

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ALBERTA

Amazing Race: Roman Catholic and Anglican Missionaries
In the Canadian Northwest 1818-1875

By Bart West

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EXAMINATION DETAILS:

CHAIR OF THE THESIS DEFENCE COMMITTEE.....DR. STEVEN MUIR

THESIS SUPERVISOR.....DR. DARREN SCHMIDT

READERS:

DR. JOHN MAXFIELD AND DR. TOLLY BRADFORD

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1 Introduction

1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Early in the nineteenth century, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church began a serious attempt to Christianize Canada's First Nations people living in the west and north of present-day Canada. At that time, the Church of England had a firm base in Newfoundland, the Maritimes, Lower and Upper Canada, ministering almost exclusively to immigrants from Britain. The Roman Catholics were well established in Lower Canada; but in addition to catering to the spiritual needs of the Catholic Church, had for over two hundred years sent out missionaries to carry the good news of the Gospel to native Canadians throughout the territory of the former New France and beyond.

From early in the seventeenth century, French and British pioneers had competed in the Canadian fur trade. Selected British merchant-adventurers were given a large land grant in Canada for which they formed a company known as the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). The company engaged in the fur trade, establishing fortified "factories" on the shores of Hudson's Bay, and waited for the native trappers to bring their pelts to them. The French, on the other hand, preferred to meet the natives on their own ground in the St Lawrence and Ohio River valleys, employing a large number of *coureurs des bois* as agents. After the conquest of New France, the British assumed control of the French fur industry. Another fur-trading company was formed in 1783, called the Northwest Trading Company (NWC) which challenged HBC's near monopoly of the trade. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the beaver that lived in the area which drained into the Hudson's Bay had been trapped to near extinction, causing the axis of the fur trade to move west.

Lord Selkirk, a Scottish laird and a major HBC shareholder, established a colony at the junction of the Assiniboine and Red rivers in 1811, near present-day Winnipeg. The colony, known as the Red River colony, became home to many of Selkirk's former Scottish tenants and served the interests of the HBC by commanding the trade route to eastern Canada, denying access by the NWC. Normal commercial competition between the two companies gave way to violent confrontation, culminating in the Seven Oaks massacre in 1817 in which members of NWC staff killed more than a score of colonists, including the governor. At this point, the British government intervened; the HBC and the NWC merged under the name and management of the HBC.¹ Selkirk asked the Roman Catholic bishop of Montreal for two priests to help restore peace and good order to the colony, which consisted mainly of Roman Catholics. The priests arrived in 1818, established a parish, and built a church. In 1822, the Roman Catholic diocese of the North-West was established, headed by Bishop Provencher.

A total of twenty-four secular priests were sent from Quebec between 1820 and 1840, but few stayed longer than five years because of the privations and loneliness of frontier life. When restrictions on the immigration of French priests were lifted after the Papineau rebellion, regular priests from the Order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate were sent to help Provencher in Christianizing the Northwest on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church.

British interest in missions emerged because of an evangelical revival of the eighteenth century. A small nucleus of evangelically-minded clergymen within the established Church of England effected a transformation of the dormant spirituality of the British people through dynamic preaching. John Wesley and George Whitefield, amongst others, concentrated their

¹ The actual date of the merger was in 1821, but the threat of forced liquidation reduced the overt hostilities between the companies.

efforts on the poor and those members of the working class most affected by the industrial revolution. Lady Huntingdon, a wealthy aristocrat, was co-opted into the revival movement, providing money and campaigning for spiritual renewal within the middle and upper classes of society. Over a relatively short period, individual piety became the norm, and public support for social reform succeeded, amongst other things, in bringing about the abolition of the slave trade by British subjects.

