. cit., 8-10, 25-6.

CHAPTER THREE: THE METHODIST MISSIONARY MOVEMENT IN NORTH AMERICA

Background

In the later half of the nineteenth century, Europe and America both witnessed a spiritual awakening in the form of an evangelical revival which led in part to the creation of new religious movements and a desire to spread the Christian teachings to all corners of the world. In the forefront of these new movements was the group who became known as Methodists. The Methodists were appalled by the state of religion in England during the early 18th century. They reacted against the worldliness of the Anglican Church and the indifference that the clergy showed to the spiritual welfare of their flocks -- in particular to that of the lower classes who were beginning to suffer from the effects of industrialization. Whereas the Evangelicals, who remained within the official church, mainly directed their efforts towards the middle and upper classes in hope of having them use their influence for the common good, the Methodists aimed their efforts mainly at the poor.

The man mainly responsible for the new movement was John Wesley. As a young student at Oxford, Wesley had joined a student group of similarly pious young men, and had later joined the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel as a missionary to the Indians in Georgia. The latter was an unhappy experience except for his contact with a group of Moravians whose piety impressed him. Returning to England in 1738, he attended a Moravian chapel, and while there he experienced a spiritual new birth. However, when he attempted to preach his gospel of social regeneration through individual conversion, he found that many Church of England pulpits were closed to him. Filled with the fire of

his new-found faith he followed the recent example of George Whitefield and took to horseback to preach his message to the masses at outdoor rallies. Soon his remarkable success made him realize that some form of support was necessary to prevent his newly-won converts from "backsliding"; and in 1743 he published his Discipline which was intended to serve as an organizational manual for his followers.

It was this system of mutual support which was to give the Methodists their name, and set them apart from their fellow Christians. The nucleus of Wesley's system was the weekly class meeting, at which the faithful recounted their trials, failures and support from the Lord. While Wesley himself was a Church of England clergyman, he introduced the practice of creating lay ministers in order to cope with the tremendous growth in the number of converts, and the reluctance of the regular clergymen to become itinerant preachers. Class leaders were laymen who acted in the absence of a minister. They were required to be men of piety, well versed in scripture, and knowledgeable about church discipline. In addition they were expected to be acquainted with human nature, have some business ability, be punctual, and above all be leaders who could help others when needed and encourage them to follow their example.¹ Several classes united together to form a society, which in turn formed part of a circuit.

Itinerant preachers who were almost always laymen visited each society according to a regular schedule, teaching and preaching. In addition, each circuit had a resident preacher who acted as a supervisor for the other local lay preachers and class leaders. Local preachers were expected to possess three marks. These marks were felt to be there

if the preachers had the love of God in them and sought nothing else; if they had the gift of speaking justly, readily and clearly; and, if their converts were truly converted as shown by their subsequent life. After a four year probation period the local preacher was accepted into full connection with the circuit, if it was felt that he met the standards that had been set out. Quarterly meetings were held for the local preachers and class leaders to discuss their progress and problems, while an Annual Conference of itinerant preachers was held to settle doctrinal issues, and admit or discipline itinerants.²

If their unique organizational structure and the use of lay preachers tended to set the Methodists apart from other members of the Church of England, their evolving forms of worship and their religious fervour tended to separate them even further. While Wesley and his followers agreed with the Church of England that "God willeth all men to be saved" -- a point which placed him in opposition to the Calvinism of his fellow preacher, George Whitefield -- they still held a pessimistic view of human nature. Man's wickedness and the evils that beset him were not the result of his environment nor his lack of education, but rather a result of original sin. Man could not be saved through his own efforts, but only through the free gift of God. However, since Christ had died in order to save mankind from sin, anyone who repented and accepted this salvation could achieve everlasting life. The Methodists felt, nevertheless, that this repentance marked only the beginning, for the sanctified person still could and did make mistakes, and thus must remain aware of his dependence on God. It was for this reason that Methodist services were filled with fervent hymn singing, vigorous

prayer and enthusiastic preaching.

Methodists also drew up a set of rules for moral and spiritual development so that sanctified persons would be able to have guidance in leading proper Christian lives. The rules included avoiding evil of every kind, doing good to all men whenever possible, setting aside a part of each day for prayer and reading the Bible, and attending regular worship services. These practices set early British Methodists apart from their compatriots, but as they gradually became less evangelical and more conventional in their practices, the Methodists gained a sense of respectability in British society.

Methodism was carried to the new world before the American Revolution. Even before the break between England and its former colonies, the movement there had tended to depart even more radically from the Church of England in its emphasis than Methodists in England did. Although Wesley re-established contact with them following the American Revolution, the American body under Bishop Asbury soon became a separate denomination called the Methodist Episcopal Church. It retained the episcopal tradition, but dropped the liturgical side of the British Methodism in favour of simple services marked by enthusiastic preaching and extreme congregational fervour.³ In addition, Love Feasts and the Lord's Supper were celebrated at each quarterly meeting. While their preaching continued to follow the Arminian position rather than the Calvinistic, American Methodist preachers emphasized a fear of Hell, and made emotional appeals to listeners. Even more than their British counterparts the early American Methodist preachers tended to be uneducated, unsophisticated men who appealed to the backwoods frontier

settlements to which the practice of circuit riders and tent meetings proved to be ideally suited. Due to the nature of their beliefs, their approach, and their audience, they played a major role in the Second Awakening, a religious revival which swept through much of the United States and parts of Canada in the 1770s and early 1800s. Their success and their zeal led them to attempt to reach all those who had not yet been converted -- including those who had not yet heard of Christianity. In 1813 the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was formed in the United States with the express purpose of establishing missions among the heathen so that the Gospel could be propagated.

The Upper Canada Missions

Canadian Methodism developed, to a large extent, as the result of the conflict and eventual fusion of the British and American strains of Methodism.⁴ While not all the controversies that developed were applicable to the work with the Indian missions, some aspects, such as those relating to church government, had important implications. In 1824 a separate Canadian Conference of the Methodist Church was established for the first time, and a Canada Conference Missionary Society was organized to "evangelize the country, Christianize the Indian tribes, and extend the pure Gospel and Gospel privileges to the remotest bounds of new settlements".⁵ While the Canadian body was to rely upon American and British financial assistance for some time, it played a major role in the evangelization efforts of the Methodists among the Mississauga Indians of Upper Canada. The Mississaugas were a branch of the Ojibwa who, by the beginning of the eighteenth century had pushed the Iroquois out of most of southern Ontario. Early allies of the French, they made

peace with the English following the Seven Years War and until 1783 their lands were protected from Euro-American settlers. However, following the influx of United Empire Loyalists, their traditional way of life became threatened as large numbers of Euro-Americans sought their lands, and brought with them the European diseases and alcohol. Where they had previously resisted the efforts of the French to convert them to Christianity many now responded favourably to the Methodists.⁶

In the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century American Methodist preachers were dominant in Upper Canada. Most of them were of humble origin; rough, hearty men who had completely surrendered their life to God. William Case was such a man. Born in Massachusetts, he was converted in 1803 and answered the call for volunteers to Canada two years later. He was to spend the greater part of his life working with the Methodist Church in Canada. While most of his initial work was with the Euro-Americans of the region, Case became aware of the attendance of some local Mississauga Indians at the various tent meetings, and along with several other local Methodist ministers, began to devote some of his attention to these Indians. Following the conversions of prominent natives such as Peter Jones and John Sunday, large numbers of Ojibwa became Methodists, and Case began to devote most of his efforts to them. He was appointed the first Superintendent of Indian Missions and even when he was not acting in that specific capacity, he continued to devote most of his energy to missionary work among the Indians.

Although Case did not develop as systematic a rationale for his work as had his Anglican counterpart Henry Venn, nevertheless very

little took place in the Methodist Indian missions without his involvement.⁷ Unlike some of his contemporaries, Case did not feel that it was necessary that the Indians be civilized before they became Christians.⁸ All that was required was that they become convinced of their sinfulness and their need for salvation. He instructed Jones and the other early missionaries to teach the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and some of the sayings of Scripture. The teaching of the Decalogue was considered particularly important since the missionaries wanted to show how the Indians' former ways contravened God's moral code. These same basic teaching methods were applied by the Methodist missionaries at Rainy Lake.

Once the Indians became Christians the Methodists assumed that, with a little help, the converts would give up their former wicked, depraved habits, and adopt Euro-American Methodist standards of piety, cleanliness, temperance and industry. Since the Methodist conversion experience stressed the need to give up one's old sinful ways, and since the Indians' ways were viewed as inherently sinful, Case and his followers made little attempt to understand Indian beliefs or lifestyle. There could be little or no accommodation or adaptation. Like most other Christians of the period, the Methodists simply equated the adoption of Christianity with that of Western civilization, or more precisely their version of it, including the customs and manners which they felt appropriate. Case typified this approach when he described the Christian community of Ojibwa at River Credit: "Here are industry, civilization, growing intelligence, peace and grace."⁹

Schools were seen as a particularly important aspect of the work

with Indians, for, as Case explained to Jones, they not only taught literacy, but were centres for devotion and religious instruction where pious and virtuous character could be developed.¹⁰ The Methodists expected that the conversion and sanctification experiences of their Indian converts would result in the same type of transformed character as it did among the Euro-Americans -- but only if the Indians were provided with some means of support. Since Methodist doctrine placed such a heavy stress on the Bible, converts had to attain a certain degree of literacy. Thus, the establishment and maintenance of schools became an integral part of Methodist missionary activity. The schools also served as important training grounds for future leaders who could act as teachers themselves, as catechists, and as preachers. While Methodists did not have the same formal requirements for ordination as the Anglicans, they gradually began to demand that their clergy, including the Native clergy, receive a more extensive education. If the Indians were to be trained to minister to their own people it was necessary that they first receive a good basic education in both academic subjects and Methodist-inspired character formation. Candidates were chosen from among individuals who either showed academic potential like Steinhauer, or had successfully shown their faith and leadership qualities by acting as exhorters and class leaders.

Case and his followers established the communities of River Credit and Grape Island as models of how the Ojibwa could be educated and trained to live in the manner of Euro-Americans. The settlement on Grape Island in the Bay of Quinte region was of particular importance for our purposes, for it was here that Steinhauer and Salt spent their

early years. Following successful missionary activity in the region around Kingston and Belleville beginning in 1825-6, Case had taken 160 Christian Ojibwa with him to Grape Island and established a small community there in 1827. Here Case hoped to build an Indian community isolated from the disruptive influences of both Euro-Americans and heathen Ojibwa. He was able to secure the services of two American missionaries who assisted him with the work: Mr. Benham, who served as teacher and manager, and Miss Barnes who taught school and domestic skills. By 1830 the community had grown to well over 200 Ojibwa, and included 23 whitewashed houses, a chapel, schoolroom, hospital, store and mechanical sheds. While the Ojibwa were still dependent upon hunting and fishing for part of their subsistence, they had 75 acres of land under cultivation.¹¹ In addition to farming, the adult males were taught trades including joinery, cabinet-making, black-smithing and shoemaking, while the women were taught to keep house, to knit and sew, and various handicrafts.¹²

Life at the Grape Island Mission was highly regimented, for the Methodist missionaries considered what they saw as the Indian's undisciplined approach to life to be one of the main impediments to their becoming "civilized" according to Euro-American standards. Thus, they felt that one of their prime tasks should be the introduction of the habits of industry and regularity on the Euro-American model. Each morning at 4:00 A.M. in the summer and 5:00 A.M. in the winter everyone was awakened by a horn. Breakfast was scheduled for 6:30 A.M., dinner was at 12:30 and supper at 5:00 P.M. each day. Each meal was followed by a period of prayer. At nine in the evening a horn was sounded to

remind people to prepare for bed.¹³ The sabbath was totally devoted to religious services, beginning with a call to prayer at 6:00 A.M. This was followed by Sunday School at 9:00 A.M., the missionary's sermon at 11:00 A.M., an inquiry meeting at 2:00 P.M., classes at 4:00 P.M., and a prayer meeting at 7:00 P.M.¹⁴

The school at Grape Island was central to the mission. Like other schools of the time, it was segregated between boys and girls with separate teachers for each. It was also bilingual since Case wanted to have some of his young scholars serve as missionaries to their own people. Thus classes were taught in English and Ojibwa and emphasis was placed on translation skills. The curriculum had academic, religious and vocational components, but the underlying emphasis of the school was religious in nature. English grammar, arithmetic and geography were taught, along with the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the catechism, and portions of the Holy Scriptures. Watts' divine songs were also taught and the singing of hymns was an important part of each school day. As Mabindisa points out, Watt's hymns not only denigrated their previous way of life, but also encouraged the young Ojibwa students to feel that they were now part of a select community who were both Christian and British:

Lord, I ascribe it to thy grace
 And not to chance as others do,
 That I was born of Christian race,
 And not a heathen or a Jew ...
 'Tis to thy sovereign grace I owe
 That I was born on British ground ...¹⁵

While emphasis was placed on rote learning to teach the academic and religious portions of the curriculum, the school was one of the first in Upper Canada to use the Infant School system developed by the Swiss educator, Johann Pestalozzi.¹⁶ Pestalozzi stressed the use of concrete objects, bodily exercise and amusement as prime ingredients of learning. With the use of these methods, children could be taught complex ideas in such a way that they understood them rather than simply memorized them. Without doubt Pestalozzi's system was more in line with the traditional way that Ojibwa children learned. As such, it probably helped facilitate the introduction of new ways of looking at the world, which, in turn, may have helped to undermine their traditional beliefs even more than the more overt Christian arguments. While Grape Island school also had much in common with "manual-labour" schools, these latter schools really only began with the establishment of Alderville Manual-Labour School in 1844, following the education of some local Ojibwa at a similar institution in Jacksonville, Illinois.¹⁷

The religious education of the students also had a profound effect on the future native missionaries. If the academic subjects at the school were intended to introduce the young Ojibwa to new ways of looking at their external world, be it the larger community or the universe, the religious elements of the curriculum were intended to teach them the basics of the Christian religion as interpreted by the Methodists. As such there was a heavy stress on the sinfulness of mankind, and the goodness and mercy of God.¹⁸ Efforts were made to spell out the numerous ways that sins could be committed and children were constantly exhorted to avoid evil ways. They were left with little

doubt that their past lifestyle was, by its very nature both evil and displeasing to God, and harsh and unpleasant. The thrust of the teaching is illustrated by a speech which the young Allen Salt gave to a nearby Euro-American community as part of a missionary fundraising campaign:

My name is Allen Salt. I am 8 years old. I was born in the wigwam, and lived in the woods till two years ago, when my father and mother began to pray. My mother is dead. She prayed when she was dying. My father lives and sends me to school at Grape Island, where 60 children are learning to read the Good Book. My Christian friends, in the wigwam I was cold and hungry. Now we have plenty to eat, and live in good house like our white friends. The good people in Belleville they help to build them. We thank them very much for all they do for poor Indians, and we pray Kezhamunedoo to reward them an hundred fold in this life, and in the world to come -- life everlasting.¹⁹

Three Native Methodist Missionaries

Allen Salt had been born near Alderville, Northumberland County, Upper Canada in approximately 1818. He was of mixed parentage, though little is known of either his English father or his Mississauga (Ojibwa) mother. It appears that Salt's mother died shortly after his birth and his father remarried. The Rev. William Case discovered the boy at this point and adopted him as one of his own family.²⁰ The young Native was

brought up and educated at Grape Island along with Henry Steinhauer, and other Ojibwa youth such as John Paul, John Summerfeld and David Sawyer -- all of whom were destined to form part of Case's vanguard of Native missionaries.

Henry Bird Steinhauer (Shawahanegezhik) had also been adopted by the Rev. Case and brought up as a member of his family. Born in approximately 1816 at Rama on Lake Simcoe of Ojibwa parents, he was taken by Case to Grape Island in 1828, where he lived with Case and attended school with the rest of the students. Like many other Christian converts his Ojibwa name was abandoned and he was given a new Christian name.²¹ Case seems to have been genuinely attracted to his young proteges for he treated them with a warmth and affection that seem uncharacteristic of the otherwise austere lifestyle which was espoused by the Methodists. Contemporary accounts of the Grape Island Mission mention that the Ojibwa children were particularly responsive to Case. They were attracted not only to his warmth, but also to the intonations of his voice which resembled Ojibwa intonations, and to his musical talents and enthusiasms.²²

Both Salt and Steinhauer showed an ability to learn and an eagerness to adopt the new lifestyle with the result that they quickly became Case's prize pupils and star attractions. In 1828, along with five other students and several of Case's adult converts, they joined him on a fundraising tour throughout the major cities and towns of the eastern United States. These tours were a necessary part of the Methodist Indian missions since the cost of educating the students at the schools was paid for by the Methodists from funds contributed by

individuals, congregations and societies in communities wherever there were Methodists. On the tour the Ojibwa converts were exhibited to American Methodist congregations as examples of the progress that was being made in both Christianizing and civilizing the Indians. The highlight of this tour was the tenth anniversary meeting of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church held at John Street Church in New York City. The audience at the meeting was addressed by John Sunday with Peter Jacobs interpreting. The Ojibwa children sang Methodist hymns, recited the Lord's Prayer in English and Ojibwa, went through spelling exercises, and told the story of their lives for the appreciative white audiences. This, and other similar experiences must have had a telling effect on the minds of the young scholars for as Mabindisa points out they witnessed the esteem that was accorded to them and the adult Indians by the white congregations.²³ At the same time they observed the denigration of their traditional Indian way of living by such impressive members of their own people as John Sunday and Peter Jones. Sunday, in a typical speech explaining his new lifestyle referred to 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold all things are become new.". Thus he no longer wore feathers and paint, and had given up his ornaments to the mission cause. His tomahawk had been replaced by the 10 commandments in Ojibwa.²⁴ Both Sunday and Jones, along with Case himself, would have served as role models for young Salt and Steinhauer. Given these early experiences, it is hardly surprising that in later life Salt and Steinhauer attempted to use similar techniques and arguments when they were trying to win converts.

