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# METHODISM IN THE CANADIAN WEST IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by

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ABSTRACT

The British Wesleyans were the first Methodists in the north-west. Four came out in 1840 at the request of the Hudson's Bay Company. The British Wesleyans were conservative in character and no longer practised the enthusiastic evangelism which had marked the early days of the movement. Frontier conditions have often provided a stimulus for evangelical activity and these precedents inspired some of the Wesleyans to attempt a heroic approach to the conversion of the Indians in the West. These attempts to convert a primitive culture to an eighteenth century Protestantism in the presence of the all-pervading metropolitan power of the Hudson's Bay Company, which had greatly modified the wilderness, could not succeed.

The Canadian Methodists from Canada West took over the Indian missions from the British Wesleyans in 1854. This church was perhaps even less evangelical and heroic than the Wesleyans had been. Their approach to the problem of Indian conversion brought little in the way of new ideas but they produced at least one heroic figure in the person of George McDougall. He found a courageous and selfless role among the Indians of what is now Alberta during the years when war and disease were stalking the western plains. The Canadian Methodists began work among the white settlers of Red River in 1868 on the eve of the first Riel Rebellion. The reaction of their first pastor to the events of 1869-70 sufficiently demonstrated his Anglo-Saxon and Ontario biases. In 1872, the first western conference met and institutional Methodism came to the prairies.

Three other Methodist groups appeared in the Canadian west in the

late 1870s and early 1880s. The Bible Christians and the Episcopal Methodists made a valiant attempt to transfer their institutional strength to the new and rapidly developing west. They saw a challenge which might enable them to renew the sources of their spiritual strength. They mistook the Canadian west for a traditional frontier, whereas it was in fact being rapidly transformed by the railway and other advances of modern technology. The Primitive Methodists came out mainly to found a farming colony in which their religion might flourish. The Primitives had little hope of survival as a denomination, as they accepted anyone of similar mind as a member of the colony without insisting on a denomination label. The Episcopals and Bible Christians insisted on their denominational peculiarities, but found that even these did not make them distinguishable against the western background. Accordingly, all of these went into union with the Canadian Methodists in 1884.

The union merely meant that a united Methodist church faced the same problems which had confronted the separate churches before the union. All attempts to inaugurate traditional evangelical practices, or enthusiasms of the type which had succeeded on the classic frontier, were doomed to fail. On the other hand, mere institutional stability and a relatively innocuous social role were insufficient reasons for the Church's existence. The problem was never solved but the peculiarities of the western environment caused the Methodists to take hesitant and faltering steps in the direction of social utility by emphasizing sabbatarianism, temperance work, and other worldly concerns. This was really part of an increasing secularism and identification with general cultural tendencies. No clear and single path was taken by the Church, however, and the uncertainties exhibited by its leaders clearly fore-

shadowed the eventual disappearance of the denomination in the Union of 1925.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

Whatever may be said about the exact nature of English Methodism and its very complex relationship to the whole context of English life and history,[1] the fact remains, that all Methodists, English, Canadian and American, had some sort of evangelical heritage and were, therefore, at least potentially evangelical.

Early Methodism is almost impossible to define in plain terms. An attempt to do so would probably suggest that Methodism was composed of the following. These were a unique theological thrust, an evangelical appeal of great spiritual urgency directed at the lower elements in society and, after the break with the Church of England, a remarkable organization designed to perpetuate the first two characteristics.

Methodism owed its early success to the fact that these three characteristics were perfectly suited to the time in which the movement appeared. The application of evangelical appeal, contained within the boundaries of "Arminianism", and applied rigorously through such devices as the class meeting and the love feast, all constituted a formula or technique which was truly effective in eighteenth century England.

Wesley's doctrinal tenets evolved during his life. Methodist doctrine is more readily described in efficacious rather than theoretical terms. Wesley's theology was more Catholic than Protestant since it avoided the extreme Lutheran emphasis on faith alone. It also lacked the grim stress

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1. The whole matter is much more complex than had been hitherto imagined. The terrible complexity of the Methodist phenomenon has recently been brought to light in dramatic fashion by the publication of the first volume in a projected new official history of Methodism. See Gordon Rupp and Rupert Davies, (ed.), A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, Vol. I, Epworth Press, (London, 1965).

on God's omnipotence which had provided Calvinists with such a "sheet anchor". The label "Arminian" did not mean that the Methodists were Arminians but rather that they were not susceptible to the pitfalls of antinomianism inherent in the declined Calvinistic predestinarianism of their own day. In short, Wesleyan doctrine had the general effect of freeing a branch of the Christian church from Reformation doctrines which had, for complex reasons, lost much of their effectiveness in the climate of the eighteenth century. Wesley's theology was not new since it was basic Catholic doctrine, but it was very basic indeed. Among other things it lacked the framework of an episcopal structure and the balance provided by historical precedent. This enabled it to fit perfectly into the simple, popular rationalism of the age.[2] The original intention of the Wesleys was that the framework and balance of the movement would be provided by the Church of England. The break with the English church left a body of Christian enthusiasts, unfettered by precedents, and free to work in an age eager to receive them.

Evangelical appeal is a difficult topic to discuss at all. The psychology of revivalism presents many problems and few answers. There was a great sense of urgency and drama in the eighteenth century evangelical revival, of which Methodism was the mainstream. Scenes of great spiritual upheaval were often witnessed. The test of an aspiring preacher

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2. It is of course true that the seminal thinkers of eighteenth century rationalism were in no sense either simple or popular. The ordinary folk, however, partook of a simple rationalism which even provided a context for their emotional outbursts. It was possible to subscribe to a simplistic rationalism in physical and intellectual matters and still be a religious enthusiast. The Methodists perfectly exemplified this tendency at a popular level as they attempted a precise rational control and direction of the emotional power inherent in their revival.

was simple and direct. Did he save souls? The answer was found by simple observation. If he caused people to come forward in agony, saw them delivered in bliss, and then could point out that they went on to lead noticeably improved lives, he could be considered a success. This simple direct test suited the empiricism of the age. It was a bit more complicated in practice, of course. Backsliding was frequent, but was also guarded against, and many organizational rules were forced on the "saved". These rules were always free of philosophical or theological complexity, however, and had to do with observable conduct.

The Methodist organization had to expand its range, purpose and effectiveness after its break with the Church of England and after the death of Wesley. Its devices for its earlier purposes were excellent in their time. In the class meeting, for example, the saved met each week and recounted their progress since the last meeting and "watched over their neighbours in love". The hymns provided by Charles Wesley were the second major addition to popular, congregational church music since Isaac Watts, whose hymns they also acquired.

After the death of Wesley the organization had to find something to replace him. This forced them to fall back on the various Protestant systems of church government. The question was never really satisfactorily settled for all branches of Methodism, but the Wesleyan mainstream opted for an exclusive clergy directed in theory by a conference. The break with the Church of England constituted a more serious problem because it meant that the Methodist organization would have to be capable of perpetuating itself and carrying its special formula through time. The Methodists did not see the problem in this light, however. They simply

added committees and other organizational devices as they were required in order to meet special problems. Their eighteenth century origin meant that the long philosophical view would seldom, if ever, be taken.

The Methodists entered the nineteenth century with an elaborate organization which was being constantly expanded to meet new problems, and which soon became a burden in itself. The maintenance of the "system" would eventually be at least as important as the purpose of the church. When it was realized that the church was not as effective as it could be or had been, more detailed reports and more committees were laid on in the hope that things would improve. Thus, the excellent Methodist organization was, by the middle of the nineteenth century, a source of weakness rather than strength. The very pragmatism which had given unusual flexibility in the previous century became a liability. Their organization had originally given them strength and coherence and, indeed, prevented Methodism from evaporating out of or merging with the historical stream in the manner of so many of their competitors. Eighteenth century evangelical movements were legion. The Methodist system or organization was the means whereby the Methodist church was to move forward into the next two centuries. Ultimately, this task was beyond its competence.

Methodism flourished in England in the century of its birth and for some time thereafter. It appears to have operated effectively among people of British extraction in North American frontier conditions. Methodist success in the United States in the eighteenth century, and in Nova Scotia in the same period, has often been documented. Upper Canada prior to 1840 provided similar conditions and saw similar Methodist success. The harsh frontier conditions, only slightly alleviated by a pre-railway

industrial technology, seemed to keep the Methodists in the path of spiritual urgency and prevented them from becoming overburdened with connexional zeal. Later, when conditions in these areas became easier and the railroad brought the comforts of civilization, the local Methodist churches became more "connexionally" minded but they at least enjoyed the impetus and sustenance of an authentic, local heroic tradition. Methodism at work in pre-railroad circumstances (whether in desolate eighteenth century England or in the harsh frontier of early nineteenth century Canada), and displaying a sense of urgency which even took precedence over the "beloved discipline", can be characterized as "heroic" Methodism.

The Methodists who came to the Canadian west in 1840 constituted in their own small group of four missionaries a unique band, neither entirely heroic nor yet entirely connexional, but something in between. Later western Methodists, like Methodists in most other places, tended to move closer to the connexional side of things. It was not quite so simple, however. Western Methodism always had its own distinct character moving in harmony with the peculiar forces of the western environment. The western prairie frontier was not a true frontier at all, even in 1840. Instead, the west was the scene of a complex shifting interaction between mighty external forces, growing ever stronger as the century passed through the railroad age, and a stubborn natural environment which fought a losing rearguard action but was capable of many surprises. These gave western Methodism its peculiar flavour.

No less than five distinct Methodist churches came to what is now the Canadian west during the last century. The first to arrive were the conservative British Wesleyans who were generally regarded as natural

supporters of the empire and the status quo.[3] They were followed in 1854 by the Canadian Wesleyans who appear to have been similar in character but with a more Canadian orientation.[4] These Canadian Methodists were identified with the Canadian party in the events of the first Riel affair. Two Methodist splinter groups with markedly evangelical origins arrived in the late 1870s and early 1880s: the Bible Christians and the Primitive Methodists. The Episcopal Methodists, a branch splintered from American Methodism, once noted for evangelical zeal,[5] arrived in the same period. Thus Methodism in nearly all its forms was well represented in what was, a new territory, hardly touched by settlement even as late as 1878.

In spite of a considerable Methodist population among the western settlers none of these churches witnessed the great scenes of evangelical success which had marked the American frontier or had crowned the labours of "saddle-bag" preachers in Upper Canada[6] in the earlier years of the century. In fact, except for isolated instances, the whole effort of Methodism in the west seldom rose above the level of a self-perpetuating institutionalism. This is not surprising if the character of each institution at the time of its penetration into the western regions is examined

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3. Goldwin French, Parsons & Politics The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855, Ryerson, (Toronto, 1962), 137.

4. Their "Canadian" character, the result of their peculiar environment, was evident as early as 1825. Ibid., 78.

5. Ibid., 45.

6. French, loc. cit.

in detail. All of the churches concerned were far removed from their evangelical origins and well along the highway leading to nineteenth century Protestant institutionalism. Nevertheless, enthusiastic, dedicated, evangelical and unsophisticated men of humble origin were often sent into remote areas and should have been able to reap "an abundant harvest of spiritual blessing". Many tried, no doubt, and most failed even when they were beyond or momentarily out of reach of the suffocating power of the officialdom of their own institution.

What had happened to the vital Methodism of the classic frontier?[7] The north-west was new territory, there was a wilderness environment, and conservative institutionalism could not really restrain someone on a distant station working among a few Europeans in a largely Indian population. The answer is more likely to be found in the nature of the development of the Canadian nation and, more particularly, the Canadian west.

There are many descriptions of Methodism at work in an American style frontier situation. One of the works dealing with the subject, and attempting to account for the more extreme manifestations of evangelical revivalism on the American frontier, provides the following explanation:

> The less inhibitory powers are developed by education and training the more surely will such results as those described above take place. Suggestion and imitation are

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7. The term as used here refers to a frontier marked by individualism, democracy, and frontier religion all practiced against a background of extensive agriculture together with a pre-1840 technology. See Michael S. Cross, (ed.), The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate on the Impact of the Canadian Environment, Issues in Canadian History. Copp Clark, (Toronto, 1970.) Page 5 of Introduction "Classic Frontier".

> also potent factors producing the phenomena....
> The rate and extent of the spread of revivalistic phenomena depend very much upon the attitude of the religious leaders involved, as well as on the proportion of the more educated self controlled members of the community....[8]

In short, the classic frontier revival required a large proportion of people who were relatively unsophisticated in order to be successful (leaving aside the question of the character of the leaders). People were, or continued to be, unsophisticated and lacking educational advantages because of the character of the frontier. The classic frontier situation, because of the isolation of the people involved did not only produce a lack, but also a need. The following observations were applied to overseas settlers, but this does not really alter the case:

> Among the large mass of overseas immigrants, free of the inhibitions of a social class system, the sudden break from old world cultural systems was more often followed by a strong reaction against traditional restraints of all sorts and the acceptance of new social supports such as those offered within evangelical religion. The highly emotional experience of the evangelical religious revival served, among the overseas settlers, as a means of securing new cultural ties.[9]

This raises the whole question of the validity of the frontier concept in any attempt to explain the development of Canada or Canadian institutions. The most eminent historian of central and eastern Canadian Methodism has very definite views on this matter:

> That the church-sect antithesis and the frontier thesis are useful conceptual tools is certain; but their relevance to the understanding of Canadian conditions is questionable. In British North America as in the United

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8. Elizabeth K. Nottingham, Methodism and the Frontier Indiana Proving Ground, Columbia University Press, (New York, 1941), 181.

9. S. D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada, University of Toronto Press, (Toronto, 1948), 128.

> States, a number of denominations developed--religious communities whose members were held together in each case by their pursuit of a common objective. Their differences arose out of the distinctive character of their aims, and these in turn were determined as much by their historical backgrounds as by immediate circumstances. Hence the ends sought remained much the same long after the period of settlement had passed. Similarly, the shifting frontier was not so much a challenge to theological and liturgical adaptation as the symbol of a new society in which religious and other institutions had to be established. The distinctive aspect of British North America was that this new society was less pagan and less detached from its past than the United States. Metropolitan pressures were stronger and the antipathy toward them less acute--a factor of greatest importance in producing the specific flavour of Canadian Protestantism.10

In his great work, Parsons & Politics,[11] Professor French traces the development of Wesleyan Methodism in what is now Ontario and in the Maritime provinces up to 1855. This work aptly demonstrates his views given above; the Methodism of the Maritime provinces soon developed a markedly conservative and British character in keeping with the paramount influence of British metropolitanism exercised through the sea lanes of the north Atlantic trade routes by means of British sea power. This was in spite of the fact that, prior to 1800, they shared in the great and somewhat primitive revivals which swept New England. As they rejected the American Revolution, they rejected frontier enthusiasms which culminated in the United States in such things as Jacksonian democracy. Upper Canada, on the other hand, developed its own brand of Methodism, rejecting the intense conservatism of the British Wesleyans

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10. Goldwin French, "The Evangelical Creed in Canada", The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age, W. L. Morton, (ed.), McClelland and Stewart, (Toronto, 1968), 17

11. Supra, n. 2.

on the one hand and the uncontrolled and undisciplined zeal of the American Methodists on the other.[12]

Metropolitanism, then, appears to be a more fruitful concept in any examination of the Canadian phenomenon. Dr. Careless has done more than anyone else to give the concept specific definition:

> Historically speaking, the functioning of metropolitanism may do more to explain the course of Canadian history than concepts of frontierism borrowed from the United States and set forth before the significance of the modern metropolis was clear. For example, the greater conservatism of Canada as compared to the United States may be read as a mark of the much stronger influence exercised in this country by conservative-minded eastern urban centres--which were certainly far removed from any impulse of forest democracy. Moreover, the stronger influence of British ideas and institutions--and even of colonialism--must have been fostered in Canada by its long and close focusing on the British metropolis itself....13

and again:

> Furthermore, in Canada, with its small population heavily concentrated in certain areas, metropolitan influences have had a particularly free sweep.14

Dr. Careless also sees Canada's tendency to make use of "large scale combination of public and private interests to overcome the problems raised by a difficult environment"[15] as further setting this country

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12. French does not specifically apply the metropolitan thesis but he does make the foregoing judgements as to the specific character of Methodism in these areas and supports these with exhaustive research.

13. J. M. S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History", The Canadian Historical Review, XXV (1) March, 1954, 82.

14. Loc. cit.

15. Ibid., 83.

off from the American patterns of growth. He sees the building of the Canadian Pacific Railroad through areas which were not even settled and would not be for many years as one example of this type of metropolitan tendency at work.[16]

Accepting the metropolitan model, the Canadian west may be seen as a frontier being considerably and sometimes instantly modified by the forces of metropolitanism. Thus, frontier conditions, which provided such a fertile field for Methodism at other times and other places, never existed for a sufficiently long period to provide any sort of revitalizing climate for Methodists already sunk in the slough of institutionalism. What were the specific metropolitan forces involved in this modification of the Canadian western frontier?

The British Wesleyans found themselves confronted by the vast and efficient power of the Hudson's Bay Company, which was an agency of a London-based metropolitanism operating through the medium of the fur trade. Superior European technology and the European fur market combined to hold the natives and all within the territory in an iron grip. This confounded them in their missionary zeal even when they managed to avoid the direction of their own institution which was also based in London. The Canadian Methodists, who succeeded them, were more firmly under the

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16. Careless, loc. cit., and also see Donald Swainson, "The North-West Transportation Company: Personnel and Attitudes:, in Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, Series III, Number 26, 1969-70, 59-77, where the following footnote occurs: "With reference to social, political and cultural aspects of metropolitanism it should be pointed out that the term implies a homogeneous hinterland. This helps to explain the tremendous power of a Paris or a London. In many respects Canadian society is too regionally disparate to permit such control from one centre. Economically of course, such control is less difficult."

control of their institution which had its headquarters in Ontario. It was nearer their sphere of action, and even the temporary success of Riel (whose actions have been viewed as a short term resistance of frontier forces and interests in the face of an aggressive Canadian metropolitanism[17]), did little to alter their attitudes which appear to have been identical with those of other Canadians on the scene. The other Methodist churches which came out later were confronted with the peculiar western Canadian phenomenon of "instant settlement" greatly assisted by the building of the railway. This meant that the isolation and hardship resulting from trying to build new homes in a new land usually did not last longer than a year or two. The immediate extension of the railhead meant that all the amenities of civilization and the agencies of government had arrived or would soon arrive on the scene. The forces of metropolitanism were thus greatly strengthened by the new technological developments, such as the railroad and the steam press, and the culture and preoccupations of Ontario were quickly transferred to the west. Large audiences of ignorant and unsophisticated people were usually leavened by the presence of those who were well educated and relatively cosmopolitan. There was even little opportunity for simple heroism.

Admitting all the foregoing, it might be pleasant to record that Methodism in western Canada gained what distinctive character it had from the dramatic tension between the natural force of the vast western environment, still untamed, and the opposing forces of metropolitanism. This would give too much credit to the influence of the western frontier.

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17. George F. G. Stanley, Louis Riel: Patriot or Rebel, The Canadian Historical Association, Historical Booklet No. 2., (Ottawa, 1954).

Whatever the exact balance between the two forces might have been in 1840, rampant technological growth altered it in favour of the metropolitan forces as the century progressed.

Still, the very success of metropolitanism may have something to do with the formation of distinctive elements in western Methodism. The bankruptcy of Methodist institutionalism became more quickly evident in western Canada because it was not artifically sustained by the relics of a recent and heroic past as was the case in Ontario. Institutions tended to be eroded simply by the physical process of pulling up roots and moving to a new territory. When new currents of thought arose in the west it was found that the denominational loyalties of the east were usually met here in a more attenuated form. They were thus more easily overcome. Wesley College, supposedly based on a traditional type of eastern Methodist church college, quickly adapted itself to a wider secular role in the community. Finally, some of the clearest voices speaking for the new social gospel, with its refutation of traditional institutionalism, were heard among the Methodists of the Canadian west.

## CHAPTER I METHODISM IN THE WEST: THE BEGINNING, 1840-1854

Three Wesleyan Missionaries have come in for Lac-la-Pluie and the Saskatchewan; and furs have fallen 15 to 20 percent in price. Ominous signs these, saying plainly, 'Make hay while the sun shines!'

The Journal of Thomas Simpson
Red River, June 5, 1840

The first Methodist missionaries in the north west arrived in 1840. They were sent out by the British Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Four Europeans with two native helpers were given the task of ministering to the Indians living in the vast area between the "lakehead" and the Rocky Mountains. The territory assigned to them, was, in most respects, a vast wilderness; but it was not a virgin field. The inhabitants of the region did not everywhere pursue a way of life stretching back unaltered into distant epochs. Rather, most of them were completely enmeshed, transformed and held in the iron grip of European technological supremacy. This domination was exercised by a great mercantile company operating out of London. From this metropolitan base, the Hudson's Bay Company controlled the northern interior of a continent, and, although the reins were slipping gradually from its hands, it was still, in 1840, by far the most powerful representative of European culture in the areas where the missionaries would labour.

The Hudson's Bay Company did not, of course, have a perfect monopoly at any period of its history. Prior to 1821 the Company, with its London-based support, had contested the control of the north west with the powerful and energetic North West Company. The Hudson's Bay Company had the geographic advantage of its locations on the lower coastline of Hudson Bay.

These, combined with the secure English shipping routes, gave them much closer access to the plains than that enjoyed by their rival. The Nor'-Westers had the long and difficult overland haul from Montreal but they attempted to overcome this liability by energy, enterprise, ruthlessness, and a trading flexibility in marked contrast to the rigid trading practices of the Hudson's Bay Company. The latter company also hesitated for many years before taking the necessary step of setting up posts in the interior. In spite of backward practices and uninspired trading methods on the part of the Bay Company, and in spite of the Nor'-Westers initiative, the Hudson Bay route backed by London was sufficient advantage to give the Hudson's Bay Company the dominant role in the forced union of the two rivals in 1821. Henceforth, heavy goods would come into the west through the Bay route and lighter ones would come overland from Canada until the 1850's, when the Hudson's Bay Company began to use the St. Paul route. Purchasing, however, in spite of Nor'-Wester protestations, would be done in London. All this represented a temporary victory for London-based metropolitanism (operating through the Hudson's Bay Company) over the merchants of the St. Lawrence waterway system.

Red River had been reluctantly established by leave of the Hudson's Bay Company as a settled bastion of their trading system in the middle of North-West Company activities. The settlement continued to be a inherent rival to a fur trading monopoly system even after the union of the two companies in 1821. Free pedlars congregated there and the American influence from St. Paul was eventually strengthened by a wagon road. The united Hudson's Bay Company followed the largely successful policy of using its superior resources to break its American and other independent

rivals financially and drive them to bankruptcy. Many who challenged the Company's dominance found a role in the Company's system. In short, while the Company's dominance was technically challenged by such events as the Sayer trial of 1849, it managed to do more than hold its own, even in Red River, although Company officials looked forward to the day when they would be free of any governmental responsibility in the colony itself. The Sayer trial marked the end of the fiction of a legal or technical monopoly in Red River, but "free traders within the colony were forced to rely on the Company for goods".[1]

> For Hudson's Bay goods were still got to Red River at much less cost by way of Hudson's Bay than by any other route. The old geographical advantage was still in the hands of the Company.[2]

As far as the missionaries were concerned in the period 1840-1848, they were far from Red River in any case and Company authority was still absolute at such distant posts as Norway House or Fort Carleton.

Why were these Wesleyan Methodists "British" rather than Canadian Methodists? Methodism had long been established in Upper Canada. This sparsely settled province was not yet in a position to seriously consider the acquisition of the vast Hudson's Bay Company Territory. She still had her own "west" to fill up; mission work among her own Indian tribes was a sufficiently large task; and there were many internal difficulties which complicated the situation there.

Upper Canada had been the scene of considerable controversy before

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1. E. E. Rich, The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., (Toronto, 1967), 266.

2. Ibid.

and immediately after the War of 1812-1814. This centered around the issue of the questionable loyalty of many in its large American-born population. The American Episcopal Methodists had extended their work into the province well before the war but their preachers were suspected in certain quarters of having "Yankee" sympathies.[3] The war forced many people to choose sides with often surprising results, but the exact composition and loyalties of the population of Upper Canada both before and after the war remains a debatable question to the present day.[4] It might be generally agreed, however, that the people most closely connected with government and officialdom were against the continuation of American Episcopal Methodism because the ministers of that church tended to be evangelical, enthusiastic and not noted for an attachment to the British crown.[5] These clergymen, often barely educated men themselves, did not represent an authoritarian institution modifying a raw frontier from a more civilized base, but rather tended to be products of the frontier itself. In the view of those who were trying to create a more balanced and perfect constitution in the wilderness, American Episcopal clergy seemed often to have had too many frontier characteristics.[6] Isolated

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3. Goldwin French, Parsons & Politics The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855, Ryerson Press, (Toronto, 1962), 68.

4. See for example: Gerald M. Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., (Toronto, 1963), 66-115, and David W. L. Earl, (ed.), The Family Compact: Aristocracy or Oligarchy? Copp Clark, (Toronto, 1967).

5. French, op. cit., 74.

6. Ibid., 72 and Craig, op. cit., 55-56.

pioneer families of American origin, however, would tend to welcome this form of adaptation to their peculiar environment.

It must not be imagined that there was a clear division between the so called "family compact" and the "people" on this question. The whole notion of a "family compact" is suspect as just another relic of Whig-liberal history and the "people" of Upper Canada do not fall easily into homogeneous categories.[7] Many ordinary settlers appear to have felt at some period that certain American-born preachers were fanatical and ill-educated, while to others they accorded general respect.[8] Many preachers were accused of being republican in sympathy but this does not mean that they were necessarily guilty.[9]

During the War of 1812-1814, the British Wesleyan Methodists began to move into Upper Canada.[10] They were welcomed by some as they were noted for their staunch support of things British; and, in fact, they were often recruited in, and sent out from England. A bitter debate ensued between those who thought that true Methodism had been neglected in Upper Canada and those who felt that the Episcopal Methodists were answering the needs of the people.[11] An agreement was reached in 1820 which confined the Wesleyans to Lower Canada and to the military base

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7. Earl, loc. cit.

8. French, op. cit., 72-73.

9. Loc. cit.

10. Loc. cit.

11. Loc. cit.

at Kingston, while Upper Canada was left to the Episcopal Methodists.[12]

In the following years, Methodism in Upper Canada lost much of its "American" character. In 1828 a Canadian Methodist Episcopal Church was set up which gave more weight to the laity in church government. The episcopate remained a feature of the new church but it did not develop within the new body as some had hoped and it was abolished in 1833.[13] The new church appears to have developed a distinctly "Canadian" character as it was not as radical or enthusiastic as the American original, nor yet as conservative or authoritarian as the British Wesleyan Church.[14]

The official party in Upper Canada was never entirely happy with the arrangement of 1820 which effectively excluded the Wesleyans from that province. Dr. Strachan had urged the Wesleyan Missionary Committee in England to send its preachers back, and Governor Maitland had offered indirect assistance to the British Wesleyan District in Lower Canada in order that it might extend its work into the neighbouring province.[15] There were also continuing complaints about the quality of Canadian Methodist preachers from ordinary Methodist adherents in Upper Canada.[16]

In the spring of 1832, the Rev. Robert Alder, one of the Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Committee in London, announced, in a letter to

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12. French, ibid., 74.

13. Ibid., 102.

14. Ibid., 76-79, 103, 107.

15. Ibid., 134.

16. Ibid., 134-135.

the Rev. John Ryerson, that he was bringing twelve missionaries with him in his immediately forthcoming trip to Canada.[17] This was the beginning of a series of events and negotiations that would lead to the Union of 1833 between the British Wesleyans and the Canadian Methodists in Upper Canada. The British Wesleyans had definitely decided to re-enter the work in the upper province and proceeded to do so with vigor. They did this partly because of the several requests for their presence, but were primarily motivated by their desire to carry on and continue their mission work among the Indians.[18]

Canadian Methodists accepted the idea of a union with the forces of Wesleyan Methodism with many misgivings but felt it was the only alternative to damaging denominational strife.[19] Rev. Robert Alder journeyed to Canada in 1832 where he met the Canada Conference and pointed out the advantages of a union between the two competing Methodist forces in the area.[20] On October 2, 1833, British delegates met the Canada Conference and a plan of union was accepted. Some changes in organization were made which seem to have been in the general direction of denominational conservatism. For example, the practice of ordaining local preachers was given up.[21] This, and other changes, led a group of Methodists with American Episcopal leanings to set up their own church rather than enter

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17. French, ibid., 134.

18. Ibid., 135.

19. Ibid., 138.

20. Ibid., 139.

21. Ibid., 142.

the new union.[22]

In spite of many differences of opinion, the new union lasted until the rebellion of 1837 and the controversy raised by Egerton Ryerson and his participation in politics through the medium of the official Methodist newspaper, the Christian Guardian. Any type of political action on the part of a Methodist clergyman, especially through a religious newspaper, was frowned upon by the Wesleyans. Ryerson continued to discuss the Clergy Reserve question after the rebellion and in this fashion continued to participate in the political controversies of Upper Canada. Although he did not support the rebels, he did support those who criticized the government and thus incurred the wrath of the "loyal" elements in the colony, who complained to the all powerful Wesleyan Missionary Committee in London.[23] Ryerson was a local Methodist who appeared to have the support of his fellow-Canadian Methodists.[24] Dr. Alder appeared again to present the views of the Committee to the Canada Conference assembled at Hamilton in 1839. The opinions of the Wesleyan Missionary Committee were rejected by a vote of fifty-five to five.[25] Ryerson was re-elected unanimously as editor of the official Methodist newspaper.[26] A reply to this action was soon sent from England, laying serious charges against Ryerson with the suggestion that his conference repudiate him.

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22. French, ibid., 149.

23. Ibid., 180-189.

24. Loc. cit.

25. Loc. cit.

26. Loc. cit.

This communication contained strong language to the effect that the acceptance of this suggestion was the price of maintaining the union of 1833.[27] Rev. Mathew Richey, a Wesleyan, proposed a vote of censure against Ryerson in the Canadian Conference but he was not supported.[28] After a few more futile communications, the union was dissolved, to be renewed again in 1847. In that year, Dr. Alder was sent out yet again to set up the new union. By the time the new union was set up, the British Wesleyan Missionary effort in the Hudson's Bay Territory was approaching its final failure.

In 1840, leaving aside the question of the native missionaries, four Europeans were sent out to the Hudson's Bay Territory. These were: Rev. James Evans, who was in charge of the group, Rev. William Mason, Rev. Robert Terrill Rundle and Rev. George Barnley. They were all directly under the authority of the Missionary Committee of the British Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in London. Partly because of the recent split between the British and Canadian Methodists, and partly because their very presence in the north-west was the result of approaches made to the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, these men had no formal connection whatever with the Canadian Methodists, although James Evans, while originally from England, had worked for some years as an Indian missionary in Upper Canada. They were required to report in all matters, in detail, in Methodist fashion, to the Committee in London.

The Committee requires further consideration as it was to attempt

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27. French, ibid., 186.

28. Ibid., 187.

to exercise absolute control over the four missionaries, in spite of vast distances, through the simple medium of written reports and instructions. It was under the Missionary Society which was, in theory, democratic and open to all British Wesleyan Methodists. The British Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society was supported by one of the many Methodist complex financial systems. This particular system elaborately arranged for subsidiary Missionary Societies to be set up at every level in the vast Methodist pyramid, from individual Circuit through the District Meeting to the local Conference, so that every mission had its own miniature Society to which everyone was expected to contribute, and even the newest missions or circuits contributed to their own support as well as to that of all other missions. Open meetings of the parent Missionary Society in London were held once a year to review and approve the whole state of the past year's work.[29] The Committee was supposed to be merely the executive arm of the Society, but in practice made most of the decisions, and actually ran the Society itself with little interference from the Conference which was supposed to be supreme in all matters.[30] This state of affairs was possible because the four secretaries were usually very prominent Methodists who were often leaders of the Conference. Drs. Hoole, Alder and Beecham are the Secretaries whose names most often appear in the correspondence with North America, although they were also involved in the

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29. Report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society 1830-1831, (London, 1831), "Laws and Regulations".

30. W. H. Brooks, "The Changing Character of Maritime Wesleyan Methodism, 1855-1883", unpublished M.A. thesis, Mount Allison University, 1965, 16-20 contains a full account of the nature of the Committee.

direction of Methodist work in Africa and Australia as well as the European continent. At any given period, the four men who held the secretarial offices had to read all the vast correspondence coming in from every corner of the globe from Methodist missionaries. After reading these many letters and digesting the material found in the usual Methodist voluminous reports, they then sent out replies and instructions in their own handwriting. Each missionary had to report everything in fine detail. Every cent of money taken in or spent had to be reported.[31] Until the late 1830s actual accounts of the exact spiritual state of each small class were provided in almost incredible detail. For example, a particular class might report that "three had backslid, four were strong in the way and one was indifferent."[32] This practice gave way to more general reports by the 1840s[33] but very exact financial and other information other than "spiritual states" was still required. All clergy were expected to keep a journal of their personal spiritual progress and excerpts from these were often published for general edification. By means of a vast torrent of paper reports and replies moving back and forth across the oceans, the Committee felt that it could regulate the progress of a Methodist Christian mission work covering several continents with an almost scientific accuracy.

The conservative character of the Missionary Committee was evident

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31. Brooks, loc. cit.

32. Ibid., 24.

33. See Reports of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, loc. cit., 1840-1850.

in the personalities of the men who became its powerful secretaries and also in the precise instructions given the missionaries as they set out for the north-west. For example, Rev. William Mason received the following admonition from Dr. Alder in a letter written in 1840:

> Avoid the appearance of evil. Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slower still to wrath. Be cautious in forming opinions of the character of others and still more in expressing these opinions. A fool uttereth all that is in his mind, but a wise man keepeth it 'till afterwards. Identify yourself with no parties. Strive to promote peace. Be the friend of all, the enemy of none. Show all due respect to lawful authority. Treat your superiors with due respect. Act toward your inferiors with kindness and condescension....[34]

This was probably good advice for missionaries who would be almost totally dependent on the good will of the Hudson's Bay Company for their survival, but Alder was not one to encourage any type of radical or liberal thinking. As a young man he had served in North America in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and had risen from his humble origins as a printer's apprentice to Mission Secretary by exhibiting a steady conservatism and ruthless political skill.[35]

The missionaries were to be provided with board and lodging by the Company at the posts where they were stationed. From the Committee they were to receive 6:15 pounds (British) per quarter with 1:10 extra for washing and stationery. They were to act as official Chaplains at the various posts where they were stationed and were to depend on the Company for all medicines, means of travel, assistants and interpreters.[36]

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34. Quoted in James Woodsworth, Thirty Years in the Canadian North West, (Toronto, 1917), 24.

35. French, op. cit., 59.

36. Woodsworth, op. cit., 24-25.

Officially then, they had a sort of dual role working for both the Company and the Committee. In practice, once they had arrived in the north-west, the Company would be in a position to exercise the greater influence over their conduct. Little trouble was expected, however, as the British Wesleyans had a reputation for co-operation with legitimate authority.

Each man was to have a wide area under his supervision with his main base at a major post. Mason, for example, was to be stationed at Lac-la-Pluie but was responsible for Rat Portage, Fort Alexander, Osnaburg House and Lac-le-Seul as well as several other areas.[37] The districts given to each man, apart from the posts where they were stationed, appear to have been somewhat flexible as far as their areas were concerned, and new areas might be entered as the need arose always providing that the Company agreed.

James Evans was to be the local "Superintendent" but all the men under him would also report directly to the Committee as well as to him. They were all advised to be careful concerning controversial matters in all their private communications, presumably with friends and relatives in England or Canada and to confine any discussion of these to their letters to the Committee.[38]

The Committee could only exercise its control of the missionaries through the medium of written reports and instructions. These were sometimes published for the general encouragement of missionary work. Even

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37. Woodsworth, loc. cit.

38. Loc. cit.

private spiritual journals were required from the missionaries as a method of keeping track of doctrinal or mental deviation from the Wesleyan norm. Any idea system of this sort incorporated or exalted into a formal structure is open to abuse. One of the abuses noticeable even at this time was the use of much Wesleyan jargon. This type of language was common to those Protestant groups which, in the last century, had achieved enough success to become major institutions. It is important mostly because it meant that any Methodist felt obliged to use many stock expressions in any communication with colleagues or superiors and these same expressions could also be repeated in endless combinations to fulfill the requirement for a precise account of one's spiritual state. Dr. Alder's closing lines in his letter of 1840 to Rev. William Mason are typical of this type of writing:

> May He give you the souls of many of the aborigines for your hire and seal of your ministry. When He shall appear may you and they appear like Him and be presented before the presence of His glory with exceeding great joy. Such are the prayers of my colleagues and myself.
>
> Most truly yours in the Gospel of Christ.
> R. Alder.39

Dr. Alder seems to have had a large part in the negotiations leading to the establishment of Wesleyan missions in the north-west. Much may have been done by him on a personal basis but we have only the record of the Missionary Committee itself. Alder had gained his title "Mission Secretary" in 1832, and, after that date seemed to be increasingly responsible for much of the work in North America. In 1839 he went to the

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39. Woodsworth, loc. cit.

Canadas to look into the crisis caused by Egerton Ryerson and returned after his unsuccessful mission early in 1840. The Minutes for the Missionary Committee for January 15, 1840, recorded that:

> The proposal of the Hudson's Bay Company that the Society should send Missionaries into their territories has been laid before the Committee by the Rev. Dr. Alder.[40]

The consideration of this proposal was interrupted, however, by the introduction of the newly appointed Governor of the Settlement on the River Gambia![41] Returning to the proposal, the Committee resolved:

> That the Secretaries be authorized to select and prepare immediately to send to the Hudson's Bay Territory three Missionaries according to the proposal made by the Company through their officers George Simpson Esquire and Capt. Drew on their interview with the officers of the Society on the 14th instant.[42]

On the 12th of February, 1840, Dr. Alder reported that the Hudson's Bay Company had forwarded 100 pounds sterling to defray the expense of the missionaries.[43] This notice led the Committee to make two extended and fulsome recommendations of thanks. The first thanked the "Hon. Hudson's Bay Company"[44] and the second thanked Governor Simpson personally and was much longer and even more fulsome. He was thanked:

> ....for the deep interest which he has manifested in the spiritual welfare of the people dwelling in those

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40. Microfilm Reel A251, Methodist Missionary Society Committee Minutes. (Extracts) July, 1814 - July, 1851. (Henceforth, MRA251), 113.

41. Loc. cit.

42. Ibid., 114.

43. Ibid., 117.

44. Loc. cit.

> extensive territories as well as for the incalcuable aid which that Gentleman has afforded in completing the arrangements which are commenced under his recommendations for the introduction of the Missionaries of the Society into this new and interesting sphere of labour and usefulness....45

There seems to be very little material extant which can shed much light on the early careers of Mason, Barnley or Rundle. They came from England and were probably of quite humble origin and limited education. Rev. James Evans, however, had already served in the Canadas and his position as Superintendent was probably the result of his having previous experience with Indian missions.[46]

James Evans was born at Kingston-on-Hull, England, and was apprenticed to a local grocer at an early age. Here, he learned merchandizing and shorthand and showed early linguistic ability. He came to Upper Canada in 1822 and was forced into school teaching because he could find no employment in his chosen profession. He settled in a sparsely populated area and was convinced by a Methodist preacher that he could be useful working among the Indians of Rice Lake, twelve miles north of present day Coburg. Here, he was soon involved in trying to write in the language of the local Indians. Rice Lake was the scene of much enthusiastic

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45. MRA251, loc. cit., Simpson's exact motives are difficult to determine. It seems quite certain that they did not arise from any religious convictions. He was probably attempting to localize the inevitable tendency among the Indians towards settlement.

46. See the following account.

47. This is the standard account from secondary sources. For example: Rev. R.J. Scott, Birch Bark Talking, Board of Home Missions pamphlet, United Church of Canada, The United Church Publishing House, (Toronto, 1940), 6-12.

Methodist mission work in the early years of the century. In the early 1820s it was still under the influence of the American Episcopal Methodists, with their strong tradition of frontier evangelism characterized by such men as William Case and Anson Green. These men had a very strong evangelical and other worldly character far removed from people like Alder or even Egerton Ryerson.[48] In 1830 Evans was received on probation by the Methodist church and was already corresponding in the Chippewa tongue with the Rev. Peter Jones, a native Ojibway missionary who impressed Dr. Beecham, a Wesleyan Mission Secretary, and many others by his adoption of civilized customs on one of his visits to England.[49]

In 1840, Evans was unsuccessful in getting his new method of writing in the Ojibway tongue accepted by the Missionary Committee, but was appointed Superintendent of the new missions in the north west. He had corresponded with Dr. Beecham, the Mission Secretary, on the matter of Indian conversion in the 1830s, and provided some of the material used by Beecham in his address before a select Committee of the British House of Commons in 1836.[50] The general thrust of Beecham's address was that Indians could not be successfully civilized until they had adopted

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48. French, op. cit., 105 - for a full account see J. Carroll, Case and His Contemporaries, Wesleyan Conference Office, 5 Vol., (Toronto, 1867-1877).

49. MRA251, op. cit., 6, 154.

50. John Beecham to James Evans, December 3, 1835, Evans Papers, University of Western Ontario.

Christianity.[51] Evans had probably impressed the Missionary Committee sufficiently to warrant their consideration of him as a sort of Indian expert. James Evans was a complex character and there is still no final historical verdict on his strange conduct as Superintendent. It is now obvious, however, that he was not a perfect choice for the position of Superintendent of Missions in the north-west. It may have been his experience in the genuine frontier of Upper Canada in the 1820s, or the influence of Episcopal Methodism in his early years, but whatever the reason, he was not entirely amenable to the strict discipline of the British Wesleyans, although he had chosen to serve their cause. This tendency would prove fatal to the aims and objectives of the Committee as far as the north-west was concerned. In order to exercise their peculiar denominational sway in a vast wilderness ruled by an autocratic Company they required absolute obedience to their many rules. The Committee also expected that, in keeping with Wesleyan tradition, their servants would work in perfect harmony with the constituted authority in the area. In this, they were to suffer disappointment.

The great Company was the most important agency of European power in the north-west. From its long experience of the country, and the nature of the staple trade which gave the Company its reason for existence, the officials of the organization had found a workable formula for survival which would only be threatened by the appearance of settlement in the area. In a sense, the Company and its servants, including the

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51. "The Visit of the Rev. Dr. Beecham to British America" in Wesleyan Missionary Notices, Vol. II, Third Series, James Nichols, (London, 1855), 201.

Indians in its employ, constituted a sub-culture where every man had his place according to his role in the fur trade. Each man, from the chief factor to one of the Indians who made up the crews of the various types of Company boats, had a particular role which carried with it an assured status. Indian and European worked quite well together as each was necessary. Nevertheless, there was a clear hierarchical structure which carried over into every social situation. Europeans were graded among themselves according to their role. The Chief Factor represented the highest form of society at a particular post unless the Governor himself came through or some official or guest appeared with a letter of introduction from him. A man's place at the factor's table indicated his standing in the territory. Any person travelling in the area (if he was European) was assigned a certain number of assistants to break trail or to paddle his canoe. The number of these indicated the rank of the person concerned in a manner which was obvious to everyone, both Indian and European.[52] The Company did not have to be so crude as to express their displeasure with a European by withholding food supplies or preventing them from travelling (although this last was done on some occasions). Rather, they had only to insist that the unfortunate person eat at the servant's table in the various posts, or to provide only one native assistant or none at all for purposes of travel. This served to lower the prestige of the European in question in the eyes of the Indians and in the case of a missionary could destroy any hard won prestige that

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52. See Mae Atwood (ed.), In Rupert's Land, Memoirs of Walter Traill, McClelland & Stewart, (Toronto, 1970), for a description of the operation of the Company in 1869.

he had once had among them. Indians who were out of range of the independent traders of Red River could not risk the displeasure of the Company as they were absolutely dependent upon it for the products of European technology. On the other hand, if the Company supported any type of missionary work the Indians were open to new religious ideas. Like all such peoples confronted with a superior technology, they imagined that the religion of the white man held the key to his supremacy and power and they were anxious to share it. The Missionary Committee was certainly ready to co-operate with the Company in all matters as their aims appear to have been simply institutional and territorial. They merely wished to see their particular institution established in this new field of endeavour. No difficulty should have arisen and the troubles that led to the failure of the mission adventure were certainly not due to any conscious fault of the Committee.

Two "native" Missionaries from the Rice Lake area or the Rama Indian Settlement in Canada West were also sent out. Henry B. Steinhauer and Peter Jacobs were Ojibway Indians of the Peter Jones type. Steinhauer was born at Rama in 1820, educated at Upper Canada Academy at Coburg, finally attended Victoria College, was a good Greek and Hebrew scholar, and was ordained by the Canadian Conference of 1855 after serving fifteen years in the north-west. He went on to gain fame and repute, to help stop the rebellion of 1870, and finally to die in 1884 after seeing his two sons become ministers and graduates of Victoria.[53] Peter Jacobs was

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53. Rev. John MacLean, Henry B. Steinhauer, His Work Among the Cree Indians, (Pamphlet published by Methodist Young People's Forward Movement for Missions, no date).

born at Rice Lake in 1805 and was stationed at several places in the north-west but died at Rama "a victim of strong drink".[54] He did gain some reputation for a time, in that he visited England twice, was presented to the Queen, who gave him a "magnificent robe" and a picture of herself! He also is reputed to have "charmed an audience at Exeter Hall".[55]

One other man deserves some mention: the Rev. Thomas Hurlburt who was stationed as a missionary on the north shore of Lake Superior. In 1854 he would volunteer for work in the Hudson's Bay territory and would become Superintendent of Missions. Hurlburt (whose direct descendents still live in Winnipeg) heard the news of the 1840 split between the British Wesleyans and the Canadian Methodists with a certain amount of pleasure:

Jan. 11/41

> About the 20th of October last I received through the Hudson's Bay Co. the agreeable intelligence that your society had taken me under their direction, and that for the future, I was ecclesiastically to be entirely unconnected with Upper Canada. In my letter of last winter I stated to you the advantages possessed by your Society over the Canadian for prosecuting the Missionary work in this region: so I was much rejoiced when Bro. Rundle & Mason called upon us on their passage west.
>
> Bro. Evans informed me that he had no jurisdiction out of the Co.'s territory and therefore for the present I was "Master Domino" in Lake Superior....56

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54. Rev. John MacLean, ibid., 20.

55. Journal of the Reverend Peter Jacobs, Indian Wesleyan Missionary, Published for the author, (New York, 1858), 6.

56. MRA270, Box 13, Reel 13, Canada 1841-42, Hurlburt to Dr. Alder, May, 1841.

Hurlburt went on to say that he hoped to be placed under the jurisdiction of James Evans but he realized that communication from Evans' territory would be almost as slow as that from England. He spoke very highly of the co-operation shown him by the Hudson's Bay men.[57]

Hurlburt's activities as a missionary among the Indians are worth a glance: He provided a description of his house which was built with materials not costimg more than ten pounds but now worth a hundred at least, according to him. The Company supplied him with all types of packaged food but he would not accept wine or brandy. He spent his time teaching in a small school and working on a Chippewa grammar. Since he had been established at that place he had baptized 16 adults and 29 children. In his letter to Dr. Alder, Hurlburt declared, in typical Methodist fashion, that "four found peace through believing" and that he was glad to find "their experience so clear". He noted that Lake Nipegon was ten days journey from him and hence required "another labourer". Thomas Hurlburt appears to have been at this station since 1839. He had a wife, and three children with him aged seven, five and seven months.[58]

Another letter from Hurlburt to Dr. Alder written on March 2, 1841, continued his discussion of the recent dissolution of the union. He stated his determination to uphold the principles with which he entered the work twelve years previously and "to sacrifice everything as far as regards myself that contravenes the interest of that work...." He feared that the Committee would move him to some other area and asked that he

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57. MRA270, loc. cit.

58. Loc. cit.

remain where he was so that he might be useful among the Chippewas, as he knew that Indian tongue better than any other. Eighty pages out of a proposed two hundred had been completed for his Chippewa grammar which he would soon present to the Committee. In answer to some questions that the Committee had put to him about the origin of the Indians and their mythology, he replied that he did not know but supposed that they came from Asia. A friend of his who had been in India said they resembled "Hindoos" and that there were language similarities. He referred the Committee to a useful book by Henry B. Schoolcraft, an American Indian Agent. He closed with another request to be placed under the supervision of Rev. James Evans.[59]

Later letters from Hurlburt, still in the year 1841, described the terrible state of Indians in those parts who had killed off all the game after they had received firearms. By 1841 they were subsisting entirely on rabbits of which they consumed even the contents of the intestines.[60] Like many other missionaries, Hurlburt asked for agricultural implements (so the Indians might become established as tillers of the soil) and clothing from the Committee. This would involve a whole new operation, much wider in scope than merely "saving souls", and would involve an investment in men and materials which was quite alien to the missionary notions of the Committee.[61]

In spite of any objections those in authority in England might have

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59. MRA270, ibid., Hurlburt to Dr. Alder, March 2, 1841.

60. Ibid., Hurlburt to Secretaries, June 29, 1841.

61. Loc. cit.

to such a scheme, the facts, as Hurlburt described them, were there for all to see. Little could be done to "save" Indians who were dying of starvation because of technological change without improving their material position first.

Peter Jacobs, native missionary, stationed at Fort Alexander, received the news of the split between the Canadian and British Methodists on December 2, 1840. He had come out with Rev. James Evans but was stationed far from him (Evans was at Norway House) and would, therefore, come under the supervision of Rev. William Mason at Lac-la-Pluie. Dr. Alder sent Jacobs notice of the split and offered him the choice of joining either group. This gave Jacobs a chance to write to the vulnerable Dr. Alder in usual Methodist fashion. Jacobs made remarkably effective use of Wesleyan jargon in spite of errors in spelling and punctuation. Receiving the status of Wesleyan preacher evidently conferred the right to invoke connexional expressions of Biblical origin to an extent that makes much of his communication almost meaningless. In the case of an Indian where the whole role was imperfectly grafted upon his native heritage, the ritualistic and invocational effect of these phrases seems even more pronounced. His letter to Rev. Robert Alder was dated May 4th, 1841:

> My Dear Brother,
>
> I have received your very kind and a Christian letter of December 2nd last and I have learn [sic] by it, that the happy union, that was between the Upper Canada Conference, and the British Conference that it was not at an end. O, how I wept, and wept: when I heard this unhappy affair. I am exceedingly sorry that the Union is now at an end, I have called your letter a Christian [sic] & because it gave me the free liberty of returning to the Canada Conference if I like or to become a member of your Honourable Society.After a long consideration, and much prayer to the Almighty God, I have come to the conclusion

of choosing the English Wesleyans to be my people and their God to be my God. I have also made up my mind to go to Canada, that is to go to the Rev. Mr. Stinson, I am well acquainted with that Gentleman for I have travelled miles with him attending Missionary Meetings for months together.

As for the Rev. James Evans he has been kind and good to me for he has endeavoured at all times to make me comfortable and happy wherever he has station [sic]me. I was going to say that I love him with all my heart. But, I must not for I must first love God with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, etc. and next to love Brother Evans as myself for the first time I find that love is here deficient for I wish to love him more than myself: if he was here I would say to him O I Brother Evans "Very pleasant has thou been unto me: thy love to me, has been wonderful passing the love of women."

Nicol Finlayson Esquire, The Gentleman in Charge of Fort Alexander has been very kind to me and my family. And he has taken an active part in my services, such as reading the scriptures and sometime the Wesley's Sermons. May God bless him for his kind assistance.

The principle [sic] part of my time during the winter has been occupied in teaching a small school of nine children. Four of them when they left the school, that is when I ended my school could repeat by ear from the beginning to the end the Church Catechism, and read very well in the new Testament. The other could read and spell well words of four letters and the other two, could read and spell-ba, be, bi, bo, etc.

I loved these little children very much when I was teaching them to read the word of God for themselves. I have loved them more because Christ said to Simon Peter feed my lambs. I have done my best with the people that are in the Fort teaching them the way to everlasting life that is to believe in the Saviour of their souls. The Lord only knows: But as the Saviour of their souls the lord only knows whether I have done any good among them. But I hope God will bless them with the world's goods and will give them the everlasting life in the world to come.

I must now write about the Indians of the Fort. I have found them to be very wicked and that they are greater blackguards that [sic] I have ever seen: and that they have not the leass [sic] desire of becomming Christian, I have preached the word of God to them, time after time, and that I now feel clear of their blood and if they will now go to the Devil they will go there, with their eyes open and that I have told them so. However, one of them has given me his conncent [sic] to become a Christian.

This is the translation of his speech to me. I this day

> renounce my heathen religion and I have chosen the Christian Religion to be my Religion hereafter and that I have given my whole heart to God. I now deliver up my heathen gods to you and do with them as you please. (I have given them to Bro. Evans and I think he will send them to you) And here is my wife. I wish her to go to heaven with me; and that she has a little Indian in her that is to be born in a month or two. I also give the child to the Lord, and I hope he will take it and make it happy, you must baptize it for he must also be a Christian. As I now give my whole heart and my wife and child to the Lord, now pray for me. I have done so, I hope you will pray for him ye Christians over the great water.
>
> There are five or more that says [sic]: "Almost thou persuadest me to become Christian: I hope that the time will very soon come when the praises of the Almighty God, shall be heard from over Somoky Wegewawm [?] in these ends of the earth and I hope by help of God that you and all the friends of Missions in England will never cease in sending out English Missionaries into North America until the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ shall cover the earth as the mighty waters do cover the "seas".
>
> I remain my Dear Sir
> Truly yours
> Peter Jacobs[62]

Jacobs, being an Ojibway Indian, would not have the prestige of an European missionary and presumably could not have survived at all without the active support of the factor in charge of Fort Alexander post. His success with adult Indians in the west was usually quite limited and it must be noted that even the single adult conversion mentioned evidently required specific reference to "Christians over the great water." He was only effective in as much as he could invoke the names and titles of European power which reached out to the Hudson's Bay territory. The only real source of power in the area was the Company, which had a direct relationship with the powerful Missionary Committee. The matter was further complicated because although the Company was in England, it

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62. MRA270, ibid., Peter Jacobs to Robt. Alder, May 4, 1841.

exerted direct and autocratic power over its agents in the north-west through its governor who was on the scene. The will of the Committee was only effective through written communication with each missionary and through the supervision "on the spot" provided by the Rev. James Evans.

At some period after this, Jacobs returned to Lac-la-Pluie with H. B. Steinhauer (who was many years his junior) as his assistant. Rev. William Mason was moved to Norway House from this station by 1844 to replace Evans, who was on a tour of Rundle's territory while the latter was in England. Evidently, Evans had suggested to Jacobs that he open a new permanent mission at Lac Seul. Mason had visited this area and sent back his usual glowing reports.[63] In May and July of 1844, Jacobs wrote the Committee to the effect that the Indians at the Lac Seul area were very poor and most were away when he visited them. It was his opinion that the area could not support a missionary. He was politic enough to mention that Sir George Simpson shared his opinions in this matter.[64]

Jacobs' letter of August 20, 1844, noted the kindness of Simpson in supplying him with accommodation by adding an extra room to the Fort at Rainy Lake for him. (This was a clear hint that the autocratic Simpson wished him to remain there.) After noting his conversation with Simpson on the undesirability of setting up a station at Lac Seul, Jacobs

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63. MRA270, ibid., Mason to Secretaries, Aug. 10, 1841.

64. MRA271, Methodist Mission Reel 14, Box 14, Canada 1842-1848, Jacobs to Alder, May 23, 1844, (145) and Jacobs to Alder, July 10, 1844, (155).

innocently informed the Committee:

> I received a letter from Mr. Evans stating that I am to go immediately with my family to Lac Seul. This puts me in a puzzled state of mind, after having received the Governor's opinion on the subject and knowing that the Gentleman in charge of Lac Seul is not at all aware of the new arrangement....65

No arrangement could be made at the Lac Seul post to support Jacobs' family:

> ....as a matter of course, the gentleman then would require at my hands a letter from Sir George, as they do nothing of any public nature without his special order or approval and I have no letter to that gentleman from His Excellency and therefore I concluded to remain here.66

In short, Jacobs realized that if the Company would not countenance a new mission at one of its posts there was no possibility of establishing one. Since obedience to authority was a prime Wesleyan doctrine, Jacobs "hedged his bets" by saying that he intended to obey Evans in the spring and go to Lac Seul as soon as the streams were free of ice. This would give the Committee time to digest the facts and send out a reply. At this point Jacobs solved an old personal problem which he had been using for the last several years as a reason to persuade the Committee to allow his return to "civilization". The problem was the difficulty of providing for the education of his sons in the wilderness of Rainy Lake. He solved it, after many futile requests to the Committee that he be allowed to return to the Canadas, by sending his sons to the academy at Red River.[67]

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65. MRA271, ibid., Jacobs to Alder, August 20, 1844.

66. Loc. cit.

67. Loc. cit.

The most complex and verbose gentleman among the missionaries was the Rev. William Mason. He wrote inumerable letters to the Committee in beautiful and precise handwriting, faithfully providing all the information the Committee could ever require along with a full explanation of his own and everyone else's conduct. His fulsome reports should be seen in the light of his subsequent conversion to Anglicanism in 1854, and his later taking credit for the invention of the Cree syllabic,[68] as well as his prominent part in the condemnation of his superior, the Rev. James Evans. What appears to have been his second letter to the Committee was dated June 9, 1841 and received by them on August 29th. A sample of his style will perhaps suffice to give some indication of his character:

> ....many and great have been the interpositions of mercy and grace which I have experienced since my departure from England, four times has my room been saved from being totally destroyed by fire: several times have I been rescued from a watery grave, and once I had been lost in the woods for eight long hours; and such have been the dangers to which I have been or shall continue to be expoused [sic] while a wanderer in the wild uncultivated forests of North America, but still I can sing
>
> "O what are all my sufferings here
> If Lord Thou count me meet....etc."[69]

Certainly most of Mason's reports seem to be written for public consumption and inspiration.

The same letter reported that Mason's success was, up to that time, very small. He had baptized one of the Company's servants and one Indian

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68. John Semmens, Personal History of John Semmens, typescript (copy), 77. Henceforth, Semmens.

69. MRA270, op. cit., Mason to Secretaries, June 9, 1841.

family with three children. He named them after Jacobs who had been the first to speak to them on the subject. The father of the family continued in his belief although ridiculed by his brethren. Some Indians were cultivating the soil but Mason had few seeds to give them for that purpose. The problem of, what in China would be called "rice Christians", had affected Mason's work even at this date. Religion and material demands could not well be separated. Mason had great hope for an old chief, who had, perhaps, a sharp eye to the future:

> I expect that he will soon leave the senseless and idolatrous heathen worship. He has presently stated that he believes that there is no reality in it at all. The Holy Spirit is at work I trust in his soul. His oldest son had consented to send his son to school next winter provided I will feed and clothe him while he is out hunting. His second son is under our instruction and is determined to learn how to worship God aright-Can you send something to clothe these poor children of the Forest while under our protection? Any common apparel will suffice & cannot arrangements be made with the Hon. Co. for a little fish and wild rice? The latter cannot be obtained without express orders from Mr. MacDonel....70

Having mentioned the factor at the fort, Mr. MacDonel, Mason raised another question which vitally affected the success of Methodist work in the area. Suppose the gentleman in charge of a post did not favour the growth of Methodism? Would this not be fatal to the cause?

> Mr. MacDonel hates to see the Indians who listen to us come to the Fort, this he told Mr. Isbister the other day, in fact, he (Mr. MacDonel) does all he can with a Gentleman's appearance to hinder our success. He is a Catholic. I need say no more but have little hopes [sic] while such characters are stationed at this place.71

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70. MRA270, loc. cit.

71. Loc. cit.

The sinister forces of Roman Catholicism haunted the minds of all the Methodist missionaries in the north-west in this period. In the same communication Mason noted that another priest would be sent into the area and was coming out in the supply canoes.[72]

Mason shed some light on the official attitude of the Company in the matter of Indian conversion in his description of a visit to the post on June 3, 1841 by Sir George Simpson, Lord Mulgrave and Lord Caledon as well as a Russian gentleman. Seven chiefs and more than 200 Indians met Sir George in formal council and presented him with three major complaints. These were (1) a request for the abolition of rum sales to the Indians; (2) a notice that the price of trade goods was too high; (3) notice that fur-bearing animals were in very short supply.[73] These complaints added up to the fact that the Indians were in a desperate situation and expected the great Company to take definite action on their behalf. The Company was not likely to engage in any entirely humanitarian program but Simpson did perhaps have some sort of scheme. Mason recorded that Simpson told the Indians that he would provide them with the necessary equipment and cattle if they would build homes and cultivate the ground. He said that the missionaries had been sent out to make them happy.[74] This then, would be the role of the missionaries, to prepare the Indian for a change from his nomadic, hunting existence. Mason recorded that many of the Indians

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72. MRA270, loc. cit.

73. Loc. cit.

74. Loc. cit.

regarded the whole business as a simple trick to get them to abandon their own religion. Mason himself recorded that many would sooner starve.[75]

Mason's own observations on the problem of Indian conversion led directly to the conclusion that their own religion was too firmly established among the adult population, and the only real hope of the missionary enterprise would lie in the teaching of the young provided these could be separated from their families. At the close of this long letter, Mason announced his intention of leaving for Rat Portage (present day Kenora).[76]

In June of 1841, Mason set out on an epic journey to Lac Seul after going first to Rat Portage. He described his voyage in incredible detail for the benefit of the Committee. He took with him an interpreter, a guide, two Indians and two small canoes. Their food consisted of tea, sugar, bread, ham and pemmican. Mason described the terrible labour of the portages, including one so bad that it even terrified the Indians! They set out on the 13th of June and passed through Blue Water Lake, Long Narrow Lake and High Rock Lake. The hot sun made them desperately uncomfortable at times but they arrived at Lac Seul on the 19th. According to Mason, the Indians at Lac Seul had never had any missionaries or heard the gospel preached before. The Company factor at this post helped Mason and provided interpreters. The local medicine men stayed away and predicted death to all who accepted the white man's religion but they finally joined the rest of the Indians. Mason baptized twenty-eight children, and seven families threw away their idols and consented to become Christians.

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75. MRA270, loc. cit.

76. Loc. cit.

Some clue to the nature and rapidity of this conversion process may be found in the fact that he promised the Indians seeds and utensils to be supplied by the Committee. On June 23rd he left for Osnaburg House in company with an Indian from Lac Seul who ignored the warnings of his friends and decided to travel with Mason.[77] It appears that he laboured in this general area until the 13th of July. His success became much greater as time passed and he gave the Committee the clear impression that a new area had been won for Christianity and Methodism. He warned them, however, that it could not be held unless a missionary was stationed there as the Roman Catholics would probably penetrate the area.[78]

Six days later, arriving at Rat Portage, Mason was alarmed to hear that the priest had baptized some of the children belonging to Lac Seul, Rat Portage, and Lac-la-Pluie and had even re-baptized one of Mason's flock, telling him that he could not go to heaven unless baptized a Catholic. He also heard of plans for a Roman Catholic mission at "White Dog" where the Indians camped for their summer's fishing. To Mason, there was little doubt about the whole nature and value of Roman Catholicism or its methods of obtaining converts:

> I am not surprised at the success he meets with, when he comes loaded with Pemican, Tongues, Flour, and Tobbaco [sic] which he gives to the Indians and their superstitious ceremonies which are so similar to heathen ceremonies that I wonder they do not make more nominal converts than they do, an appeal to the senses is more easily felt than an appeal to the understanding....79

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77. MRA270, ibid., Mason to Secretaries, August 10, 1841.

78. Ibid., Mason to Secretaries, August 11, 1841.

79. Loc. cit.

Mason asked the Committee to send him more seeds in order that he might compete with this formidable threat.[80]

Mason was forced to report to the Committee that his visit to Fort Osnaburg was not an unqualified success as all the Indians there had left for a place called Martin's Falls in order to do their summer's fishing. He did, however, manage to make a great deal of his success in working with the personnel of the fort there. He noted that all the boats passing from Albany to Lake Seul passed through Martin's Falls but that it did not lie either in his or in Barnley's territory. Because of the lack of Indians at Osnaburg, Mason went back to the "entrance to Lac Seul" where, according to him, he achieved a glowing success in converting at least some Indians to Christianity in spite of innumerable obstacles. He provides an account of an interesting conversion which may indicate something of the Indian attitude to all this. An old Indian who was converted graphically described the impact the coming of the European had on Indian cosmology:

> He said that the rest of the Indians did not know anything more than what they beheld. "I see" says he, "the world & water, the sun, moon and stars, anything more we know nothing about" i.e. their knowledge was bounded by sight, a confession which has been frequently made to me by Indians since my residence amongst them....81

Mason recorded that this same old Indian was also interested in cultivating the ground as he did not wish to starve![82]

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80. MRA270, loc. cit.

81. Ibid., Mason to Secretaries, probably written in August, exact date uncertain as MS damaged at this point.

82. Loc. cit.

By 1841, the Roman Catholic forces in Mason's territory had organized themselves to the extent that the Methodist cause could not remain with a static number of workers and hope to even retain its position. Although Simpson presumably would not allow an unlimited number of priests to work the areas around his posts, the Catholics had the advantage of having a secure base in Red River. When Mason finally returned to Lac-la-Pluie after his heroic journey, he was greatly disturbed to find that the Catholics had increased their activity. On September 2nd, he wrote the Committee almost in desperation:

> One very great drawback here is the periodical visit of the Priest from Red River, he spent 8 days at this place during my absence and at or near Rat Portage already he has sent utensils to cut wood for building and has promised the Indians cattle, seeds, etc. which he intends sending from Red River during the winter. The "White Dog" is the intended place for settlement being a rendezvous for the Indians from Lac Seul and Rat Portage during the spring. A beautiful situation and two hundred acres of cleared land and the surrounding waters team with fine white fish and sturgeon. The Romanists applied for passage in the Company's canoes for three priests but were only allowed one, they say they will have the others sent up from American territory. Shall Popish superstition and anti-Christ be more zealous in the propagation of error than Christians are of truth? Every house in this establishment has its bottle of pretended Holy Water which the deluded Canadian is taught to believe comes from the Jordan, the very spot where our Saviour was baptized. What advantage or profit do the poor ignorant Indians obtain in exchanging their wooden idols for a brass or silver one and the noise of a drum for a bell and beads....83

Mason asked for material aid to combat the Catholic menace and promised to be at Martin's Falls and Lac Seul early in the spring. He noted with satisfaction that MacDonel had been replaced at the fort by Nicol Finlayson,

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83. MRA270, ibid., Mason to Secretaries, September 2, 1841.

a Protestant. Mason closed this letter asking for forgiveness from the Committee for something for which he had evidently been censured by them (although their letter is not extant).[84] Perhaps they wanted more concrete action from him and less explanation?

Mason complained to the Committee that he received little word from James Evans at Norway House.[85] Letters from Evans to the Committee appear very seldom in the Committee files but one, dated August 27th, 1841, finally puts an end to the controversy of who invented the Cree Syllabic. It contains a detailed plan for this syllabic in something close to its final form.[86] Rev. James Evans, Superintendent of Missions in the northwest, had perfected a weapon of great potential in any struggle between the forces of Catholicism and Methodism for the souls of the Cree Indians. Potentially it would allow the few Methodist missionaries in the territory to exercise an influence far in excess of their actual numerical strength. It would also introduce a new cultural factor in the complex confrontation of Indian and European. It might be the key to Methodist success to offset the disadvantages Mason found facing the Methodist cause at Lac-la-Pluie. Much difficulty lay ahead, however, before any part of this potential could be realized. From an early period, however, Evans, using crude characters shaped from lead from a tea chest, laboriously began to print material for the Crees in a written form of their own language.