From the perspective of this paper, the most important result of this evangelical revival was in stimulating the need to obey the Commission: “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:20).”² Contrary to logic, this cause was not led by the leadership of the Church of England, but by evangelically minded clergy and laity who were members of both the established and the non-conformist churches. Pious Protestants founded several independent mission societies in the last two decades of the century, including the Church Missionary Society (CMS), a nominally non-denominational society, but one based on Anglican principles.³

The CMS selected, trained, and dispatched missionaries around the world, including Asia, Africa and, in 1820, to the Canadian northwest. In conjunction with the HBC, the CMS sent the Rev. John West to Red River to establish a school for the children of HBC staff and to assess the feasibility of launching missions to the First Nations people of the Northwest. West accomplished his mission. By 1823, he had built a church and a school across the river from the Catholic church of St. Boniface.

² This and subsequent biblical references are from the New International Version of the Bible, published in Great Britain in 1981.

³Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and its Work* (4 vols.; London: The Church Missionary Society, 1899), vol.1, 6

The dissertation that follows describes the history of the Christianization of the people of the Canadian northwest during the nineteenth century, in terms of a competition between Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries. As such, it forms an important part of the history of both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic churches in Canada. There are ample primary and secondary sources of information about the history of both denominations in the east, but with the possible exception of two chapters of John Webster Grant's *The Moon in Wintertime*, secondary sources before 1990 are scarce. In the early 1990s, a reassertion of First Nations sovereignty allowed the history of missions and colonisation from a Native perspective to come to the surface and some of the negative effects of residential schools' policy became the subject of a judicial enquiry.⁴ Several books commissioned by the Oblates appeared in the mid 1990s to tell the full history of their missions, rather than allow the negative facts revealed by the enquiry to stand alone. From an historical perspective, it is unfortunate that there was not a corresponding number of books published about the Anglican missions.

And yet the history of the Christianization process in the Northwest before those residential school policies were put into effect is a fascinating one and perhaps will garner more attention now that mistakes have been admitted, apologies given and a process of reconciliation is well under way.

Primary sources, such as those letters and reports written by missionaries, and the institutional records such as those of the missionary societies, are the foundation of historical knowledge. But they cannot provide information on long-term effects of the missions. Nor can they explain the motivations that drove individual missionaries and First Nations people to

⁴ John Webster Grant, *The Moon in Wintertime: Missionaries and Indians of Canadian Encounters since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

embrace Christianity the way they did. Winona Wheeler, the great granddaughter of the Native catechist, James Pratt, cites the huge contradiction between the interpretation of the character of her ancestor, as understood through oral family history, compared with Pratt's self-identity as revealed in his mission journal. After applying the techniques of literary criticism and allowing for the distortions in writing that are apparently common in the writings of Native people who feel oppressed by their colonial masters, Ms. Wheeler concluded that Pratt's diaries portrayed not his personal reality, but the messages that he believed his masters wanted to hear.⁵ While Ms. Wheeler specifically refers to the difficulty in interpreting Native narratives, there is a corresponding difficulty with interpreting the writings of anyone who seeks to influence a particular audience. (See para.1.2.3 below).

While this dissertation does not claim to answer these questions, it does offer some insights into the role of the fur trade, the pre-existing Christian sensibilities of the Native people--particularly those of the Métis—and the methods used by the missionaries in the Christianization process. By choosing a period before the effects of government influence and the needs of European settlers affected the outcomes of the missions, this dissertation offers a unique addition to an understanding of the foundations of the Roman Catholic and the Anglican churches in Western Canada.

Geographically, the dissertation is set between the western border of present-day Ontario in the east and the Rocky Mountains in the west; and between the forty-ninth parallel in the south and the Arctic Ocean in the north. Chronologically, it is set between 1818, when the Roman

⁵ Winona Wheeler, "The Journal and Voices of a Church of England Native Catechist: Askenootow (Charles Pratt), 1851-1884," in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History* (2nd ed; Jennifer H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds.; Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2003), pp. 237-261.

Catholic missionaries first came to the Northwest, and 1875, when Europeans began to settle the lands in significant numbers. Scholastically, it is set within the bounds of the history of the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Canada.