In late 1832 Henry Steinhauer and two other young Ojibwa were enrolled by the Rev. Case in Cazenovia Seminary in upper New York State so as to further their education. Cazenovia Seminary, despite its name, was more like a Methodist high school than a training ground for ministers. Nevertheless, it helped give Steinhauer a solid educational background. What happened to Allen Salt during this period is hard to determine. While Case continued to speak positively about him throughout his lifetime, there is no record as to why Salt was not selected to go with Steinhauer. Perhaps Case was reluctant to allow both Salt and Steinhauer to go on what was decidedly an experiment on his part, or perhaps Salt was already showing some signs of the indecision which later caused him to go into business for a time. Steinhauer, for his part, excelled, attaining first place among the mainly Euro-American male students. In 1836 he was enrolled in the first class of Upper Canada Academy (later Victoria College) in Cobourg for further training. The following year he graduated near the top of his class, and returned for a brief period to teach at Alderville, where the Grape Island Mission and its school had moved in 1836-7. From there he was called to help at the Rainy Lake Mission.

While Salt was chose in age to Steinhauer, his decision to become a storeowner for a period of time meant that he was considerably older than Steinhauer when he finally decided to become a missionary. Little is known of his activities during this period, but it appears that the secular influences of the early training had more effect on him than the religious -- if indeed he did not forgo his new religion for a time.²⁵ In his brief third person introduction to his Rainy Lake diary he makes

cryptic references to the fact that he had previously been married to an Ojibwa woman whose mother used her "power" to administer a vegetable poison to his second wife, Jane, when their first child was born. According to the account, the Indian woman attending Mrs. Salt recognized the poison in time, but she continued to be affected by it throughout her life. Who this first wife was or what happened to her is not mentioned anywhere.²⁶

We do know that his second wife, Jane, was of mixed descent from the Ojibwa community of Mud Lake. The two were married in 1848 just after he had graduated from Toronto Normal School as a member of the first class. Presumably sometime in the mid 1840s he had decided to give up business and become a teacher. From 1848-53 Salt taught at the Alnwick Manual Labour School. There he appears to have prospered for, at the time of his marriage, he had a house, two cows and a pony which he used to deliver the weekly mail from Cobourg. It was while teaching there that he became seriously ill during the cholera epidemic in 1852 and underwent a conversion experience which caused him to become a missionary.

According to his account he had been helping the sick when he was himself stricken with the disease. He lapsed into a comatose position which caused the Ojibwa to think that he was dead. When the committee came to bury him his wife refused. For three days they attempted to persuade his wife to bury him, and when on the third day they came to fetch him, he rose up in bed to a sitting position and then fell back. Later when he had recovered he related that he had promised God that if he was spared from being buried alive he would devote his life to

serving his people as a minister.²⁷ According to another account of the incident the Rev. Case had tried to convince Salt to become a missionary, but the former had refused on account of his wife. Now both husband and wife were willing to go anywhere. They sold their belongings and the following year, in 1853, Salt was appointed to work as a missionary among the Ojibwa at St. Clair Mission. The next year he was ordained as a deacon and sent to Rainy Lake.

Peter Jacobs, whose Ojibwa name, Pahatahsega, means "One who makes the world brighter" came from a somewhat different background. Slightly older than the other two, Jacobs was born in approximately 1809. Jacobs was a member of the Credit River Band of Mississaugas who were among the first to be affected by the encroachments of Euro-American society and the Methodist revival. In later life he told how his parents had died as a result of overdrinking when he was about three years old. He was taken in by his sister and brother-in-law, but they too soon died from drinking to excess. One older sister froze to death while drunk, another was clubbed to death by a drunken husband, and an older brother was killed during a drinking spree.²⁸ Although Jacobs at first refused an offer of a missionary (probably Case) to live with him and attend school, he later decided to enter the Grand River School at his own expense, where he hoped to learn to live as the white man did. While there he was taken to a camp meeting where he was converted.

The story of Jacobs' conversion was related many times. In a speech given at Exeter Hall in England to a gathering of Methodists, he explained the circumstances:

When I was a worshipper of the sun and moon, about

fourteen years ago, I hear a missionary speak of a beautiful heaven, where nothing but joy was to be experienced, and of the awful flames of hell, where the wicked shall be cast if they do not believe in the Jesus Christ. I made inquiry if there was any possibility of a Chippewa Indian getting to heaven. I was told heaven was open to all believers in Christ Jesus ...²⁹

Jacobs mentioned in the introduction to his journal that he first heard the Rev. Case preach in 1824 when the latter came to the Bay of Quinte region.³⁰ He explained that at first he had felt that God was a white man's God and would not understand him as he, Jacobs, only understood a few words in English. Then he met Peter Jones and heard him pray in Ojibwa. Jacobs related that he was convinced that God could indeed understand Ojibwa too, though he told of passing several sleepless nights before he finally felt "the joy of Jesus". Following his conversion, Jacobs was taken in by some pious Christians while he attended school at Belleville. He must have been an apt student for soon he was able to read parts of the New Testament.³¹ Soon Jacobs was asked to join John Sunday and other prominent Ojibwa converts as a frequent speaker at Methodist revival meetings. Jacobs was able to use his own background and his skills as an orator to create dramatic effects for his white audiences. George Copway, another Ojibwa convert and Native missionary in the American mid-west, tells a story of one such meeting. According to Copway Jacobs attended a camp meeting in Adolphustown, Bay of Quinte where both whites and Indians were present.

At a point in the meeting Jacobs sprang to his feet and spoke:

The Great Spirit has blest Peter the orphan boy. He no tell lies. He says He love me. That good man say (preacher), Jesus died for everyone. How happy, happy now! My father, mother, gone; they drank firewater (turning to some of the traders, who were at this moment as attentive as the rest). You did not give the Indian blessed Bible; you cheated poor Indian for his furs. You kill my people. What will the Great Spirit say when he come? He will tell you 'You give poor Indian firewater: you kept the Bible from poor Indian long, long time. YOU BIG RASCAL, GO TO HELL. That is what he will say to you.³²

While Copway's story may well be apocryphal, it provides us with some idea of what the converts and missionaries felt were important elements in the Methodist missions to the Indians. For one thing, it brings out the perceived conflict between the missionaries and the traders that Jacobs was to feel throughout most of his stay at Rainy Lake. For another, it indicates that Jacobs, like Salt and Steinhauer was made to feel that he was an orphan and thus both physically and spiritually cut off from his previous life.³³ Regardless of when, or even if he had indeed been orphaned or abandoned by his parents, there is no doubt that following his conversion he was made to feel a part of his new family and forget his old. Nevertheless, Jacobs was considerably older than Salt and Steinhauer when he came under the influence of the Methodists so that more of the influences of his early life kept cropping up in his

later life. At the same time, Jacobs' conversion at a very impressionable stage of life, may have contributed to making him more enthusiastic than the other two. Despite his periodic falls from grace, Jacobs exhibited many of the excesses of a new convert in the manner in which he attempted to write, dress and act towards others.

The immediate period following Jacobs' conversion is not totally clear apart from the fact that he was active in the local native Methodist communities. According to his own testimony he became a prayer leader, then a class leader and finally a local preacher among the Ojibwa.³⁴ In 1826 Jacobs married his first wife and established a home on the Credit Mission. It may be during this period that Jacobs briefly attempted to set up shop as a businessman. Mary was one of the earliest of the Ojibwa converts, had attended mission school where she had learned to read and write, and had gained a reputation for her sanctity. It seemed to be a perfect marriage, but two years later she died of a fever, and shortly after their infant daughter also died.³⁵ Following the tragic death of his young first wife in 1828, Jacobs apparently underwent a second conversion, decided to give up his business career, and became a full time missionary worker.

In 1831 Jacobs remarried, this time marrying Elizabeth, the mixed-blood daughter of a local militia leader by the name of Joseph Anderson who was very influential among the Southeastern Ojibwa. Captain Anderson acted as the Indian Superintendent of Rice Lake from 1800 until his death in 1843. He was reported to have had six children by two Mississauga women. Although the children spoke Ojibwa and English fluently, Anderson refused to let them attend the mission

school. This may explain why the marriage caused some consternation in the Methodist community, although the girls were reported to have become Christians.³⁶ The marriage also meant that Jacobs was now related to many of the Euro-Americans in the region. Whether or not he married to advance himself, it is interesting to note that many of the Jacobs' later associations were due either to his wife or her family connections.³⁷

Between the years 1828 and 1835 he was actively involved at the Credit Mission where he served as an interpreter for various Anglo-American Methodist missionaries including William Case and the brothers Egerton and George Ryerson. It is difficult to determine just when Methodist leaders such as Case began to be disillusioned with Jacobs, although it was probably during this period. There are charges in the correspondence of the Methodist missionaries that Jacobs had difficulty keeping out of debt and avoiding the temptations of female members of the congregation even during the period when he was married. Nor, it seems, could the young Ojibwa females resist the flatteries and advances of Jacobs. William Case, in particular was concerned that Jacobs would prove a bad example to the other Ojibwa converts:

Peter Jacobs has so often foreited our confidence that I wish to have nothing to do with him. I should expect that he would seek the first opportunity to seduce some of your promising females, so I can and will have nothing to do with him till we have full proof of his penitence and virtuous deportment ...³⁸

Just how serious these indiscretions were is hard to say, but they cast

a pall on Jacobs' subsequent career both during and following his lifetime. Obviously at least some of the Methodist leaders were willing to give Jacobs another chance for Rev. John Ryerson suggested that the Rev. James Evans use Jacobs as an assistant when he undertook new missionary duties along the northern shores of Lake Superior. Evans had encountered Jacobs earlier and never seemed to be overly concerned about Jacobs' financial problems or sexual promiscuity.

Westward Expansion

In 1828, a few short years after missionary work with the Upper Canada Ojibwa had begun, Peter Jones and another noted Ojibwa convert, John Sunday, were already making missionary journeys to Lake Huron and the southern shores of Lake Superior. It was a signal that the Methodist vision extended far beyond the local Ojibwa communities. However, that same year, the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada became independent of its American parent body. Although the Canada Conference continued to receive a grant of money from the American missionary society, the task of maintaining ten growing Indian missions placed a large burden on the small Canadian church. Moreover, 1828 was the year that Bishop John Strachan made a concerted effort to cut off the government aid that was being paid to the Methodist missions for helping to settle the Ojibwa. While Strachan was unsuccessful in his bid, his action did result in Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Colborne approaching the British Methodists to see if they might serve as a more suitable source of missionaries to the Indians. This, coupled with the visit of the Rev. Peter Jones to England on a fundraising tour, convinced some of the British Methodists that their assistance was indeed required in

Upper Canada.

Following a round of negotiations which left many of the Canadians unhappy, the British and Canadian Conferences were formally united in 1833. The work of the Indian missions was incorporated into that of the English Wesleyan Missionary Society, and the Rev. Joseph Stinson was sent out from England to act as the General Superintendent of Missions. Rev. Case was relegated to the role of General Missionary to the Indian Tribes with responsibility for Indian schools. Case, however, continued to play a pivotal role in the work of the missions. Since there were only four Euro-Americans serving the Indian missions, most of the missionary work had to be carried out by the young Ojibwa that he had trained or was in the process of training. Although the British Conference, in 1834, sent out five English missionaries to work among the Indians, they were unprepared for their task and all but one gradually took up missions with Euro-American communities. Their places in the more established missions were taken by members of the Canada Conference including several of the Ryerson brothers, James Evans and Thomas Hurlburt, but most of the expansion work to the northwest continued to be carried out by Case's native missionary workers.

Several years earlier, in 1831, the Rev. Wm. Case expressed the Methodists' ultimate aspirations in a letter to Peter Jones:

I can perceive no impediment to the work becoming general throughout the wilderness of America. So extensive is the Chippeway, and so zealous the converts of that people -- and such is the foundation now laid for the spread of the work -- that it will

extend across the country, from tribe to tribe, to Hudson's Bay, thence west through all the wandering tribes ...³⁹

It was to this vision that the young native missionaries now applied themselves. Relatively unaware of and certainly not comprehending, the underlying quarrels that were going on between the Canadian and British branches of Methodism, they set out to bring the twin gospels of Methodist Christianity and Euro-American civilization to their far-flung pagan brethren. Each year beginning in 1829 and continuing until the late 1830s, teams of the Native missionaries, including David Sawyer, Thomas McGee, William Herkimer, George Henry, John Young and John Summerfeld, ventured forth to visit the numerous small bands that lived along the shores of Lake Huron, on Manitoulin Island, and the countless other islands of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. Using Sault Ste. Marie as a base, the indefatigable John Sunday and John Paul pushed on even further west. In journeys that took them eight months to complete, they proceeded along the south shore of Lake Superior and beyond. In doing this they effectively ignored political boundaries in much the same way the Indians themselves ignored them.⁴⁰ The Rev. John Clarke, missionary of the American Methodist Episcopal Church stationed on the American side of the Sault appealed for further help from Case's students. As a result David Copway, Peter Marksman and John Johnson were despatched to work with the Ojibwa in Wisconsin and Minnesota Territories. Each time that the Native missionaries returned, they brought back enthusiastic reports of having been received by Indians eager to hear more of the new religion and the whiteman's ways.

Although it is easy to discount these stories as merely the exaggerations of the missionaries, the appeal and power of John Sunday as an orator should not be forgotten. It is likely that word of his trips did in fact travel throughout the scattered bands in much the same way that enthusiasm for the Shawnee Prophet had done previously. Certainly, the fact that later observers such as Hoffman and others reported that some of their informants claimed to have been converted by Sunday -- and to have remained Christians, despite the lack of regular ministers -- would seem to indicate the magnetism of the man and the curiosity of the Indians.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Sunday and his colleagues also brought back reports of the activities of Roman Catholic missionaries in these regions, and the resultant need to reach them before their rivals did.

In 1836, following a tour of Manitoulin Island and the Saugeen Peninsula, the Superintendent of Missions, Rev. Joseph Stinson, expressed the hope that the Methodists would soon be able to expand their operations even further afield into the Hudson's Bay Territories. However, this time the Methodists returned to the practice of appointing Euro-Americans for the task, probably since the hope was to establish permanent missions. Two years later the Rev. James Evans and Thomas Hurlburt (who had not yet been ordained) were transferred from the St. Clair Mission to work among the Ojibwa who lived along the northern and western shores of Lake Superior. Evans had worked at the contentious St. Clair Mission since 1834, attempting to persuade the pagan Ojibwa that they should embrace Christianity and civilization, and dealing with opposing Christian factions. Hurlburt, meanwhile had spent some time at

the newly established mission at Saugeen, before being sent to work with Evans. Both men were involved in championing Ojibwa rights in connection with the sale of Indian lands at Saugeen to the government. They were also both keenly interested in Indian languages, although Evans had just suffered a personal disappointment when he was unable to get some of his Ojibwa translations published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. As a result of this disappointment Evans was thus particularly ready for new challenges in previously unexplored missionary territories.

It was decided that Evans and Hurlburt should leave their families behind in Upper Canada. There were just too many unknown dangers to be faced in a land where few Euro-American women dared to venture. However, the missionary party included not only Peter Jacobs as interpreter and teacher, but also his wife and two young children. Mixed-blood women were obviously built of sturdier material, as was proven when Betsy Jacobs bore a baby daughter later that winter. The expedition left Toronto in July and by the end of August had reached Sault Ste. Marie where they delayed for a time, attempting to pick up more provisions. At the Sault they were met by John Sunday and in turn met a Catholic bishop and two priests, one of whom was the Rev. Antoine Belcourt. Hurlburt continued on to Fort William, while Evans spent some time at the Hudson's Bay Company posts of Michipicoten and Meshehegwatoong on the northern shores of Lake Superior. In a letter to his wife, Evans reported that "There are 4,000 heathens here. May the Lord make them all Christians, and if he please, all Methodists ...".⁴² He was equally enthusiastic in another letter to the Rev. Case,

when he expressed his enthusiasm for the new mission field:

The sphere of labour is boundless, from Labrador and Hudson Bay to the Rockies. We have favour in the eyes of the Hudson's Bay factors, and as they command the entire influence of the Indian country our prospect as far as they are concerned is good.⁴³

Evans' letters reflect the fact that he was impressed by the reception that he and Hurlburt had received. He was particularly struck with the hospitality, the erudition, and even the religious sentiments of John Cameron and Nicol Finlayson, the two Hudson's Bay Company officials with whom he frequently dined and conversed at Michipicoten.

Evans' enthusiasm for the challenges ahead were shared by his colleague, Thomas Hurlburt. In a letter to Evans the following spring, Hurlburt suggested that they should push on even deeper into Hudson's Bay Territory:

... I have seen a few of the Indians of the interior, as they came in to get their supplies ... All, without exception, tell me that, had I come a year ago, they all would have joined themselves to me. I think that some [missionaries] should be sent to Rainy Lake as soon as possible, before the priests do us more harm. I hear that Mr. Charles, the gentleman in charge, is anxious for a missionary, but says that he must have an inexhaustible supply of patience and perseverance to deal with those Indians ... Had I an Indian [native missionary] with me, I should go to

Rainy Lake for the summer. From what I hear of their character, I should expect them to be indifferent and shy at first ...⁴⁴

It was the first direct sign of interest in a mission at Rainy Lake. Although Hurlburt was not to visit Rainy Lake himself for many years, within a very short period of time the Rainy Lake mission was to become a reality, and Hurlburt's casual observations concerning the Indians there were to be borne out in fact.

FOOTNOTES

¹"Class leader's Qualifications". Christian Advocate, (New York), July 1834, 192. (Quoted hereafter as CA).

²Goldwin French, Parsons and Politics. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), 9.

³Canadian Methodists, however, continued to use both the more informal services and the more formal Anglican form of service. Jacobs, for instance, mentions using the Anglican service at Rainy Lake and Fort Alexander. WMMS Jacobs to the London Secretaries, May 4, 1841.

⁴See French, op. cit.

⁵F. C. Stephenson, One Hundred Years of Canadian Methodist Missions, 1824-1924. (Toronto: Missionary Society of the Methodist Church), vol. 1: 50-51.

⁶John Webster Grant, Moon of Wintertime. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 76-7; and Donald Smith, "The Mississauga, Peter Jones and the White Man". Ph.D. University of Toronto, 1975.

⁷John Carroll, Case and his Contemporaries. (Toronto: Wesleyan Office, 1867-77), v. 1: 61.

⁸Case's ideas were not popular, even among his fellow Methodists, most of whom felt that Indians had to be "civilized" before they could be converted. While Case's ideas continued to be espoused, many of his disciples began to lean towards stressing civilization first, or as a simultaneous activity. However, the Rainy Lake missionaries never did stress "civilization" to the same extent as their R. C. rival, Rev. Antoine Belcourt.

⁹CA, March 31, 1827, p. 118.

¹⁰Carroll, op. cit., v. 3: 231.

¹¹J. E. Sanderson, The First Century of Methodism in Canada. 2 vols. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1908), v. 1: 210, 245).