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84. MRA270, loc. cit.

85. For example, see Ibid., Mason to Secretaries, August 11, 1841.

86. Ibid., Evans to the Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, August 27, 1841 (Written on board the Saskatchewan Boat at Hayes River).

This story has been told in many secondary sources but can be verified by the simple fact that some of his printed material was noticed by the other missionaries.[87] Evidently he requested permission to have a printing press sent out but this request was not granted for some time.[88] The complexities of the James Evans story will require separate examination.

Rev. Robert Rundle has perhaps the best reputation of the four early Methodist missionaries in the north-west. He was stationed in what is now Alberta and covered an area between present day Edmonton and Rocky Mountain House. He provided an account of his journey from Norway House, where he went first before the arrival of Evans, to Edmonton House. He evidently worked at Norway House until September 7th, 1840, and then set out on a long journey along the course of the North Saskatchewan River to arrive at Edmonton House on October 18th. This was the standard traders' route and Rundle provided a detailed account of the scenery and the stops at the various Hudson's Bay posts on the way.[89] His letter to the Committee written from Carlton House on the Saskatchewan on May 31, 1841, noted that there was a vast confusion of Indian tongues in the area, Crees, Assiniboine, Salteaux, Blackfeet, Piegans, Sarcees and Blood and several others. He found the principal languages to be Blackfoot and Cree, however. He noted that there were many Indians in the area but they were terribly scattered, a fact which would make work among them most difficult. Rundle was to solve this problem by travelling a

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87. MRA271, op. cit., Barnley to Committee, August (?) 1843.

88. MRA251, op. cit., July 11, 1845, 305.

89. MRA270, op. cit., Rundle to Secretaries, May 31, 1841.

lot, a tactic which soon got him in trouble. After being near the scene of his labours for such a short time, Rundle, who appears to have had a sweeping imagination, raised a typical Methodist spectre by giving the following reason why the Committee should send out missionaries to the Saskatchewan area at once:

> The Roman Catholics are I think casting a jealous eye over the plains of the Saskatchewan, I not only want to rescue them from the strongholds of heathenism but also to save them from the fascinations and abominations of the Church of Rome. Please excuse my warmth. I write from my heart....90

He went on to inform the Committee that he was on good terms with Mr. Rowand, the factor of the post at Edmonton House. Rundle noted, however, that he had had difficulty with his interpreter who had left the service of the Company because Rundle had reprimanded him during a visit to the Blackfoot camp. Rundle planned to visit the Piegans along the Rocky Mountains and about fifteen days journey on horseback from Edmonton House. He noted that he had just returned from a visit to the Plains Indians. As usual, Rundle wrote in haste as he was always travelling.[91] Rundle had the honour of being the first of the Methodist missionaries to attract the wrath of Sir George Simpson, who wrote a sharp letter to Evans on the subject of Rundle's conduct as early as July 27, 1841. Evans duly forwarded it to the Committee:

> My Dear Sir:
>
> I am much disappointed at not having fallen in with

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90. MRA270, loc. cit.

91. Loc. cit.

> Mr. Rundle, who, I think would do much more good by remaining at one or other of the establishments, or dividing his time among them, than in wandering about the country in search of Indians at their camps. There I am quite certain he can do no good, especially among the Plains Indians while he exposes himself to insult and ridicule. This was the case last winter at one of the Piegan camps and by employing Tommy Tock? one of the most worthless of the breed in the country as an interpreter, he gave a license to that worthy to say whatever might answer his own purpose, without any certainty that he would communicate one word of what he, Mr. Rundle, said to the Indians.----Mr. Rundle, from what I have heard of him, possesses more zeal than judgement, he is nevertheless well spoken of and much liked by Mr. Rowand and the different other Gentlemen of the District; but it is quite evident he lacks experience and I feel assured he will benefit by your advice on many points. I have left a few hurriedly drawn up memoranda with Mr. Rowand in reply to some queries put to me by that Gentleman in reference to the Mission. Mr. Rundle, I regret to learn, is not so grave and serious in his manner as would be desirable, in order to have influence over the Indians and Halfbreed character, and is too much given to frivolous chit chat and gossip with our clerks and others, and is rather indiscreet in the expression of his opinion on the mode of management or dealing with the Natives, matters on which he is from inexperience perfectly incompetent to form an opinion....92

The outlines of future conflict were already clear. Any zeal the missionaries might have for their work was not to conflict with the aims or rule of the Company. Also, any ideas the missionaries might have about the status or conduct of the Indian insofar as it affected his relationship with the Company, were to be kept to themselves. If a missionary ever felt that he had a Divine mission among the heathen, subject only to the discipline of the Methodist church and not subject to the all-powerful Company and the autocratic Sir George, severe conflict would be inevitable. Rundle appears to have been an almost heroic figure of an older Methodist type in that he appears to have been somewhat impatient of "connexionalism",

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92. MRA270, ibid., Simpson to Evans, July 27, 1841.

in the face of what he regarded as a great Christian missionary challenge.[93]

By May of 1843, Rundle was in the same position as the other missionaries in that he faced a Catholic counter offensive in his own area. After first informing the Committee that he was still travelling and had visited lesser Slave Lake and White Fish Lake since his last letter, he noted that his greatest trial had been a "popish priest" at the Fort:

> The Priest left last autumn for Red River (where in he came) after having succeeded in beguiling away very many from the simplicity of the gospel. The greater part, however, consisted of half castes of french descent, many of whom are deeply rooted in popish superstition as the Canadiens themselves. I am glad to state, however, that few of the Indians have been led astray....94

Rundle did not doubt that Mr. Thibault [sic] (the priest) would claim to have baptized a number of Blackfeet children and to have made many Indian converts. Holding the same view as Mason had earlier formed of the efficacy of the Roman sacraments, Rundle hastened to add:

> ....yet the plain and lamentable state of the case is that neither the Blackfeet nor any of the other tribes (including the Plains Crees and Assiniboines) have as yet embraced Christianity....95

The obstacles to real missionary work among these tribes, were in Rundle's view, the constant warfare and "horse stealing practices".[96] Only the Indians living in the woods and in the Rocky Mountain area took to

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93. He tended to travel a lot and to write less than Mason, for example. His writing contains little of the jargon and stock phrases and has a unique sense of urgency. Further, he usually writes about the business of "saving souls" or merely tells where he went.

94. MRA270, op. cit., Rundle to Secretaries, May 24, 1843.

95. MRA271, loc. cit.

96. Loc. cit.

Christianity. These remained Protestant and the Wood Crees even held their own services by themselves when they were away from the fort, using hymn translations by Mr. Harriott, the factor of Rocky Mountain House.[97]

Rundle noted in the same letter that his mission at White Fish Lake had suffered because the priest had taken over the French half-breed population there. As usual, he begged the Committee to send more missionaries. Rundle's letters were full of bloody incidents resulting from drinking, gambling, and the general state of war among the Plains Indians. He was horrified by the high death toll among the chiefs he had known and worked with.[98]

In January of 1844, Rundle wrote to his Superintendent, Rev. James Evans, in order to get permission to return to England. He evidently wished to press the cause of the plains Indians in person before the Committee. He also wished to take a young Cree with him who had been baptized. He noted that Alder would not give him permission to return but hoped that Evans might be able to arrange something. He reported that Mr. Rowand continued to be kind to him and had given him a fine horse for his personal use but the Catholic menace was having its effect:

> The Fort is a hot-bed of popery. No one but the English half-breeds attend the services. Mr. Rowand attended once or twice before Christmas but lately I have not seen him. It is lamentable that this should be so but I do not possess sufficient influence for it to be otherwise....99

Mr. Thibault was back and intended to establish himself at Frog Lake, not

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97. MRA271, loc. cit.

98. Loc. cit.

99. Ibid., Rundle to Evans, January 6, 1844.

far from Fort Pitt, but as no Indians were settling around him, he intended to return to Red River in the spring. This was probably because of the wars raging on the plains which had prevented Rundle himself from visiting Carlton House and Fort Pitt for two and one-half years. He asked Evans if he should abandon these posts as mission stations.[100]

This letter also mentioned a matter which often soured relations between the missionaries and the Company. Rundle recorded his particular experience with it as follows. When he was travelling with the Company men on the Slave River in 1842 he informed them that he could not travel on the Sabbath. They replied that Mr. Rowand had instructed them to leave Rundle behind if he refused to travel on Sundays. Rundle answered by saying he would, in that case, leave them on Saturday and proceed in one day as far as they did on two and then rest on Sunday. At this, they gave in and stopped! As a result of this, Rundle informed his Superintendent, he had refused to travel on Sunday for the past two and one-half years. Rundle also wanted to know if "bannes" of marriage were necessary in the area under the circumstances.[101] This was to be a matter of later difficulty.[102]

The Rev. George Barnley was established at Moose Factory which was located on the Moose River flowing into James Bay. Barnley's mission was within the bounds of the jurisdiction of the Company and he was under the direction of James Evans at Norway House. Hurlburt, at his station

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100. MRA271, loc. cit.

101. Loc. cit.

102. See pages 79-80.

on the north shore of Lake Superior which was further west than that of Barnley, was, strictly speaking, within territory claimed by Canada West. Barnley was in the Hudson's Bay Company territory, or, the north-west.

The first letter extant from Barnley was dated July 7, 1841, from Moose Factory. He had last written from Fort George on his way out to his station in December of 1840 and was pleased to note that his letter had been published verbatim in the "Missionary Notices".[103] He had received his last communication from the Committee while visiting Rupert House which was one of his preaching places. Barnley tended to suffer from ill-health which frequently incapacitated him. At first, however, before he became discouraged, he displayed considerable initiative. While at Fort George, he came in contact with the usual problem of Roman Catholics in the employment of the Company. He had, perhaps, a little more success than some of his brethren:

> The Gentleman in charge of Fort George being a Roman Catholic and apparently anxious to know the truth, though fettered by the claim of his church to infallibility, and perhaps held in awe by its affirmed power to anaethematize the doubters of its faith, yet often alluded to the difference existing between the two systems. At one of these occasions I very cautiously and explicitly stated my objections to Popery, and the result was that his presence at the Jubilee Service

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103. MRA270, op. cit., Barnley to the Committee and Secretaries, July 7, 1841. "Missionary Notices" appeared in a variety of Methodist publications and were also sent out under their own title. Extracts from the personal journals of all the missionaries were published. Barnley's first extract appeared with those of the others in The Wesleyan (Montreal), Vol. I., No. 12, March 18, 1841, a newspaper published under the direction of a Committee of Wesleyan Ministers and friends in Lower Canada in connection with the British Conference, Montreal, March 18, 1841. (These sources have not been used extensively in this chapter because they were too carefully selected and edited for public consumption.)

> was discontinued, this of course rendered my situation less pleasant than it had previously been although no alteration took place in the great personal attention which had been shown me and his family continued to occupy their usual place. I might say that these conversations were never introduced by me, though when introduced I did not think it my duty to decline them. I had previously, as I continued to do subsequently, endeavoured to preach the plain, simple way of salvation, and I am happy to say that God pleased to make the entrance of his word afford such light to one of this Gentleman's children that on my departure she had the pearl of great price, though from my perilously delicate situation I have been precluded from using more private influence than that which would necessarily result from a residence with the family....104

In plainer language he had converted a member of the factor's family but was unable to follow it up in usual Methodist fashion because of the situation.

In a later communication to the Secretaries of the Committee in 1843, Barnley recorded the careful manner in which he looked for signs of the workings of the Holy Spirit in some of his services at Moose Factory:

> The power of the Lord was present to wound in several of our services. I have seen persons start up in a state of deep and uncontrollable emotion, and hastily leave the room in which they were congregated.
>
> A fear lest I should ascribe that to be an agency of the awakening Spirit of God, which was only the effect of a heated and confined air on constitutions so constantly accustomed to the pure air of Heaven was the consideration which alone restrained me on those occasions from converting the service to a prayer meeting immediately....105

Once he made the attempt actually to light the evangelical fire, but "due to the lack of efficient auxiliaries failed to secure those glorious

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104. MRA270, loc. cit.

105. MRA271, op. cit., Barnley to Committee, August [?], 1843, 95.

results which so often follow the employment of similar means of Grace at home". In spite of this failure, he believed that some, at least, received comfort from his message, as "some Indian countenances were seen lighted up by a placid smile which told of a calm within", while others had "their eyes intently directed heavenward".[106]

Barnley was also the closest observer of Indian customs and their reaction to innovation in their religion and general culture. He had a great many ideas about all these things. In his earlier communication to the Committee, he noted that "Esquimeaux" had visited the post. He immediately proposed that Rev. James Evans and the Committee allow him to take an Eskimo youth into his own house to be educated for the double purpose of serving as an example to his brethren and providing Barnley with a useful assistant![107]

He noted that the Indians around Rupert House appeared to be degraded and superstitious to a great extent. He tried, with the help of the Chief Factor, to get them to give up their rum ration for a few "useful articles" with limited success. He also discovered a man among these who had recently murdered a newly-widowed mother and her infant daughter, and the case of a father who had five children by his daughter, two of whom he murdered. The solution in this latter case was to bribe the man with a few gifts to seek a suitable wife and to place the daughter in question in another household until a husband could be found for her.[108]

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106. MRA271, loc. cit.

107. MRA270, op. cit., Barnley to Committee and Secretaries, July 7, 1841.

108. Loc. cit.

The Hon. Company, still solicitous in 1841, had caused a fine chapel to be erected at Moose Factory. It was completed while Barnley was at Rupert House on a visit. When he returned, he was dismayed to find a cross on the top of it which he removed at once lest his mission be in any way confused with the always threatening forces of Roman Catholicism. Evidence of this threat was noted when he was unable to collect the children coming in on the canoes from Grand Lake for teaching purposes because of the "prohibitions of their Romish Priests".[109]

Evidence of the fertility of Barnley's imagination may be seen in the note he enclosed with a plan for an Indian colony (the plan is no longer extant) in his letter to the Committee. Here, the Indians would be taught and supplied with food by catching rabbits and by growing potatoes! He noted that he had forwarded a copy of this plan unofficially to Sir George Simpson. Barnley felt the plan was practical because an Indian woman could catch more than four hundred rabbits a season.[110]

Barnley closed this letter with a request for more books, and further a more moving request that he be allowed to return home to England at the end of his period of probation for the purpose of getting a wife, as he had been promised this by Dr. Bunting himself. This request was to be heard again and it may indicate, in the form given here, that Barnley was of relatively humble origin and had been accepted into the ranks of the "ministry" only on the condition that he labour in the wilds of North

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109. MRA270, loc. cit.

110. Loc. cit.

America during his period of probation.[111]

In his letter written to the Committee in August, 1843 Barnley noted that he had gone to Rupert House in March and did not return to Moose Factory until June. Things were not as pleasant as they had been as far as the Company and its relationship to the mission were concerned. Barnley had intended to visit Whale River but a letter from Sir George suggested that he return to his post at Moose Factory. Instead, he visited the Big River Indians, his explanation to the Committee being: "I should have yielded at once to the representations of his Excellency but that a positive engagement had been entered into with the Big River Indians.[112] Such reasoning would have failed to impress Sir George!

While James Evans was, without doubt, the first to make actual use of the technique of writing and printing the Indian language with his famous "Cree Syllabic", that particular idea was not uncommon. Barnley had even devised his own:

> In the course of last autumn I formed the purpose of adopting the suggestion of Sir Augustus D'Este made when myself and colleagues enjoyed the honour of an introduction to him by Dr. Alder before our departure from England, that it would be desirable to substitute new letters for the Roman in reducing the Indian to a written language. An alphabet was accordingly adopted on the basis of Byrom's [sic] stenography, a copy of which I herewith send you. During the summer I was informed that my esteemed General Superintendent had invented a syllable alphabet and commenced printing, and subsequently in a manner of the "Aborigines Protection Society's" report saw a notice of the Missionaries [sic] in the country having found that he could

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111. MRA270, loc. cit.

112. MRA271, op. cit., Barnley to Committee, August (?) 1843.

> express all the sounds in the Indian language by 10 characters. Two natives who came here in the autumn from Severn had a paper which they said was a copy of one of Mr. Evans' books, though most likely very inaccurate, it served to strengthen me in the opinion that the dialects of the cree spoken in this neighbourhood could not be accurately expressed unless the number of characters was considerably augmented, and I therefore proceeded with my own system. The primitive characters are formed of a line and a semi-circle placed in various positions. The first compounds have a small loop attached to them and the double compounds two, the long open sounds of the vowels are expressed by lines attached to different parts of the consonant, the broad sounds of a and u, with the [?] by dots [?] And by this method I seem to have united that very desirable object in writing Indian: brevity with great precision. This alphabet I have employed myself a good deal in teaching by means of a large chart and a chalk board. The natives have everywhere been much interested in trying to learn it, but their proficiency in reading and writing does not equal the expectations I had formed from the simplicity of the system. One Indian boy, however, whom I have recently taken under my care with a view to educating him for the office of interpreter has advanced so far as to read and write most words with facility.
>
> While at Rupert House I spent a great deal of time in trying to cast type and at the vice, carpenter bench and ladle of molten lead sometimes wrought hard enough to produce a good deal of fatigue. But my ink not being sufficiently fine--the black employed was soot from the above [?] furnaces--together with the existence of many defects in the type itself, rendered my first attempt to print abortive, though the hope of eventual success is far from being abandoned. In the meantime I have cut wooden blocks and from them some impressions have been taken off which are perhaps preferable for elementary books to those which have been produced by lead in consequence of the letters being much larger.113

Barnley is the best source for discovering the detailed teaching methods of the missionaries. It need not be emphasized that these differed considerably from those employed by the Roman Catholic missionaries in the

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113. MRA271, loc. cit.

north-west, although it is not necessary here to compare the two. It is perhaps sufficient to point out that the two groups worked from what might be called different cultural assumptions. Barnley was never short of ideas:

> The plan of inducing the native to commit to memory the most important summaries of Divine truth--the Decalogue and the Lord's Prayer by ranging them in series and assigning one sentence to each person consecutively 'till the whole is disposed of, and which I mentioned having been adopted with some advantage at Albany last year, has since been pursued elsewhere with the same, or rather with enlarged success. And I have further introduced a Mnemonigal [sic] stick which appears to render material aid to those whose opportunities for learning are much limited. I send you one of them as a specimen. The small notches indicating the number of persons required to repeat each Commandment. The larger ones the number of precepts in the whole. They learn to associate each notch with the remembrance of the person who uttered the words signified by it, and thus acquire the entire moral law with much rapidity as frequently to awaken a feeling of surprise both in me and in themselves.114

This could perhaps be described as a useful way of bringing abstractions to people unused to them by making use of their substantial sense of community relationships for memory purposes, and by adding an element of invocation and ritual to make the material more palatable.

Barnley provided a further description of Indian reaction to his preaching. He found them generally interested and receptive and many, upon being informed about Christian marriage and baptism put away their extra wives and asked to be baptized. The consumption of rum always hindered his work and was a constant evil. A typical account of the reaction to his preaching described how all listened without result until an older Indian came forward and announced his intention to give up old

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114. MRA271, loc. cit.

ways, others followed, until all had "joined" the cause. Some destroyed their drums which Barnley believed, had a definite connection with native religion. He wrote about the drum with Methodist or "enlightened" sarcasm:

> ....its supposed use seems to have been to arrest the attention of those spirits whether good or evil they were desirous to invoke and who like the ancient Baal may be pursuing or in a journey or peradventure asleep, and requires to be awakened....115

The most interesting part of Barnley's letter, however, described in detail one of the effects of the introduction of the technological advantage of print on the social structure of a group of Indians. The printing of the white man's message in the Indian tongue brought the literal power of the printed word into open conflict with the weaker oral and tribal traditions. The printed word, together with the European supremacy in other technological areas, was bound to win, but some rearguard actions were fought. Barnley provides us with a fascinating account of one of these:

> The authenticity of every circumstance which has been communicated to me I cannot vouch for but the substance of the following account may be relied on.
>
> Two hymns printed probably by Mr. Evans but certainly by some person familiar with evangelical truth and poetic numbers were in circulation among the Indians at York Factory, and thence found their way to Severn House. The natives there laboured earnestly to obtain a knowledge of them and the truths thus communicated so engrossed their attention that the mysteries of the Indian magic sunk rapidly in public estimation, and the Conjurors saw that the hope of their gains were gone. One, however, more subtle than the rest, like Mohamet, conceived the

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115. MRA271, loc. cit.

> idea of amalgamating those portions of revelation which had come to his knowledge with the crafty fabrications of his own mind, aided by an efficient confederate, that the declining dominion of darkness might be not only saved from irretrievable ruin, but even exalted in the fragments of prostrate truth.
>
> These two individuals consequently withdrew from the society of others for the purpose of maturing their plans and after being absent some length of time, presented themselves before their countrymen as extraordinary messengers from Heaven. The first of the two hymns referred to above commenced with an allusion to Light, the second to our blessed Saviour. Of these circumstances the imposters availed themselves--to augment their influence; One calling himself "Wasetek" (Light). The other assumes the sacred name of "Jesus Christ". Their recent absence was accounted for by the announcement of certain visits having been made both to the regions of future blessedness and to those of future woe. A chart was produced exhibiting representations of a path which branched off in two directions passing by the Sun, Moon, etc.; the one leading to Heaven, and the other to Hell. A sensual paradise was described dressed up in all the furniture likely to be produced by, and to fascinate an Indian imagination. Deer were inumerable, amazingly fat, gigantic and delicious beyond conception. They proceeded so far as to describe the person of that God who is a spirit, whom no man has seen, nor can see and live. A splendid man, seen extensive enough to contain all the Indians but designed for them alone, and abundantly supplied with every possible source of enjoyment was stated to be in course of preparation, and to be let down from Heaven in a few years. And, as if dreading lest some measures of a coercive kind be resorted to for the purpose of checking their proceedings, consequences the most terrible involving something like the destruction of the world were announced if any person dared to interfere with them....116

At this point Barnley pointed out that all this could not have taken place if these people had been visited by a missionary at some time or other. He was undoubtedly correct in this, as any Methodist missionary would certainly not have allowed any "amalgamation" between Christianity and "heathen superstition" to proceed so far. Although something similar

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116. MRA271, loc. cit.

must have occurred several times, it is fortunate that such a detailed record is preserved in this particular instance, even if it was not first-hand. As there was no missionary on the scene:

> The credit of the false prophets was firmly established, and the people were so enraptured with their new Heaven, that day and night their tongues--were employed in chanting the praises of those fertile regions with the exhaustless abundance of berries and animals as set forth in the attempted poesy of their great "Light" who, with his coadjuator had abandoned the mean employment of hunting and trade, finding the contributions exacted from the hopes or fears of their deluded votaries sufficient for their support....117

This Indian version of Christianity, if it can be called that, even developed a missionary zeal of its own:

> A missionary zeal was awakened in the bosoms of an old woman and a youth who took up their residence among the Albany Indians, and soon introduced their chart with all the enchanting revelation of the new system and the poor people were almost universally carried away with the delusion--children and parents having laid aside the appropriate appellation addressed each other as brother and sister and other extravagances were generally prevalent....118

The forces of European civilization soon rallied, however:

> To the chief Trader George Barnstone Esq. the mission is deeply indebted for a prompt and earnest exposure of these wicked devices which resulted in the old Sybil's consenting to the demolition of her valued work and the discontinuance of many of the prevailing follies. They unanimously declared their renunciation of the "false Christ" by a show of hands and one elderly female who may be supposed to have expressed the sense of the rest, said, "I think we have all been very foolish."....119

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117. MRA271, loc. cit.

118. Loc. cit.

119. Loc. cit.

At Moose Factory many of the natives also took up the new faith until shown the error of their ways. One of the curious proscriptions implemented by the "false prophets" was that all Indian dogs should be killed.[120]

At the end of this remarkable communication, Barnley returned again to his idea of an Indian school where the young would "live in". He had mentioned in a previous letter that this scheme had been forwarded both to the Committee and to Sir George Simpson. He noted that it had been considered by the Governor in Council and was still being considered. In the meantime he had placed some Indian boys under his direct charge and one Indian family had planted some seeds on Factory Island as an experiment in subsistence farming.[121]

Barnley seemed well informed about what was going on elsewhere. He had heard from Company officials that Hurlburt had taken an Indian boy and trained him as a helper and even left the circuit in the boy's charge when he was away! Barnley's opinion was that Evans should not allow that area to be so short staffed as the Roman Catholics were a constant menace.[122]

Toward the end of this twenty-two page letter, Barnley referred again to his invention:

> It will be left to the Committee to decide whether my system of Orthography be such as would render it desirable to have type founded to print Indian by it. It will be necessary to obtain the sanction of the

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120. MRA271, loc. cit.

121. Loc. cit.

122. Loc. cit.

> Hon. Co. to the introduction of printing apparatus from England as Sir George Simpson informed me during his stay here that 'though he had sanctioned the attempt of Mr. Evans to found type himself it was after refusing his assent to Mr. Evans request that he might receive the means of printing from home....[123]

He went on to note that Sir George had "similarly refused the Romanists at Red River."[124]

Barnley closed with the strange observation that he was glad no wife had been sent out to him as the supply boat had been held in the ice for some time before being able to land. He suggested that such travel was too difficult for a lone woman in any case, and begged that he be allowed to return to England at "ship time" in 1844.[125]

The most controversial figure in the history of these early missions has hardly been discussed so far. This is, of course, the Rev. James Evans. He had sent in a plan of his Cree Syllabic to the Committee in 1841, and some evidence of his early attempts to introduce this among the Indians of his territory had been noticed by other missionaries.[126]

The James Evans' story has two parts: the first dealing with his conflict with the Company on specific issues, these having economic implications, and second, the whole question of his moral character and mental stability. This last is important only because it brings to light some rather unsavoury activity on the part of the Company and because it may also help to illuminate the Methodist mind of the late 1840s.

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123. MRA271, ibid., September 27, 1843 (This letter was evidently written over a period of days.)

124. Loc. cit.

125. Loc. cit.

126. Loc. cit.

Evans began to get in trouble with the Honourable Company at a fairly early period in the history of the mission. One of the first matters to come up was the business of Sunday travel. Evans evidently made a point of telling the Indians under his care not to travel on the Sabbath. This may seem like a small point, but it was a serious matter for a great commercial company, trying to make deadlines and avoid seasonal floodings or spring breakups, to have the Indians in their hire suddenly refuse to travel merely because they counted themselves among Evans' flock. As many of the Company men were Roman Catholic, they would see no point in the practice, and it meant, in the Company's eyes at least, that a few individuals whose co-operation and strength were needed before a brigade could continue, were responsible for causing them to lose a whole day's travel time out of each week. If this happened, as it appears to have, it also meant that the authority of the Company had been successfully challenged by "natives" who had the support and sanction of Europeans living on Company premises. This was intolerable. In June of 1843, however, when Simpson addressed a letter to Evans from Red River, the language employed was still cordial. Simpson's reasoned view on Sunday travel was:

> ....the practice in question, as a general rule, seems to fall within the allowed exemptions of both necessity and mercy in a country where the summer is so short, the navigation so disjointed, the living so precarious and the winter so severe....127

The Sunday travel issue would appear again many times but in this instance was merely the first of many disagreements which finally caused a complete deterioration in the relations of the two men. Sometime in 1843, Evans

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127. MRA271, ibid., Simpson to Evans, June 6, 1843.

evidently tried to issue a draft for funds on the Company, payable in the territory, instead of just drawing supplies as he should have done. This prompted a letter from Simpson, spelling out the exact nature of the missionaries' financial arrangement with the Company. He also was careful to explain in great detail why Evans' action did not fit within normal Company financial policies in any case:

> C. Factor Finlayson handed to me yesterday your letter of the 20th wherein you express surprise that your draft on the Company payable here in favour of Mr. James Sinclair has not been accepted. I regret there should be any misapprehension on this subject, but have the satisfaction to feel that the circumstance cannot possibly affect the credit of the Mission, as Mr. Sinclair, who is already aware of the high standing of the Society, was informed that the non-acceptance thereof arose entirely from the transaction being irregular, and that you could give him a draft on the Society in London, which, to him, would answer every purpose of a draft on the Company payable here.
>
> The understanding with the Society in London I believe, was that we should meet from the Company's stores any demands that might be made upon us for goods and supplies of any description which we might have; but there was no arrangement that I am aware in reference to payments of money in this country, and without some such arrangement Mr. Finlayson could not have met the draft, as by meeting it he would be exposing the Company, upon that particular draft, to a loss of nearly 16 months interest or about 7 percent, inasmuch as your draft to Mr. Sinclair would have been paid him in notes, for which notes he would have required from Mr. Finlayson a draft at sixty days sight in London, which he would have transmitted via Canada so as to have been payable in London in September, while the cash paid here would have been charged to the Society in accounts that could only be presented to them in the month of November 1844, consequently there would be a loss of interest from September 'till the following November twelvemonth....128

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128. MRA271, ibid., Simpson to Evans, July 7, 1843.

It is somewhat unfortunate that Rev. William Mason must be relied upon for some of our most detailed accounts of Rev. James Evans' activities. Mason had been moved from Lac-la-Pluie to Norway House by 1844, leaving Jacobs in charge in the south. In a letter from Ross Ville (the name of the village at the Norway House post), dated August 20, 1844, to the Secretaries, Mason recorded Evans' departure on a journey which was to involve only one of the major disasters which would overtake the mission cause in the next two years:

> ....Mr. Evans took his departure on the first day of this month for his long journey to the north. The whole village was off [sic] at an early hour to see their beloved pastor and bid him good speed in the name and worth of the Lord. Thomas Hassal and three men made his crew's complement, when to expect him again we cannot at present say, as his intention was to visit Edmonton and if permission be granted to Bro. Rundle to return to England to remain there until he returns again but doubtless he will be governed more or less by circumstances....Mr. Evans has left Mrs. and Miss Evans in possession of the Mission premises, part of which are closed, with John McKay as the servant and given directions for them (Mrs. and Miss E.) to meet him next summer at the Long Portage Athabaska....I desire to know whether the house must be closed entirely during the period of their absence the period of which will be uncertain as Mr. E. left no directions respecting the matter. The keeping up of two establishments is certainly adding to the already accumulated expenses. The Superintendent has also written Henry Steinhauer to come here as his services are not required by Mr. Jacobs. In what capacity must I receive him? He also proposed that Henry should board and lodge at our house but this is impossible for we have only two small rooms.129

Mason went on to note that he did not take as intransigent a view of Sunday travel as that of Evans or Rundle:

> With respect to travelling in the Hudson's Bay crafts

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129. MRA271, ibid., Mason to Secretaries, August 20th, 1844, 163.

> on the Sabbath. I wait your fatherly advice, but I think we ought to be provided with our own craft and spend the entire day ashore....If I have done wrong in travelling in this country on the Sabbath which I have done more or less since my arrival, I am sorry and will do no more....130

Evans was away from Norway House from August of 1844 until the spring of 1845. This epic journey included an incident which caused Evans to be suspected of murder. The incident itself is best told in Evans' own words in a letter he wrote to a certain Colin Campbell, Esq. from Lac la Ronge, on September 17, 1844:

> On the 11 Inst. I had come within three days of Isle a La Crosse, and with many a prayer anticipated seeing you before winter, when, Ah, unhappy day my cheerful hopes were withered under the hand of God's inscrutable Providence. On that unfortunate morning there being numbers of ducks and geese, I loaded my gun--which I had only discharged twice since leaving Norway House--and laid it before me in my canoe, without a percussion cap. At breakfast time poor Thos. H. (Hassel) now no more while getting wood found Partridges and took out my gun, capped her but made no shot. He returned with his own, and I enquired where it was. He replied that, he had exchanged it for his own with one of the men--who returned it in a few minutes, and put it in the canoe. About noon some ducks were near us, and I drew off the cover, and put it beside me, and when in the act of taking a cap from my pocket the piece went off and Alas! lodged its contents under poor Thomas' left shoulder. He looked around, sunk down, and was no more....131

Supposedly Evans made a dramatic confession to Hassel's family and was forgiven but this is part of the Evans legend and may, or may not, be

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130. MRA271, loc. cit.

131. "Copy of a letter to Colin Campbell, Esq.", Lac la Ronge, September 17th, 1844, Evans Papers, op. cit.

entirely true.[132] More important for this account, while Evans was still on his journey, Simpson was in London intimating to the Committee that the enthusiasm of some of the resident missionaries was not entirely welcomed by the officials of the Hon. Company. The Committee evidently did not disagree, as Simpson wrote to Ross, the Chief Factor at Ross Ville in December of 1844:

> ....both the Governor and Committee and Dr. Alder (the principal organ of communication in reference to the Am missions) concur in the opinion with the Council, that it is both necessary and proper, to check the zeal of the resident missionaries, and to limit the establishment to such a number as it may be expedient to maintain, with a due regard to the circumstances and convenience both of the Fur Trade and the Wesleyan Society....
>
> I am glad to find that Mr. Evans' unauthorized demands for passages and other facilities to establish missions at Isle a La Crosse and elsewhere were not complied with....In some instances, I am sorry to say that Mr. Evans' arguments have had an undue influence on minds of some of our gent. inducing deviations from established usages....133

By the time the above letter was written, the Company had definitely decided that the missions would remain static and would not expand, and Sir George Simpson had decided that James Evans would have to be restrained.

Full scale conflict between James Evans and the Company broke out in the spring of 1845, after he had returned. It began with a local dispute which Evans had with Donald Ross, the factor at Norway House, who represented the Company there and also agreed with Simpson's view of Evans.

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132. See Rev. R. S. Scott, op. cit., 23. This account is based on work done by the Rev. John MacLean, M.A., Ph.D., who did most of the pioneer writing on Evans in the early years of the century.

133. Hudson's Bay Company Archives. (Henceforth, HBC Arch.), D 4-66 fo. 67.

On the 19th of May, 1845, Evans sent an unsigned parcel of papers containing an account of Ross' conversation with certain Indians on the subject of Sunday travelling, to Ross himself. The implication here seems to have been simply that Ross used the power of the Company to force the Indians to travel on Sunday. Ross replied the same day, saying that he would forward all this, together with his own explanation, to Governor Simpson.[134]

On May 20, 1845, Ross wrote to Governor Simpson. Ross maintained that Evans had persuaded the Indian crew which Ross usually used to take boats to Red River to refuse to accompany him unless he promised not to travel on Sunday! Ross considered this a terrible threat to the Company, as indeed it was. He saw it as "the beginning of a system of combination, which if continued, may in all probability produce the most disastrous results...."[135] Ross denied Evans' charge that he had threatened the Indians as a result of this. He mentioned the papers Evans had sent him which were enclosed and then went on to describe the situation at Norway House as he saw it:

> ....whilst the Indians are left to exercise their own free will, they come forward and offer their services to perform their usual duties; the moment Mr. Evans gets hold of them, his threats of temporal and everlasting punishment, and promises of employment, pay, supplies, the prospect of a better market for their furs and other advantages, induce them to break their solemn engagements....136

Ross then defined the whole question in explicit, and one might say, even "sociological" detail:

> The minds of the Indians here, are as yet, but in a

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134. MRA271, op. cit., Donald Ross to James Evans, May 19, 1845, 224-225.

135. HBC Arch., op. cit., D f/14 fo. 32 ff; Ross to Simpson, May 20, 1845.

136. Idem.

> state of transition in regard to religious knowledge and religious principles, whatever statements may be made to the contrary; their ancient faith together with its various obligations they had laid aside, and those rules of conduct prescribed by the Christian Religion, are not yet sufficiently developed or fixed to keep them on the right path, of legal obligations they know little or nothing....137

This was getting at the heart of the matter. The Company held the Indian under its sway by a combination of technological supremacy and a relatively primitive system of reward delicately combined with the basic factors in Indian character and tradition. The enthusiasm and zeal of the Rev. James Evans with his Cree Syllabic, gospel message, Sabbatarianism and his determination to "uplift the heathen" would naturally upset this delicate balance and loosen the grip of the Company.

Ross was becoming rather angry at this point. He became so upset by the state of events that he wrote another letter to Simpson the next day. This one contained much more bitterness than the first:

> Our Reverend neighbour here has at length shown the cloven foot and unmasked himself, this I was well aware he would do on what he might consider the first available opportunity. I think you will find that I have in no way done injustice to his true character--he has now played his first card, Sunday travelling,--his second and by far the most important in his ruin, a share in the proceeds of the trade--he holds ready to make best use of....138

Ross noted that one of his (Ross') Indians had broken his engagements with him with no compunction at all. Ross believed this was due entirely to Evans' influence and that it placed him in an intolerable position as far

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137. HBC Arch., idem.

138. Ibid., Ross to Simpson, May 21, 1845.

as maintaining the trade was concerned:

> I am aware that if Mr. Evans' career be not speedily checked, the trade of this valuable section of the country will soon be lost to the Company--a number of the best Beaver skins, have during the winter been cut up for caps and other purposes by the Indians, most of which are as a matter of course intended for Sales to [?] and presents to friends in the Settlement, and in all possibility some clandestine trade in whole Skins will also be going on in the course of this Summer, and indeed at all times in the future, various circumstances seem to indicate that part, at least of Mr. Evans' object in visiting Red River at present is to make preparatory arrangements in regard to the hunts and Supplies of the Indians, unless you yield to all his wishes....139

Ross evidently believed that Evans was out to smash the commercial monopoly of the Company by encouraging a type of "cottage industry" among the Indians, the products being sold in Red River. Ross felt this trade would soon take in whole furs. Certainly, illicit Indian trade with interests in Red River was felt to be a constant threat to the Company at this time. It is difficult to say whether this accusation has much substance or not. One thing is certain; Ross was both bitter and angry:

> Last fall we had before us the prospect of passing a happy, peaceable and contented season, the affairs of the Company and the Mission bearing a fair promise of success....when this man like an evil genius came back to disturb our repose after having destroyed the life of a fellow creature.--I do not say wilfully, [sic] but certainly with a degree of fatal forgetfulness....140

Ross was not the only one to complain. A certain Mr. Gladman who was probably in the employ of the Company, complained to those in authority that Evans encouraged the Indians to take their furs elsewhere rather than

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139. HBC Arch., idem.

140. Idem.

bring them to Company posts. Evans felt it necessary to deny this charge and to provide some kind of proof of his own innocence. It appears that he sent a letter to Simpson and a copy of this letter, with copies of the enclosures, to the Committee. This last contained the date May 25, 1845. Evans felt it necessary to include supporting letters attesting to his innocence from John McKay, the native interpreter, and Henry B. Steinhauer, the Ojibway missionary from Rice Lake. McKay wrote with some difficulty:

> I remember very well what you said, because I interpreted [sic] nothing was said to injure the Company's interests in the fur trade you told the Indians not to sell their furs to one another if they did not know what to do with them the furs they got was the property of the Company....141

Steinhauer, who was more literate, was also more explicit:

> I have now been residing nearly 8 months at this Mission and at no time have I heard such injunctions given to the Indians which may tend to injure the interests of the trade of the country or disaffect the minds of the Indians towards Gentlemen engaged in this cause.
>
> It appears that a designing person or persons reported that in one of your sermons during last winter you urged upon the Indians of this village to be dishonest....142

(It is possible that Mr. Gladman had written a complaint last winter to various people and the resulting letter to Evans did not arrive until June of 1845.)

Evans himself mentioned Mr. Gladman by name and categorically denied the charges. He protested that it was wrong that he should be ordered to

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141. MRA271, op. cit., John McKay's testimony copied by James Evans, May 25, 1845, 196.

142. Ibid., Henry Steinhauer's testimony, May 25, 1845.

stop such conduct when it had not even been yet established that he was guilty. He ended by saying that Mr. Gladman did not like the mission in any case, and "there was no fire where he could find no smoke."[143]

Matters evidently came to a head on the 10th of June, 1845, when both Simpson and Evans were at Red River. Simpson was at Lower Fort Garry and Evans was at the Upper Fort. They exchanged letters that day and both of these letters were copied out by Simpson's secretary and forwarded to the headquarters of the Company in London. Simpson included a letter in the package to the Secretaries of the Missionary Committee recommending Evans' immediate removal. This packet eventually reached Hudson's Bay House in London and the whole lot was forwarded by them to the Secretaries on September 24, 1845.

Simpson began his letter to the Secretaries with the observation that he had been mainly instrumental in introducing the missionaries to the Hudson's Bay Territory and, therefore, he felt a measure of responsibility for them. Because of this, he felt little hesitation in bringing to their attention the conduct of their Superintendent, who appears to be at all times, "in public and private, writing and in conversation", working against the success of the Company. Simpson stated that if Mr. Evans disagreed with him in spiritual matters he would have been content to acknowledge his motive as being perhaps well grounded; but Evans was trying to "acquire a secular authority" which conflicted with the interests of the Company. Simpson maintained that he had put up with a great deal, hoping that "experience might temper his zeal with

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143. MRA271, ibid., Evans to Alder, May 25, 1845.

discretion", but this had not been the case. He had just received a letter from Evans "of so insidious a tendency as to abandon further forebearance incompatible with my official obligation":

> In a word, I have deemed it expedient to recommend to the honourable Committee the adoption of such means as may be necessary for inducing the Wesleyan Missionary Society to recall Mr. Evans....144

Simpson further noted that it was the trade of the Company alone which provided the wealth which in turn supported the missions. Evans had disrupted the trade and hence damaged the source of support for his own mission. Simpson did not want the situation ever to occur again:

> Considering the experience which Mr. Evans' coadjutors have now attained, and considering also that he himself has been instructed by you to discharge the special duties of Superintendent by means of correspondence, the appointment of a successor might, in my opinion, be advantageously postponed--a postponement which might also be more agreeable to Mr. Evans, as less likely to place his removal before the public on personal grounds....145

What had Evans written in his letter of June 10, 1845, to so enrage the Governor and make him take drastic action? The first part of Evans' letter was merely a report on the success of the various mission stations. He described some of Jacobs' difficulties at Lac-la-Pluie, where he had replaced Mason and told about Rundle's work among the Wood Crees. He noted that Rundle was somewhat successful but:

> I am of the opinion, that unless they can be so situated as to afford the Missionary greater facilities in instructing the rising generation his success must be but partial. Education is well

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144. MRA271, ibid., George Simpson to Dr. Alder, June 10, 1845, 257.

145. Loc. cit.

> nigh out of the question where the natives retain all their wandering habits, and any attempt to raise them above their former degraded condition under such circumstances almost hopeless....146

Here was the beginning of trouble: Evans envisaged a permanent change in the habits of the Indians. This change would mortally affect the fur trade. Evans looked forward to it and Simpson feared it.

There was little to report about Barnley's mission as he had finally managed to get to England for the purpose of collecting a wife. Evans mentioned the new chapel donated by the Company, and while he was thankful for the gift, he asked that the outside be plastered to improve its appearance. He then announced his plan for Norway House:

> I am anxious to introduce at this Mission something like a manual labour school, and have thought of endeavouring to procure some wool, a few wheels and a female to instruct the women and girls to spin....I hope that something in the manufacturing of common woolens might be yet accomplished....147

Besides this radical scheme, he mentioned that he had taken three boys for full time education and hoped that the Company might provide them with some kind of allowance so they would stay on the missions. He noted that his printing press had not yet arrived and that all his converts were permitted to observe the Sabbath, and then came up with a crowning insult to the great Company:

> On several occasions some of our people have sent as presents to their friends at Red River, Furs, (Deer Skins, etc.), and in some instances have, I believe, sold to each other Skins for private use. As far as I have felt myself justified, I have endeavoured to

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146. MRA271, ibid., Evans to Sir George Simpson, June 10, 1845 (copy) 258.

147. Loc. cit.

> restrain them from so doing. Now if this be a [?] of any standing regulation having the authority of law we are fully prepared to enforce on our people, obedience to the powers that be. May I beg you will afford me, such information, as may serve to guide the Missionary when called upon to correct immoralities....148

Evans was asking the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company by what legal right he commanded a monopoly of the fur trade! He went on to add that some of the Indians wished to assist the Missionary Society by means of an annual contribution. Noting that the amount would, of course, be small, he hoped that his plan would meet with Simpson's approval. His "plan" was that the Indians:

> ....such as are in immediate connection with the Missions be permitted to subscribe annually, one Skin, or not exceeding two, payable in kind, which appears to be the only available means within their power of manifesting their regard for those blessings....149

This proposal would establish a commercial rival to the Company within its own territory. It would tend to make the missions independent of the Company and at the same time reduce its (the Company's) revenue. Finally, it might alter the way of life of the Indians to the point where the trade itself could no longer be sustained. Evans ended this remarkable letter with a request that permission be given him to send Mason to Lac-la-Ronge to establish a new mission!

It should be perhaps noted here that the Committee recorded a note in July of 1845 to the effect that the Government of the Hudson's Bay Company "had permitted the introduction of a Printing Press for the use

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148. MRA271, loc. cit.

149. Loc. cit.

of the Mission in that Territory, for the preparation of Hymn Books, Catechisms, portions of Scripture, etc...."[150] and that these would be "in the language of the Indians, and in the new and appropriate character which has been invented by the Rev. James Evans...."[151] The press probably arrived sometime in late 1845 or early 1846. Printed material from it did not reach the Committee until 1849, after Evans had been dead for three years.[152]

Simpson's reply, considering the contents of Evans' letter, was restrained. His real feelings were evident in the letter which he sent to the Secretaries. He replied that he would send plaster for the chapel when it could be spared. He said he would consider the matter of manufactures at Rossville but noted that that place was a source of great expense to the Company already. (It appears that the Company did finally attempt to encourage industry at Rossville as a means of helping with expenses.) He noted that the gratitude of the mission Indians did not appear too great when they squandered their furs among themselves instead of contributing to the trade of the Company. On the matter of law and the Company's position:

> I beg to state that on points of moral law our own officers can alone be recognized as standing between the Honourable Company and those whom the law has placed under its immediate and extensive guardianship....[153]

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150. MRA251, op. cit., July 11, 1845, 305.

151. Loc. cit.

152. Ibid., 444.

153. MRA271, op. cit., George Simpson to Rev. James Evans, June 11, 1845 (copy).

He closed by saying that he could not permit any contributions from the Indians to the Mission as the Company was already giving "all that the country can afford." He also stated that the Company and the Missionary Society did not contemplate any extension of the missions at present and hence, Mason would not go to Lac-la-Ronge.[154]

There was also a letter enclosed in the packet for the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Co., dated June 20, 1845, describing Evans' interference in the trade of the Company under the cloak of religion.[155] All of these were forwarded to the Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society and to Dr. Alder, in particular, by the Hudson's Bay Company officials in London.

All of this incriminating material produced a mild reply from Dr. Alder to the Secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company in September of 1845. Alder acknowledged the packet with the enclosures of the correspondence between Evans and Simpson and added:

> I deeply regret the existence of those differences in which the correspondence originated and beg to assure you that I will at the earliest possible period bring this important subject to the consideration of the Wesleyan Missionary Society.156

We do not know what action was taken, if any. However, in December of 1845, Simpson wrote a personal and cordial letter to Dr. Alder from Hudson's Bay House in London, thanking him for his prompt action toward

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154. MRA271, loc. cit.

155. Loc. cit.

156. MRA251, op. cit., R. Alder to Dr. A. Barclay (Secretary to the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company.), September 29, 1845.

the removal "of the cause of the unfavourable feeling that is beginning to obtain in Rupert's Land towards the Wesleyan Missions." Simpson further suggested that the supervision of these missions might be vested in Mr. Richey of the Canadian Methodists, with whom he had been in touch. He said that he had shown Richey papers relating to the Evans' question and Richey had agreed that Evans should be removed. Simpson closed by mentioning the Oregon question.[157]

A letter from Rev. M. Richey himself, dated Montreal, December 26, 1845, was also sent to Alder. Richey stated that Evans clearly should be removed as he had the audacity to challenge the authority of the Governor and he had become a liability as far as the furthering of the mission cause in the area was concenred. He suggested that Evans be appointed to the St. Clair Mission, where he had been stationed before. Richey was not against Evans personally in any grave sense as his own son had married Evans' daughter, but Richey had a unique view of the source of all the trouble:

> Let me just say in <u>your private ear</u>, the whole difficulty in poor Evans' case originated in Mrs. Evans' unruly member, which no man can tame....158

Richey noted that Mr. Mason "seems to have imbibed Mr. Evans' spirit toward the Company" but that might be set right in time. He also suggested one William Scott as a possible new Mission Superintendent. He closed with the suggestion that all future missionaries have "clear,

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157. MRA271, <u>op. cit</u>., G. Simpson to Rev. D. Alder, December 28, 1845, 280.

158. <u>Ibid</u>., M. Richey to Dr. Alder, December 26, 1845, 281.

minute, and imperative," instructions before they went out.[159]

Sometime in April of 1846, Evans was accused of having improper relations with Indian girls under his care. The charge appears to have been made by the girls, although someone could well have prompted them in the matter. A trial was conducted where evidence was taken by interpreters from Indians. Mason conducted the trial on the theory that only Methodist clergymen could try clergymen in matters such as this, and laymen were excluded. Evidently, Evans was judged innocent. Mason, however, sent a separate report to Red River to be forwarded to England. Evans heard about it as soon as it was sent and Mason read him a copy of it. It appears to have been a different account from the one that Mason and Evans had agreed to send in together. Mason evidently claimed that he was coerced during the trial by Evans as were the Indian witnesses. After this the story becomes very complex. It appears that Evans prepared counter-charges against Mason to send to the Committee. Evans soon felt that he had to go to England to defend his reputation in person. At this point the Hudson's Bay Company entered the story. Donald Ross and Simpson amplified the charges against Evans in the various letters they wrote and even returned to the "murder" of Thomas Hassel. More important, however, Simpson and the officials of the Company decided to take this opportunity to restrict the whole Methodist cause in the northwest permanently and make it merely a static and declining cause entirely subordinate to the Company interests. Support for the missions in the form of supplies was to be gradually curtailed and unless the illicit

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159. MRA271, loc. cit.

trade with Red River ceased altogether, Indian settlements such as the one at Norway House were to be broken up so the Indians would return to "their former habits of trade" and would become more dependent upon the Company. Donald Ross was informed by the Governor that no one must "play the Bishop at Norway House" except Ross himself, who would be, in his capacity as Chief Factor, "prophet, priest and king". Any remaining missionary, such as Rev. Mason, would always be "merely acting under your advice."[160]

James Evans died shortly after his return to England, on November 22, 1846, at the age of forty-five. Dr. Alder and the Wesleyan Missionary Society and the Conference decided that Evans was not guilty, and Mason, after being questioned and mildly reprimanded, was allowed to remain in charge of the Norway HOuse Mission.[161] The complex question of Evans' moral guilt or innocence cannot be decided here.

It remains briefly to trace the course of the Methodist missions in the years following the lamentable Evans' affair. Things would never be the same again as Simpson had decided against the success of the mission project. He did not have to kill it outright but had merely to restrict its growth and limit its support until the three remaining missionaries gave up the struggle and returned to England. Barnley was gone by 1847, Rundle the next year; only Mason lingered on at Rossville until 1854, when, rather than transfer the control of the mission to the Canadian

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160. See Appendix page 405.

161. MRA271, loc. cit.

Methodists, he chose to join his many friends in the Church of England.[162]

Evans had succeeded in establishing an Indian village at Norway House, or actually, at nearby Rossville, which contained about three hundred souls. This type of Indian settlement was contrary to the traditional habits of the Cree and also contrary to the policies of the Company. The village brought the Indians together where they could be clothed and fed, examined and taught the principles of Christianity as well as the arts of civilization, notably writing in their own language. From a Methodist missionary point of view it was the only logical step. Although not sufficiently dispersed for the most effective gathering of the ever declining fur supply, the men could still trap in winter for the benefit of the Honourable Company. In this sense, this particular village was not a major threat to the power of the Honourable Company. The problem was more subtle. The village could become a viable entity and take up the pursuits of a "village". For example, agriculture was encouraged. Evans added another possibility in his scheme to use furs as an elementary medium of exchange so that his Methodist Indians would approximate the traditional Methodist self-supporting financial unit of a Society. This might be done by having "extra" furs sold in the Red River Settlement or by exchanging them for other goods. Obviously, these practices would break the Company's monopoly over the Indians, and in fact break the Company's power. It would mean that a whole new economic system would come into being whereby the Indian could become independent of the Company, and the Methodist Indian village at Norway House would be only the first

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162. See page 85.

of a series of new creations which would effectively mark the end of the Company's domination of Rupert's Land. No wonder Simpson could regard this possibility with horror!

Nevertheless, the Company was threatened in any case, apart from the puny settlement at Rossville. Many Company men realized that traditional patterns of Company and Indian life must soon come to an end. It appears that Company officials did countenance the Rossville experiment to a certain extent in order to see if some new formula could be found within the limits of their resources which would enable them to move with the changing times and still keep their position and profits. The Company did allow the village to develop to a certain extent because it could not have been built at all without Company support.[163]

One secondary source notes that sheep were imported into the village economy in 1846 as an experiment but were all eaten by sled dogs![164] They were presumably sent there so wool might be produced for eventual weaving purposes. Glimpses of the nature of the Rossville experiment are provided by this and other casual references in various letters. On March 3, 1846, Evans indicated in a letter to the Secretaries that some sort of manufacturing experiment had at least been started by that date. This was just before the "storm broke" which resulted in his return to England. He remarked that "we are at present under a dark cloud" but gave no details of that matter. Otherwise:

> Several of the girls spin very well and knit stockings

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163. E. E. Rich is of this opinion. See E. E. Rich, Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870, 2 vol., (London, 1959), 11, 528.

164. Semmens, op. cit., 75.

> and gloves and mittens in a manner creditable to themselves--straw bonnets and hats they are making, and their attempts are such that Mr. Ross had kindly proposed to open the market next summer and give them encouragement to sell their manufactures. We hope to be able to meet the expenses of the materials out of the profits....165

Evans also mentioned that the girl brought from Red River to teach the Indian girls had not been successful.[166] After Evans' return to England, little is heard of the "manufacturing" project.

In the same year as the Evans' disaster, others in the service of the Missionary Society in the north-west found themselves in difficulty. Peter Jacobs wrote from Fort Francis on March 6, 1846 to tell of his discouraging mission to Lac Seul. As noted before, he had been ordered to go there by Evans, and he finally went in spite of Simpson's assurance that the country was too poor to support a missionary and that he would have to provide for himself. Simpson went further and told him that the country was too poor even to support a gathering together of the Indians to form a congregation! He finally agreed, however, to send a letter to the factor at Lac Seul to instruct him to provide a place for Jacobs' family in the local fort. Jacobs went to the area and found that the Indians were only interested in him if he brought provisions for them. He partially built two log houses himself when he found that the local factor would not provide any help. He was forced to abandon the unfinished houses and was repeatedly told by Mr. and Mrs. MacKenzie that the area was so poor that the fort could not possibly support both families during the

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165. MRA272, Reel 15, Box 15, Methodist Missionary Society, Canada 1846 1848, Evans to Secretaries, March 3, 1846, 7.

166. Ibid.

coming winter.[167] In short, Jacobs was so actively discouraged by the Company's representative that he was forced to give up the Lac Seul mission altogether.

Barnley, at Moose Factory, was having similar difficulties. He wrote the Secretaries on February 23, 1846:

> In my last I stated that our situation here was most uncomfortable and disadvantageous (he had recently brought his wife out from England) and I exceedingly regret having now to add that the pledge of the Company to furnish us with a separate residence in expectation of which we came thither, is not to be redeemed.168

He noted that Simpson's explanation was merely that it would be "inconvenient" to build such a residence but Factor Miles had informed him that the real reason was the difficulty of providing the missionary and his family with separate provisions apart from the general mess. Not having been sent a printing press, Barnley was still trying to print from plaster of Paris plates![169]

An earlier letter from Barnley, (January 20th) had begged for a printing press. Like others, he felt that the few missionaries in so vast an area could only compete with the "Church of Rome" by the full use of printing. He asked only for the metal parts of a press from England, saying that he would build the rest himself and even offered to pay five pounds toward the cost of the metal parts from his own pocket.[170]

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167. MRA272, ibid., Peter Jacobs to Dr. Alder, March 6, 1846, 72.

168. Ibid., Barnley to Secretaries, February 23, 1846, 83.

169. Loc. cit.

170. Ibid., Barnley to Secretaries, January 20, 1846, 92.

Another letter from Barnley without a date, was received by the Secretaries on February 3, 1847, and reiterated what was to be his never ending "swan song" until he left the country. He noted that the break between Factor Miles and himself was never likely to heal and:

> The despotically governed people of the Company's establishment have for many years by their tame submission added strength to this material and [?] tyranny and his attempts to reduce me to the same state of tame subjection left me no alternative but to resist....171

Here indeed, was the heart of the problem again. The Company wanted "tame" Methodist missionaries, or none at all. They wanted men who would join the other lackeys at the Company's establishments and act as glorified chaplains to the organization. Methodism had been originally expansionistic and heroic. The heroic element had been replaced in more settled areas by "connexionalism" but only recently, and poor itinerants on distant stations, with the example of the Wesleys before them as well as the force of hostility and wilderness, often revived the older heroic tradition. Perhaps Evans and Barnley, and certainly Rundle, are examples of this revival of this older Methodist tradition. A static position consisting of tractable missionaries stationed at Company posts, with no prospects of a wider field or success of even the "connexional" kind, was alien to many of the basic principles of Wesleyan Methodism.

Barnley wrote again on June 28, 1847 to describe the impossible situation at Moose Factory. He claimed that the Company agent had resorted to what we would call psychological warfare. He noted that Miles had taken every opportunity to lower the prestige of the missionary in

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171. MRA272, ibid., Barnley to Secretaries received by them February 3, 1847, 128.

the eyes of "all classes of people". In short, the elaborate caste system which provided the backbone of European control of the Indian and the Company's control of its officials was being turned against Barnley. The results could only be fatal for his work. He felt he could only leave and gave as added reason the poor health of himself and his wife. He asked the Committee to find him a circuit near London so his wife might recover in the care of her relatives.[172]

In October of 1847 the Committee received a letter from Barnley which was evidently written in England, so he was home by this date. He noted that he had left Rupert's Land and that the Company officials had maintained their annoying behavior right up to the time of his embarkation. His wife's health continued in a very poor state.[173]

Simpson's side of the story appears in a letter of November 8, 1847, to the Secretaries on another matter wherein he noted in passing that Barnley had left Moose Factory on the seasonal ship. He said that he was not acquainted with Barnley's motives but suggested that "the Committee examine his statements with caution as bad personal feelings existed between him and the man in charge of Moose Factory". He added that all was well until Mrs. Barnley arrived and that all the trouble was entirely due to the women of the respective families.[174]

There may have been some substance in Simpson's claims because Barnley wrote the Secretaries on December 7, 1847, from Dewsbury in

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172. MRA272, ibid., Barnley to Secretaries, June 28, 1847, 159.

173. Ibid., Barnley to Secretaries, October 17, 1847, 190.

174. Ibid., Simpson to Alder, November, 1847, 197.

Yorkshire to complain about the inconvenience of boarding with a family and asked to be moved again because of the state of his dear wife's health.[175] Perhaps Mrs. Barnley couldn't get along with anyone or perhaps they merely wanted their own home.

There was another matter which affected relations between the Company and the missionaries. This was the question of the validity of Methodist marriage ceremonies in Rupert's Land. William Mason wrote a report to the Secretaries on June 26, 1847, in which he mentioned that he had raised the question with Sir George Simpson. Simpson replied that he would write Adam Thom, the Recorder of Rupert's Land, and ask for a legal opinion. He would then send a copy of Thom's reply to Alder.[176] This was done, and Thom's reply to Simpson, dated July 27, 1847,[177] was sent to Alder. Thom, after a long legal discussion which brought in various historical precedents from British Colonial history, including the Navigation Acts, stated that Methodist marriages in the territory were not valid.[178] Simpson sent this letter to Alder along with a covering letter dated from Lachine, November 8, 1847. He mentioned that he was going to discuss the matter of the Hudson's Bay missions with Dr. Richey of the Canadian Methodist Church as soon as he had the opportunity.[179] The outcome of all this activity was a resolution published from the Extracts of the Minutes of

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175. MRA272, ibid., Barnley to Secretaries, December 7, 1847, 207.

176. Ibid., Mason to Secretaries, June 26, 1847, 158.

177. Ibid., Adam Thom to Sir George Simpson, July 27, 1847, 174.

178. Loc. cit.

179. Ibid., George Simpson to Alder, November 8, 1847, 197.

the General Council, Northern Department, of Rupert's Land, held at Norway House, June 12, 1848, Resolved 93rd:

> That henceforward any Wesleyan Missionary that be labouring in the country with the Hudson's Bay Company's sanction and also in the absence of qualified ministers of the Gospel, the Governor, or any Chief Factor may validly solemnize marriage and further that all subsisting marriages already so celebrated shall be held to have been valid from the beginning anything to the contrary withstanding....180

This was ironic, because, by the end of 1848, William Mason would be the only remaining European Methodist Missionary in the whole territory!

The year 1848 was really the last chapter in the story of the Wesleyan missions. Mason at Rossville, the principal station, had his difficulties. He complained in a letter on January 7th that Evans had taken the matrices of the type back to England when he left and they were sorely needed as much of the remaining type was defaced. He repeated this complaint many times but little action seems to have been taken.[181] Writing on January 14th, Mason noted that the village cattle suffered from the cold (oxen were in use in Rossville) and that spirits had been reintroduced among the Indians with the usual bad effects. Mason also recorded that he met some more adherents of the Christian-Indian heresy first discovered by Barnley. One of these claimed to be a healer after the manner of Christ except that he healed with the laying on of a book (scripture) rather than the laying on of hands. This particular Indian claimed to have been "ordained" at York Factory and had

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180. MRA272, ibid., copied Extract, 281.

181. Ibid., Mason's Journal of November, 1847, January, 1848, Sent to Secretaires sometime in March, 1848, 196.

a "conjuring book" of hymns written in the Cree syllabic by himself.[182]

A long series of letters from Peter Jacobs at Fort Francis reached the Secretaries in 1848. He complained that he was sick of the country and the Indians and wished to return to Canada.[183] More ominous for the success of the missions, however, he reported that the Company was charging the mission itself for all the items which had formerly been free. Such things as bullets and candles, formerly supplied without cost from the Company's stores were now charged to the mission accounts, and hence to London.[184] He also asked Sir George if he would keep the mission "open" for two years in the event that he (Jacobs) returned to Canada. Sir George replied that he would keep it open for one year only and he would then inform the Church of England![185]

And so it went; the Company had withdrawn its support and was allowing the missions to languish. Mason reported a total population in Rossville of only two hundred and fifteen by the end of 1848.[186] He later noted that the Company goods were now very high in price and it paid to buy in Red River where he had recently purchased a mare and three metal stoves. He also noted that Company goods could not compare in quality with those found in Red River. In the same letter he noted

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182. MRA272, loc. cit.

183. Ibid., Jacobs to Secretaries, June 15, 1848, 229.

184. Ibid., July 20, 1848, 270.

185. Ibid., July 25, 1848, 273.

186. Ibid., Mason to Secretaries, 1848, no exact date, 278.

that Robert Rundle had arrived with two Indians and one Indian boy.[187]

Rundle's arrival and his purpose in making such a journey worried Mason to the extent that he wrote another major letter to the Secretaries on August 25, 1848. He evidently realized that he might soon be alone:

> I feel, however, an interest in the welfare of Bro. Rundle, my only colleague left in these regions and earnestly desire and pray for the prosperity of his mission on the extensive plains of the Saskatchewan....188

Rundle, the heroic figure, did not wish to mark time at Company posts. He wished to extend the range of the mission in his area, and had made his vast journey, according to Mason:

> Expecting to meet Dr. Richey, the Superintendent and to obtain permission to commence and the means to carry on a Missionary Establishment at Pigeon Lake where Benjamin Sinclair resides....189

Mason went on to say that he had heard of the scheme by letter and had approved of it as had Mr. Harriott. He realistically added, however, that nothing could be done without the permission of Sir George Simpson. He recorded that Rundle left for York Factory and from there for Oxford House. Mason had provided him with a canoe, a guide, and men and also undertook to board the three Indians that Rundle had brought with him. This was a heavy expense only partly offset by Rundle's offer to do Mason's regular work at York and Oxford House and thus save Mason the expense of visiting those parts. Of Rundle's intentions after this, Mason recorded: "His mind is not decided whether to return from York, or proceed to England when he left us." There was some doubt about getting

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187. MRA272, ibid., August 17, 1848, 283.

188. Ibid., August 25, 1848.

189. Loc. cit.

passage on a Company vessel without a direct order from Simpson until a Company man passing through Rossville told Mason that Rundle would likely get passage. Mason, therefore, told the Secretaries that they might expect Rundle in England in October.[190]

Rundle's diary entry of Sunday, September 3, 1848 reads:

> The next day being Sunday, I held two services. This was my last Sunday in the country, for the following Saturday I went on board the ship which was to bear me back to old England. We had a severe storm during the voyage, but through Divine Mercy I landed at last safely in England after an absence of eight and one half years....191

Rundle was the Wesleyan Missionary with the clearest reputation. He was not given to complaint and he wrote few letters to the Secretaries. His diary appears to be an unvarnished account of his adventures, some examples of which have been given. There is little record of his having much extended conflict with Company men and nearly all his contemporaries spoke well of him. It appears that he hoped to find support from Dr. Richey of the Canada Conference for his proposed mission at Pigeon Lake. When he did not find this forthcoming, he decided to go to England to state his case. This is the most probable explanation because he wrote few letters and his diary or journal merely tells where he went and what he saw and did without telling much about his motives or intentions. In spite of his feeling that more men were needed before success was possible, he appears to have enjoyed a certain amount of lasting success himself. His eventual successor, writing as late as 1860, (the Rev. Thomas Woolsey)

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190. MRA272, loc. cit.

191. Journal of Robert Terril Rundle, MSS, Glenbow Foundation.

said that certain tribes that had no missionary since Rundle left in 1848 were still practising Christians as a result of Rundle's teaching. This was mentioned in several accounts.[192]

William Mason stayed on at Norway House until 1854. In 1852, in a letter dated April 6th, one of the Secretaries, the Rev. John Beecham, gave him some intimation of coming events. The letter was an admirable statement of the Society's position in the world as seen by the Secretaries. It may serve to explain the whole trend of Wesleyan operations in the Australasian Conference as well as the Conference of Eastern British America in 1855:

> The financial circumstances of the Society have made it necessary for the Committee to review the whole of our missionary operations; with the view of equalizing the Society's income with its annual expenditures. We have been led on, step by step, to extend the field of our labours beyond the amount of our means for maintaining the work in a state of efficiency. Vigorous efforts have been made to raise our Annual Income so as to render it equal to the claims of our Missions in the present state, but without complete success. The only other alternative must now be adopted and measures devised for the relieving the Income Funds from the pressure [?] occasioned by our old missions. Arrangements are being contemplated for forming British North American Districts into a separate Conference or Conferences, and placing them in a state of comparative independence like the Canadian Conference in Upper Canada Province....193

The important notice affecting Mason himself came in the following words: "It is proposed to transfer our missionary work in the Hudson's Bay

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192. Can be found in typescript of his journal--last page. Also in Dr. John MacLean, Vanguards of Canada, Toronto Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, (Toronto, 1918), see "Life of Thomas Woolsey."