¹²Elizabeth Graham, Medicine Man to Missionary. (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1975), 21.

¹³Rev. J. B. Benham as quoted in Graham, op. cit., 106.

¹⁴Rev. Philander Smith as quoted in Sanderson, op. cit., v. 1: 245.

¹⁵Issack K. Mabindisa, "The Praying Man: The Life and Times of Henry Bird Steinhauer". Ph.D diss., University of Alberta, 1984.

¹⁶Grant, op. cit., 78; Mabindisa, op. cit., 83.

¹⁷Grant, op. cit., 86.

¹⁸Not only the Ojibwa student's former lives were condemned however, for the Methodists tried to develop a sense of unworthiness and guilt, plus a fear of eternal damnation, among all their potential members, Indian and Euro-American. It was only when sinners desired to flee from God's wrath and be saved from sin, that they were accepted into the Methodist societies. It was this combination of fear and surrender to God's will that characterized both their preaching and their teaching. See Wade Crawford Barclay, Early American Methodism: 1769-1844. 2 vols. (New York: Methodist Church Board of Missions, 1949), 301-331.

¹⁹Mabindisa, op. cit., 93-4.

²⁰Allen Salt Papers, Journal (1854-55) MG29. Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, 1.

²¹Methodists, in keeping with a long tradition, had taken on a Christian name as a sign of their new life. In a sense it even resembled the Ojibwa practice of taking new names at important rites of passage. However, the new name came to be identified not only with Christianity, but with a Euro-American way of living, particularly when the names were taken from prominent Euro-American Methodist ministers.

²²Mabindisa, op. cit., 91-2.

²³Ibid., 85-6.

²⁴Rev. John Sunday as quoted in Stephenson, op. cit., vol. 1: 75.

²⁵It is difficult to determine whether or not Salt simply lost his vocation to be a minister at this time and decided to stress the self-betterment aspects of the Methodist teaching, or whether he actually returned to live among the Ojibwa and their way of life.

²⁶Despite Salt's deep Christian conviction and his determination to avoid partaking in any pagan practices, he obviously still believed in the powers of Ojibwa conjurors to do evil.

²⁷The Christian significance of the experience of "returning to life after three days" is clear, but it is also significant that both Salt's and Jacobs' conversion experiences were results of dreams or visions. Consciously or not, they were drawing upon their Ojibwa past to interpret Christianity.

²⁸CA, op. cit., May 2, June 17, 1928.

²⁹Christian Guardian, June 12, 1843. (Quoted hereafter as CG).

³⁰Peter Jacobs, Journal of the Reverend Peter Jacobs, Indian Wesleyan Missionary from Rice Lake to the Hudson's Bay Territory. (New York: Published for the Author, 1858), 3.

³¹CA, op. cit., May 2, 1828.

³²George Copway, Recollections of a Forest Life: or, The Life and Travels of Kah-Ge-Ga-Gah-Bowh, or, George Copway, Chief of the Ojibway Nation. 2nd ed. 1851. Reprint Edition: (Ann Arbour: University Microfilms, 1980), 198-200.

³³"Orphans" was, of course, the term used by Euro-Americans, for according to Ojibwa kinship structures, they would have been adopted by their kin if both parents had in fact been killed.

³⁴Jacobs, op. cit., 4.

³⁵CA, op. cit., Sept. 26, 1828.

³⁶Ontario Historical Society. Papers

³⁷Certainly this would account for his family's reception by the Johnson family at Sault Ste. Marie, to whom Betsy was related. It also probably accounts for the solicitous attention paid to her by Jacob's associates in the Methodist Church.

³⁸WMMS, op. cit., Wm. Case to James Evans, 1836.

³⁹WMMS, op. cit., Wm. Case to Peter Jones, 1831.

⁴⁰They were no doubt supported in their ignoring of the boundary by Rev. Case himself. Case had retained his ties with the American Wesleyan Missionary Society and readily agreed to have some of his students serve as missionaries to the Indians in the American Northwest.

⁴¹See Hoffman, _____, for example.

⁴²James Evans to his wife, Mary, as quoted in Nan Shipley, The James Evans Story. (Toronto: Ryerson, 1966), 20.

⁴³James Evans to his brother, Ephraim, as quoted in Shipley, op. cit., 21.

⁴⁴Thomas Hurlburt to Evans,

CHAPTER FOUR: THE RAINY LAKE MISSION

Historical Overview

The Rainy Lake Methodist Mission had its beginning with the decision of the Rev. James Evans to take Thomas Hurlburt's suggestion and visit Rainy Lake in the summer of 1839.¹ Taking Peter Jacobs and his family with him, Evans left Michipicoten, and stopping briefly at Fort William proceeded on to Rainy Lake, where the party arrived on the 21 June 1839. The next day Evans had one of the old chiefs (probably Pied Gelez) who appeared sympathetic, call a council. Evans spoke to the assembled Indians, explaining to them that "all their good medicines they might still use but the bad must be thrown away ... we came not to prevent their hunting but to encourage them to hunt and make their lives happy and to get their souls blessed by the Great Spirit".² Evans was jubilant at finding so many Indians:

Rainy Lake, or Lac la Pluie is one of the most important establishments ... east of the Rocky Mountains. There are generally two to five hundred Indians in the immediate vicinity of the company's fort; and during a part of the year their number may be estimated at no less than two thousand.³

However, he went on to observe that "Rainy Lake is one of the principal places in the country for holding Great Indian medicine feasts ... The mittay or medicine men are strongly opposed to the Christian religion".⁴ While Evans had originally planned to go on to Red River, he decided to return as soon as his new canoe was finished. Arrangements had previously been made with Governor Simpson for Peter

Jacobs and his family to remain at Ft. Frances, so on June 29, 1839 Evans left the new mission in charge of Jacobs and returned to Ft. William and then to Upper Canada.

Jacobs and Evans arrived at Rainy Lake while both men were still missionaries of the Canada Conference, and before any agreement had been reached between the Hudson's Bay Company and the London-based Wesleyan Missionary Society. However, while the two men were involved in establishing the mission, circumstances in England and Upper Canada were unfolding which would dramatically change this course of events. Although the Rainy Lake Mission had its beginnings under the Canada Conference of the Methodist Church, this relationship would not last long.

During his meeting with Evans in Michipicoten in May 1839, Simpson had suggested to Evans that the Methodists in London should approach Company officials with a proposal for an arrangement whereby the Company would help them with supplies and logistics. He assured Evans that the whole country was open to Methodist missionaries. Thus, even before the break between the British and Canada Conferences, Evans had been exploring alternate means of providing for the missions, and appeared to have received a sympathetic hearing from Simpson. Nevertheless, the subsequent discussions between the Company and the Methodists were no doubt complicated by the impending split between the two conferences. It is difficult to say whether or not Simpson himself was caught up in these struggles, or whether he attempted to make the most of them for Company purposes. Presumably he would have preferred the more centralized control of the British Wesleyans to the more individualistic

Canadians. We do know that in January 1840 Simpson wrote a letter to Dr. Robert Alder, the Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London in which he stated:

I beg leave to state the substance of the arrangement as I understood it, viz -- that the Mission shall appoint three of their missionaries to proceed to the Company's Territories this ensuing summer; one of these gentlemen to be located or stationed at Moose Factory, another at or in the neighbourhood of Norway House, and the third at one of the establishments on the Saskatchewan River ...⁵

Simpson made no mention of any discussion with Evans, nor of the latter's interest in possible missions at Ft. William, Nipigon and Rainy Lake. This is curious since it would have been obvious to him that Evans and Alder were interested in the same thing, and had no doubt spoken to each other during Alder's visit to Upper Canada in 1839. While Rainy Lake was subsequently added to the list of missions under the agreement, there continued to be confusion as to the status of the Ft. William mission, and Nipigon seems to have been forgotten.⁶ Despite the fact that Simpson appeared to have by-passed Evans at this point, it should not be assumed that he had been ruled out by either Simpson or Alder. Evans was one of the very few Methodist missionaries to have any experience in the region, and he had shown himself favourable to Alder and the British connection during the running debate which had been carried out between Alder and Egerton Ryerson. It is therefore not totally surprising that when a Superintendent for the new missions was

appointed, it should have been James Evans. Presumably, when he accepted the appointment, Evans requested the assistance of two Native missionary assistants in addition to the three English missionaries, for when the original contingent was appointed it included Evans himself, plus Peter Jacobs and Henry Steinhauer, as well as the three Englishmen: William Mason, Robert Rundle and George Barnley. The latter men had been ordained by Rev. Alder on March 8, 1840, and shortly after had set sail from Liverpool for New York and then Montreal. There they were to meet Evans and Steinhauer where together they would accompany the fur trade brigade on their annual trip west. However, due to a misunderstanding Evans and Steinhauer arrived late in Montreal and were forced to make their own way to Rupert's Land. The Evans party arrived in Ft. Frances in late June of 1840, where they were met by Jacobs who was still there from the previous year, and by Mason who had arrived on May 25. Evans remained only a short time before continuing on to Red River and then Norway House, leaving the mission at Rainy Lake under the leadership of William Mason. Jacobs and Steinhauer were to assist him with interpreting and teaching. The Methodist Mission at Rainy Lake, while fully staffed, was leaderless and lacking in direction from the very beginning. Evans had not had sufficient time to help them devise a plan of action, and was soon too far away to give adequate guidance. The instructions from London were vague and showed little understanding of the conditions under which the missionaries would be working.

Under the terms of the agreement between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Wesleyan Missionary Society, the Company promised to provide the Wesleyan missionaries with board and lodging and luxuries in the same

manner as was provided to commissioned gentlemen. This part of the agreement proved to be difficult from the very beginning for the Methodists constantly complained of being short of supplies. Jacobs, for instance, in a letter back to Evans during his first winter at Rainy Lake, advised Evans to send someone who knew how to hunt and fish, "for we have to depend on spear, gun and snares for our living. Cannot get things from Sault Ste. Marie as when on Lake Superior."⁷ The agreement between the Company and the Society also allowed passage in Company craft, and special conveyance was to be made available when the missionaries required it in order to visit the stations of their mission.⁸ While, initially there were no difficulties, Simpson gradually became reluctant to provide such passage -- particularly for the entire families of missionaries. In return for the above benefits, the Wesleyan Missionary Society agreed to pay for the missionaries' wardrobe and personal effects. The missionaries were expected to hold daily worship and sabbath services for Company gentlemen and servants who wished to attend. While it was not specified in the letters from Dr. Alder, the missionaries were also expected to establish schools, which could be attended by the children of Company employees.

Alder, in his letters, set out guidelines for the missionaries. They were warned to avoid the appearance of evil, to be swift to hear and slow to speak, to be a friend to all, to be respectful to authority and to treat civil superiors with respect, and to take no liberties with young females, being especially careful of "half-caste" families.⁹ They were encouraged to write both their Superintendent in Norway House and the Secretaries in London on a regular basis regarding such things as

the circumstances of the country, the state of the people, and the progress of their work.¹⁰ Alder's guidelines were originally intended for the English missionaries who had been sent out, but they applied also to their native colleagues, and indeed they were little different than the general rules of conduct set forth for Methodist class leaders.

Unfortunately for the recently arrived Methodist missionaries,¹¹ Alder's guidelines provided little practical advice for dealing with either the officers and men of the Hudson's Bay Company or the Ojibwa. While Rainy Lake was the centre of a large concentration of well-established Ojibwa and a sizeable population of mixed-bloods who had connections with both settlements in American Territory and Red River, it was no longer a major terminus in the fur trade, and lacked many of the amenities of "civilized society" to which both Mason and his native colleagues were accustomed. Jacobs gives a good description of his mixed feelings on arriving there:

Two thousand miles from Toronto, four months pulling at the ash oar, rivers, lakes, portages -- never worked so hard before; but forgot all my troubles seeing so many Indians. I find them firm in their idolatry, holding councils against Christianity and warning their young men. Yet some give encouragement.¹²

The new mission was under the nominal control of a recently ordained English minister with no experience in the wilderness setting and no knowledge of the Ojibwa language. He was quickly to prove himself notably unsuitable for the position. While Steinhauer had a

solid educational background needed for the work and spoke a dialect of Ojibwa, he had not as yet had sufficient experience to develop any leadership skills. During his Rainy Lake tenure Steinhauer functioned primarily as a teacher and translator, although he did at times act somewhat independently. It was not until much later in 1855, long after he had left Rainy Lake, that he was finally ordained.

Although Jacobs lacked Steinhauer's educational background, he also spoke a dialect of Ojibwa, and had the most extensive missionary experience of the three. However, as later events were to prove, he was a follower rather than a leader. Even after his ordination as a minister and his appointment as Mason's replacement at Rainy Lake in 1843, Jacobs showed few leadership qualities. It is scarcely surprising then, that the first years of the mission were marked by indecision and inaction. Lacking the drive and charisma of an Evans or a Hurlburt, the missionaries foundered in their attempts to establish meaningful contacts with the Ojibwa, and lacking knowledge of fur trade society, they began to alienate both the Hudson's Bay Company officials and their own superiors in the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

However, it must be admitted that despite their personal limitations, a major part of the problem which they faced was the opposing organizational structures and goals of their two sponsoring bodies. Despite the agreement drawn up between the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Wesleyan Missionary Society, it soon became clear that implementation of the agreement at the local level would be difficult if not impossible. Part of the problem was due to the fact that the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in establishing a missionary

station at Rainy Lake, viewed it as merely the headquarters for a circuit of connected stations which would be established at Manitou Rapids on the Rainy River, at Fort Alexander, Rat Portage, on Lac Seul, and at Osnaburgh House. Unfortunately this plan led them into conflict with the organizational structure of the Hudson's Bay Company which placed Rainy Lake, Rainy River, Fort Alexander and Rat Portage in the Company's Northern Department, but Lac Seul and Osnaburgh House in the Southern Department. The rivalry between the two departments and the officials concerned meant that friction was almost bound to occur if the missionaries pushed ahead with their plans. Moreover, as Evans himself complained to his brother, the secretaries of the Society in London never did understand that the vast distances and primitive communications made it difficult to minister to such widely separated communities on a regular basis.¹³ Not only were the physical problems posed by such trips enormous, but new converts were left to their own resources for long periods of time when they most needed the assistance of their new spiritual leaders. Nevertheless, even Evans supported many of these moves at expansion. It appears at times that the main motivating factor was simply a desire to reach new bands of Ojibwa before their Catholic rivals did, although this, in turn, left their established missions open to their rivals since there was a continual shortage of missionaries. Certainly the aggressive efforts of Rev. Antoine Belcourt in the region were a matter of considerable concern to the Methodist missionaries -- as well as some of the Protestant HBC officials such as Nicol Finlayson.¹⁴

With the arrival of Mason and Steinhauer at Fort Frances in the

spring of 1840, the Rainy Lake mission was the most fully staffed of all the missions in Hudson Bay Territory, and was well staffed in comparison to most of the Methodist Indian missions in Upper Canada. However, the missionaries did not concentrate on a single site near Fort Frances. Instead, they began plans to cover the large mission circuit which stretched from Fort Frances, down the Rainy River, through the Lake of the Woods to Rat Portage and up the Winnipeg River to Fort Alexander. Steinhauer was put to work teaching school at Ft. Frances where Jacobs had begun the previous year, while Jacobs was posted to Ft. Alexander. The following year, in 1841, Mason and Steinhauer took the first of several trips to Lac Seul and Osnaburgh House, while Jacobs left for Norway House and ultimately for England where he was ordained in 1842.¹⁵ During the period that Mason was in charge of the mission he baptized a considerable number of Ojibwa but it is doubtful if any of these "converts" had any intention of becoming committed Christians.¹⁶ Mason remained only a short period of time in the Rainy Lake region. In the second summer he and Steinhauer made the first of several trips to the Lac Seul and Osnaburgh House regions. Later that same summer, while on an extended visit to Red River he met and decided to marry Miss Sophie Thomas, one of the mixed-blood daughters of former Governor Thomas Thomas. Rather than return to the relative isolation of Fort Frances, he accepted Nicol Finlayson's invitation to spend the winter at Ft. Alexander with him. Mason instructed Steinhauer to proceed to Rat Portage for the winter, where he was to act as a tutor to the factor's children. However, Steinhauer did not feel that he was fulfilling his work as a missionary, so he returned to Rainy Lake, causing Mason to

accuse him of not doing his duty. Mason's neglect of his own duties, his decision to marry, and his profligate spending habits did nothing to endear him to Superintendent Evans or Rev. Alder. The Methodist officials' confidence in Mason's abilities to direct the affairs of the mission were shattered, despite the enthusiastic reports which they received from Mason and Steinhauer during their visit to Lac Seul and Osnaburgh House in the summer of 1842. Thus, Mason was transferred to Norway House in 1843 so that he would be under the direct supervision of Evans.¹⁷

Jacobs returned to take charge of the mission in the fall of 1843. Steinhauer remained in the Rainy Lake district as his assistant. It was an arrangement which suited both men since they were able to work together and presumably help each other. Thus, for instance, Steinhauer helped Jacobs with his correspondence, and it is possible to see a definite improvement in Jacobs' prose during this period. Steinhauer, for his part, appeared to be much more at peace with himself, than when he had worked with Mason.¹⁸ Jacob's appointment should not be taken as an indication that the Rainy Lake Mission was no longer considered important to the Methodists. On the contrary, as Alder noted to Evans, Simpson was anxious to have a resident missionary at Rainy Lake and felt that "... Jacob's appointment at Lac la Pluie will be very accessible to all classes there and will be the best method that can be presently employed to neutralize the influence of the Romish Priests".¹⁹ Simpson himself expressed another reason for having Jacobs take up the Rainy Lake post. He was afraid that the large, annual congregations of Indians each spring could lead to trouble, and he felt that "Mr. Jacobs,

who has a great deal of influence with those Indians might be useful in drawing the Chief's attention to the danger ..." of a quarrel developing between the traders and some of the young Ojibwa.²⁰

However, the appointment of Jacobs to Fort Frances on Rainy Lake, did not mean that the Methodist authorities had given up hope for establishing additional mission stations along the Rainy River as well as at Lac Seul and Osnaburgh House. Jacobs and Steinhauer were instructed to visit the latter areas in 1844. Despite their reservations about further efforts in the area, and despite the opposition of both Sir George Simpson and the local official, Charles Mackenzie, Jacobs was sent back the following summer to begin work on building houses for the local Ojibwa. He was given no assistance by Mackenzie, who made it clear that he wanted nothing to do with the mission, or with any attempts to have the local Ojibwa engage in agricultural pursuits.²¹ After spending a very trying winter at Lac Seul with his family who had joined him there, Jacobs was told by Evans to abandon the attempt at establishing a Lac Seul mission and return to Rainy Lake. The officials of the Hudson's Bay Company had finally made it clear that they would not sanction the mission. They were afraid that any concentration of Indians at Lac Seul would become a burden on the Company since the poor soil and severe weather made it impossible for the Ojibwa to farm. Thus, the attempts to establish mission stations at Lac Seul and Osnaburgh House were permanently abandoned. Steinhauer meanwhile had been transferred to Norway House in August of 1844 to take charge of the mission school at Rossville where the Methodist efforts were more favourably received by both Hudson's Bay

Company and the Indians. Jacobs was now left to his own resources at the Rainy Lake Mission.