193. MRA251, op. cit., John Beecham to Rev. William Mason, April 6, 1852.

Territory to the Canadian Conference, and we are now in correspondence with Mr. Wood...." Beecham stated that the work of the Mission could be much more fully supported by this proposed arrangement.[194]

Mason evidently did not think too highly of the proposal and the Society minutes of January 18, 1854, recorded the following startling information:

> It was reported that a letter had been received from the Bishop of Rupert's Land stating that Mr. Mason, the Society's Missionary at Norway House had offered his services to the Bishop as a missionary in connection with the Church of England, and proposing on the part of the Bishop to take the Mission under his care and to compensate the Society for the premises occupied by the mission, on a fair evaluation....195

The minutes also referred to a letter from the Rev. Enoch Wood noting that he had received a similar communication from the Bishop and expressing the hope that the Committee would not consent to the proposal but would transfer the Mission to the Canada Conference. Wood was careful to suggest that a grant should first be made by the Parent Society "to assist in restoring and maintaining the Mission". He also noted that the Auxiliary Missionary Society of the Canada Conference had raised £5000 to meet all the expenses of its Domestic and Indian Missions without help from the Parent Society. The Minutes noted at this point that the total cost of the Hudson's Bay Missions for the last year had been £450. They also referred to a General Conference decision made two or three years before to the effect that superintendence of the Hudson's Bay Missions was placed under the direction

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194. MRA251, loc. cit., (Rev. Enoch Wood was then Chairman of the Canada Conference.)

195. Ibid., Minutes of General Committee, January 18, 1854, 153.

of the "General Superintendent of the Missions in Western Canada", with the view that they should be connected to that department as soon as possible.[196]

All the above resulted in two wordy resolutions. The first merely stated that the time had come to transfer the missions in question to the jurisdiction of the Canada Conference. The second stated that £700 would be sent in aid of these missions for one year in the hope that they would soon be totally supported by the Missionary Society of the Canada Conference.[197]

On April 12, 1854, the Committee had the pleasure of recording the acceptance of the Canada Conference by copying actual extracts from the minutes of a Special Committee of the Canada Conference, which assembled at Toronto on March 15, 1854, for the sole purpose of accepting the new territory. The whole business was carried out with all the usual Wesleyan jargon and connexional formality:

> The Conference Special Committee being assembled in Toronto at the call of the President took into consideration a communication from the General Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, to the President of the Canada Conference dated January 19, 1854, on the subject of transferring the missions in the Hudson's Bay Territory to the care of the Conference in Canada. Also, the Resolutions of the Missionary Committee in London deciding upon and authorizing the said transfer, and also a copy of a letter from the General Secretaries to the Rev. William Mason advising him of this transfer, and instructing him to place the Mission and Mission property of the Society

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196. MRA251, ibid., 154.

197. Loc. cit.

under the direction of the Canada Conference....198

Actually, the largest part of the reply of the Canada Conference to all the above mentioned communications was laid down in the form of the communications themselves. The letter to Rev. Enoch Wood of January 19, 1854, informed him of the transfer and hoped that he would send out a deputation to look over the new territory.[199] The reply of the Canada Conference was given in the usual form of four resolutions. The first accepted the transfer with much verbiage. The second looked to the Parent Society for continued financial support in the undertaking. The third appointed the Rev. John Ryerson as a deputation to inspect the new territory. The fourth was the only unusual one in that it recorded the acceptance of an offer made by the Rev. Thomas Hurlburt to serve in the new territory. He was to be accompanied by two Canadian Indian converts; Allen Salt and John Sunday.[200]

It is only necessary to add that Mr. Mason was informed of the transfer in a coldly official letter signed by the four Secretaries in the same style as the official letter which had been sent to the President of the Canada Conference. In both communications, to both Mason and Rev. Wood, showing their extraordinary care for all things financial, the Secretaries stated that they would pay all the expenses due to Mr. Mason from the past

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198. MRA251, ibid., Minutes of the General Committee, April 12, 1854, 164.

199. Ibid., Beecham, Hoole, Osborn and Arthur to Rev. Enoch Wood, June 19, 1854.

200. Ibid., Minutes of the General Committee, April 12, 1854, 164.

year or so that the Canada Conference could start with a "clean slate".[201] Thus, the Hudson's Bay Territory Missions passed to the Canada Conference. A new chapter had begun.

The presence of the four missionaries in the west from 1840 to 1848 established a pattern which had much of what would continue to be the western formula for Methodism for the rest of the century. This formula might be described as an insecure connexionalism with intimations of heroism. Heroic tendencies were probably as strong in the 1840-1848 period as they would ever be in western Canada.

The four missionaries described in the preceding pages had many of the characteristics of their eighteenth century predecessors. Rundle had "more zeal than judgement" according to Sir George Simpson. Evans was not susceptible to external discipline, and had a simplistic faith in the power of print which was, of course, one of the most effective instruments of the early evangelical revival. Evans' Cree Syllabic, Barnley's rival system, Barnley's "neat" plans for an Indian colony, Evans' literal application of the Methodist financial system to the fur trade, their view of Indian and Roman Catholic "superstitions", are all typical of the simplistic popular rationalism of the eighteenth century and of original Methodism. Barnley's amazing and literal attempt to light an evangelical flame among the Indians is perfectly within the context of early Methodism.

The harsh climate and terrible distances, the threat of active Roman Catholicism, and the sometimes dangerous Indians, combined to produce a

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201. MRA251, ibid., Beecham, Hoole, Osborn, and Arthur to Rev. William Mason, June 19, 1854.

situation similar in some ways to Upper Canada in the early 1800s or parts of England in the eighteenth century. These conditions encouraged a "heroic" strain in Rundle, Evans and Barnley.

On the other hand, the pervasive power of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the inherent conservatism of the parent Wesleyan Committee, were inhibiting factors. These combined to provide a context for Evans' sabbatarianism (although he maintained this heroically), Mason's old maidish and interminable dissertations, Barnley's domestic moanings, and Mason's insistence that Evans have trial by clergy after the Wesleyan fashion. The Wesleyan Committee's demand for picturesque reports provided an unheroic context, as did their continual insistence on connexional trivia. The Hudson's Bay Company provided a metropolitan sophistication and control in an otherwise savage environment, which, at worst, reduced potentially heroic missionaries to the status of company lackeys.

Canadian control of the missions would mean more connexionalism and even less scope for heroic conduct. Nevertheless, the prairie environment had a few surprises in the form of two Riel affairs, Blackfoot wars and disease. Phenomena of this type would briefly check the flood-tide of English Canadian technological domination, and in doing so would alter the flavour of western Methodism.

## CHAPTER II THE MIDDLE PERIOD - FROM 1854

Before looking at the growth of western Methodism after 1854 in detail it is useful to sketch in the main lines of development. One of the most notable features was the rapid growth. In 1868 domestic missions began at Fort Garry. The work was divided into two huge Districts under the Canada Conference: the Red River Settlement and the Rocky Mountain District under the respective chairmanships of the Rev. George Young and the Rev. George McDougall. Between these two districts the whole vast area from what is now Port Arthur to the foot hills of the Rockies was provided with a scattering of Methodist missionaries. Most of them were concerned with Indian missions as there was little white settlement.[1]

By 1887, a mere 19 years later, the Manitoba and north-west Conference listed no less than eight full fledged districts in the same area with an average of about fourteen circuits and the same number of preachers in each. These were: the Winnipeg District, which included all the old Indian Missions such as Norway House and Nelson River, as well as the new urban churches; the Morden, Portage la Prairie, Birtle and Brandon Districts; the Regina District, which included what is now northern Saskatchewan; and the Saskatchewan District, which included all of present day Alberta. The numbers of regular Methodists had been swelled by the Union in 1883, which had seen the Bible Christians of southern Manitoba join their Canadian Methodist brethren. Wesley College was established in

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1. Reports of the Wesleyan Missionary Society of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, 1868-1871, (Toronto, 1871) IX-XV.

Winnipeg in 1888.[2]

Looking at the minutes of the Conference of 1887 it may be seen that by this time the whole Wesleyan system of committees and auxiliary committees was well established. It may also be noted that the dominating concern of Methodism on the prairies was:

> ....the sin of Sabbath-breaking. We deprecate, amongst other things the dispatching of trains and trafficking among the Indians etc. by traders on this day; and also the too common practice of visiting on Sunday....3

The "Report of the Committee on the State of the Work" did not report any great evidence of the hand of the Lord at work in great revivals of religious enthusiasm. Instead, they noted "a large increase in both Connexional and Circuit Funds" together with a membership increase. The Committee deplored:

> ....the vast amount of dissipation in connection with our civic celebration, as horse racing, gambling, etc. and recommend the constant diffusion of Gospel truths as the only effectual cure....4

The longest report came from the Temperance Committee, which objected violently to the evasion of the liquor laws in the north-west. Although the report was long, it can be summed up in one quotation: "As a Conference we desire to nail our colours to the mast inscribed with the one word Prohibition."[5]

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2. Minutes of the Manitoba and North-West Conference 1887 (printed), (Toronto, 1887), 12-14

3. Ibid., 31.

4. Ibid., 32.

5. Ibid., 33.

It is not surprising that Canadian Methodism should have followed this course in western Canada. The Methodism of the Canada Conference which took over the control of the western missions in 1854 was a mature institution. In the same year as the missions came under the jurisdiction of the Canada Conference, the famous Egerton Ryerson was engaged in a violent debate with his conference on the question of compulsory attendance at class-meetings. Ryerson was opposing those who wished to enforce attendance. One of his reasons was that:

> It is well known that meeting in class, by a very large portion of the members of the Wesleyan Church, is very irregular--that their absence from class-meeting is the general rule of their practice, and their attendance is the exception. Yet such persons are not excluded, as it would involve the expulsion of the greater part of the members of the body, including several of its ministers.6

Ryerson went on to comment on the unfortunate fact that the younger people did not follow the tenets of the church to any great extent.[7]

The chief pillar of John Wesley's system had been the class-meeting. By the 1850s the Methodists were losing much of their evangelical appeal. Ryerson advocated regular service in the affairs of the church rather than undue zeal at a class-meeting.[8] This was a fine thing to say, but what did regular service actually mean? It obviously did not mean direct participation in the "saving Grace" by means of powerful religious experience. Without Wesley's terrible and urgent emphasis on the saving of

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6. Rev. Egerton Ryerson, D.D. The Story of My Life 1824-1881, (ed. Geo. Hodgekins), Wm. Briggs, (Toronto, 1883), 487.

7. Loc. cit.

8. Ibid., 488.

souls, alone, and at all costs, the Methodists would have little to distinguish themselves from any other Protestant body, and would be in grave danger of only being concerned with the details of running a large institution.

Thus, in the west, the Canadian Wesleyan Methodists did not pass gradually from a concern with "grace" to a preoccupation with the standard Victorian Protestant virtues. Instead, they began at the latter position as soon as they were established.

It is necessary to turn now to the personalities and events in the period just after 1854.

The Rev. Thomas Hurlburt, the experienced Indian missionary who had worked for many years north of Lake Superior and who had lately spent six years in the United States, was the new Superintendent of Missions for the Canada Conference in the Hudson's Bay Territory.[9] Rev. William Mason, who had gone over to the Church of England, had been the last European missionary in the territory before the transfer of 1854.[10] Hurlburt had two Indian converts with him who were to act in the capacity of assistant missionaries in the same manner as Peter Jacobs and H. B. Steinhauer.[11]

Of these last two men, Steinhauer was now embarked on a long, and glorious career, which was to be perhaps the most exemplary of all

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9. John MacLean, "Rev. Thomas Hurlburt" in Vanguards of Canada. Toronto Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, (Toronto, 1918), 66-68. (This authro also makes much of Hurlburt's United Empire Loyalist ancestry.)

10. See Chapter I.

11. Loc. cit.

Methodist Indian workers in the north-west. The Conference Journal containing the "Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Canada in the City of London for June 6, 1855," noted concerning Steinhauer: "That the rule relative to the receiving on trial be suspended in this case and he be received into full connexion."[12] Henceforth, Henry, the humble and confused assistant during the Evans affair, would be the Rev. H. B. Steinhauer.[13] The same manuscript noted during the year 1856 that "Bro. Peter Jacobs on motion of Mr. House is restored to his full standing in this conference."[14] The year 1857 saw him again under investigation and then placed under suspension for a year.[15]

Steinhauer is a more pleasing example and, as indicated, seems to have been quite successful. He was born at Rama in 1820. The best account of his youth is in a printed version of a speech he gave while visiting England, which was reprinted in the Canadian and English Methodist papers.[16] Steinhauer, like Jacobs, was first acquainted with the Christian message through the work of Rev. William Case in 1828 or 1829. He went to the mission school set up in his area at that time. He noted

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12. Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Canada in the City of London, Wednesday, June 6, 1855. MSS. in vol. entitled "Conference Journal", Victoria College Archives, 466. Henceforth - "Conference Journal".

13. See Chapter I and Appendix - His name is sometimes spelled "Steinhauer" and sometimes "Steinhaur" depending on the source.

14. "Conference Journal", 1855, op. cit., 491.

15. Ibid., 525.

16. The Christian Guardian, December 20, 1854, 42.

that it took him three months to learn the alphabet while his colleague, Peter Jones, learned it in a day. A gentleman from Philadelphia, who accompanied Rev. Case on a later visit to the tribe, asked for a boy who could spell and read the New Testament. Henry was brought forward and given the name Henry B. Steinhauer, presumably the name of the gentleman in question who arranged for Henry to be brought up and educated at the expense of the Missionary Society in Canada. He was employed by the Society after his education until 1840 when he was sent to the Hudson's Bay Territory. In his speech, Henry gave an account of the missions in that territory, noting the competition from other churches such as the Roman Catholic. He felt that the Catholics did not make great progress because they did not teach the Indian to read. He further noted that his colleague, Peter Jacobs, had not been too successful and that while his own labours had been in the Norway House missions he was now destined for the Edmonton area. (He was to be finally established at White Fish Lake.) He closed with an appeal for funds to buy a new printing press as the old one was falling apart.[17] Steinhauer's long and respectable career, which saw his graduation from Victoria College as well as the graduation of his sons and their ordination as missionaries, will be referred to in another place.[18] He was involved in the troubles of the first Riel affair and lived until 1884.

The Special Committee of the Canada Conference which met in 1854 also resolved to send one of the Ryerson brothers out as an official

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17. The Christain Canadian, loc. cit.

18. See page 19.

Deputation to view a new field of endeavour. The Rev. John Ryerson was duly selected.

The Christian Guardian of October 11, 1854, printed an extract from the journal of Rev. Thomas Hurlburt which gave the readers an account of the situation in the north-west as he found it upon taking up his new position. Hurlburt was, perhaps, the closest the Methodists could come to producing an Indian expert in a scientific sense. While labouring at the Pic Mission north of Lake Superior he had read and reflected upon the works of the American, Schoolcraft, and had finally corresponded with him personally and even contributed to Volume IV of H. R. Schoolcraft's history of the Indians of North America in the form of a "Memoir upon the Inflections of the Chippewa tongue", as well as a section entitled "Remarks on Indian Orthography" in another Schoolcraft work. Hurlburt was an acknowledged expert in the study of Ojibway but he now had to learn Cree. He did this with his usual enthusiasm and took up the task of printing a large number of works in syllabic script for the Indians of the region. Hurlburt was also reputed to be an excellent geologist. According to Dr. John MacLean, the Methodist chronicler, Hurlburt's printing activities were very effective and the Indians refused to leave for winter trapping until they had received portions of scripture to read by the light of their campfires![19]

Hurlburt's journal on this occasion noted that he arrived in Rossville on August 4th and that Rev. John Ryerson had appeared there on August 9, 1854, before proceeding to Oxford House. Hurlburt reported

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19. The Christian Guardian, October 11, 1854, 30.

that Rev. William Mason had left the mission on June 14, 1854, but Steinhauer had remained and the mission appared to be in fairly good shape. Hurlburt had started to preach immediately in the Indian language on the first Sunday and was informed that he was understood for the most part. His assistant, Robert Brooking, preached a sermon to the residents of the local Hudson's Bay establishment which was, nevertheless, attended by all the Indians as well. The church needed enlarging but the mission vegetable garden was flourishing and two cows, two young cattle and a horse were listed as mission property. The cost of providing winter hay for all these would be about twenty-five pounds and Hurlburt considered sending half of his livestock with Brooking to Oxford House. He was working on an inventory of all the mission properties which had been begun by Steinhauer and would be forwarded to the Canada Conference. There was a large Indian tribe 130 miles away without a missionary, and the Indians from York Factory felt that they should have an ordained man there in place of Benjamin Sinclair, the native preacher. Rev. Mason had taken the Norway House school teacher with him when he left, and that place was temporarily filled by John Sinclair who would then go to Oxford House when a replacement was found. Brooking would go there as well. Hurlburt had acquired a Miss Adams who was to prove very effective in the instruction of Indian girls in the mission. Hurlburt closed this account with the observation that his knowledge of Indian dialects enabled him to master Cree with relative ease, and that the large area and the number of Indians warranted some consideration of the idea of providing him with an

assistant.[20]

Hurlburt appears to have been a sort of transitional figure in the history of western Methodism. He was not in the old heroic mold of the simple wilderness preacher, but appears to have been rather a hardworking expert who took pride in his work and continually attempted to gain a better scientific grasp of his environment and a better understanding of his charges. He appears to have been an excellent missionary.

In sharp contrast to Hurlburt was the Rev. John Ryerson who was officially the "Co-Delegate and Deputation" to the Wesleyan Missions in Hudson's Bay. This is how he was styled as the author of an incredible book entitled Hudson's Bay or A Missionary Tour in the Territory of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company, printed in Toronto in 1855. According to the introduction it was...."the first volume published at the Book Room by the Wesleyan Missionary Society of Canada, and so beautiful in its typography and illustration...."[21] It was further described as "a production of Wesleyan Unity in Canada and Hudson's Bay".[22] Illustrated with scenic steel engravings, this book was in the travelogue class and devoid of any religious content. The decay was always most evident at the top in Methodism and the Rev. John Ryerson was a typical bureaucrat, entirely concerned with institutional imperialism and all the trivia and

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20. The Christian Guardian, loc. cit.

21. Hudson's Bay or A Missionary Tour in the Territory of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company by the Rev. John Ryerson, Co-Delegate and Deputation to the Wesleyan Missions in Hudson's Bay, (Toronto, 1855), XXIII. Henceforth, John Ryerson.

22. Idem.

trappings of a church that was gradually beginning to take on all the aspects of a modern fraternal order. His book was largely composed of letters to Rev. Enoch Wood, one of the Secretaries of the Missionary Society, describing hunting and fishing expeditions.

In a letter dated August 1, 1854, Ryerson described a meeting with Mason who had been ordained in the Church of England a few days before. He met several dignitaries at Red River, including Adam Thom. He preached for the Presbyterians in the church of Rev. Black and visited the cathedral to hear Bishop Anderson. He thought the Bishop preached far too long. He also visited the Roman Catholic establishment and noted after this:

> In conversation with you on several occasions, I have expressed the conviction, that, in view of more extensive and effective missionary operation in this territory, we should have a mission in the Red River Settlement, and on this subject, I believe that your judgements accord with my own....23

In spite of this observation in a letter to Wood, no mission was established there until 1868.

Ryerson's descriptions of the Red River Settlement are interesting only because his trip was supposed to be in the nature of a survey for future reference. He told how the Swiss settlers were leaving or had left and how the Scots married only among themselves. He found few pensioners in the Settlement as most tended to leave except for a few Company men. Activity consisted of half farming and half buffalo hunting, both pursuits requiring the help of the other. The population was,

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23. Rev. John Ryerson, ibid., 66.

according to Ryerson, half Roman Catholic and half Protestant. These could be roughly divided into French and English as well and these again tended to live apart. The Protestants were either Presbyterians in connexion with the Free Church of Scotland, or Episcopalians of the Church of England under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rupert's Land. The Bishop received a salary of 1000 pounds a year, part of it from a 10,000 pound legacy left by a Chief Factor of the Company.[24] Episcopalian strength was divided as follows:

> Two of his Lordship's six resident clergymen are connected with the Church Missionary Society, one with the Society for the propagation of the Gospel, and one with the Church and Colonial School Society; while the remaining two are respectively Chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company, and Master of the Bishop's Classical School.25

The Presbyterians had two churches and one man supported by themselves and a grant of 50 pounds a year from the Company.[26]

Near August the 10th, Ryerson visited Beren's River and was informed by the Factor there that a mission had been promised but had not materialized. Ryerson himself decided to try his hand at preaching to the local Indians but he unwittingly employed their conjuror as an interpreter! He noted that the journey from Red River to Norway House took eight days, which was considered good time.[27]

Ryerson was very pleased with the Rossville Mission at Norway House

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24. Rev. John Ryerson, ibid., 71

25. Ibid., 72.

26. Loc. cit.

27. Ibid., 81

and described it in great length for his readers, concluding with the observation:

> ....so that Mr. Hurlburt, instead of finding himself in a vast howling wilderness, living on pemmican or buffalo tallow, and surrounded with savages and eaten up by mosquitos, finds himself in a most comfortable and well furnished parsonage, surrounded with not only the necessaries, but even the luxuries of life, with a Christian Society far advanced in knowledge and practical piety; and indeed there is no Indian mission in Canada, which for pleasantness of situation, and means of domestic comfort, will compare with the Rossville Mission. 28

Ryerson went on a tour with Steinhauer to visit every house in the village and noted that agriculture seemed to have declined considerably since Evans' time.[29] It is worth wondering if Ryerson himself could have been persuaded to labour in this idyllic spot for several years and would he have found winter in the north-west as pleasant as the month of August?

Ryerson evidently felt the need to convince his readers that he was no mere effete eastern official touring the west, as he took the trouble to record that he always got the men up instead of waiting to be called on the canoe journey north, and that he always stayed in the boat when it was running the rapids.[30]

His next visit was to Jackson Bay or the Oxford House Mission. Here, he found that the church and house were not yet complete and that 70 to 100 pounds would be required to complete the work. The Company had been kind enough to meet expenses so far. There were few houses here and the

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28. Rev. John Ryerson, ibid., 88.

29. Ibid., 90.

30. Ibid., 96.

Indians were living in camps. The garden, however, was very satisfactory. Oxford House itself, that is the post, was twenty miles from the mission premises at Jackson Bay.[31]

Ryerson went on to York Factory where he would meet a boat to take him to England. At York Factory he met Archdeacon Hunter and his wife, Adam Thom and family, as well as Mr. Mason and Mr. Ross. While they were waiting for the boat a Dr. Rae arrived who had been exploring the west shore of Boothia for the Company. He brought news about the probable fate of Sir John Franklin.[32]

Ryerson had a few observations about the Indians in general. He had to admit that the Indians at Archdeacon Hunter's Cumberland Mission were the most progressive that he had ever seen. He noted that Indians in general tended to feast or famine but the Christian Indians appeared to be more provident. He felt that no one could expect the Indians to give up their nomadic life suddenly and settle down as good citizens.[33]

It is evident from this book that Ryerson attempted to put the Company in the best possible light. Undoubtedly, the leaders of Canadian Methodism were familiar with the problems arising out of the Evans affair and the unhappy removal of Barnley. They appeared to be anxious to find no fault with the Company at all, realizing, no doubt, that the good will of the Company was still necessary if the missions were to survive. In any case, the leaders of Methodism would have no cause to quarrel with

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31. Rev. John Ryerson, ibid., 98.

32. Ibid., 106.

33. Ibid., 149.

the great commercial organization as they were always at home in such company. Leaders such as Ryerson were not troubled by any primitive Methodist enthusiasm of the sort that might cause one of their humble preachers, alone on a wilderness station, to see some conflict between God's work and commercial interests. Ryerson took the trouble to quote a letter that he had received from Brooking on December 5, 1854:

> My opinion in reference to the Honourable Company's treatment of the Indians has undergone no change. I am quite convinced that, all things considered, it is the best system that could well be devised. The Indians here are far better off than they are in Canada. The Company supplies them articles of excellent quality at prices far more reasonable than the same articles can be obtained for [sic] in Canada. Those who from old age or infirmities are not able to procure their own living are greatly assisted, and in some cases wholly maintained at the Company's establishments....[34]

Ryerson printed the whole text of still another letter from Brooking on the subject of Company co-operation. Here, Brooking stated that they had talked to all the factors at all the posts through which they had passed and all these maintained that the interests of the Company and the Missions were identical. Brooking also stated that the sale of liquor to the Indian was restricted as far as possible (according to the various factors).[35] Ryerson stated that he had seen no evidence of intemperance at all during his trip.[36]

Ryerson provided Wood with a breakdown of the aid that the Company

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34. Rev. John Ryerson, ibid., Brooking to John Ryerson, December 5, 1854, 164-165.

35. Ibid., Brooking to John Ryerson, (no date), 122-123.

36. Ibid., 165.

provided to the various denominations in Red River but he could not find out what amount was received by the Roman Catholics. The largest single grant as far as he knew was the 300 pounds a year that the Company provided for the Anglican Bishop. He felt that all these were small sums for a Company which, in his estimation, brought in fifty thousand pounds a year after expenses. Still, he felt that the Company was favourably inclined toward religion and its servants had treated him very well on his journey.[37]

Ryerson finally sailed for England on the Company ship with Dr. Rae, Factor Finlayson, Steinhauer and Mr. Ross with a cargo reputed to be worth 120,000 pounds.[38] The ship was the Prince of Wales and the voyage provided Ryerson with further anecdotes to entertain his readers as the vessel stuck in the ice and even grazed an iceberg![39] They left York on September 20th and did not arrive in London until October 29, 1854. He returned to Canada by ship from Liverpool via Boston.[40]

The Missionary Society Report of the Canada Conference for 1853-1854 provided readers with much of the material found in his book. However, it also contained Ryerson's recommendations for the new territory. In his book, Ryerson recommended that more missionaries be sent out, especially to Edmonton, and that a native Industrial School similar to the one that the

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37. Rev. John Ryerson, ibid., John Ryerson to Enoch Wood, (no date), 123-124.

38. Ibid., 128.

39. Ibid., 137.

40. Ibid., 139.

Methodists operated at Alderville, Ontario be set up.[41] In the Report he provided an ambitious list of places where the church should establish missionaries. These give some idea of a tentative over-all scheme. They were: Michipicoton, Fort William, Rupert's House, Albany, Knoemusico, Churchill, Trout Lake House, Nelson River House, Beren's River, Swan River, Rocky Mountain House, Fort Chipewayan, Fort Alexander, Rat Portage and Edmonton. He felt that at least three men were required at Edmonton as there were many Indians there and the British Wesleyans had left only a native worker.[42] The Canadian Methodists were not in a position to establish missions in all these areas but they did gradually establish themselves in some of them and moved forward with hope to further the cause of Indian mission work in the north-west.

Rev. John Ryerson represented the dead hand of eastern Methodist institutionalism about to extend its control over the western missions. He was a typical example of the body that he represented. His attitude and outlook were similar to that of the various administrators who would now control the destiny of mission work in the new territory. While the Canada Conference was closer to the west than the British Wesleyan Missionary Society had been, they were still not close enough entirely to determine the character of the work. The north-west was too vast to be subdued before the coming of the railroad and until it arrived together with more

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41. Rev. John Ryerson, ibid., 127.

42. John Ryerson to Enoch Wood, September 12, 1854, quoted in the Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Canada In Connexion with the English Conference, June 1853 - June 1854, (Toronto, 1854), - see Hudson's Bay 1854.

white settlers, the Methodist institutionalism of the east could not take root. Even after the area that had become Manitoba was partially controlled by a resident Methodist official at Red River, the great plains of the Saskatchewan were still wild country for another decade. Wherever wild country had been cut off from civilization, except by a long and harrowing journey, conditions would continue to exist where missionary work had to be done in an almost epic or heroic fashion if it was to be effective.

Rev. Hurlburt left Norway House in 1857 because of his wife's health, according to one source.[43] He was succeeded by his colleague, Robert Brooking, who had spent three years at Oxford House. Brooking was an Englishman who had joined the British Wesleyans in 1839 and had served for six years in West Africa. He was forced to return to England because of his health and went to Canada when he recovered. The transfer to the Canadian Wesleyan Conference was presumably easy because it was still in affiliation with the British Conference. Little appears to be known about his character but he left Norway House for the east in 1860.[44]

Rev. Thomas Woolsey, reputed to be the brother-in-law of Robert Rundle, took up Rundle's old mission in 1855. Woolsey was also reputed to be an effete city dweller probably on the strength of having lived in London, England for ten years. The point is made many times in Methodist literature that he was not accustomed to the harsh life of a missionary in the north-west but his great strength of character overcame this

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43. John MacLean, Vanguards of Canada, op. cit., 67.

44. Ibid., See "Robert Brooking".

disadvantage. In spite of his supposedly weak constitution he lived to be seventy-three, spending the years between 1855 and 1864 at the Edmonton Mission and making journeys over what had been Robert Rundle's vast territory. He was stationed by the same Conference that ordained Steinhauer and journeyed with him to his station. Steinhauer went first to Lac-la-Biche and then finally to White Fish Lake where he spent the rest of his life. Woolsey and Steinhauer were the only Protestant missionaries in that vast area but the famous Father Lacombe had arrived at Edmonton in 1852 and Father Grandin, later Bishop, came out at the same time as Woolsey. Woolsey found the Stony Indians still practicing the Christianity taught them by Rundle.[45]

Parts of Woolsey's journal were published in various Methodist publications and they give some idea of his activities. It appears that the North Saskatchewan River was used as the main highway and means of communication for the missions, as would be expected. Woolsey received seed potatoes and barley from Steinhauer's White Fish Lake Mission via this river and Woolsey travelled along it himself to visit Fort Pitt. Travel appears to have been very difficult. In 1860 Steinhauer was building cart roads around his mission but these were often flooded. Even lumber for Woolsey's mission buildings came down the Saskatchewan on a 150 foot raft.[46]

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45. John MacLean, ibid., "Thomas Woolsey", 85.

46. "Extract from the Journal of Rev. Thomas Woolsey" quoted in The Wesleyan Repository and Literary Record 1860-62, conducted by a Committee of Wesleyan Ministers. Vol. I, (Toronto, 1861), 436. Henceforth, Woolsey's Journal.

Woolsey's main preoccupations appear to have been the Indian wars on the plains and his "Romish" competition. The Crees, Sarcees and Blackfeet were constantly at war. The Crees were being driven out by the Blackfeet and were looking for new territory. Many killings and murders were added to the usual feuds within the warlike tribes themselves. Feuds within a tribe were usually the result of either gambling or drunkenness. Woolsey had his horses stolen on many occasions and was often in danger from war parties seeking plunder. Conditions were generally much more difficult and dangerous on the plains than in the area of such missions as Oxford or Norway House because of the continual warfare.[47]

Woolsey's anti-Catholic feelings appears to have been of the authentic, primitive sort at least. On June 21, 1860, he noted that a great hail storm destroyed most of the crops and broke the windows in the "Romish Mission". He noted that the Catholics had imagined that Holy Water would keep them from destruction and were, therefore, dismayed.[48] He saw Catholic conversion methods as simple superstition, as in the case of a Roman convert: "The husband has been initiated into the art and mystery of the sign of the cross & etc. but has not been make a new creature in Christ Jesus."[49] On the 19th of June in the same year he met the Catholic Bishop, who was visiting Edmonton, and recorded his impressions in a manner which was markedly different from that which the Rev. John Ryerson would

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47. Woolsey's Journal, ibid., 436, 437, 438.

48. Ibid., 435-436.

49. Ibid., 440.

have used in similar circumstances:

> The bishop is a very agreeable gentleman, to whom proper respect is shown by the Wesleyan Missionary; but no yielding of the principles of our blood-bought Protestantism. "The souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held," forbid the surrender.50

Woolsey also attempted to establish a mission at Pigeon Lake as Rundle had always intended. He further considered the possibility of a training institution for young Indians as a necessary step in the process of Christianizing them. To this end he visited Smokey Lake, one hundred miles east of Edmonton, where he met Rev. George McDougall who was Chairman of the District and who was visiting the mission on an inspection tour. They decided together on Victoria as the best location for such a mission as it was located on a strategic point on "the great river highway into the west and north."[51] This move was also prompted by the fact that the Roman Catholics were considering the establishment of a similar insitiution in the same area.

Another missionary, about whom little appears to be extant, was the Rev. Charles Stringfellow, who appears in Methodist publications mostly going to and from his appointments. He went to Oxford House in 1857 and then moved to Norway House in 1864. He left Norway House in 1868 to be succeeded by the colourful Egerton Ryerson Young.

It only remains to trace the career of the last great heroic figure of western Methodism, George Millward McDougall, who was also a martyr to

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50. Woolsey's Journal, loc. cit.

51. John MacLean, Vanguards of Canada, op. cit., "Thomas Woolsey", 86.

the work. Humble men serving Methodism in distant corners of the west would still undergo heroic trials long after institutionalism had been firmly established in all the areas of settlement. The very remoteness of some of the northern missions meant that some men would still find a clear challenge well into the Twentieth Century.[52] Few of these, however, held high office or received much in the way of attention from their church.[53] It came about that only men of humble origin and expectation could be persuaded to serve in some of the fields as distant as Oxford House. McDougall was a recognized heroic figure almost in his own time, although the Methodist bureaucracy in Toronto often took a somewhat unfavourable view of him. The manner of his death, however, did provide them with inspiring material for their literature. McDougall was, in many ways, the ideal Indian missionary. His background is significant enough to bear detailed examination.

The chief source for the life of Rev. George McDougall is a biography written by his son, Rev. John McDougall, and published not long after the father's death. Allowing for the obvious bias of the writer, the introduction to this work still seems to sum up McDougall's character:

> Unlike many whose zeal abated in the presence of hardships and missionary life, he never varied from his first love, but lived and died an Indian missionary. Hardships and sorrows, in no stinted measure, fell to his share, but he was never known to murmur or complain.54

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52. As an example of this see S. D. Gaudin, Forty-Four Years with the Northern Crees, (Toronto, 1942).

53. See Chapter V, "John Semmens".

54. John McDougall, George Millward McDougall, Wm. Briggs, (Toronto, 1888), see introduction.

McDougall's origins are relevant to his later career: his father was, of course, a Scot, but was by profession a British sailor stationed in Kingston, Ontario. Here, George McDougall was born in 1820. His father then decided to homestead in such a remote area in northern Ontario that George did not even get an elementary education. He did learn woodcraft, however, and his son notes that "he could handle a birch canoe or a pair of snowshoes like the natives".[55] He was enrolled in the Upper Canada militia during the discontents of 1837 and was discharged in 1838 when he was obliged to sign his discharge papers with an X![56] After this he became famous as a "chopper" and was able to purchase a horse by clearing a large number of acres of land by himself. He started to attend a night school of a very rudimentary sort and experienced a Methodist conversion at the age of nineteen, one year after he had begun his schooling.[57] He married in the fall of 1842.

After this vigorous but humble beginning, McDougall moved to Owen Sound which was distinguished at this time by having only three houses. Here the family lived for six years and here, John McDougall was born.[58] With the help of a partner, George McDougall built the ship Indian Prince, the first vessel sent from Owen Sound.[59] He also sailed on the Sydenham and took the first load of sugar and potash to Toronto. During this

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55. John McDougall, ibid., 10.

56. Ibid., 12.

57. Loc. cit.

58. Ibid., 15.

59. Loc. cit.

period he was licensed as a Methodist local preacher.[60]

In 1848, McDougall improved his education by a one year term at Victoria College, Toronto. He was unable to stay longer and was sent to Alderville to be an assistant to the Rev. William Case at the Industrial Institute for Indian boys.[61] According to his son, he had two aims at this period in his life: One was to become an ordained Methodist minister, which was difficult as he was already married. (Most Methodist bodies had a rule that they took only single men as candidates and these had to serve for a number of years before they were allowed to marry.) The second aim was to find a suitable field of endeavour.[62] In 1851, he was given a chance to establish a mission north of Lake Huron. His son provided a quotation from his father's journal at this time, revealing something of the simple yet powerful conviction of his religious faith:

> June 29, 1851 - My destiny is the far North, among the benighted pagans. This is what I have long desired, and sometimes dared to pray for, but now that the path is opened, I feel myself to be a little child. Oh Thou Great Spirit, magnify Thy power in my weakness. Do Thine own work....63

The Conference of 1851 commissioned him to set up a mission in the north in a place of his own choosing. He went ahead with his family to explore

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60. John McDougall, ibid., 16.

61. Ibid., 18. It is interesting to note again, as in the career of James Evans, that there was an early and probably formative association with William Case and hence an experience of an older and more "heroic" Methodism.

62. Loc. cit.

63. Loc. cit.

the country and finally decided on Garden River, about ten miles from Sault Ste. Marie.[64] The prospect was not a pleasant one, according to his son, who remembered their arrival at the place:

> The whole population with the exception of three men, were drunk. Hideous yells and noises were around our new home during all the night, and I, in common with all our family, shall never forget the hours of terror we passed through.[65]

McDougall immediately set to work with an axe and hired oxen to cut down the bush and build a house. Not a "tenderfoot" in any sense, he soon recorded results:

> November 15, 1851.-Nearly four months have rolled away since we landed here, many have been the vicissitudes through which we have passed. Methodism now has a home and a footing in this place. A comfortable house erected, a school-house well on the way, and all these efforts have been marked with the special providence of God. No accident has occurred. Our meetings are well attended. Last evening the presence and power of God was felt by all. Two out of three of our chiefs were heard pleading with God for mercy.[66]

In a letter to Rev. Enoch Wood of the Mission Committee, in the same year, McDougall reported how a chief in the area made a long speech to the effect that they had been served by three missionaries previously, Peter Jones, John Sunday and finally Hurlburt, but nothing permanent or lasting was accomplished until McDougall arrived.[67] McDougall waged unceasing war against popery, drunkenness and the terrible poverty of an

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64. John McDougall, ibid., 24.

65. Ibid., 25.

66. Ibid., 26.

67. Ibid., George McDougall to Enoch Wood, August 15, 1851.

Indian population that had exhausted its food supply as early as 1841, in the time of Hurlburt.[68] McDougall held camp meetings, love feasts and watch nights.[69] In short, he made use of all the traditional agencies of Methodism. He appears to have found them all effective.

McDougall's success was great enough that the authorities noticed him and, as a reward, he was ordained at Kingston in 1852.[70] At first he was appointed to Rama, an old mission which had declined,[71] but finally, he was appointed to Norway House in 1860 as Chairman of the Western Mission District.[72] In experience and training he was eminently suited to the position.

It can be seen from the foregoing that McDougall was a man of slight formal education and the product of genuine frontier conditions. His faith was of the original urgent type, unsoftened by "connexionalism". The western missions would provide him with few shocks or surprises. He was used to the life. It is very unlikely that he would have succeeded as the minister of a prosperous circuit in a settled part of Ontario. He was impatient of connexional trivia and detail. His superiors in Toronto were always instructing him to send detailed accounts of his activities with records of "happy deaths" for Methodist publications.[73] His very

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68. John McDougall, ibid., 42, 47 - See Chapter I.

69. Ibid., 34, 37, 52.

70. Ibid., 61.

71. Ibid., 62.

72. Loc. cit.

73. See page

active life did not permit him to do this and he felt the work at hand was more important. Evans and Rundle were rebuked for the same thing, while the Rev. William Mason spent most of his time writing voluminous accounts as did Rev. Egerton Ryerson Young many years later.

McDougall took over from Brooking at Norway House with his usual energy. He noted that the Hudson's Bay Company was still carrying on the rum traffic.[74] Methodist officials like Rev. John Ryerson never seemed to notice things like this and always found Company officials very charming.[75]

McDougall also wrote a letter to The Christian Guardian expressing his views of the mission situation. It was in sharp contrast to the idyllic picture presented by Ryerson only six years before.[76] He noted that the Rossville (Norway House) and Jackson Bay (Oxford House) missions had been selected to reach the heathen and not for the quality of their arable land. Accordingly, agriculture was not practical on a large scale. The better land lay to the south and the food supply for the increasing number at the missions was yearly decreasing. At Norway House, everyone, humans and animals, lived on fish of which about 70,000 were needed each year. Twice that number were destroyed by poor fishing methods. Eventually the source of the fish supply would be destroyed by overfishing as had happened at Owen Sound. All the Indians were gradually drifting south. One-third of the Rossville congregation had come from further

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74. John McDougall, op. cit., 74.

75. See page 100.

76. John McDougall, op. cit., 94.

north but Red River was already more attractive to them. In Red River, the Indians would be lost to the "Romanists".[77]

McDougall, like those before him, found evidence of the great success of the printed word. He found tribes that had never seen a missionary learning portions of scripture from Evans' script.[78]

No man to administer his huge district from a passive position at Norway House, McDougall, like Evans and Rundle before him, soon began to travel over his vast territory. He wrote the Missionary Society on July 23, 1861 from the mouth of the Saskatchewan, asking them to found a mission there.[79] He also asked for a man for the Stonies as they had not had a visitor since Woolsey. Woolsey must have devoted himself to the eastern part of his territory as he was stationed at Edmonton at this time.[80]

McDougall visited Woolsey and Steinhauer in 1862 and found Woolsey trying to found a mission at Smokey Lake. He persuaded him to choose a spot twenty-five or thirty miles south of the lake which became finally, the Victoria Mission.[81] On September 2, 1862, he visited a camp of dreaded Blackfeet. He reported the course of his trip to Rev. Enoch Wood in a letter written in December of that year:

> Dear Sir-I left the Saskatchewan deeply regretting that

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77. John McDougall, op. cit., 78-84.

78. Ibid., 84.

79. Ibid., 85.

80. Ibid., 86.

81. Ibid., 89.

> it was not in my power to visit the Stony Indians. While on the plains we ascertained that they were camped on the South Saskatchewan at the base of the Rocky Mountains. To reach that part of the country, and then return to Norway House before the close of navigation, was impossible.82

The same letter contained the usual observation about Woolsey: "Blest in youth with the best of society, favoured with all the comforts of life in abundance, how great the contrast presented by his present position."[83] McDougall also noted how his own journey had been a matter of fifteen weeks to cover three thousand miles by horse, boat and canoe. The Hudson's Bay Company had been co-operative.[84]

McDougall's epic journey only whetted his appetite. He felt the Saskatchewan area was the crucial field of Indian missionary endeavour. He resolved to move from Norway House into that area in order directly to oversee the work and establish the new mission. His son recorded the circumstances of that decision:

> Being conscious of Divine guidance in this matter, he conferred not with flesh and blood very much, nor owing to the difficulty of communication with the east, did he have the time to obtain the sanction of those in authority as regards his contemplated movements, but went on making arrangements for the moving of his family into the Saskatchewan during the coming season, and for the securing of someone to take up the ground he would vacate by this move....85

The Missionary Committee would not see things in this light at all as the

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82. John McDougall, ibid., George McDougall to Enoch Wood, December 25, 1862, 82.

83. Ibid., 101.

84. Ibid., 102.

85. Loc. cit.

proper usages of the connexion were as important as Divine guidance, but McDougall was too effective to dismiss and communication was still slow and the north-west distant.

McDougall removed Stringfellow from Oxford House and placed him at Norway House while he joined Woolsey at Victoria in 1863.[86] They lived in buffalo leather tents until McDougall put up a shanty.[87] He then set out on his long anticipated journey to the Stoney Indians. He found their Methodism beset by paganism on the one hand and Roman Catholicism on the other.[88] In spite of this, many had remained faithful to the teaching of Robert Rundle. One aspect of this faithfulness was a militant Sabbatarianism![89]

Returning to Victoria, McDougall found that he had to sustain the mission by means of the buffalo hunt, the meat having to be hauled back in carts. Fishing was also necessary to help to sustain life as the Hudson's Bay Company would not supply the mission at this time as it was having trouble bringing in its own supplies. McDougall was forced to send a party to distant Fort Garry to bring back vital supplies for his mission.[90] This became a regular practice until by 1867 the Company began bringing supplies as far as Fort Carlton so the journey was cut in

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86. John McDougall, ibid., 103.

87. Ibid., 104.

88. Ibid., 105.

89. Ibid., 109-110.

90. Ibid., 119.

half.[91] McDougall found time to make another visit to the Stonies in the company of H. B. Steinhauer who came down from White Fish Lake.[92]

In 1867 McDougall took two Indian boys and his daughter east with him. He left the boys at St. Paul to learn farming and took his daughter to attend the Wesleyan Female College at Hamilton, Ontario. Then, he travelled throughout Ontario speaking in support of the mission cause.[93]

The following summer (1868) he left Ontario in the company of the Rev. George Young who was destined for Red River. Peter Campbell and Egerton Ryerson Young were also sent out, together with the two Snyder brothers who were to teach school at the Victoria Mission.[94] The Methodists were consolidating and expanding their mission work and were commencing work among the settled population of the north-west.

George McDougall was a strange mixture of the sober realist and the evangelical mystic. In this, he was like many of the early followers of Wesley. His son recorded that McDougall once dreamed that a certain man had drowned 250 miles away and later found this to be the case.[95] He was, according to his own view, always directed by Providence, and he always answered the call. He was, however, very practical and realistic in most matters. In a letter to Wood written in 1869 he observed that the whole idea of the "noble savage" was a myth and that they really only experienced

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91. John McDougall, ibid., 129.

92. Ibid., 123.

93. Ibid., 133.

94. Ibid., 134.

95. Ibid., 136.

wretchedness and degradation. He noted with interest that the Blackfeet threatened to attack the mission but would not because they regarded it with a certain amount of superstitious reverence.[96]

In other matters, McDougall looked forward with joy to the supplanting of the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company by the new Dominion. He even hoisted the union jack to rally his followers to prayer. He saw all who were not pro-British or who were Catholic in religion as enemies of the truth.[97] In a letter to Wood in late 1869, he described his Catholic competition in terms very similar to those employed by Rundle and Barnley twenty or more years earlier. It appears that Catholic conversion methods had not changed very much, at least not from the Methodist viewpoint:

> The Papacy, the man of sin, is powerfully represented in this country. There are five priests to one Protestant missionary. They are anti-British in their national sympathies, and if we may judge a tree by its fruit, anti-Christ in their teachings.
>
> Their converts have a zeal, but their fervour prompts them to propagate a system and not a Saviour. By them the Sabbath is desecrated, polygamy tolerated and the Bible ignored. Their churches are the toy shops where the poor heathen get their playthings, such as idols, beads and charms and where the Anglo is denounced as no better than a brute beast, or to quote from one of their sermons, "No better than the buffalo that herd upon the plains."
>
> They carry with them large pictures, representing two roads, one terminating in Paradise, the other in a bottomless pit. On the downward track all Protestants are travelling surrounded by demon spirits; while on the other road, throng all Roman Catholics, priests, nuns, etc.

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96. John McDougall, ibid., George McDougall to Enoch Wood, August 23, 1869, 144.

97. Ibid., 145.

> By these baptismal regenerationists the sacred ordinance has been so desecrated that many of the heathen receive it as they would a charm from one of their sorcerers. One of the tricks played by these gentlemen is, when a child is born in a Protestant family a female agent enters the tent, fondles the infant and then, professing to show it to their friends, carries it to the priest who baptizes the babe, but the policy of the missionary has been to avoid all controversy, and simply preach Christ. The very opposite has been the practice of the priest.98

He went on to note that the priests were very zealous, but they were encouraging bad feeling and would be the cause of any trouble that should arise between the Indian and the white man.[99] McDougall informed Wood that the Blackfeet lived in one of the best parts of the country, but that the buffalo, which were on the decline already, had left that part of the country twice in the last two years. If this happened too often the Blackfeet would be in a serious position.[100] In 1869, McDougall warned of imminent danger on the plains:

> Every resident in this country knows that a feeling of dissatisfaction prevails to an alarming extent among these Indians....In the winter of 1868 these Indians suffered great destitution, and the whole cause is attributed to the white. Recent events have added much to their previous dissatisfaction. In all past time they have regarded the Honourable Company as the highest representative of the Queen. Now a rumour reaches them that a power greater than the Company will soon be here to treat with them for their land. Injudicious parties have informed them that their old neighbours have received a large sum for these lands and the Indian is not so ignorant

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98. John McDougall, ibid., 145.

99. Loc. cit.

100. Ibid., 150.

> but to enquire to whom he ever ceded his hunting grounds. They have no idea of a civil government. We have spent days in trying to explain to them that they would be justly dealt with, and the answer invariably has been "The Hudson's Bay Co. told our grandfathers that always and you missionaries have been repeating the same story for twenty years, and yet nothing has been done"....101

He went on to say that the Indians were against the arrival of settlers and these should be kept back until disturbances were at an end. He noted that he always tried to counteract any disloyal influence among the tribes.[102] It was in this period that H. B. Steinhauer successfully used his influence with the local Indians to prevent trouble in the form of war on the plains during the first Riel affair.[103]

Upon hearing of the trouble in Red River, McDougall offered himself as one of twenty men to surprise the fort and capture it from the rebels! It appears that the other nineteen could not be found in the immediate area.[104]

A far more deadly enemy than Blackfeet or Riel's armed followers appeared on the plains of the Saskatchewan in the grim year, 1870. A letter to Wood dated August 16, 1870, written from Victoria, told the terrible story:

> The evening we left Red River I learned that the

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101. John McDougall, loc. cit.

102. Ibid., 153.

103. See page 92 and John MacLean, M.A. Ph.D., Henry B. Steinhauer, His Work Among the Cree Indians of the Western Plains of Canada, (Pamphlet published by Methodist Young People's Forward Movement for Missions, no date.)

104. John McDougall, op. cit., 153.

> smallpox had reached the Saskatchewan. Anxious to be with our people we crossed the plains in nineteen days and at Carlton we met the destroyer of the poor red man. One hundred had died at Fort Pitt and along the road we encountered bands flying from the plague, yet carrying death with them.
>
> On reaching Victoria I found my worst fears more than realized. My son had induced the Crees to scatter, but many already struck down by the smallpox were incapable of helping themselves. Two days after my arrival John was taken very ill....105

Victoria was not hit as badly as the Blackfeet who died in droves because they would not scatter. McDougall's own family was sadly afflicted by the disease; his son John recovered after a long illness, but Flora, age eleven, Anna, age fourteen, and Georgina all died.[106]

Rev. George McDougall lived through all the troubles of this crucial period in the history of the north-west. He saw his son ordained to join him in the work. He started a mission at Edmonton in 1871[107] and another at the foot of the Rockies in 1873.[108] He travelled across the plains with Sandford Fleming in 1873 and Dr. Grant, later Principal of Queen's University.[109] He met his superior, Dr. Lachlin Taylor, at Fort Pitt in the same year and joined him in a tour of the missions.[110] He protested violently against the whiskey trade to the Indians,[111] and, in 1874, made

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105. John McDougall, ibid., George McDougall to Enoch Wood, August 16, 1870.

106. Ibid., 162-163.

107. Ibid., 179.

108. Ibid., 182.

109. Ibid., 185.

110. Ibid., 192.

111. Ibid., 198.

another trip to Ontario to plead the mission cause.[112] He returned to the west in 1875 where he died of exposure on the plains while carrying out his duties on January 24, 1876.

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112. John McDougall, ibid., 201-202.

## The Beginning of the Western Methodist Church Among the White Settlers

The year 1868 saw the establishment of the first Methodist circuits among the white settlers of Red River. This was the first move toward the setting up of a complete Methodist institutional edifice in the north-west. Prior to this date the Methodist activities had always been of a missionary kind and hence, local institutionalism was kept at a minimum. Now, all the apparatus of mature Canadian Methodism could gradually be transferred to the west. The coming of age of western Methodism would be signified when local institutions were raised to the impressive dignity of a "Conference". This had been the pattern of Methodist growth all over the world.

In the north-west, however, things would not roll along an absolutely smooth path to a great climax in the Conference of 1872. Settlement, rebellion, more settlement, technology and rapidly changing social patterns altered the face of the west so quickly that Methodist authorities had great difficulty in keeping abreast of new developments. The infant church in the west did not slide quietly into the placid waters of institutionalism. Times were too troubled, the country was still too rough, communication was still poor, and more was required of local Methodist clergy than would be asked of their colleagues in Ontario. The heroic George McDougall was alone on the Saskatchewan plains except for his son and an assistant, and Rev. George Young came to Red River to face the first Riel Rebellion. McDougall was the traditional type of Methodist missionary, true to the immediate followers of Wesley. Young would have been,

perhaps, the usual kind of Methodist bureaucrat. Because of the time and place this was impossible; so he became a patriot.

It is useful to examine the structure that appeared in 1868. A Red River District had been set up by that year with three circuits: Red River, Norway House and Oxford House. Rev. George Young was sent out to be Chairman of this District and he was assisted by Matthew Robison. Egerton Ryerson Young went to Norway House and Oxford House was served by an Indian convert, John Sinclair.[113]

The Missionary Report for the year 1868-1869 noted that there was great opportunity for work among the white settlers. Rev. George Young travelled as far as ninety miles from Fort Garry and had so much to do that Robison had to be sent out to help. Two Classes were organized with twenty-five members. Work was begun on a church and mission house after the Hudson's Bay Company provided free land. The Oshawa Sabbath School sent a bell for the proposed church worth one hundred dollars. A promising future seemed inevitable.[114]

Egerton Ryerson Young began to send back colourful reports from Norway House as soon as he arrived there. In his first year of residence he visited Oxford House twice and claimed that he was the first missionary to preach at Nelson River.[115]

E. R. Young had replaced Rev. Stringfellow and the latter sent in a

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113. Reports of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, 1868-1871, op. cit., see 1868-1869, X-XIV. Henceforth, Reports.

114. Ibid., X.

115. Ibid., XI.

final account of his labours noting the many changes that had taken place. Stringfellow had come out in 1857 and in his parting reports spoke feelingly of his deep concern for the Indians, and of his appreciation for the support that he had received from Mctavish whenever he had visited Red River. He arrived in Red River in 1868 in time to hear E. R. Young preach in the Court Room there.[116]

Stringfellow recommended in his report that a missionary be sent to Nelson River as it was an important gathering place for Indians. He noted that James Evans had been there but that it had not been visited since. He suggested that a native missionary be sent to Beren's River and that the Indians around "Grand Rapids" at the mouth of the Saskatchewan in Lake Winnipeg desired a full time missionary.[117] At the close of his account, Stringfellow noted some of the changes which had occurred in eleven years:

> ....We returned to Canada much more comfortably than we journeyed from it. The roads were improved, etc. On returning through the State of Minnesota, I found a very different state of things from when I passed through it in 1857. Then, for sixteen days, we saw none but our own company, and felt like travellers in a wilderness, but on our return we found the country settled, and towns and villages almost everywhere dotting the landscape. At St. Anthony's, we found a few scattered houses when we first saw it, - we slept in a tent on the grass, - where now there is surrounding the spot a town of 8000 people, and the railway passing by it. In ten years from hence what will our own north-west be?118

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116. Reports, ibid., XI-XII.

117. Ibid., XIII.

118. Ibid., XIII-XIV.

The total Methodist membership, as distinguished from mere adherents, was 370 for the whole Red River District, an increase of 80 over the previous year.[119]

The huge Saskatchewan District contained the following areas of labour, which were really much too large to be given the name "circuit" in any case: Edmonton House and Woodville Mission, Victoria, White Fish Lake and the Elk River Mission to the Blackfeet. George McDougall was stationed at Victoria as Chairman of the District and Peter Campbell was stationed at Edmonton House. John McDougall was at Elk River and the faithful Ojibway, H. B. Steinhauer, ordained since 1855, was at White Fish Lake.[120]

A hint of future trouble for this new district was evident in the recording of the murder of a Cree Chief and several of his people by the Blackfeet. The Methodists worked among both tribes. The mission at Woodville was among the Mountain Stoneys.[121]

No minutes appeared from the Saskatchewan District for the year 1868-1869 but Steinhauer reported some success at White Fish Lake where he had been established for some time. A church building was in use with a bell donated by a Toronto gentleman and a day school was in operation with 48 regular students.[122]

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119. Reports, loc. cit.

120. Loc. cit.

121. Loc. cit.

122. Ibid., XV.

The Missionary Report for 1869-1870 had much more to record than the usual story of institutional growth. In the words of the Committee: "Unlooked for disturbances arising out of the transfer of the Hudson's Bay Territory to the Dominion of Canada, have grievously interfered with Mr. Young's hoped for success...."[123] The Mission House at Red River was not completed as: "Political antagonisms scattered the population, interfered with commerce, and at one time life and liberty were jeopardized."[124] Rev. George Young's steadfastness was gratifying, however, as he visited the prisoners guarded by the "military power"[125] and, in one case, was engaged "in assuaging the horrors of a barbarous military execution."[126]

The Missionary Committee would not, of course, be sympathetic to the cause of the rebels, as the Committee was solidly based in Protestant English, Ontario. It is to their credit that they wrote:

> The Committee also are compelled to state, that while these agitations were spread over many months, the character and labours of their Missionary were always respected by those who had forcibly assumed the government of the country.127

"Measures having now been completed which are expected to remove the causes of discontent",[128] the Committee was happy to hear that Mr. Young was

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123. Reports, ibid., 1868-1869. IX.

124. Loc. cit.

125. Ibid., X.

126. Loc. cit.

127. Loc. cit.

128. Loc. cit.

back at the task of finishing a church.

For the first time the name of High Bluff appeared on the circuit list. Mr. Robison, who laboured among the English population west of Red River, was not affected by the troubles according to the Report, and had made enough progress to ask that another man be sent out to help him.[129]

The Report for 1870-1871 quoted in full a letter to Sir George Cartier, Minister of Militia, asking that a Wesleyan Minister be appointed as Chaplain to the volunteer forces sent out to crush the "rebels". The letter was dated April 23, 1870, and gave as reason for this request the great investment the Methodists had in the Indian Missions in the area, as well as their new circuits at Winnipeg. The letter described each mission as "a living moral power, which may be wielded for the promotion of freedom and national welfare."[130] A further reason lay in the Missionary Society's conviction that a large number of those who would volunteer in Ontario would be Methodists. The letter was signed by the Chairman of the Canada Conference, as well as the General Secretaries of the Society, Enoch Wood and Lachlan Taylor. The only reply to this request appears to have been a printed formal acknowledgement signed by "G. Futvoye" and addressed to the President of the Conference at Montreal.[131]

From Norway House, Egerton Ryerson Young sent a voluminous personal report, most of which was printed in the official publications. His

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129. Reports, loc. cit.

130. Ibid., X-XI.

131. Ibid., XI.

novelist's style was already apparent as he addressed the Committee from "the most frigid posts in the Methodist world."[132] Everywhere he reported great success, even visiting the sick and feeble missionary at Oxford House who was anxious to have his children educated elsewhere. Young reported 124 baptisms, 21 marriages, 15 deaths and 230 members. Total membership in the Red River District was now 395.[133]

The report from the Saskatchewan District was made up almost entirely of a series of letters from Peter Campbell at the Woodville and Edmonton House missions. Indian wars were disturbing the state of the work. The Blackfeet were at war with the Stoneys and the Woodville Mission in the middle of the latter tribe, expected a Blackfoot raid. Campbell recorded that "Now there is no safety for the traveller...."[134] He provided a graphic example of the trouble in his territory:

> In January, two Crees were treacherously murdered and scalped at Edmonton by a Half-Breed and a Stoney. On the 18th inst; two men, three women and one child, belonging to the Blackfeet tribe were also killed at Edmonton by the Crees and Stonies. One of the men killed was a Chief, after smashing out his brains and almost literally cutting him in pieces, they danced the horrid scalp dance....135

It was Campbell's opinion that the Plains Crees would be the first to attack the white man although John McDougall had visited them twice in the past winter. Campbell stated his intention of visiting White Fish

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132. Reports, loc. cit.

133. Ibid., XII.

134. Ibid., XV.

135. Loc. cit.

Lake which was 200 miles from his Woodville Mission. He made the attempt to keep up regular visits to Edmonton during the winter and twice walked the fifty miles alone! Lack of any church building hampered the work as well as ingrained polygamy among the Indians. Letters to the Committee were a problem as Campbell was fifty miles from his nearest line of communication at Edmonton. Many letters from the missionaries did not seem to reach the Committee in any case.[136]

Another letter from Campbell reported a trip to Edmonton during which he had a narrow escape from a party of Blackfeet out to avenge the murder of their people mentioned in the first account. Campbell was forced to spend much time standing guard with a rifle and the party he travelled with lost most of its supplies. Campbell himself lost all his bedding and his overcoat. He complained about the lack of any accommodation at Woodville, describing his hut as a miserable thing with a bark roof and walls six and a half feet high, which was always full of water from rain and melting snow. Since the church was still not completed all services were held in this hut! He closed this particular letter with a translation of a request from the oldest living Indian at his mission, who had known Robert Rundle, and who desired the Committee to send out the means whereby he might be enabled to take up agriculture with his people and reside permanently at Woodville.[137]

George McDougall, the Chairman of the District, was visiting Red River at this time and his work was taken over temporarily by his son.

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136. Reports, ibid., XV-XVI

137. Ibid., XVII-XVIII.

Because of warfare the mission to the Blackfeet was suspended for a time. The total membership of the District stood at 400.[138]

A later report from this District informed the Committee that Indian warfare continued but so far the missionaries were unharmed. Another enemy to the work was noted by the reports in the description of the terrible smallpox epidemic, which killed thousands of Indians and two daughters of the Rev. Geroge McDougall.[139] The officers of the Hudson's Bay Company had been of great assistance. The Chairman of the District had decided that a missionary should be permanently established at Edmonton instead of having it visited from Woodville. The reasons were: "The place is becoming a very important one, because there are many English-speaking people, and troops are expected to be stationed there."[140]

At the Victoria Mission, George McDougall reported that Chief Factor Christie gave him full support, including a personal donation of ten pounds. McDougall noted that his son was a great peacemaker among the Indians and was liked by all the tribes. He further noted that it was a pity that John was not ordained as he was so effective. McDougall required another "healthy, zealous, young man"[141] for the work.

H. B. Steinhauer reported again from White Fish Lake to the effect that a new building was needed to replace the old mission house but the

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138. Reports, ibid., XIX.

139. Ibid., 1870-1871, X.

140. Ibid., XI.

141. Ibid., XII.

people were destitute due to the disappearance of fur bearing animals. Help was needed from Ontario. Thirty of the forty-five pupils in the school could read "in the New Testament". There were 112 Cree members of the church at White Fish Lake.[142]

At Woodville disease and war still held up progress but another report from Campbell told of greater spiritual success than ever before. Forty tents surrounded the mission and "Some who never spoke earnestly before, told us of the love of Jesus, and with swimming eyes besought the people of God to pray for them." The ravages of war and disease apparently had the effect of turning many to the comforts of religion. Total membership in the Saskatchewan District for the year end 1871 was 450.[143]

More reports came in from the Red River District before the end of 1871: George Young noted that the arrival of the troops had increased his labours: 80 joined his services and 10 came to the classes. The Committee recorded: "Notwithstanding the aspersions thrown against these men, Mr. Young maintains, on the whole, they are a credit to Ontario." The Presbyterians were kind enough to allow the Wesleyans the use of their church on Sunday nights as the Methodist one was still incomplete.[144]

At High Bluff Mr. Robison was given $500 by the Committee to help pay for buildings erected by him which were necessary before the work could begin. A woman in Ontario gave $250 to this cause after reading

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142. Reports, ibid., XII-XIII.

143. Ibid., XIV.

144. Ibid., XV.

a letter written from this mission. The attention of all friends of missions was drawn to the fact that not only did the "stranger" in Manitoba require the care of the Wesleyan Methodist, but "many sons and daughters of her own family"[145] would be seeking new homes there.

1870-1871 saw Nelson River added to the list of circuits. No missionary was appointed, but Egerton Ryerson Young would visit it from Rossville. He reported from Rossville that a great work was in progress at Nelson River, and as to his own station: "I think....this is the best mission in the world...."[146] and: "It will be twice as large in another year".[147] He felt that trapping would soon cease and that thirty new farms had been marked out for the support of the Indian population. The frame of his new church had been destroyed by a hurricane but a new one was planned. Total membership in the Red River District was now 413.[148]

The year 1872 saw the formal establishment of a Methodist Conference in the Canadian west. It is useful to note the total strength of the church here as given by the official minutes of 1872.[149] The Saskatchewan District had not changed from previous years:

RED RIVER DISTRICT

Red River - George Young, (Chairman), Matthew Robison

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145. Reports, ibid., XVI.

146. Loc. cit.

147. Loc. cit.

148. Ibid., XVII.

149. Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Canada, 1872, Wesleyan Bookroom, (Toronto, 1872), 430.

High Bluff - Michael Fawcett, Allan Bowerman, B.A.
Nelson Brown, Super'd
Norway House - Egerton Ryerson Young
Nelson River - To be supplied
Oxford House - John Sinclair (Indian)
Beren's and Pigeon River - To be supplied

SASKATCHEWAN DISTRICT

Edmonton House - George McDougall (Chairman)
Woodville - John McDougall
Victoria - Peter Campbell
White Fish Lake - Henry Steinhauer (Indian)
Elk River and Blackfeet Indians - (To be visited by missionaries from Edmonton House and Woodville.)

In usual Methodist fashion, no new independent body could be launched without the proper usages and forms. A "deputation" was called for and consisted of: the Rev. Enoch Wood, Secretary of the Canadian Missionary Society, Rev. W. M. Punshon, President of the Canadian Conference, and John MacDonald, Treasurer of the Society. They found their journey long and difficult and noted their indebtedness to God for preserving them from peril on Lake Superior while they were travelling by steamer. The preservation was sufficiently dramatic to persuade the rest of the passengers to contribute to a fund, which was to assist in the erection of "Providence Church" at Prince Arthur's landing as a purely commemorative gesture.[150]

All the missionaries in the two districts had arrived by July 23, 1873, with the exception of John Sinclair, who did not attend. The Saskatchewan District delegation proved their toughness by living out on the open prairie during their stay rather than accepting accommodation

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150. Minutes, ibid., See Appendix "Report of Deputation", XCII.

in any of the houses provided for them in Winnipeg. It was recorded that they preferred the "air of freedom" of the prairie. The average time of travel from that huge district which embraced present day Saskatchewan and Alberta, was twenty-three days with horses! The deputation from Canada arrived on the 25th.[151]

After the standard religious exercises, the usual inquiry was made as to the "signs" of true Evangelical prosperity. It was stated that these signs were evident at all stations because of the devotedness of the missionaries and their lack of concern with secular comforts, as well as the example of "industry" which they presented to the Indians.[152] In short, this was a stock answer slightly modified by picturesque frontier conditions.

They noted that congregations in Winnipeg itself varied much as "people arrive and depart to other locations,"[153] but at times the building used by the Methodists was crowded and it could hold 250 people. They noted that Rev. George Young made ample use of "the means of grace peculiar to us as a church,"[154] and also held the only evening week-day service of all the Protestants in Winnipeg. Young visited, for preaching purposes, Boyne River, Sturgeon Creek, Headingly and Victoria, and for this reason and because of the increase in population had been given an

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151. Minutes, ibid., See title page of Appendix.