During the next several years Jacobs continued to operate a very small school at Ft. Frances, but none of the regular students were Ojibwa. He made repeated attempts to evangelize the Ojibwa in the immediate vicinity of Ft. Frances who came to the fort to trade or attend the annual gatherings of the Ojibwa. He complained, though, that all his efforts were thwarted by religious leaders whom he termed "conjurors".²² These conjurors used their influence to prevent the people from listening to him, and convinced them to persist in their old ways. Jacobs also continued to try and obtain permission to establish a mission station on the Rainy River at Manitou Rapids or Long Sault. He hoped that by separating himself physically from the Hudson's Bay Company establishment, and by providing the Ojibwa with practical assistance in building houses and farming, he would have more success. However, Pied Gelez, the river chief who had initially expressed an interest in Christianity had died, and the new leaders were not sympathetic to the idea of a new mission on Rainy River when he met with them. In this instance Jacobs found himself caught between the Hudson's Bay Company which expressed a willingness to help, and the Ojibwa, who wanted tools and seeds, but were unwilling to accept the missionaries and their Christian message.

In the meantime Jacobs was becoming increasingly frustrated by his lack of success in having either the society or the Company pay for the education of his sons. His son Peter, in particular, had shown academic talents which Jacobs wanted to have developed. However, since the only

school at Rainy Lake was the one he taught, this meant that the sons would have to be sent either to Red River or back to Upper Canada to complete their education. Jacobs could not afford to do this on his missionary's salary so he had appealed to both the missionary society and the Hudson's Bay Company for assistance. Both groups acknowledged his desires and his difficulties, but did nothing concrete to help him. At the same time Jacobs was increasingly finding that arrangements with the Company were becoming more difficult.

In the beginning, Jacobs, like his missionary colleagues, had expressed satisfaction with the cooperation that they received from local Company officials, but gradually this harmony eroded. The missionaries, Jacobs included, found it difficult to obtain the private goods necessary for their work and families, and felt that Company officials often were deliberately not helpful.²³ As Jacobs noted in a letter to Rev. Alder "... a Wesleyan missionary and Indian trader can not live together in peace in one establishment because their profession in life is as different as day and darkness".²⁴ On several occasions he indicated to both Alder and Simpson that he wanted to leave, but both men made excuses as to why he should remain.

Finally in 1849, after his wife became increasingly ill, his request for a two year furlough was granted. The following summer, in 1850 he left for Upper Canada with his family, leaving the Rainy Lake mission vacant. He had suggested, and Simpson had concurred, that there was no reason to send a replacement during his absence. During his furlough Jacobs again visited England as Alder's guest, and while there made a moving plea for more missionaries to the annual general

conference of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. Although he reluctantly agreed to return once more to the mission field, Simpson was no longer willing to pay for the transportation of his large family. Thus, when he returned to Hudson Bay Territory briefly in 1852, it was to tour the Methodist missions in the Northwest, not as a missionary to Rainy Lake.

It was not until 1854 when Allen Salt arrived that the Methodists were able to find another missionary for Rainy Lake. In that year efforts were being made to rebuild the Methodist missions in the west following the recall and death of Evans, the defection of Mason to the Anglicans, and the reunion of the English and Canada conferences. Salt was part of a new group of missionaries who came west under Superintendent Thomas Hurlburt, Evan's old colleague from the Lake Superior missions. Salt energetically began his twin tasks of re-establishing the school and making contact with the local Ojibwa. Older and more experienced than Steinhauer, better educated than Jacobs, and like them, speaking Ojibwa, he seemed an excellent choice for the mission. However, while his reports are less pessimistic than those of Jacobs, success eluded him in much the same way as it had his predecessors. Despite Jacobs' warnings to the contrary he was once again stationed at Fort Frances where he faced many of the same problems that his predecessors had encountered.

Unlike Jacobs, Salt appeared to have gained the cooperation of the local Company officials, particularly Robert Pither, Alexander Murray and James Mackenzie.²⁵ His efforts among the Ojibwa who lived on Rainy Lake or came there for the annual gatherings were less successful. While he received Gabagonashkung (Peter Jacobs II) on trial as a member

of the Church, and while a few other individuals indicated an interest in becoming Christians, the vast majority of Ojibwa continued to follow their own religious practices. Although Salt did not make an issue of the opposition of the conjurors to the extent that others did, it nevertheless appeared that their influence continued unabated.

Initially it appeared that Salt might have more success in establishing a mission on the Rainy River, but once again the forces opposed to Christianity prevailed. Following a council meeting, Ogimaubinas, one of the river chiefs, reported that neither the River Indians nor those from Lake of the Woods wanted anything to do with the missionaries.

Later that year, in the summer of 1857, Salt and his family returned to Upper Canada, ostensibly so that Salt's wife could receive medical attention, but the continuing failure of the mission no doubt played a major part in the transfer.²⁶ While the Rainy Lake Mission was kept on the books of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for a number of years, it never again was a viable mission, although a native lay missionary, James Asquabe was briefly assigned there in 1860.²⁷

Missionary Views of the Ojibwa

While all the Methodist missionaries, both Euro-American and Native, shared a common religious faith, they differed, according to their own varying backgrounds and personalities, in their individual assessments of the Ojibwa and in their methods of evangelization. These views and practices are reflected in their official and private letters, in the portion of Salt's journal which survives, and in references to them by their Methodist superiors, Company officials and the Ojibwa themselves.

Like the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, the Methodists realized that their letters to the Secretaries in London and later to Church leaders in Upper Canada would be used both to assess the progress of their work and, if they were judged suitable, to publicize their efforts in order to garner support for the missions. As might be expected, this often led them to minimize their problems and exaggerate their successes, although Jacobs always emphasized the strength of the opposition they faced. Even their letters to friends and relatives were filled with pious expressions and lofty ideals, although these were often tempered with more realistic assessments of the situation.²⁸ The problem remains that the letters seldom dealt with the Ojibwa as individuals, so that the picture that they present of Ojibwa society is extremely vague. For this reason Salt's journal and lecture are particularly valuable since they fill in some of the details omitted by the letters. Since the post journals have not survived, and since relatively few of the letters of Company officials deal specifically with the missionaries, it is difficult, though not impossible to reconstruct the total picture, or to always correlate the actions of the missionaries with their expressed views. Nevertheless, the documents do provide us with sufficient material to differentiate the views and actions of the four missionaries, as well as some individual Ojibwa whom they encountered.²⁹

Of the four Methodist missionaries at Rainy Lake, two (Mason and Steinhauer) spent only a brief period there during the time that the mission was being established. Nevertheless, their influence was important since they helped lay the groundwork for subsequent efforts.

Although both men were single, young and inexperienced, the similarities ended there. Mason never felt comfortable in his situation at Rainy Lake, never understood nor tried to understand the Ojibwa, and appeared to be more interested in his own welfare than that of the people he had come to serve. He much preferred to spend his time in the company of HBC officers or at the colony in Red River where he could socialize with other Euro-Americans. To Mason the Ojibwa were a "... simple hearted and obliging race, honest and sincere -- ignorant and poor in the greatest extreme ...".³⁰ It was for this reason that "the conjurors hold all the others in servile subjection; were it not for this circumstance many who are even desirous would long ere this have embraced the religion of a crucified Jesus."³¹

Despite this opposition Mason did make some apparent headway with the Ojibwa. Not overly bright himself, but scheming and self-serving, Mason was content to accept Ojibwa actions at face value, and thus baptised over one hundred Ojibwa and mixed-bloods in his short stay at Rainy Lake.³² On the surface it appeared that a very promising start had been made at the mission. However, most of the "converts" were children whose Ojibwa parents had no intention of bringing them up as Christians, although they were willing to take part in the ceremony which seemed so important to the missionaries. The mixed-bloods as nominal Catholics were happy to have their children baptised since the ritual of baptism was more important to most of them than the niceties of denominationalism. Mason's actions served to add fuel to the controversy with the Catholics since Belcourt continued to regard the Rainy Lake Mission territory and its inhabitants as the rightful domain

of the Roman Catholic Church.

Steinhauer, in contrast to Mason, was a sincere, self-effacing and overly scrupulous young man who both attempted more and claimed less for his efforts. An Ojibwa himself, but one who considered himself to be enlightened, he saw the Rainy Lake Ojibwa as "wanderers of the forest" who were given to idolatry and superstition because of their ignorance of divine things. Thus, he set about to enlighten them just as he had been enlightened. It was Steinhauer who did most to establish a school which would serve both the children of Company servants and Ojibwa youth. Given the constraints under which he worked, he appears to have been fairly successful.³³ Certainly, the number of students (seventeen) that he mentioned was never attained again during the life of the mission. Steinhauer's skill and basic good will must have been recognized by the Ojibwa, for when a number of the major chiefs in the region decided to present a petition to Sir George Simpson in 1841, they approached Steinhauer to help draft their petition and act as their interpreter. It was a strange role for a Methodist missionary for the petition among other things complained of a shortage of rum!³⁴ However, it did illustrate that Steinhauer had gained the trust of the Ojibwa chiefs, even if they continued to have nothing to do with his religion. If Steinhauer was relatively tolerant about beliefs and practices of the pagan Ojibwa, he was less tolerant about the Roman Catholic Ojibwa and mixed-bloods who lived near the fort. Like the other Methodist missionaries at Rainy Lake he was scandalized by their behaviour. In a letter to Evans he wrote that "... I find not a different between these who belong to the infallible Church and the superstitious pagans of the

Country".³⁵ Steinhauer believed that it was the behaviour of these Christians that stopped many of the pagan Ojibwa from becoming Christians.

Mason and Steinhauer were in agreement in their assessment of the Ojibwa at Lac Seul and Osnaburgh House. During their two visits to the area both men wrote back glowing letters of how receptive the Ojibwa in the region were to Christianity. Once again Mason baptised a number of the children, and the missionaries set about teaching the parents to say the Lord's Prayer and sing a few hymns. Some of the "converts" even gave up their ceremonial drums and medicine bags as evidence that they no longer believed in their old ways. However, one of the Lac Seul chiefs, upon meeting Belcourt at White Dog went through another baptism ceremony for his children, indicating that the Lac Seul Ojibwa were willing to humour any missionary who promised to help them.³⁶ What made Steinhauer so naive in his assessment of the situation is hard to say, given his subsequent work at other missions. Perhaps it was due to the overpowering presence of his superior, or perhaps it was due to his inexperience. Certainly the actions of the missionaries were followed with a certain amount of bemusement by Charles McKenzie who recorded his observations on the sequences of events. According to McKenzie the poor missionaries did not realize that they were being taken for fools by the Ojibwa who had no intention of becoming Christians, but simply wanted the gifts which Mason was distributing or promising.³⁷ This was an opinion later shared by Peter Jacobs when he visited the area. While Steinhauer never revised his opinion of the Lac Seul Ojibwa he later expressed his concerns regarding the sincerity of Ojibwa conversions.

Indeed, Jacobs and Steinhauer, in a joint report to Evans, stated that:

Many an opportunity has presented itself wherein we might have made many proselytes and those thus made would have been actuated by mercenary motives, but we did not choose to improve such opportunities because we earnestly desire to see souls added to the Church of God who shall really feel the converting power of the Gospel.³⁸

Steinhauer and Jacobs were not simply making excuses for the drop in the number of converts which followed the departure of Mason for Norway House. They were explaining that they (it is probably Steinhauer who is expressing these thoughts) had a fundamentally different approach to the question of baptism. Mason had readily baptised anyone who expressed a willingness to become a Christian, regardless of the reasons behind this decision. Steinhauer and Jacobs believed that many of the Ojibwa had expressed a willingness to become Christians simply in order to receive the gifts which the Hudson's Bay Company was making available through the Methodist missionaries.³⁹ Although they provided material assistance, they did not want their actions in this regard to become confused with their mission to convert the Ojibwa to Christianity. Thus, they accepted only those people whom they felt were truly converted and who demonstrated the results of grace through their actions.

The Rev. Peter Jacobs was a complex man who had many sides to his personality. To his missionary superiors and to Sir George Simpson he presented himself as an archetypal Methodist missionary labouring

zealously among the heathen who refused to take heed of his message. Time and time again he compared the Rainy Lake and Rainy River Ojibwa to "... the Jews of old ... a stiff-necked people" who persisted in their idolatrous practices despite his best efforts to preach the word of God to them and convert them from their evil ways.⁴⁰ Like Mason before him, Jacobs attributed many of his problems to the "conjurors" who, he argued, dominated Ojibwa society in the general region and prevented the missionaries from making any headway.⁴¹ The Lac Seul Ojibwa, he charged "... acted the hypocrites, when they said they wanted to become Christians ... for they think that if they would become nominal Christians, they would confer on us a very great favour, and that we would therefore be under a great obligation to them, and they would therefore expect from us great things such as clothing and feeding them, etc., etc."⁴² The only group that did not receive Jacobs' censor were "the tribe of Cranes" at Osnaburgh House, whom he reported, were glad to see him and rejoiced in the gospel despite the fact that previously they had been very wicked and were the dread of the land.⁴³ Several years later, while on his tour of Hudson's Bay Territory for the Wesleyan Missionary Society, Jacobs claimed that the whole band had changed because of his preaching and were now model Christians who "pray the Great Spirit to send them a missionary ... and trouble [the trader] all day to read to them the Bible ...".⁴⁴

Jacobs' pronouncements have been taken by some historians as reflecting typical Methodist intolerant and superior attitudes, when in fact, it would be more accurate to take them as examples of an Ojibwa Methodist convert, who like most converts was trying to impress his new

colleagues with the depth of his conviction. Certainly he was able to impress many of his superiors such as Evans and Alder with his enthusiasm and devotion. The Methodist congregations that he addressed certainly viewed him as an example of what Indians could become if they embraced Christianity. His addresses to the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London on his two visits there were extremely successful. Dressed in mock Indian garb, he was wildly cheered as he spoke to them of his conversion from paganism to Christianity, and of the benefits that Christianity had brought to his people, particularly the women.⁴⁵

At the same time, we know from Jacobs' contemporaries, both Ojibwa and Euro-American, that there was another side to him. Despite his protestations to the contrary, it is doubtful if he was as conscientious in promoting Methodism as he suggested. Certainly, if some of Salt's informants are correct, he spent more of his time telling the Ojibwa what he had seen in foreign countries than telling them of Christianity.⁴⁶ This would seem to suggest that he was most interested in impressing them with his own stature and importance. In much the same way he boasted to his Euro-American colleagues of his ability as a sturgeon fisherman and as a marksman when hunting gamebirds -- skills which even he attributed to his Ojibwa background. Moreover, some of the aspects of Jacobs' Ojibwa background which he had not totally abandoned brought him in conflict with his new lifestyle. It has already been shown, for instance, that he was torn between the demands of totemic responsibilities and the Christian commandments. Undoubtedly this applied not only to gift-giving, but also to the sexual teasing and exchanges that took place between cross-cousins.⁴⁷ This may, in fact,

help to explain some of the charges of sexual immorality that were laid against him by Case and others, although it does not explain his interest in various mixed-blood young women. Certainly Jacobs was undergoing an inner conflict between the values of the two cultures that does not appear in his letters. This conflict may also help to explain his lapses with regard to alcohol to which he ultimately succumbed. Like a number of other Ojibwa converts, he had accepted the new God of the Christians and many of the white man's goals, but he could not free himself of his Ojibwa past and its obligations -- and neither his Methodist superiors or his Ojibwa kinsfolk were willing to accept compromise in this matter.

To admit that Jacobs had not forsaken all the beliefs and practices of his Ojibwa past is not to say that he had not genuinely accepted his new Christian beliefs, or that he was not sincerely annoyed with the local Ojibwa for refusing to accept Christianity. There seems to be little doubt that the problems of his early childhood, and his own conversion experience had affected him greatly.⁴⁸ Even more important than the spiritual aspects of his conversion, however, were the cultural, for Jacobs saw the twin acceptance of Christianity and Euro-American civilization as opening the doors to a better life for him and his children. He felt the power of the written word, enjoyed dining in style with Company officers or dignitaries of the church, and was impressed by the things he had seen in the cities that he had visited. It was a lifestyle which he wanted to partake in, along with his wife and family. In a sense Jacobs was attempting to rise above his background in much the same way that many of the lower class English

missionaries were using the church to rise above theirs. The difference was more a matter of degree than of kind.

Jacobs was also proud of the new manual skills which he had learned from the Euro-Americans. He was a very competent builder of houses, and genuinely would have liked to have been able to pass this skill on to the Rainy Lake Ojibwa in the same way as he had done in Upper Canada and at Norway House. While his skills as a farmer never became evident, he had acquired the habit of looking at every piece of land in terms of its farming potential, in much the same manner as his Euro-American counterparts.⁴⁹ Despite Jacobs' problems of acculturation, he undoubtedly felt that he had managed the transition quite well and could not understand why the Rainy Lake Ojibwa were reluctant to follow his example. In particular, (since he had accepted Christianity and Euro-American culture as two parts of a whole) he could not understand their desire to pick and choose only those aspects of Euro-American culture which they desired, while retaining their own religious beliefs and practices. So, while we can be skeptical about some of Jacobs' more extreme verbiage, we should not reject his observations out of hand.