152. Ibid., XC.

153. Loc. cit.

154. Loc. cit.

assistant.[155]

The deputation visited High Bluff, a circuit which then included Poplar Point and Portage la Prairie. Two churches had been built on this circuit and two more were being constructed. Fawcett, the new married man on this circuit, had managed without a parsonage, and evidently had no house at all, not even a rented one. He had even visited new settlements beyond the Portage area.[156]

Rev. Egerton Ryerson Young presented the deputation with a colorful account of his ministry. He claimed to have visited Oxford House, Nelson River and Beren's River. At Nelson River he once met, according to his account, 250 Indians, of which number he baptized no less than 110, only 70 of these being adults! Several of these Indians were at Winnipeg and asked for a teacher. Some of these were reputed to be from bands 500 miles still further north! The deputation noted that the whole Nelson River area contained migratory Indians living in a country still depending entirely on fur. The deputation felt that it would be pointless to settle a white missionary among them but that the missionary at Norway House could direct native missionaries in that area. E. R. Young reported 250 Indians at Beren's and Pigeon River with ten fully converted there. He had appointed a native missionary for the area. Rossville was getting overcrowded and the deputation felt that a fully ordained missionary would be needed there, as well as at Oxford House (which seemed to make little

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155. Minutes, loc. cit.

156. Loc. cit.

progress).[157]

The Saskatchewan District missions were discussed but nothing was recorded in detail, except to note that the Hudson's Bay Company was supporting the day schools as were the settlers. The missions among the Cree and Stoney Indians were in operation and the deputation approved a new mission at Bow River to the Blackfeet. These last wanted their own missionary.[158]

The deputation expressed a desire to Governor Donald Smith of the Hudson's Bay Company for a Methodist College at Winnipeg and he promised them a grant of land free of charge. They also asked for the establishment of day schools at Oxford House, Woodville and Edmonton House.[159]

The American Consul and Governor Archibald attended an ordination meeting, held in a new Hudson's Bay warehouse loaned for the purpose, and this service "excited much interest in the settlement". The meeting decided that a senior member of the Canada Conference should visit all the stations as soon as possible. It also expressed confidence that the continuation of the work in the west as these were not large.[160]

One ministerial candidate was present in the person of one George Edwards. Thus ended the first meeting of conference stature in the

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157. Minutes, ibid., XC-XCI

158. Ibid., XCI-XCII.

159. Ibid., XCII.

160. Loc. cit.

Canadian west.[161]

The foregoing will serve to give some idea of the growth of Methodism in the west after 1868, as well as some picture of the operation of the formal machinery of the institution. It will also serve to convey the "official" view of the church itself in all these preceedings. The Methodists published nearly everything in their innumerable reports; this was one of their great strengths as it gave people in settled areas a chance to participate vicariously, through reading and giving, in exciting work in exotic places. The system had its weakness, however, as may be seen in the reports of E. R. Young, who seemed to have discovered how to write exactly the type of thing everyone wanted to read. Also, there were communications that did not shed a very favourable light on certain personalities and events and these were not published and are, in many cases, lost to the present day historian. This is not to suggest that the official report was always far from the truth, rather, there were small, but significant sins of omission. In the case of E. R. Young something seems to have been added.[162]

The central figure in the establishment of institutional Methodism in the west was Rev. George Young. The men who had laboured among the Indians always followed somewhat in the steps of Evans, Rundle, or Barnley. While some of them did not spend a long time in the wilderness, they followed a pattern which should be evident from the preceding pages. Generally,

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161. Minutes, ibid., see title page of Appendix.

162. See page 156.

they faced similar problems. It fell to George Young to establish a new pattern for Methodism in the west and because of the circumstances and his particular character, he placed a strong stamp on western Methodism. Today, the views of people like George Young are not regarded with particular favour by historians. Such people have been discredited as the pendulum of historical imterpretation has swung against them. Nevertheless, he was present during the first and most controversial Riel insurrection and his views were similar to those held by many in his native Ontario at the time. His opinions presumably were also representative of those people who were Methodist.

Rev. George Young appears to have been a man of strong sympathies and ideals. He left little doubt about his opinions on many matters. He may be taken, however, to represent Methodism in a state of transition. He was not cast in the same heroic mold as Evans or McDougall. On the other hand, he was not merely a detail-ridden supporter of connexional trivia and Victorian respectability. It is possible that he might have drifted into this later position if he had not been thrown into difficult circumstances, the result of natural hardships and the fulminations of Louis Riel. These combined to bring out the more solid foundations of his character.

For the best record of his life it is necessary to depend for the most part on his own account,[163] and hence the historian must allow for the usual autobiographical bias, as well as for a conscious attempt on his

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163. Rev. George Young, Manitoba Memories 1868-1884, Wm. Briggs, (Toronto, 1897).

part to write something inspirational and heroic for a Methodist readership.

In traditional Methodist fashion he mentioned his first birthday as the last day of the year 1821, and his second birthdate, complete with a justification experience, in October, 1840.[164] His ancestors were Loyalists who had left the United States soon after the Revolution and settled in Prince Edward County of what is now Ontario. His mother was widowed in the year he was born and returned to her parent's home. These were Methodists, and their friends and the local clergy left a great impression on George Young.[165] Several years later his mother married again to a Mr. Thomas Bowerman and they all moved to "a more sparsely settled part of the country".[166] Here, George had to help till the soil and clear new land. He had little opportunity for formal education.

It was at this period of his life that he had an experience very similar to Wesley's early recollection of being "a brand plucked from the burning". According to his account, he was feeding the cattle in the basement of a large pioneer barn which had several upper stories. A terrific wind storm struck the building with such force that the whole structure fell in upon itself. Hearing the sound of falling beams, Young fell on his knees to pray. This action saved his life as the beams fell in around him in such a way as to only narrowly miss him because he had adopted a kneeling position. Had he remained standing, he would have

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164. Rev. George Young, ibid., 11.

165. Ibid., 12.

166. Ibid., 13.

been struck down. He took this as a sign of God's particular Grace in the same manner as Wesley had done years before.[167]

Like McDougall, Young took part in the rebellion of 1837. He recorded that "my loyalty led me to respond to the call".[168] He joined a company of dragoons and was engaged in the guarding of Presque Isle Harbour. He was also stationed in the village of Brighton. His view of the whole experience, from a later period in his life, was simply that his six month period of service taught him useful things about horses. He was glad, however, that his upbringing saved him from "being drawn into those excesses which proved the ruin of some of my comrades in the service".[169]

It was shortly after this time, in October of 1840, that George Young experienced his conversion. A young friend of his had died and he attended the graveside at the burial. Here, he heard a neighbour, an "exhorter" use the occasion to dwell on certain religious truths. The prospect of his friend's sudden death was evidently enough to bring out all the latent features of Young's grim and urgent Methodist background. His formal conversion took place shortly afterward in a series of services which were held in the new local school house. Almost at once, he took out a Methodist ticket and began to preach himself. He still did considerable farm work but also took part in revival services. It appears that in this way he did have some experience of vital, frontier, Methodist evangelism. He

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167. Rev. George Young, ibid., 15-16.

168. Ibid., 16.

169. Loc. cit.

attended the Picton Grammer School for a short time and received some educational help from the local minister. In usual Methodist fashion he reached the status of "local preacher", and, as a result of some effectiveness in this work, was finally recommended to the Conference as a candidate on trial for the ministry. His first appointment was as an assistant on the Oxford Circuit in June of 1842.[170]

After this, George Young went on from strength to strength. His career led, by the nature of its success, more and more into work in the longer settled areas. In order, a list of his charges was as follows: Oxford, Chatham, London (as supply), Brantford, Toronto, St. Catharines, Gatineau and Hull, Hamilton and Glanford, London again as supply, Niagara and Drummondville, Belleville, Montreal, Brantford, Kingston, Quebec and then Toronto again (Richmond and Queen St. churches).[171] At the time of his appointment to Red River, he was chairman of the Toronto District.[172] Thus, the Canada Conference appears to have sent one of their better qualified and ablest men to commence the Methodist work in the first settled part of the north-west.

Young married his first wife, the daughter of a Methodist clergyman, in 1848.[173] Another significant event in his life was the early death of his mother at age fifty-seven. Her death was, according to his account,

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170. Rev. George Young, ibid., 18-19.

171. Ibid., 19-20

172. Ibid., 27.

173. Ibid., 22.

heroic in the best Methodist tradition. Among her last words were "All is well, All is well!"[174] She told her children to meet her in heaven, and in her son's words: ...."in the full assurance of a blessed immortality she joyously received her dismissal out of this life and passed within the veil, on October 8th, 1860"....[175]

The chain of events which led to Young's appointment to the Canadian west began when George McDougall returned from his mission in the Rocky Mountain region to attend a meeting of the Missionary Board in the fall of 1867. This was held in the town of Whitby, Ontario. McDougall appealed for a more vigorous missionary effort among the Indian tribes in his area. He also advocated the establishment of a mission in the Red River Settlement itself. His reasons were simply that the settlement now had a population of about twelve thousand and quite a number of these had been Methodists in their places of origin. There was also a large number of "foreigners and natives",[176] many of whom were insufficiently supplied with "the ordinances of religion".[177] The Board decided to send someone as soon as "a suitable selection could be made from among those who might volunteer for that work". The selection committee was made up of Dr. Wood, Dr. L. Taylor, George McDougall and Mr. John MacDonald. According to his own account, Young talked the whole project over with George McDougall

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174. Rev. George Young, ibid., 26.

175. Loc. cit.

176. Ibid., 27.

177. Loc. cit.

over a period of months and also consulted with Dr. Wood. It is not clear from this account whether he decided to volunteer on his own or was persuaded by these men to do so.[178] In any event, he finally volunteered and a Special Committee of Conference released him from the Chairmanship of the Toronto Circuit and appointed him to Red River. Clothing, tents, horses and wagons were purchased in preparation for what was, at that period, a long and difficult journey.[179]

Farewell gatherings took place on the 7th and 8th of May, 1868. These were reported in The Christian Guardian. That paper recorded a "valedictory service" held in the Richmond Street Wesleyan Church in Toronto.[180] E. R. Young, George Young and Peter Campbell were the three missionaries to be sent to the north-west. The building was crowded to its utmost capacity for the service and there were even people there from other denominations. On the platform with the prospective missionaries were most of the notables of Canadian Methodism, including Rev. James Elliott, President of the Conference and Rev. Dr. Wood, General Superintendent of Missions. Wood led off the proceedings with a history of mission work in the west, going back to the days of Evans and Rundle. Even by this period, Evans was known chiefly for the Cree Syllabic and had officially become a Methodist hero. According to Wood, Rundle left the work because of ill-health.[181] After indicating where the three

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178. Rev. George Young, loc. cit.

179. Ibid., 28.

180. Ibid., 29.

181. Ibid., 31.

missionaries would be situated, not failing to note that Campbell would be among the most warlike tribe in the west, Wood stated that any of the six hundred Methodist ministers might have been sent but they had waited for the direction of Providence to provide the right men for the position. This had come about and the ones selected "had the entire confidence of the Missionary Committee".[182]

E. R. Young made the next speech. He found it impossible to give "utterance to all the feelings of the heart".[183] He saw the Divine Plan in the proposed work and asked for everyone's prayers. He was sure of one thing: "those who had been appointed to this work would not talk annexation".[184] It is not clear just what kind of annexation he had in mind.

Campbell followed in similar vein. He had been in the ministry for eleven years and would find the breaking of family and social ties very painful but he felt a need to preach.[185]

After a hymn was sung, George Young spoke. He referred to his conversion in 1840 and then hoped that the Missionary Committee would not be disappointed if there were no progress reports from the north-west immediately. He also hoped that they would not be disturbed by formidable expense figures in his reports.[186] Both of these hopes proved prophetic.

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182. Rev. George Young, ibid., 32.

183. Loc. cit.

184. Loc. cit.

185. Ibid., 33.

186. Loc. cit.

There were a great many other speakers, including George McDougall and Dr. W. M. Punshon. Dr. Taylor closed with an appeal for a collection to support the venture and about $180 was taken in.[187]

The papers also carried an account of a "farewell breakfast" held in the basement of the same church. This occasion was also well attended. Six large tables were set up and a banner across one end of the hall proclaimed "Missionaries to Red River and the Saskatchewan regions."[188]

The same account told something about the missionaries themselves and the course of their journey. They were to follow the American route through St. Paul. All the new men were married and would take their wives with them. McDougall would accompany the party. The patriotic note was not absent from the proceedings as on the wall of the church basement opposite the previously mentioned banner was a huge British flag. The account was careful to note as well that Campbell and McDougall, while going a thousand miles beyond Red River, would still be in British Territory.[189]

A further meeting was held in the church after this notable breakfast, chaired by Mr. John MacDonald, Treasurer of the Missionary Society. The various notables of Methodism appeared on the platform, including Dr. Ryerson. The personal history of the new missionaries was brought up again in MacDonald's speech. From this it was learned that E. R. Young had been

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187. Rev. George Young, ibid., 38.

188. Ibid., 39.

189. Loc. cit.

stationed at Hamilton and that Peter Campbell had been serving at Rama among the Ojibway Indians and thus had experience of Indian work.[190]

Dr. Ryerson spoke next and spent a lot of time reminiscing about his own work among the Indians, which he had begun forty years ago. There were many more speeches closed by one Rev. W. M. Punshon, who represented British Wesleyan Methodism. He gave a long talk full of quaint illustrations and mild humour. He defended charitable denominationalism and patriotism but a large part of the speech had to do with the financial support of missionary work. Naturally, he closed with an appeal for increased giving.[191]

Young recalled another event that marked his departure for the west: A presentation purse of gold and two testimonial addresses for himself and his family came from his Toronto church congregation.[192]

All the foregoing connexional trivia with its complex usages, numerous social occasions and elaborate precedence, titles and ritual was, of course, very dear to the hearts of Canadian Methodists at this time. McDougall probably saw it all as a means to an end, to persuade the people of Ontario to support his beloved mission to the Indians of the plains. For others it was probable that the most important part of the occasion was to be found in the pleasant exercise of the machinery of connexionalism as all the intricate detail of complex connexionalism was so lovingly recounted in the records. There was more than this, however, in the series

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190. Rev. George Young, ibid., 40.

191. Ibid., 47.

192. Ibid., 48.

of meetings and other formal devices that launched western Methodism; there was also an almost belligerent note of British patriotism.

The missionary party left on the 9th of May, 1868, for Hamilton to attend the opening of a new church there. Then, the entire party with the exception of the George Youngs left via the Welland Canal and Lake Erie for St. Catharines, where they took a steamer for Milwaukee. George Young had to stay behind to arrange for complex financial details with the General Treasurer as he was to be in charge of salaries for the group as well as all other forms of expense. Arrangements had to be made for changing the money into American currency as "greenbacks were then generally below par".[193]

On the 14th of May, the Youngs "rushed on to Detroit"[194] and took the steamer for Milwaukee at midnight. Here, in spite of credentials from the United States Consul in Toronto, the party was stopped and the officials demanded that duty be paid on the entire outfit. It was necessary to telegraph Washington before the party could get permission to proceed.[195] They travelled by rail to the Mississippi River where they took another steamer to St. Paul. Here, horses, wagons and vital luggage were assembled while other freight was sent on by rail to St. Cloud. The party drove on in their wagons to the village of Clearwater.[196]

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193. Rev. George Young, ibid., 54.

194. Loc. cit.

195. Ibid., 55.

196. Loc. cit.

In a letter home, Young described the situation that faced the party at Clearwater. At this point they were beyond the railway and telegraph lines and about six hundred miles from Fort Garry. Some of the party lived in tents, some put up at the Temperance Hall, and the rest stayed at the home of a man from Stanstead, Quebec. Then they drove up toward Fort Garry, passing through Sauk Centre, Alexandria and Fort Abercrombie. They bought some provisions on the way but found the prices very high.[197] The track was rough and dangerous and the mosquitoes were terrible. McDougall was in charge of travelling as he was the only one with any experience of the west.[198] Frog Point, Georgetown and Pembina were the only tiny settlements on the trail. Pembina was the last American point and contained a Customs House. The Hudson's Bay Company had a post on the other side of the border. The arrival of the party at this last point caused the following ceremony to take place:

> After crossing into our good and beloved Victoria's dominions, our party joined heartily in singing the national anthem, after which our loyal brother, E. R. Young, hoisted the Union Jack, a beautiful flag with which he was presented in Canada.199

It would require much less than Riel's unfortunate activities to inspire excessive British patriotism in men like these!

The party was obliged to stop when only four miles from Fort Garry and camp for the night because of the condition of the road. They found a place with some natural shelter as a great windstorm came up during the night

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197. Rev. George Young, ibid., 57.

198. Ibid., 59.

199. Ibid., 62.

which destroyed the property of others who were not as fortunate and who had camped on the open prairie around the fort. According to Young, a cart was blown across the river, a man killed and an Episcopal church levelled. It was reputed to be the worst windstorm experienced in the area. Young took the good fortune of his party as a special mark of Providence and a good omen.[200]

Winnipeg in 1868 was a depressing sight. It was surrounded by and full of mud. Young saw the town as:

> ....a few small stores with poor goods and high prices; one small tavern where "Dutch George" was "monarch of all his survey", a few passable dwellings with no "rooms to let", nor space for boarders; neither church nor school in sight or in prospect; population of about one hundred instead of one thousand as we expected....[201]

Things were even worse than usual in July of 1868 as a locust plague had destroyed the grain in the fields. Flour had risen as a consequence to thirty shillings per hundred pounds and oats for horses were two dollars a bushel. Besides all of this, the buffalo hunters were reporting little success.[202]

At this point the party broke up. E. R. Young embarked on a Hudson's Bay boat for Norway House. McDougall took his family and the Peter Campbells to the Saskatchewan country, and Rev. George Young was left in Winnipeg to begin a Methodist mission.

At first, Young thought that he might have to tent on the prairie with

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200. Rev. George Young, ibid., 63.

201. Ibid., 64.

202. Loc. cit.

his family but a kind couple allowed them to stay in their home for a period of three months until a mission building could be set up. Among Young's many practical difficulties was the opposition he suffered from "bat-like bigots"[203] who objected to the introduction of Methodism.

His first trip through the settlements along the Assiniboine River covered some sixty miles. He took his son with him and obtained permission to preach in the homes of several families. Young set up three appointments; Winnipeg, Sturgeon Creek and Headingly. A thirty-five mile journey through the "White Horse Plains" took him through French and Roman Catholic territory which was not very well settled. Young did not speak their language but he assumed that they were well provided for as they had a church with a bell, priests in residence and the Sisters of Charity.[204] From Windmill Point to Portage la Prairie, however, he found many who welcomed him. He also met some opposition here as well, presumably from English speaking people who would probably be Anglican. At Windmill Point an appointment was set up in the home of an English-speaking half breed who later became a class-leader.[205] A few miles further on another appointment was opened at the home of Mr. William Gowler and it was known as "Gowler's"[206] for many years thereafter. Young noted that Mr. Gowler was reprimanded by an unnamed official in the district who said

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203. Rev. George Young, ibid., 68.

204. Ibid., 69.

205. Ibid., 70.

206. Loc. cit.

that Mr. Young had no permission to preach from the Anglican bishop and that, in any case, he would soon be discouraged and return to the east. Mr. Gowler was further informed that when this happened he (Mr. Gowler) would find himself isolated and in official disfavour for encouraging Methodist preaching in his own home.[207]

Thus it was that Rev. George Young came to the west to find a traditional enemy of Methodism: the displeasure of the Church of England. This opposition, combined with primitive conditions, would tend to produce a vital and militant type of Methodism that would be similar to that found in the Canadas in the 1840s, or in England at an earlier period. There would be little time to concentrate on connexional matters for the first year or so and then a "rebellion" would further disrupt the pattern.

Young opened an appointment at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Angus Smith at High Bluff and here organized the first Methodist class in the settlement. The surnames of the people in this first class were Smith, Inkster, Dillworth, Norquay and Murray. Eight miles further on he came to Portage where he opened an appointment in the home of a Presbyterian family. This marked the limit of his activities in this direction for a time.[208]

Unfortunately, Young provided little indication of the nature of these early classes. The class was the very corner-stone of traditional Methodism and had already become a sort of dry formality in Canada proper.[209]

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207. Rev. George Young, ibid., 71.

208. Ibid., 72.

209. See page 92.

It is likely that Young's classes were still somewhat enthusiastic and vital. They would have to offer something like this in order to compete with Presbyterians, combat official displeasure or interest people who were still living under relatively harsh conditions. Certainly the church could not yet appeal in a purely social or institutional sense because of the local conditions and the lack of any church or mission edifice.

Rev. Young began to look about for a larger place to rent to replace the accommodation in the private home where his family were living. A building was being put up at the corner of Portage Avenue and Main Street which was supposed to be ready in six weeks. Young arranged for the rental of this as a place to live and hold services for the sum of $26.00 per month. In the usual transient western fashion, the builder ran out of money and was unable to finish it. Young, having behind him a limited source of hard cash from the Missionary Society, advanced him three months rent, hired a plasterer and even helped the man himself. In spite of all these efforts, the work progressed slowly and Young and his family were compelled to board in "Dutch George's" tavern. Meanwhile, the cold of approaching mid winter froze the newly plastered walls of the unfinished building at Portage and Main and fires had to be kept in all the rooms to dry the plaster. Young had enough of tavern living in a very short time, however, and the family moved into the new and still unfinished building on the 13th of December, 1868. The next day, the lower flat was opened as "Wesley Hall" and church services begun as it was Sunday. Sunday school was conducted in the afternoon and Young also conducted two services in the country. Before the new building was opened Young had held his

Winnipeg services in the courtroom in the fort, where services had been poorly attended because of the small and uncomfortable accommodation. Now, in the new building attendance increased and an evening service and a weekly class meeting were quickly added.[210]

The winter of 1868-1869 was unusually severe. It was also a "famine" winter as a number of families almost starved because of the failure of the buffalo hunt and the locust plague of the previous season. To offset the coming disaster, the leaders of the settlement, including the clergy, tried to organize relief by drawing up lists of the destitute and appealing to the outside world for help. A schedule was drawn up by November 1868 which showed that there were 216 families in the Protestant section of the country (a total of 951 persons) who needed immediate aid.[211] Twenty barrels of flour a week and a large amount of meat were distributed before the end of November. Later, the number of persons needing relief rose to 3000 and a great deal of difficulty was experienced in getting supplies from the distant railroad terminal to the settlement, and from the settlement itself to the families scattered around it. The Red River freighters, who did not receive any of the handouts, agreed to haul the supplies in the dead of winter for one half of their loads upon delivery.[212] On a visit to White Mud River, some eighty miles from Winnipeg, Young found the few settlers there living on jack-rabbits and fish caught through the ice. The buffalo hunters went out but found no buffalo and were forced

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210. Rev. George Young, op. cit., 73-74.

211. Ibid., 79.

212. Ibid., 70.

to eat their horses.[213]

The missions found all this a heavy burden of expense even though Young always seemed to have enough money to buy what was necessary. He was also sent special collections and contributions from parts of Canada which gave him something to distribute.[214] Being in possession of these resources could not have harmed the Methodist cause in the settlement, and probably did much to extend its influence.

Young soon turned his attention to the construction of a proper church building and a manse. He arranged with two members of his High Bluff class to "get out" timber-oak and poplar for the buildings and raft it down to Fort Garry in the spring, (1869). This was done, and a Mr. Ashdown, described as one of the "most industrious and courageous of all the newcomers", supplied more timber and helped with the painting, glazing and lathing when the buildings were under construction. Mr. Ashdown was to become one of the chief lay pillars of Methodism in the area.[215]

Young also applied to Governor Mctavish for a proper site for his buildings and the request was forwarded, as usual, to London. A site was duly granted which could be chosen by the local governor himself. While Mctavish was absent, Young chose a vacant site but was told by another Company official that he could not have it. Upon his return, Mctavish granted the site that Young had chosen "to the great surprise of not a few".[216]

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213. Rev. George Young, ibid., 71.

214. Ibid., 80.

215. Ibid., 82.

216. Ibid., 83.

After a great deal of heavy work, a new mission house and stable were opened on August 17, 1869. The first sermon was preached on August 22nd. This was known as Wesley Hall No. 2 and was to be used as the mission church and manse until the church proper was finally completed in September of 1871, after being held up by events in the settlement.[217]

In a letter to Mr. John MacDonald, Young, in Methodist fashion provided an extract from his daily journal to indicate the extent of his preaching, and to provide something for publication to encourage the support of mission work. The extract is from the month of February, 1869. From this it appears that he occasionally visited the Lower Fort and that he had a total mission area of about one hundred miles in length. For example, he preached in Winnipeg on a Sunday morning (both Sunday school and service) and then at Sturgeon Creek at two p.m. At 4:40 he held a Sunday school and another service at Gowler's, four miles further on.[218] On Monday he drove forty miles and preached on two hours notice. On Tuesday he preached at High Bluff, eight miles from the settlement. Here, he helped some who were, he recorded, "actively engaged in rebelling against the Divine throne and the Government".[219] (The two seemed almost synonomous in Young's usage.) On Wednesday he was met by someone from Mud River which was twenty-seven miles from High Bluff and he returned there with them. Here, he baptized, held services and returned to High

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217. Rev. George Young, loc. cit.

218. Ibid., 84.

219. Ibid., 86.

Bluff on Thursday evening. On Friday night he preached at a new appointment near High Bluff and on Saturday gave a temperance lecture at which time twenty signed the pledge. At this point he recorded: "This land is rum cursed".[220] The following week began much the same way except that he started by preaching on Monday at Headingly.

Before proceeding further with the career of George Young as seen through his own published account, it is useful to look at him through other eyes than his own. The Methodist Missionary Society kept up a voluminous correspondence with the missionaries that was not always reciprocated. These letters of instruction and admonition were not for publication and the matters discussed in them are often not found at all in official published material. They also provide a quick view of what Young's colleagues were doing in this period before the Riel affair.

A letter from Toronto dated September 7, 1868, reprimanded E. R. Young for signing some bills of exchange at the instigation of Mr. Stringfellow when the two met as Young was replacing the latter at Norway House. The Committee considered this a grave breach of policy. The letter also suggested that Young should report more fully on his activities to the Committee as "It is not very gratifying to the officers of the Society to receive information of what the missionaries are doing from other sources".[221] The letter was signed by Enoch Wood and Lachlan Taylor.

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220. Rev. George Young, ibid., 87-88.

221. Canadian Wesleyan Missions Letter Book 1868-1880, MSS. Henceforth, Letter Book, 1868-1880, Enoch Wood and Lachlan Taylor to E. R. Young, September 7, 1869, 36.

They would have more reason to write such letters to E. R. Young in the future.

A letter from Taylor to George McDougall, dated February 20, 1868, thanked him for his brief letter telling of the safe arrival of the party. This was not sufficient, however, and the Committee were "anxiously looking for a full and detailed account both from yourself and Bro. Campbell...."[222] This was to be sent as soon as possible and McDougall was instructed to "Take the time and write an article that we can insert in our Missionary Notices".[223] They also wanted a "detailed account of your expenditure"[224] in the matter of the cost of the trip from Red River and poor McDougall was told: "Do not fail in this...." because all the expense had to be properly sanctioned "according to our usages".[225] They enclosed the appropriations for the year ending June, 1869 which provided $1000.00 for the Blackfeet Indian Mission and the same amount for White Fish Lake. Then McDougall was treated to another long discourse on the absolute necessity of regular reports and adherence to all the detail of financial regulations. He was told that "you are not to draw on us under any circumstances or for any purpose whatsoever."[226] Worse still, complaints had come to the Committee about some misconduct on the part of the

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222. L. Taylor to George McDougall, February 20, 1869, 65.

223. Loc. cit.

224. Loc. cit.

225. Loc. cit.

226. Letter Book, 1868-1880, ibid., 67.

missionaries. McDougall's son was instructed to send a letter "explanatory of the transaction"[227] which appear to have to do with the following type of misconduct reminiscent of the James Evans affair:

> We have had an intimation that some of our agents in the Hudson's Bay Territory engage in trading with the natives. We have only to state that our Discipline, which on this point cannot be misunderstood; [sic] must be enforced in that territory; [sic] as strictly as in the home work; and any departure from it, when certified to us, will receive immediate attention....228

These cheerful communications indicate the size of the gap between the noble sentiments and good fellowship expressed in published letters and the more private communications from the Society. They also indicate the extent of Canadian Methodism's dependence upon a written report to substantiate, or give body to, work in a distant field of labour. From the point of view of the institutional leaders, a complete and picturesque report was the basic unit to be lined up with elaborate financial machinery to give all adherents to their church the necessary sense of participation and forward movement. People could read about dangerous and spectacular mission work and then give to support more of it, which provided more spectacular reports. McDougall, it appears, on the surface at least, was a heroic and spectacular missionary who had little time to write. The system was bound to encourage people of the same stamp as William Mason, who spent all their time on their reports.[229] It was also bound to produce sooner or later, an Egerton Ryerson Young.

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227. Letter Book, 1868-1880, loc. cit.

228. Loc. cit.

229. See page

Rev. George Young fared somewhat better than his colleague. He had been, in Ontario, fairly close to the inner councils of officialdom and was well acquainted with the correct administration of connexional detail. A letter to him from Wood on February 20, 1869, thanked him for his cheerful communications and discussed rather amiably the matter of the three thousand dollars which was being raised for the construction of the church at Red River.[230]

Another letter, dated May 10, 1869, told Young that an ordained single man would be sent out as he had requested. A humourous note in this letter referred to a man that Young had asked for specifically to be sent out as his assistant. Wood had also favoured the man but upon enquiring about him found that he had become a lunatic and had gone home to die. The whole long letter was very cordial and intimate as far as George Young himself was concerned but his colleagues were censured. E. R. Young had already embarked on his career of seeking publicity in the manner of the later Lawrence of Arabia:

> Will you intimate to the Norway House Brother not to send copies of what he writes to the Mission Rooms to any of his friends; for they are given to publishers of local papers, and have anticipated what we had prepared for our own publication.231

Wood then proceeded to note that the "surrender of the Western Territory to the Canadian Government creates intense satisfaction".[232] He believed

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230. Letter Book, 1868-1880, op. cit., Enoch Wood to G. Young, February 20, 1869, 68.

231. Ibid., Enoch Wood to G. Young, May 10, 1869, 78.

232. Loc. cit.

that the transfer would stimulate a great deal of settlement by "our people" on the plains of the Saskatchewan.[233]

The remainder of the letter dealt with financial matters: E. R. Young was again in the wrong, and the Treasurer was also "greatly puzzled and annoyed by drafts from the brethren beyond you" (in the Saskatchewan District).[234] E. R. Young had sent in three different orders for personal items for his comfort and the Committee considered this excessive. If he required anything else, Rev. George Young, as Chairman of the District, was to get it in Winnipeg or across the border. George Young was permitted to do this for E. R. Young as he saw fit, even though the usages did not provide for it. E. R. Young was such a problem that the Committee put his supervision in the hands of George Young, hoping that he could deal with him. Wood closed with the observation that:

> We have been astonished at the quantities of Egerton's orders of some articles, more than any of us ever had in our wardrobes at the same time.235

Egerton himself received a letter dated May 17, 1869. He was told that the Committee felt that his repetitive orders for some items made them think that he was going in for the "retail trade",[236] or else he anticipated being shut up or isolated for a long time. They suggested that he get his supplies from Red River where they had "a prudent and

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233. Letter Book, 1868-1880, loc. cit.

234. Loc. cit.

235. Ibid., 79.

236. Ibid., Enoch Wood to Rev. E. R. Young, May 17, 1869, 81.

thoughtful agent",[237] or at least a few things from the Hudson's Bay store at Norway House. The Committee noted that he had informed them that the Company did not wish to see him after they had paid their 50 pound sterling allotment to the mission. Wood felt that "the more independent we are of them the better it will be for our missionary enterprise".[238] E. R. Young was instructed to work through Rev. George Young at Red River, and was then assured that the Committee did not wish to see him or his family naked or starving but "they cannot give you all things richly to enjoy...."[239] The letter closed with a note of appreciation for E. R. Young's voluminous accounts of the epic journeys he was making all over the north, which were invariably crowned with success. He was, however, cautioned again in mild terms about sending his mission correspondence to his friends for publication.[240]

On July 14, 1869, Rev. George Young was joined in the work around the Red River Settlement by the Rev. Matthew Robison who came out as his assistant. Young had asked that none be sent out but "an earnest, devout, adaptive and consecrated young man"[241] and in Young's own words: "Mr. Robison, from the first, filled the bill...."[242] Young took him around to meet all the people and saw that he obtained a horse, harness and buckboard.

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237. Letter Book, 1868-1880, loc. cit.

238. Loc. cit.

239. Loc. cit.

240. Loc. cit.

241. Rev. George Young, op. cit., 90.

242. Loc. cit.

Robison was stationed at High Bluff and supplied Windmill Point, Gowler's, Portage la Prairie and White Mud River (now Westbourne). Rev. Young himself then preached at the following points: Headingly, Sturgeon Creek, Woodlands, Rockwood, Lower Fort Garry, Springfield, Prairie Grove and Winnipeg.[243]

Young recorded with satisfaction that Robison did not send his people to get out timber and supplies to build his churches, but rather he led them on such expeditions and helped in the actual construction. According to Young, this was typical of Methodist preachers in the early days. He noted that there were a few who felt that they should not share in such labour but "they did not make much headway among the people."[244]

While Young found Robison excellent in every respect, the Committee, found fault with him in connexional matters. In a letter from Toronto, dated October 8, 1869, the Committee thanked Young for his extensive reports and then turned immediately to financial matters. They admitted that they expected to pay for some things not in the regular arrangements, these being designated "extraordinaries",[245] but they were surprised to find furniture in this category for Bro. Robison, as his board and horse expenses were all supposed to be provided by the people. The Committee appreciated the good reports that Young had sent in about Robison's work, but "still must express our astonishment at his dereliction of duty in

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243. Rev. George Young, ibid., 92.

244. Ibid., 93.

245. Letter Book, 1868-1880, op. cit., Enock Wood & Lachlan Taylor to G. Young, October 8, 1869, 95.

not writing to the Committee".[246] They still had considerable confidence in Robison, however: "We have great confidence in his principles and prudence and therefore feel less apprehension of his Bachelor mode of life than otherwise would trouble us".[247]

More important information, regarding the political events which would soon convulse the territory, was contained in the latter part of this communication:

> You will learn with pleasure that yesterday afternoon we had an interview with your new governor, the Hon. Wm. McDougall. He shows himself very friendly-recollected your ministry in Quebec and intimated his readiness to give fair play and justice to our claims. We think he will hold the balance of different religious pretensions and expectations equitably; and hope his measures may so far command your approval as to secure whatever moral influence on his behalf which yourself, or any of your colleagues may possess. Notwithstanding his Methodist origin you are to bear in mind that he is a thorough Politician and having given his life to this you are not to expect more from him towards the interests of the church you represent than from any other man. If it were necessary we should not hesitate publishing to the world that as Servants of the Missionary Society, and the warm friends of human freedom, and the best interests of the future inhabitants of the vast territory over which he is appointed to preside that we are devoutly thankful to God a Papist has not been appointed as the first governor. He may well have difficulties to contend against, but we anticipate for him a successful career in laying broad foundations of a Government which will embrace our own favourite motto - "the friend of all, the enemy of none."[248]

Little did the Committee realize how great McDougall's difficulties would

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246. Letter Book, 1868-1880, ibid., 96.

247. Ibid., 95.

248. Ibid., 97.

be! They appear to have had little or no knowledge of the feelings of those people in the Settlement who were not looking forward to joining the new dominion. Instead, they saw a friend of Methodism being installed as the supreme authority in a new territory which would soon attract many more Methodists from Ontario. It seemed as if their cause would become very firmly established at once and thus be able to play a leading role from the beginning. The letter closed with a discussion of the possibility of another exercise of that much favoured Methodist device; another "deputation" which would give the new civil government in the colony an account of the state of the missions along with the usual expressions of loyalty and goodwill.[249]

A letter to poor George McDougall from the Secretaries, dated December 29, 1869 lamented the complete lack of communication from either John or his father, and noted with profound regret that there was even confusion in financial matters as John was now stationed at Victoria which did not fit in with prearranged plans. The Committee closed this letter of admonition by lamenting George McDougall's return to his old ways after he returned to the Saskatchewan country, when the Committee had hoped that so many years of complaint from them would have caused him to mend his ways![250]

It is time to consider now the view that Rev. George Young took of the first Riel Affair. His work, and that of Rev. Robison, was affected

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249. Letter Book, 1868-1880, loc. cit.

250. Ibid., Enoch Wood and Lachlan Taylor to George McDougall. December 29, 1869, 110-111.

and sometimes brought to a halt by this event. Unfortunately, Young's account was written many years later (1897) at which time he was careful to make a clear case for his particular view of the events. Nevertheless, his account is an interesting one and has a certain validity as he was there at the time and was often directly involved.

Young made it very clear in his book that he at no time held any of the more moderate views of the whole matter. In this, of course, he is in direct opposition to the most popular academic interpretations of the present day, and from the manner of his writing, he appears to have been opposed by more moderate English Canadians in his own time:

> There were some in the country at that date, as possibly there are now, of the milk and water class, whose principles would not allow of their using the term rebellion in this connection, and so they could only write or speak of the "troubles" through which the Red River Settlement was passing. Yet to many of us these troubles were even more than troublesome, and the troublers themselves none other than organized rebels, who, having in a treacherous way possessed themselves of power, were now using that power in terrorizing, plundering and cruelly imprisoning many of her Majesty's loyal subjects....[251]

Young's first intimation of trouble came from the pages of the Norwester, which reported that an agitation was going on "among a certain portion of the people of the country (the French halfbreeds)"[252] because of the proposed transfer of the territory to the Dominion of Canada. Young found this incredible as, according to him, a petition, "numerously

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251. Rev. George Young, op. cit., 100.

252. Ibid., 101.

signed",[253] had been forwarded to the Canadian Parliament as early as 1857 asking that such a transfer be arranged. Also, during the recent famine season, large supplies of food and seed grain had been sent to the Settlement from Canada, part of which had gone to the very people who were presently in a state of agitation. These supplies had not even been exhausted by the time that the agitation had begun. According to Young, rumours were being spread throughout the Settlement about "wrongs, which they were told, the Imperial Government, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Government of Canada were conspiring to inflict on the country".[254]

Young admitted that Riel had great talents as a public orator, but he deplored the uses to which he put these talents in the form of making speeches to his "countrymen and co-religionists"[255] outside the door of the church after Sunday service. The "rebellion" began, according to Young, when Riel and his followers heard that Wm. McDougall had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor and was on his way to the west to establish the government. The first actual step "in open rebellion against the Government and the laws of the Province of Assiniboia"[256] was taken on October 21st, 1869, when "a few days after Mr. Howe's mysterious visit had terminated",[257] an armed detachment of Riel's followers took possession of the highway at a narrow place near Stinking River. Here, they proceeded

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253. Rev. George Young, loc. cit.

254. Ibid., 102.

255. Loc. cit.

256. Ibid., 103.

257. Loc. cit.

to stop all traffic and allowed none to pass without permits from their officials. Young noted that some traffic was allowed to proceed but in other cases property was confiscated. The incoming property of the Lieutenant-Governor's party, which included furniture and arms and ammunition, was thus, "eagerly appropriated".[258] The Governor and Council met on October 25th and urged the leaders of the "insurrection" to cease their opposition to the arrival of McDougall. They refused to do this, and instead, sent a messenger to McDougall at Pembina, forbidding him to enter the territory. McDougall entered in any case and camped at the Hudson's Bay post. Here, according to Young, he was met by Lepine and an armed party and was told to leave by nine the next morning or take the consequences. At eight the next morning the armed party returned and threatened McDougall's party again. A Mr. Hallet, who carried a message to them, was tied to a cart and forbidden to speak to the Governor's party. McDougall retired across the boundary.[259]

It will be seen from this account that Young omitted quite a bit from his story and tended to stress the things he considered to be illegal. He pointed out that "these French halfbreeds acted entirely on their own responsibility"[260] in stopping highway traffic and forcing the Governor to withdraw:

> They never conferred, up to that date and prior to that outrage, with the other and larger and more intelligent and influential portions of the people

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258. Rev. George Young, ibid., 104.

259. Loc. cit.

260. Ibid., 105.

> in relation to this matter; but treating the entire Protestant population of English, Scotch and Irish halfbreeds and Canadians and Americans as if they were nonentities, took it upon themselves to rush into rebellion....261

Young did admit, however, that Riel consented to a conference between a "few English-speaking Protestant"[262] representatives and his own party after the expulsion of the Governor, with the intent of discussing what should then be done. When these English-speaking people desired the entry of McDougall, Riel, according to Young, replied that "he could only come in over their dead bodies".[263] Thus, there was really no co-operation or free discussion with other elements in the settlement at this point. On November 17th, the Governor and Council of Assiniboia issued a proclamation asking the insurrectionists to lay down their arms and submit to the "Queen's authority".[264] The "rebels" of course, did not comply. In Young's view, this constituted obvious rebellion.

It will be seen from all this that there are two levels of conflict between Young's account thus far and the more generally accepted historical account provided by such authors as W. L. Morton[265] and G. F. G. Stanley.[266] The first level is one of interpretation of facts accepted by everyone:

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261. Rev. George Young, Loc. cit.

262. Ibid., 106.

263. Loc. cit.

264. Loc. cit.

265. W. L. Morton, Manitoba, A History, (Toronto, 1957).

266. Geroge F. G. Stanley, The Birth of Western Canada, op. cit.

for example, W. L. Morton suggests that "to deny the public highways to private individuals and to occupy the strong place of the Settlement at the head of armed men was only to skirt rebellion".[267] Morton, as if in some doubt about this, begins the quoted sentence with "if".[268] Morton perhaps thinks that a stronger interpretation of these actions is possible. Morton points out that John A. Macdonald was quick to grasp "the essential point" that the rebellion was not against "constituted authority" as such, but "against the assumption of sovereignty in the north-west by Canada".[269] So it may have been, but this is to discuss intention rather than action. It will be seen that Young ignores the whole question of legitimate racial or even economic aspirations and concentrates on strict legality. Most present interpretations of the Riel affair of 1870 concentrate on the intentions of Riel,[270] as Macdonald did.

On another level, there is a great deal of detail left out of Young's account that is found in various other histories of the troubles but there is some detail in his that is missing from other accounts. The detail peculiar to Young's account deals mainly with the conduct of Riel and his men in matters such as the treatment of prisoners and their general conduct toward other groups in the Settlement. The treatment accorded Hallet is a mild example provided to date. Young's concentration on these matters

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267. Morton, op. cit., 124.

268. Loc. cit.

269. Loc. cit.

270. See, for example, Joseph Kinsey Howard, Strange Empire, a narrative of the north-west, William Morrow & Co., (New York, 1952), 14-17.

probably would serve as a good indication of how the "Canadian" elements in the Settlement viewed Riel's actions. People in Ottawa, or in Ontario generally, could afford to be much more broadminded up until the time of Scott's execution. Young's method is simply to describe the sufferings of the Canadian element in some detail. This does not mean that his account is untrue, rather, it is selective. It should perhaps be taken as typical of outlook of one cultural group in what was, essentially a conflict of cultures. In short, a situation where the term "bigotry" as applied to local people on the spot, has little or no meaning.

To return to Young's account; Fort Garry was seized on November 3rd, 1869. Riel marched into the fort with one hundred and twenty armed half-breeds. He had companies of armed men in the Settlement, making a total of about six hundred. In the Fort he found thirteen six pounders and four hundred Enfield rifles. Young quoted Riel's answer to the Chief Factor who asked him why he had taken the fort: He replied that he had taken it to protect it "from all danger".[271] Young considered this to be nonsense. The people of the village knew nothing of this until a clerk of the Hudson's Bay store who was a Canadian leaped from the walls, after spiking one of the guns, and then reported the whole incident.[272]

McDougall, at Pembina, in the belief that the transfer would take place on the 1st of December, issued his "Queen's Proclamation" and commissioned Colonel Dennis to enroll companies of loyalists "for the

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271. Rev. George Young, op. cit., 107.

272. Loc. cit.

suppression of the rebellion and the re-establishment of peace".[273] Some four hundred men, mostly from Winnipeg and the "lower settlement", were enrolled. These became disheartened, according to Young, when they found out that they did not have sufficient supplies or munitions and no able commander. Many "fell away" at this point but Dennis was still left with about fifty volunteers at the Lower Fort. He then took the disastrous step of placing fifty or sixty poorly equipped men at Schultz' store to guard some government provisions. These buildings were within range of the fort guns and could be easily surrounded. This last was accomplished by Riel's men and the siege went on for three days. At the end of this time Riel made preparations for an assault, and on the morning of December 7th, Rev. George Young visited him to dissuade him from this and to obtain the release of his son who was one of those on guard duty at the store. This last he secured in the following way:

> In my desperation, I presume I put the case before him pretty urgently, receiving in return such browbeating and insulting language as was decidedly trying to patience and self-respect, until, seeing an opportunity as we neared the buildings, I beckoned my son, and unhindered by the surrounding guards, we both made our way to our mission home close by.[274]

The men at Schultz' store were taken into captivity by Riel. Young was very disturbed by this action and by the conditions the prisoners were forced to endure.

Meanwhile, the Missionary Committee, in the person of Dr. Wood, took a more detached view. In a letter to Young dated January 5, 1870, he

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273. Rev. George Young, ibid., 108.

274. Ibid., 110.

took an almost cheerful position:

> Amidst the painful commotions which have taken place in Red River, we cannot but adore the good Providence of God which has thrown around you and yours protection and strength. The respect shown you both by ecclesiastical and lay residents of your present dwelling place excited our gratitude to the Master you serve and shows their intelligent estimate of the work in which you are engaged. Our whole system, like the Kingdom of Christ our great Examplary, "is out of this world". The genius of Methodism keeps its ministers free from the turbulent wars of politics; from the beginning this has always been our motto--"the friend of all--the enemies of none".275

They added: "Of course we may be mistaken in our views, but we anticipate for you and your family, whoever may the governing party in Red River, the utmost liberty and protection".[276] The Committee was also of the opinion that Young would have even more influence than usual in the present situation because his supplies and means of support would not be cut off and he would be in a position to help. Actually, the Committee seemed to be overjoyed that a Methodist minister was actually on the scene and gaining recognition for himself and his denomination. They took the view that the delay in his church building plans was only temporary as was the interruption of the steady expansion of the work. It is possible that Young hinted for his own removal, although we only have the letters which he chose to quote in his book and these make no mention of any such request to the Committee. The Secretaries felt that it was necessary to set him straight on the matter of leaving his post:

> Unless you are warned away, and this can only be

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275. Letter Book, 1868-1880, op. cit., Enoch Wood to George Young, January 5th, 1870, 114.

276. Loc. cit.

> done by the adoption of a public policy, which will affect all Protestant ministers as well as yourself, we should look upon your voluntary abandonment of the station you so honourably occupy as exceedingly disastrous to our whole work in the Territory.[277]

This appears to have been more than a gentle hint and may have been in answer to a less than heroic request from Young for removal from an intolerable situation. If he deserted his station it would, of course, be bad publicity for a proud denomination and a blow to institutional pride, especially if other Protestant clergy remained.

Rev. George Young acted as unofficial chaplain to Thomas Scott. The execution of Scott filled Young with horror and provided him with a reason to write his book, which is primarily an attempt to establish Scott as a genuine Protestant martyr. Young sent his wife and son out of the territory during the Riel troubles, but maintained that he assured the Missionary Committee that he would remain steadfastly at his post.[278]

Young greeted the liberation with great joy. He put up a huge welcome banner and rang his recently acquired church bell with great enthusiasm. Unfortunately, a large downpour of rain prevented the amount of pomp and ceremony he felt was appropriate for the occasion.[279]

The arrival of the troops was beneficial in more ways than one. Many of them were Ontario Methodists who became active supporters of Young's church. Even some of those who were not Methodists found his

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277. Letter Book, 1868-1880, loc. cit.

278. Rev. George Young, loc. cit.

279. Ibid., 187-188.

congregation congenial. Non-commissioned officers and men of the Ontario battalion helped to swell the ranks of the local Methodists.[280] The Sunday School in Winnipeg had been broken up because of the scattering of families during the "reign of terror". Among the soldiers were some men of wide Methodist experience who helped him reconstruct the school. Captain Kennedy, a man named Gardiner, and a Lieutenant Mulvey were very helpful. Mulvey was an Episcopalian who helped teach a large Bible Class.[281] Kennedy later became a Colonel and was mayor of the city for a time. He took part in the Sudan campaign and died in a London hospital during the second Riel affair of 1885.[282]

Finally, there is a hint in the correspondence of the Missionary Society to the effect that Young's account of his own resolute conduct during the Riel affair is not entirely trustworthy. As was mentioned before, the Committee felt that he should remain in the Settlement until all the Protestant groups were driven out. A letter from Enoch Wood to Young, dated March 4, 1870, might lead us to suspect that Young considered leaving his post:

> A variety of rumours have been circulating around us all tending to the conclusion that at an early and favourable period you intend the removal of Mrs. Young and your son from Red River which has produced the painful impression upon our own mission that the plain meaning of such a movement is your abandonment of the station. We are the more inclined to make this inference from your having intimated to ourselves that you first desired to send them to Pembina--then you named Toronto--and proceeded to suggest how <u>your</u> place might be supplied. The profound and almost universal interest

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280. Rev. George Young, <u>ibid</u>., 193.

281. <u>Ibid</u>., 194.

282. <u>Ibid</u>., 195.

> shown by our church in the commencement of the mission, and the very favourable reports you have made of your progress up to the time of the unhappy disturbances in the Settlement, only make the possibility of your early return more saddening and grievous. At present we are quite uninformed why anyone occupying such a position as yours [?] treated with respect and even [?] consideration by those....283

This communication closed with an expression of the hope that Young would stay in his place until the end of the trouble.

It would be wrong to cast any doubt on Young's character on the basis of a single letter, but there is more evidence of a similar kind in a letter from the Committee dated April 26th, 1870. This was written after Scott's death had become known. Wood and Taylor regretted the shedding of blood, and noted that it was more serious than any sort of interference with commerce, but they only devoted one sentence in their letter to this matter. They noted that Mrs. Young had arrived safely in Toronto and that young George had obtained a job. It appears that Rev. George Young had suggested that he make an inspection tour of the missions at Rossville and Oxford House. The Committee might well have interpreted this as an attempt to escape from the current difficulties in the settlement.

> With reference to your immediate visit to Rossville and Oxford House, unless you are really in any personal danger we would rather you would abide for the present at least in Winnipeg. After a full conversation with the President, this is our united judgement. Your devoted attention to your spiritual duties in reference to the prisoners, as also shown in your general ministerial labours, has given unspeakable satisfaction to the Committee, and to all

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283. Letter Book, 1868-1880, op. cit., Enoch Wood to George Young, March 4, 1870, 135-136. (Much of this letter cannot be read as it is a very poor copy.)

> the ministers and people of our own church, and we feel quite jealous lest your leaving the mission for any purpose less than to protect your life and liberty should have even the semblance of weariness and despondency.[284]

As far as the other missions in the north-west were concerned things proceeded much as before. Rev. George Young received a letter from the Committee dated January 8, 1870 which was concerned entirely with the financial arrangements of the Indian missions and the settlement circuits. The appropriation for the coming year (1870-1871) allowed $1000.00 for Winnipeg and Fort Garry, with $200.00 for High Bluff. Norway House received $100.00 and the teacher there got $250.00. Oxford House received a total of $500.00.[285]

A letter from Wood to Peter Campbell at Edmonton, dated January 11th of the same year, bemoaned the fact that no communication had been received from him.[286] A letter written the same day to H. B. Steinhauer at White Fish Lake assured him of the Committee's interest even though they did not write him very frequently. They were thankful for his letters but would not mind more detail and wished more accounts of "happy deaths" for publication. Henry was informed that the appropriation for his mission would be the same as it had been last year.[287]

Rev. George Young turned his attention again to the suspended process of building a church and manse as soon as he was able to do so. He had

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284. Letter Book, 1868-1880, ibid., Enoch Wood and Lachlan Taylor to George Young, April 26, 1870, 147.

285. Ibid., Enoch Wood and Lachlan Taylor to George Young, January 8, 1870, 115-116.

286. Ibid., Enoch Wood to Peter Campbell, January 11, 1870, 124.

287. Ibid., Enoch Wood to H. B. Steinhauer, January 11, 1870, 126-127.

intended to construct both in the summer of 1869 but a fall of the water level prevented a large part of his wood raft from coming down from High Bluff until the spring of 1870. The Riel troubles also put a stop to the work for a time. The raft in question was made of heavy timber, oak, poplar and elm. General lumber was harder to obtain even if one had the timber. He often had to have it "pit sawed" himself as most of the saw mill lumber was very crudely sawn and was usually only bad spruce. Even this quality of lumber cost, in the spring of 1871, about $70.00 per thousand feet and good quality lumber was $100.00 for the same quantity.[288] Young was forced to purchase old flat bottom boats from freighters at his own expense in order to get pine wood from them. These he broke up himself. He recorded his vexation at the halfbreed labourers that he hired to do the pit sawing for up to two and a half dollars a day who wasted much time smoking or talking to friends. In spite of all these hindrances, formal building operations began on the 10th of April, 1871.[289]

At the same time tenders were let out for the carpentry work in the new building. Gardiner and Dawson got the contract (Gardiner being a volunteer with the Canadian force at Fort Garry). He decided to stay on after his discharge. Two other men who were very helpful were Colonel Kennedy and Mr. Ashdown. Kennedy was a "first class painter, grainer and letterer"[290] and did much of the interior decoration. He put the name on the church which had been chosen by Young because the latter believed

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288. Rev. George Young, op. cit., 198.

289. Ibid., 199-200.

290. Ibid., 201.

that "Grace" had been very evident in the providential establishment of the Methodist cause in Red River.[291]

The size of the completed church was 30 by 50 feet with eighteen foot posts and a steep peaked roof. The whole was painted with special fire-proof paint on the roof. The interior had wainscotting of basswood and grained oak. Stain glass windows were provided, all donated by congregations in Ontario. The windows were designed by a Mr. Causland of Toronto and he personally donated the circular or rose window at the back of the church. When Grace Church was replaced by a large block known as "Wesley Hall Block", the windows were moved to a new church known as "Wesley Church".[292]

Young approached the Bishop of Rupert's Land in an ecumenical spirit and asked him to preach the first service in the new church "as if in one of his own churches".[293] The bishop replied that he would have liked to do this but he happened to be in the process of leaving for England and so could not accept the offer.[294]

The opening service was held on the 17th of September, 1871, with Young preaching in the morning and Robison in the afternoon. Young preached again in the evening and recorded that a large crowd put in an appearance in spite of an outbreak of "Red River fever". A planned concert and "soiree" had to be cancelled because of this epidemic. Total collections amounted to $221.12, and a concert on December 6th brought

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291. Rev. George Young, loc. cit.

292. Ibid., 101-102.

293. Loc. cit.

294. Loc. cit.

in a further $267.50. A collection taken up among the soldiers added $1,366.87. Mr. Ashdown and Kennedy collected another $250.00. Dr. W. L. M. Punshon came out later and gave a series of lectures which brought in some more money for the new church and manse. A total figure mentioned by Young, after the deduction of running expenses, was $2,100.16.[295] By the end of 1871, institutionalized Canadian Methodism was on a firm financial footing in the Red River Settlement.

A complete chapter in Young's book was devoted to the Fenian Raids of 1871. Young noted that the loyal elements opposed the Fenians, while some of the supporters of Riel tended to co-operate with them. Thus, Irish, French and Catholic elements appeared in the same "disloyal" light.[296]

To turn briefly to the affairs of the Saskatchewan District; it will be recalled that McDougall wrote the Committee in 1871 to inform them about the seriousness of the smallpox epidemic and to record his personal loss to the ravages of the disease. The reply of the Committee, written in February of 1871, was for once, not one of criticism:

> Your communications announcing the lodgement of a fearful epidemic disease among the Indians in the Saskatchewan awakened in our mind apprehensions of the possibilities of its invading our Nipiwa nations and in addition to the ordinary trials and inconveniences of your secluded position removed from the advantages of civilized life, inflicting upon the Nipiwa families, and the newly formed churches surrounding them the calamities of a malady repulsive in its mildest form....297

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295. Rev. George Young, ibid., 207-208.

296. Ibid., See Chapter XIV.

297. Letter Book, 1868-1880, op. cit., Enoch Wood to Lachlan Taylor to George McDougall, February, 1871, 199.

The Committee, in the persons of Wood and Taylor, went on to discuss the plight of the unfortunate Indians with the happy observation that those who had been converted were at least assured of a reward.[298] At the end of the letter they turned to McDougall himself:

> And now dear Brother, we have before us your own domestic afflictions and bereavements. These have come rapidly, perhaps to yourself, from the manifest dangers and deaths around you--not altogether unexpectedly, the darkness has gathered thickly, and whilst suffering personally, thrice the arrow fled! and thrice the grave had to be opened for members of your own family. The Committee are not insensible to the harrowing incidents connected with the burying of your own dead, but rejoice with you in the assurance of their eternal safety. They are folded in the arms of the Great Shepherd, removed from the dangers and tempests of the present life....[299]

By November of the same year the Committee had returned to its usual petulant tone in its letters to the Rev. George McDougall. A letter of November 13th, from the Secretaries, concerned the ordination of his son, John, who would become a noted minister and writer in the Methodist cause:

> Arrangements must be made to have your son ordained, although you are aware the actual Disciplinary requirements have not been complied with, nor have we received from you sufficient accounts of his general attainments as to render our duty of recommending him for Ordination and Admission to the Conference as pleasurable to ourselves as you might have made it. Still, his piety and knowledge of the Cree language, blended with the educational advantages he has received, justify the expectation that by diligence and devotedness to God and His work, he may be useful in the conversion of vast numbers of Indians around you....[300]

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298. Letter Book, 1868-1880, ibid., 200.

299. Ibid., 202.

300. Ibid., Enoch Wood to George McDougall, November 13, 1871, 250-251.

The letter went on to note that either Wood or Taylor should be present at the ordination and asked McDougall when it should be held. They also wanted his expert opinion on travelling time and methods of conveyance for a journey embracing all the missions past Red River as far as Woodville.[301] Another letter to John McDougall written on November 14, 1871, from E. Wood informed him that his ordination and reception had been authorized and would be carried out either by a visit from Toronto or by the authorization of the local clergy.[302]

A minor difficulty appeared in the Saskatchewan District in 1871 when Peter Campbell complained that the Hudson's Bay Company had not paid its annual fifty pounds to the support of the Edmonton House mission and this had resulted in much hardship. A member of the Committee complained to the Company and found that the money had been placed to Rev. Campbell's credit through Rev. George Young. Campbell would have been able to draw goods on this credit but had not sent a proper financial form to Young, who, in turn had not been able to fill in the right form for the Missionary Committee! The Committee found this very humiliating and all concerned were lectured on the need for administrative efficiency.[303]

The Committee considered opening a mission at Nelson River on the advice of E. R. Young but he changed his mind and Beren's River was considered instead. Most annoying, however, Robison suddenly appeared in

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301. Letter Book, 1868-1880, loc. cit.

302. Ibid., Enoch Wood to John McDougall, November 14, 1871, 253.

303. Ibid., L. Taylor to George Young, November 25, 1871, 258 and also L. Taylor to Peter Campbell, December 9, 1871, 279-280.

Toronto and would only return to the west for one more year.[304]

George Young provided the details of Robison's strange case in his book. Robison decided to resume his education at Victoria University at Coburg. Young begged him to stay for another year. Then, Robison's mother became very ill in the winter of 1871, and he made the difficult journey back to Ontario. Here, he visited the Missionary Committee in Toronto, much to their dismay. He returned to the west to attend the Conference of 1872 but was still determined to return to college. He was allowed to go, but, according to Young, worked so hard that his health was impaired. He got worse and decided in 1878 to visit Manitoba again in the hope that the climate would improve his health. Here he declined even more rapidly and returned to Ontario to die on December 17, 1878. Young was convinced that this was all because of his abandonment of the Manitoba work, which, in Young's view, was his real destiny.[305]

A letter to George Young from Taylor in July of 1872, hoped that the two new men, A. Bowerman and M. Fawcett, would prove useful and that the much discussed "deputation" to the western missions "will come to you in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ".[306] Rev. George McDougall received a more formal notice:

> I congratulate you and the other members of the District on the privilege you will enjoy as this reaches you of Christian intercourse with the honoured servants of Christ who compose the Deputation appointed to meet the Missionaries of both

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304. Letter Book, 1868-1880, ibid., Enoch Wood to George Young, May 8, 1872, 289-290.

305. Rev. George Young, op. cit., 96-97.

306. Letter Book, 1868-1880, op. cit., L. Taylor to George Young, July, 1882, 296-297.

> Districts at Winnipeg. From their sermons and addresses you will receive much instruction, and I trust spiritual profit--and from a full free conversation on all matters pertaining to the work, you will get such suggestions as will be of great service to you in the future, and I trust, you will return to your field in the far north even like a gnat refreshed with the fullness of new wine....307

It can only be imagined what the sturdy George McDougall thought as he read this amazing communication. The administrators of connexionalism were coming from Toronto to give him some helpful hints on how to approach the murderous Blackfeet! More likely, they would instruct him on the niceties of connexional paper work. The rest of the letter reprimanded him, as usual, for neglecting proper financial usages. It was in this year that the Saskatchewan District really became independent with McDougall as Chairman. Until this time (1872) Rev. George Young had been really in charge of the whole area, but it proved very difficult to administer effectively an area so far from Red River. The change was probably delayed by McDougall's lack of enthusiasm for the necessary paper work.

A letter to McDougall from Taylor in November, 1872 announced that Taylor himself had been appointed to visit all the missions in both Districts and that he intended to leave Toronto in May of 1873. Rev. John McDougall was to meet him at Fort Garry to act as a guide.[308] (Taylor had not been included in the "deputation" of 1872.) A similar

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307. Letter Book, 1868-1880, ibid., L. Taylor to George McDougall, July 13, 1872, 299.

308. Ibid., L. Taylor to George McDougall, November 28, 1872, 323.

letter announcing this intention was sent to Rev. George Young.[309] Both letters contained the amusing observation that the removal of the Rev. John McDougall from the active work to act as guide would be compensated for by Taylor himself, who would undertake to address Indian tribes along the way provided they could be gathered for that purpose into suitable groups.[310]

The first Manitoba Missionary Conference grew out of the continued suggestions that some officials of the Missionary Committee and the Conference should personally visit the western missions, which had really not been examined in this way since Dr. John Ryerson's visit in 1854. Rev. George Young received definite word of the coming visits on the 16th of February, 1872, when he received the following telegram:

> Summon missionaries of both Districts to meet the deputation, Punshon, Wood and MacDonald, August first, at Winnipeg.
> (Signed) "Wood and Taylor" 311

Old Doctor Wood was the first to arrive, having made the difficult two days and two nights journey from Moorhead by stage. Dr. Punshon and MacDonald took the steamer up the Red River instead and did not suffer as much. They had been warned by telegram not to try the stagecoach route.[312] The missionaries from the distant points arrived quickly, and the conference actually opened ahead of schedule in Grace Methodist

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309. Letter Book, 1868-1880, ibid., L. Taylor to George Young, November 30, 1872.

310. Ibid., and supra, n. 350.

311. Quoted in Rev. George Young, op. cit., 230.

312. Loc. cit.

Church on the 26th of July, 1872. Its proceedings have been described elsewhere.[313]

313. See page 135.

## CHAPTER III THE FAILURE OF THE INDIAN MISSIONS

There is little real discussion of the philosophy of Indian education in Methodist literature. Instead, Indian schools were discussed, for the most part, as an administrative problem. It was difficult to find suitable teachers who were both upright moral Christians with some education, and willing to serve in some distant outpost for little pay. After the transfer of the Hudson's Bay Territory to the Dominion government, the church missions faced a new problem in administrative conflicts with the government in the matter of Indian education.

In the process of making arrangements for the Western Indian which would lead to the reserve system, the federal government had to provide basic education facilities under its own jurisdiction for Indian children.[1] Church mission schools were already well established in many places and were too well established in terms of buildings and equipment to be suddenly discontinued. They could not be taken over legally or expropriated without raising a hornet's nest of denominational wrath. Accordingly, a system of dual control and support was evolved which was cumbersome to say the least. It led to endless conflict between officials of the Dominion government and the Methodist Missionary Society.

The Letter Book of Dr. Alexander Sutherland, D. D., for the period 1880-1883 is useful for highlighting some of the exchanges between the Methodists and the Dominion government on the subject of Indian mission schools. In a section entitled "Memorandum of Certain Interviews",

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1. For a full discussion of the reserves and the Indian school problem see Chapter XI in George F. G. Stanley, The Birth of Western Canada, University of Toronto Press, (reprint), (Toronto, 1963).

Dr. Sutherland tells of his meeting with Sir John A. Macdonald, Minister of the Interior, James C. Aikins, Secretary of State, and Lawrence Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, regarding the Methodist schools among the Indians.[2] A section entitled "Preliminary Remarks", gives some idea of the events leading up to the interview:

> During the past few years considerable correspondence has passed between the Missionary Secretaries and the Department of the Interior in reference to the Indian Day Schools conducted by the Missionary Society, and also in reference to the Industrial Farm and Schools at Muncey. In the spring of 1878 documents embodying the views and wishes of the Society were laid before the Hon. David Mills, at that time Minister of the Interior, by a deputation composed of Rev. Dr. Ryerson, Dr. Rice, A. Sutherland, and John MacDonald, Esq. The various points were discussed and it was promised on the part of the Government that the whole matter would be enquired into, and the grievances remedied as far as possible. The general election which occurred in the early autumn of the same year and the overthrow of the government of the day, put a stop to negotiations and the questions involved remained for some time in abeyance. At a meeting of the Central Board in 1879 they were again brought forward, and the Secretaries were instructed to press for a settlement. Some time afterwards a fresh statement of the case was prepared by the General Secretary, at the request of the Hon. J. C. Aikins, who brought the matter under the notice of the Minister of the Interior who instructed the Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, Mr. Vankoughnet, to examine and report upon the same.3

Sutherland visited Ottawa on the 20th of February, 1880, to meet with Aikins, who had made arrangements to see the Minister of the Interior.

On the morning of February 23rd, Sutherland and Aikins proceeded

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2. Sutherland Letters, Letter Book, 1880-1883, MSS, February 23-24, 30. (A book of copies of letters sent by Alexander Sutherland, D.D., General Secretary of Canadian Methodist Missionary Society.) Henceforth, Sutherland Letters.