During the period which Jacobs had worked under another missionary such as Evans, he appears to have been able to take on the manners of a Victorian Christian gentleman and submerge those aspects of his background which were Ojibwa. Similarly, while working with a charismatic figure such as Evans, he was able to bask in the reflected glory, and enjoy his important role as intermediary. As a result, his services as an interpreter and exhorter had been well used in Upper Canada, and undoubtedly he had relished the sense of power that this

gave him. However, left to himself in a region where the vast majority of Ojibwa rejected Christianity, and the Company servants were not impressed by his pretentious manners, he found it difficult to exert his authority -- moral or otherwise. Rather than functioning as a leader, he became a peripheral figure who, in his search for acceptance, was easily influenced by both the Ojibwa and the Company servants and officials.⁵⁰ This is illustrated by his pathetic attempts to win acceptance from the Ojibwa, his inability to manage his canoe crews, and his obsequious behaviour towards Simpson when he was vainly trying to be moved or at least have his sons' education paid.⁵¹ In a vain attempt to assert his authority with the Ojibwa, he may well have resorted to the same sort of bombastic language which alienated the Company servants -- with probably the same results. On the other hand Jacobs would have been aware of the Ojibwa views regarding such aggressive behaviour, so it is possible that his accounts of his encounters with the Ojibwa have been tailored for his Methodist audiences.⁵²

In some ways the Rev. Allen Salt's experiences at Rainy Lake were similar to those of Jacobs, although Salt was far less flamboyant in his descriptions, and considerably less pessimistic about the possibilities of success. Moreover, Salt had a far stronger sense of self, and was firmer in his acceptance of both the ideas of Christianity and Euro-American "civilization". Despite the fact that he had married an Ojibwa woman from Mud Lake in Upper Canada, he always spoke of her family in the third person as though he considered himself apart from them and Ojibwa society. Nevertheless, even though he identified almost fully with Euro-American society while he was at Rainy Lake, Salt was

still considered an "Indian" by his missionary colleagues, and a kinsman by the Ojibwa.⁵³ For his part, Salt seems to have respected the Ojibwa as people even though he abhorred their pagan practices, and in particular those connected with the practice of warfare. His diary continues numerous references to his disgust with their dances, the scalps they displayed and their pride in the body paint that they applied to themselves. Likewise, in his view, the dancing, the feasting and the communicating with spirits practiced by the Ojibwa during their shaking tent and midewiwin ceremonies were both obscene and deceptive. He appeared to have only the slightest interest in these ceremonies, and certainly does not appear to have any doubts as to the fact that they were merely designed to trick those who trusted in them.⁵⁴

Moreover, he was very careful to avoid taking part in any Ojibwa religious rituals. The one custom that he did consent to take part in was the distribution of tobacco before speaking to their gatherings. However, even then he was careful not to smoke the pipe which was passed around for he felt such an action would indicate that he accepted their religious beliefs.⁵⁵ Although Salt may have felt that the Ojibwa were ignorant for holding their beliefs, he appears not to have held it against them, and indeed even his descriptions of the instances when individual Ojibwa such as Gauba or Jack-fish Bones disrupted his services were not bitter. Similarly, when he presented the arguments of various individuals or of different band chiefs, unlike Mason and Jacobs, he seldom expressed exasperation or condescension regarding their views.

Whereas Jacobs was vociferous in his denunciation of the villainy

of the Rainy Lake Ojibwa, Salt appears to have viewed them more as backward and ignorant of the truth, than as intrinsically evil. Perhaps for this reason he was less inclined to place as much blame on the role of the "conjurors" as his predecessors had been. Indeed he appears to have attempted to bypass them to some extent and attempt to win over other leaders and individuals who could act as counterbalances to their influence. Salt, like Jacobs, was eager to show the local Ojibwa the wonders of Euro-American society, although he approached the task in a somewhat different way. Drawing upon his own educational background he used his knowledge of astronomy to demonstrate the vastness of the universe and the glory of God to the Ojibwa. And he attempted to impress upon them the greatness of the British people by using his knowledge of geography to explain all the regions of the world that the British people controlled. The Ojibwa, he implied, could become part of and share in this great "empire" by becoming Christian and civilized. At the same time he viewed the Rainy Lake Ojibwa as backward cousins of the Mississaugas and Ojibwa in Upper Canada since the latter had, in his view, made significant advances towards integration into Euro-American society.⁵⁶

Despite their different personalities and approaches, none of the Methodist missionaries was successful in making inroads among the Rainy Lake Ojibwa. Neither Mason with his lavish distribution of gifts, nor Steinhauer with his quiet diplomacy, nor Jacobs with his use of totemic connections, nor Salt with unbending faith, was able to breach the solid wall of opposition which faced them and their beliefs. While there were isolated instances of Ojibwa showing an interest in becoming Christian,

and while there appeared to be some interest among fair numbers of the Lac Seul Ojibwa, the vast majority of the Rainy Lake, Rainy River and Lake of the Woods Ojibwa continued to hold strongly to their own religious beliefs, although they made it clear that they were interested in accepting other types of assistance. What were the factors which influenced the Ojibwa in taking this stand? In order to answer this question it is necessary to look in depth at their response to the coming of the missionaries, and to consider their response to Euro-American society in general.

Ojibwa Views of the Missionaries

The Ojibwa greeted the first Methodist missionaries with a combination of interest and suspicion. While missionaries were not unknown to the Ojibwa, the intentions of the missionaries were not entirely clear at first. As has been previously explained, French explorers and traders had first entered the Rainy Lake region in the late 1600s and early 1700s. French missionaries such as the Rev. Aulneau had accompanied these early traders, ministering to them and any Indians who would listen. However, following the fall of the French Regime, the traders that entered the region did little to foster the spread of Christian missions. Following the departure of Rev. Jean-Baptiste de la Morenie in 1751, there had been no Christian missionary in the area until the brief visit of another priest, Rev. Tabeau in 1818. During most of this time there had been no Protestant missionaries in either what was considered to be Hudson's Bay Territory or Wisconsin Territory. While the Church Missionary Society had begun to send a few missionaries to the area around Red River, and while there

were a few American Protestant missionaries to the south, there were none in the immediate region of Rainy Lake.

Although the majority of traders continued to consider themselves nominal Christians, the infrastructure for the outward observance of their religion was lacking. English and Scottish traders gave few concrete demonstrations of their faith, even though individual Protestants such as David Thompson and Nicol Finlayson, and Catholics such as John McLoughlin were personally religious or interested in religious ideas. French-Canadians and mixed-blood traders as a rule continued to take part in basic Catholic rituals and devotions despite the absence of priests. While mass could not be celebrated and marriages had to be resanctified by priests, the rituals as performed by lay people were considered to be "valid" by the Church.⁵⁷ At the same time many of them openly partook in Ojibwa customs that their English and Scots counterparts found alien and distasteful. The practices horrified the missionaries. Salt, for instance, complained that the French and mixed-bloods took part in scalp dances, sought information from shaking tent conjurors, and called upon various "medicine men" when they were sick.⁵⁸

The fact that Euro-Americans and Ojibwa continued, over the years, to participate in what came to be called "country marriages", further helped to bridge the social and religious customs of the two societies. Just as Euro-Americans adopted and adapted certain Ojibwa customs and beliefs, the Ojibwa drew upon some Euro-American beliefs and customs. It has been argued, for instance, that their belief in a supreme being, as well as many of the beliefs and customs of the Midewiwin were

influenced by Christian beliefs. However, since the Europeans of this intervening period were not proselytizers, the Ojibwa were able to show an interest in, or even accept those portions of the Christian message which they felt appropriate to their own belief structure and lifestyle. The arrival of Christian missionaries who demanded absolute adherence to a particular set of doctrines and practices posed new and direct challenges to the Ojibwa.

The arrival of the Methodist missionaries was not a complete surprise to the Ojibwa for they had heard from their brethren on the shores of Lake Superior of the presence of Evans, Hurlburt and Jacobs. At Green Bay, in Wisconsin Territory, another Methodist missionary, John Clarke, was also working among the Ojibwa there while considering establishing a mission at Red Lake.⁵⁹ Moreover, Roman Catholics were once again active in the Sault Ste. Marie and Ft. William regions, while to the west, the Rev. Antoine Belcourt had begun work among the Ojibwa. He had first visited the area in 1838 and returned in succeeding years despite the disapproval of Hudson's Bay Company officials and the Methodist missionaries who had arrived by then. Belcourt related the story of an old man at Rainy Lake who told him of the Ojibwa traditions about the coming of the "black-robos". The old man spoke of a recollection that he had

... when I was about the size of this child
(indicating a child of ten years), I heard it said to
my grandfather, who was at the time talking with the
other old men: At Sault Ste. Marie there are some
extraordinary men; they are clad in long black

robes; they are respected by everybody, speak always kind words, comfort and aid the unfortunates; they preach of things never before heard of; the French call them fathers. My grandfather added: You, my grandchildren, shall see things that we others shall not, you shall see these men dressed in this manner ... You shall live to see them come here, and shall hear them with your own ears.⁶⁰

The speech has to be interpreted with some caution since it may have reflected an Ojibwa attempt to win favour with the strangers. However, it may indicate that the Ojibwa did have previous knowledge of and expectations of missionaries. It may also reflect the fact that the foretelling of events was a fundamental principle of Ojibwa "history".

Nevertheless, the arrival of Jacobs and later Mason and Steinhauer, marked the first time that a Christian mission had been established in the region with permanent resident missionaries. The Ojibwa were therefore interested in finding out more about these Euro-Americans and distant kinsmen who came to their region, but did not wish to trade in the usual fashion. Any stranger was viewed by the Ojibwa as a potential enemy until such time as he had proved his trustworthiness through his actions. Since their experience with missionaries was limited, the Ojibwa evaluated the newcomers on the basis of their previous experience with the traders, and in the context of their own beliefs, rather than on the content of the missionaries' message.

Nevertheless, they were for the most part willing to listen to what the missionaries had to say, even though this did not mean that the

Ojibwa were interested in the doctrines of Christianity. More likely, as Mary Black-Rogers has pointed out, and as is described in more detail in a previous chapter, their actions were a result of their own belief system.⁶¹ This system, which was based on the premise that power is necessary to life, led to a complex set of rules of behaviour for different situations. Caution was a basic rule of behaviour since it was dangerous to show a lack of respect to anything or anyone who might have greater power than oneself. Since speech was a chief medium of showing disrespect, great value was placed on remaining silent or avoiding sensitive topics.⁶² Until the Ojibwa were certain as to the power of the missionaries, most were non-committal, expressed a vague interest or pleaded for more time to consider what the missionaries had told them. Thus, for example, Steinhauer reported that "They received me very kindly and paid good attention to what I said, but they must consider further before they consent to embrace the religion of the big Book ...".⁶³

Although this continued to be a popular refrain throughout the missionary period, most of the Ojibwa became more openly opposed to Christianity as they came to know the missionaries and realized that the latter did not possess great power. Picottee, a chief of a band along the Rainy River who was initially quite favourable to the missionaries, later turned against them and warned his people that "the 'Black Coats' are the cause of all the misery they suffer and of the deaths that have occurred among them and that our design was his death".⁶⁴ Although most of the Ojibwa remained respectful, they made it clear that they did not want to accept Christian beliefs or practices. By 1854, when Salt

arrived, he was met by a delegation of Ojibwa who announced that:

We Indians Poor Indians of Kochejeeng (Rainy Lake)
and down the river heard that missionaries were
coming to this part, so we held a council and ...
these Indians are determined not to receive the white
man's religion.⁶⁵

In attempt to analyze how the Rainy Lake Ojibwa responded to the evangelization attempts of the Methodist missionaries a number of factors need to be kept in mind. In the first place, the Ojibwa "response" should not be seen as an event which was central to their existence. The missionaries were, in fact, marginal figures in a society where well-established patterns existed between the Ojibwa and the traders. Nor was Ojibwa society in a state of disintegration. Rather, as has been described, it was strong, vigorous and relatively unthreatened. As Dr. John McLoughlin observed during a somewhat earlier period, "... they are full of pride, conceit and vanity, which they hide in their intercourse with Europeans by gravity and distant, formal behaviour resulting as much if not more from dissimulation than regard, as it is their opinion that no man is equal to an Indian ...".⁶⁶ They were a religious, or as many Euro-Americans were apt to observe, a particularly superstitious people, who relied heavily on their religious leaders and religious ceremonies such as the Midewiwin and shaking tent ceremonies. Given the fact that the majority of Ojibwa needs were being met, there was no pressing need to seek alternative sources of power or radically different ways of living, although they were willing to borrow both ideas and technologies when these were felt to be appropriate to

their needs.

The key role played by Ojibwa religious leaders is attested to by fur traders as well as missionaries. Sir George Simpson himself noted in 1848 that "The Saulteaux [sic] have always been regarded by our traders as being more firmly attached to their ancient superstitions, and more under the control [sic] of the conjurors or "medicine men" (who are a very clever and unscrupulous set of imposters than any other thickwood tribe).⁶⁷ The same year Jacobs had complained that "Lac la Pluie is the Headquarters of Heathenism of the surrounding Country. The other Indians come from a great distance to be initiated in the conjuring arts of the Lac la Pluie Conjurors -- consequently they rate very high in the estimation of the Heathen world. Indians fear and tremble before them ...".⁶⁸ He went on to explain that Indians from as far away as Nanmakang River and Ft. Alexander (a distance of from 600 to 800 miles) assembled each year at Rainy Lake in order to be initiated into the arts of conjuring. In return the assembled Indians paid the conjurors with guns, cloths, traps, dogs and other goods -- which according to Jacobs meant that the main conjuring families acquired great fortunes, and he implied, great influence.

It is true that the religious leaders whom the missionaries called conjurors, or sometimes Metais, generated an undercurrent of fear among their fellow Ojibwa and even the missionaries -- as Jacobs and Belcourt attest in their letters.⁶⁹ Certainly it enabled them to exercise a considerable degree of power over their fellow bandsmen through sorcery, intimidation and ostracism.⁷⁰ It would appear that these religious leaders quickly recognized the missionaries as potential rivals, and

correctly realized that if Christianity were adopted they would lose both their influences and the material gifts which were presented to them. In this regard Jacobs' comment that the conjurors had told him that they would accept Christianity only if they could become ministers so that they could continue to receive gifts, is a particularly telling one.⁷¹ There can be little doubt, therefore, that they helped to forestall the acceptance of Christianity among the Rainy Lake Ojibwa. However, a close examination of both missionary and company documents indicates that the role of the conjurors and metais extended beyond the religious sphere of influence. Their opposition to the missionaries was therefore based as much on political as religious and material motives.

Thus, for instance, Salt made it clear that many of the decisions as to whether or not to listen to the missionaries, and certainly whether or not to allow the establishment of a Christian mission, were made by political leaders or chiefs acting in concert with band councils. Salt was fairly clear in his descriptions of Ojibwa political leaders, although he sometimes used terms interchangeably, and was vague regarding the size and location of the bands. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify several chiefs who seem to have played a key role in the decision-making process in the area, and Salt's description gives us some idea of the process itself. What needs to be remembered from the outset is that the term "chief" does not correspond with our present-day conception of the word. Chief, or principal man (Salt uses the words interchangeably) usually referred to senior person in a small band usually made up of kinsmen. Principal chiefs appear to have been chiefs who were recognized as having pre-eminence in a region, although

their authority was very limited and coercive powers were totally lacking. In fact, even within the band, decisions on most matters were made on the basis of consensus. Decisions beyond the band level were made at council meetings attended by band members of the respective bands. Nevertheless, the situation in the Rainy Lake region during the period in question was fluid, for there were attempts by certain chiefs such as Crooked Neck to expand the nature and scope of their authority.⁷²

Salt's diary accounts mention a number of chiefs, conjurors and metais by name, but Salt was not clear in his descriptions as to the precise role played by particular individuals in the Ojibwa community. Either he assumed more than he stated, or he was unclear in his own perceptions. It certainly appears from his account that he was not fully aware of the full extent of the internal ferment in the Rainy Lake Ojibwa community. A few individuals such as Ogimaubinas, the chief of a Rainy River band, were clearly identified as civil chiefs, although they do not appear in any other accounts of the region. Many, such as Muskohonaya, the chief of a band from the south shore of Rainy Lake, are identified as both chiefs and metais, depending upon the citation. Similarly, Wanaune, whom Salt identified as a Meta, is listed as one of the chiefs who signed the petition to Simpson.

Augwaushimaugan (better known as Crooked Neck or Coup Couch), whom Salt mentioned numerous times as a troublemaker and a leading opponent of Christianity, was in fact one of the principal chiefs in the region and a contender for the role of head chief according to Simpson and Sinclair. Gauba (or Gobay as he later became known) was one of the

chiefs from Rainy Lake who signed Treaty No. 3, but Salt does not give any indication of his status. While at first it appears contradictory that some of the same individuals should be referred to as both chiefs and metais, this probably reflects the inter-connection between the two roles in Rainy Lake Ojibwa society. On the one hand chiefs were considered to have a degree of supernatural power which was received from the Vision Quest or Midewiwin. On the other hand there is little doubt that metais in the region exercised various degrees of civil authority. This has led Waisberg and Beaudry to contend that

Metais after 1840 exercised a significant control over important questions of civil and foreign relations for all Ojibway and were seen to enforce their authority through religious power, in effect a 'usurpation' of political power ostensibly exercised through consensual decision of head of families; the individual authority of certain leading men who, according to the Wesleyans, were ready and willing to welcome them and in time convert, was sharply circumscribed by the concensus [sic] which had developed among the Metais that Christianity was a perfidious doctrine.⁷³

The ambiguity of roles certainly reflects the fact that there were overlapping spheres of power and influence in Rainy Lake Ojibwa society during this period. While Waisberg is correct in suggesting that the religious leaders were able to exercise power by influencing council decisions, there does not seem to have been the total consensus that he

suggests, nor had they attained full leadership roles. Because there was a diffusion of power and an absence of coercive authority, the loosely defined roles of the leaders in Ojibwa society prevented any one leader from becoming too powerful and acting unilaterally. Although Crooked Neck and other such leaders possessed a considerable amount of informal authority, their views continued to be challenged by others. For this reason they continued to rely to a great extent on their own personal persuasive and religious powers to ensure that the consensual decisions were of their making. In turn, this ambiguity in power relationships and decision-making authority made the Methodist missionaries' attempts at evangelization more difficult since they received contradictory messages, which made it impossible to determine who really made the final decisions for the Ojibwa. The conjurers and metais undoubtedly were the most powerful faction in the Rainy Lake region, but their views were challenged from time to time, and it was these challenges which continued to give the Methodists hope.