3. Loc. cit.

to the home of Sir John A. Macdonald and were "courteously received" by him.[4] Sir John read the report on the whole matter which had been written by Lawrence Vankoughnet and then talked about it for a short time. According to Sutherland's account, "He then said":[5]

> Mr. Aikins, you have more time than I, will you meet with Dr. Sutherland and Mr. Vankoughnet, talk over these matters, and try to put them in workable shape?6

As a result of further meetings between Aikins and Sutherland, several conclusions were reached which were to be the basis for future policy.[7] They were to be the basis for future conflict as well and so are worth noting in some detail:

> In regard to Indian Day Schools in the N. West
>
> 1. The Society complains that several of these schools have been excluded from participation in Grants from the Department, and that grants have been withheld from others for several years. In reply it was stated (1) that thus far grants had been authorized by Order-in-Council to three schools only - Norway House, Beren's River and Whitefish Lake, (2) that the schools at Nelson River and Oxford House were outside of Treaty limits, (3) that grants had been withheld because suitable returns had not been sent in, (4) that arrears due to the participating schools will be paid when proper returns are sent covering the period for which arrears are claimed, (5) the amount of aid to such schools is $12 per annum per capita of the average attendance for the whole year but not to exceed $300 to any one school.
>
> 2. Grants to new schools - Grants to new schools where there are others on the reserve receiving aid, will be made from time to time, on application being made accompanied by proper returns showing attendance, etc.

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4. Sutherland Letters, loc. cit.

5. Loc. cit.

6. Loc. cit.

7. Ibid., 32.

> 3. Grants to Indian Schools in the north-west conducted by the Society to be paid hereafter quarterly by cheque to the order of the Treasurers of the Missionary Society. The Treasurers to make application for the same.
>
> 4. All communications between the Department and these Schools to be made in future through the Officers of the Society.
>
> 5. Blank forms, for Quarterly Returns, to be furnished to the Secretaries by the Department.8

The year 1880 saw the detailed plans being laid for the establishment of what was to be called "the McDougall Indian Orphanage and Training School"[9] at Morley Mission in Alberta in memory of George McDougall's heroic life and recent death by exposure on the plains. This had been a project of the Rev. George McDougall and the Missionary Society considered that it would be a fitting memorial. The work would continue under the direction of his son, the Rev. John McDougall, who still served in the area. The estimated cost of setting up a building to house thirty Indian children and purchasing farm implements and stock was $3500. Rev. John McDougall felt that $1000 could be raised locally, with $500 worth of clothing and other necessities coming from "friends" in the older provinces. The remaining $2000 would come from a special fund and would be partially offset by expected profit from the farm itself.[10] This institution was duly constructed to become one of the three Indian Industrial Institutes in the Canadian mid-west which were operating by the

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8. Sutherland Letters, ibid., 32-33.

9. Ibid., 53.

10. Ibid., 52.

turn of the century. The other two were located at Red Deer, Alberta and at Brandon, Manitoba.

To return to the matter of aid to the Indian Day Schools and the problems connected with them, on December 15, 1880, Dr. Sutherland wrote the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs to inform him that the Indian School at Whitefish Lake, N. W. T., was in operation and that the proper forms were enclosed in the letter. The school had not received any grants at all as no "proper returns" had been sent in so far and the school had not been in operation during 1879-1880. A teacher had been there since September 1880, however, and Sutherland was anxious to receive the government share of the costs.[11]

Another letter from Sutherland to the same office on December 24th saw the beginning of a more serious difficulty. He acknowledged that he had received a note from the Department "referring to the alleged incompetence of certain teachers in Indian Day Schools conducted by the Society...."[12] The teachers concerned were supposed to be at Rice Lake, Georgina Island and Saugeen Village. Sutherland's reply was to the effect that new teachers had been appointed to Georgina Island and Saugeen during the past summer and these appeared to be qualified for their tasks. The teacher at Rice Lake was new to teaching but "we have

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11. Sutherland Letters, ibid., Sutherland to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, December 15, 1880, 71.

12. Ibid., 72.

no reason to suppose her as incompetent [sic]."[13] He did, however, promise an enquiry.

The letter from the Department raised another difficulty in the matter of formal teacher qualifications. New government regulations had the effect of disqualifying some of the teachers employed by the Methodists in Indian Schools. Sutherland found this a troublesome matter:

> With regard to teachers reported as competent but holding no certificate from the county Board, I beg to say that I was not aware 'till now that such certificate was required by the Department nor am I yet aware what grade of certificate is necessary. In our "Regulations for Indian Day Schools" a copy of which is enclosed, it is required that the standard of qualification for teachers shall be equivalent to a county certificate of the second class in Ontario," and that "teachers must be members in good standing of some Christian church." I respectfully submit that these two requirements cover all that can be secured by a certificate from any local Board. It is true that a liberal interpretation may sometimes be given of the term "equivalent", but there are three points which we regard of primary importance, viz:-1. Moral character; 2. Ability to teach the branches required in the School to which the teacher is appointed; 3. Diligence and success in securing the attendance of the children. Where these qualifications concur, we consider them as "equivalent" for the work of an Indian School, to a county certificate. Indeed, we have found that these documents are not always to be relied upon either as regards character, acquirements or teaching ability.
>
> I also beg to call the attention of the Superintendent-General to the fact that if the possession of a Certificate from the County Board be insisted upon, it will necessitate, in some cases, (unless the grade of certificate is very low), an increase in the teacher's

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13. Sutherland Letters, loc. cit.

> salary. I do not think it will be possible to secure persons holding anything higher than a third class certificate to teach for a salary of $200 per annum.14

This was not the last complaint from the Department in this remarkable communication. Sutherland had to answer another charge concerning the neglect of school buildings themselves:

> With regard to the condition of the school houses on certain Reserves, it does not appear to me that this is a matter which belongs to the Society. We have no title to any of these properties, and I do not think our responsibility extends beyond taking reasonable care of the buildings while occupying them for School purposes.15

The Department further raised the question of equipment in the schools, this being definitely the responsibility of the Society. Sutherland replied that a full shipment of all kinds of supplies had been sent to all the schools named during the past summer, and he proceeded to list all the equipment sent to each school. The list included "Reading Books, No. 1 to 4",[16] Grammar, Arithmetic and Geography Books, together with the usual slates, pens, copy books and various cards and tables for use as teaching aids.[17]

The very complete answers provided by Sutherland did not satisfy the Department. They wrote him again on January 5, 1881, to raise similar issues in different form. The Department itself meanwhile, according to

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14. Sutherland Letters, ibid., 73-74.

15. Ibid., 75.

16. Loc. cit.

17. Loc. cit.

Sutherland, had made errors in their accounting of the Methodist teacher's salary at each location. Sutherland set them right. The teachers at Alderville, Hiawatha, Rama, Christian Island, Stone Ridge, Red River and Oneida received $250 per annum each. Those at Georgina Island, St. Clare and Walpole Island got $300 each, while Saugeen and Stoney Point teachers received only $200 each.[18]

The matter of what was actually paid was simple enough to verify but the Department still found the Methodist standards for teacher evaluation somewhat vague. In his letter of January 28, 1881, where he replied to the Department letter mentioned above, Sutherland was forced to answer the question of "how it is determined that the standard attained by the Teacher is equivalent to the grade of certificate referred to."[19] His reply sheds further light on the whole matter of Methodist teacher selection:

> "The Regulations" were adopted as printed about a year ago with the view of securing a certain standard, and greater uniformity in the qualifications of teachers.
>
> 2. When application is made for the position of Teacher, by anyone unknown to us, we make a careful enquiry of the Pastor of the church to which the applicant belongs, concerning his moral character and educational standing. When we find serious defect in either, the application is not entertained.
>
> As much of the work in the Indian Schools is of the most primary kind, we do not insist upon the full standing required by a second class county certificate in every study embraced, provided we find, in a marked degree, other qualifications which we consider essential in the Teacher of an Indian School.

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18. Sutherland Letters, ibid., Sutherland to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, January 28, 1881, 83.

19. Loc. cit.

> If the rule of the Department that every teacher must hold at least a third class certificate, be insisted upon, we shall, of course, conform to the requirement, although experience leads me to think that it will, in some cases, prevent us from securing someone [sic] who really make the most useful teachers.20

On February 19th, of the same year, an advertisement appeared in the Winnipeg Times which advertised for teachers for the Indian Schools at Norway House, Beren's River and Islington. Interested persons were advised to apply to the Indian Office in the area. Dr. Sutherland quoted the advertisement in full in a sharp letter to the Superintendent-General on February 18, 1881, and then went on to say:

> In reference to the foregoing, I beg to say that in the understanding arrived at between the Department and the Methodist Missionary Society, about a year ago, the right of the Society to appoint and control the teachers in its Indian Schools was distinctly conceded. I assume therefore, that Mr. Superintendent Graham (the local Indian Superintendent in Winnipeg) has acted in ignorance of this understanding, and I would respectfully request that he be instructed to cancel the foregoing advertisement in so far as the schools at Norway House and Beren's River are concerned.21

Trouble continued to arise. On March 3, 1881, Sutherland had to acknowledge a letter from the Superintendent-General, who had enclosed a devasting report from the local Indian Agent at Oka on the condition of Methodist schools on that reserve. The complaints were to the effect that the teacher was incompetent and the classes small and badly attended. The parents allegedly did not like the teacher and the school was generally

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20. Sutherland Letters, ibid., 84-85.

21. Ibid., Sutherland to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, February 18, 1881, 92.

in bad condition.[22] Sutherland was able to point out that the school in question was being confused with another one in the same area, and that the local Indian Agent had himself at one time applied to the Methodists for the position of teacher but had been turned down as unsuitable. As a result of this, according to Sutherland, the agent was merely trying to make trouble for the Methodists in that area.[23]

A more pleasant task came to Dr. Sutherland when, on April 1, 1881, he could inform the government that the Society had opened two new Indian Schools at Fraser River in Keewatin and at Fort McLeod in the North West Territory. He enclosed reports from these schools for the quarter ending December 30, 1880, so that they might be placed on the list of those schools receiving aid from the Department. He noted that the school at Fort McLeod was not entirely Indian but contained some white children.[24] On the same day Sutherland wrote another letter to the Department asking that a cheque for $60 be sent to the Society toward support of the schools at White Fish Lake, according to the "per capita" arrangement which applies to the schools in the north-west.[25] This seems to have been a rather successful school as the teacher was paid, according to Sutherland, the large sum of $600.[26] The 18th of

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22. Sutherland Letters, ibid., Sutherland to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, March 3, 1881, 97.

23. Ibid., 99-100.

24. Ibid., Sutherland to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, April 1, 1881, 105.

25. Ibid., 107.

26. Loc. cit.

April saw Sutherland writing to the Department to enclose the reports from the school at Beren's River which had not received any money because the reports had not been sent in. The sum required in this case was $18 for the quarter.[27]

Sutherland found it necessary to write his friend, the Hon. J. C. Aikins, in order to clarify some of the issues that were causing continual conflict between the Methodist Missionary Society and the Department of Indian Affairs. In Sutherland's view the Society had many legitimate grievances. The major one was the matter of teacher qualifications. He again maintained that the Department should not enforce rigid rules for several reasons. The teaching required in Indian Schools was very elementary. The standard necessary to obtain a 3rd Class Certificate was now higher than that required for a 2nd Class one a few years ago. Thus, hiring people to fit the new requirements meant paying better salaries. Also, the regulations in question did not apply to other church groups, notably, according to Sutherland, the Oblate Fathers or the Jesuits who issued their own certificates. He felt that the Canadian Methodists were equally competent to judge character or qualifications. Finally, Sutherland agreed that if a teacher was shown to be in any way incompetent to teach what was required the Society would take steps to replace him, but he still felt that the new higher certificates should not be insisted upon.[28]

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27. Sutherland Letters, ibid., Sutherland to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, April 18, 1881, 108.

28. Ibid., Sutherland to the Honourable J. C. Aikins, April 5, 1881, 115-116.

Sutherland also referred to the advertisement for teachers for the Indian Schools at Norway House and Beren's River which had appeared in the Winnipeg paper. He noted that the answer he had received from the Department was not satisfactory.

> The Deputy-Superintendent replied that no Reports had been received from these schools since 1876, and that the Department is bound by treaty to maintain these schools on the Reserves; further that the Superintendent at Winnipeg has been instructed to employ for Norway House a person who has applied for the position of teacher.
>
> I can only say if this arrangement is carried out by the Department, collision is inevitable. Not only have the schools at Norway House and Beren's River been conducted by us from the first but the buildings were erected solely at the cost of the Missionary Society, long before the country came under the jurisdiction of the Dominion Government (in the case of Norway House at least). That we ceased sending reports is due to the fact that the Department refused the customary grants, not because there was any doubt that the schools were in operation, but because of trifling inaccuracies in the Reports, which owing to the great distance, and want of postal facilities, we could not send back to have corrected. In this connection I may say, the school at Beren's River has been well kept up during the year; that at Norway House was closed owing to the resignation of the teacher in the autumn, and the impossibility of sending out another during the winter season. But a teacher is to be sent as soon as navigation opens and the Mission is advised that only a teacher appointed by us is to be allowed to teach in our school building.
>
> If the Department chooses to build a new school house and employ a teacher of its own, it doubtless has the right to do so, but we intend to keep our school there in operation....29

The next matter to be placed before Aikins was a new difficulty that

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29. Sutherland Letters, ibid., 117-118.

had arisen in the territory that was to become Alberta. Rev. John McDougall had been away from the Mission at Morley when government surveyors visited the place to lay out a reserve for the Stonies. They included the Mission itself in the survey. Sutherland noted that the mission premises had cost the Society many thousands of dollars and had been built at an early period when the land was first ceded by the Indians. He noted that he had written the Department asking for a title in the name of the Society to the mission land and buildings but he had received no answer. He asked Aikins to press his request upon the Department.[30] The last matter in this voluminious letter concerned the proposed McDougall Orphanage at Morley. Sutherland wanted a grant of land from the government for this institution.[31]

On April 6, 1881, Sutherland wrote the Department again to protest about the unsatisfactory reply he had received from them in the matter of the advertisement for teachers in the Winnipeg paper. Here, he repeated all the arguments that he had used in his letter to Aikins and the same explanation for the situation at Norway House. In this letter, however, he described what he felt to be the root of the conflict:

> I am quite aware that "the Department is bound by Treaty to furnish the Indians with schools upon their Reserves", but what strikes us unpleasantly is the zeal displayed to send teachers where schools are already established by the Missionary Society while other bands, without any school at all, are left unprovided for....32

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30. Sutherland Letters, ibid., 118.

31. Loc. cit.

32. Ibid., Sutherland to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, April 6, 1881, 121.

Meanwhile, Sutherland wrote the various teachers at all the Methodist Schools for Indians instructing them in great detail to fill out the government reports correctly.[33]

On April 13, 1882, Sutherland wrote the Department to inform it about the location of "the School called Woodville".[34] It was on Pigeon Lake, about sixty miles south-west of Edmonton. It had been in operation since 1880, but proper reports had not been sent in because Sutherland had not been provided with the appropriate forms.[35] It appears that there were two distinct types of financial assistance provided by the government, one being based on the salary paid to the teachers, and the other on pupil enrolment. The school At Whitefish Lake appears to have been one based on the salary arrangement.

Thus, each spring when the time came to collect grants from the government for the Indian Schools, the same issues were fought over and debated by the Department and the Missionary Society. In 1882 the situation was obviously no better. The Department cited its endless rules and regulations and the Methodists did the same. To continue briefly with the story, Sutherland wrote on April 21st, to answer once more Departmental complaints about Norway House and Beren's River. He had to admit that things were not going too well at Beren's River:

> In regard to Beren's River, I learn that the school

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33. Sutherland Letters, ibid., see letters dated May 5 & 6, 1881 to Fort McLeod, Beren's River and Whitefish Lake, 122-123.

34. Ibid., Sutherland to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, April 13, 1882, 182.

35. Loc. cit.

> has not been conducted the usual number of hours per day, owing to local circumstances which make it exceptionally difficult to secure regular attendance. I learn also that the present School House is not centrally situated, and that this is a cause of dissatisfaction to some of the Indians....36

The situation at Norway House was complicated by the fact that the Department had evidently decided to set up its own school there in competition with the Methodist one. Sutherland admitted that average attendance there had not been high of late, but the Indians seemed content and:

> ....any dissatisfaction which exists is due to the persistent interference of the Indian Agent in regard to School affairs, and that the new School House being erected on the Reserve by the Indian Department is entirely unnecessary....37

The Society decided to fight both to hold its own and to improve its record. Sutherland closed this communication with the information that the present female teacher at Norway House would be replaced by a "properly qualified teacher",[38] and the person of "mixed blood"[39] at Beren's River would be replaced by a white man.

It is pointless to pursue these controversies any further in detail. The conflict continued for some years and concerned the same issues of administration and jurisdiction. It was really a clash of rival bureaucracies. There was little or no mention of salvation or bringing the

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36. Sutherland Letters, ibid., Sutherland to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, April 21, 1882, 192.

37. Ibid., 192-193.

38. Ibid., 193.

39. Loc. cit.

Christian message to the Indian in any of the Methodist correspondence in this affair. The Methodist teachers differed from their government counterparts only in the requirements of being in good standing in a church and of having a reasonable moral character. This last probably meant merely a lack of the more obvious Victorian vices. In spite of this, the Methodists were still aggressive in an institutional sense, and jealous of their jurisdiction, which they sought to extend. Their proud denomination was not going to be ousted from an area that they had held historically, or left behind in the conquest of the heathen in new territories. This denominational imperialism, however, did not necessarily signify that they had any clear cut purpose or intention, other than the extension of their institution into more distant fields.

In his history of the Canadian Methodist Church and its missions published in 1906,[40] Dr. Sutherland wrote of the need to see evidence of spirituality in any church that was really alive. He noted that churches in the past had often been deceived by their riches when they lacked true spirituality. Whatever he may have meant by "spirituality", he felt that the best evidence of it was a desire to emulate Christ by obeying his command to go and teach all nations. In short, expansionist missionary activity indicated true spirituality. He even implied that an enthusiasm for expanding missions was greater evidence of true Christianity than old fashioned evangelism, where sinners were merely

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40. Alexander Sutherland, The Methodist Church and Missions in Canada and Newfoundland, Missionary Literature of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1906.

converted in a scene of great religious enthusiasm and "the spirit descended". Like many people, he felt that the evangelism of the end of the last century, which had seen such an expansion of many Protestant churches, was, in effect, a real period of spiritual renewal, similar to that of the first flowering of English Pruitanism. He felt that the whole missionary movement thus had authentic and deep spiritual roots in a genuine religious enthusiasm.[41] This was not true in the case of the Methodist church at least. They had expansionist tendencies without doubt but it was merely rampant institutionalism.

There are rather substantial reasons to account for the failure of the Methodist missions among the Indians. Unlike Roman Catholicism, Methodism had a relatively short history, and was, as mentioned before, a distinctly eighteenth century creation. Methodism rose on the same tide that brought cheap printed tracts to the newly-literate. It had never faced a long period where its survival depended on bringing some type of Christian message to a large number of barbarians. The Roman Catholic church in its long history had faced this and many other problems which had, in total, given that institution much useful experience. The Methodists could only bring eighteenth century Methodism, Victorian respectability, or all the trappings of a print-based institutionalism to the Indian. It was unlikely that the Indian would be interested in any of these.

What were the possible alternatives in greater detail? The alternatives really depended on the clarity of purpose of the institution involved. The Methodists never seemed to decide clearly whether they

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41. Sutherland, ibid., 254.

were spreading Christian doctrine, moral respectability, or the blessings of their British civilization. It will be recalled that when Dr. Beecham presented his brief to the House of Commons, using material collected by James Evans (then at Rice Lake), he argued that a conversion to Christianity (meaning the Methodist kind) was a necessary prerequisite to the process of "civilizing" a native or aboriginal population.[42] Beecham was at least partly right. Methodist Christianity implicitly contains the assumptions of the historical period which saw the triumph of rationalism and the birth of the Industrial Revolution. Any Indian or native who could grasp a type of Christianity set in the context of a simple popular rationalism, and abstracted from everything else, would have grasped the essence of early western industrial society. He would then no longer be a savage but would have entered the mainstream of European civilization. This was not likely to happen. If the Methodists had been truly successful there would be large numbers of Indians fully integrated with our society in the present day. In short, it is not possible to "civilize" immediately large numbers of primitive people when the missionary forces are a distinct minority. The Methodists in western Canada tended to concentrate on Indian "improvement", rather than simple conversion, especially in the period after 1848. Conversion was still attempted, but improvement was never far behind and appears to have been the ultimate direction of their efforts.

Historically, there are many examples of the conversion of large groups of barbarians to Christian doctrine without attempting to impose

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42. See pages 17-19.

a cultural bias along with the doctrine. In the period following the fall of the Roman Empire, when waves of barbarians engulfed the West, the church found itself in no position to dictate the precepts of classical culture to an invading host. Rather, it did the only possible thing and applied the essence of Christian doctrine directly to the barbaric culture of the invaders. The result was that the invaders remained barbarian, but their religious expression took on Christian forms and symbols, and they grew gradually over the years into a Christian context which produced the glories of medieval Europe. Similarly, the early Jesuits in North America working among the Hurons took the basic Indian religious ideas and shaped them into the context of Catholic doctrine. The result was an Indian Christianity, a process of blending which may be discerned even in the buildings and implements of the restored mission to the Hurons in present day Ontario. Of course, if this process is followed, the Indian remains an Indian and does not become a European. This is partly the reason that the Indian today is still somewhat culturally distinct. Most of the Indian conversion, indeed all the conversion that was successful, was carried on by the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches.

The Methodists could never have followed the Roman Catholic example. From the standpoint of their simplistic rationalism, Catholic success was largely due to the similarities between Roman Catholic and Indian "superstitions".[43] This was part of the price Methodism paid for its brief history of pragmatic success in a particular time-period. Unhindered by

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43. See page 33.

a long history of ecclesiastical progress through different cultural epochs, Methodism enjoyed amazing success because of the resulting freedom and flexibility. Faced with the old Christian problem of converting a large group of barbarians who constituted the clear majority in a new wilderness, the Methodists could not find a solution. In fact, they had difficulty in even describing the problem.

By 1912 the Methodists seem to have become almost wholly secular in their approach to the Indian question. A work entitled Our Indian and Their Training for Citizenship[44] was published by the Methodist church in that year. It was written by the Rev. Thomas Ferrier and examined all the ramifications of the problem as the Methodists saw it. The title indicates the direction of the concern. In this work the author declared that the convent type of school was entirely unsuitable for training Indian girls.[45] Ferrier looked for civic utility in such training and made little or no mention of the spiritual life. His religious feelings, if they may be called that, were entirely of the moral sort:

> All government agents should be free from the use of strong drink. There have been too many of the brutish kind, drunkards, libertines and blasphemers. The man with the political pull is not always the man for the welfare of the Indian.46

The remainder of the work was mainly a sociological survey of the Indian question. He stated that the whole treaty or reserve system,

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44. Rev. Thomas Ferrier, Our Indians and Their Training for Citizenship, A Methodist publication by the Superintendent of Indian Education, Methodist Church of Canada, (Toronto, 1912).

45. Ibid., 37.

46. Ibid., 15.

which massed the Indians together in primitive units, was the greatest barrier to progress.[47] He believed that the treaty rights merely made the Indian a prisoner in his own culture. He suggested that schooling be made compulsory and practical, emphasizing agriculture and home making.[48] He pointed out that one third of all Indian children of school age did not attend school at all, and the rest were not regular in attendance. He suggested generally that the Indians should be taken individually and trained to fit into civilized life instead of going back to the reserves. He made the point that the Indian likes his own culture, and, being human, does not like bits and pieces of another culture thrown at him. Ferrier objected strongly to government-sponsored "Indian customs".[49] This was all very admirable by way of analysis, and Ferrier would have made a useful government Indian Agent, but there was no mention of Methodism's once vital Gospel message that Barnley and McDougall had tried so hard to bring to the natives of the plains. Only in his rather oblique final paragraph did Ferrier even hint at this:

> As men of our own race have taught them to eat of the bitter fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, be it ours to lead them to the tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations....50

Only the reference to the "tree of Life" would lead one to suspect that a minister was the writer.

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47. Rev. Thomas Ferrier, ibid., 16-17.

48. Ibid., 25-33.

49. Ibid., 42.

50. Ibid., 47.

The foregoing does not pretend to be an exhaustive survey of the complexity of the Indian problem, but rather a brief examination of Methodist Missionary attitudes and activities in regard to Indian missions. These say much more about the Methodist Church and its character than about Canada's mysterious native peoples. Even by the time Ferrier wrote there were still a few heroic men in Indian work,[51] but there was nothing heroic or evangelical, or perhaps even religious, in the official attitudes of the bulk of the Methodist church. In these, as in all things, there was a growing secularism.

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51. S. D. Gaudin, Forty-Four Years with the Northern Crees, (Toronto, 1942).

## CHAPTER IV OTHER WESTERN METHODISTS

### (a) The Methodist Episcopal Church in the Canadian West

The Canadian Wesleyan Methodists took over the Indian missions of the British Wesleyans in 1854, and went on to begin work among the settlers of the Red River area. They carried the Methodist cause through the events of 1869-1870, and, by 1872, had established their institution on a firm basis.[1] Only three short years after their (the Canadian Wesleyan) conference of 1872, the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada had arrived on the scene to compete for Methodist loyalties in the new province. The Episcopals were at a disadvantage as they were financially weaker, they were competing against a church already well established in an institutional sense and they appeared after settlement was well under way and therefore missed the possible revitalizing effect of even semi-frontier conditions. In this last connection, the Episcopal Methodists did not take up Indian work but chose to labour among settlers. They found to their dismay that these, for the most part, took little notice of the claims of denominational loyalty which had sustained the work in Ontario. Theirs was a heroic attempt in the sense that it was bound to fail. It might not have failed, however, if the church had been able to rediscover the great sources of spiritual power that it possessed in the 1820s.[2] All the disadvantages mentioned here might have had less effect on a truly evangelical missionary church, especially in view of the decidedly non-heroic character of the Canadian Wesleyan competition which

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1. See Chapter II page 133.

2. See pages 214-215.

was not apt to enter any type of heroic era in western Canada after 1872. In spite of final failure, there was a great expenditure of time and money. In institutional terms, the effort seemed to be a worthy one.

A few random quotations from the Missionary Report of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, for the year ending June, 1877, will serve as an admirable introduction to the detailed examination of their attempt to conquer the north-west:

> Especially does our work in Manitoba lay it upon us all that we sustain more liberally than ever heretofore the Missionary developments of our church enterprises. The time had come when that work must have been undertaken in the fear and love of God, or declined at great risk and loss of spiritual power. We must venture on God, have something in our hands for His glory and worthy of His name, if we desire to grow in grace and faith; and so far the fruits of the labour have justified the attempt. Some money has been sent out truly, but the brethren have thereby secured property greater in value than all the money expended and increasing in value as the country improves. If men looked upon church investments as their own they would be readily satisfied with this state of our affairs there, and hasten to invest more largely for Christ. Now is the time to secure property in that opening province, and one dollar invested judiciously for God will be worth many dollars in a few years....3
>
> Our own friends are going thither, brothers, sons, daughters and a population fast spreading out over those new lands, and settling in the starting cities of that prairie land, and we but do a work of affection for kindred as well as gratitude to God when we keep our preachers and institutions abreast with their movements in this vast procession of civilization and peaceful Christian conquest....4

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3. Annual Missionary Report of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada for the Year ending June, 1877, (Bound), VII.

4. Loc. cit.

> The average of a dollar per member from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada would enable the Society to meet all the obligations of the year....5

It may be seen from these quotations that the Episcopal Methodists felt that a missionary effort had to be launched because they felt that the very nature of their church was such that to ignore a new field of labour would indicate spiritual weakness.[6] In fact, they expanded to prove that they were spiritually strong. It may be also noted that the chief incentive presented by the leaders of their Missionary Society to their supporters was one of material value for money. This was an ill omen for the success of their western work.

Because the Episcopal Methodists disappeared into the Union of 1884, the details of their work in the west are not well known. Many of the villages that they made the centre of their activities in a particular area have undergone name changes since that time and others disappeared altogether or were moved a considerable distance from their original location to meet the railroad or railway spur lines. Thus, it is necessary to trace their work in considerable detail with special emphasis on their geographical location. Before doing this, however, it is necessary to examine briefly their historical origins.

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5. Missionary Report, loc. cit.

6. See page 225.

One of the best accounts of the history of this denomination is to be found in the pages of the rival Bible Christian Methodist newspaper, The Observer, which ran a series on the history of each of the Methodist bodies contemplating a general union in 1884. The article on the Methodist Episcopal Church appeared in January 30, 1884, and was written by no less a person than the Rev. Bishop Carman, D.D., the major ecclesiastical figure in the Methodist Episcopal Church at that time.

The church began in British America as a missionary enterprise on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. It began first as missions and circuits of the New York Conference and finally became a Conference of the American church in its own right. Later, it became an independent church bearing some slight affiliation with the American church and distinguished from other forms of Methodism in the Canadas by its form of "polity" or church government, which was, in outward form at least, episcopal.[7]

According to Carman, the events of 1833-34 indicated that the British type of Wesleyan Methodism would be the predominant form of Methodism for the Canadas and so the Episcopal Methodists decided to concentrate on being a missionary church rather than an established one. Thus:

> Men were sent out with unlimited power to conquer territory and add to their already large circuits, and with equal power to add indefinitely to their own number by raising up, under God, local preachers, class-leaders, and men and women everywhere fellow-helpers in the Gospel. The spirit that animated them was a Christian heroism, the success that crowned their labours was a universal amazement....

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7. See page 302.

> As in Methodism elsewhere and everywhere it was not first the organization and the rule, and then the life and work, but first the life and energy and work, and then the organization etc....The first Missionary Society, and consequent work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada was an extemporaneous association, and voluntary contributions of the preachers to send one of their heroic pioneers up the Ottawa valley....8

Carman went on to explain how unofficial missionary organization had been until quite late in the history of the denomination. Mission work was undertaken separately by each of the three Canadian Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church until the year 1874. Until this date most of the mission work attempted had been in some region of Ontario. In 1874, the church centralized the control and financing of its missionary operations:

> ....the General Conferences definitely took the missionary work under its own care, established one Board of Missions for the entire Church, gave Annual Conference Boards an auxiliary relation, secured an Act of Incorporation for the General Conference Board, directed all missionary moneys to be paid into the Central Fund out of which certain allowances were then voted to the Annual Conference Auxiliaries and so placed the General Board in a position to undertake remote work as soon as practicable....9

In short, all the elaborate machinery of a "connexional" institution was set up to direct Missionary enterprises. By 1874, the missionary machinery of the Episcopal Methodists was similar to that of the Wesleyans.

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8. Rev. Bishop Carman, "Methodist Episcopal Mission Work in Canada", in The Observer, Published under the direction of the Bible Christian Conference, Bowmanville, Ontario, January 30, 1884, 5.

9. Loc. cit.

No longer would the Episcopals be noted for having the "life and the work" before the organization.

After this, the Rev. Dr. Gardiner was appointed Missionary Secretary. He visited Manitoba and found the southern sections unoccupied by Methodist churches and so decided to open missions there. Rev. D. Pomeroy was sent out to found churches at Winnipeg and Emerson, and with the help of his brother, who lived in Manitoba a circuit was laid out in the Pembina Mountain region. Later, work was begun at Morris and Portage la Prairie.[10] At the time Carman was writing (1884) the Methodist Episcopal Church employed eight fulltime men under the supervision of the minister resident in Winnipeg.[11] Carman closed the historical account of his denomination with one of his usual pleas for church union. One of the strongest reasons for advocating this direction for his church was, in his opinion, the fact that "....more keenly than ever in Ontario have the antagonisms of our Methodism been felt...."[12]

Since much of the history of the Episcopal Methodist Church in the west was concerned with financing it is useful to look at its exact financial state in the years before it disappeared before looking at its character. The Annual Report of their missionary society for the year ending June, 1882, gave the total indebtedness of the society as $10,458.62.[13] The Manitoba Missions for that year were listed as

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10. The Observer, loc. cit.

11. Loc. cit.

12. Loc. cit.

13. Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, op. cit., June, 1882, 3.

Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie, Morris, Emerson, Dominion City and several places listed under the title Carman Mission.[14] These were the divisions of the work for raising money in Manitoba, as in usual Methodist fashion, even a new circuit contributed in a small way to its own support and the support of all mission work. For purposes of support, the missions were listed as follows with the amount required to keep them going for a year:

| | |
|---|---|
| Winnipeg | $ 700.00 |
| Emerson | $ 500.00 |
| Dominion City | $ 300.00 |
| Morris | $ 400.00 |
| Carman | $ 400.00 |
| Nelsonville | $ 500.00 |
| Portage | $ 700.00 |
| Brandon | $ 500.00 |
| Total | $4000.00[15] |

This amount required for the support of the western missions was divided among the three Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the following manner:

| | |
|---|---|
| Niagara Conference | $1350.00 |
| Ontario Conference | $1150.00 |
| Bay of Quinte Conference | $1050.00 |
| | $3550.00 |

The remainder of the money was borrowed to make up the $4000.00 total. In this report Brandon was noted as being fairly promising and having a

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14. Chubb's Branch, J. H. Loree's Branch, Nelsonville Branch, Hill's Branch, Pomeroy Branch, Ostrander's Branch. (Most of these last would be homes belonging to the people named which were preaching appointments where neighbours would gather for service.)

15. Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, op. cit., June, 1882, 3.

population of fifteen hundred.[16]

The Annual Report for 1883 listed seven missions in Manitoba requiring a total of $2550.00 in financial support. By this time the Carman Mission and Moosomin (in Manitoba) were listed as self-supporting. This might be considered fair progress but the total debt of the Missionary Society had risen to an ominous $12,608.20. Winnipeg had church property worth $25,000.00 but was still receiving aid. Carman, the second wealthiest circuit, had a church building valued at $4700.00.[17]

It may be seen from the foregoing summary that the Methodist Episcopal Church had not succeeded in establishing a viable circuit in any place in Manitoba except the Pembina Mountain or Carman region. True to their origins, the Episcopal Methodists used this single successful circuit as a base to extend their influence as far as Moosomin. Their success in the Pembina Mountain region resulted from the fact that the people were usually Episcopal Methodists from Ontario who settled permanently. They were not transients like the people of Winnipeg or renegades from the Wesleyans like the people of Dominion City.[18]

It is now necessary briefly to examine the character of the Episcopal Methodist church that came to the west. In spite of the audacity of their missionary effort here, the Episcopal Methodists were, in no sense heroic. Their great age had occurred in what is now Ontario in the years after

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16. Missionary Report, ibid., 4.

17. Ibid., June, 1883, vi.

18. See pages 235, 240.

the war of 1812-1814 when they swept like a great fire up the Ottawa valley, able to evangelize and gain adherents even in the face of opposition from British patriots who suspected their American connection.[19] By the time they came west, they were definitely "connexionally" minded. Looking at their Minutes of their Conferences of 1876 in the Ontario Conference section, under Sabbath Observance, it may be seen that their preoccupations were those of most Methodists:

> resolved 1st....that we seriously deplore the desecration of the Holy Sabbath, by the citizens and corporations of our land and that we will discountenance Sabbath desecration of every shade and form....20

and, again predictably, on the subject of temperance:

> Your committee would further recommend the church to still greater efforts to secure for this province, at least, if we cannot for the whole Dominion, total prohibition, which is the only effective cure for this great evil....21

These were typically Methodist resolutions in the last half of the nineteenth century in Canada, and, for that matter, could probably be found in the minutes of any mainstream, Protestant church.

More revealing, perhaps, was their notice of their own decline in those elements of religious practice which had always made Methodism a

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19. See Goldwin French, Parsons and Politics, The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780-1855. Ryerson, (Toronto, 1962), 72--for accusations of disloyalty, 79--In 1825, in French's judgement, Upper Canadian Methodists, unlike the Maritime ones, "were still a band of enthusiasts", 74.

20. Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, Minutes of the Conferences, (Bound), Ontario Conference, 1876, "Sabbath Observance", May 29, 1876, 51.

21. Ibid., "Report of Committee on Temperance", 55.

vital form of Protestantism. A writer in their own newspaper, The Canada Christian Advocate, for September 7, 1881, began his column with the heading: "Are the Days of Old Fashioned Camp-Meetings Past?".[22] He noted that a recently proposed camp meeting had been called off because of a lack of support from the circuits involved. "Four day meetings"[23] had been substituted instead. He recalled that, in the past, camp meetings had been a great source of strength to the church but now had taken on a new form:

> ....these meetings have assumed a form never dreamed of by the fathers. They are fast becoming places of retreat and recreation. Large sums of money are being expended for the purpose of rendering them attractive, combining amusement, healthseeking and religion in due proportion....24

The same paper, in the August 10, 1881, edition, published the following expression of editorial opinion, indicating another related tendency which always heralded Methodist decline:

> One of the greatest needs of the Methodist church, at the present day, is a legion of earnest, willing men to act as class leaders. A preacher who finds a good class leader surely finds a pearl of great price. Why earnest, willing, class leaders are so hard to find, I am not able to say....25

The class meeting had always been considered the corner stone of any brand

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22. The Canada Christian Advocate, Hamilton, Ontario, published for the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, September 7, 1881, "Are the Days of Old-fashioned Camp-Meetings Past?"

23. Loc. cit.

24. Loc. cit.

25. Ibid., August 10, 1881.

of Methodism.[26] Its decline meant an end to the very motive power of the movement.[27]

When news from Manitoba was first placed in the paper it is interesting and relevant to note that it came in the form of an account of "Prairie Social"[28] given in honour of Rev. Warne of the most successful of the Episcopal circuits in the west by people of Chubb's appointment. It was described in the July 20th, 1881, issue of the paper by "One who was there":[29]

> ....The result of their planning was a very good and sociable time spent by the friends and members of this Class together on Dominion Day, in the form of a Prairie Social, the program for the day being about as follows: Ball-playing for those who wished it, swinging for all, and a good dinner for everyone. Then followed speeches and readings interspersed with both vocal and instrumental music, each being well given by those taking part therein, then was read a short address expressive of the regard for and esteem of the ministrations of the minister who laboured among and for us....the proceeds of the dinner were presented to the pastor, the sum being (after expenses) $18.55....30

By the 1880s the social aspects of the denomination had come to overshadow and even replace the more vital concerns of their forebearers. There was only one thing besides denominational rivalry to separate them from their Methodist brethren; this was their "polity" or form of church

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26. Rev. James Porter, A Compendium of Methodism, (New York, 1851), 459.

27. Loc. cit.

28. The Canada Christian Advocate, op. cit., July 20, 1881.

29. Loc. cit.

30. Loc. cit.

government which had made them distinct in the first place.[31] Apart from this, they had every reason to go into union: They were financially overextended in the west. They had tried to establish churches in areas where they did not have sufficient members to support a church or where other types of Methodist were well established. Most western villages could not support two or more types of Methodism. Thus, compromises were arranged on the "polity" question and they were swallowed up in the Union of 1884.[32]

Union was probably the only logical step for the church to take. Not everyone was in favour of it, however. Bishop Carman came to support union and went on to achieve fame and position in the new Methodist church. His father, old Philip Carman, was of a different mind. In a letter to his son, dated April 6, 1882, he announced:

> For myself I don't go for union on any terms even if they would adopt our polity--we can't draw in the same harness. I think the bishops in the states should be consulted....have we been wrong in contending for the Episcopal form of Church government?....
>
> It seems we have fallen on critical times--I fear it is an unholy alliance that is sought....the motive seems to me to be for popularity and power and not for the Glory of God....33

An examination of the spiritual condition of the churches that went into

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31. See W. J. Townsend, H. B. Workman, George Eayrs, A New History of Methodism, Hodder and Stoughton, 2 vol., (London, 1909), Vol. II, 219. Henceforth, "T.W.E."

32. See pages 302-306.

33. Papers of Bishop Albert Carman, 1876-1884, MSS, Victoria College Archives. Henceforth, Carman Papers.

the great Methodist union of 1884 would lead one to suspect that perhaps Philip Carman was right.

The Episcopal Methodists began their work in Manitoba in the fall of 1875. Rev. D. Pomeroy was sent out, as has been noted[34] but little was heard from him in the first few months. It was possible to trace the progress of the work in the pages of the denomination's official newspaper, The Canada Christian Advocate. In the October 6, 1875, issue a short notice from the Mission Secretary informed the readers that the "Missionary is now in the work"[35] and that "the outfit and salary must be paid".[36] A more cheerful note was sounded in the issue of December 29, 1875 under the heading "Manitoba Mission":

> The missionary, the Rev. D. Pomeroy, with his usual zeal and activity is extending the range of his work and adding new conquests to his mission in different directions....Great grace is manifest at the protracted meeting in Winnipeg, the altar being filled with seekers....37

On paper at least, it was a noble beginning, true to the great traditions of the denomination.

The first full report of Rev. D. Pomeroy appeared in the March 29, 1876 issue of The Canada Christian Advocate and gave readers a complete account of how mission work had begun. Pomeroy also gave voice to the incredible ambitions of his church in this report, displaying an optimism,

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34. See page 216.

35. The Canada Christian Advocate, op. cit., October 6, 1875.

36. Loc. cit.

37. Ibid., "Manitoba Mission", December 29, 1875.

which from a present day vantage point looks like unbelievable folly. The vision and the language were heroic, in any case:

> Brethren: As your missionary it becomes my agreeable duty to transmit to you for your consideration and action a report of my work and an account of the religious prospects of the territory. It is with gratitude to Almighty God that I record the success with which He has crowned my labours during the few months that I have been your missionary in the great north-west. And I trust that the report of our prosperity here will be received with the same interest that was manifested in the establishment of the mission. The commencement of this work on the 26th of last September in an unfinished bar-room in Hutchinson's Hotel at Emerson, where I preached my first sermon in this province was as small as a grain of mustard seed, but the branches have been extending, not only to almost every part of Manitoba, but into the territory of Dakota, U.S.A. and we believe will continue to extend, until these western wastes are covered, and the banners of the lamb are unfurled on the Pacific shores. This work embraces ten preaching places where I visit, which will soon require preachers. We have ten subscriptions to The Canada Christian Advocate, three Sunday Schools, fifty-four scholars, sixteen officers and teachers, a full Board of Stewards, an Elementary Committee for next year, one exhorter, two local preachers, four boards of trustees for Chapel property, five sites for churches of two acres each, arrangements made for ten lots in Emerson and one lot in Winnipeg, and a membership of 82, all of which I will describe in detail in this report. There has been raised for the support of this mission the sum of two hundred and nine dollars and fifty cents.
>
> To perform all the necessary work on this mission has demanded an incredible amount of labour and drudgery, especially during the winter which is not the most propitious season for the performance of missionary work in this country. The settlements being a great distance apart it requires a travel of three hundred and twenty miles to fill all the appointments at once. Still, your missionary feels that it is his work to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the remotest settler and leave no spot unvisited where families can be found who need spiritual help. The population of this country is rapidly increasing and in all probability

> many families will, from year to year, leave Ontario and find homes in the north-west. Some of these will be members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for whom we should timely provide means of Christian fellowship in their own church. Many others of all nationalities will come here who are totally indifferent as to their church relations and spiritual interests. To these we would send the Gospel. By establishing appointments in every new settlement homes are prepared for their own members and means provided for bringing sinners to God....38

In this fashion, the Episcopal Methodists of Ontario began their western work and embarked on an enterprise far beyond the financial resources of the parent body. They saw the challenged not in terms of saving souls in a new territory, but rather, as an institutional challenge. While they might have been quite successful as a vital missionary church truly ministering to people with a minimum of denominational trivia, they had no chance at all of success in their aim of establishing an Ontario type of denominationalism. Pomeroy's fantastic scheme of establishing a church in every new settlement was a program even beyond the strength of an institution such as the Roman Catholic Church. As a plan of action for a splinter group of Canadian Methodism it was ridiculous. Pomeroy was also correct in predicting that many of those who would come out to settle would be "totally indifferent as to their church".[39] These would be hard pressed to distinguish the subtle differences which separated the Methodist Episcopal Church from their Canadian Methodist brethren who were already established.

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38. The Canada Christian Advocate, ibid., March 29, 1876, (A letter from "Daniel Pomeroy, Missionary Manitoba", dated at Emerson, February 24, 1876.)

39. Supra.

It is useful to examine Pomeroy's survey of the general settlement situation in Manitoba in 1876 as it not only provides an excellent picture of the progress of settlement at that time but indicates how, and on what basis, the officials of the church would try to guess the probable future patterns of development in order to profit by them. They attempted to go about it in a sort of semi-scientific fashion which looked impressive on paper but often caused them to be sadly mistaken. The officials of the Episcopal Methodism were not the only people who were disappointed in attempts to "second guess" the patterns of western development. In the case of the church, they had to be correct or suffer financial disaster. Emerson was one of their principal centers of strength before they disappeared, although it was not as stable as Pembina Mountain. Here is the way Pomeroy saw it in 1876:

> Emerson - The proposed town is situated on the east side of the Red River, and on the southern boundary line of the Province. As it is the only place between Moorhead and Winnipeg where the present survey of railroads touches the Red River, it is supposed that it will be the most important market in all the north-west. All the land in the two townships east of the river is located and must be settled in the spring or forfeited. On the west side of the river, within two miles of the town, are the customs house, the Hudson's Bay Store, post offices, soldiers barracks and emigrants sheds, these last two are vacated. In this town we have five subscribers to The Canada Christian Advocate, a Sunday School, thirteen members, one exhorter and arrangements for ten town lots. Three lots are to be given to the Methodist Episcopal Church by Messrs. Fairbank and Co., on the condition that a building be erected thereon of the description recommended by the Mission Secretary and the Secretary of the Missionary Board in a letter they sent me. Three hundred dollars (quite sufficient for that purpose) must be sent soon, or we break an agreement that was made in good faith. Six miles east of this town we have three members of the Methodist Episcopal Church,

> one of whom is a located minister. Six miles north of town we have two Methodist Episcopal families from Ontario. In both of these places there should be preaching during the coming summer.40

The idea of preaching in an area to a prospective congregation of only two families was strange enough, but the notion of having the Mission Board put up the finances for a church building simply in order to hold choice lots without determining if the area could ever support a church would be questionable even in a single circumstance. Such practices, however, were contemplated on a massive scale!:

> Winnipeg - As you are acquainted with the population, situation and position of this city, I need only speak of our church. We have here a good Sunday School and a class of twenty-five members, including those at Springfield. The expenses, which were heavy, were cheerfully borne by our members. We have negotiated for the most suitable lot for a church site and depend on the Board to assist in this matter. The trustees propose to build a frame church size 32 x 54 Grecian style, to be properly seated and painted; estimate $3000.00. They propose to raise in Winnipeg the materials and labour, $1000.00 and provide for the balance. They ask the Board to give $1000.00. We are now paying $180.00 a year rent for a room that cannot accommodate us. If we had a suitable church our congregation would be doubled, our income increased, and all paid to the minister. All these advantages will relieve the Board for all time to come of the burden of the maintenance of the minister in Winnipeg. We have five subscribers to The Canada Christian Advocate.41

It will be noted that the number of church supporters in Winnipeg had to be grouped with those in Springfield to get the sort of number of members to warrant establishment of a church. Springfield itself appeared to

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40. The Canada Christian Advocate, op. cit., "Daniel Pomeroy", February 24, 1876.

41. Loc. cit.

have offered even less reason for hope but Pomeroy did not see it this way:

> Springfield - Is a settlement lying east of Winnipeg, consisting of fifty families, mostly Presbyterians and Episcopalians. The preaching place is twelve miles from the city. We have here five members who are connected with the city class, also one subscriber to the C. C. Advocate. About ten miles further east another neighbourhood is being formed, to which some of our members, who now reside in Winnipeg, will move during the summer. They were there last summer and were driven into the city by the grasshopper scourge.42

Already the Episcopal Methodists had discovered a difficulty that would plague them in the Winnipeg area and in most of their other circuits: no sooner did they establish a church and congregation in an area than some of their people would move somewhere else, usually further west. Others might come in to take their place but this only happened consistently in Winnipeg proper. In any case, they found that they always dealt with transients who were lacking in strong denominational loyalties.

Here is the manner in which Pomeroy viewed other potential points of his church's influence:

> Rosabella - This proposed village is located at the station, graded on the railroad where the road crosses the Roseau River. This place, with the surrounding country, has as bright a prospect as any in this Province. With a large settlement, good natural resources, good water, timber, lime, sand; all the land for miles on all sides taken for actual settlement, and a railroad running through the centre, this must be a place of importance. Here we have eight members and two acres for a church site. This place is twelve miles north of Emerson, east of the Red River.43

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42. The Canada Christian Advocate, loc. cit.

43. Loc. cit.

> Morris - This is a town laid out on the west side of the Red River at the mouth of the Saskatchewan River, forty miles from Winnipeg, twenty-four miles from Emerson, twenty-four miles from the Boyne settlement, forty miles from the Pembina Mountains, sixteen miles from Rosabella and seven miles from Plum River. This point, to our work is very important as a centre. It will also be an important place in the country, as the mails and the merchandise will be carried from here to Boyne, Pembina Mountains and all points west. Here, and at Plum River, we have sixteen members. I preach at both places, but all belong to one class. We have arranged for two acres in each of these places for church sites. There is no road at present from here to the Boyne.44

The next area of settlement in Pomeroy's survey was to see the only permanent success achieved by his church in the west. Here, his predictions were more accurate than usual:

> Pembina Mountains - This settlement is situated along the Pembina Mountains, twenty miles south of the Boyne, but there is no travelled road from one settlement to the other this winter. We reach this place by the trail from San Jose. For farming purposes this section surpasses any place that I have visited, rolling land, running springs, abundance of timber, and with the beginnings of a population, than which better cannot be desired; mostly from North Port, Shannonville, and Belleville. This country will be rapidly filled up. We have in this neighbourhood four members and many friends, also two acres for a church site.45

The distances described here by Pomeroy were vast, given the transportation methods of his day. It is amazing that he should have preached at so many places so far apart. He could not have visited them all regularly, especially in winter! Large, lightly populated areas would constitute

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44. The Canada Christian Advocate, loc. cit.

45. Loc. cit.

a real problem as only a huge rural district could properly support a church but then, the supporters would not all be able to make the journey to services. If churches were to be constructed they would have to be in each tiny centre of population and would have to have a resident minister in each one. Pomeroy was dimly aware of this problem but he looked even further afield. He had two more stations in mind:

> Pembina - A town in Dakota, U.S.A. One member, a good Sunday School and one subscriber to the C. C. Advocate.[46]
>
> Tongue River - This settlement of Ontario people lies north of the Pembina River and on the road to the Pembina Mountains, twenty-four miles from the mountain settlement. We have here four members, and as soon as the spring opens, four of our members who reside in Winnipeg will move to this place.[47]

Pomeroy closed this listing with an account of his visit to the huge Indian Reserve lying at the mouth of the Roseau River. He remarked that "the sight of an abandoned mission or circuit is painful"[48] but he could not work here regularly as he had too many other duties![49] His last paragraph contained some recommendations for the Mission Board:

> In order to properly advance, organize and accommodate this work to the usages of our church, I would recommend that the appointments, within reasonable distance of each other, be organized into distinct missions. It is not possible for

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46. The Canada Christian Advocate, loc. cit.

47. Loc. cit.

48. Loc. cit.

49. Loc. cit.

> people to travel fifty or one hundred miles to attend Quarterly Meetings. By organizing into distinct missions each one would have its own Quarterly Meeting, transact its own business and extend its field of usefulness, by forming a centre from which its influence would extend throughout the surrounding country....50

This was how the Rev. Daniel Pomeroy saw the future of his church from his vantage point in Emerson, Manitoba on February 24, 1876.

It might be imagined that a report of this nature would give the Mission Board cause to reconsider the whole question of establishing their church in the west but they seemed, if anything, to share the optimistic view of their missionary. The same issue of The Canada Christian Advocate reported on the recent meeting of the Mission Board at Ingersoll, Ontario:

> The Board took energetic measures to prosecute the work undertaken in Manitoba. It was decided as soon as practicable, to place another man in the field, thus, virtually making two charges, one in the north at Winnipeg and one in the south centering on Emerson. The southern charges will likely engage the time of a Superintendent and an assistant who is already on the ground and has rendered good service. It appears from the report of Bro. Pomeroy, the missionary, the brethren and friends in Manitoba are ready vigorously and liberally to do their part. At some points considerable lots of land are engaged for church purposes, and besides people contribute to building. There are evidently many that cleave to the Methodist Episcopal Church and her polity, and it would be both unwise and illiberal to desert them now....We cannot expect that field will pay back dollar for dollar. It is present duty to enter in faith of God....We fully expect the day will come when Manitoba will have her millions of people. Now is

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50. The Canada Christian Advocate, loc. cit.

the time to secure the sites....[51]

They even approved of Pomeroy's excursion into Dakota, mentioning that such a beginning might enable them to eventually pay back some of the labours of the American Genesee Conference in Canada which had resulted in the founding of their own denomination![52]

The May 24th issue of the newspaper contained a long letter from Pomeroy describing the difficulties in travelling in the west and telling of how he was forced to use a raft to cross a river.[53] The June 21, 1876, edition of the paper noted that three men had been sent out by the Mission Board and that one of these was a Rev. James A. Campbell. A special collection was taken up for their support. Pomeroy had also reported that a lot had been secured in Winnipeg on Bannatyne Street.[54]

In the same year (1876) Winnipeg appeared in the list of stations for the first time with J. A. Campbell listed as the incumbent.[55] The following year it was listed with these statistics: 14 members, 14 more on probation, $61.20 raised for foreign missions, $676.56 raised toward building, and one church valued at $5500.00. Morris and Emerson were listed (1877) as Sunday Schools and there were many mentions of a "Winnipeg Building Fund".[56] The report also made much mention of

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51. The Canada Christian Advocate, ibid., see "Missionary Board".

52. Loc. cit.

53. Ibid., May 24, 1876.

54. Ibid., June 21, 1876.

55. Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, Minutes of the Conference, op. cit., Toronto District, 1876, 40.

56. Minutes, ibid., Ontario Conference, 43.

"Subscriptions for the Manitoba Mission".[57] The report for 1878 indicated the total indebtedness for the Manitoba work stood at about $7000.00.[58] By 1882, it had reached $10,458.62.[59]

An intimate view of the struggles of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the west may be gained from the correspondence of the Rev. Albert Carman, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who was soon directly concerned with the progress and state of the Manitoba work. In his capacity as Bishop, he first visited Winnipeg on September 28, 1877 at which time he was presented with a fulsome address by J. A. Campbell, Pastor of Bethel Church which was the object of the "Winnipeg Building Fund". This address expressed the "many thanks [with which] we acknowledge the kind and liberal aid afforded us by you and your generous people in the older provinces...."[60]

From 1880 onward, Carman received regular letters from all the Methodist Episcopal ministers in the west. These reveal, more graphically than any other source, the schemes, struggles and difficulties faced by that church in its attempt to conquer the west. For example, a letter written in January, 1880, to Carman by A. W. Edwards, who was stationed at Emerson, described a scheme for supporting the work, which was, in effect, simply a plan to speculate in land:

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57. Minutes, loc. cit.

58. Ibid., 1878, 23, 42.

59. Ibid., 1883, 30.

60. Carman Papers, op. cit., Box 2, File 2.

> By the late land records of the Dominion Government one half of all the lands in belt E, which is the choicest portion of Southern Manitoba extending west on the International Boundary line for several hundred miles, is for sale at $1.00 per acre, 10% of which must be paid at the time of purchase, the balance in nine equal installments at 6% interest. Now the land for sale on these most favourable terms consists of every alternate section, the intervening sections available for actual settlement, by homesteaders and pre-emption only, which gives every reasonable guarantee that the sections purchased at $1.00 per acre will be enhanced in value by the improvement in the adjoining ones.
>
> There certainly never has been in Canada such an opportunity to secure valuable lands at a nominal price. I am exceedingly anxious that our Missionary Society should be endowed by securing a large tract of land and in my opinion it can be done if we undertake it in a proper way. For instance, $500.00 invested will secure 5000 acres, without further outlay for one year and by the time the second payment becomes due the land will have so increased in value that a portion of it can be sold if necessary to meet the payments on the remainder....[61]

Edwards suggested himself as the agent for these transactions and was careful to add that he had no personal ambition in the matter.[62]

At this time, things were not going too badly for the Methodist Episcopal Church in Emerson. Edwards wrote in June of 1880 to report that their work still prospered and "we have not lost any of our people or old friends by the C. M. [Canadian Methodist] Church. Our congregation is larger than their's...."[63]

Elsewhere in Manitoba, the denomination, while sometimes enjoying

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61. Carman Papers, ibid., A. W. Edwards to Bishop Carman, January 8, 1880.

62. Loc. cit.

63. Ibid., June 8, 1880.

temporary success, was beset with all the difficulties which foreshadowed its ultimate end. The Superintendent of the whole work in the west, A. S. Ferguson, reported to Bishop Carman on February 5, 1880:

> In Winnipeg our church is slowly advancing and but for the fact that most of our people here are transient residents in the city the outlook would be more encouraging. Our congregations have been gradually increasing, our membership are mostly in very moderate circumstances but on the whole are good living (morally) and warm-hearted....64

Four weeks of revival services had only brought thirty people forward as seekers after religion. Bro. Warne, the man stationed at Pembina Mountain, had assisted in the revival and other ministers in the city seemed kindly disposed toward it.[65] Still, there could be no settled or established work in a city where people were always moving in one direction or another.

Already, there was talk of more Methodist union in the east. The Canadian Wesleyans had joined the Methodist New Connexion and the Maritime Wesleyans in the great union of 1874 leaving only the Primitives, the Bible Christians and the Episcopal Methodists as small groups outside the main body.[66] Naturally, this discussion filtered out to the west through the newly arrived settlers and the various periodicals sent from Ontario. It was not too difficult for many to see that nascent towns could not support several churches of similar character and that some

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64. Carman Papers, ibid., A. S. Ferguson to Bishop Carman, February 5, 1880.

65. Loc. cit.

66. T.W.E., op. cit., Vol. II, 220.

solution would have to be found to the problem of denominational rivalry in these situations. In 1880, there was no immediate solution to prevent the bitter competition. Ferguson reported the situation at Morris:

> At Morris Bro. Shorts retains his hold upon the largest congregation in the town. He proposed commencing revival services following the work of prayer and had good prospects, but the Wesleyan preacher and the Presbyterian, probably suspecting as much, cried out for a union meeting and it resulted, as union meetings often do, in a religious failure. However, Bro. Shorts intends, when the others have got their fill of the union effort, to go to work in Methodist fashion, in the name of the Lord for a revival of our church. He is universally loved and respected....67

The Pembina Mountain Mission, composed of relatively settled adherents saw little in the way of competition. Ferguson merely noted that Bro. Warne, who was stationed there, would need an assistant by the following year at least.[68] At Roseau, Bro. Ottewell was much liked but was facing competition:

> They (Episcopal Methodists) have moved the church into "town" and fitted it up very comfortably. They had quite a successful re-opening last Sunday and Monday. The Wesleyans have gone to Roseau and claimed their own and I suppose will fight us from this out. George Young preaches there on a week night but promises them a man at conference time. There is not room for two Methodisms in that country at present but we have the ground and our man is well respected and we have a comfortable church and "If we must fight if we would reign", increase our courage Lord....69

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67. Carman Papers, op. cit., A. S. Ferguson to Bishop Carman, February 5, 1880.

68. Loc. cit.

69. Loc. cit.

Ferguson also noted that the Canadian Methodists were met in the process of church extension:

> It would very much strengthen our position if the Board could afford to assist in building a church at Arnaud--ten miles north, the next station on the Pembina Branch. They ask as much assistance as was given to the Roseau Church ($300.00) but I presume if $200.00 were promised they would "arise and build". If the Board can do anything for them action should be taken immediately for if the Wesleyans were to make them an offer they would be very apt to accept it.70

Ferguson did not share the optimistic view of the work in Emerson that Bro. Edwards had expressed to Bishop Carman. This was not surprising as Edwards had asked Ferguson to tell Carman that he (Edwards) wished to be removed back to Ontario in the spring in time for the meeting of the Niagara Conference.[71] This was always a problem for the Episcopal Methodists; their good men usually returned to Ontario at the earliest opportunity and this prevented their often arduous labours from having the necessary continuity. Ferguson felt that the seemingly comfortable situation of the Methodist Episcopal church in Emerson was in reality very tenuous:

> At Emerson the war has fairly commenced and it is quite evident that the Wesleyans mean business. I cannot feel easy about our interests there. (Perhaps I have too little faith but I have fears about our cause there.) We have comparatively little of either connexional or Christian loyalty there. The attachment to our church is mostly contingent and social. There has been scarcely a conversion, very little real effort in social winning since that

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70. Carman Papers, loc. cit.

71. Loc. cit.

> mission was taken up, and now, let another denomination come in and promote a revival and get the people converted and they will get as they deserve to, the people's sympathies and their support....72

To correct this situation, Ferguson had advocated an all out revival with a concentration of personnel in Emerson from other stations. This had been postponed because it had cost too much to light and heat the church! He predicted that the Wesleyans would soon open a temporary place of worship there and then hold a revival over a considerable period of time "while we sit and admire our fine church and suck our thumbs".[73]

Ferguson closed his letter to Carman with a request for an assistant for Bro. Warne at Pembina Mountain although he made it clear that he thought that no more preaching should be concentrated in areas already held. For Ferguson, expansion was again the solution: "If we can compass it, the little Saskatchewan country would furnish a field of promise for someone who would not be afraid of travel...."[74] This was a persistent delusion and was the same type of thinking that had inspired the whole western mission program in the first place.

By 1880 all the problems which would eventually mean an end to Methodist Episcopal work had appeared in force. The problem of building up a settled congregation among a population composed mostly of transients made it impossible for them to count on much denominational loyalty. A fragment on the back of a letter from R. M. Pope of Emerson from some

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72. Carman Papers, loc. cit.

73. Loc. cit.

74. Loc. cit.

time in early 1880 explained why there was so much emphasis on revival in the letters to Bishop Carman from the west. The writer noted, that in Emerson, any gains must:

> ....come chiefly from revival as we profit very little from emigration, not one family of ours having come here to stay since my arrival. If you can, send a few good loyal businessmen from Ontario, you will do us a great favour and I feel quite sure it will be no disadvantage to them.
>
> It would help me very much in my work if the Brethren in Ontario would drop me a card informing me of persons who are coming out here and when they start....75

Things deteriorated rapidly in Emerson: Edwards wrote to Carman on February 10th to say that he could not take another year in Manitoba. He felt that the Methodist Episcopal congregation was, on the whole, more intelligent and better educated than that of the Canadian Methodists but a successor should be on the field before he left or some would transfer to the Wesleyans.[76] On March 12, 1880, he wrote to ask that the deficiency in his salary be remedied; and spoke with ever increasing bitterness of the activities of the Canadian Methodists:

> I think you ought to be informed of the course the Canada Methodists are pursuing. Since the dedication of our church and more particularly since they organized they have never ceased in the most determined and un-Christian opposition. In fact, they make it their chief business to malign us and abuse us. They have attacked me personally, and continued their cowardly assaults

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75. Carman Papers, ibid., R. M. Pope to Bishop Carman [?] 1880.

76. Ibid., A. W. Edwards to Bishop Carman, February 10, 1880.

> until I was driven to the necessity of having these charges publically denied....[77]

He added that some of the slanders were so great that some of their own people had become disgusted and joined the Episcopal Methodists. He closed with the information that he would not be able to attend the conference that year and was "weary of the intense cold".[78]

Things moved very quickly in the west in the early 1880s. The churches were forced to be constantly on the move in order to keep up with settlement. Ferguson sent another full report to Carman in a letter of July 20, 1880. Roseau had become "Dominion City" and Bro. Ottewell had taken out a new appointment in what he called the "South Ridge" where they decided to build a church. A meeting was held to decide if it would be frame or concrete and $450.00 had already been subscribed. At Dominion City they now had a comfortable church and parsonage with a debt of $650.00. The Wesleyans had placed a full time man there, but the people at nearby Arnaud had announced their intention of standing by the Episcopal Methodists. Bro. Pope had replaced Edwards at Emerson but the work there needed financial aid. Bro. Frizzell had arrived at Morris but found the outlook grim:

> The Wesleyans have two men now and preach twice a day in Morris. Matters at Morris are quiet this summer--they are in suspense until the South Western R. R. is located. If it touched Morris, it will go ahead rapidly....[79]

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77. Carman Papers, ibid., March 12, 1880.

78. Loc. cit.

79. Ibid., A. S. Ferguson to Bishop Carman, July 20, 1880.

Bro. Warne was reported as being cheerful and contented:

> He has more Episcopal Methodism on his mission than we have in the rest of the Province put together. Then his people are settled. They expect to live and die on the farms they have taken up. It is very different in the towns, where very few are permanently settled. People do not take the same interest in the church and its work when they are on the wing....80

Matters in Winnipeg progressed slowly as usual but "Removal! removal! Keeps us ever weak". Bro. Edwards had been sent on a mission of church extension. He was to go as far west as Fort Ellice which was then the outer verge of settlement and then buy a horse and work back. After this great effort, he was to go to the Rock Lake and Turtle Mountain region. Edwards took blank deeds with him to accept any property donated for church purposes. Ferguson noted that the Mission Board could not hold any western property as a corporation and it was not possible to set up a trustee system in such a situation so the deeds would be made out by Carman himself.[81]

Another general problem was the poverty and slow response of the Mission Board. Their reasons were probably sound as they were relatively poor and in debt, but they tended to infuriate the men on the spot. Bro. Shorts wrote to Carman on April 12, 1880 saying that he had done his best but his two years were up and he wanted to return to Ontario.[82] A letter from Ferguson on April 15th, explained the situation more fully:

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80. Carman Papers, loc. cit.

81. Loc. cit.

82. Ibid., R. Shorts to Bishop Carman, April 12, 1880.

> I presume however, that the "rigid economy" practiced by the Mission Board in making the appropriations for next year has something to do with this move. They fixed his appropriations at $100.00 below what I recommended. Bro. Shorts has given heavily to help on his work out of his private means and I know that he is not receiving enough this year to support his family without drawing on private resources.
>
> $100.00 won't keep his family and pay for horse keep etc. in this country at the present time, and yet that is all he gets and the outside that he can hope for next year on the appropriations allowed. I talked with him before the meeting on the Board and I feel quite sure that if he had been voted a living appropriation he would have remained another year at Morris which is very desirable both for the social influence he wields and the financial work to be done in collecting subscriptions....83

Another letter from Ferguson on May 13th asked why Edwards wasn't transferred as requested as he had sold some of his household goods and was in a very bad situation waiting for the notice of his transfer.[84] These problems occurred again and again making it obvious that the Mission Board was overburdened and had far too many commitments.

Meanwhile, the church had ventured to expand into the country directly west of Winnipeg. This work had been begun by 1880 and its progress was summed up in a letter written from Portage la Prairie dated June 25, 1880, written by E. C. Squire, who had the status of local preacher:

> According to the direction of Brother Argue [the next Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the west] we have held special services and supplied the regular work here until Bro. Dimmock could take charge. Last Sabbath he was here, and I went to the Town of Birtle, secured the Hall

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83. Carman Papers, ibid., A. S. Ferguson to Bishop Carman, April 15, 1880.

84. Ibid., May 13, 1880.

> and preached on Monday. Crawford and Wood who own the Town plot presented the church with site and parsonage (worth $800.00). I had conveyances put it in legal shape, and have forwarded it this morning to Bro. Argue [sic].
>
> I have been to Brandon twice looking after our interests there. The C.M. [Canadian Methodists] have talked and preached up union until it has blocked our way more than a little. They have a church, and [so do] the Presbyterians in Brandon. I tried to secure the local school house but the Church of England had that engaged 11 a.m., 2:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. so there seemed no alternative but to wait until the tent arrives. I supply the work here (Portage) on Sabbath and then will move to Brandon. Bro. Dimmock will be back....the boom has filled this country with grasping, dishonest men....85

Further west, the mission of Brother Edwards had been a complete failure. His first letter, reporting his progress, was dated August 3, 1880, from Rapid City:

> I arrived here on the 1st and [sic] having been first as far as Fort Assiniboine. This place is growing with wonderful rapidity. Though not two years old it has five stores and three more starting....
>
> I am negotiating for church property here. So far, except at Portage, I have found very few of our people. There are [sic] none here but one family. It is almost a hopeless task to travel this immense region looking for our people without knowing where they are. I do not think that enough of our people can be found in any one place to warrant us opening a mission, but these growing centres ought to be looked after....86

He reported that he would be back in Winnipeg by the end of the month

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85. Carman Papers, ibid., E. C. Squire to Bishop Carman, June 25, 1880.

86. Ibid., A. W. Edwards to Bishop Carman, August 3, 1880.

and would be ready to go to Ontario in October. He could not work for the rest of the year as he was suffering from consumption. His final report came from Winnipeg and was dated August 17th.[87] He reported that he had been as far as Fort Ellice and had only been able to find about thirty people belonging to the Methodist Episcopal church and few of these together. Most were scattered over a vast area. The new towns provided possibilities and the usual difficulties:

> Portage la Prairie, Gladstone, Minnedosa and Rapid City present openings for us, but there are difficulties which will require consideration. I have gathered all the information available at these and other places which will be laid before the Board in due time. We cannot obtain church property without either paying a moderate price or pledging ourselves to build within a specified time. As I am not at liberty to offer either of the above considerations, I have failed to secure any property....
>
> At Minnedosa, a place likely to be of importance, I took an agreement that will secure to us a desirable church site of these lots which I selected, by either paying $140.00 or erecting a church thereupon next year. At Rapid City I obtained a verbal promise of a site when we build. It is quite different in new towns now from what it was when we obtained our property at Emerson and Morris....88
>
> Then the prospects were uncertain and men had to be induced to buy now there is a general run in new towns and lots are eagerly bought for cash....89

It may be gathered that the Episcopal Methodists usually collected subscriptions from their members and adherents to finance new churches because of the general shortage of ready money. This system did not

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87. Carman Papers, loc. cit.

88. Ibid., August 17, 1880.

89. Loc. cit.

work very well and often led to problems. A letter written from Emerson in September of 1880, provided Carman with a view of the result of the subscription method in Winnipeg:

> I have deferred writing hoping to learn the decision of the Supreme Court at Winnipeg on a case of appeal in which we are interested. The Trustees having sued Dr. Bedford, who refused to pay his church subscription and got judgement against him. He has appealed and should it go against us it will not only involve us in heavy costs, but may possibly make it more difficult to collect some of the others....I am busy collecting subscriptions but it appears many can never be collected....floating debt of $600.00....mortgage of $3500.00 first installment and interest due in December ....Now the success of this work will depend largely upon the promptness and liberality of the Mission Board in rendering financial aid.90

And so it was to be. The success of the work largely depended on the liberality of the Mission Board which was already overextended. There was really no solution to the problem. Money could not be raised on the spot in sufficient quantities. The building of new churches had to be regarded as a long term investment. There was nothing really wrong with this in itself but as time went on it appeared that many of the adherents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the west were actually people who had been Canadian Methodists in Ontario and were only temporary supporters waiting for their own church to appear. Such was the case with many of the parishoners of William Ottewell, stationed at Dominion City, who wrote Bishop Carman in the following hopeless vein sometime in 1880:

> But on account of the many difficulties and uncertainty

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90. Carman Papers, ibid., unsigned to Bishop Carman, September 20, 1880.

> all efforts have proved to be comparatively a failure and the prospects are very poor to hold even our present position simply because the greater part of our present help are C.M. and they now have a minister stationed at Roseau Crossing leaving us with only one family to depend on in the country appointments. We meet with the same kind of thing. I have been told by nearly all that they prefer their own church and as soon as this conference expired that they will join with the C.M. I have tried to reason with them....the Mission Board has lost enough at Roseau Mission....91

The year 1880 ended with a letter from Pope in Emerson dated December 9th, containing the sad story of his $1100.00 in subscriptions that could not be collected. The church at Marais had a debt of $250.00 at 36% interest owing to a Mr. Ginn! Pope preached at Marais every two weeks to a congregation of three to fifteen, none of whom were members. Pope wrote that he could now sympathize with Ottewell, who had been left with only five or six members since the C. M.s came into his area. Ottewell, Pope reported, had had only seven people at his last Quarterly Board Meeting, including the officials![92] A final letter from Pope appeared to close the year's correspondence announcing that his Trustee Board had sold some land for $500.00 to cover their immediate necessities.[93]

The year 1881 saw more of the same problems with little relief in sight. But Methodist Episcopal Church had not yet given up the struggle and 1881 would see further futile effort. F. W. Warne of Carman (formerly

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91. Carman Papers, ibid., Ottewell to Bishop Carman [?] 1880.

92. Ibid., R. M. Pope to Bishop Carman, December 9, 1880.

93. Ibid., December 14, 1880.

Pembina Mountain)[94] wrote Bishop Carman on January 19th to give his view of the peculiar nature of his station:

> I see our work in Manitoba as more encouraging than most of the brethren see it. I believe we have reason to be encouraged and enlarge our sphere of operation. 'Tis true the M.B. [Mission Board] are in debt--but our church does not do her duty in her missionary contribution. Our people have gotten into a way of giving a subscription of $1.00 and they stay at that. If we could have some [?] develop the ideas of our church until we could raise annually one dollar per member, then we could begin to do our share of missionary work....95

Warne went on to note that a number of the "brethren" were leaving Manitoba to return to Ontario in the spring. This led to a consideration of the type of men required for western work:

> Be very careful in your selection of men. Get men who when they are away from their former associations won't get the "Blues". A poor man is no use here except to waste the money of the Board. This is a fast country, and if we keep apace we must have smart, responsible, and thoroughly loyal men....96

Warne was undoubtedly correct in this analysis, but where were these good men to be found? Men would have to be very good indeed to set up an organization that was mainly social and financial in character and hence not very relevant as there were other similar organizations and churches and the financial competition was extreme. They did not realize that they were trying to found a denomination based on historic Ontario

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94. Renamed after Bishop Carman.

95. Carman Papers, op. cit., F. W. Warne to Bishop Carman, January 19, 1881.

96. Loc. cit.

prejudices in the new, fluid and markedly materialistic west.

Bishop Carman was treated to a letter from Mr. Ginn of Arnaud, Manitoba, written on January 31, 1881. Mr. Ginn had loaned the local Methodist Episcopal church $400.00 at very high interest when Bro. Edwards was minister at Emerson. This accounted for Mr. Ginn's great concern for the affairs of the church in that area. He had been repaid some money but $147.00 was not forthcoming. Mr. Pope, who succeeded Edwards, denied any knowledge of the debt. Ginn was suitably bitter:

> There is a preaching appointment at my house. I live eight miles north of Roseau and I will quit the church if they don't settle. Mr. Pope is too much Pope for me but his Bulls has [sic] lost the horns....97

Ginn wrote again on March 1st threatening legal action if he was not paid.[98] The same date brought Carman the grim news that his western superintendent, A. F. Ferguson, intended to leave his post in Winnipeg as he was convinced (as many Methodist Episcopal clergy had been) that he would be more useful in Ontario.[99]

More heartening was a letter from a certain J. C. Young of Emerson who offered to take up church work in the west in the employ of the Methodist Episcopal church. He mentioned the dispute with "Squire Ginn" and stated that it was his opinion that the man should be paid at once. His reason was that money was more valuable in the west than in Ontario and any sum invested usually brought a one hundred percent return before

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97. Carman Papers, ibid., John Ginn to Bishop Carman, January 31, 1881.

98. Ibid., John Ginn to Bishop Carman, March 1, 1881.

99. Ibid., A. F. Ferguson to Bishop Carman, March 1, 1881.

a year had passed.[100]

On August 12th, the new Superintendent, the able Bro. Argue reported to Carman on the failings of Bro. Ottewell, echoing many of the sentiments expressed by Warne:

> If Bro. Ottewell insists on being removed, in my judgement you should recall him. He never was, nor is he now, suited to the work in this country; there is not enough of the lively, hopeful or ambitious in his nature, nor is he a good businessman. Some of us who succeeded fairly well in Ontario surrounded by strong denominationalism can do but little here. I have visited all our mission fields and seeing the desperate struggles of the churches for position and ascendency and am satisfied that it is bad policy to send to the work any brother who cannot and will not defend our denominational interests against all comers. Bro. Ottewell cannot do it. Better never enter the [sic] Portage at all than send an inefficient man....[101]

It will be noted that the chief attributes of a satisfactory man, according to Argue, were a good business sense and an aggressive denominational loyalty. He added advice to the effect that no man should be sent to the west merely because he wished to come out. The men should rather be selected carefully to meet the unique conditions of the work.[102]

Argue wrote again on August 22nd to note that Portage had gone ahead since the change in the course of the railroad and property values had risen to very high figures. He reported that a Methodist Episcopal adherent there had made a deposit on a church lot and the Mission Board could buy

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100. Carman Papers, ibid., J. C. Young to Bishop Carman, March 12, 1881.

101. Ibid., G. Argue to Bishop Carman, August 12, 1881.

102. Loc. cit.

it from him if they wished.[103]

Argue's predecessor, A. S. Ferguson, in his last report to Carman, written January 17, 1881, had also discussed the Portage question. He noted that the Canadian Pacific Railway would go through there and that the Canadian Methodists had a church under construction. The Presbyterians planned to build in the spring. He also informed Carman that an Episcopal Methodist adherent in the area had been offered a Canadian Methodist Class Ticket which he refused because he preferred to remain loyal to his own church. He was told "the Episcopal Methodists will never follow you here--they are too poor".[104] Ferguson's parting summary of the whole work was much as usual. Winnipeg still suffered from constant removal. Pope suffered from the same thing at Emerson. Warne, with his permanently settled rural population, did well. Morris was in bad shape as Bro. Frizzell could not fill the gap left by Bro. Shorts who had a great deal of "personal influence".[105] Frizzell also suffered from the lack of a boarding place and his own poor health. Ottewell was in hopeless straits only partially because of his own character defects. He was faced with indifference on the part of his own people and with the bitter opposition of the Canadian Methodists.[106]

Argue sent in this type of formal report to Carman on August 5, 1881,

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103. Carman Papers, ibid., August 22, 1881.

104. Ibid., A. S. Ferguson to Bishop Carman, January 17, 1881.

105. Loc. cit.

106. Loc. cit.

indicating little real progress in any direction. An informal conference had been held at Emerson at which the various ministers all complained about the seeming indifference of the Mission Board. Bro. Warne was to add Mountain City to his list of stations as some adherents had moved there. Warne's own mission was thriving as usual and he had no less than twelve effective preaching appointments. Ottewell had some success at Ridgewell but at Dominion City he was reduced to one family! Morris continued its decline as a town because railway prospects were uncertain and the church had a large debt on its property. Warne had reported that all prospective adherents in Portage had been absorbed into other churches and it was therefore too late to start there.[107]

In spite of this, the Episcopal Methodists had to contemplate more expansion. In a letter of September 23, 1881, Argue told Carman that Portage and Brandon both had great future prospects as many were moving there and money was being spent in large amounts. He regretted that they had not obtained a church lot in Portage. Argue also objected to a plan which had been put forward by his predecessor who was now in Ontario. Ferguson had suggested one man for both Portage and Brandon as an economy measure but Argue felt that the distance was such that one man could only preach alternate Sundays in each town and this would accomplish little. Argue wanted to send Shorts to Portage but, Shorts, still wanted to return to Ontario.[108] Bro. Shorts appears to have been on a temporary

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107. Carman Papers, ibid., G. Argue to Bishop Carman, August 5, 1881, (Warne had reported to Argue).

108. Ibid., September 23, 1881.

station at Evanston, Illinois, at this time.[109]

On October 6th, Argue reported again. The situation was always changing slightly but seldom for the better. The cause at Plum Coulee and Union Point had been lost to the Canadian Methodists and Presbyterians. Bro. Frizzell was only preaching once a week and teaching a Sunday School. He had no prayer or class meetings of any kind! A new village had appeared outside Morris but was too far away to be served by Frizzell. Ottewell needed an extra $50.00 in his grant to make it $100.00 as he had had to sell his horse and could not travel very far on foot. Shorts had been persuaded to go to Portage and had twenty persons on the roll. He had reported from there to the effect that the land around the Brandon area was excellent for farming, much better than that around Winnipeg, and thus, would be soon settled. Bro. Edwards had left the Canadian work and joined the Minnesota Conference.[110]

A glimpse of the condition of the parent body of the western Episcopal Methodists in Ontario in the same year may be had from a letter written to Carman from a Mr. D. Graham in Morrisburg who would shortly be working for the church in the west. He discussed the decline of the vital class meeting, indicating that the Episcopals as a body were losing their enthusiasm for this most important institution:

> ....the peculiar usages of Methodism with us are not utilized as they ought to be. The marking of Class books is not attended to at all in many

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109. Carman Papers, ibid., Post Script to August 5, 1881.

110. Ibid., G. Argue to Bishop Carman, October 6, 1881.

> churches. This arises partly from the fact that the office of Class-Leader is fast becoming a sinecure from the fact that preachers now hold them in almost every appointment and lead the classes themselves.; they have no book and leaders neglect or forget to bring them. The marking of class books is looked upon by many as mere child's play. Again many of the members take offense at their name being called out in their absence-note three persons left the church in Edwardsburg because their names were called and the reasons for their absence inquired into before the class....111

Graham laboured under the delusion that "A unification of Methodism would cure this evil".[112]

Another letter from Graham to Carman, dated September 28, 1881 informed Carman that Graham had visited Portage and picked out sites for a church. He also gave a general report of the work which was almost identical to reports already mentioned.[113]

The union question continued to affect the strength of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the west. It had the general effect of weakening denominationalism and hence the smaller Methodist bodies. Argue, although strong in the support of his own church, began to have serious doubts in December of 1881:

> I have already written you on the union question. My opinion is that united Presbyterianism will be more than a match for divided Methodism in this land. Presbyterianism is gaining in this way and is wise enough to say nothing about it. In one

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111. Carman Papers, ibid., D. Graham to Bishop Carman, November 18, 1881.

112. Loc. cit.

113. Ibid., D. Graham to Bishop Carman, September 28, 1881.

> neighbourhood the Presbyterians and Canadian Methodists have churches. In comes a member of our church--a real devout Christian man with a large family and instead of joining the Canadian Methodist Church as he ought to--he takes his family and unites with the Presbyterians. Again, in another place you find the Presbyterians, for they are everywhere, and the Methodist Episcopal Church. In comes a Canadian Methodist family and instead of uniting with us as they should do, they go off to the Presbyterian.... I am in favour of a United Methodism in this country, believing it to be to the glory of God and the welfare of our common Christianity....114

He added that he would, of course, abide by the decision of his superiors on the union question in spite of his own feelings. A private note added further that land value had risen so high that no land within one hundred miles of Winnipeg was less than ten dollars an acre and that the church might well consider investing some money here.[115]

Argue reported on the state of things on February 7, 1882, with little new information. Winnipeg, Morris, Portage and Pembina Mountain were improving slightly but the church was doing badly in Emerson and Dominion City. Pope was discouraged and wished to go home, and Shorts, in spite of success in Portage, was in poor health. Pope, Ottewell and Frizzell all intended to leave in the spring.[116]

On February 12, 1882, Warne, with the strongest circuit in the whole area, wrote to complain that the union agitation was affecting his work. Some of his members would not pay for a new church in case it would

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114. Carman Papers, ibid., G. Argue to Bishop Carman, Post Script to letter of December 3, 1881.

115. Loc. cit.

116. Ibid., February 7, 1882.

eventually be used by the united Methodists. He said that rumours reached him from the east to the effect that Bishop Carman favoured union and the people of his own circuit were dismayed as they wanted no part of union at all. He respectfully asked Carman to make a definite statement on the subject as all his work would be in a state of suspension until the question was settled. He had two new churches underway and was now having difficulty proceeding with them as well as trouble in collecting money subscribed to pay for one already built.[117]

A letter from Argue to Carman dated June 9, 1882, saw many new names in evidence as some men had gone home. Bro. Squires was waiting for a tent at Portage so he could use it to preach in Brandon. Bro. Anderson was seeking an appointment but had not received one and a Bro. McKay was at Morris to replace Frizzell. Bro. Dimmick was expected from Fort Ellice. Shorts continued to decline in health although still presumably located at Portage.[118]

On September 11th, Argue reported that the union question was wrecking the work everywhere. Squires would not stay in Brandon and was to be replaced by Bro. Scott. Local preachers, who were the essence of the strength of the successful Pembina Mountain circuit, would not do their work until the union question was settled. Everywhere things had slowed to a crawl. Argue thought that Brandon could be well abandoned if union came but should be held if it didn't. In the meantime, the Baptists

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117. Carman Papers, ibid., T. W. Warne to Bishop Carman, February 12, 1882.

118. Ibid., G. Argue to Bishop Carman, June 9, 1882.

had entered the work there. He added that if the work in Brandon was not immediately taken up, the present cause there would be absorbed by the competition and the Episcopal Methodists could never start again.[119]

The year 1882 saw several letters reach Carman from strong-minded laymen in Manitoba. These were opposed to union altogether. The discussion of advantages and disadvantages of union in the church newspaper had thrown the whole question open to all the adherents of the church.[120] This merely added to doubt and hesitation in the west. Argue gave his views again in a letter of February 8, 1882:

> If all are going into a Godly union-Amen. If we are not, one of the greatest mistakes in our denominational history was in opening the question at all. The effects of the agitation are already upon us. In some instances where new churches were contemplated the brethren think it better to wait a while. A few of our stringent laymen are opposed to union while a large majority are, I think, in favour of it....[121]

Argue was probably right in intimating that once the question was opened, the church either had to go ahead with it or it would lose so much ground in the meantime that nearly all the money and effort would have been wasted. He noted again in the same letter that nothing was being done

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119. Carman Papers, ibid., September 11, 1882.

120. Ibid., See for example, letter to Bishop Carman dated at Carman, August 17, 1882, (signature impossible to read). Also letter from R. P. Roblin to Bishop Carman, March 12, 1882, dated at Carman City. Argue described Roblin as "one of our most intelligent laymen in this province" but had reservations about him: "I fear a part at least of what he calls loyalty in himself is bigotry". (Argue to Carman, "Purely Private", March 5, 1882.)

121. Ibid., G. Argue to Bishop Carman, February 8, 1882.

while union was debated and that most thought that "union was a foregone conclusion".[122]

The year 1882 also saw Bro. Warne, their most successful man, ask, in a letter of July 27th, for permission to go to the United States to further his education.[123] On September 6th, Bro. Scott reported from Brandon that his preaching tent would soon be untenable because of the cold. He had few at his morning services but managed to attract more than one hundred in the evening.[124] A Bro. Crichton wrote from Nelsonville that his small congregation had only a log church while other denominations were better provided for. He had found appointments along the Canadian Pacific Railroad line as far as Archibald and noted that the Turtle Mountain area presented good prospects.[125]

On November 17, 1882, Argue reported that both Morris and Arnaud were lost to other denominations. The unpleasant question of Mr. Ginn had come up again. Pope had left Emerson without permission when the town was flooded in May. Argue suggested that the valuable Winnipeg church property be mortgaged in order to raise money to build in Portage where the Canadian Methodists proposed to build a $20,000.00 church.[126]

This was probably the high point of Methodist Episcopal success in

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122. Carman Papers, ibid., Those who did not think so had written to Carman - see fn. 120. These were described as "stringent laymen" by Argue. - see above.

123. Ibid., T. W. Warne to Bishop Carman, July 27, 1882.

124. Ibid., Scott to Bishop Carman, September 6, 1882.

125. Ibid., C. Crichton to Bishop Carman, September 11, 1882.

126. Ibid., G. Argue to Bishop Carman, November 17, 1882.

the west. Westward, Bro. Dimmick was stationed as far away as Moosomin and he wrote to Carman to report that he was preaching there every Sunday as well as at other places in the same area. He had two lots secured for a church and planned to build in the spring but needed, of course, the usual financial aid.[127]

Even successful expansion could not save the church now as the cause was disintegrating in the more settled areas of the west. Argue reported by November 16, 1883, that Bro. Taylor did not bother to preach at Emerson at all as the cause was so weak there and merely visited the country appointments around it while marking time before his return to Ontario. Bro. Anderson had not been given a circuit and had gone into secular work.[128] A letter from Emerson, from a trustee of the church there told the end of the sad story in detail. The population of the town had dropped from three thousand to about five hundred and there was no longer any Methodist Episcopal congregation. Only two trustees were left with a large church and a $2700.00 debt![129]

The autumn of 1883 really saw the final decay of the church's strength. Union discussions in the east were drawing to a close. On October 6th, Argue reported that union had "completely demoralized us."[130] It was difficult to keep the men on their stations. Taylor and Anderson wanted work in Ontario. All growth had ended. The Canadian Methodists

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127. Carman Papers, ibid., M. Dimmick to Bishop Carman, October 22, 1883.

128. Ibid., G. Argue to Bishop Carman, November 16, 1883.

129. Ibid., C. Peterson to Bishop Carman, September 17, 1884.

130. Ibid., G. Argue to Bishop Carman, October 6, 1883.

had built a fine new church next to his own in Winnipeg and his own congregation was moving into it gradually.[131] A letter of December 1, 1883, told the same story with only a single bright ray of light in the general gloom: Bro. Crichton had a successful revival at Portage. The transfer of property prior to union added to the general demoralization.[132]

Thus, the Methodist Episcopal Church in the west staggered into the union of 1884 with the same results as were seen in Ontario at the same period. Many ministers left the work altogether and many debt ridden churches were sold. Connexional or denominational rivalry between some branches of Methodism came to an end but at the cost of destroying the result of the often heroic labour of many devoted men. The union indicated that a church sustained merely by traditional denominationalism could not flourish in the west. It also indicated that the churches concerned in the union had, for the most part, little to distinguish them from each other but their denominationalism. While individual men might occasionally be enthusiastic or even heroic, the vital sense of high spiritual purpose was usually absent.[133]

It is sad, perhaps, that the Methodist Episcopal Church, with a heroic past as recent as the 1840s, was absorbed by a more powerful institution which had been suffering under the burden of administrative

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131. Carman Papers, loc. cit.

132. Ibid., December 1, 1883.

133. Apart from all of this, the church was unfortunate enough to be speculating in land during the collapse of the land boom in 1882. See W. L. Morton, Manitoba, A History, University of Toronto Press, (Toronto, 1962), 202. This would probably increase their interest in church union.

connexionalism for a much longer period. It was all the more ironic because the earlier Episcopal Methodists had, by their audacious enthusiasm and missionary spirit, successfully challenged the institutional ancestor of the Canadian Methodists in Ontario in the first half of the century.[134]

(b) The Bible Christian Church in the West

One of the more unusual branches of English Methodism established itself for a short time in the Canadian west before being absorbed into the general Methodist union of 1884. This particular branch was known as the Bible Christian Methodist church although its members were often referred to as simply "Bible Christians". The church existed in Ontario, and this area, as usual, was the seat of officialdom. From Ontario came the direction of the western work and here were the largest number of Canadian Bible Christians. The adherents of that church in Manitoba, however, had peculiar links with the original founders of the movement in England. They were further unusual in that many of them came from Prince Edward Island. Finally, they appear to have been remarkably homogeneous and some of their families have preserved a sense of their peculiar identity down to the present day.[135]

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134. See page 223.

135. Discovered through conversations with J.A.D. Stuart, author of local history entitled The Prairie W.A.S.P., The Prairie Publishing Co., (Winnipeg, 1969) and in further conversation with several people from the area in question, probably members of the Kinley family. The names "Thorne" and "Metherall" are still found in the Snowflake and Crystal City region of Manitoba. These families and several others came from Prince Edward Island via

The movement had its origins in Devon and Cornwall, but appeared first in Devon at the end of the 18th century. Devon was distinguished at that time by being one of the most backward areas in England.[136] Wages stood at a shilling a day in 1800 while wheat was 113s a quarter and a quarter loaf of bread was 1s10d. The Anglican clergy in the area were, according to some accounts, either sportsmen or drunkards.[137] Conditions were ripe for the revival phenomenon. The regular Methodists, however, had neglected that part of the country which had only thirty-two Methodist chapels by 1812.[138] Cornwall, for example, had only half as much area and population as Devon but supported one hundred and twenty-two chapels in the same period.[139] Misery in Devon was acute in these years and the people found little comfort in the Church of England. Among these ignorant rural people many ancient Celtic traditions were still preserved and the district itself had a distinctive cultural flavour.[140] The less charitable might say that it had a distinctively backward character.

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Ontario. Other typical Bible Christian family names are Cobbledick, Ching, Laurence, Kinley, Elliott, Gordon, Greenway, Hird, Hoskin, Stubbs, and Clarke. Many of these are still to be found in that region of Manitoba.

136. T.W.E., op. cit., Vol. I., 502.

137. Ibid., 503.

138. Loc. cit.

139. Loc. cit.

140. Loc. cit., Some types of Cornish cooking, notably "Cornish cake" are still carried on in Southern Manitoba in the Crystal City region.

In 1814 a religious revival finally swept the area and affected the Anglican curate of the Shebbear church north of bleak Dartmoor. He then laboured to convert sinners in evangelical fashion as did a member of the Methodist splinter group, the Lady Huntingdon Connexion. These two, however, were exceptions among the clergy as the rest remained as before.[141]

The man chiefly responsible for finally evangelizing the area was a certain William O'Bryan of nearby Cornwall. He was born in that country in 1778. His family had been Irish but had served with Cromwell in Ireland and returned with him to England. This tradition of religious dissent was further strengthened by the fact that his grandfather was a Quaker and his own parents were Methodists. While O'Bryan was still a child, John Wesley visited the area and was reputed to have placed his hands on the boy's head with the prayer "May he be a blessing to hundreds and to thousands!"[142] Oddly enough, O'Bryan's father was wealthy, owning farms and tin mines. O'Bryan grew up well educated with ample leisure time which he gave to painting, wrestling, engraving and the study of history and philosophy! He studied to be a draper and mercer. Later he was appointed church warden and overseer of the poor.[143]

O'Bryan was converted in 1795 and became a Methodist lay preacher. He was "incessant but irregular" in his work but his peace of mind left him as soon as he stopped evangelical preaching. His zeal, when he did

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141. T.W.E., loc. cit.

142. Ibid., 504.

143. Loc. cit.

pursue the work was such that it dismayed regular clergy who thought he was deranged. When active, he visited the people so frequently and prayed and fasted so much that his followers feared for his health.[144] Some dramatic and narrow escapes from death, convinced him, like Wesley, that he was ordained for the Lord's work.[145] A sermon by the great Dr. Coke[146] in 1805, together with a "strange book"[147] and a near fatal illness, finally convinced him, by 1808, that he would never again turn from the work. From this time forward he never doubted or hesitated and spent every hour in active evangelizing. He helped regular Methodist ministers to open new churches and then set out on his own to found Methodist churches in those parts of Cornwall where there had been no previous Methodist tradition, or even Dissenting tradition for that matter. His method was to preach on three occasions and then form a class-meeting. He was told in an area, that had had no churches but the Church of England since the Reformation,that "It is time for some Christian to come".[148]

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144. T.W.E., loc. cit.

145. Ibid., 505.

146. Dr. Coke was President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1797, President of the Irish Conference for many years, and responsible for the first organization of Home Missions after Wesley's death. His name is generally associated with the establishment of Methodist Missions. He is one of the major figures in British Methodism after 1800. (T.W.E., Vol. I, 388-389.)

147. T.W.E., op. cit., Vol. I., 505.

148. Loc. cit.

As would be expected, the regular Methodist body did not look favourably upon a lay preacher who travelled everywhere and founded new circuits without direction from officialdom. The Cornwall Wesleyan Methodist District Meeting refused, in 1810, to accept him as an itinerant. Their reasons were supposed to be connected with the support of his family, in spite of the fact that he was in a position to offer an independent guarantee of their support. He continued to travel and preach in spite of this decision and was finally expelled after twenty years of membership, without trial from the Methodist body at a Leader's Meeting![149]

In 1814, however, the friendly leader of the Methodist Bodmin Circuit persuaded him to rejoin the Methodists and the circuits that he had established himself were joined to the regular plan. O'Bryan then turned his attention to nearby Devon where he found that twenty parishes had no Methodist work at all. He exhausted his own financial means in his labours and then begged money from the affluent.[150]

In the meantime, his own residence was at St. Blazey, and here his class-ticket was withheld as he had not attended the meetings for three weeks! An attempt was made to give him regular work in the Stratton Wesleyan Mission but the Superintendent there would not preach where O'Bryan did and O'Bryan would not give up preaching. Things moved toward another break.[151]

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149. T.W.E., loc. cit.

150. Loc. cit.

151. Ibid., 505-506.

O'Bryan had a positive attitude to the Church of England as he always encouraged his hearers to attend all its ordinances and he always tried to co-operate with its clergy. In this, he was again following in the steps of Wesley. He also did not preach the evangelical gospel where it was already being preached but instead sought out new areas neglected by everyone else.[152]

O'Bryan next began to organize his work in Devon on a regular basis, setting up several circuits, even taking in notorious Dartmoor Prison. At Cookbury he met one James Thorne, who invited him to come to Shebbear. He refused to go, as the curate there, as has been noted, was an evangelical. John Thorne, a brother of James, asked him again to visit the area and he finally consented but only on the condition that all his services be held outside church hours. The results of this visit were very great and on October 9, 1815, he enrolled twenty-two members in a class. This was the first class he formed after taking a final decision to leave the regular Methodist church.[153] This class, however, did not at once constitute a new church because it was still considered as a "ginger group" within the still friendly local Church of England in the area. All the people in the class were still active supporters of the Church of England. The next curate to come to the area, however, was of the more usual sort and a chapel was eventually built at Shebbear. This became the first Bible Christian circuit.[154]

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152. T.W.E., ibid., 506.

153. Ibid., 506-507.

154. Loc. cit.

O'Bryan may have been the founder of the denomination but James Thorne was clearly the chief architect. He gave fifty years of service to the denomination. He was of a profoundly spiritual nature, although he had a very orthodox background and it took several years before he found "assurance" in his work. His labours were also fantastic in that he often preached five times a day, walking forty miles to meet a congregation and often preached three times before breakfast, rising at four a.m.! In 1820, at the Kent Mission, he enrolled four hundred members in one year![155]

The first Quarterly Meeting was held on January 1, 1816, at O'Bryan's new home in Holsworthy. Here, 237 members were reported. Fifteen months later they had 11,112![156] In 1817, a Methodist group that had left the regular Methodists under a Mr. Boyle, joined the Bible Christians. This group was situated in Truro in western Cornwall.[157] After this union, the whole movement suddenly gathered momentum and spread rapidly throughout the west of England, the Isle of Wight, Kent and Northumberland.[158] Unlike the original Methodists, the movement was led by people who had "a mystic love of poverty and suffering" and an enthusiasm that was strongly mystical.[160] By 1822, as another innovation, they were using

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155. T.W.E., ibid., 507-508.

156. Ibid., 508.

157. Loc. cit.

158. Loc. cit.

159. Loc. cit.

160. Loc. cit.

women, many of whom were young, to bring classes to "decisions".[161] These were not used as itinerants but as evangelists. In 1819, the denomination had thirty travelling preachers, sixteen men and fourteen women. The emotional outpourings at some of the services led by these people seemed to surpass anything that had been seen before.[162]

The new denomination remained strictly Methodist in doctrine refusing to stray toward any particular aberration. They called themselves "Arminian" to indicate that they were not Calvinistic and they stressed santification or progress in the spiritual life after conversion, as much as conversion itself to avoid antinomianism. They did, however, tend to stress the emotional aspects of conversion more than the regular Methodists. O'Bryan recorded that "To feel is to know".[163] The west of England was strongly Celtic, and what could be described as a strongly superstitious area. The Bible Christians appear to have been influenced by this and were "greatly affected by dreams, mysterious voices, signs, and tokens".[164] Extraordinary physical phenomena, of the type found in earliest Methodism and repudiated by the regular body by 1840, was often observed. For example:

> ....even at sight of the preacher, men and women, young or old, behaved as if under demoniacal possession. Relief was obtained as they yielded themselves to the claims of Christ.165

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161. T.W.E., ibid., 509.

162. Loc. cit.

163. Ibid., 510.

164. Loc. cit.

165. Ibid., 510-511.

These traits attracted the persecution of the secular authority, and this in turn, merely increased the zeal of the preachers. They were known in their day as "Bryanites", "Shining Lights", "Free Willers" and "Bible Christians".[166] They called themselves "Arminian Bible Christians", dropping the first name in 1828 and later adding "Methodists".[167] They often co-operated with the Quakers and came to adopt many attitudes that were similar to those of the Quakers. They were, as a result, often called "Quaker Methodists". They tended to use archaic terms, disliked all titles, depended upon an "inner light" and generally believed in simplicity in all things including dress.[168]

The denomination commenced missionary work, apart from the English work in 1821 with a fund of only 92 pounds sterling. By 1865 the mission fund had reached 70,000 pounds![169] The first regular conference met in 1819 with only twelve preachers attending. They had, at that time, eight chapels with 2,389 members. A deed was laid down to secure the chapels to the body and regular Methodist machinery was set up with the sole difference that they used new names for the various divisions. For example, the "Leader's Meeting" became the "Elder's Meeting". District Meetings were set up in 1824 and laymen from these could attend the conference with the "pastors".[170] A traditional Methodist controversy arose

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166. T.W.E., ibid., 511.

167. Loc. cit.

168. Loc. cit.

169. Loc. cit.

170. Ibid., 512.

when O'Bryan claimed the same authority as John Wesley and objected to lay participation in the conference. He further claimed that his single vote could successfully oppose the whole conference vote! This led to a split in 1829 which resulted in O'Bryan leaving the denomination. Only two preachers and a few members out of 7,600 followed him. Six years later a reunion took place. O'Bryan went to New York and established circuits in the United States and Canada. He returned frequently to England to preach and died at the age of ninety in 1868.[171]

In 1831, the Bible Christian Conference laid down its Constitution. This made the conference the supreme authority with guaranteed lay participation "in order to prevent priestly domination".[172] In this, they chose an opposite course from the mainstream Wesleyans, who suffered great loss of members in order to preserve an exclusively clerical control.[173] Every fifth conference of the Bible Christians was to have equal lay and clerical representation and new members were received with the approbation of members as well as by the pastors.[174] In this, they resembled another breakaway Methodist group, the Methodist New Connexion who also differed from the Wesleyans on the matter of lay participation. The usual Methodist newspapers and periodicals appeared as the denomination grew.[175]

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171. T.W.E., ibid., 513.

172. Loc. cit.

173. The great disruption of 1849-1856. One hundred thousand people left the Wesleyan Methodist Church, (T.W.E., Vol. I, 438).

174. T.W.E., op. cit., Vol. I, 513.

175. Loc. cit.

In 1831, the Bible Christian Conference sent out two missionaries to British North America, one to Canada and one to Prince Edward Island. In both cases, the purpose was to minister to those who had settled in those areas after leaving Bible Christian churches in England. Francis Metherall was the heroic missionary who was sent to Prince Edward Island.[176]

Bible Christian work in Canada was begun by John Hicks Eynon, who arrived at Coburg in 1833. By 1855 the denomination had 51 churches, 104 other preaching places, 21 preachers and 2,186 members. By 1883 they had 181 churches, 80 ministers, 7,400 members and about 30,000 adherents including the Prince Edward Island circuits.[177]

The only detailed source of the Bible Christian work in Manitoba appears at this writing, to be their newspaper, The Observer. Once again, their work in Manitoba was not initiated with the intention of evangelizing the west. Their people appear to have settled in relatively compact groups unlike the other Methodist groups examined so far. Their ministers were sent out, at first, simply to minister to the people already settled in certain areas. There appears to have been considerable intermarriage in the groups of Bible Christians settled in Manitoba. This, combined with their unusual proximity to one another, made it a logical proposition to send a man to a specific, permanent area.

The August 2, 1882, edition of their paper provided its readers with a history of the Manitoba Missions. They claimed to have started work here three years previously. In 1882, they noted that their returns for

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176. T.W.E., ibid., Vol. II, 222.

177. Ibid., 223.

the past year showed an aggregate membership of 46, with 2 churches and five other preaching places. They also had two Sunday Schools in operation.[178] Their missionary reports for the year June, 1882 to January, 1883, listed the following as missionary circuits: Little Prairie (Wisconson, Burlington [?] Crystal City, Alexandria (three miles south of Thornhill), Grandvalley and Souris (one circuit).[179] The last three places would presumably be in Manitoba and "Souris" would be "Souris City".[180]

The newspaper article referred to previously went on to say that many thought that the rate of growth seemed very small compared with the great influx of settlers to the west. The explanation, however, was clear to the writer:

> Two out of the three men sent to the north-west, prior to the last Conference, withdrew from the work at a time and in a manner which could not fail to be disastrous to any new enterprise. These ministerial defections have caused serious inconvenience to the Executive and great discouragement to our friends in the new province.181

The writer went on to add that many Bible Christians had settled in the towns and cities of the west and were now lost to their church. This

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178. The Observer, Published under the Direction of the Bible Christian Conference, Bowmanville, Ontario, August 2, 1882, 4.

179. Bible Christian Church Missionary Society Reports 1857-1883 (Bound), June, 1882, June, 1883 - The Twenty-eighth Annual Report, Bowmanville, Ontario, 1883, 11.

180. The town here and henceforth referred to as "Souris City" no longer exists. It was located about three miles west of the present town of Wawanesa and existed from 1882 until 1888. The present town of Souris was originally the village of Plum Creek which was renamed after 1890.

181. The Observer, op. cit., August 2, 1882, 4.

would indicate that the denomination had not yet made a clear decision as to the strategy of their western work apart from a general conviction that their own people should be reached in their new homes.[182]

The piece continued with the observation that the missions had not really had a fair trial because of the above circumstances but that the Conference was sending out Bro. A. Gordon, a minister of 23 years standing, together with his able wife, to reinforce the western work. Another of "our best men"[183] was to be sent out also but no name was provided at this time. The writer closed with the rather vague observation that the denomination should try to occupy the centres of the north-west and that two things were needed: Men and Money. Another column on the same page of the paper noted, that Bros. Hoskin and Gordon after a tedious journey, had reached Manitoba.[184]

The February 8, 1882, issue of the paper noted that the First Bible Christian Tea Meeting had been held in Manitoba at the residence of R. Sweet on the 5th. Tea Meetings, in any Methodist group may be taken as a sign of a more social orientation and a decline in rigour and enthusiasm. The Rev. J. Greenway, visiting the area, was present. The article went on to note that the first Bible Christian Church would be opened on the 14th of February, 1882.[185]

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182. The Observer, loc. cit.

183. Loc. cit.

184. Loc. cit.

185. Ibid., February 8, 1882, 5.

The March 8, 1882, issue of the paper carried the account of the church opening which took place at Alexandria, Manitoba. Rev. J. Greenway of Crystal City preached the dedicatory service. A Rev. Mr. Bothwick also took part in the service. The total cost of the building, put up with free labour, was $600.00. It was 20 by 28 feet with Gothic windows and a peak roof. The names of the people who took part in this opening are names that are noted again and again in any examination of the Bible Christians: the Elliott brothers, Mugford, Stubbings, Ray, Sweet, Laurence, and the man who contributed the article; W. Kinley.[186]

The Observer of August 2, 1882, carried an account by a J. Kenner, who evidently left Collingwood, Ontario, to come to Manitoba. He noted that he had devoted twenty-seven and a half years to the work and had to obtain permission from the circuit stewards to leave because of ill health. He must have been either a preacher or a lay preacher. (The Bible Christians often referred to people as "brother" without meaning that they were actually ministers or preachers and it is sometimes difficult to tell which was which except in the obvious cases where they use the standard "Reverend".) In any case, Kenner had "appointments", so he must have been some type of preacher. He provided his readers with a "blow by blow" folksy account of his trips to Manitoba recounting all the myths about that province told to him by fellow travellers. The stories of bad water, flooded land, and "the abominable monopoly given to the Pacific Syndicate"[187] would be of interest to the general historian

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186. The Observer, ibid., March 8, 1882, 5.

187. Ibid., August 2, 1882, 4, 5.

as part of the explanation why so many western settlers proceeded on to the United States. Kenner was also told, by a man who had lost money in Manitoba, that American "sharpers" created artificial booms to make money and that the mosquitos were so bad that cattle were drained of blood in the fields![188]

An article on the decline of class-meetings in the same issue, on the same page,[189] indicated that the Bible Christians were having the difficulty that the other branches of Methodism were having or had had. This fact, together with the Tea Meetings and the travelogue syndrome just mentioned, lead one to suspect that there would be little that was heroic in the composition of the Bible Christian denomination as it sought to become established in the west.

A letter in the same edition of the paper told of the arrival of A. Gordon in Manitoba. He had travelled for seven days on the train, sleeping only on the wooden seats, and had been met at Emerson by Bro. T. D. Elliott. Gordon's family and Hoskin were travelling with him. They then set out for Alexandria, crossing the Red River on a temporary bridge.[190]

A very long letter from Gordon appeared in the paper on September 13, 1882 which gave a full account of his activities in Manitoba. He recorded that he had visited some of the people in the area of the Lorne school

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188. The Observer, ibid., 5.

189. Loc. cit.

190. Loc. cit.

house, and Hoskin had gone there with him on Sunday to preach to about seventeen people. Bro. Kinley had left Alexandria for Souris with his family, a distance of ninety-four miles. He reached his home there in three days near "what is called Souris City". Gordon provided his readers with a long account of the terrible state of the roads in July and August and the resulting difficulty of travel. He referred to the special kindness of the Mennonites who provided accommodation for the travellers during their journey between Emerson and Mountain City, a distance of about fifty miles. He met Bro. Kenner who was travelling with a Bro. Clarke of Coburg, Ontario. Kenner had arrived at Alexandria which he left for Souris and finally went to Crystal City to hear Bro. Greenway preach. On July 13th, Gordon had preached at Darlingford and again at Lorne with an evening service at Alexandria. The congregations were generally small but fifty appeared at Alexandria. An Elder's Meeting had been held at Alexandria and a Quarterly Meeting was planned.[191]

The whole schedule of Bible Christian mission work appears to have been quite informal in comparison with the Episcopals or Wesleyans and some of their activity seems almost entirely haphazard. Perhaps the preachers merely wandered about among the more scattered families until circuit patterns became established. Certainly, there seems to have been little direction from anyone.

Bro. Kenner appeared at Alexandria with the news that Bro. Hoskin had gone to Turtle Mountain instead of Souris as had been planned, wrote Gordon in the same letter. Kenner himself had been to Souris and arranged

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191. The Observer, ibid., September 13, 1882, 4, 5.

with the people there to have Hoskins enter the work. Greenway turned out to have been responsible for sending Hoskins to Turtle Mountain as he had not known about Kenner's previous arrangements and was afraid that the Bible Christians there would join other churches. Mrs. Gordon was to preach at Darlingford and Alexandria the following Sunday. Gordon himself visited the busy Bro. Greenway at Crystal City.[192]

Meanwhile, in the same issue of the paper, Kenner's column was still running. He described the Mennonites in detail, their beliefs, methods of settlement, etc. He told how he had hurt himself in a coach accident on the way to Crystal City from Pembina Crossing. He met Greenway at Crystal City and accompanied him to his appointment at Snowflake where a new church had been built. He also attended Greenway's Quarterly Meeting. At Snowflake he met a number of friends from London and Exeter. Kenner provided his readers with a description of Crystal City in 1882; it boasted 45 houses. Kenner also travelled with Greenway to Pilot Mound, Rock Lake and Clear Water.[193]

The October 18, 1882, issue of The Observer saw another letter from Kenner refuting all the unfavourable myths about Manitoba. Hoskins wrote in to the paper at this time to report that he was at Souris City and eighty miles from the nearest Bible Christian minister. He described his visit to Turtle Mountain where he found only a few Bible Christians but preached anyway to a mixed group including a Roman Catholic![194]

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192. The Observer, loc. cit.

193. Loc. cit.

194. Ibid., October 18, 1882, 5.

An interesting letter from Gordon appeared on November 22, 1882, describing the state of the work. He noted that the biggest problem was "the worldliness of the people".[195] Everyone wanted to become rich or obtain valuable property which would enable them to become so. Gordon reported that "This tide of worldliness has swept many away from their moorings in Christ".[196] Schools were needed for the children and a church building was proposed for Darlingford. The Canadian Pacific Railroad track was within six miles of Darlingford and had run three miles north of Alexandria, so the area should prosper, he reported.[197]

The February 7, 1883, issue of the paper recorded that the first Bible Christian Missionary Meeting was held at Darlingford on November 26th last. On December 7th, a new church had been opened at Snowflake. A description of the terrible winter of 1882-1883 followed this information.[198]

The issue of May 23, 1883 reported a Quarterly Meeting for Snowflake and Crystal City, held on May 13th. Few of the officials put in an appearance and the mission was in dire financial straits. Greenway had been appointed to the field for the fifth year, indicating that he must have been in the area since 1878. A District Meeting was held at the same location on May 2nd. The spiritual state of the mission was described

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195. The Observer, ibid., November 22, 1882, 5.

196. Loc. cit.

197. Loc. cit.

198. Ibid., February 7, 1883, 1.

as "worldly" and "cold".[199] Thirty-eight new members were recorded, all of whom came from Ontario where they had been Bible Christians before.[200]

The forty mile drive from Crystal City to Snowflake was considered too much and thought was given to the placing of a young man at Snowflake. Some consideration was also given to the possibility of making "some arrangement" with the Canadian Methodists on the Alexandria Mission.[201] Hoskins was reported as having been successful in bringing down Divine Blessing in a service.[202]

The issue of December 19, 1883, brought a tale of prairie disaster which affected many of the Bible Christian families:

> In most parts the crops looked splendid. I never saw such fields of wheat. Elliott, Chings, Cobbledick, Werry, Gonil and Cudmore had the prospect of a very large yield, but on the night of the seventh of September, the frost came down....203

The Canadian Pacific Railroad was not furnishing transportation for what wheat was marketable and when they did do so, they charged seventeen cents for carrying a bushel of wheat one hundred miles. Gordon recorded that feeling was running very high against the railroad and trouble would result. He felt that the church would suffer from the general economic decline.[204]

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199. The Observer, ibid., May 23, 1883, 1.

200. Loc. cit.

201. Loc. cit.

202. Loc. cit.

203. Ibid., December 19, 1883, 5.

204. Loc. cit.

A letter in the issue of April 2, 1884 from Gordon, described the western climate in detail and noted that coal was available at Turtle Mountain and at Souris. At the latter place it was found on the surface and could be shovelled into wagons. He noted that he was wrong in his quotation of freight charges in his last article and that many of the stories of the evils inflicted on the farmers were not true.[205]

The newspaper of May 28, 1884, contained a short note from J. Hoskin telling about the last Manitoba District Meeting held at Alexandria on Tuesday, May 6, 1884. Gordon and Greenway were there although Greenway had been "laid aside"[206] for the past year because of ill health. Mrs. Greenway was recovering from a serious illness. The spiritual state of the people had changed very little but some had wandered away. Certain parts of the work were described as being in a healthy condition financially, while others had fallen behind because of the depression of the previous year. He closed with a rather touching note:

> Our public meeting in the evening was not very largely attended but the Master was with us and some of us will not soon forget our last B. C. District Meeting in Manitoba.[207]

Thus, the western Bible Christians went into union. By 1884, they used Tea Meetings or similar social occasions to raise money and were occupied with temperance resolutions much in the same way as other Methodist groups. They were different, however, in that they were, at the time of union,

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205. The Observer, ibid., April 2, 1884, 1.

206. Ibid., May 28, 1884, 5.

207. Loc. cit.

still a remarkably close knit and homogeneous group. A list of their clergy and laymen at the time of union, appearing in the May 28, 1884 issue of their paper reveals the same family names found in Manitoba and in the work in Prince Edward Island, and even in England.[208] They were not a large denomination and seemed to have a relatively informal organization for a Methodist group. The role of women and laymen in their church further sets them apart from the Wesleyans and the Episcopal Methodists. Their subsequent role in the history of Manitoba deserves closer examination.

### (c) The Primitive Methodists in the North-west

Another remarkable branch of Methodism, similar in character in many respects to the Bible Christians, also appeared for a short time in the Canadian west. The members of this peculiar denomination called themselves "Primitive Methodists" and appear to have limited their activities in this region to the establishment of an agricultural colony in the area of Grenfell, Saskatchewan. They were very peculiar in the fact that they did not really limit their "colony" to Methodists, but, in the tradition of their church, welcomed Christians of other denominations with similar views. Their organization, in the west at least, was also markedly informal for a Methodist group. These two last tendencies make it difficult for the historian actually to find or locate them in a physical sense and it is really quite difficult to discover

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208. The Observer, loc. cit.

major salient features that can be examined. In short, they merged so well with their environment that it is an almost impossible task to define their limits.

It would be suspected, after examining the origins of the movement, that they would be very easy to discover in any historical context, as they had very definite characteristics in their early days. They began, like the Bible Christians, in the early years of the nineteenth century in England. Here, they appealed in "primitive" and evangelical fashion to the disinherited multitude at the very bottom of society. Their freedom from Wesleyan regimentation and the stirring drama of their evangelism set them apart from all other branches of Methodism. By the time they reached the Canadian west in the 1880s, however, they appear to have lost most of these characteristics and become relatively colourless. This loss of character combined with an apparent lack of aggressive denominationalism can provide a likely explanation of their strange elusiveness when viewed from the present day.

Their decline from their heroic era appears to have the same sort of symptoms found in the decline of the other branches of Methodism. In 1883, for example, one of the contributors to their Canadian newspaper, The Christian Journal, could regard the new Salvation Army with its "crude but effective methods" as being the same in substance as the Primitive Methodists of fifty years ago.[209]

To understand them at all, it is necessary again to examine their

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209. The Christian Journal, Published by the Primitive Methodist Church in Canada, Toronto, Wm. Bee, April 27, 1883, 4.

beginnings in the British Isles. As in the case of the Bible Christians, the Primitives appeared as a reaction to the tendencies of mainstream Wesleyan Methodism. Methodism in general began with the outpouring of a great evangelical spirit which swept across England and took in persons from many walks of life including some of those who were most destitute of both material and spiritual things. The movement was prone to produce scenes of emotional excess.[210] John Wesley, however, constantly purged the preachers who constituted his following and unrestrained enthusiasm was not encouraged outside the boundaries of the discipline. This trend toward discipline became more marked after Wesley's death. His successors tended to emphasize the unique role of the clergy and the need for all to submit to the rules of the organization. There was also a growing tendency toward ultra respectability in all things. Leaders like Bunting went to great extremes to avoid the charge of possible Jacobinism,[211] with the unhappy result, that, by the 1840s, Wesleyan Methodism had divorced itself from the lowest orders of society in England.[212] This did not happen without a struggle; the organization minded imposed their

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210. See E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Gollancez, (London, 1964), for an unfavourable account of the "free spirits".

211. T.W.E., op. cit., Vol. I, 406, 421. Jabez Bunting--President of Wesleyan Methodist Conference 1820-28-36-44.

212. A judgement accepted by all authorities and first found in J. L. and Barbara Hammond, The Bleak Age, (London, 1934), 143. The Wesleyans were similarly respectable and institution-minded in Canada and The Canadian Church had ceased to be enthusiastic by 1840. See Goldwin French, op. cit., 220.

will on the people who objected with the result that many left to found new denominations like the Bible Christians and many just left. The climax was perhaps, the "flyleaf" controversy of 1849, when many left the Wesleyan body.[213] The Primitives left the mainstream about the same time as the Bible Christians but were unique perhaps, in that they became associated with those very elements of society that the Wesleyan wished to avoid: those people at the bottom of English society who found much that was unendurable in their lot and who were sometimes prepared to do something about it. This is not to suggest that any Primitive Methodists were social reformers but rather that their activities, and the people who followed them, came as close as Methodists ever came to what the authorities referred to as Jacobinism. That was not very close by today's standards but it was enough to give them a bad name in their own day.[214]

They began in a remote part of Staffordshire in the year 1800. Three years before this date, Hugh Bourne, a carpenter, had been converted. While living in Staffordshire in the year 1800, he attempted the conversion of his cousin, Daniel Shubotham, a collier. He was successful, and the result was a local revival whereby others were drawn in. "Conversation preaching"[215] which was simply direct spiritual conversation with the proposed convert, was the chief means employed in this

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213. T.W.E., op. cit., Vol. I., 438. The "fly sheets" were anonymous tracts circulated by preachers who did not accept the Wesleyan policy of ranking their clergy clearly above the laity.

214. Ibid., Vol. I., 566.

215. Ibid., 561.

revival. There were also numerous "cottage meetings" held under strict rules. One of these rules was that no meeting should last longer than an hour and a half. This led many to complain that they did not have enough time either to listen or speak or to pray. Shubotham promised some of those who complained that they could have a full Sunday's praying on a local hill known as "Mow's cop". This promise was not forgotten.[216]

Meanwhile, a chapel was built in a corner of Shubotham's garden and regular Methodist classes were held although the authorities of the local Methodist circuit (Burslem) took no part in the proceedings. The whole thing was irregular. In 1802, however, the regular Methodists supplied the chapel and received the classes, yielding, as in many other cases to what appeared to be simply another local initiative.[217]

In 1804, another revival took place in the area, begun by visiting Methodist irregulars who did not have the support of the local organization. These were popularly known as "revivalists".[218] They were very successful and even converted some of the regular Methodist officials to their methods! In Tunstall, one William Clowes, the other founder of Primitive Methodism, was converted during this revival. He became a class leader and exhorter.[219]

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216. T.W.E, ibid., 562.

217. Loc. cit.

218. Loc. cit.

219. Ibid., 562-563.

These unrelated events were brought into meaningful focus by an influence from America. The fantastic Lorenzo Dow,[220] appeared on the English scene in 1805. His reputation for "second sight" and his odd mannerisms, combined with his wandering evangelical vigour did not endear him to the regular Methodist leadership who rightly suspected that he would lead others into irregularity. Accordingly, he was denied access to many Methodist chapels and was forced to turn to those circuits and societies which had already developed a talent for revivalism.[221] At the request of Hugh Bourne and his friends, Dow visited, and preached in, Harriseahead.[222]

Camp-meetings had begun in America in 1799 and brought great spiritual blessings. Dow constantly referred to these while in England and talked about them at great length while preaching at Harriseahead. Before he left, he sold two instructive pamphlets on camp-meetings to Bourne. Both Bourne and Clowes heard Dow preach his farewell sermon at Congleton.[223] This took place in April of 1807 and on May 31st, the first English Camp Meeting was held on Mow Hill.[224]

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220. T.W.E, ibid., 564--Lorenzo Dow was an itinerant American evangelist who was a strong exponent of the camp meeting for revival purposes. He was of strange appearance with oddities of speech and was supposed to have second sight.

221. Ibid., 564.

222. Ibid., 565.

223. Loc. cit.

224. Ibid., 566.

Large numbers attended this first meeting and four preaching stands were necessary to reach the huge crowd. Clowes took a large part in the proceedings and many of the Methodists who attended were already known as Independent Methodists. The official Wesleyans did not offer active opposition to this meeting as it was understood by them that this would be the first and last such experiment.[225]

Many people of course, wanted a second meeting and the idea was talked about, attracting official displeasure. The regular circuit preachers in the vicinity began to issue bills against the camp meeting. Also, the Conventicle and Five Mile Acts were still in force, and it was understood that the Toleration Act only included those who had been ordained to a specific congregation.[226] All of this led Hugh Bourne to secure a preaching license for himself and for the ground for the second meeting. The second meeting was held, but the third, held at Norton-on-the-Moors, in August of 1807, was the most significant. Before it was held, the regular Methodist Conference of 1807 met and condemned the proposed meeting as "highly improper and likely to be of considerable mischief".[227] The result was that Hugh Bourne was expelled from the regular Methodist Quarterly Meeting in his area on the grounds that he had not attended his class. The parting of the ways had begun.[228]

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225. T.W.E., loc. cit.

226. Ibid., 566-567.

227. Ibid., 567.

228. Loc. cit.

Bourne continued to preach and he engaged James Crawfoot in 1809 to assist him as an itinerant evangelist.[229] Crawfoot had already preached for the Independent Methodists and had held monthly meetings in the forest of Delamere where his followers had been given the name of "Forest Methodists" or "Magic Methodists"[230] partly because of Crawfoot's own strong tendencies toward mysticism. Bourne himself assimilated many of these tendencies and he also associated with local "Quaker Methodists" as he had read a great deal about the original Quaker movement. The followers of both of these men were now referred to as "Camp-Meeting Methodists" although they were still not a denomination but regarded themselves in the usual fashion as a "ginger group" within the regular Methodist body. Some regular Methodist leaders still supported them. The year 1810 is generally regarded as the time when the Camp-Meeting Methodists became a distinct denomination but this may be rather arbitrary.[231]

Meanwhile, in June of 1810, William Clowes was deprived of his plan and in September he lost his ticket on the grounds that he had attended camp-meetings contrary to Methodist discipline. Clowes left the church and many of his followers continued to meet with him in a private home. Frequently, Bourne and other Camp-Meeting Methodists were present. The "kitchen church" soon became the center of a circuit and they resolved

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229. T.W.E., ibid., 568.

230. Ibid., 569.

231. Loc. cit.

to build a church. Clowe's followers were also known as "Clowesistes".[232] The union of the Clowesites and the Camp-Meeting Methodists took place somewhere in 1811-1812. At a joint meeting on February 13, 1812, the name "Primitive Methodists" was adopted.[233]

In 1814, rules were drawn up for the conduct of the societies in usual Methodist fashion. An attempt was made to avoid the perils of denominationalism. Members were counselled to "walk in wisdom to that are without, and honour all men, highly esteeming pious people of all denominations".[234] At first, a policy of non-expansion was laid down[235] but the nature of the movement was such that it had to expand and this became the policy by 1819. Gradual expansion then took place, greatly aided by the revivals of 1817-1818. Bourne introduced a new type of American camp-meeting practice utilizing "praying circles".[236] The greatest social significance of these Primitive Methodist revivals was that they took place in the Midlands right on the heels of the Luddite and Leveller uprisings which had brought on harsh reprisals from the government. By 1819, the year of Peterloo,[237] the Primitive Methodists were well established.

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232. T.W.E., ibid., 570.

233. Ibid., 571.

234. Ibid., 572.

235. Ibid., 573.

236. Ibid., 574.

237. Attack by troops on a great crowd gathered at St. Peter's Field, Manchester, August 26, 1819.

The rest of their story can be summed up briefly: there were only four circuits in the whole Connexion in 1819. In 1824 there were four Districts with seventy-two independent stations.[238] The democratic, unrestrained, revival tendencies of the body combined with the liberal use of women as regular preachers (there were thirteen of these in 1832),[239] and a brief history of persecution at the hands of the authorities, gave them the necessary impetus for growth. This growth was too uncontrolled, however, and the period 1825-1830 saw the whole Connexion in grave disorder through debt and lack of coherent direction.[240] New rules were accordingly passed and Bourne conducted a "purge" of the type often conducted by Wesley. Order was brought to the whole movement and it continued to grow but on more disciplined lines.[241] In 1843, Bourne and Clowes retired and new leaders came to take their place.[242] Gradually, the old circuit missions were taken over by a central office in London and by 1863, the whole organization was under centralized control.[243] The next logical step was the establishment of foreign missions.

It may be seen from the foregoing that the Primitive Methodists set out to avoid many of the perils of the regular Methodist organization.

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238. T.W.E, op. cit., Vol. I., 579.

239. Ibid., 585.

240. Ibid., 581.

241. Ibid., 582.

242. Ibid., 586.

243. Ibid., 587.

It may also be gathered that they were not entirely successful as some of the things that they found most objectionable were necessary in order to sustain, perpetuate and maintain any church body. There had to be some order and control in order that they might be recognizable as a distinct entity and not be eroded into a dozen minor sects. In spite of their orthodox consolidation after 1843, however, they still managed to retain several features that set them apart from the Wesleyans: they tried to welcome pious people from any church body, they made use of women in the regular work and they still tried to direct their evangelism toward the lower elements of society in a relatively democratic fashion. It appears that by the time they were ready to enter the Canadian west, they had suffered some further decline, particularly in reference to the last of the distinctive characteristics mentioned above. If they found the Salvation Army using their own methods of fifty years ago, then it can only be imagined that they were no longer directly appealing to the poorer classes and that they had also suffered a decline in their famous "revival" power.[244]

There is considerable evidence indicating a decline in their motive power in any examination of their Canadian institution. By 1882, this organization embraced seven districts, all of them in Ontario. These were Toronto, Brampton, Hamilton, Guelph, London, Kingston and Barrie Districts.[245]

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244. Supra, n. 209.

245. Primitive Methodist Year Book 1875-1883, containing pamphlet entitled "Minutes of the 29th Annual Conference of the Primitive Methodist Church in Canada held at Aurora, Ontario". Toronto, Wm. Bee, 1882.

They also had, like other groups, their own newspaper; The Christian Journal. The Camp-Meeting question was not really as controversial a matter as it had been in England. This was partly because the Canadian branch of the church, like the other Methodist groups, was not so enthusiastic by the time it was well established and also because Canadian Methodists had been introduced to it at an early period by their American brethren and it had been used on a considerable scale. Only the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada withheld formal recognition of this particular method of generating spiritual blessing.[246]

A glance at the minutes of the annual conference of the Primitive Methodists in Canada indicates that they were taken up with general Methodist concerns by 1882. The Sabbath Observance Committee for that year reported:

> We would strongly recommend all our people to abstain from business conversation, secular reading, and diversions of any kind that might interfere with the design and spirit of that day, which is holy unto the Lord....[247]

This was perhaps a bit more severe than any similar resolution by other Methodist bodies, but the question would be one of degree only. Their resolution on alcoholic beverages would be almost typical of any Methodist group of the period:

> We are of the opinion that with the knowledge possessed and available on this subject no official

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246. T.W.E., op. cit., Vol. II., 213.

247. Primitive Methodist Year Book, op. cit., Minutes of Conference of 1882, 14.

> can indulge in the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, with a clear conscience, for whatever is not of faith is sin....

The last phrase in this question was more typical of the Primitive Methodists in that it brings the whole matter back to notions of gospel truth rather than leaving the resolution supported by only psuedo-scientific evidence.

The Primitive Methodist Colony in the north-west, however, was a peculiar manifestation of the Primitive Methodist church in Canada. It can only be understood by an examination of the Colony itself as the latter's links with the denomination appear to have been rather ill defined. A quotation from the promotion pamphlet issued by the Colonization Company in 1882 or early 1883, gives the best available description of its origins:

> This Colonization Company was formed in the beginning of the year 1882 for the purpose of affording the Primitive Methodists and their friends, of whatever religious denomination, the opportunity of locating together, as the more easily to secure religious as well as educational and social advantages in the north-west, which was then and is still, attracting so many people from England, the older provinces of the Dominion and the United States. In February of 1882 a grant of land was made to the Company by the Dominion government, being the first grant made to any company, and the lands granted being the first choice from among the Colonization lands of the attractive Qu'Appelle District. The company, without loss of time, went to work to secure settlers. They took the lead in settlement and have been rewarded by a large number of contented, hopeful colonists on their lands who speak in glowing terms of the location and their prospects....249

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248. Primitive Methodist Year Book, ibid., 15.

249. Typescript, The Primitive Methodist Colony, copied by W. A. Cooke, evidently written by Dr. A. W. Kenner for the United Church Archives, Vancouver, 1950.

The headquarters of the company was given as Toronto, the President was R. Walker, Esq., J.P.; all other officers were presumably, Primitive Methodist ministers, including the very active Secretary, Rev. William Bee.[250]

A former resident of the Colony recalled that for many years the nearest railway station was Wolseley on the Canadian Pacific Railroad mainline. Settlers arriving to take up lands drove north across the Qu' Appelle River Valley and after twenty-five miles came to the edge of the Colony which then extended some seventeen miles further north and was between twelve to eighteen miles from east to west. The Pheasant Hills bounded the Colony on the south-east. The trip to Wolseley took two or three days by oxteam.[251]

The same gentleman recalled how the settlement of the Colony was promoted:

> Rev. Mr. Bee, in promoting the settlement went to England and interviewed prospective settlers, some of whom paid their entrance fees for specific half sections they accepted on his report and recommendation. Perhaps seventy-five percent of the early settlers came from England, and were Primitive Methodists. Others were of English stock who had lived in Ontario before coming to the Colony. Some were Wesleyan Methodist in England, others were Anglicans. A number who called themselves Christians and Believers but were known as Plymouth Brethren, held service every Sunday in the log house of one of the families. Methodist services were held in a hall of a school at Pheasant Forks, and in the home of Rev. C.S. Willis, north of the Forks, and in the extreme west of the Colony in the home of Thomas

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250. The Primitive Methodist Colony, loc. cit.

251. Ibid., 2.

> Pallister; and in the north-east part in the log home of Mr. Thomas Loveridge. To maintain these services the old Methodist circuit plan of local preachers was followed. Some had been "on the plan" as accredited local preachers in the Circuits from which they came. Among them were men well read in general literature and divinity; able preachers and men of fine sterling character....252

This account was given from memory in 1950, but is substantiated by the material on the Colony found in the Primitive Methodist newspaper, The Christian Journal.

According to the source mentioned earlier, the first settler in the Colony was J. M. Perrigrin of Hamilton, Ontario. He opened a store at Pheasant Forks which included a Post Office. He also ran a stage from Wolseley carrying both passengers and mail.[253]

By 1885, at least, the area was included in the Manitoba Conference list of stations under the Regina District: Fort Qu'Appelle and Primitive Methodist Colony. It appears from this listing that the Colony merged with the regular Methodists in the Union of 1884. In that case, it had a short life span.[254]

The columns of The Christian Journal provide a detailed account of the establishment of the Colony and in the process of doing this give a close view of the actual method of settlement in that area.

The first mention of the Colony appeared in the October 13, 1882 edition of the paper. Rev. William Bee reported on his visit to the

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252. The Primitive Methodist Colony, loc. cit.

253. Ibid., 3.

254. Loc. cit.

Colony commencing on August 8th. This was his first visit and he made an attempt to be critical as much had been favourably reported about conditions to be found there. He looked especially at the quality of the land and noted that in an area as large as six townships there was bound to be some poor land but he, nevertheless, saw very little. He reported that a government agent considered the land to be unusually good and that it was his own opinion that "it would be very hard, even in the north-west to find a block of land of equal extent as good as this".[255] The topsoil, he observed, varied from nine inches to more than three feet.[256]

At this point the northern townships were in the process of being surveyed and Mr. Bee reported them to contain rolling land suitable for crops with many small lakes. No settlers had taken up this area as yet. The two centre townships had more than half of the homesteads located. The Pheasant Hills lay in the south-east and contained all the timber of the Colony for fuel and for building. The timber was of better quality than expected. The settlement of the township here was restricted in order to preserve the wood supply. In the central-south township all the homesteads and pre-emptions were reported taken up. Here the soil was very good with only one lake in the township. Near this lake stood the preaching tent supplied by the company and around it the tents and log houses of the settlers. Bee reported that there had been two services

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255. The Christian Journal, op. cit., October 13, 1882, 4.