When the encounters between the missionaries and various groups of Ojibwa are examined in detail it is possible to identify a number of other reasons for their rejection of the Christian message. Some of the reasons they expressed overtly, while others we can only deduce from our knowledge of Ojibwa religious and social customs. The members of the delegation of Ojibwa which greeted Salt shortly after his arrival were blunt and forthright about their feelings. They reported that they had held a council meeting and decided that they wanted no part of Christianity. "The Manitou Spirit made the white men to be as they are and likewise the Aunishenauba (Indian) to be as they are, so our council

decided to retain the Indian customs and not to change our forefather's gifts, for that of the white man (meaning religion)."⁷⁴ It was a familiar argument to Salt since many Indians had used it, but try as he might, he could not persuade them that the white man too had been pagans before they had accepted the Christian gospel, which was intended for all men. As Tibishkogihik, an Ojibwa from Manitou Rapids explained to Salt, there were two gods: "The first always proposed and the second agreed and from this all things are. After this the first god became silver and went up to heaven and was called Kishimanitou, the white man's god, the second god became brass and he went under the earth and we call him Medamanitou and the Indians worship him."⁷⁵

While such views certainly did not reflect unadulterated native religious beliefs, they do give us a good indication of how some of the Ojibwa viewed the relationship of the two societies. It was no easy task to simply adopt the beliefs of the new religion and give up those of the old for as Crooked Neck's son (his father was an influential religious and civil leader) explained: "That we would like to become Christians but we are afraid that we would cause the displeasure of the Manitou who gave different customs to the white man and the Indian."⁷⁶ Another group of Rainy Lake Ojibwa related the story of an Indian who had died and was refused a place in the white man's heaven because it was reserved for white men, and then was refused entry to the Indian heaven because he had dropped the Indian religion. Thus he had to wander around until he came back to the body and revived. Many of the Ojibwa were afraid that they would anger the Manitous who would then not give them the power to perform various function. The conjuror

Waubeshuguguigun made the excuse that "I am afraid that the foreign spirits in me would be angry", and he implied, he would lose the gifts that they brought to him.⁷⁷ Certainly Jack-fish Bone, another Ojibwa who expressed some interest in Christianity, was afraid that if he became a Christian he would lose the power of being able to heal by blowing on the patient.⁷⁸

Other arguments for not accepting Christianity were related to tales of woe which had fallen on their kinsmen in other parts of the continent when they had accepted Christianity and the ways of the white man. An unnamed Rainy Lake Ojibwa related to Salt the story of seven Indians from the western shore of Lake Superior who had travelled south and east among a people that they had never seen. There they met a ragged old Indian man cutting roots. He told them how a missionary had convinced part of his band to become Christian. They planted and raised provisions, built houses, and signed a treaty for their lands. In return they were given goods, but soon a vessel came to take away the Indians; first the non-Christian Indians, and then the Christians. Those who were left had to work from sunrise to sunset without rest or pay. All the misery, he charged, was brought about by the missionary. He begged them to return and "Let all the Indians in the west know this so they don't come to such misery".⁷⁹ This was a very different message from that given to Salt by a chief from American Territory who begged for help because "... the white man is coming very fast to my country. You who speak the word of God, I want you to see me every time Kishamunido brings the day ... I desire to follow your ways so that my children may have the benefit ...".⁸⁰ These two viewpoints represent

two sides of the same problem. Generally speaking it appears to have been primarily Ojibwa from the American side of the boundary who were concerned with the problems of Euro-American expansion, while their kinsmen on the British side continued to be concerned with their rights vis-a-vis the Hudson's Bay Company -- although as the first stories indicate, both were aware of the problems of their distant kinsmen.⁸¹

A number of Ojibwa social customs were at odds with Christian belief, and thus proved obstacles to their conversion. The missionaries were particularly concerned about the Ojibwa practice of polygamy among prominent men, for the Methodists saw it as both contrary to the law of God and degrading to women. Jacobs, in his speeches to Methodist societies in England, stressed how the introduction of Christianity had helped the cause of women who in their natural state were treated no better than beasts of burden by their husbands, who thought nothing of leaving them or killing them at the slightest provocation.⁸² However, Jacobs' one example of polygamy was a woman from Rainy River whom he called the "Queen Dowager", who first agreed to become a Christian, but then decided to marry a man who had another wife.⁸³ The missionaries were faced with the problem of what became of these additional wives should such a man become a Christian. Salt counseled one such man that the children of his other wives should support their mothers, but such arrangements were not very practical.⁸⁴

One of the most important reasons for the Ojibwa dissatisfaction with the missionaries and their message concerned the role and nature of gift-giving in Ojibwa society. On the whole the missionaries, unlike the fur traders, seemed unwilling or unable to fully partake in the

traditional Ojibwa process of gift-giving. Since the giving of gifts in Ojibwa society was viewed as a means of expressing one's feelings in concrete terms, and of demonstrating one's trustworthiness, it seemed strange to the Ojibwa that the missionaries often refused to make concrete their beliefs. As the German traveler, Johannes Georg Kohl pointed out: "If you say to one of them 'I love thee' have a present ready to hand, to prove your love clearly."⁸⁵ Of the Methodist missionaries, only Mason was liberal in administering gifts to the Ojibwa at both Rainy Lake and Lac Seul. However, even he found it difficult to provide all the gifts that were requested, since the missionaries were limited in what they were able to bring with them or purchase from company stores.⁸⁶ Mason's example was, nevertheless, sufficient to provide increased expectations as to what might be obtained from the missionaries. It also made Belcourt redouble his efforts to obtain seed and livestock in order to compete with the Methodists for souls.⁸⁷ Generally speaking, however, the other Methodist missionaries were concerned lest their gifts be taken the wrong way. Both Jacobs and Steinhauer spoke of their decision not to baptise people who appeared to be mainly interested in obtaining material goods,⁸⁸ while Salt reported in his diary that he insisted that the Ojibwa show a firm commitment to Christianity first, for he argued that

I see plainly that they wish me to give them goods so as to become Christians, in other words they wish to be purchased so as to be instructed; but my motto is and will be by the grace of God while I remain here

'But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.'⁸⁹

This inability or reluctance to provide gifts in the usual fashion was viewed with disfavour by the Ojibwa. They were particularly annoyed that the missionaries would not provide them with traditional gifts of rum. Moreover, they blamed, on the missionaries, the 1840 decision of the Hudson's Bay Company to curtail the supply of rum.⁹⁰ Even those who appeared somewhat interested in Christianity were annoyed by this interference in the gift-giving process. Gabagonashkung (called Peter Jacobs after his missionary name-sake) complained to Salt that "It is because you do not give things to me that the Indians talk about you. They even say that you are the cause of their not getting provisions from the fort as on previous winters."⁹¹ If the Ojibwa, were on the one hand anxious to receive gifts as tokens of the good faith of the missionaries, on the other hand the Ojibwa religious leaders, particularly conjurors such as Kichigauk, were contemptuous of any efforts to extract information about their own beliefs and practices without the proper payment of goods. Doubtless they must have wondered why their Christian counterparts were so eager to give away their information so freely.

The fact that the Ojibwa recognized the native missionaries as kinsmen, with all the mutual obligations that this implied, added to their annoyance. Since, as White explains, the exchange of goods and services was basically a function of kinship, the recently arrived Ojibwa missionaries were expected by their brethren to live up to their kinship obligations.⁹² The fact that they were Christians was

immaterial. Steinhauer and Salt had been adopted by Case at a very early age, and therefore may not have been fully aware of these obligations, or less likely to continue to take them seriously. Jacobs' late conversion meant that he was fully aware of his totem connections and the obligations that were implied. Warren reported that the Reindeer totem, to which Jacobs belonged, were relatively few in number, but in fact, a glance at Cameron's 1830 census of Ojibwa traders indicates that they were common to the region.⁹³ No doubt Jacobs found himself torn between his responsibilities to his kinsmen and his new responsibilities as a Christian since the two sets of responsibilities often conflicted. We know, for instance, from some of Salt's informants that Jacobs had been particularly generous to members of his own totem, despite the fact that he, himself, complained vociferously about the "begging" of the pagan Ojibwa. Jacobs' position was common to many cross-cultural situations wherein individuals who enter a materialistically more advanced society are expected to provide additional assistance to their kinsmen. What made the situation even more difficult for him was that the traditions of gift-giving and kinship became entangled with the Christian concept of conversion.

Health, in its widest context, was another basic concern of the Ojibwa (and indeed was one of the foundations of the Midewiwin religious movement), so it is not surprising that various individuals sought to find out the missionaries' knowledge and powers in this area. Not only did they soon come to the conclusion that the missionaries had few positive powers in this area but they began to believe their own religious leaders that the missionaries were the cause of some of the

diseases and illnesses that were afflicting their people. As has been previously mentioned, Jack-fish Bone, while expressing interest in Christianity, was reluctant to become a Christian for fear of losing his powers of curing by blowing on a patient.⁹⁴ When Big John visited from Whitefish Lake with a message from his father-in-law he asked Salt what was the cause of sickness, but when Salt answered that sickness and death were caused by sin which only the grace of God could cure, Big John was not satisfied. In fact, he explained to Salt that: "These Indians do not receive your religion because from that part where your religion is embraced, various diseases come."⁹⁵ However, in times of extreme emergency the Ojibwa did seek the aid of missionaries when their own medicine men had been unsuccessful. Thus, when Chief Augwaushimaugan's son was shot in the arm and all else failed, they brought him to the trader and then to Salt for help. When Salt was reluctant to help, Augwaushimaugan (Crooked Neck) assured him that no harm would come to him if the son died. When the son recovered he returned to Salt with a gift of moose meat -- an indication that the tradition of gift-giving applied both ways when the missionaries had something concrete to offer. While Crooked Neck's son was no more willing to listen to the Christian message than before, he did agree not to seek revenge on his assailant.⁹⁶

While the missionaries were often considered marginal figures in the context of Ojibwa society, there were occasions such as the above, when they were asked for direct assistance. In fact, the Ojibwa frequently appeared to be trying to determine which ways the missionaries could provide useful services for them. Initially it

seemed that the missionaries might serve as teachers. Reading, in particular, was a much valued skill since it would help the Ojibwa to communicate over great distances, as well as to communicate with the growing number of Euro-Americans. Pied Gelez, an elderly River chief was initially willing to have one son receive instruction, and agreed to send another son when the latter was not busy hunting.⁹⁷ However, the Ojibwa insisted that the missionaries pay for room and board while their children were attending school, since they knew that their distant kinsmen in the East were being paid to send their children to school. Moreover, the Ojibwa felt that by sending their children to school they were bestowing an honour on the missionaries -- an honour which they felt the missionaries should recognize.⁹⁸ Given their perennial shortage of funds, the missionaries were unable to pay for the student's room and board, so their school had few local Ojibwa in it. Moreover, the Ojibwa were interested in learning to read and write, but they wanted to do so without receiving instruction in the Christian religion.⁹⁹ Thus, they wanted the school to confine its curriculum to secular subjects. This was to be a consistent theme in their relations with Euro-Americans during the period of Methodist missionary activity, as well as during the period leading up to, and after the Treaty #3 negotiations when Anglicans were sent to establish schools.¹⁰⁰

The Ojibwa had been actively engaged in various agricultural practices for some time, but they were aware that they could use assistance in the form of tools and seeds. Several bad years where both the wild rice crop and the fish supply had failed impressed the Ojibwa with the need to diversify their traditional food gathering techniques

and increase their crop yields. The missionaries were in basic agreement with the requests since, as has been explained previously, agriculture was viewed as one of the foundations of the Methodist missionary program. Where they differed was once again in the proposed role that the missionaries would play, and in the ultimate object of the assistance. Peter Jacobs objected to the fact that the Ojibw simply wanted to live in wooden houses and to "make small plantations of potatoes, Indian corn, garden vegetables, etc. ...". They really did not want to learn how to farm, he complained.¹⁰¹ Even Sir George Simpson appeared to be favourable to the idea of assisting the Ojibwa with their agricultural operations along the Rainy River, despite his opposition to such plans at Lac Seul. Speaking of the efforts of the Catholic and Methodist missionaries to Christianize the Indians he noted the advantage of these efforts in a letter to Company officials in London:

... the encouragements they hold forth to the natives to form themselves into agricultural settlement to which they seem inclined, as from the precarious state of their natural resources ... indeed unless they give their attention to this object, the population must either migrate to some other part of the country, where the means of subsistence are more abundant, or become extinct from starvation, so that ... it becomes necessary to encourage and assist their endeavours, and to that end instructions have been given that hoes, seed, grain, and cattle ...

shall be provided to the Indians free of charge.¹⁰²

Simpson went on to propose three agricultural settlements: at Manitou Rapids, Plantation Island on the Lake of the Woods, and a third on the upper part of the Winnipeg (probably close to White Dog where Belcourt had begun work). If they became successful Simpson suggested that the Ojibwa would then be able to devote themselves to fur trapping during the winter instead of occupying themselves with finding food.¹⁰³

The Ojibwa discussed the plans for an agricultural mission along the Rainy River at Manitou Rapids or Long Sault first with Jacobs, and later with Salt. While they were interested in expanding their agricultural capacity, the majority of them balked at the idea of having to accept missionaries as part of the arrangement. Only a small minority were willing to accept a mission, and then only if it was staffed by a native missionary. It appears that those in favour of the mission were members of Jacobs' totem whom he may have won over with gifts and promises.¹⁰⁴ The majority of Ojibwa were already part-time small cultivators of garden plots containing Indian corn, potatoes and other garden vegetables. They did not feel any need to have missionaries show them how to grow these, nor did they feel that Christian beliefs and practices would prove particularly beneficial to their agricultural pursuits. Indeed, they sometimes supplied the missionaries with their surpluses. Jacobs reported being forced to buy potatoes from some Ojibwa; while Little Rat, the chief of a Rainy Lake band, reported to Salt that they had sold some to Jacobs in return for a supply of rum.¹⁰⁵ In other words the Ojibwa were not adverse to accepting specific aspects of Euro-American technical assistance as long

as they could do it on their terms with no conditions attached.¹⁰⁶

Nevertheless, despite the opposition of the majority of the Ojibwa a few of them continued to express an interest in Christianity. Some of those expressing interest had physical disabilities which they hoped that the new religious leaders would be able to cure or otherwise help. Mason, for instance, mentioned the case of a family which he baptised and then materially assisted since the man was an invalid.¹⁰⁷ For others, like Gabagonashkung (Peter Jacobs II), the reasons were more complicated. They may have been interested in determining the nature and extent of the material assistance they would receive from the rival Christian groups. Gabagonashkung, for instance discussed Christianity at length with both the Methodists and the Catholics and appeared to be attempting to play one group of missionaries off against the other. On the other hand, it is conceivable that he was genuinely interested in some aspects of the Christian belief, although in Gabagonashkung's case it is more likely that he wished to allude the wrath of man than that of God.¹⁰⁸ While the individuals who appear to have shown the most interest in Christianity seem to have been persons with no religious or civil power, a few of the civil leaders such as Gauba appeared to be interested in what the missionaries had to say.

Even some of the Ojibwa who were recognized as conjurors, from time to time expressed an interest in Christianity, or at least in accepting the missionaries' offers of assistance. Thus, for instance, Little Eshnuagishik, one of the individuals interested in a mission at Manitou Rapids during the time that Salt was at Rainy Lake, was a conjuror. Still other Ojibwa, such as Jack-fish Bone appeared to be genuinely

curious. Time and time again they came back to listen to Salt and occasionally they attended his services. It is impossible to determine the precise reasons for each individual's interest in Christianity. However, it is clear that they expressed an interest in Christianity with some trepidation, since they did so in direct opposition to the views of their own religious leaders. Salt reported that on one occasion he had been refused permission to speak to the council. However, an Ojibwa came to him and whispered, "I want to hear the Great Spirit's words, lock the door and put down the window blinds". Even after he had done this the individual was afraid and left before he had finished. Salt attributed this to the fact that the man was afraid that his companions might find out, and that his "personal god would get angry with him".¹⁰⁹ Even the few individuals who came regularly to hear him speak became afraid when it was rumoured that they had become secret Christians. This fear was borne out in fact when one of them, Jack-fish Bone was attacked and forced to flee with his family.¹¹⁰ Despite this violent opposition to Christian sympathizers, or perhaps because of it, Gabagonashkung and three others addressed a letter to Salt in 1857 begging his assistance. In it they referred to the problem of factionalism within the Ojibwa community and emphasized that despite the opposition of some of the Ojibwa, they still wanted to become Christians and wanted to learn to live like the Euro-Americans:

You have come to this part to look for us, but our relatives will not do as you wish.

Now we Indians on the British side desire you to establish a Mission at the foot of Lac la Pluie,

Little Rapids, where we wish to cultivate the soil, and build our houses, where you may teach wisdom to our children, and where we may hear the word.

We are poor; we do not wish our relatives to throw us down; we wish you to use all the power you have to help us, for we need help in tools, also clothing to cover us from the heat of the sun; and may our good ways go up to the sky.¹¹¹

Had Salt remained, he might have been able to exploit the divisions in the local Ojibwa community. However, given the strength of the factions opposed to Christianity, it is likely that it would have been an uphill struggle. Following a trip down the Rainy River to the edge of Lake of the Woods where he tried unsuccessfully to meet with the Indians there, Salt received a message from Ogimaubinas, one of the principal chiefs along the Rainy River. He explained

... that some time ago they [the Lake of the Woods Ojibwa] had agreed not to embrace Christianity and said that it would be so still let come what may upon us ... We river Indians gave in to their views. No one sides with Eshquagishik [the Ojibwa who favoured a mission] for a school. Our relative [the missionary] can remain in the fort. He has a custom which he embraced. We gently bar our door against him as Crooked Neck did last spring.¹¹²

The speech is important for it provides us with an illustration of how the Ojibwa decision-making process worked in practice. While

Ogimaubimas admitted that some of the Ojibwa such as Eshquagishik had expressed a personal interest in learning more about Christianity, he wanted to make it quite clear that the majority of the Ojibwa in the region continued to oppose any attempts to introduce Christianity through the establishment of a mission which was independent from the trading establishment at Fort Frances. In other words the party of Ojibwa which was led by the principal metais had once more been able to exert their influence and reject any attempt by the Christian missionaries to subvert their influences.¹¹³ The Ojibwa were willing to recognize the fact that Salt (and Jacobs before him) were distant kinsmen. However, while they accepted the fact Salt and Jacobs had chosen to become Christians and live in the manner of the Euro-Americans, they were unwilling to have the native missionaries live amongst them. If Salt wished to be a Christian he could do so as long as he continued to live in the confines of Fort Frances and limited his preaching to the people there. In laying down these conditions the Ojibwa once more rejected the efforts of the Native missionaries to act as brokers between the Ojibwa and Euro-American societies.

FOOTNOTES

¹The Roman Catholic priest, Antoine Belcourt had made two visits to Rainy Lake just before the arrival of the Methodists, with a view to re-establishing the Catholic presence in the region. He mentions preaching to the Ojibwa and mixed-bloods beneath a large cross which had been erected by Rev. Tabeau in 1814 during the latter's visit there. Allan Macdonell, the factor at Fort Frances, and a Catholic himself, initially appeared supportive, but later sent a letter to Belcourt's superior informing him that Rainy Lake was considered to be Methodist territory and asking him that Belcourt cease his activities in the region.

²James Evans Letters and Papers. Diary. University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. n.d., 20. (Hereafter quoted as Evans Mss.)

³Evans to his wife as quoted in Shipley, op. cit., 25.

⁴Ibid., 25.

⁵Sir George Simpson, Official Correspondence Outward, 1839-1858. Hudson's Bay Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg. Simpson to Alder, January 1840. (Hereafter quoted as Simpson Correspondence Outward)

⁶Both Hurlburt and Evans were confused about the status of the Ft. William mission. On the one hand Hurlburt continued to receive assistance from the Hudson's Bay Company and looked to Evans as his Superintendent, while on the other hand, he had decided to join the Canada Conference after the split, and was considered to fall under their jurisdiction. See: Hurlburt's letter to Evans (May 8, 1841) and Evans' letter to his brother Ephraim (July 3, 1843) in the Evans Mss.

⁷Jacobs to Evans, March 23, 1840 as quoted in J. E. Sanderson, The First Century of Methodism in Canada. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1908), v. 1: 444-5.

⁸Extracts from the Minutes of Council, Northern Department of Rupert's Land, Hudson's Bay Company, 1841.

⁹This reference to "half-caste" females was part of a changing British attitude towards race that was reflected in both North American fur trade society and East Indian society. In both instances "half-caste" females were felt to be sexually promiscuous by nature, and generally of low moral character. See Christine Bolt, Victorian Attitudes towards Race (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), plus Jennifer Brown, Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Families in Indian Country (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1980) and Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870 (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1980).

While Alder's admonition was not unusual, it had several specific ramifications which he could not have foreseen at the time. In the first place, Peter Jacobs' current wife, Elizabeth, was the "half-caste" daughter of Major Anderson. Moreover Jacobs was later to be accused by some of having an affair with Margaret Sinclair, the mixed-blood daughter of a local Company official. The Rev. Wm. Mason, for his part, soon became involved in a bitter controversy with both Alder and Evans over the propriety of his marrying Sophie Thomas, the mixed-blood daughter of former Governor Thomas Thomas. See The Letters of Lettia Hargrave, edited by Margaret Arnett McLeod (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1947) for a contemporary view of these events.

¹⁰ Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Foreign Missions. Correspondence, 1840-1850. United Church Archives, Victoria University, University of Toronto, Toronto. Alder to Mason, March 11, 1840. (Hereafter cited as WMMS). The missionaries produced a considerable amount of correspondence as a result of these guidelines.

¹¹ The term "missionary" is used subsequently throughout the paper to refer to both those who were ordained ministers, and those who merely assisted at the mission as teachers, exhorters and translators. While the missionaries themselves were aware of the different degrees (Jacobs, for instance, complained that his work was useless unless he could exercise all the functions of his calling), both the traders and the Ojibwa viewed them as part of a team.

¹² Sanderson, op. cit., v. II: 22.

¹³ Evans Mss., op. cit., James Evans to his brother, Ephraim, August 2, 1842.

¹⁴ WMMS., op. cit., Nicol Finlayson to James Evans, 14 Sept. 1842.

¹⁵ Alder was undoubtedly anxious to have some prominent native missionaries ordained by the British Conference, since the Rev. Peter Jones had elected to join the Canada Conference following the split. In addition, Peter Jacobs' speeches to local groups were calculated to increase donations to the lagging mission fund. Since this was an endeavour at which Jacobs excelled, it is not surprising that Alder was impressed with him. See WMMS, op. cit., Alder to Evans, December 3, 1842.

¹⁶ The Mission register at Fort Francis records 152 individual baptisms for this period but Rev. Salt mentioned that none of them were practising Christians when he arrived. See John Maclean, James Evans: Inventor of the Syllabic System of the Cree Language (Toronto: Methodist Mission Rooms, 1890), 188. Mason's misplaced confidence in the professed sudden conversions of many of the Ojibwa led him to overestimate the permanent results of his efforts. Although, he was hardly alone among Methodists in accepting the statements of the Indians, the native missionaries at Rainy Lake appear to have been more concerned that the potential converts were truly ready to be saved from

sin, renounce their former ways and assume a new life. The fact that the Ojibwa were not willing to change their ways was to them sufficient proof that they had not accepted the sinfulness of their present life. Moreover, since both Jacobs and Salt had themselves experienced conversions which were preceded by feelings of extreme guilt, followed by profound emotional release, they no doubt expected others to go through a similar process.

¹⁷There is considerable confusion as to the exact sequence of events and the reasons for the move on the part of previous authors such as Shipley and Brooks. Evans indicated that he was unhappy with several aspects of Mason's performance in a letter of July 8, 1842, but it was Alder, in a letter of Dec. 1, 1842, that ordered Evans to move Mason to Norway House so that he could be directly under the latter's personal supervision. Contrary to what is usually stated, Steinhauer did not leave until two years later, and then it was to teach school at Rossville.

¹⁸Issack K. Mabindisa, "The Praying Man: The Life and Times of Henry Bird Steinhauer". Ph.D diss., University of Alberta, 1984, 205-7.

¹⁹WMMS, op. cit., Alder to Evans, Dec. 1, 1842.

²⁰Simpson Outward Correspondence, op. cit., Simpson to Nicol Finlayson, December 20, 1843.

²¹Jacobs found himself in the middle of a struggle between Evans and Alder who wanted to establish Methodist missions at Lac Seul and Osnaburgh House, and Simpson, who was firmly opposed to the idea. In this instance Jacobs was firmly on Simpson's side, although he did his best to carry out Evans' orders, and at one point admitted that the Cranes were sympathetic and seemed to be genuinely interested. See Jacobs' letter to Evans, Feb. 15, 1846. However, his lack of enthusiasm no doubt helps account for the particularly dismal picture that he painted of the region and the people. See Jacobs' letters of May 20, 1844, July 10, 1844, Mar. 5, 1845.

²²WMMS, op. cit., Jacobs to Alder, July 21, 1848.

²³Ibid., Jacobs to Alder, December 14, 1847.

²⁴Jacobs appears to have alienated most of the Company officials through a combination of his bombastic preaching and frequent falls from grace. While initially Company officials and servants attended services, very shortly his congregation was limited to his own family. (See Jacob's letter to Alder, July 21, 1848). Nevertheless, he apparently did co-exist well with Sinclair, despite Hargrave's allegations. Jacobs' relationship with Simpson was good, no doubt because Simpson found him easy to manipulate. Thus, for instance, Jacobs wrote to him "explaining" that the Company did not supply quantities of rum to the Ojibwa. See HBCA, Sir George Simpson, Correspondence Inward. Jacobs to Simpson, July 2, 1849.

²⁵ Salt reported that Company officials participated in his services, went with him on his visits to the Ojibwa encampments, and joined in the discussions. Pither even helped him teach school. See Public Archives of Canada. Allen Salt Papers. (MG29) Journal, 30, 33. (Hereafter referred to as Salt Mss.)

²⁶ The Ojibwa claimed to be puzzled by the fact that the Methodists were going to give up so easily, since the traders knew that patience was needed to accomplish their ends. See Salt Mss, Journal, 46.

²⁷ Asquabe, who was on trial by the Methodists, had been stationed on the shores of Lake Superior, and following his short stay at Rainy Lake he was re-stationed there. He was later released before he was ordained.

²⁸ Collections of these letters exist in a variety of places. However, while duplicate copies of many of the letters exist in several collections, there are no extensive collections as there are for the correspondence of the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society. Often all that remains of a letter is a brief excerpt in a missionary publication. A few have been transcribed, and a smaller number yet (such as some of Evans) have been edited and published.

²⁹ Jennifer Brown, in her study of Salt's residence at Rainy Lake has argued that the mission and fur trade organizations, despite their different goals, were similar in many ways since they were both involved in "directing, orchestrating and acting out what might be called a morality play for multiple audiences", the stage of which was the local post and mission. See Jennifer S. H. Brown, "Fur Trade/Mission Parallels, Conflicts, Consequences in Northern America: A Methodist Among the Rainy Lake Ojibwa, 1854-55" (Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Conference, Chicago, 1983). This is an apt analogy, but it could actually be extended to the Ojibwa, since they too were involved in trying to present their message to multiple audiences in the most effective way possible. It is this message which will be analyzed in the third part of this chapter.

³⁰ WMMS, op. cit., Mason to Society Secretaries, August 11, 1841.

³¹ Ibid., June 9, 1841.

³² Maclean, op. cit., 188.

³³ Several years later, when Salt arrived, all he found left of the school were a few slates and exercise books. Jacobs had been unsuccessful in obtaining any further supplies for the school, partly, one suspects, because Evans funnelled them off for his own schools in the north.

³⁴ Mabindisa, op. cit., 200.

³⁵ WMMS, op. cit., Steinhauer to Evans, December 19, 1840.

³⁶ Minnesota Historical Archives, Papers Relating to the Northwest Missions. Compiled and translated by Grace Lee Nute. Box 8. St. Paul, Minnesota. Belcourt to the Bishop of Quebec, August 3, 1841. (Hereafter referred to as MHA)

³⁷ Mabindisa, op. cit., 197.

³⁸ Evans Mss, op. cit., Steinhauer & Jacobs to Evans, May 20, 1844.

³⁹ Belcourt expressed his disgust and dismay at the extent of these gifts. He mentioned that Mason had "dressed from head to foot" one family of converts (probably that of Gabagonashkung). Furthermore, he noted that "... the governor has supplied the Indians with steers, cows, seed, farm implements, etc. ... it seems that the Company is making preparations for them [the Methodists]". Such promises compelled Belcourt to make promises of his own and beg his superiors to provide him with the means to supply the gifts. See MHA, Box 8, Belcourt to the Bishop of Quebec, August 3, 1841.

⁴⁰ WMMS, op. cit., Jacobs to Alder, December 14, 1847; Simpson, Inward Correspondence, Jacobs to Simpson, July 2, 1849.

⁴¹ WMMS, op. cit., Jacobs to Alder, July 21, 1848.

⁴² WMMS, op. cit., Jacobs to Evans, February 25, 1846.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Sanderson, op. cit., v. II: 87.

⁴⁵ Wesleyan Missionary Notices. British Conference (1851), 110-2.

⁴⁶ Salt Mss, Journal, 12.

⁴⁷ See Ruth Landes, Ojibwa Sociology (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937) for a detailed explanation of how cross-cousins were expected to behave in Ojibwa society.

⁴⁸ Despite the many trials that Jacobs went through at Rainy Lake he remained loyal to the Methodist connection. Much later, after his expulsion from the ministry, he once again repented and was accepted as a lay member. (Christian Guardian, Oct. 16, 1867)

⁴⁹ Peter Jacobs, Journal of the Reverend Peter Jacobs, Indian Wesleyan Missionary, from Rice Lake to the Hudson's Bay Territory. (New York: Published for the Author, 1858)

⁵⁰ Despite Jacobs' apparent lack of success with the Rainy Lake Ojibwa, Simpson continued to view him as someone who "... had a great deal of influence with those Indians ...". Simpson Outward Correspondence, Simpson to Nicol Finlayson, 20 Dec. 1843.

⁵¹In one telling incident Jacobs was forced to admit he was forced to take part in the pilfering of a Company official's personal bag which had been found on a portage. Jacobs explained that his men simply would not listen to him so he had been forced to take his share. The incident was also an excellent example of how Jacobs had difficulty in dealing with the different moralities of the two societies. See Simpson Inward Correspondence, Jacobs to Simpson, Dec. 1851.

⁵²The Ojibwa's rejection of Christianity hardly reflects the fact that Jacobs was an Ojibwa himself as Brooks suggests. Rather, it reflects the strength of the Ojibwa convictions on the one hand, and Jacobs' refusal to accept their outward acceptance as a sufficient sign that they had been converted, as Euro-Americans like Mason were willing to do.

⁵³In later life, when he was working in the Lake Huron region, Salt became more intimately connected with Ojibwa life. However, even there he and his family were not considered as part of the reserve community.

⁵⁴Salt Mss, Journal. See also Salt Mss, "A Lecture in reference to a portion of the North West, delivered 1872" Notebook (1872-1901). In this lecture Salt provides a quick overview of the religion of the Rainy Lake Ojibwa and some of their ceremonies.

⁵⁵Salt Mss, Journal, 42-3; Lecture, 33-5.

⁵⁶See Salt Mss, Lecture. Although he felt that they were backward and superstitious, he did acknowledge that they were hospitable.

⁵⁷Jacqueline Peterson, "The People in Between: Indian-White Marriage and the Genesis of a Metis Society and Culture in the Great Lakes Region, 1680-1830". Ph.D diss., University of Chicago, 1973.

⁵⁸Salt Mss, Journal, 20.

⁵⁹Evans Mss, John Clarke to Evans, July 27, 1836.

⁶⁰MHA, Box 7, Belcourt to Bishop of Quebec, July 3, 1839.

⁶¹Mary Black Rogers, "Algonquian Gender Revisited: Animate Nouns and Ojibwa 'Power' -- an Impasse?". Papers in Linguistics, 15, no. 1 (1982): 59-75; "Ojibwa Taxonomy and Percept Ambiguity". Ethos, 5, no. 1 (1977): 91-103.

⁶²Rogers, "Algonquian Gender Revisited", op. cit., 64.

⁶³WMMS, op. cit., Steinhauer to Friends, December 19, 1840.

⁶⁴WMMS, op. cit., Mason to Secretaries, June 9, 1841.

⁶⁵Salt Mss, Journal, 9.

⁶⁶McLoughlin Papers, Public Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, "Description of the Indians from Fort William to Lake of the Woods", 11.

⁶⁷As quoted in Mabindisa, op. cit., 210.

⁶⁸WMMS, op. cit., Jacobs to Alder, July 21, 1848.

⁶⁹None of the early commentators really distinguish between the various forms of Ojibwa religious figures. (See chapter 2 for a full explanation.) However, Salt does provide some indication in his Lecture, and his Journal provides enough indirect information for us to distinguish between shaking tent djessakids such as Kichigauk and Waubishuguigun, and principal metais or Mide priests such as Wanune and Maskokanuya since he describes the two ceremonies separately. Since the latter two were also chiefs, it would appear that it was the latter that the Methodists were usually referring to when they spoke of "conjurers". However, neither Salt nor Jacobs provides any explanation as to how the two were integrated into Ojibwa religious, social or political life.

⁷⁰In the Midewiwin, as practiced in the Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods region, there were eight ranks or grades. Individuals who had attained the highest four grades were felt to possess not only great medical and supernatural power, but were also felt to have the ability to do great harm through the improper use of these powers. Landes contends that in the 1930s the upper four grades automatically taught sorcery. This, she argued, was consistent with the Ojibwa's "absolute conviction that man's power lies in ability to do evil, knowingly". See Landes, Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 58-9.

⁷¹WMMS, op. cit., Jacobs to Alder, July 21, 1848. It would seem from their comments that they were unwilling to adopt Christianity unless it was guaranteed that they would retain their status in the community, and their sources of material wealth. Such a belief would have been compatible with the Ojibwa practice of considering the practical results of their beliefs.

⁷²Simpson Outward Correspondence, op. cit., Simpson to Sinclair, 19 November 1849. While Simpson doesn't name the individuals involved he was concerned that the constant assemblies diverted the Ojibwa from their hunting and trapping pursuits. Unfortunately Salt totally ignores this aspect of Ojibwa society.

⁷³Leo G. Waisberg and Marie-Ange Beaudry, An Ethnological and Historical Outline of the Rainy River Ojibway. Parks Canada, Regional Office, Cornwall, Ontario, 1984, 22-3.

⁷⁴Salt Mss, Journal, 9.

⁷⁵Ibid., 3.

⁷⁶Ibid., 42.

⁷⁷Ibid., 43.

⁷⁸Ibid. Salt's informant was worried about losing his powers as *Metais*, since he seems to have been describing one of the rituals in the Midewiwin ceremony.

⁷⁹Ibid., 28.

⁸⁰Wesleyan Missionary Society, Report, 1856-7, xxxiv.

⁸¹The question of determining just which Ojibwa were "British" and which were "American" is almost academic since only a river separated many of them. However, some of the visitors described by Salt did come from some distance inside American Territory where they had experienced the more rapid advancement of Euro-American society.

⁸²Wesleyan Missionary Notices, New Series, IX, nos. 150-1 (1851), 110-12. Jacobs' speech to the Annual General Meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society (1850) is reproduced. (He had made a very similar speech during his earlier visit to London in 1843). In the speech he spends a great deal of time speaking of the benefits that Christianity has brought to Indian women, and the need for missionaries to have wives to help them in their labours -- but not once does he mention his own wife. In fact neither he nor Salt do more than mention them in passing, except when they used them as an excuse for returning to the East.

⁸³WMMS, op. cit., Jacobs to Alder, December 14, 1847.

⁸⁴Salt Mss, Lecture, op. cit., 36.

⁸⁵Johann Georg Kohl, Kitchi-Gami: Life Among the Lake Superior Ojibway. Translated by Lascelles Wraxall. With a new introduction by Robert E. Bieder. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985), 65-66.

⁸⁶WMMS, op. cit., Mason to Secretaries, June 9, 1841. In this letter, and various others Mason related the demands of the Ojibwa and the difficulties of supplying them with the various things they wanted. Mason also noted that Fort Frances was dependent upon the Ojibwa for wild rice. Without it "the Company servants and missionaries would starve", but the Ojibwa would only provide it in exchange for rum.

⁸⁷MHA, op. cit., Box 8, Belcourt to the Bishop of Quebec, August 3, 1841.

⁸⁸Evans Mss, op. cit., Jacobs and Steinhauer to Evans, May 20, 1844.

⁸⁹Salt Mss, Journal, op. cit., 37.

⁹⁰MHA, op. cit., Box 8, Belcourt to the Bishop of Quebec, August 3, 1841.