256. Loc. cit.

in the tent every Sunday since the settlers came out and a Class-Meeting followed the morning service. Mr. Bee closed his account by describing the high quality of the settlers themselves although he was bound to mention that some came out expecting to find Paradise, and as they did not, turned back. These, however, could be found in any western settlement situation; as they lacked the necessary strength of character and were discouraged by the rough life.[257]

The next mention of the Colony did not occur until January 12, 1883, and then only in the form of a letter from Rev. C. S. Willis, who was identified as the "Colony Agent". He sent in a series of daily temperature reports covering about a month per letter! He seemed to go to great pains to explain that western temperatures were not fatal to human existence as some of his readers evidently felt that any temperature in the region of fifty below would threaten life itself. Willis told what clothing the settlers wore in these temperatures and how the air was dryer than Ontario, and so forth.[258] In March of 1883, he noted that flour was $6.50 a barrel but other things were priced as in Ontario, allowing for freight. Coal would soon be available at Wolseley for $10.00 a ton. He expected a large influx of settlers in the spring by train.[259]

Rev. Bee's next visit to the Colony on July 23, 1883, was recorded

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257. The Christian Journal, ibid., 4-5.

258. Ibid., January 12, 1883, 5.

259. Ibid., March 16, 1883 [?].

in the paper's August 3rd issue. By this time the railroad had reached Wolseley and the whole business of travel was revolutionized.

> Less than a year ago the journey from Winnipeg to Wolseley was an uncomfortable day and night's travel. Now it is a pleasant trip made almost in daylight in summer time.260

The country west of Brandon had altered greatly as a result of the railway:

> A year and ten months since in a hundred miles or more along the surveyed line of the railway, we only found about five settlers now there are hundreds; cultivation is progressing on every hand, log and frame houses are built all along the line, and for miles on each side of it;....The towns and villages which last year consisted merely of tents, making the impression that they might all be gone in a day, now have good substantial buildings, and indicate permanent settlement.261

When he arrived at Wolseley, Mr. Bee decided to take the stage to the Colony but the stage owner was taking two wagons instead to haul goods and lumber so Mr. Bee had to ride on these. Mosquitos were bad and so was the rain and mud. Both teams were fastened to one wagon to make greater progress but the party arrived at Walkerton, Pheasant Forks, five hours late. The next day Bee went with Willis to visit Pheasant Hills but the buck board broke down on the way! Because of these travel difficulties, Mr. Willis suggested a plan to have preaching places at the corner and centre of each township. There were half a dozen local

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260. The Christian Journal, ibid., August 3, 1883 [?].

261. Loc. cit.

preachers in the Colony besides Mr. Willis but some had not yet withdrawn their membership from other churches. Mr. Bee expressed the hope that they would soon do so "and seek to build up the cause where they intend to make their future homes".[262]

The most important letters from Mr. Bee were published in the paper August 10th and 17th, 1883. His account of the trip back to Ontario published in the August 31st issue and entitled "Homeward Bound" reads like a too cute travelogue and is filled with all the trite phrases that marked Victorian Methodism in decline.[263] There is a bit of this sort of thing in all of his reports.

His report given in the August 10th issue told how the religious life of the Colony was organized. He conducted a service in the home of C. S. Willis. Fifty people were present and the house was too full. Two other services were conducted at the same time, one three miles south and the other four miles north. Another was conducted in the morning six miles west. Mr. Bee noted that:

> On Saturday the first Quarterly Meeting was held when four preaching places were decided on, and where there has been preaching regularly for some time. They have had for some time a regular plan with four local preachers besides Mr. Willis on it....There are two other local preachers to place on the plan so they have a good staff of workers. They are talking of building churches....264

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262. The Christian Journal, loc. cit.

263. Ibid., August 31, 1883 [?].

264. Ibid., August 10, 1883 [?].

He noted that they only had about twenty members in the Society but that there were others who still identified themselves with other Methodist churches but who were expected to join.

Bee found further improvement in another direction:

> There is a great improvement in the Colony from a material point of view. Last August there were but two houses up and a few others on the way. Now nearly all the settlers who came here in the spring and previously have houses now or are building. By the end of the summer there will be perhaps one hundred houses....265

The wood for these came from the Pheasant Hills and Bee reported that the log houses were as comfortable as any in Ontario. He ended this letter of July 30, 1883, with a lengthy description of the beautiful scenery and bountiful crops to be seen in the area.[266]

The last useful account from Mr. Bee, written from the Colony, was published in the August 17th, issue of the paper, and provides a grim account of the state of Primitive Methodism in the west. Although the Primitive Methodists appear to have solved the problems of distance and dispersion they evidently did not have any solution for the growing tendency toward purely social activities and general secularism. The social activities may have been intensified because of the greater need for them in the early days of western settlement. The account was entitled: "A Settlers' Pic-Nic":

> Monday, July 23rd, was a gala day in the Colony. The settlers hit upon the idea of a colonial

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265. The Christian Journal, loc. cit.

266. Loc. cit.

> holiday and pic-nic to commemorate the arrival of the pioneer settlers...267

Preparations were made which would have been a credit to a similar group in Ontario:

> A stand for the speakers, singers and band had been erected composed of boards taken from Wolseley for building purposes. It had a good floor well elevated, was sided up and had a good roof as it is intended for a week's camp meeting....268

Seats were arranged in front of this. The band, choir and speakers were all provided by the Colony. Speakers all dwelt on the success and beauty of the Colony. Bee observed that any stranger would suppose the settlement to be several years old:

> ....and yet only thirteen and a half months previous the first settlers had camped at the place, tried, discouraged and tired with their hard, slavish journey from Brandon, through the floods of the spring of 1882....269

Bee recalled that many had been discouraged at this point and had gone home, some all the way to England. The rest remained and prospered. Now no one need fear that they were going beyond the bounds of civilization. Times were hard at first as the women and children did not come out until a little later.[270] The September 7, 1883, issue of The Christian Journal stated that the Colony was now homelike and could be reached by rail and

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267. The Christian Journal, ibid., August 17, 1883 [?].

268. Loc. cit.

269. Loc. cit.

270. Loc. cit.

stage and hence the women and children could now be sent out in larger numbers as many had already arrived.[271] Bee was careful to note that the "pic-nic" could not have been a success without the women.[272]

Thus, the period of trial in the settlement of the Primitive Methodist Colony was brief and not too difficult in any case. It did not produce many heros or saints. It did not stimulate religious activity in a Colony which appears to have had a remarkably secular orientation for a religious colony.

It was a long way from Mow's Cop and the terrible years of Peterloo in England to the comfortable farm lands of Ontario and still further to the "pic-nic" of July 23, 1883, in the Primitive Methodist Colony in the north-west. The progression, or decline, is easy enough to trace. The denomination tended everywhere to become less enthusiastic and more "connexional" after 1843. In Ontario and the north-west there was no lower or oppressed working class untouched by regular Methodism. The Primitive Methodists apparently did not make use of the novelty of women preachers in the west. Their democratic organization with encouragement of lay participation combined with their tendency to welcome other denominations only hastened their own inevitable disappearance as a distinct organization. In shortest terms; the most essential characteristics of the denomination known as the Primitive Methodist Church were fast disappearing long before it reached the Canadian west and the

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271. The Christian Journal, ibid., September 7, 1883 [?].

272. Ibid., August 17, 1883 [?].

conditions it met there only hastened its peaceful end.

It remains to look briefly at the Methodist Union of 1884. Most of the controversy about, as well as the actual implementation of, the union took place in Ontario and does not properly belong to a history of western Methodism. It is useful, however, to outline the major issues.

To deal first with the Episcopal Methodist Church by asking again the question: "In what way was it distinctive by 1884?" It was, by that date, still the most distinctive of the Canadian Methodist groups. Although it may have lost some of its heroic enthusiasm, it still had its independent tradition and its "polity". Its tradition amounted to this; it had been, since the disruptions of 1833, an independent Canadian body (unlike the other Methodist groups) with no special connection with their American parent or any British group. Their peculiar polity was unusual and consisted of the use of three orders in their ministry; the Episcopacy, circuit ministers and a Diaconate. No other Canadian Methodist group had either the first or the last. The members of the Diaconate were limited to marriage, baptism and preaching. Their bishops were peculiar in that the church repudiated apostolic succession but believed in the succession of Elders. The Bishops embodied the authority of Presbytery. They were not figureheads, however, but acted as a sort of working executive. The Methodist Episcopal Districts were also territorial unlike all other Methodist divisions of that name and were ruled as a distinct unit by a presiding Elder for the whole year.[273] Other groups merely had a circuit

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273. J. Warren Caldwell, "The Unification of Methodism in Canada, 1865-1884", The Bulletin, The United Church of Canada, Committee on Archives, (Toronto, 1967), 34.

minister act as Chairman for a District Meeting which was simply a meeting of the Methodists in that area to deal with institutional matters. In the Episcopal Methodist Church, the Bishop also presided over the Annual Conference.[274]

The Episcopal Church had a strong, independent and quite successful history and was sufficiently independent to avoid the union of 1874. Soon after this date they were in trouble on two counts; education and westward expansion. They believed in the establishment of educational institutions of their own and, as a result had Albert College at Bellville, Ontario, since 1859 and established Alma College at St. Thomas, Ontario, in 1877. These institutions were debt financed and the depression that set in in 1873 meant that many people did not honour pledges they had made through the subscription method. The same sort of difficulty affected their western work as has been noted. Most important of all, the aggressive union arguments brought forward by the Canadian Methodists disrupted Episcopal work in the west to such an extent that it is likely that they would never have recovered if they had remained outside the union. Once the union issue was discussed in the open, there could be no turning back.[275]

The Bible Christians had largely ignored the union of 1874; but in the interval between that and the union of 1884, they took up their western work. In 1882 they began to discuss the whole matter as their

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274. Caldwell, loc. cit.

275. Ibid., 35-41.

growth had slowed considerably and their church debt was rising. They were divided on the question but had really no great issue to fix on to counter pro-union arguments. Their distinctiveness as a denomination had resided chiefly in their early lack of organization and in their unusual enthusiasm and both these characteristics were absent by 1884.[276]

The Primitive Methodists also were lacking in the original enthusiasm that had made them primitive. They did, however, have continuing tradition that became an issue: they were adamant on the question of lay representation. In union discussions with the then Wesleyans this was a sore point as early as 1871 and no agreement was reached in time for the 1874 union. Also, the church appears to have contained many who were recent immigrants from Britain who approved of the very close relationship that the Canadian Primitive Methodists maintained with the British parent church. The Canadian church received much financial support from this source and these ties would be inevitably cut if the Primitive Methodists in Canada entered a union to set up a new, Canadian, church. They were also very suspicious of the very name "Wesleyan" which had unpleasant historical connotations for most Methodist splinter groups.[277]

The union question was much discussed in the Primitive church as early as 1871. Many felt that too much union talk would merely destroy small denominations. They also felt that while they were Methodist in doctrine, they were more Presbyterian in church government. On the other

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276. Caldwell, ibid., 31-33.

277. Ibid., 23-25.

hand, the depression of 1873-1874, forced many of their members in Ontario to migrate to the west. This constituted a loss they could ill afford and they noted with dismay that they had 34 less preaching places in 1874 than they had in 1864. By 1880 they found their membership dropping slowly but steadily and came to the conclusion that a new approach was needed to suit changing times. They felt that some reorganization was necessary but failing to discover the correct formula for this intended change, they went into union. Their way was made a little easier perhaps, because the Wesleyans had dropped their cherished name in the union of 1874 and were now merely Canadian Methodists.[278]

The actual terms of the union arranged a compromise on the polity question by the use of General Superintendents who provided real administrative authority in the manner similar to that of a Methodist Episcopal Bishop. Bishop Carman of the Episcopal Methodist Church had much to do with the framing of the powers of this office although the idea was put forward by Dr. Alexander Sutherland. Lay representation was guaranteed at both the Annual and General Conferences and these did not have their powers curtailed by the existence of Superintendents. Real opposition to the union came from within the ranks of the Canadian Methodists, particularly at the Toronto and Montreal Conferences. Here, the opponents of the idea showed up in dramatic votes on the subject. The meeting of the Manitoba and north-west Conference of the union year did not see any opposition delegates at all.[279]

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278. Caldwell, ibid., 25-31.

279. Ibid., 45-54.

The union saw a united Methodism for the whole of Canada and a Methodism that intended to expand with the new Dominion. They avoided a federal union and preserved their connexion or institutionalism intact so that they might remain a coherent, directed body. This was presumably in order that they might maintain their influence. But, one might ask, influence for what? Increasingly, they sought to identify themselves with the general course of English-speaking Canadian development, or English Canadian nationalism. They also became the mouthpiece for several of the standard prejudices of Protestant Victorian Canadians. In short, they began to merge with their surroundings. In the case of the splinter Methodist groups examined in this chapter, they had been spiritually bankrupt before coming to the west, and in the case of the Bible Christians and the Episcopal Methodists at least, the effort involved in the establishment of a western branch of their institution revealed the extent of their bankruptcy. The failure to establish a new branch revealed that the parent tree was almost devoid of life.

## CHAPTER V EXPERIMENTS AND ANOMALIES:

## A STUDY IN TRANSITION TO 1900 AND BEYOND

As the Methodists became less emotional and enthusiastic in the practise of their faith their institutionalism became more exclusively territorial. They were also forced to turn to such obvious concerns as Sabbatarianism and Temperance and anti-Catholicism in order to find a meaningful social role. In Canada, in the absence of anything else, they could always emulate national trends. They could attack labour movements when this approach was generally popular and could share in the general relief when the 1885 rebellion was crushed.[1] Little can be learned about the specific nature of Methodism by examining the social attitudes displayed in their newspapers in the nineteenth century because the prevailing attitudes were simply those of the English-speaking majority. Such an examination is really only a study of middle class Canadian cultural attitudes. For example, the editor of The Christian Guardian took a very predictable view of all socialistic ideas in 1878. Socialism was simply:

> ....the revolt of the poor against the rich; of the ignorant against the educated; of the shiftless and lazy against laws which protect the persons and property of those who are better off than themselves. In one word, it is the rebellion of those whose impulses have not been brought under the control of an enlightened conscience....2

Nevertheless, by 1880, the Canadian Methodists knew that their institution was not working perfectly. The decline of the class-meeting

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1. Minutes of the Conference of the Methodist Church, (Toronto, 1886), "Montreal Conference", 80.

2. The Christian Guardian, July 3, 1878, 212.

had been evident for years and the editor of the Guardian was radical enough to suggest that it should play a more educative role.[3] Some readers violently opposed this suggestion and one demanded a return to "primitive zeal and devotedness".[4] Needless to say, this did not come about and the class-meetings were becoming more educative in character in any case. The Salvation Army movement gave the Canadian Methodists uneasy feelings because it displayed many of the characteristics of early Methodism. The Canadian Methodists were forced to recognize the success of the Salvation Army in spite of their general distaste for its methods:

> Though many things are out of harmony with good taste, yet the fact is undeniable that the lowest and vilest of people have been reached and changed, not perhaps into fine gentlemen and ladies, but into earnest though rough Christians. Perhaps after all, the Churches have not sufficiently adapted their methods to reach all classes....5

They chose, however, to leave this vital but slightly distasteful work to others. More important, from a Methodist point of view, were the two major concerns of the church, Sabbatarianism and Temperance. The Conference of 1885, in its Pastoral Address enjoined its members and adherents to move almost to political action on the liquor and Sabbath question in that they would refuse, at election time:

> To support every candidate who is not pledged to

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3. The Christian Guardian, ibid., December 31, 1879, 406 and February 4, 1880, 38.

4. Ibid., February 4, 1880, 38.

5. Ibid., May 12, 1880, 148.

> maintain in their integrity the laws which guarantee to us the sanctity of the Christian Sabbath, and the right and power to totally prohibit the licensed liquor traffic.6

Perhaps the most positive attitude in nineteenth century Canadian Methodism was a growing identification with the vision of a Canadian destiny. This could be described as a sort of glorified expansionism but it was at least positive. The London, Ontario, Conference of 1885 expressed it in this fashion:

> Ours is no small responsibility. Set to cultivate a large field in this great Dominion, our endeavours as a Church must be to take and keep a wider field than it. Not only must we enlarge our borders in our homeland, but in other lands also.7

Inevitably, this enthusiasm for a Canadian destiny was really only part of the British enthusiasm of English-speaking Canada. Given the origins of the Methodists they could not be expected to develop a national feeling which could include French people of Roman Catholic faith. The Montreal Conference passed a resolution dealing with the Rebellion of 1885:

> Resolved--That this Conference desires to record its gratitude to Almighty God for the cessation of the rebellion which has recently disturbed our North-West Territory, and caused much painful anxiety throughout the several Provinces of this Dominion; and to express its admiration of the prompt and loyal response to the call of duty, and the high military qualities displayed by our volunteer force in its suppression, and to assure the wounded and bereaved sufferers of our heartfelt

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6. Minutes of the Conference of the Methodist Church, op. cit. "Montreal Conference", 55.

7. Ibid., 1885, London Conference, 44.

> sympathy and earnest prayers in their behalf.8

The Manitoba and North-West Conference of the Church usually followed a similar pattern. In 1890, they carried the following resolution which illustrated their anti-Catholic stand on the Manitoba School Question:

> ....One of the greatest objections to Separate Schools is that they keep a line of sectarian cleavage between the youth of our country unfavourable to that political unity which is essential to the power and progress of a country.9

The 1896 session of the same Conference was concerned about the exact position of political candidates on the liquor question.[10]

The editor of the Guardian, writing in 1891, felt that the traditional Methodist outlook was still adequate to meet the problems of the times:

> Outward circumstances change. Plausible theories spring up and go down. Beautiful cities rise in the wilderness. Culture and art take the place of barbarism. But human nature remains essentially the same; and so does God's remedy for the woes and wants of men. Notwithstanding all the discoveries of science, all the speculations of philosophy, and all the results of modern criticism, it is just as true as ever it was that men are guilty and need forgiveness, unholy and need renewal and sanctification, and weak and need divine strength. It is also as true as ever that there is no way of deliverance from these evils but by coming in penitence and faith to Christ, trusting fully in Him, and yielding ourselves up to do His will.11

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8. Minutes, ibid., Montreal Conference, 80.

9. Minutes of the Manitoba and North-West Conference 1890, (Printed), (Toronto, 1896), 5.

10. Ibid., 1896, 230.

11. The Christian Guardian, op. cit., February 11, 1891, 89.

These were noble and even heroic sentiments but perhaps too nicely phrased. They have a ring of complacency about them. Methodists still used the old hymns with their evangelical forms of expression but William Morely Punshon (1824-1881) was writing newer hymns which eventually found their way into the hymn book. These had an authentic nineteenth century Methodist spirit which lacked the vigour of those of Wesley's day:

> Sweet is the sunlight after rain
> And sweet the sleep which follows pain
> And sweetly steals the Sabbath rest
> Upon the world's work-wearied breast.12

This presents a startling contrast to any of the hymns of Isaac Watts, beloved by the Wesleys, or to any of the hymns of Charles Wesley himself; for example:

> Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts
> inspire
> Let us Thy influence prove,
> Source of the old prophetic fire,
> Fountain of life and love.13

In spite of complacency in many quarters, however, the Canadian Methodists began to examine social questions as the community as a whole became dimly aware that terrible human need existed in sufficient proportions to demonstrate the inadequacy of the current laissez-faire mythology. This inadequacy was particularly evident in the general economic depression of the late 1880s and early 1890s. The Deaconess

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12. Found in the Methodist Hymn Book down to the union of 1925. Still found in the current United Church hymnary, no. 195.

13. Ibid., 155.

Movement of 1887 and the Epworth League of 1889 provided the church with a female charity organization and their own version of the Y.M.C.A. respectively. The intent behind both of these organizations may have been to encourage evangelical activity but they tended to fill a more charitable and social role.[14] The year 1889 also saw the establishment of several Methodist missions to the poor, which, while they also had an allegedly evangelical purpose, primarily provided beds and meals.[15]

Part of the trouble with Canadian Methodism was the result of its institutional success. The church was supported by many middle-class people who had become financially successful. Many of these had been Methodists in their earlier and poorer years and had continued to support the church when they attained considerable wealth and middle age. In fact, it could be well argued that these, combined with their less successful but always hopeful brethren, set the true character of the institution. It was probably the comfortable middle class which objected to the traditional urgency of Methodist sermons and class-meetings and rather pressed for more comfortable and liberal exhortations from the pulpit. Nowhere is the middle-class spirit more evident than in Canadian Methodist church architecture of the last quarter of the Victorian era and well into the present century. The churches built in this period both in eastern Canada and the west reflect their social role and the

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14. William H. Magney, "The Methodist Church and the National Gospel, 1884-1914", The Bulletin, The United Church of Canada, Committee on Archives, (Toronto, 1969).

15. Ibid., 20-23.

character of their middle class membership. The comfortable pews, the solid ugly buildings, the many extra rooms and basement facilities for the social role of the church, reflect the power and the outlook of the prosperous laymen who dominated the counsels of the church in this period.[16] These men gave generously to support an institution which was a real bulwark of their way of life. In return for their gifts they expected a large say in determining the outlook and policy of the church. This can explain in part why the church took so long to turn to any consideration of social problems and then only did so when the middle class itself became dimly aware of these. The popular revivalism of the period based on the brand dispensed by Moody and Sankey was curiously watery and lacked the terrible urgency of the Wesleyan phenomenon.[17] It may have been a reaction to the contentless sermons of the period but it did little to alter the character of the churches and became less popular by 1900 in any case. The whole religious flavour of the late Victorian period was primarily sentimental and comforting rather than challenging and powerful.[18] William Morely Punshon's hymns were merely typical of the hymns and sermons of the age.

The Methodists were dimly aware of their connection with successful capitalism. The editor of the Guardian felt that the rich did not intend

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16. See for example, Crescent Fort Rouge United Church, Wardlaw and Nassau, Winnipeg 13, built as a Methodist Church in 1911.

17. Ian Murray, The Forgotten Spurgeon, The Banner of Truth Trust, (London, 1966), 182.

18. Ibid., 188.

to use the church for their own ends:

> Material prosperity has wonderfully increased: but when has there been such a number of rich men who use their money so benevolently? Many of the most devoted and loyal of our church members are among the rich....It can never be said that Methodism, if it retains its original and impelling spirit, will be dwarfed by the sordid prevalence of wealth in its councils and enterprises....Rich men are not a necessity to us; but the Christian benevolence which supports our great connexional aims is, and ever will be.19

The year 1890 saw an event which had much to do with the general course of Canadian Methodism. The first was a heresy trial instigated by General Superintendent (formerly Bishop) Carman. Rev. G. C. Workman, Professor of Theology at Victoria College, Toronto, had allegedly taught that the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament did not predict the coming of Christ. The trial, conducted by Carman, angered many of those who had come into the 1884 Methodist union from the smaller Methodist groups and all those who had been against the episcopal tendencies of Carman and his original church.[20] The whole affair convinced Methodist leadership that a doctrinal "hard line" was impractical in light of the evident fragility of the 1884 union. Henceforth, gentle admonition became the rule for most similar cases. An official "open-mindedness" became the rule as Biblical criticism brought new controversy which, in other churches was often destructive.[21]

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19. The Christian Guardian, op. cit., March 18, 1891, 168.

20. Magney, op. cit., 31.

21. Loc. cit.

Many of the foregoing tendencies could be seen in any mainstream Protestant church and they did not develop without strong opposition from some quarters. Rural Methodists for example, could still be found who opposed a wishy washy stand on doctrinal issues and demanded a return to original or traditional positions. These and similar people in other churches have been called "fundamentalists", or more properly, "Biblical literalists", and were marked by their violent opposition to the "higher criticism" emanating from German Biblical scholars.[22] In the case of Methodists of this type it should be noted that while they claimed to be defenders of the original genius of Methodism, they were at best defenders of the theory only, as the practice had long been disregarded.

All the foregoing can only give some indication of the direction of Canadian Methodism in general. The problem of western Methodism still remains. The question of the exact relationship between central Methodism and western Canadian Methodism is really analagous to the more basic question of the relationship between the Canadian east and the Canadian west.[23]

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22. See page 325.

23. The domination of the western Methodists by the parent organization before and after the union of 1884 presents a serious difficulty for the historian. Not only have all western materials been moved to Toronto physically as a permanent policy on the part of the present United Church which has inherited the same tendencies as its Methodist ancestor, but the historian is tempted to use sources such as The Christian Guardian as a basis for interpreting western thought and feeling. In fact, scholars at the University of Toronto are presently writing the history of the western church based almost entirely on such sources. Such attempts assume that the west has no distinctive history of its own. See, for example, page 302.

It is generally agreed that the American concept of "frontierism" cannot be simply transferred across the border to the Canadian scene. At best, it applies only in isolated and special circumstances. Metropolitanism seems more readily applicable to the Canadian scene.

Metropolitanism, however, is not entirely a one-sided affair. Certainly, the Canadian wilderness has been dominated by our metropolitan centres in a way which has little parallel south of the border because of the difference in population density, and because of the Canadian tendency to be engaged in either staple trade or resource exploitation. The control exerted by a centre such as Winnipeg or Toronto over its hinterland is never absolute and is not of a consistent texture over the whole territory. The hinterland itself, as W. L. Morton has suggested, also has a role.[24] People who are far from centres of authority tend to take on more of a frontier character. Thus, James Evans could sometimes travel to places where even the great Company was not always in evidence and George MacDougall could forget the trivial-mindedness of the Methodist Mission Secretaries on the yet untamed plains of the Saskatchewan. Similarly, every settler from Ontario did not settle next to the new railroad, and floods and crop failures could sometimes overwhelm the puny forces of civilization and make even new-fangled farm machines ineffective.

It was always a matter of how far one was from the centre of metropolitan power. Winnipeg soon arose as a Metropolitan rival to Toronto,

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24. See W. L. Morton, The Canadian Identity, University of Toronto Press, (Toronto, 1961).

sometimes providing a distinctive urban centre for direction of western hostility toward eastern domination. Western Methodism naturally situated its institutionalism here. In the urban area and in districts very close to it, the authentic western nature was not always evident. Further into the hinterland, however, the environment was felt more strongly.

It has been suggested earlier[25] that metropolitanism is perhaps the most fruitful concept to use in interpreting the Canadian scene. The orderly and conservative nature of metropolitan authority extending into a vast wilderness gives Canada its peculiar character. It makes western Canada distinct in character from its American counterpart across the border. A study of Canadian regionalism has shown how Winnipeg is, in many ways, more sophisticated than Minneapolis, an American counterpart.[26] The difference probably arises out of many historical factors such as the early existence of Hudson's Bay Company's authority in the area, the even longer history of the French settlement at St. Boniface, the role of Winnipeg as an Imperial city representing an extension of British power into the north-west, the role of the city as a metropolitan centre dominating a hinterland and acting as both a railhead and staging centre for a great staple trade, and, finally, the existence of many sophisticated groups of settlers who brought their culture with them and were not

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25. See page VI of Introduction.

26. D. C. Masters, "The English Communities in Winnipeg and in the Eastern Townships of Quebec", in Mason Wade (ed.), Regionalism in the Canadian Community, 1867-1967, University of Toronto Press, (Toronto, 1969), 156.

quickly assimilated.

On the other hand, it appears that metropolitanism only operates effectively in a vast hinterland such as Canada. Those who pass their days in the more outlying areas are probably in many ways less sophisticated than their American counterparts because, although they may not have been exposed to the invigorating but primitive stimulus of the classic frontier situation, they have been forced to exist in a slightly modified version of it for long periods. In America the growth of population centres, both large and small, over much of the country has prevented this from happening. In short, because of metropolitanism, Canada, and the west in particular, has a tendency to produce the extremes rather than an American mean. To use present day examples, Manitoba has turned out artists and writers of considerable merit, and even churchmen of international standing, yet the sheer backwardness of some of Canada's more isolated areas (not only in the north) could not be matched by even the smaller centres of Minnesota.

These tendencies are reflected in the history of western Methodism. The western church could produce men as "forward" thinking as J. S. Woodsworth who certainly partook of the most up-to-date currents of his time. True, there were not many who followed his course, but even one would be unusual enough if the west is taken to be a primitive midwest on the American model. On the other hand, the church also produced the Rev. Wellington Bridgman, who was in some ways more typical of the western Methodist clergyman of the period. Today, his clearly expressed opinions are sufficiently primitive to make even the illiberal shudder.

Nevertheless, he tells us much about western Methodism at the end of the last century and up to the Great War.[27]

The Rev. (Captain) Wellington Bridgman wrote an account of his pioneer work in the Methodist ministry in the 1880s in a memorable book entitled Breaking Prairie Sod,[28] published just after the First World War. Actually, the book was more than an account of the heroic eighties; it was also a bitter attack on those people the author considered to be "enemy aliens".[29] The author had lost a son in the war, as had many of the Methodist clergy whose relatives took part in the great outpouring of English Canadian blood on the battlefields of 1914-1918. The influx of enemy aliens, the corrosive currents of higher criticism, the "modern" forces released by the Great War, all combined to make Bridgman feel that someone should defend what he considered to be the essential truths. These essential foundation stones of his world view were: a strong belief in the superiority and world wide community of the Anglo-Saxon race, an equally strong belief in traditional Methodism and its practices, and a

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27. Two major events affected western Methodism after 1890: The first event was the tremendous influx of "British-born" settlers, many of whom joined the ranks of Methodism and gave it at least a fifty percent "British" character, although officialdom continued to be drawn from Ontario. This meant that western Methodism would be caught up in the war spirit when the British-born went home to fight in 1914-1918. The second event was the influx of people from eastern Europe after 1900 who presented a strange challenge since they could not be easily influenced or converted. A full discussion of these events and their effect is found in George Neil Emery, "The Methodist Church on the Prairies: The Outreach of Ontario, 1896-1914". University of British Columbia, unpublished Ph.D. thesis.

28. Rev. (Captain) Wellington Bridgman, Breaking Prairie Sod, Musson, (Toronto, 1920).

29. Ibid., The subtitle was "Shall the Alien Go?"

clear conviction that the earliest days of western settlement were particularly pure, heroic and vital, especially in comparison with the post-war period.

In this last regard, it should be noted that this was a consistent western phenomenon. The settlement of western Canada by Ontario people in the eighties was not, as has been noted, a reversion to frontier conditions. It did produce, however, a year or so, or in some cases almost a decade of conditions similar to the classic frontier in many ways. There was a lack of the comforts of civilization, some isolation, the thrill of "starting from scratch" in an unsettled area and a necessary period of considerable toil. People in such conditions, while not too institutionally-minded, tended to place unusual stress on various convivial gatherings such as dances, or suppers which were simply events among others in a more settled area. This is probably where the idea of "western hospitality" came from. People cut off from most types of social life with few visitors naturally tend to welcome those who do appear. It also seems that such conditions, in the case of a religious group like the Methodists, produce a temporary intensity in the form of a revived emotionalism or enthusiasm. Put most simply, people's reactions become more human and basic during the stress of the challenge of settlement. It is probable that these effects of western settlement led the Methodist churches to imagine that they were experiencing some of the old "blessings of the spirit", as well as merely taking part in a general territorial expansion. It should be added that where the Methodists concerned came from remote areas of the British Isles, or were

unfortunates from barren industrial areas in the same country, the whole experience of western settlement unleashed powerful feelings within them. Nevertheless, as soon as the area was solidly settled and began to take on the characteristics of a similar district in Ontario, Methodism appears to have quickly reverted, within the space of a decade or so, to its usual institutionalism. By the time of the First War, Methodists could view the eighties and nineties as a lost heroic age. Another factor in this rapid transition was the massive technological acceleration, which marked the early years of the present century and served to bring the forces of metropolitanism even more quickly to outlying areas. The railroad was simply the forerunner of many inventions which would make the Canadian frontier even more temporary and remote. The mighty steam tractor and threshing machine followed close behind.

The authentic note of western Methodism's short heroic age among the Ontario and English settlers on the prairie farming frontier is struck by Bridgman:

> A week later the superintendent said to me: "Bridgman, they say there are no Methodists in Virden, but I don't believe it. I wish you would go up there and see." So on Friday night I went. This gave me time to find a meeting place. I had little bills printed, with spaces left to fill in the meeting place and the date. I billed the town the next morning. Then I would go to the country and secure a place to preach Sunday morning or afternoon and return to the town for the evening service. This time the place was a vacant C.P.R. storehouse, with a good floor and canvas sides. When I came the place was filled. I had two subjects on my mind--one distinctly Methodist on "Assurance"; the other a general subject for a mixed crowd. The tune was pitched by an Englishman who seemed to know his music. The singing was hearty. I was looking for signs of Methodism. In the opening prayer on my left was a voice

> "responding". In front was another more vigorous, and to my right was a strong Yorkshire voice shouting "Amen" with emphasis. My text that night was "One thing I know".
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> ....In like manner Moosomin was opened, and Wolseley, Wapella, Broadview, Grenfell, White Wood, Summerberry, Indian Head, Qu'Appelle station, Fort Qu'Appelle, and Edgeley....All the people seemed to attend and a real spirit of worship was in the services.30

This was in 1882. The next year saw men stationed on the new circuits that Bridgman had opened.[31] Soon there was settled Methodist work and all the institutional trivia. The westerner was not too susceptible to the latter, however, as we have noted. He did not clearly distinguish the Episcopal Methodist from the Wesleyan or Bible Christian.

The western settler, however, when faced with his first few years of hardship and isolation, welcomed the social aspects of his church and the fellowship it offered. This phenomenon may have misled many church officials, who probably confused a general desire to encourage any such centre of community life with hard core denominationalism. The clergy always tried to harness any good will and enthusiasm directly to the "connexion". In some cases they were successful, as in the case of Rose Green, an English servant girl from Ontario:

> She taught in the Sunday School, and prayed and testified in public meetings whenever the opportunity afforded. A revival followed, and she became an active Christian worker. The Sunday we closed those services we had to move to the

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30. Bridgman, ibid., 5-6.

31. Loc. cit.

> Town Hall, where an audience would have four times filled the little church. A quarterly board was formed, and she was made envelope stewardess and ever after paid the pastor's weekly salary.32

Rose was the humble, devoted, denominational Christian that Bridgman wanted to see more often. She was not the rule, however, and Bridgman saw too many other women who were too sophisticated for this sort of thing, and whose very presence was evidence of the forces which modified the western frontier:

> These were pioneer days in the wild and raw west. Flashes of civilization kept flitting across the trails; new importations were added to the society record. Here were merchants' wives, lawyer's wives, police officer's wives, judges' and bankers' wives and daughters. They reeled in the circle: they swarmed in the dance.
>
> Socially, they were dazzling stars. From their conversation flashed wit, from their language culture, from their features beauty, from their throats and fingers sparkled diamonds, but the united aggregate of their accumulated virtues did not carry in that community the unsullied, saintly reflection of that common Christian maid.33

The western atmosphere, while it produced successful Methodist evangelist service as late as 1883, according to Bridgman,[34] often seemed to alter the focus of these procedures a bit. Bridgman tells us that

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32. Bridgman, ibid., 16.

33. Ibid., 17.

34. Loc. cit.

"one night everybody at the meeting testified to something"[35] but it appears that some were not clear as to what they were testifying about. Bridgman added that: "Some had not entirely broken away from sin, but they served notice on the devil that when conditions got right he could expect a jolt at any time".[36]

Bridgman provides other illuminating glimpses of what he considers are authentic western characteristics. Most rural congregations liked to see the minister working in the fields at harvest with the people and helping to build their own church buildings. To do otherwise, would leave a man open to the charge that he was an effete easterner. Bridgman found that settlers of English extraction usually had all the noble character of their race, in contrast to degenerates such as Austrians, Germans, Slavs, Metis and Indians,[37] but the Canadian-born were a little rougher than the British-born. These last brought better manners to the western frontier.[38] Both types of Anglo-Canadian, however, when approached in a rural situation, wanted only a "Biblical" gospel, without reference to social issues other than smoking, drinking, breaking of the Sabbath and pro-British enthusiasm. Any deviation from these standard concerns met with little success:

> The westerner has always strongly objected to a diluted gospel. Any adventurer posing as a preacher

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35. Bridgman, ibid., 20.

36. Loc. cit.

37. Ibid., 26.

38. Ibid., 114-115.

> finds the western people hard to fool. German higher criticism and destructive Socialism never did take root in occidental soil....No one on God's green earth is quicker to detect what is spurious and irreverent in the pulpit than the ordinary westerner. After a violent outburst of party politics in the pulpit, a Methodist preacher told a North of Ireland man that "the Lord told him to preach that sermon". "Well," said the Irishman, "when He tells you to preach another like that, let me know and I won't be there...."39

Bridgman had his own views about the enemies of the old time Methodism:

> I have never known a German higher critic or a destructive Socialist or a political pulpiteer ever to bring a report to a conference that either he or his brethren were proud of. From all such crime and folly let me exonerate all "old timers".40

Bridgman approved of Dr. Sparling, Head of Wesley College:

> Rev. Dr. Sparling knew all about subtle philosophies and follies which have thrown thousands of weaker men off their balance, and finally submerged them altogether. But he never got above or below living and preaching the might and infinite love of Christ.41

Of Dr. Crummy, Riddell and Sparling he recorded:

> These men were all Imperialists. They were bigger than politicians or political parties.42

Finally, Bridgman's book is most notable for its violent and bigoted Anglo-Saxon racism. The "Huns" and foreigners generally were, in his

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39. Bridgman, ibid., 138.

40. Ibid., 140.

41. Ibid., 141.

42. Ibid., 143.

view, a blight on the nation, and universally inclined to crime unlike the noble Briton. They should all be sent home, or their property taken from them and given to the families of those British Canadians who lost their sons in the war.[43] In 1911 Rev. James Woodsworth had brought 281 new ministers to Canadian Methodism from Great Britain, and this had only identified Methodism even more closely with the Anglo-Saxon world-wide community feeling which poured itself out in the war.[44] Bridgman subtitled his book "Shall the Alien Go?", and the answer was clearly Yes. Some justification for this bitterness may be found in the previously mentioned fact that one of his sons was killed in the war and the other son badly wounded. He provided the names of nine of his prominent acquaintances among the Methodist clergy who had also lost sons in the war. These were:

> Rev. Dr. Crummy, Rev. Dr. Riddell, Rev. Dr. DuVal, Rev. Dr. Baird, Rev. Dr. Christie, Rev. Dr. John McLean, Rev. J. H. Jocelyn, Rev. G.K. Adams, Rev. S.O. Irvine.45

As is generally well known, Canadian Methodism as a whole went forth to war with enthusiasm, partaking of the "bed rock of Anglo-Saxon patriotism" and even seeing it as a God-directed crusade. Only J. S. Woodsworth and William Ivens of Winnipeg took a somewhat pacifist line among all of the Methodist clergy. This super-patriotism was not a purely western

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43. Bridgman, ibid., 225-234.

44. James Woodsworth, Thirty Years in the Canadian North West, (Toronto, 1917), 97.

45. Bridgman, op. cit., 151.

phenomenon except that it was provided with a sharper focus in the west by the existence of large numbers of "alien" immigrant groups.

Bridgman's career up to the First World War, and his opinions on matters other than the alien question, may be taken as representative of those Methodist clergy who attempted to operate in the context of traditional Methodism in changing conditions. In spite of the changes in the times and conditions noted by writers in The Christian Guardian, Bridgman attempted to evangelize the fluid western frontier of the 1880s in traditional fashion. His frustration and anger when faced with things arising out of metropolitan sophistication or enemy aliens are very much in evidence. His solution was to cling ever more resolutely to the traditional tenets of Methodist faith. Bridgman was not typical, however, in his exceptional bitterness during the "alien" controversy. Another example of traditional Methodism frustrated not only by changing times, but also by the faults inherent in the structure of Methodist institutionalism as it appeared in the late nineteenth century in western Canada, may be found in the career of Rev. John Semmens.

A curious manuscript[46] in the church archives provides an unofficial glimpse of western Methodism as seen by a minister who was one of the less successful in social and conventional terms, but who served in either the outlying or less prosperous areas. It should be noted that the church adopted an unofficial policy, similar to that adopted by other churches, of sending clergy of humble origin to the most remote and backward areas,

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46. "Personal History of John Semmens", typescript (copy). Henceforth "Semmens".

and keeping those who had experience of dealing with the more prosperous and educated areas of the community among their own kind. This has caused a distorted view of the institution to be perpetuated because the cultivated urban clergy usually wrote the history. Rev. John Semmens had a rather strange career in the Methodist church. He was a miner in Cornwall, Ontario, and decided to enter the Methodist ministry. He attended Victoria College at Coburg[47] and was asked by William Morely Punshon to succeed E. R. Young at Norway House.[48] He was given special ordination in 1872, and went to Norway House where he was under the direction of Rev. George Young at Winnipeg.[49] Presumably through the manipulations of Rev. George Young, he was soon brought to Winnipeg.[50] Here, he was situated at Headingly where he noted there was no cause or even a church and he was in reality assistant to Rev. Young at Grace Church in Winnipeg....[51]

> ....but it was not considered prudent to write me down as acting in that capacity. It would have a better appearance to make it evident that a new mission station was being opened up. So while I took alternative sermons in the parent church, I was ostensibly at Headingly where I was obliged to live....52

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47. Semmens, ibid., 1-8.

48. Ibid., 12.

49. Loc. cit.

50. Ibid., 16-17.

51. Loc. cit.

52. Loc. cit.

Besides taking these services, Semmens had to visit the following places: Niverville, Otterburne, Prairie Grove, Springfield, Selkirk, Rockwood, Victoria Township, Woodlands, Meadow Lea, Silver Heights, Poplar Point, White Horse Plains, Headingly, River Sale, Boyne River and Tobacco Creek.[53] Semmens recorded that he made personal visits to the homes in these areas and made further appointments for services to be held in some of them.[54] He did not get along too well with Rev. George Young:

> My relations with Rev. George Young were not always the most cordial. It did not occur to me that it was necessary to analyze this apparent animus. I was young and active. I had many friends and the congregations were good. I was willing to go wherever I was sent and to do whatever I was directed to do. My salary was small and I was at times short of both funds and food. I visited a good deal and friends gave me assistance. This provoked the venerable gentleman and increased his antipathy.55

In the light of this situation, Semmens decided to apply for a northern posting which was granted and he was posted to Nelson House in March of 1874.[56] Fate seems to have marked him for continuing unpleasantness as the Hudson's Bay officials at Norway House did not permit him to go any further and he was forced to remain for three months at that place. He was finally allowed to proceed in June but was not given an interpreter and the Crees at Nelson House apparently knew no

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53. Semmens, ibid., 18.

54. Loc. cit.

55. Loc. cit.

56. Loc. cit.

English.[57] He soon discovered the reason for the Company's attitude:

> When enquiry was made, I was informed that some of our missionaries had written things which reflected upon the trade as conducted by the Hudson's Bay Company and a convenient person must suffer for the guilty.58

Semmens was forced to go to Red River himself to obtain supplies but the Company refused to transport these past Norway House. He finally managed to hire his own transport.[59] At Nelson House he fell into the usual pattern of combating Paganism, translating hymns into Cree, and building the physical premises of the mission.[60] By the spring of 1876 he could record the following results in the face of difficulties with the Company:

> In two short years a mission house had been erected, a Christian Church had been organized, bigamy had been overthrown, idolatry had been abolished, society had been instructed and purified, Christian worship had taken the place of paganism and nearly everyone gained the ability to read in his own tongue the wonderful words of life.61

In July he was transferred to Beren's River.[62] He had a holiday in Ontario where he overstayed and missed the Company boat to his mission. He asked Governor Graham, the Company's Commissioner for help and was

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57. Semmens, ibid., 19-20.

58. Ibid., 21.

59. Loc. cit.

60. Ibid., 23-30.

61. Ibid., 38.

62. Ibid., 39.

quoted a very high price for transport. When he objected he was rudely told that "no successor of E. R. Young's should ask favour of the Hudson's Bay Company.[63] Semmens then proceeded to Selkirk, bought two skiffs and made his own way to Beren's River in a heroic fourteen day journey.[64]

Semmens was removed from Beren's River in 1878 by the direction of the Toronto Conference and returned to Ontario where he married.[65] He served at Bruce Mines, Ontario, which had a bad reputation but he recorded his success there.[66] In 1879 he was at Davenport Rd. Church near Toronto where he did much speaking in support of western mission work.[67] Finally, in 1880, he was selected as the Pastor of Zion Church in Winnipeg. He did not regard this as a promotion, as it was not a popular charge, but Sutherland had asked him to go and he replied that he would go where he was sent.[68]

> I found then that my views of the right of the Church to appoint a man where it was thought he might do the most good were out of harmony with prevailing opinion. Many seemed to think that they ought to take a hand in helping the Lord to locate them on easy fields where good salaries were being paid. Wire pulling was resorted to and calls worked up. Self-denial was voted out of date. There appeared to be a general scramble for the best places. Men outside of the stationing committee

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63. Semmens, ibid., 48-50.

64. Ibid., 50-51.

65. Ibid., 65-66.

66. Ibid., 67-68.

67. Loc. cit.

68. Ibid., 69-70.

> influenced their friends inside to guard their interest. A divine call was not much thought of in many cases.69

Zion Methodist Church was located at the corner of King and Fonseca Streets in Winnipeg. It had been started by Rev. J. A. McCamus but the building was unfinished and the congregation small. It was known as the "working man's church" and Methodists generally considered it a doubtful cause.[70]

Semmens noted that his first salary there was fixed by the local board at $800.00 but prices, especially in rents and real estate, were much higher than Ontario and no living quarters were provided.[71] He had to buy a small cottage on his own credit for $1100.00.[72] The church soon filled up, a property boom came to the city, and a grateful congregation gave him a gold purse of $400.00 as well as $100.00 at a housewarming.[73] The way Semmens tells the story, the Superintendent of the Sunday School felt that the church should now have a minister to suit their improved status and introduced a motion to this effect when Semmens was away. Semmens agreed to co-operate when he returned and helped them place a call to a Rev. Mr. Jeffery. The congregation also considered putting up a better building at the same time. "Mr. Jeffery was reputed to be

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69. Semmens, ibid., 70.

70. Loc. cit.

71. Ibid., 71.

72. Loc. cit.

73. Loc. cit.

eccentric, popular, able and a good money getter, and would prove a great drawing card in the game of progress toward a more advanced type of church life".[74] Jeffery refused the call and the congregation asked Semmens to remain. He refused and persuaded Rev. George Young to send him to Emerson.[75]

Emerson, in July of 1882, presented a dismal prospect. There had been a flood in the spring which had ruined the real estate market. "Steamers could float in the streets"[76] and Semmens was provided with the magnificent sum of $350.00 to support a family of four![77]

At this point in his narrative, Semmens felt it necessary to point out that:

> I have been singularly unfortunate in the matter of grants from the Missionary Society. The year before I went to Davenport there had been a grant of four hundred dollars. It was cut off when I went there. At Bruce Mines a grant of three hundred dollars was cancelled. At Winnipeg no grant was allowed after my arrival. At Emerson a grant of $600.00 was discontinued in my first year.78

He recorded that he had made all these places self-supporting by intense work during his stay at each place.[79] At Emerson he was soon preaching

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74. Semmens, ibid., 72-73.

75. Ibid., 73.

76. Loc. cit.

77. Loc. cit.

78. Loc. cit.

79. Loc. cit.

to large congregations and was able to move into the new brick church, which had been built by the Episcopal Methodists but was given up just prior to the union of 1884. He also held services at West Lynne.[80]

In spite of this success he found that he was literally starving on his salary and requested that he be sent to Norway House. Emerson had seen the flood of 1882, the boom of 1883, and a crop failure due to frost in 1884, with the result that they could not raise his meagre income. He was posted to Norway House in June of 1884 and recorded that this move alone enabled him to escape the necessity of taking on burdensome debt.[81] At Norway House he found that he had a huge circuit four hundred miles long from north to south and fifty miles long from east to west. He was expected to travel this vast field and report from each station once a year. He had Poplar River, Cross Lake, Nelson House, Oxford House and Island Lake as points to visit:[82]

> For these journeys, the Missionary Society allowed us four articles of diet--flour, bacon, tea and sugar. All other things must be provided at personal expense, and we are charged to keep down expenditure to the lowest possible figure. My predecessor averaged a cost of five dollars a day while on the road. He took two men and two trains of dogs. By taking one man and one train of dogs, this was cut to two, but it meant that the missionary did the walking and dog driving while his man broke the trail, or it meant that instead of taking a canoe and two men, one man only was taken-and the minister was one of the paddlers. It was poor economy of strength.83

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80. Semmens, ibid., 74.

81. Loc. cit.

82. Ibid., 78.

83. Loc. cit.

Semmens followed these economies to save money but often arrived too exhausted to preach. He also found that his status was lowered in the eyes of the Indians, who were used to seeing Hudson's Bay Officers travelling with two or three men.[84] The Missionary Society felt that he did less work than E. R. Young because his travel only cost half as much.[85] He also sent a very large number of hymns and books back to Toronto which he had translated into Cree. He hoped they would publish these for the benefit of the Indians but they did not with the single exception of his translation of Pilgrim's Progress.[86] Semmens enquired about this policy and they replied that Rev. John McDougall had advised against use of his translation as they were in Swampy Cree instead of the parent language, which was Plains Cree. About this time Semmens published a book of his own locally in Cree entitled "The Way of Salvation".[87]

While he was still at Norway House, Semmens became involved in a project to reconstruct the buildings there which were falling down. With much difficulty he arranged for lumber to be brought from Selkirk and a new church and a new parsonage were constructed for a total cost of $7000.00 by the end of 1886.[88] The station was still a difficult one

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84. Semmens, ibid., 78-79.

85. Ibid., 79.

86. Loc. cit.

87. Ibid., 80.

88. Ibid., 83.

because of isolation and the distances involved and by 1887 his wife was unhappy there.[89] By this time they had four boys and a girl and Semmens felt it was necessary to return to civilization to educate his children.[90] Accordingly, in 1888, he was sent to Carberry, Manitoba.[91]

Here, the whole cycle of starting on an unpromising field began again. There was no parsonage, no furniture and the church itself was very crude and unfinished. He was met at the station not by an church member, but by a local resident named Henderson. Everyone in town had measles but Henderson invited them to his own home. Semmens decided to abandon this field but Henderson persuaded him to stay.[92] The Carberry circuit involved a forty mile drive each Sunday for preaching purposes. Semmens claims that he preached at Wellwood (14 miles), Dempsey (10 miles), Farview (16 miles) and Carberry (6 miles) on one Sunday and at Sidney (13 miles), Arizona (10 miles), Pleasant Pt. (10 miles) and Carberry again (7 miles) on alternate Sundays. He also claimed never to have missed an appointment, rain or shine![93] He made some progress here, but the next year the frost destroyed crops and he was forced to borrow money in order to live. At this time his wife produced another daughter.[94]

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89. Semmens, ibid., 87.

90. Ibid., 88.

91. Loc. cit.

92. Ibid., 89.

93. Ibid., 90.

94. Ibid., 91.

The Methodist Stationing Committee moved him to Wesley Church, Winnipeg, in 1889 where he was made Chairman of the District as well. The District included all the Methodists from Port Arthur to Nelson House. Wesley Church, however, was unfavourably situated on Bannatyne Avenue and its congregation had moved to other areas.[95] Semmens headed a move to buy property at a better location on the corner of Ross and Isabel, but was successfully opposed by a Mr. McKecknie who considered himself "the patriarch of the board".[96] Some years later the church was moved to the corner of William and Kate but Semmens was gone by that time.[97] In 1891 Semmens was Secretary of the Conference and in 1892 served a term as President. The evangelist Hammond came to the city in this period and the Misses Judd visited Wesley Church. At this time Semmens became ill from nervous prostration[98] and later admitted that he could not give his best to Wesley.[99]

The Conference of 1892 sent him to McDougall Memorial Church on Main Street North which had been begun by Rev. Enos Langford. It soon suffered financial collapse and was supplied by students from Wesley College. Semmens was held to take over the Brandon Industrial School for Indians but was put down on the circuit lists as being at Norway House. Actually, he

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95. Semmens, loc. cit.

96. Ibid., 92.

97. Loc. cit.

98. Loc. cit.

99. Loc. cit.

lived in Winnipeg in the meantime.[100]

The year 1895 saw him at Brandon organizing the Industrial School for Indian children.[101] He personally went to Norway House and brought back 38 children.[102] The school was under the Department of Indian Affairs and they sent him to Elkhorn and Qu'Appelle to see what was done at these schools.[103] The government was to start the school at Brandon, pay all the expenses until its organization was complete and then hand it over to the Methodists. His wife quarelled with the staff of the school and then injured her spine in a buggy accident and became partly paralyzed for a time.[104] While Semmens ran the school he achieved the lowest cost figure per child ever achieved in the later history of the school (35¢ per child per day).[105] The Missionary Society demanded that this be reduced to 30¢ a day.[106] Semmens resigned. Before he left Semmens persuaded Hon. D. Laird (Indian Commissioner) and Clifford Sifton to raise the government grant to the school. This came through after he left, and Dr. Sutherland, in charge of Methodist Missions, took full credit for it.[107]

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100. Semmens, ibid., 93.

101. Loc. cit.

102. Ibid., 94.

103. Ibid., 95.

104. Ibid., 98.

105. Ibid., 99.

106. Loc. cit.

107. Ibid., 100.

Semmens later confronted Sutherland on this matter and was told that anything Sutherland's subordinates did, he (Sutherland) accomplished.[108] Semmens had a rather poor opinion of Methodist officialdom:

> Dr. Sutherland was a man of strong animosities. I twitted him once for the amount he spent on meals in the dining car and on beds in the pullman while he opposed the right of men doing frontier work to have any luxuries whatever. Dr. James Woodsworth was his great friend and ally and he made himself very busy keeping headquarters posted in evil report, some men are so constituted that they overlook the good and emphasize the unfavourable. At any rate, both men were on my track and neither manifested the charity which "thinketh no evil".109

In 1899, Semmens was sent to Portage la Prairie where the congregation was small but the buildings were good for a change. His wife became very ill and he asked for a year off in 1900.[110] He bought a home on McDermot Avenue in Winnipeg but the tenant would not vacate and he had to live with friends.[111]

The rest of his career was outside the church. In 1901 the Dominion Government asked him to become Indian Agent at Beren's River at a salary of $1000.00 a year.[112] He accepted and was away on his travels connected with this work when his wife died. He was left with seven children, the

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108. Semmens, loc. cit.

109. Loc. cit.

110. Ibid., 102.

111. Ibid., 103.

112. Ibid., 104.

youngest being ten years old.[113] In 1905 he was appointed Inspector of Indian Agencies & Schools at which time he moved from Selkirk to Stonewall, Manitoba.[114] He married a widow in 1907 and remained in Indian work until 1915. This wife also became paralyzed and his son died by this date.[115]

Such was the career of Rev. John Semmens. Allowing for a considerable distortion because of personal feelings in this account, this is still a rather detailed and unsavoury picture of the character of the Methodist Church in the west in these years. The middle class character of its bureaucrats, the tendency to put men of humble origins on distant and difficult fields, and the power of prominent local laymen, are all observable tendencies in this account. More important perhaps it shows how misleading the official and published versions always were. Men like James Woodsworth and Sutherland were always portrayed as being without flaw and the shocking condition of some poorer circuits never seemed to reach the published accounts.

Bridgman and Semmens represent different facets of traditional Methodism facing new conditions. Their solution was to attempt to carry on in the old way even if, as in the case of Semmens, failure seemed to be the inevitable result. A different approach was taken by those Methodists whose reaction to altered circumstance was to attempt to modify their

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113. Semmens, ibid., 107.

114. Ibid., 108.

115. Ibid., 111-118.

faith and practice in the light of the most modern ideas. This course of action led some directly to the Social Gospel. Such men would not be found among pioneers, or on distant Indian missions, but would operate in the context of the city with its much greater educative advantages. The institution which provided local Methodists with these advantages was Wesley College.

Nowhere is the condition of Canadian western Methodism more graphically illustrated than in the peculiar history of the institution known as Wesley College. Historians of the college have dealt with their subject as if it was simply an educational institution with considerable advantages at various periods in its history.[116] It is not the intention here to examine Wesley College as a secular educational institution or to evaluate it by any standards other than Methodist ones. In a certain sense, the history of Methodist educational ventures is a microcosm of the larger history of the church as a whole. Wesley College was established late in the history of Canadian Methodism (1888) and the most obvious reason for its being set up was because Methodist Conferences at a certain stage in their development usually set up some such institution. To find out what other reasons might be applicable to this case it is necessary to look briefly at another Methodist college.

In the case of one of the earlier ones, the stated reason for its foundation was in the words of its founder, to furnish education conducted

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116. See Watson Kirkconnell, The Golden Jubilee of Wesley College, Winnipeg, 1888-1938. Columbia Press, (Winnipeg, 1938), also, A. S. Cummings, A History of Wesley College, Winnipeg, (Winnipeg, 1938).

on Wesleyan principles "to the glory of God and the extension of His cause".[117] This was in January, 1840 at the time of the placing of the corner stone of Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick. Mount Allison, and other early Methodist academies, appear to have made the attempt to provide a devout teaching staff who would give the general student body, apart from Theological Students, some grasp of the Methodist "means of Grace" not only in an intellectual sense, but as an emotional experience. For example, the Maritime Conference of 1856 recorded the following reference to Mount Allison with obvious pleasure:

> Recently there has been vouchsafed a gracious influence affecting many of the students in both branches of the Institution, resulting in unquestionable evidences of a work of grace upon their hearts.118

It seems that here the reality of the Methodist version of the Christian message was, to a certain extent, the background against which all other subjects were presented. This can be ascertained by an examination of the type of general texts recommended for a subject such as Classical History where Rollin's highly didactic work was in use.[119]

The above might represent Methodist educational philosophy at its more evangelical stage. Where did it progress to or regress from here? Probably new texts were adopted to keep abreast of the progress of the

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117. T. W. Smith, History of the Methodist Church of Eastern British America, 2 vols., Michalson, (Halifax, 1877), vol. II., 393.

118. Minutes of the Conference of Eastern British America, Halifax and St. John, 1856, (pamphlet), 15.

119. Nova Scotia District Minute Book 1827-1841, MSS., See examination of probationers.

Victorian era, and men were hired to teach for their competence rather than their explicitly religious character. In the latter case, of course, a certain outward morality in keeping with convention was still required. Religion would still be taught as a course but would gradually be relegated to an area known as "religious studies". It would then be accepted, if only by implication, that religion was only one of several mutually exclusive and equally important areas of study to be pursued by specialists. In the case of religion, the students who came to study would be prepared for a theological career. By the turn of the century, text books which were too obviously didactic would be out of favour, except in the case of national history.[120]

This situation would have several general effects. The average student would now have only an elementary religious knowledge. This would not be too serious if he also had some personal experience of religious phenomenon, as in the early days of Methodism. The emotional experience, however, gradually disappeared from mainstream Methodism, as has been noted. Thus, the student was left with an elementary knowledge of his religion which would appear increasingly inadequate and simplistic in comparison with his growing knowledge in his own field of specialization. The Theological Student was in a better position than the general student because theology usually kept pace with the course of scientific development. The number of people, however, who kept abreast of, and understood in detail, the latest Protestant theology probably became as

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120. See page 302.

few in number as those who clearly grasped the latest scientific advances. An examination of mid-Victorian periodicals will reveal illuminating and detailed discussions of the latest mechanical and electrical inventions,[121] as well as many articles dealing with theological niceties.[122] This was no longer the case by 1900 as such things no longer appeared in publications intended for the general public.[123]

Thus, the people learned in theology came to communicate less and less with those well informed about science, a situation that persists to the present day. There could no longer be any background synthesis to the teaching of all subjects and the various courses became ends in themselves. Religion was taught in specialized form to theological students and was offered as an "Arts credit" in one or more elementary courses to the general student.

Methodist educational ventures in the Canadian west had a relatively early beginning, at least as far as the intention was concerned. The first western Conference of 1872 referred to a promise secured from Donald A. Smith, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company.[124] This was a promise of a suitable lot for college buildings in Winnipeg on the

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121. See the Illustrated London News, December 7, 1848, for example.

122. See the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, John Mason, (London, 1856), for example.

123. See the Canadian Methodist Magazine, 1904, Heustis, (Toronto, 1904), for discussions of current events, warfare and travel but little theology.

124. See Chapter II, page 157.

condition that this land would only be granted when the Methodists were ready to build. This arrangement was negotiated during Rev. George Young's period of residence in the Settlement and he was later criticized for not taking up the offer as the constituted Methodist authority in the area. The condition attached to the offer effectively prevented him from doing anything because the Methodists were not nearly strong or rich enough in the west in 1872 to commence such an undertaking. Some evidently felt that Young should have obtained the property and held it as a financial investment. It is obvious that he could not have done this, however, within the terms of the original offer.[125] It appears that subscriptions, "amounting to a large sum"[126] were taken up at a meeting of the Missionary Board at Brockville, Ontario at this time and Young approached Smith for a grant of land. This was not forthcoming as Young could not assure him that they were actually ready to build, and so the matter lapsed for a time.[127]

As was frequently the case, Wesley College proper was preceded by a Methodist common school. The reasoning which led to the establishment of this institution provides a sad picture of Methodism in these years. The school appears to have been established for reasons which were mostly negative. Rev. George Young noted that, in the spring of 1873, there seemed to be cause to consider the establishment of a small Methodist

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125. Rev. George Young, Manitoba Memories, 1868-1884, William Briggs, (Toronto, 1897), 268-269.

126. Loc. cit.

127. Loc. cit.

school:

> ....for the twofold purpose of safeguarding our youth from error and adverse influence, and also to secure for them better educational advantages than those hitherto enjoyed.128

He followed these reasons with a series of quotations from the Winnipeg Free Press of May 10, 1873, which criticized the Manitoba school system then in existence:

> The common school system, as our legislators have left it, has not yet done much for the country, and the present state of things (educationally) is far from satisfactory.
>
> We have the public school of the district, and the Roman Catholic School, recognized by law as a separate common school. The first of these has never received the united support of Protestants which it needed to put in on a proper basis.
>
> We hear a good deal of dissatisfaction in relation to it, and that the children are not advancing, etc.
>
> The Roman Catholic School has profited from the misfortune of the school of the majority, etc.129

Young then proceeded to provide an account of the real incentive behind Methodist educational ambitions. According to his account, the state of the common school system was so bad that many Protestants were sending their children to the "Sisters of Charity" school on Notre Dame East, presumably because of the superior quality of the instruction there, although Young did not give this as a reason.[130] Here, many of the pupils

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128. Rev. George Young, loc. cit.

129. Ibid., 270.

130. Loc. cit.

picked up very bad habits which were "un-Protestant" in character such as "crossing themselves before meals, etc."[131] Some parents complained to Rev. Young, who agreed to put up a building at once on the church lot and employ a regular teacher at no cost to the parents concerned, on the condition that they agree to send their children there regularly and pay a reasonable fee to do so.[132] A Mrs. D. Clink, who had taught in Ontario, took over the school which was, according to Young, very successful and soon could not accommodate all those desiring admission.[133]

Rev. George Young attended the London Conference of Methodism in June of 1873, and was encouraged at that time to stay longer in Ontario for the purpose of making a money-raising tour of various centres in both Ontario and Quebec. This money would be used to support some of the newer western circuits and also to provide for a newer suitable building for the Methodist school in Winnipeg. He collected subscriptions amounting to nearly $3000.00, which, when combined with the similar amount pledged at the Brockville Conference, gave a total of almost $6000.00.[134] He returned to Winnipeg in September fully equipped with maps, charts, globes and library books for the "Methodist Institute".[135] By the 27th of September the frame of a new two storey building had been put up on

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131. Rev. George Young, loc. cit.

132. Loc. cit.

133. Loc. cit.

134. Ibid., 271.

135. Loc. cit.

the corner of Main and Water Streets. The building was opened on the 3rd of November, 1873. It was on the same lot as Grace Methodist Church.[136] This was done for a total cost of $3000.00 and the remainder of the money that Young collected went toward the erection of new churches in the city and outlying areas.[137] The Institute immediately ran into a considerable annual deficit because of its operating expenses. This was partly covered by a series of grants from the Educational Fund of the Church but no more money could be found for this purpose by 1877 and the institution was closed.[138] It was found that the paying of regular school taxes plus the fees of the Methodist school was more than most parents could afford, and further, in the opinion of many, the public schools themselves had improved.[139] No further support came from Ontario, so the school was closed. Also, 1877 saw the Manitoba Legislature pass the act which established the University of Manitoba, with three colleges named in affiliation. A charter was granted to "Wesley College" which would allow it to become affiliated as soon as it had a certain number of staff and a suitable building.[140] Thus, the Methodists were at least on an equal legal footing with their denominational rivals, the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics. It appears that all of these Methodist educational

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136. Rev. George Young, loc. cit.

137. Loc. cit.

138. Loc. cit.

139. Ibid., 272.

140. Ibid., 275.

impulses were prompted, not by a desire to spread Wesleyan principles, but by denominational rivalry and their old antipathy toward Roman Catholicism.

The Methodist Institute while in operation, seems to have had a rather secular curriculum. The first month of term for the year 1873-1874 saw forty pupils registered.[141] The close of the 1875-1876 term saw a report giving the names of seventy-one who had attended the institution. The highlight of this year was the preparation of two young men who would go on to Victoria College in Toronto.[142] The term 1875-1876 was the period when the school was most successful.[143] It declined the following year. It should be noted that the building was constructed to afford "ample accommodation....for more than one hundred pupils".[144]

Nothing more was done about Methodist education in Manitoba until the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railroad brought the expected flood of Ontario settlers after 1885. In 1886, the Legislature granted an amended charter to Wesley College and the actual commencement of the new college was seen in 1888.[145] The success of the Methodist union of 1884 may have also contributed to the clearing of obstacles as it was now possible for all western Methodists to support such an institution.

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141. Rev. George Young, ibid., 273.

142. Ibid., 274.

143. Ibid., 273-274.

144. Ibid., 273.

145. Kirkconnell, op. cit., 14.

Rev. D. Sparling, President of the Montreal Methodist Conference, and pastor of a large church in Kingston, Ontario, was appointed Principal in August and two professors (R. R. Cochrane and G. J. Laird) began to lecture two months later in the class rooms of Grace Church. The Department of Theology was begun informally in 1889 and the university charter was taken up by the end of the academic year 1888-1889.[146] The second year saw the infant college move to a building on Albert Street because of increasing attendance. This proved inadequate and they moved it again to a three story brick veneered building at the corner of Broadway and Edmonton.[147] Only seven students attended the first year, but by the third year of operation it had attracted over seventy students. Two students received B.A.s the second year of operation and three the third year, increasing to twelve by the sixth year of Wesley College's existence.[148] By this time Rev. J. H. Riddell was on the staff of the college, thus commencing an association which would be continued for more than half a century.[149]

Wesley College in these years was supported mostly by the efforts of western Methodists who were frequently solicited by Dr. Sparling in his capacity as Bursar. Some help came from the Educational Fund of the whole church and the total raised for the support of the institution each

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146. Kirkconnell, loc. cit.