- ⁹¹Salt Mss, Journal, op. cit., 30.
- ⁹²Bruce M. White, "Give Us a Little Milk": The Social and Cultural Significance of Gift Giving in the Lake Superior Fur Trade" in Selected Papers of the Fourth North American Fur Trade Conference, 1981, edited by Thomas C. Buckley. (no publishers, 1984), 186-7.
- ⁹³Jacobs' totem is listed in the private papers of Eliza Field Jones of Vancouver, B.C. I am indebted to Professor Donald Smith for this information.
- ⁹⁴Salt Mss, Journal, op. cit., 43.
- ⁹⁵Ibid., 28-9.
- ⁹⁶Ibid.
- ⁹⁷WMMS, op. cit., Mason to Secretaries, June 9, 1841.
- ⁹⁸The Ojibwa considered the "gift" of the son in terms of kinship obligations, and expected that the missionaries would both appreciate the gesture and live up to the obligations by providing for the son.
- ⁹⁹Salt Mss, Journal, op. cit., 28.
- ¹⁰⁰Waisberg and Beaudry, op. cit. provide a full account of the difficulties that occurred.
- ¹⁰¹WMMS, op. cit., Jacobs to Secretaries, August 21, 1849.
- ¹⁰²Simpson Outward Correspondence, op. cit., Simpson to Governor and Committee, April 25, 1843. Simpson's objectives in this regard were viewed with distrust, however, by the Ojibwa. Mason had reported in a letter that they had told him that: "The Governor wants to deceive us, to get us to sow and build and then we must become Christians ... we would rather starve ...". See WMMS, op. cit., Mason to Secretaries, June 9, 1841.
- ¹⁰³1840 and 1849 were particularly severe years for both the Ojibwa and the local fur traders. Despite the fact that Simpson mentions the disappearance of big game, the major problem appears to have been the failure of the wild rice crop which was a major means of winter sustenance. Although there does not appear to have been mass starvation on the part of the Ojibwa, they certainly were restricted in their ability to hunt and trap. (Conversation with Leo Waisberg, March 1986).
- ¹⁰⁴WMSS, op. cit., Jacobs to Secretaries, December 10, 1849.
- ¹⁰⁵Salt Mss, Journal, op. cit., 25.
- ¹⁰⁶The Ojibwa had taken various forms of Euro-American technology from the fur traders and adapted them for their own use. However,

whereas the fur traders had made few demands upon the Indians to change their lifestyle, the missionaries insisted that the adoption of Euro-American "civilization" was intertwined with the adoption of Christian beliefs and mores. Only in areas such as Lac Seul, where their well-being was threatened were the Ojibwa generally willing to accede to such demands. In the Rainy Lake, Rainy River and Lake of the Woods regions most of them strongly resisted the pressures of the missionaries to convert to Christianity, even if it meant giving up some of the material benefits that might accrue.

¹⁰⁷Evans Mss, op. cit., Mason to Evans, February 28, 1843.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Salt Mss, Lecture, op. cit., 5-7.

¹¹⁰Salt Mss, Journal, op. cit., 50.

¹¹¹The wording of this text suggests that it was probably written by Salt himself (he mentioned in his Lecture that he had written petitions to Simpson for the Ojibwa). Nevertheless, the fact that he could convince several Ojibwa to sign it appears to indicate that there were a group of Rainy Lake Ojibwa who did not go along with the majority, and who were at least willing to accept Christianity in return for material benefits.

¹¹²Salt Mss, Journal, op. cit., 49.

¹¹³The references to the fact that the River Indians had given in to the views of the Lake of the Woods Indians in this matter would seem to indicate that the latter continued to exercise a strong influence in matters of religion. This is a view with which some Euro-Americans such as David Thompson agreed, although most speak of Rainy Lake itself as being the centre of the Midewiwin movement. Most likely, Ogimaubimas was simply putting the blame on absent kinsmen for a decision which they had made themselves.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The Rainy Lake Mission figured prominently in the initial plans of Evans and Hurlburt, but changing circumstances and the firm resistance of the local Ojibwa quickly weakened the role of the mission. The establishment of Norway House as the headquarters of the new mission territory, the creation of additional new missions to the north and west, and the decision not to include the Lake Superior missions in the new territory, meant that the centre of Methodist activity was far removed from Rainy Lake. Although the mission began with a large initial complement of mission workers, the numbers were reduced as more activity was concentrated in the Norway House region, and as it became apparent that the efforts of the Methodists were not bearing fruit at the Rainy Lake Mission or in the surrounding region. While both the Methodists and the Hudson's Bay Company continued to be interested in establishing a viable agricultural mission at Manitou Rapids on the Rainy River, their efforts were firmly opposed by the Ojibwa who refused to accept any assistance which was tied to accepting Christianity. Finally, as a result of this continuing resistance, coupled with a shortage of funds and missionaries, the Methodists decided to abandon all efforts at establishing a mission anywhere in the region.

An unmitigated failure from the Methodist point of view, the Rainy Lake Mission was understandably forgotten by the early chroniclers of mission history since it failed to conform to their version of events. From the Ojibwa viewpoint, the Methodists proved to be but a minor irritant who had no little or no impact on Ojibwa society. Even from the viewpoint of the native missionaries involved, the Rainy Lake

"experience" was a trying part of their careers that in later years they would have preferred to forget. And yet, a detailed analysis of the encounter is instructive, precisely because it did not follow the usual pattern. There were, of course, other Ojibwa missions where significant numbers of Ojibwa retained their traditional beliefs in the face of missionary efforts to convert them to Christianity. However, there are few examples where the situation was so clear cut, and the final result so decisive.

It is possible to look at the encounter in a number of different ways. In the first place, the encounter at Rainy Lake can scarcely be seen as a simple conflict between fur traders and missionaries for the minds and loyalties of the Ojibwa. Although there were significant disagreements between the two groups, to a considerable extent they depended upon each other to achieve their ends. These dependencies were first set out in general terms in the agreement between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Wesleyan Missionary Society. However, the missionaries at Rainy Lake remained particularly tied to the Company since they never succeeded in building a mission station separate from the Company buildings. This resulted in them being extremely dependent upon Company officers and servants for most of their basic needs. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the reliance also existed the other way. They did act as teachers to servants' children, and occasionally they were used as mediators. For example, Governor Simpson made use of Jacobs to prevent potential disturbances among the young Ojibwa at Rainy Lake.

Both traders and missionaries at Rainy Lake were, in turn,

dependent upon the Ojibwa in a number of important ways. In strictly economic terms, of course, the traders and Ojibwa were mutually dependent, but the Ojibwa also supplied important elements of the food supply for both traders and missionaries. Wild rice continued to form a major part of the diet for everyone in Rainy Lake region since flour was difficult to transport. Since the Ojibwa had a virtual monopoly on the wild rice, they were able to use it as a powerful bargaining tool. Generally speaking the missionaries had nothing similar that the Ojibwa required for their existence. The missionaries were occasionally able to play an advocacy role for the Ojibwa, as when Steinhauer served as the interpreter for a delegation of local chiefs to Governor Simpson. A number of the Ojibwa had expressed an interest in having their children learn to write, but interest declined when the conditions were made known. Similarly, some of the Ojibwa were interested in receiving agricultural assistance, but only if it was granted on their own terms. Under these circumstances, the missionaries became increasingly irrelevant to the needs of both the traders and the Ojibwa, since they had nothing concrete to offer.

In the second place, the traders' and missionaries' ultimate objectives regarding the Ojibwa coincided to a considerable extent. Whatever disagreements there were over the most suitable means of accomplishing their mutual ends, and whatever antagonisms there may have been between individual Company officials and missionaries, the two institutions were in fundamental agreement on a number of important questions. Despite what may have happened elsewhere (including Lac Seul), both Company officials and missionaries acknowledged that

agricultural assistance should be given to the Ojibwa in the Rainy Lake region, and both acknowledged that the Ojibwa in the region would continue to hunt and trap as before during the winter season. In this way, it was hoped, the Ojibwa would have a means of providing a more stabilized food supply, which in turn would allow them to devote more of their energies to trapping in the winter. The Hudson's Bay Company officials hoped that having the missionaries involved would ensure that the Ojibwa remained within the Company's sphere of influence without requiring the deployment of Company personnel. From the missionaries' point of view the plan would have led to a more permanent lifestyle during the summer which, in turn, would have allowed them to spend more time on educating the children. While the Ojibwa also agreed with the ultimate goal of improving their agricultural capacity, they refused to accept any assistance on terms which included missionary involvement since the leaders recognized that such an action would result in a diminution of their own authority and the community's independence.

Hudson's Bay Company officials and missionaries were also in basic agreement regarding the need to Christianize the Ojibwa. Other than Mackenzie at Lac Seul, the officials were very supportive, some like Pither, even personally assisting in the work of the missionaries. Even when Jacobs' preaching kept most of the Company officials and servants from attending Methodist services, Sinclair and Jacobs remained personal friends. In many cases, the Methodists' efforts involved saving the Ojibwa not merely from their heathen superstitions, but from the equally despised Catholic ones. While Nicol Finlayson may have come to dislike Jacobs, this did not lessen his fundamental feeling that the Protestant

missionaries were needed to spread their version of the gospel before the Catholics succeeded in implanting theirs. The Roman Catholic threat, while serious in the minds of the Methodists and some of the Protestant traders, never really developed once Belcourt was withdrawn, but it did continue to provide an impetus for maintaining the mission despite the difficulties encountered.

Initially the Ojibwa welcomed the missionaries, listened to their speeches, and waited to see what they would do. Although the Methodists arrived just before 1840 when food supplies were particularly scarce, they were unable to provide any assistance to the Ojibwa since they were dependent upon the Company which was also short of supplies. Even later, when opportunities arose to share their goods, they generally refused to follow Ojibwa customs. Thus, they were seen as selfish, or even as sorcerers who used their evil powers to cause shortages.

It was in the area of providing concrete demonstrations of the practical implications of Christian beliefs, that the Methodists had their greatest problems. Both Methodism and the Midewiwin were, in their own way, practical rather than theoretical belief systems, but the practical implications of the two faiths were radically different. In Methodist terms the power of Christianity was evident in the changed life of the convert who was able to rise above his former natural self with the help of saving grace. In Ojibwa terms, the power of the Midewiwin rested in the fact that the initiate was able to live in harmony with nature and thus have his basic needs met. The missionaries appeared unable to concretely demonstrate how their powers could be used for good in Ojibwa terms. The Ojibwa could see no need, nor any

advantages in giving up the life to which they were accustomed. Meanwhile, the powers of the metais continued to be demonstrated. The Ojibwa's material needs were being met and they did not feel threatened by outside forces. The Ojibwa continued to flock to the region to take part in the Midewiwin, while ignoring the Methodist missionaries.

Ojibwa society at Rainy Lake was dominated by the Midewiwin and indirectly by the chief officials in that society. The very fact that the Midewiwin ceremonies drew participants from great distances who were ready to pay considerable sums [in goods] for the privilege of belonging to the society, is a clear indication of its influence, and the perception of its members that the rituals practiced did in fact have a beneficial effect. The metais were thus able to use this satisfaction, and their own personal influence to persuade the majority of their countrymen to pay no heed to the words of the missionaries. The metais do not appear to have normally used overt forms of aggression to frighten away the missionaries, since they realized that such moves would be counterproductive. However, a few of their leaders such as Crooked Neck, were hostile and derisive, and threats were made against potential converts. Most, however, were content to listen, ask for time to consider, and then do nothing. Eventually the more militant factions were able to use a combination of their religious and secular offices, and the consensual nature of Ojibwa decision making, to ostracize the Native missionaries. By telling Salt to confine himself to the vicinity of the fort, they indicated he was no longer considered part of Ojibwa society since he had adopted Christianity, and they left the impression that anyone else who became a Christian would also be ostracized. Since

Native missionaries had been unable to gain more than a handful of converts, let alone organize a Christian faction among the Ojibwa, the efforts of the missionaries were effectively neutralized. It should also be remembered that men such as Crooked Neck, who led the opposition to the missionaries, were determined leaders in their own right, who possibly used the issue of Christianity as a means of advancing their own claims to more expansive powers.

There were, of course, some Ojibwa who did show some interest in Christianity. Most, however, were at Lac Seul and Osnaburgh House where living conditions were more precarious than in the Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods regions. Thus, the more northern Ojibwa were more open to possible new sources of power which would assist them in meeting their basic needs. Unfortunately, for the missionaries, they were not given the chance to pursue these opportunities, so they were forced to refocus their activities on Rainy Lake, Rainy River and Lake of the Woods. Although a few individuals such as Peter Jacobs (Gabagonshkung) and Jack-fish Bone either became Methodists or showed considerable interest in doing so, the missionaries were unable to capitalize on these few successes. As a result the converts were few, isolated, and often feared physical violence from other members of the band. The Methodists were also unable to point to the evidence of Anglo-American communities that lived according to the gospel preached by the Methodists, as they had been able to do in Upper Canada. None of the traders, even those who were sincere Protestants, lived the type of life that the Methodists espoused for the Ojibwa. Since both faiths placed a great deal of stress on the practical applications of belief, it was difficult for the

Methodists to convince the Ojibwa that there was, in fact, a connection between believing and living a "Christian" life.

The nature of the Methodist faith, and the personal limitations of the missionaries combined to make their task of evangelization even more difficult than it might otherwise have been. Foremost among these problems was the attempt of the Wesleyan Missionary Society to apply the concept of the mission circuit to Hudson's Bay Territory, where geographical barriers, adverse weather conditions, the migratory habits of the Ojibwa, and the often reluctant cooperation of the Hudson's Bay Company all combined to make the circuit system impossible to implement. Even when, as in the case of John Sunday's tours along Lake Huron and Lake Superior, the results were initially successful, there was no way that the mission station could be staffed. Yet much effort and money was expended on trying to establish missions at a variety of points, rather than concentrating their efforts on one area for an extended period of time. The circuit system, and the placement of the Superintendent's headquarters at Norway House, also meant that the new missionaries lacked guidance -- particularly since Evans never visited the mission in the first years of its existence.

Coupled with the problem of the circuit system and the placement of the superintendency at Norway House, was the failure of the school system to develop at Rainy Lake. The lack of supplies were a major problem. This was connected to the fact that Evans wanted to concentrate his efforts at Norway House where he was experimenting with his new Cree syllabic system. As a result, the educational needs of the Methodist teachers at Rainy Lake were largely ignored. The teachers

were willing and able, but they had nothing with which to work, and few students to work with.

An even more fundamental problem was the missionaries' rigid application of the Methodist doctrine which required that the new converts demonstrate that they had been touched by God's grace, were ready to make a complete repudiation of their past ways, and begin a new life. Theoretically Methodists made no distinction between Euro-American and Indian converts since all men were equal in God's eyes. However, conversion for Euro-Americans meant a re-orientation of their life, while, for the Ojibwa, it meant a total disruption of their former existence since converts were expected to cut themselves off from all their kin who remained pagan, and in turn were often ostracized by other members of the band. Furthermore, both Methodist missionaries and Ojibwa metis were convinced that the adoption of an Euro-American lifestyle was a natural corollary of becoming Christians. Although some of the Native Methodist missionaries in Upper Canada such as the Herkimers attempted to separate strictly religious changes from cultural ones, all of the missionaries at Rainy Lake followed the example of Peter Jones who totally identified Christianity and Euro-American "civilization". As a result they demanded that converts embrace Christianity and adopt an Euro-American lifestyle.

The fact that three of the four Methodist missionaries at Rainy Lake were either Ojibwa or of mixed-blood, would suggest at first glance, that they would have been able to act as cultural brokers between the Euro-American and Indian communities. However, as has been shown, none of the three were able to function successfully in this role

while at Rainy Lake. The reasons for their failure to do so are fundamentally the same ones which explain the failure of the mission. The native missionaries could not serve as cultural brokers in a situation where the Ojibwa leaders effectively closed off Ojibwa society from Christian influences, while the missionaries insisted that they would do nothing until the Ojibwa demonstrated a willingness to live a Christian and Euro-American lifestyle. In simple terms this meant giving up their gods and rituals, and beginning to build log houses. All three of the native missionaries had been raised in a Methodist atmosphere which placed a heavy emphasis on personal conversion. Two of them, Jacobs and Salt, had undergone intensely emotional conversions of their own. Although Steinhauer had been raised a Methodist and appears to have never doubted his calling, he remained a deeply introspective man who was constantly concerned with his inner state of grace. All three men had come to equate such secular virtues as "hard work", frugality and sobriety with Christianity itself. They had come to believe that the Indian people were especially cursed with the sins of drunkenness and gambling, so it was natural that the Native missionaries should expect their converts to make the same break with the past that they had made. Under such circumstances, both the Native missionaries and their metais opponents emphasized the differences rather than the similarities between the two religions. As a result, the opportunity for any form of adaptation was almost non-existent.

Steinhauer, Jacobs and Salt were representatives of those Ojibwa, who, faced with the breakdown of their traditional society, had chosen to adopt the beliefs and customs of the dominant culture. Having made a

radical break with their own past, they were unwilling and unable to serve as bridge figures between the two communities at Rainy Lake. In other situations, working with other Indians, both Steinhauer and Salt were able to function as very effective cultural brokers. Both men became respected by the Indian and Euro-American communities for their help in mediating between the Canadian government and the Indians regarding treaty rights. Of the three missionaries, only Jacobs found it personally impossible to bridge the gap between the two cultures, but all of them were affected by their experience at Rainy Lake.

Crooked Neck and Maskohonuya, two of the leading metais at Rainy Lake, were equally secure in their own beliefs, and confident of their own abilities. As such, they were unwilling to compromise their own customs and ideals. Faced with new challenges from Euro-American society and religion, they solidified their own position and strengthened the barriers against the new religious ideas. While neither lived to take an active part in the treaty negotiations of the 1870s, their views continued to dominate Rainy Lake Ojibwa thought. Other Ojibwa leaders like Gauba, who had listened to the Methodist missionaries, remained determined to avoid them in the future.

Canadian mission history has changed considerably since the early hagiographies, but there is still a tendency to suggest that Indians accepted Christianity because their societies had disintegrated in the face of a more powerful Euro-American society. While this was undoubtedly true in some instances, the explanation does not apply to Rainy Lake. Traditional Ojibwa society and religion were both strong and healthy, and Methodist attempts to convince the Ojibwa otherwise

were therefore doomed to failure. In the final analysis, Rainy Lake was the story of two groups of strong-minded, stubborn individuals who were determined to impose their particular worldview on the local people. There are no heroes in the piece, nor are there any real villains.

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