147. Loc. cit.

148. Rev. George Young, op. cit., 277.

149. Ibid., 277-278.

year was about $10,000.00. In the sixth year of operation the total cost of the college site and building was estimated at about $100,000.00, while it was considered to be worth $125,000.00 because of the rise in land value. Subscriptions had amounted to about $95,000.00 with some $67,000.00 already paid in.[150] The College in these years was managed by a Board of thirty-six with eighteen of these who made up the Executive, resident in Winnipeg. The Chairman was, of course, Mr. J. A. Aikins, Q.C., long a friend of the church, and the Vice-Chairman was J. H. Ashdown, whose association with the Methodist cause dated from 1869 and was to continue long into the next century.[151]

Wesley College's contribution to Methodist education in numerical terms may be gathered from the fact that it registered four students in theology in 1893, rising to fifteen the following year, and dropping again to six in 1895. Theological students registered at the college rose steadily in number after this date to reach twenty-four by 1900. By 1900 there were 126 full time students at the College.[152] A separate Faculty of Theology was set up in 1890 in accordance with the further amended University Act.[153]

The last steps in the formal establishment of Wesley were taken when a further search was made for a larger building and site in 1891. The

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150. Rev. George Young, ibid., 279.

151. Loc. cit.

152. Cummings, op. cit., a selection of figures cited in Cumming's work. (He was registrar from 1917 to 1940.)

153. Rev. George Young, op. cit., 276.

site settled on was the present one of the University of Winnipeg at Portage and Spence--a whole city block of five and one half acres. The lot was obtained for $12,000.00,[154] but the cost of the present stone building would have been beyond the resources of western Methodism had it not been for the timely gifts of Mr. Hart A. Massey and Mr. George Cox, both of Toronto. (Massey gave $20,000.00 and Cox $5,000.00.)[155] Massey also contributed $100,000.00 to the endowment fund in 1900.[156] The new building was opened on January 6th, 1896, and was considered one of the finest of its type. In the fashion of the time, it was given "a predominantly Norman flavour".[157]

In the foregoing fashion, Methodism established its educational institution in the Canadian west. The great "Norman" edifice on Portage Avenue would testify to the power and influence of their denomination. The power and influence of Methodism's prosperous laymen was also evident in the composition of the College Board. J. H. Ashdown, the hardware merchant, was already prominent and would remain so for many years. He took over as Chairman of the Board in 1907 and remained in that position until 1924, and was reported long after that as being "a generous contributor to the current revenue".[158] According to one account, he

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154. Kirkconnell, op. cit., 17.

155. Loc. cit.

156. Ibid., 31.

157. Ibid., 18.

158. Ibid., 16.

rescued the College from total financial oblivion in 1918.[159] His influence on the policy of the College authorities must have been considerable. Other prominent laymen, however, were very much in evidence. The previous Chairman, Sir James A. M. Aikins, was a Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba. Other members of the Board included J. B. Somerset, J. T. Gordon, Sir Rodmond Roblin, W. H. Culver, Sir Clifford Sifton, Thomas Nixon, Captain Robinson, Jerry Robinson and J. H. Campbell.[160] It would have been very surprising if the character of the college was not determined, or at least considerably influenced, by a Board which included so many powerful English Canadians.

The history of Wesley College up to the end of the First World War is largely concerned with institutional questions concerning co-operation with Manitoba College and with the resistance to attempts on the part of some educational authorities to promote university centralization at the expense of the College system.[161] The debate was carried on largely on technical and non-Methodist grounds, and need not be examined here as it continues to the present day and is part of the whole history of higher education in Manitoba. A Royal Commission looked into the question in 1907 with indecisive results,[162] but the decision to drop all instruction

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159. Kirkconnell, ibid., 39 and Alexander Richard Allen, "Salem Bland and the Social Gospel in Canada", University of Saskatchewan, unpublished M.A. Thesis, 1961, 117.

160. Ibid., 17, some prominent members of the board to 1908.

161. Ibid., 22-27.

162. Ibid., 23.

in Arts at the Colleges in 1914 nearly wiped out Wesley College's existence.[163] The forces of Methodism reacted violently and arts teaching was resumed.[164]

It is very difficult to discover much in the printed sources dealing with Wesley College that would point to any markedly religious characteristic in that institution. The various historians of the College such as A. S. Cummings and Watson Kirkconnell[165] have tended to emphasize the excellence of the institution on purely academic or general cultural grounds. Wesley was, of course, a famous western Canadian institution which produced many brilliant and prominent citizens and included many very distinguished scholars in its staff, particularly in the period after the First World War. That it justified its existence by its academic qualities, as well as by its contribution to the cultural life of the city and province, is beyond question. This is the view usually taken by the college historians and they are no doubt correct in this evaluation. It is hard to see very much, however, that is purely Methodist or even notably religious in its accomplishments and as a church college it may well have been a total failure. If, however, we consider that western Methodism was lacking in any religious character or purpose it would not be surprising if a Methodist educational institution was also surprisingly secular. The various arguments supporting the existence of Wesley as an

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163. Kirkconnell, ibid., 25.

164. Loc. cit.

165. Supra., 116.

independent college in the face of administrative centralization tendencies nearly always revolved around the standard philosophy which justifies the existence of a small college: the superior academic quality of the smaller unit, the resulting intimacy, the financial investment already made, etc. These arguments had nothing to do with Methodism except for the fact that the church had founded the college.

Apart from the existence of clergy on the staff of the college and the training of theological students, the only religious influence apart from the obvious one of proximity, were to be seen in the rules for compulsory chapel attendance (unless the parents of the student provided reasons to the contrary),[166] and the usual Victorian moralistic rules like the following:

> The use of tobacco and spirituous liquors and the playing of games of chance in the building is forbidden.167

Students were also required to board only in those places approved by the College, and had to agree to abide by this and similar rules before they were allowed to register.[168]

Nevertheless, Wesley College did not have a colourless early history. It partook of the stimulating climate engendered by the same metropolitanism that made Winnipeg more than a mid-western backwater. Certainly, Wesley was dominated by a Church which was in turn dominated by its powerful laymen. These very laymen, as we have seen, were not without

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166. Wesley College Calendar, 1899-1900, See "General Regulations", 5.

167. Ibid., 9.

168. Ibid., 2.

sophistication, and some, like Sir Clifford Sifton, were national figures. Wesley College in itself was probably one of the metropolitan forces which contributed to the relative sophistication of the Canadian west in the years prior to the First War. Men like Sparling and Riddell, with their middle and moderate views, probably represented the educational type most agreeable and amenable to the standard aspirations of western Methodist English Canadian. They were not the only type attracted by the college, however.

The theological faculty at Wesley attracted men who were also in the forefront of educational and theological thought. One of these in the pre-war period was the Rev. Salem Bland who arrived in 1904. He was, at that time, well on the road toward a Social Gospel position. He was supposed to teach Church History and New Testament but was soon involved in putting forward his views on social questions. He met with resistance in the classrooms of Wesley College almost at once.[169] The theological students at the College paid minimal fees and were supported by their local churches to a considerable extent. It is likely that many of them from rural areas of the west would come fully committed to a theology or "world view", similar to that held by Rev. Wellington Bridgman,[170]

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169. Allen, op. cit.

170. See page 333 for Bridgman's ideas. A vigorous and direct statement of rural objections to advanced Biblical criticism and sound gospel ideas is to be found in District Minutes, Neepawa, Manitoba, June 6, 1910, MSS, 30, 31 "Doctrine".

Preamble. "The church is in danger of abusing the critical Faculty. It is well that criticism has demolished the scaffolding of Religion which we too long have identified with the structure itself; but humanity cannot feed upon negations. It must have something positive

which was really a type of neo-orthodoxy. They were bound to conflict with Bland who pitted Christ against St. Paul, and who felt that the traditional liturgy and emphasis on private worship was a selfish

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on which to nourish its life. It is time therefore that we were set at the building again. If the church is to continue to move the world, it must have a message which it believes with all its mind and soul and strength. It must devote itself to the construction of such a faith. Our creeds, systems and institutions may change but human needs do not alter. Men still know what it is to sin, and to carry about in their lives the scars of broken law. They still know what it is to sorrow, they still grow old and die, and they still hunger for the positive faith that will save them from their sins, comfort them in their sorrows, illuminating them in their darkness and nourish them when the strains of life has left them weak and faint. The church must give them their message."

(1) That the time has come when the Methodist Church should reaffirm her unaltered attachment to the Doctrines of Faith in the Divine Christ as the Eternal Son of God coequal with the Father. The Bible as the revealed word of God. The atonement of Christ for the Sins of Men. The Sacrifice of Christ being necessary for the pardon of sin.

(2) That we, the members of the Neepawa District assembled in General Session do hereby request the Manitoba Conference at its session in June, 1910 to memorialize the General Conference to pass such legislation at its next session, which will in its judgement insure for the future, that only such Professors and teachers be employed in any of our colleges, who will teach our young men and women the great truths for which our Beloved Church has always stood; Especially the unity of the Godhead as per Articles of Religion 1-4. The Atonement of Christ for sin as per articles 3-20. The authority of the Holy Scriptures as the word of God.

(3) In order that the ranks of our ministry may be kept clear of strange or false Doctrines that each minister be required in his examination RE ministerial qualifications to give an affirmative answer to the question--Do you believe and teach all our Doctrines?

(Carried)

(The foregoing is reproduced in its original form complete with special capitalization, grammar, etc.)

position.[171] Bland entered politics in 1907 and attacked the Roblin government.[172] This action attracted the wrath of the minister of Grace Church in 1913 who demanded that the Ministerial Association take action against him but nothing was done at the time.[173] He went on speaking tours and wrote but the Methodist authorities, as in the case of J. S. Woodsworth,[174] did very little about him. Finally, he was dismissed from, or rather "retired" from Wesley along with A. J. Irwin, on the grounds of "retrenchment" in 1917 at the height of the war fever.[175] There is some doubt as to his pacifism as he opposed the war on some occasions but on at least one occasion supported it.[176] The Manitoba Conference was disrupted by his dismissal. The Saskatchewan Conference demanded a full investigation in 1918, and it appears that he was dismissed on political grounds because of his opposition to the war.[177] The full College Board was called to rule on his dismissal at the request of the same Saskatchewan Conference at the time of the event

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171. Allen, op. cit., 68, 72.

172. Ibid., 88.

173. Ibid., 74-75.

174. See page 362.

175. Allen, op. cit., 114, This is a confused matter. Allen's book The Social Passion, Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928, University of Toronto Press, (Toronto, 1971), does not agree with his thesis on this point.

176. Ibid., 75 and 106.

177. Ibid., 115-116, This was his own opinion, at least. Supra, n. 175.

but they upheld the action of the Committee.[178]

Wesley College continued to reflect the divisions in Methodism in its Theological Faculty by occasionally hiring a theological liberal or supporter of the "higher criticism" who would immediately attract the wrath of the neo-orthodox. These controversies were usually much milder than the Bland affair. The officials of the College, in keeping with the attitude of Methodist officialdom everywhere after the turn of the century, tended to take a benign "middle view" and play down all such differences, at least from the standpoint of external publicity. Bland seems to have attracted the enmity of the more consequential laymen on the Board, who, while not too concerned about theological detail, would not stand for anyone who appeared to be taking any sort of pacifist position.[179]

Finally, it may be seen from the foregoing that Methodist educational effort in the west was initially prompted by the same English Canadian bigotry that opposed the existence of the Catholic School system in Manitoba. Denominational rivalry and institutional pride were inadequate reasons to justify the establishment of Wesley College. This was evident in the controversy over centralization versus the college system. The training of theological students could have been done within the context of a provincial university without any real difficulty. Nevertheless, once the institution was established it soon found a role as small "downtown" college serving not only English Canadian Methodists but later

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178. Allen, loc. cit.

179. Loc. cit.

Icelanders and Ukranians in the metropolitan area. It continued only because it found a role which had little to do with its origin.

The most extreme and dramatic example of a Methodist clergyman's reaction to the effect of metropolitan sophistication on his traditional Methodist faith is, of course, J. S. Woodsworth. He did not appear, as Bland had done, in the context of Wesley College but the development of his ideas carried him along a similar path. His career is well known and need not be discussed here in detail. Woodsworth was not the only Social Gospel figure, sharing that distinction with Rev. A. E. Smith, Rev. William Ivens and Rev. Salem Bland. All of these men could flourish in the metropolitan atmosphere of Winnipeg, if not in Wesley College or the Methodist Church. J. S. Woodsworth, however, was the son of the famous western Superintendent of Missions. He was also unusually well educated and had been at Oxford, travelled in Europe and read all the seminal books of the period on the Social Gospel issue.[180] He also knew exactly what the traditional doctrines and practices of Methodism were. As is well known, he found he did not even believe in the essential points of Christian doctrine, let alone Methodist ideas about fasting and drinking. Several times he brought his specific doubts and objections to the Conference authorities, only to be told that these were not vital! The doctrines which he specifically listed were such things as "the total depravity of all men by nature, in consequence of Adam's fall; the atonement made by Christ for the sins of all the human race; the direct

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180. See the second chapter of Kenneth McNaught's, A Prophet in Politics, A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth, University of Toronto Press, (Toronto, 1959), for Woodsworth's education.

witness of the spirit",[181] and so on. The nature of the Trinity and the physical resurrection of Christ were also written out in detail in his account of 1907 as doctrines about which he had many reservations.[182] He had been told previously that this was not important as long as he believed the underlying truths. Yet all of the doctrines which he listed in his account of 1907 confrontation are vital to Christianity. Woodsworth was aware of this:

> It has been stated that the doctrines of Methodism are not those contained in the standards of doctrine. This may be so. Yet, I was required to state that I believed and would preach certain definitely specified doctrines. Some may say that it is necessary only that I believe only the essential underlying truths. But who is to determine what are the essential underlying truths? Words have well recognized meanings. We cannot play fast and lose them.183

In the same publication, Woodsworth referred to the traditional heart and source of Methodist practice:

> Dr. Burwash, fairly representing Methodist teaching defines conversion as "one experimental crisis of religious life, from which a consciously new life dates its beginning"....I have never had such an experience.184

Woodsworth not only did not have any religious experience of this type, he specifically denied a faith "that, through the merits of Christ, his

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181. J. S. Woodsworth, "Following the Gleam", A Modern Pilgrim's Progress--to date! (pamphlet), published in 1926, 6.

182. Loc. cit.

183. Loc. cit.

184. Ibid., 7.

sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God".[185] All he claimed was a "loyalty to our common Master" and a desire to serve. He realized that he had no business at all in the Methodist church if these were their doctrines, yet they had rejected his resignation in 1902 and they did it again in 1907. A Conference Committee made up of Rev. F. B. Stacey, Rev. Thomas Ferrier, and Dr. James Elliott reported:

> Having a full and frank conversation with Bro. James S. Woodsworth re the cause of his resignation, we find that there is nothing in his doctrinal beliefs and adhesion to our discipline to warrant his separation from the ministry of the Methodist Church, and therefore recommend that his resignation be not accepted and that his character be now passed.186

It would be a shadowy church indeed that could afford to allow the denial of doctrines so vital to Christianity in general (apart from Methodism), that their removal would constitute a return to either pre-Christian paganism, or a traditional heresy such as Pantheism. Real opposition to men like Woodsworth and Bland only appeared when their patriotism was in doubt during the war, or when they were suspected of "Bolshevik" tendencies at the time of the General Strike of 1919.

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185. Woodsworth, loc. cit.

186. Ibid., 8.

## CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

The various branches of the Methodist church which came to western Canada after 1840 were all descended from the original Wesleyan revival which took place in England in the eighteenth century. They all had some sort of evangelical tradition and shared a common doctrine. They really differed only on questions of church government. The Episcopal Methodists made use of bishops, the Wesleyans maintained the principle of a clear separation of clergy and laity while the Primitives tended to blur this latter distinction. Besides having a common doctrine they employed most of the usual devices of Methodist connexionalism such as the class meeting and the circuit organization.

There are many grave difficulties to be faced in any attempt which might be made to describe the essence of the Methodist movement. It was peculiar in many respects. For instance, it has been cogently suggested that the main thrust of Methodist theological emphasis was Catholic rather than Protestant. John Wesley made little use of the writings of the great leaders of the Reformation and, instead, directed his followers to such Roman Catholic figures as Thomas à Kempis and Brother Lawrence.[1] His followers did not always take his advice but they did follow the direction of his emphasis. The followers of the Wesleys adopted a simple, straightforward theology and were not nearly as concerned about doctrinal detail as the evangelical Puritans had been.[2] The Methodists called

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1. Jean Orcibal, "The Theological Originality of John Wesley and Continental Spirituality", in Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp (ed), A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, Vol. 1., Epworth Press, (London, 1965), 103.

2. John Walsh, "Methodism at the end of the Eighteenth Century", in Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp, ibid., I., 287.

themselves "Arminian" as a device or label to avoid the pitfalls and complexities of Calvinist predestinarianism.[3] In other words the name "Arminian" was a workable or pragmatic device which kept the whole movement off the shoals of theological and doctrinal minutiae. Arminian positions had been held before by others in the eighteenth century but in these cases they had merely been taking the first steps on the road to deism.[4]

How was Methodism able to sustain a powerful appeal on such a shaky doctrinal basis? The answer lies in the time and the place. A certain cast of mind is the necessary prerequisite for participation in endless doctrinal debate. Such a mind is able to take each argument to its logical conclusion. The Methodists did not have this sort of mind. They were much more pragmatic in their revival than the earlier Puritans had been in theirs. They drew their support from the lower classes newly disturbed by the first rumblings of the Industrial Revolution. These classes demanded the vitality of the evangelical appeal which, in itself, was not new. They also, however, required an approach in keeping with the new spirit of the age which was, for them, simplistic and rational. They wished to look neither behind nor before but to delight in a self-contained moment of the kind which is caught so well by a Hogarth painting. Their attitudes were shaped by the new, cheap press of the age and they were themselves newly literate.[5] Their view of time was like that of the

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3. John Walsh, loc. cit.

4. Loc. cit.

5. Harold A. Innis, The Bias of Communication, University of Toronto Press, (Toronto, 1964), 142-155.

novelists of their day who had:

> ....an intimate connection with early journalism, sharing its time sense as a series of discrete moments, each without self-possession, as well as its notion of the 'concrete' as residing in the particular entity or event sensorily observed.6

While the Wesley brothers themselves were relatively complex individuals and products of many diverse forces, their followers were relatively simple in the manner described. The adherents to the Methodist cause were content to be pragmatic in that they accepted basic Christian doctrine with a label which made it more easily operative and useful, and they built up an organization which sustained and perpetuated the evangelical spirit.

The fantastic success of the movement resulted from its perfect adaptation to the mood of the time. This adaptation was manifested in the Methodist's subtle blending of evangelical zeal and rational organizational detail. The psychological nature of evangelical appeal need not be discussed here except to note that Wesley was immensely pessimistic about man and society but terribly optimistic about regenerate man and a society transformed by the work of grace.[7] Like the other rationalists of his age, Wesley believed in man's possible "perfectability".[8] This fantastic optimism had a great appeal to the ordinary people of his day but it was a very popular appeal in the sense that numerous

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6. Milton Klonsky, "Along the Midway of Mass Culture", Partisan Review, April, 1949, 351, quoted in Harold A. Innis, ibid., 89.

7. John Walsh, op. cit., 314.

8. Loc. cit.

potential theological pitfalls were lightly skipped over or ignored completely. Ultimately, people were merely asked to accept a sure road to a better life and a better world.[9]

A workable appeal was combined with an organization which had no rivals in its own day:

> The flexible polity of Methodism and its control of cadres of lay helpers were to prove the mainspring of its success during the Industrial Revolution. It was more suited to work among a swelling urban proletariat than the rigid parochial system of the Church of England. Class leaders and local preachers could grapple with the souls of fellow workers where the parson and the curate could not easily go.10

Finally, Methodism was one of the ways or means by which the lower social orders could rise to middle class respectability. By practising Methodist virtues many of the poor improved their status and successfully adapted themselves to the changing cultural climate brought in by the Industrial Revolution.[11]

The point of all the foregoing is, perhaps, simply to note that Methodism's chief characteristic was its almost perfect adaptation to the chief popular cultural currents of its own day. This might explain its initial success and could also account for its final decline. It also explains the difficulties faced by any historian of Methodism. It is an almost impossible task to separate the Methodists from their cultural context. They do not represent one facet or characteristic of a

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9. John Walsh, loc. cit.

10. Ibid., 312.

11. Ibid., 310-311.

social group under examination; they usually are that particular group. This is, perhaps, the price which must be paid for an excessive pragmatism.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the main body of Methodism could be described as middle-class, conservative, respectable and removed from new lower orders. The official attitudes of the Methodist church were simply those of the class which made up the bulk of the adherents. As these became more comfortable and outgrew the naive comforts of the age of reason, evangelical zeal became a thing of the past. Middle class institutionalism, with its greater social emphasis and the usual Victorian desire for clear social divisions, became the dominant feature of mainstream Methodism.

How did Methodism operate when it left the English scene? If it met "native" populations in a natural setting in the Victorian period it approached them with the civilizing intent found in most Victorian missionary enterprises. It was almost impossible for Methodism to meet alien cultures in any fashion which allowed even the smallest amount of virtue to the other side. Methodists who came in contact with relatively primitive peoples usually did so only as a result of the help or co-operation provided by some agency of England's commercial or industrial might such as the Hudson's Bay Company. Methodists seldom seemed to be aware of the dangers inherent in these arrangements, but then, there was nothing in their theology or world-view which might cause them to resort to such critical self-examination. Simple eighteenth century pragmatism, plus a tradition which had seen some success in special circumstances, was too simple a formula to give them a sophisticated and conscious

control of the destiny of their institution. Whenever they were faced with insoluble problems they turned back to the techniques of earlier days which had given them their initial success. Thus, Barnley attempted to bring the psychological blessings of an evangelical revival to an Indian congregation which was not culturally susceptible to his technique.[12]

The Methodists were not always so unfortunate, however. The American frontier with its harsh isolation produced conditions which were often close enough to those of early industrial England to allow Methodism considerable success. The Maritimes in the 1790s, the United States in the same period, and the Ontario and general American frontier up to the 1830s all produced conditions where several branches of evangelical Methodism could flourish.

The Canadian west after 1840 differed from all of the examples given above. It was also in a state of change which would alter even more quickly and drastically as the century wore on. All the Methodist denominations who came to the west after 1840 had passed their evangelical stage some time before. With the exception of the Wesleyans, they all attempted the very difficult task of transferring their settled and non-evangelical institutionalism to the west. All of the groups tended to feel that some sort of return to their traditional evangelical zeal would be appropriate in order to meet the new challenge.

The Wesleyans, at least those actually in the west, saw the situation

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12. See page 44.

there in the 1840s as a traditional one. They were missionaries in a wilderness among the miserable heathen. The wilderness was much in evidence as were the heathen, and hence it was a time to revert to the heroic Methodism of the Wesleys preaching outdoors to the least and the lowest in the eighteenth century. They misread their position. The mighty Hudson's Bay Company provided an all-powerful framework for the complete domination of its huge wilderness territory and, worse still, regarded the missionaries as mere servants hired to prevent the erosion of Company commercial power.

The Canadian Methodists, who followed the Wesleyans, had to contend with the power of the same Company with the unhappy example of their predecessors always before them. They also had the relative proximity of their own institutional power based in Toronto to restrain any evangelical tendencies which might take them along heroic paths. Like the Wesleyans before them, they still found occasional opportunity to employ a man like George McDougall if he was on a distant Indian mission and did not antagonize the Company too much. The more likely result was the appearance of the institutional opportunist or careerist such as E. R. Young. When, in 1868, the Canadian Methodists began work among Ontario people in Red River, the only possible enthusiasm for Ontario Methodists was an aggressive attempt to rid the colony of all frontier, alien or non-Ontario elements. The temporary success of the Riel affair gave them a role in the head-on clash between two cultures which they were to maintain up into the time of the Manitoba School Question. Unfortunately, it was only a negative enthusiasm, although it did prompt the birth of the first Methodist educational institutions.

The crushing of the Riel uprising meant that Ontario was in a position to dominate the west, especially in the settled areas, and would eventually take over entirely from the Hudson's Bay Company. Distant Indian missions would still be distant, and McDougall would find a heroic task upon the war-torn plains, but settlers would be brought out by a new technological marvel which would subdue the western plains in a manner not even imagined before.

Along with the tide of settlement which came to the western plains after 1875, came the three other Methodist churches, all based in Ontario like their Canadian brethren. They tended to see the conquest of the west in purely territorial terms, in keeping with the nature of their institutional character. Given the railroad and the resulting conditions of western settlement, they had even less opportunity for a revitalizing frontier experience than those who had preceded them. Their weakness was so evident that they were forced to welcome the union which absorbed them. In the west, at least, the Union of 1884 was not a solution to the churches' problems. These arose out of the peculiar nature of the western environment.

How, specifically, would the Methodists be affected by their environment? There were two main features of the west mentioned by the Methodist groups which have been examined. The first feature was the extreme mobility of the settlers and the resulting large number of transients in each area. This gave a permanently transient character to every town, city or village. This is, perhaps, characteristic of the Canadian hinterland and arises from the now false notion that it is a wilderness of

limitless resources where it is not necessary to put up any sort of permanent edifice. As the Methodist Episcopals discovered, such a situation makes it impossible to build up any denominational loyalty, and leads to a relatively cosmopolitan outlook which finds the narrowness of the long settled Ontario town quite restrictive. Ancient prejudices,while not disappearing, fail to take firm root. The second feature was the harshness of the environment itself in terms of climate, lack of the amenities of a more civilized area, and the necessity for considerable hard work in erecting a home on new land even with the help of the railroad. People who succeeded in the face of this considerably modified frontier developed some of the democratic self-reliance characteristic of the American frontier experience and they tended to be more critical of the claims of more effete society.

The forces of metropolitanism were constantly coming into conflict with, and modifying, a raw wilderness in the Canadian west. The metropolitanism would inevitably triumph but its progress was uneven. Technological progress tended to increase the speed of ever-increasing metropolitan power. High speed printing and the distribution of sophisticated papers and periodicals, together with farm machinery all brought out by the railroad, merely heralded the fantastic technological progress of the post-1900 period. The Methodists found that they could not duplicate their Ontario institutionalism in the west in such fluid circumstances, and further, that institutionalism was being challenged even in Ontario. In Ontario, however, the long and successful history of each denomination, or rather the fact of its long actual existence with heroic antecedents, provided a base with enough inertia to resist the

changes of the late Victorian period. In the west, however, the Methodists were relatively new, and did not have time to put down roots to withstand the controversies at the end of the century. It is unlikely that they could have put down roots at all as long as the wilderness was being modified so quickly and effectively that the most sophisticated controversies of the time arrived almost as soon as settlement did. Biblical criticism and doubts about the churches' role arrived as soon as the first infant Methodist college was set up. The challenge to complacent institutionalism which was growing up in the east appeared as western Methodists were trying to set up permanent institutions of their own.

The problem was one of adaptation. Traditionalists clung to the old faith in the hope that the things which had enabled the church to conquer in past times would see them through. Others began to look in the direction of social utility. The officials of the united institution, seeing the result of the attempt to control doctrinal heresy in Ontario in 1890, and constantly aware that the recent union had left a smouldering resentment, contented themselves with the maintenance of a sort of inconclusive neutrality. This allowed people like Bridgman to pursue an extreme course in one direction while J. S. Woodsworth went in another. Wesley College thus found itself in a state of confusion over the Bland affair. Rural theological students resisted Bland's ideas, secure in the knowledge that their rural District Meeting would support them. Meanwhile, powerful laymen in the College and the churches saw to it that such basic Anglo-Saxon cultural enthusiasms as the war fever were not opposed by clergy with tender conscience.

Traditionalists with a conviction that a puritanical and evangelical Methodism was the correct formula had little cause to rejoice. Bridgman poured his contempt on the wives of Mounties and doctors brought out almost at once to a pioneer town where they "reeled in the circle" and "swarmed in the dance",[13] but they came anyway and the result was a definite decline in the number of those susceptible to a simple frontier evangelism. Poor Semmens found that heroic dedication did not bring the recognition that it might have received in the backwoods of Upper Canada in the 1830s where isolated families welcomed an opportunity for an emotional outpouring and accorded the man who brought it a relatively exalted status. Rather, Semmens found that he was merely the slave of an institution which had no place for such a role and was singularly unappreciative of his efforts. His role was supposed to be a social and an institutional one, but he was always placed in areas where this type of activity was least rewarding.

What was the final outcome of all this? Wesley College, in spite of rear-guard actions by traditionalists, gradually found a useful social role which started it on the road to becoming a secular institution. The Methodist church in the west as a whole did not find a solution. Methodists continued to display a troubled ambivalence in the face of the war fever, the Social Gospel agitation, and the conflict between fundamentalists and "German" critics. Officialdom did not take any very strong stand. They continued to support tentative movements in a Social Gospel direction but little was resolved before they were absorbed into the

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13. See page 323.

union of 1925. Once again, as in 1884, much of the precedent for union was set by the example of western churches.[14] The Union of 1925, like the flirtation with the Social Gospel, did not represent a triumph for the western church. Rather, it was the only apparent course for a church, which, while strong in terms of territory, property and secular support, had nothing really to offer except a confused institutionalism.

The Methodists came to western Canada in the hope that territorial expansion was clear proof of an inner vitality which was already in doubt. Their institutionalism never took firm root in western soil, but the temporary and peculiar conditions of the modified western frontier persuaded many that they had found a place to renew their traditional sources of power. Their institutionalism collapsed almost at once but the western environment supported a unified western church for a few more years. The united Methodists tended, however, to merge more and more with their secular environment and it took a Woodsworth to point this out. Old

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14. George Neil Emery, "The Methodist Church on the Prairies: The Outreach of Ontario, 1896-1914". University of British Columbia, unpublished Ph.D. thesis. He tends to see the physical distances on the prairies as a stimulus for union. J. Webster Grant in The Canadian Experience of Church Union, Lutterworth, (London, 1967), sees the fear of a non-British Canada,plus what he calls "the decompartmentalization of Protestant Church life",as reasons for union. This last was not a purely western phenomenon but he sees the shift toward new interests after 1890 among Protestant Churches as the shape of a new hope that would reinforce their hold on Canadian life. This may have been their hope but the shift toward new interests (Biblical criticism, German idealism, social reconstruction) certainly did not revitalize the Methodist Church, 27-28.

Grant, like many others, sees the disappearance of the denominational concerns which divided Protestantism as a hopeful thing. It may have been for Christianity but it meant the virtual disappearance of some of the denominations.

fashioned Methodism, of the type found in Ontario in the 1830s, in the Maritimes in the 1790s, and in the England of John Wesley, did not find its way to western Canada at all. The groups that did make their way here did not succeed in revitalizing themselves, although their history is occasionally illumined by individuals in remote and difficult stations who could contemplate the example of their founder in relative isolation.

## APPENDIX

## THE JAMES EVANS STORY - CONTINUED

An interesting letter, addressed to some person unnamed, serves to introduce the second part of the drama of Rev. James Evans. It is dated Victoria, V.I.,May 15, 1865, and is signed by the brother of James Evans, the Rev. Ephraim Evans, who was prominent in Canadian Methodism for many years, both in the Maritime provinces and the Canadas. The letter opens by thanking the unnamed person for his labours in the task of clearing the name of the late Rev. James Evans. The second paragraph is the interesting one:

> As regards the difficulty to which you allude, that "it has been stated that he fell into disgrace etc.", you have been misinformed in supposing that the Hudson Bay Co. were prominent, if at all connected with the attempt made to blast his reputation. At least, I have no evidence of that. He was in antagonism with their policy on the Sabbath question and other matters, but I have reason to believe that this attempt to injure his moral character was made by an assistant in the mission who soon after left our work, and became a Puseyite ultra.1

In this, Ephraim Evans was wrong, as we have seen and will see again. Sir George Simpson at least, made every attempt to "blast the reputation" of James Evans.[2] The writer went on to say that he had letters from the Committee in London "declaring him to have fully exonerated himself on those charges"[3] and that he "had lived and died with their undiminished

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1. Ephraim Evans to [?], May 15, 1865. James Evans Papers, University of Western Ontario. (Henceforth, UWO, Evans Papers).

2. See page 397 of Appendix.

3. UWO, Evans Papers, op. cit., Ephraim Evans to [?], May 15, 1865.

confidence."[4] He goes on to argue that Evans must have convinced them of this as they employed him while he was in England and would have returned him to the district as Superintendent.[5] This may have been so, but James Evans died in the middle of the controversy[6] and was then declared innocent which was certainly convenient for the reputation of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Ephraim Evans closed on a note of caution:

> In anything written, however, it might be best to make no reference to the matter, because the man who concocted the foul slander is capable of saying anything now he does not live to contradict it.7

Perhaps, Ephraim Evans was not too sure of his brother's innocence himself!

The whole story of the trial is terribly tortuous and difficult to follow. The most important letters do not appear to be extant. In summary, it appears that Evans was accused of having sexual relations with a variety of Indian girls under his care. Mason set up a court with the agreement of Evans and he (Evans) was tried and acquitted. Evidently, there was a great deal of evidence taken from various natives and relayed through an interpreter. Then came the matter of reporting the affair to the Committee in England.

The first indication of the trouble is a letter to James Evans from

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4. UWO, Evans Papers, loc. cit.

5. Loc. cit.

6. November 22, 1846.

7. UWO, Evans Papers, op. cit., Ephraim Evans to [?], May 15, 1865.

Donald Ross, dated 13, February, 1846 at Norway House.[8] It is in reply to a letter which Evans evidently wrote asking for advice. In the context of the acid letter already seen which Ross had addressed to Simpson about Evans' character,[9] it is cordial to the extent of hypocrisy. He replied that he could give him no counsel on the matter as it was outside his ability. He thought that little good would arise out of bringing the matter to the Red River court as the publicity would only create a great stir. He said only time would solve the problem and no interference of his would be of any use.[10]

Evans replied the next day from Norway House thanking him that his kind views of the mission were unaltered in spite of the terrible circumstances. It is evident from this that the Hudson Bay factors, such as Donald Ross, had a public opinion which they provided for the missionaries, and a private one which they reserved for Simpson alone. (This could have contributed to Ephraim Evans misapprehension of the real role of the Hon. Co. in the whole affair.) James Evans was pleased that Ross would support the cause of the mission as he had heretofore done!

> This of all things is to me of the most vital importance. The cause of God being injured would wound my soul even more than a false verdict founded upon false but glaring charges.11

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8. Hudson's Bay Company Archives (Henceforth, HBC Arch.), D. 5/17. Donald Ross to James Evans, February 13, 1846, No. 33.

9. See Chapter I, page

10. HBC Arch., op. cit., Donald Ross to James Evans, February 13, 1846, No. 33.

11. HBC Arch., op. cit., James Evans to Donald Ross, February 14, 1846, No. 34.

Evans went on to state that only God could clean up the past and he could see His hand in the affair. He went on to say just how he saw this and here we get some insight into the details of the case:

> Had Alick been absent hunting I should probably have fallen.
> Had Eliza Seeseep, who was near death recently died, I know not what would have saved me. None but God.
> Had Charles not happened to sleep in the Indian room and had there been not been a knot hole in the Partition?
> Had the girls not slept in the bunk bed but on the floor or on the larger bed stead even Eliza's life would have been useless to me in the cause of religion.12

He closed by saying he was deeply wounded and did not know whether he could preach or not.[13]

Following this letter, in the Hudson's Bay Company archives there are a series of comments on each of the above statements of Mr. Evans, probably by Donald Ross.[14] Ross said that the first statement referred to one of the charges brought against Evans by Eliza Miseekeecunib. This charge was that Evans had waylaid her as "she was sent to the Garret of the Mission Store to fetch some moss...."[15] Mr. Evans followed her, "threw her down on the moss and lifted up her clothes and attempted to "do bad" to her....[16] According to Ross, she then called out and Alick

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12. HBC Arch., idem.

13. Idem.

14. HBC Arch., op. cit., No. 34a.

15. Idem.

16. Idem.

heard her and came into the store which prompted Evans to let her get up and to brush the moss off her back. Ross stated that Mason had questioned Alick on the matter but Alick did not remember the circumstances which Eliza had recounted. Alick's evidence was never officially taken according to this account.[17] All this is typical of the confusion surrounding every aspect of the case.

Of the second remark made by Evans, Ross noted that Eliza Seeseep, who will be seen again later on her death bed,[18] was brought forward to counteract the testimony of Maggy Sinclair, who had testified that Evans had slept with her while she was a servant in his house. Ross added that Eliza Seeseep's evidence was simply that she always slept with Maggy in the same bunk bed. Ross noted that this was not relevant as Maggy had entered Evans' service in the summer of 1843 and left it in the late summer of 1844, while Eliza had not moved into the house until the spring of 1844.[19]

The next remark referred to one of the charges by Ann Sapah who said that Mr. Evans came into the study while she was sleeping and took liberties with her. Ross pointed out that Charles' evidence did not disprove this. He merely said he was awakened and saw a light in the study and looked in "during the latter part of Mr. Evans visit to her...."[20] He

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17. HBC Arch., idem.

18. See page 400.

19. HBC Arch., op. cit., No. 34a.

20. Idem.

evidently did not see much that was incriminating at that time.

Ross' remarks on the last observation of Evans are even more confusing. He said that the girls in question, Eliza Seeseep, Eliza Misakeecunib and Hannah Custatz lived "together in Mr. Evans house most of the time...."[21] when his attempts on them were stated to have been made. Thus, they could not all have slept in the same bunk bed. Ross goes on to state that, if Evans' remark refers to the matter of Maggy Sinclair, it is also irrelevant because she slept in his study alone or in "the Indian room adjoining",[22] and that the "alleged criminal intercourse"[23] between her and Evans was carried on so often that she had lost count![24] These remarks were closed with a question asking if any gentleman's study was a place for a young female to sleep.[25]

For the next part of the story it is necessary to turn to the diary of James Evans, which, although incomplete, is the only source for the following and is necessary in order to understand all the remaining correspondence. It appears that, after the trial, Mason and Evans began to write their reports for the Secretaries of the Missionary Society in London. It also appears that they made some sort of agreement to produce a common version. At least Evans seemed to think that this would be the

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21. HBC Arch., idem.

22. Idem.

23. Idem.

24. Idem.

25. Idem.

case. On the 2nd of March 1846, Evans recorded some routine information:

> On going to the Hon. Co. Fort on Monday the 2nd of March Mr. Ross said to me that he was going to send off men to Berens River who would meet the packet from Red River. If I had any letters to send them on Wednesday evening. I thanked him saying I do not know of anything I have to write--but perhaps I will scratch a letter or two to some friend.26

Evans considered writing to Adam Thom, Recorder of Rupert's Land, about the question of the validity of Methodist marriage in the territory.[27] The main point is, however, that Evans thought that the mail was only going to Red River.

His diary records that on the 4th of March, Steinhauer and Mason dined with him on cooked beaver "as was our practice"[28] and Mason read him a report from a paper he had in his pocket which appears to be a report of the trial and other ordinary matters.[29] Evans disagreed only with a few details. He noticed that Mason recorded that he (Mason) preached with the whole village present. Evans noted that this was not the case as the Indians never left a house empty as someone was always left to look after it.[30] Mason then left "with unusual politeness"[31] saying he had some letters to write to Red River. March 4th was the

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26. UWO, Evans Papers, Evans' Diary.

27. Loc. cit.

28. Loc. cit.

29. Loc. cit.

30. Loc. cit.

31. Loc. cit.

Wednesday the mail was to leave. Evans observed that he could think of nothing vital to write to Red River so he said he would not send anything.[32] Actually, the mail had to be handed to Ross' men on Wednesday night as the boats left early the next morning. On Thursday, the next day, the storm broke:

> Thursday 5th. I sent for Mr. Mason and my papers were laying [sic] on the table before me - We conversed on several topics - the school masters house - our removal and calling Mr. Rundle and printing, etc. At length I remarked that I must finish my papers to the secretaries before I did anything else. Mr. Mason said nothing of his having sent off. But he remarked cooly the packet will go today - I said but it only goes to Red River. Yes he said it will perhaps go to England - Well said I, I cannot send mine for I have not finished my remarks. I never thought of sending them until by the canoes. (the regular mail express) But the packet is gone said he. I did not know said I that it was an English packet. - "I sent my papers" said Mr. Mason - you should have sent yours. Sent your papers! You sent them! I exclaimed what and never even read them as you promised, nor gave me copies, nor told me they were going - Mason you have deceived me. You knew mine were not ready - I told you yesterday I would read them and you promised to read yours. You have deceived me. I called to Mrs. Evans and said "My Dear prepare my things I start for England if the Lord spare me on Thursday next. "Mason" said I "You have now realized all my fears."33

Evans recorded that, after this outburst, he went on to say:

> I wrote them on the 14th Feb. and by Henry's advice kept my letter back as he said all would perhaps come right yet. Mr. Mason said, "I never promised you a copy" - "No Sir" I said "but you said I should hear what you write." And now what you have written

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32. UWO, Evans Papers, Evans' Diary, loc. cit.

33. Loc. cit.

> I must meet in London. I am resolved on that.34

At this point, a heated debate is recorded in the diary. Mason remarked that he thought that Evans knew the boats were going to Red River. Evans said he knew that but had not realized that the mail might go through to England. Evans further said that he was sure no one had known about this or he would have heard. He then asked if Henry (Steinhauer) had heard that the papers had been sent. Mason stated that Henry knew. In fact, he said that he had told Henry of his intention when he had written the first page. Evans, probably feeling, that, in that case they might not be as bad as he had imagined, asked to read the copy of them, as it might then save him a trip to England. Mason replied that he could see no reason why Evans should read them. Evans had a direct reply to this remark:

> Because Sir every word you write is more than evidence - yours is judgement and according to your opinion offered the Conference will decide. Had I not a right to offer my defence to you after the evidence - and have I not a right to offer a defence on the conference floor if I were there, as I am not I should know all that goes home to offer it in writing--Will you read them to me?35

Mason went out to get the papers and Evans went to the schoolhouse to see Henry B. Steinhauer. Evans asked him directly if he knew that Mason had sent the papers to England by the morning packet. Henry's first reply

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34. UWO, Evans Papers, Evans' Diary, loc. cit. I take the first speaker in this quotation to be Evans himself as it follows without a break from the previous quotation. The punctuation in the diary is such that it is difficult sometimes to ascertain the identity of the speakers.

35. Loc. cit.

was "Never". He generally indicated complete surprise. Evans returned to his own house and Mason soon appeared with the papers. Evans asked Mason who it was that told Henry the papers were going. Mason replied that he had told Henry himself.[36] Evans then sent for Henry:

> Henry did you know that Mr. Mason sent the papers to England by the packet today? He replied, "No". Mr. Mason said mind Henry what you say - I have witnesses - mind - take care what I told you. - I have a witness Mrs. Mason heard me." Henry said "I never knew they were going by this packet." Mr. Mason Henry I told you - I told you I should send them both ways by this way and by ship. Mrs. Mason heard me. Take care. I told you some time ago at table." Henry. Henry said I did think I hear you say that you would send them two ways - But I never knew that they were going now - but I supposed by the canoes."[37]

At this point in the diary, Evans made a note of what he considered to be the full significance of the situation:

> The fact is that Mr. Mason never knew himself until a few days before this packet left that it was for England - nor even now is there any certainty - but the probability was - that the documents would get thro by St. Peters during the winter - but if not they would leave as soon as the Governor arrives and some time before I could possibly send mine. - The probability was that Mrs. Mason's papers would reach home before the ship sailed in June and mine could not reach until after - when my final doom must have been pronounced and my fate sealed. - and by the ship I should receive my sentence....[38]

Mason, who had gone out again while Evans wrote a note and considered the situation, returned and proceeded to read what he had written. It was as

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36. UWO, Evans Papers, Evans' Diary, loc. cit.

37. Loc. cit.

38. Loc. cit.

bad, or worse than Evans had anticipated. Mason kept quite cool, but Evans, by his own admission, became very excited:

> I humbly acknowledge that I did use some very pointed expressions such as--Mason you have wounded me--You have stabbed me in the shoulders on the Conference floor by sending home a verdict different from that you gave to my face.
>
> You have represented me as exercising authority over you during the trial - I deny it as being palpably false false false, and I will bring you to account for it. Here Mason said--there that will do you have threatened me--You threaten me Sir, - you threaten me.
>
> I said it is true I threaten you - I do - and I will carry my threat into execution. - You have injured me irreparably and I fall into disgrace and must retire under obiloquy [sic] through your misrepresentations and falsehoods I tell you I must in justice to myself - to my family and to the cause of God - represent the whole case to the Secretaries.39

Evans went on to describe exactly how Mason's account differed from the facts of the trial. Alick's evidence[40] was not included or sent, and, according to Evans, all questions which had been asked at the trial in evidence were given a definite negative in Mason's account. Mason was also accused of altering Henry's evidence and quashing Eliza Suscip's evidence. Evans also noted that the measurements of the bunk bed in question had been part of his defence at the trial and these had not been sent home. Mason also evidently sent home what Evans called "a third

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39. UWO, Evans Papers, Evans' Diary, loc. cit.

40. See pages 387-388.

verdict" with a clause of censure attached:

> You did so after having given me a verdict different to my face. Maggy's and Alice evidence 6 page? [sic] You have told the secretaries that you tore off that censure because I said it was out of order, when you told me before Henry that you never meant I was unfit for my office but only I had acted with impropriety in being too familiar with the girls in my house.
>
> You administered a private reproof - and said now I feel that I have done all in my power.
>
> I mentioned that the charges were for several attempts to commit fornication - and said do you believe I ever made any attempt. You said No I do not believe you ever did - I wrote you a paper to sign (See *) You said what you would read to the people would answer every purpose and you was sure I would be satisfied - I said - why not sign this then. - You said you would think on it and put it in your pocket.41

Following this account, on page 6 referred to above, and listed as "evidence sent home", Evans gave some description of the efforts he made to strengthen his own case. On March 28th, Thomas and Jenny, an Indian couple, came to him for their Class Tickets. He withheld Jenny's as she had been dancing at the Fort, but she told him something that Maggy (Sinclair) had told her, which although not given, was evidently in Evans' favour, as he rejoiced.[42]

On April 1st, according to his diary, he received and considered a letter from Mr. Ross "denying me his official interference to procure affidavits to send to the secretaries". He sent for Jenny, and in the presence of witnesses, (four in number, two of whom were: David Jones

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41. UWO, Evans Papers, Evans' Diary, op. cit.

42. Loc. cit.

and Henry Steinhauer) took down her statement in Indian and read it to her. She agreed to testify before a judge in Red River if necessary. David Jones then stated to Evans that Mr. Ross had asked him about the charges against Evans. He (Ross) expressed conviction that they were true. Evans told Jones that Ross had always been on unfavourable terms with him (Evans) due to the business of Sunday travel. Evans also found out at this time that while he was at Red River Mr. Ross had "called for and engaged some of the Indians during my absence to accompany him next spring".[43] Johnny, was one of these Indians and his wife Maggy had the promise of "a passage in the first sloop to the settlement".[44] Evans saw all this as a plot on the part of Mr. Ross to bring him before the Governor and Council in order that he might be forced to give an account of his conduct.[45]

Evans took a more direct step, however, which altered the course of events for the time. He evidently made it clear to Mason that he would produce counter charges against Mason presumably of the kind mentioned in the diary conversation. Mason asked Ross' advice, saying that Evans wanted him to send home the original rough papers of the trial, as he (Mason) had only sent his own copy. He said he suspected Evans of evil intentions and mentioned that Henry's support of his own story was inconclusive.[46] Ross replied that the originals should not be sent but that a

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43. UWO, Evans Papers, Evans' Diary, loc. cit.

44. Loc. cit.

45. Loc. cit.

46. William Mason to Donald Ross, March 6, 1846, quoted in Nan Shipley, The James Evans Story, Ryerson Press, (Toronto, 1966), 198.

note should be sent to the Secretaries saying the papers that have been sent are duplicates and the original will be sent by the next safe conveyance. (This would be the regular mail express.) Ross said that the present conveyance could hardly be considered safe as it went through the United States.[47] Ross then said:

> Let me know immediately after they are off and who goes after the company express....If Mr. Evans is really not prepared and any doubts rest in your mind as to the possibility of his misunderstanding you in reference to sending these papers, just write a few lines to Mr. Christie (Chief Factor at Red River) to keep this packet for your secretaries in his possession till he has your further instructions regarding it. This ought to cover every contingency and will give ample time for preparation and consideration.48

It is impossible to say what exactly happened at this time. There is a note signed by Henry B. Steinhauer in the papers of the Missionary Society, dated Ross Ville, March 26, 1845:

> I do hereby certify that on the morning of the 5th of March, Mr. Mason was at Evans' house where I heard him (Mr. Mason) state that, he had been at the Fort that morning, seen Mr. Ross, on the subject of the letter he proposed to send Mr. Christie, Mr. Evans enquired "Did you tell Mr. Ross that I desired you to stop the papers, or that it was through me in any way you wished them stopped, Mr. Mason said "No, what I said was private." and did he tell you asked Mr. Evans that Mr. Christie had full authority to keep the papers. "Yes he did." Well so as you please said Mr. Evans only remember I don't stop them. All I wish is that they may go and I will send this letter which I wrote last night - Mr. Evans then read a letter asking the Conference

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47. Donald Ross to William Mason, March 6, 1846, ibid., 199.

48. Idem.

> not to decide until they heard from him. But Mason said he would send and stop them.49

It is difficult to say what was sent and what was stopped. No copy has been found either of Mason's charges against Evans or of the latter's charges against Mason in the Missionary correspondence. This does not really affect the case as the Missionary Committee would hear about much of the preceding through other sources. At any rate, by the following year at least, they were informed of all the details.

It appears from subsequent correspondence that Mason went to Red River for reasons of health. He stayed there some time and it appears that he was left to make the decision about sending papers or stopping ones already sent by means of Mr. Christie. On the 31st of March, Evans evidently sent a report to the Secretaries through Mr. Christie and also presumably through Mason, although this is not absolutely clear. It appears that Mason may have had the option of keeping all the papers back from the Secretaries. In any case, Evans wrote from Rossville on the 19th of May, 1846, to Mason asking why he had not heard from him. He noted that he had written Mrs. Mason and Mr. Ross:

> After I had as it were placed my character and all dear to me in your hands rather than cause you trouble, and in a manner left it at your discretion to send my charges back, or forward them with the other documents, I certainly think that something less than common courtesy would have [sic] informing me of your decision....but be sure that I am anxious to know it.50

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49. Microfilm Reel A272, (Henceforth, MRA272), Reel 15, Box 15, Canada 1846-1848, 73.

50. Ibid., James Evans to William Mason, May 19, 1846, 64.

It seems that Evans had, however, by this time, since he had heard nothing, come to a different conclusion, and, rather than let the matter rest:

> I am now fully satisfied that I should be remiss in my duty to God, the conference, my religion, and my family as well as all concerned to permit even a possibility of the facts which have come to my knowledge being hidden from the Conference--such a course would make me even more criminal than yourself.
>
> I am fully prepared for any steps you may deem expedient to take in the unhappy affair. I shall not leave the Mission to come to Red River unless I hear from there that the defence of my character demands my presence.
>
> The papers as forwarded to Mr. Christie must be sent on to the Secretaries by the first conveyance. They cannot be opened or [sic] under any pretence whatever. If you have any additional remarks to make they should be under another cover, with their true date as I find that the papers you sent me when just leaving are written with no date as if a continuation of those already sent to Red River.51

Evans went on to state that an open and frank course would have prevented all this. Then, he turns back to the tangled evidence. On the question of Maggy Sinclair:

> I am perhaps bound in honour to tell you that I am prepared to prove that Maggie had confidently confessed that all her statements were lies--that she would have come and told me so but is ashamed to come and speak to me before my face....52

He mentioned other details of evidence, noting that he had a certificate

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51. MRA272, loc. cit.

52. Loc. cit.

from John MacKay (an Indian servant) which counteracted the false testimony of Johnny Maninwatum. He cited several confusing examples of evidence which had been, in his view, perverted against him. Even Evans found it all confusing, and exclaimed, "who had perverted the truth the Lord knows".[53] He signed himself "yours in much affliction"[54] but added a postscript saying that Mason could stay where he was, go to England or return to Rossville as he pleased, as he (Evans) desired to place him under no restraint in his capacity as his superior.

In this period, everyone sent copies of letters to their superiors. Donald Ross sent copies of his letters to the missionaries to Simpson (usually), and the missionaries sent copies of most of their correspondence to the Secretaries. Evans was not as efficient as Mason, who wrote immense letters to England with copies of every letter he wrote to everyone else. We can only assume that these are accurate copies. In any case, in one of his long letters Mason included a copy of his answer to the above quoted letter of James Evans. His answer, sent on May 27th, 1846, was brief:

> By the blessing of Almighty God I am restored to health and intend (D.V.) returning to the scene of my labours by the Company's ships. I choose this conveyance in preference to the boats as they all travel on the Sabbath.
>
> According to your instructions I have handed to Governor Christie your letter to the Secretaries to accompany the Documents, and beg leave to

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53. MRA272, loc. cit.

54. Loc. cit.

> state once more that I decline having any more conversation or correspondence with you on the painful subject, until the decisions of Conference are received.55

According to this letter then, all the evidence of the trial as reported by Mason together with Evans' corrections and counter charges was sent to the Missionary Society. It appears that Evans then returned to his previous intention of going to England for the purpose of defending himself. There is a letter in the Missionary correspondence addressed to James Evans from George Simpson noting that there had been an application made by the Committee of the Wesleyan Society for a passage for Evans and his family "to Canada this season".[56] The letter is dated June 4, 1846. Simpson announced that a canoe would be provided for the purpose as soon as Ross had returned from Red River to Norway House. This letter was written from an encampment on the Winnipeg River.[57] Evans probably left Rossville sometime in late summer or early fall. He was still there in July as there is a letter on the same reel from Donald Ross to him dated July 19, 1846.[58]

Mason returned to Rossville in June and immediately addressed a huge letter to the Secretaries dated Rossville, June 13, 1846. In it he

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55. MRA272, ibid., William Mason to Secretaries, June 13, 1846. Enclosure with this letter containing a copy of William Mason to James Evans, May 27, 1846.

56. Ibid., George Simpson to James Evans (copy), June 4, 1846.

57. Loc. cit.

58. Ibid., Donald Ross to James Evans, July 19, 1846.

enclosed a copy of his letter to Evans[59] together with sundry other documents. He informed them that his health was restored and his wife had safely passed through the labours of childbirth. His wife was still ill with a cough but the baby was doing fine. He followed this with a copy of his letter to Evans and then reported on his own activities in detail. He noted that he had preached in a barn in Red River with some success and that Adam Thom had informed him that the only legal marriages in the territory were conducted by the Roman Catholic and English Churches; but a law might be passed for the Methodists. Then he moved quickly back to the trial. He noted that he had met John MacKay in Red River and had been informed by him that Mr. Evans had offered him fifty pounds a year to continue as his servant but MacKay had come to an agreement with Rev. William Cockran. Strangely enough, MacKay told Mason the same story about the evidence that he had told to Evans. This is one of the few times that the two men agreed! Mason noted that Evans had written him a letter on March 28th wherein he stated that "he was unable to discover those alarming symptoms which I thought present in my disposition".[60] In order to clear up this allegation, Mason supplied a copy (in his <u>own</u> handwriting) of a doctor's certificate testifying to the seriousness of his condition when he had first arrived in Red River from Norway House. He then proceeded to deal with some of the charges which Evans had directed toward him at various times. He said that he only had time to write to

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59. <u>Supra</u>.

60. MRA272, <u>op. cit.</u>, William Mason to Secretaries, June 13, 1846.

his wife before the packet left but that he had sent Mr. Ross "a copy of Mr. Evans' letter and charges"[61] as he felt that Ross knew how false the charges were and also his name was mentioned frequently in them. In defending his own conduct further, he said that people might well ask why he did not communicate the matter of girls recanting the evidence which they gave at the trial. He said simply he had not heard of it and in any case, did not accept evidence obtained by promises or threats.[62]

This last was one of the cornerstones of Mason's case. He maintained that Evans forced the various parties in the trial and afterwards, to give evidence favouring him or to recant if they had already given evidence against him. Mason implied that similar tactics had been used against himself.[63]

He closed his letter with the usual pious note after going into more detail about the evidence:

> My case is a very difficult one. Eleven charges are preferred against me by my Superintendent who refused me a copy of the evidence upon which they are founded - but a consciousness of innocence upholds me to prosecute my way to heaven - May I be the happy instrument of getting many a benighted heathen there through Christianity.64

Around the same date, on the 15th of June, 1846, Sir George Simpson took pen in hand to write to his good friend Dr. Alder, after he (Simpson)

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61. MRA272, loc. cit.

62. Loc. cit.

63. Loc. cit.

64. Loc. cit.

had heard about the Evans affair. For sheer malice, Simpson's communications have little equal. He began by stating that he had not seen copies of the evidence taken by Mason at the trial but he was quite sure they were justified as he knew things which would make Evans' immediate recall necessary in any case.[65] Simpson had a list of four indiscretions, all crude in character, which, in his opinion, made Evans' dismissal a matter of justice. These were, in brief: First, Evans slept in a tent with a young Indian woman on the voyage from Red River to Norway House with no third party. Second, he often went on trips or walks with single girls to no particular destination. Third, "He threw down his own servant in his own garret in which they were alone at the time".[66] Fourth, he took liberties with another servant girl in his own house while she was in bed. At this point, Evans was alleged to have taught her what a husband would do to her![67]

Simpson went on to say that Evans made light of all this and at the same time used all types of force to make the various girls recant in their testimony against him. He closed by indicating that all this affected native confidence in the work of the mission, which "I still more sincerely regret".[68]

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65. HBC Arch., D4/68, f54-55d. Sir George Simpson to Dr. Alder, June 15, 1846. It should be noted here that Evans' enemies aimed at more than just his recall. If he was recalled, examined, and declared innocent, he might well return. He had to be damaged sufficiently to indicate that he was guilty beyond a doubt.

66. Ibid., Simpson to Dr. Alder, June 15, 1846.

67. Idem.

68. Idem.

This was bad enough, but the letter which Simpson addressed to Donald Ross from Red River on July 7th, 1846, was deadly in intent. The whole letter is quoted below in order to show exactly how the "Honourable Company" had come to view the Mission:

> My Dear Sir,
>
> With reference to another letter under this date respecting Mr. Evans, you must all have been very much delighted when that worthy took his departure (the sources conflict here); but in case he may keep his promise of visiting you at the expiration of two years, I think it is well we should be prepared to speak to him seriously on the question of Hassell's death. In reporting the case to me sometime after it occurred, I think there was a hint thrown out of suspicions existing somewhere that the poor man lost his life by foul means; but it made no impression on me at the time, from the belief that it was idle Indian rumour. From some observations of Mason's, however, before leaving Red River, which have come to my knowledge, it strikes me as well as Mr. Thom and Mr. Christie, that Hassell's death was not accidental but a deliberately planned murder. It is very desirable we should know whether intimacy existed between Evans and Hassell's wife and whether Hassell was aware of it: if the wife be still alive and within reach, I think you should get someone to question her closely respecting the intimacy when it commenced and how long it continued after Hassell's death. If you think that Mason has any suspicions on the subject, and that they appear at all well grounded, it would be well you should encourage him to come on here to confer with me, previous to my departure, on the subject of missions generally, without letting him suppose the point so particularly in view. It would also be well that, Henry Steinhauer, the local preacher should come along with him as one of his crews.
>
> Now that Mr. Evans is off, we must not allow his successor, whoever he may be, to play the Bishop at Norway House, where you alone must be prophet, priest and king-Mason merely acting under your advice. By having him in your hands, he may be useful to the trade and may, unquestionably better carry out the views of the Society than by acting on his own judgement and discretion in which I have little confidence: you must endeavour to render the mission as little burdensome as possible. Should Mason come to Red River, it must be his

> own act and at the expense of the mission, in fact we must relieve ourselves as far as possible from all outlay connected with that establishment. The extra pay to Evans' crew provisions, etc. must be charged to the Society, as, although the Company undertook to convey the missionaries up from Canada free of charge, they never contemplated that they would have sent such a worthless character as Evans, whom they would be under the necessity of recalling so soon.69

In a letter to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company dated August 23rd, 1846, Simpson mentioned the Evans' case. He stated that Evans had encouraged free trade among the Indians and also encouraged them to send their furs to Red River. Mason, however, appeared to favour the Company, and:

> I am in hopes we shall now be able to bring the Norway House Indians back to their former habits of trade; but should they persevere in sending their furs to Red River, we shall take steps to break up the Settlement at Norway House where an Indian village has been formed, the population of which amounts to 300 or 400 souls; and when dispersed over the country, as they were formerly, they will become more dependent upon us. The trade of....70

These two letters of George Simpson indicate the true position of the Company (by this period) in relation to its Wesleyan Mission stations. Actually, there was little point in having a Methodist cause in the west at all by 1846.

On September 23rd, 1846, William Mason wrote a long letter to the

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69. HBC Arch., ibid., f125d, Sir George Simpson to Donald Ross, July 7, 1846.

70. Ibid., f172-172d, Sir George Simpson to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, August 23, 1846.

Secretaries in answer to Evans' letter to him (which had been forwarded in copy to the Secretaries) of March 31st, 1846! His excuse in waiting so long was that he had been fully employed in more pressing matters. He noted that Mr. Evans had said that "I now place in your hands a copy of the enclosed charges"[71] but this was not true as they had been sent to him while he was at Red River and he had not received them until April 10th. He stated that he did not reply as Evans had sought no explanation or reply from him, "to my knowledge".[72] He went on to debate the validity of Evans' remarks in tremendous detail and closed by saying that he had to send home an account of the whole affair, unaltered by Evans, or worse would have occurred, as others knew the facts. He rejected Evans' implication that there had ever been any agreement between them on the matter of holding the evidence.[73]

Simpson wrote again to Alder in September of 1846, saying that his last letter about the charges against Evans had been incomplete and that, on returning from York Factory, he had questioned an Indian woman in the presence of several witnesses. The resulting charges were so grave that Simpson had written them down and they were enclosed.[74] The letter went on to state that Mr. Evans also misused his financial accounts and paid

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71. MRA272, op. cit., William Mason to Secretaries, September 23, 1846.

72. Loc. cit.

73. Loc. cit.

74. Ibid., Sir George Simpson to Dr. Alder, September [?], 1846. Unfortunately, the charges are no longer extant.

money to individuals for no good reason and this scandal was such that they were withholding payment on his notes. And worse yet:

> In illustration of the influence which Mr. Evans is alleged to have exercised over the females of his flock. I may cite the extraordinary fact, that, on apparently solid grounds, even his own wife is universally believed to have connived at proceedings which so immediately affected her own peace and comfort.75

He closed by stating that Evans kept up all aspects of his evil conduct right up to the time of his recall.[76]

The story still had not been brought to a close. On December 15th, 1846, Mason addressed a voluminous letter to the Secretaries. It was a full report of all his labours, including a detailed report of all the deaths among the Indians due to an epidemic. Some of the key witnesses at the trial died:

> Eliza Seeseep daughter of old Lahtamas. Eliza was the first in her class at school and as far as I know was a good girl, she lived as a servant at our house for about six months - from our house to Adam Moody's - and from there to Mr. Evans' - she was one of the mission girls and implicated in the reports of which you have heard - I did not believe it, Mr. Evans brought her forward to speak in his favour. She was at the time, living in his house. Though she had been dangerously ill during the winter she recovered in the spring, and was going about in June but the hope of her recovery was speedily vanished, she expired suddenly on the morning of the 30th of June - before she died she made the following statements to her mother, "It is all true what the girls say about Mr. Evans for I saw him one night go to Eliza Nagekeguanabs' bed and lie with her he came very slowly I heard him

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75. MRA272, loc. cit.

76. Loc. cit.

> lift up the latch and saw him come in, he stepped so lightly that....[77]

According to Mason, she did not tell this sooner because Evans told her not to tell. Mason also recorded that David Jones had died, but before he did so, he told many people, including Mr. Ross and Sir George Simpson, that Evans was guilty, although Evans had persuaded him to sign a paper to the contrary![78]

More important than all this, Mason enclosed a letter, written to himself by Henry B. Steinhauer, which was, in effect a recantation on Henry's part. Until this time, Henry had not condemned Evans but had tried to stay out of the controversy without success. Henry maintained that he could not believe the charges at first because he owed so much to Methodism and to Evans that he could not bear to believe them. Mason had, however, by a long conversation the night before, finally convinced Henry that he had to testify against Evans for the good of the mission. His letter is confused and full of the tribulations of his own mind. He does indicate that Evans used coercion to get support for himself but the letter is generally not very clear and Henry seems at many points to have been led, by his own admission, to see things in a different light. For instance, he says he did not realize that Evans was leading him astray until it was pointed out to him![79]

The ironic point of the whole affair was, that, on the 22nd of

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77. MRA272, ibid., William Mason to Secretaries, December 15, 1846.

78. Loc. cit.

79. Ibid., See enclosure.

November, 1846, James Evans had died suddenly at the age of forty-five after a speaking engagement in Hull.

Mason did not hear of this until April 19, 1847. The following day he addressed a letter to Donald Ross asking for his help. The Secretaries had informed him of the death of James Evans and had asked him to explain his own conduct on three points: One, why had he sent his documents to Red River in such haste? Two, why did he not allow Ross to read all the evidence at the time of the trial? Three, what did he say about Evans while he was in Red River?[80] Ross replied the following day from Norway House, April 21, 1847, providing Mason with a letter which justified Mason's conduct down to the last insignificant detail.[81] It was designed for the eyes of the Secretaries and is perhaps too excessive in its justification.

The last official word on the subject of James Evans came from Dr. Alder, and had been given to Sir George Simpson in a letter dated December 1st, 1846 from London.[82] Alder thanked Simpson for all his information about Evans but noted that he had, from Evans and Mason, a full report of everything, including the testimony of individuals at the trial as well as accounts of all the tortuous charges and counter charges. Dr. Beecham and Alder had examined all the evidence and had come to the conclusion

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80. MRA272, ibid., William Mason to Donald Ross, April 19, 1847.

81. Ibid., Donald Ross to William Mason, April 20, 1847.

82. Dr. Alder to Sir George Simpson, December 1, 1846. Typescript copy of unknown origin from the United Church Archives, Victoria College, University of Toronto.

that Evans was not guilty. The letter was very long, however, and it is useful to examine Alder's arguments. He noted that the Indian witnesses at the trial "show that they either have no regard for truth, or else they are utterly ignorant of the difference between truth and falsehood".[83] He showed how the testimony of people like Maggy varied from one moment to the next. Such conflicting evidence weighted against Evans' excellent record could have little real value. Evans had been guilty of treating Indian girls too much like his own daughter, but this was merely impropriety. Mason suffered, in Alder's view, from being too attached to the rule of Methodism and should have allowed Donald Ross to view the trial. Evans himself had impressed the Secretaries by his personal sincerity while in England. Alder hoped Simpson would not be offended by this frank statement of the opinion of the Missionary Committee, but he felt it to be right to speak out in that fashion. As for Evans, Alder stated: "....we may safely inscribe on his tomb 'not guilty'...."[84] in reference to the charges which his accusers had brought against him.

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83. Dr. Alder to Sir George Simpson, loc. cit.

84. Loc. cit.

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