1.2 THE DISSERTATION AND ITS LITERARY CONTEXT

Literary and historical works about missionaries have undergone significant changes since the eighteenth century when the subject of this dissertation began. A dramatic religious revival in Britain and North America had occurred in an age that was otherwise characterized by horrors of revolution and war. In that context, missionaries were seen as messengers of an emerging British Empire determined to make the world a better place by shining the light of Christ on those who sat in the darkness of heathenism. Missionaries were saintly heroes rescuing noble savages by leading them by the hand and transforming their lifestyle to conform closely to that of the Europeans. Alternatively, the native people could be portrayed as untrustworthy barbarians who delighted in torturing and martyring missionaries.

Times changed. Two world wars changed the old world order; the western European empires crumbled and those values and beliefs that had sustained individual and social loyalty to religious denominations gave way to a more secularist society.

In our own present world, the nineteenth-century missions to the Northwest are a relatively insignificant item in the history of Christianity. Stephen Neill, a British historian and a minister of the Anglican Church, wrote *The History of Christian Missions* in 1984 and devoted a few pages about the missions in the eastern regions of Canada, but very little space about

missions to the Northwest.⁶ In the late 1970s when the First Nations began to assert their sovereignty, historians began to examine the effects of missionary work more objectively. John Webster Grant's *Moon of Wintertime* provided a detailed account of the changes that had taken place, but had difficulty in segregating the effects of religion from those of commercialisation.⁷ J. R. Miller's *The Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens* documented the deterioration of the relationship between the First Nations people and white society caused by successive Canadian governments that have sought to assimilate and marginalize Native people.⁸ Miller's book, which was first published before the story of widespread abuse of Native children in residential schools was brought to the attention of the public, has become a classic since its publication in 1989 and has been substantially revised through three editions.⁹ Murphy and Perin's *History of Christianity in Canada* was published in 1996 as a survey of the development of religious life in the whole of Canada. Their work included descriptions of the missions of all denominations that were involved in the Canadian Northwest, but only mentioned the residential schools issue in a brief epilogue. "The Oblates were part of a process that sought to undermine the identity and culture of the First Nations. . . ."¹⁰ (alongside other factors such as alcoholism and economic pressures). As with much of the work done by contemporary scholars, the authors over emphasized the damage done by missionaries and ignored the free choices that Native people made when deciding whether to accept Christianity. The residential schools issue refocused attention on the

⁶ Stephen Neill, *The History of Christian Missions* (2nd ed.; London: Penguin, 1996, 1984).

⁷ John Webster Grant, *The Moon in Wintertime*.

⁸ J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (3rd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

⁹ N. Christie & M. Gauvreau, *Christian Churches and Their Peoples, 1840-1965: A Social History of Religion in Canada* (Toronto University of Toronto Press, 2010).

¹⁰ Roberto Perin, "French Speaking Canada from 1840," in *History of Christianity in Canada* (ed. Terence Murphy and Roberto Perin; Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 1996), 217.

role of missionaries in Canada and a series of books were devoted to the topic. Some of those books that were commissioned by the Roman Catholic Order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, were aimed at providing an objective history of the Oblates, and are dealt with in the next section.

More recently, in 2010, Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau wrote a social history of religion, which characterized Canada as a whole during the period of this dissertation as one in which the traditional loyalties to the two mainstream churches in Canada were successfully challenged by a population anxious to follow their own beliefs and religious practices. A short section on the missions to the Northwest emphasized the role of the Métis in spreading the Gospel informally and of the Native people making their own decisions about their spiritual direction.¹¹ Otherwise, the *Church Mission Society and World Christianity 1799 -1999*, written in 2000 and edited jointly by Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley, provides a modern perspective of the history of the CMS.

1.2.1 Review of Sources Used in the Thesis

The guiding principle of this study is to provide an unbiased, objective analysis of the evangelizing efforts of the Anglicans and the Catholics. As can be seen by the review of the general Canadian religious literature, conclusions about the role and the effect of missions in the Northwest depend very much on the period when any given work is consulted. However, there is another bias depending on the denomination of the author. Authors are well aware of this bias and consequently tend to write only about their own denomination to the exclusion of the others. This is as true of the writers of the “primary” missionary literature as it is of the writers of

¹¹ N. Christie and M. Gauvreau, *Christian Churches and Their Peoples*.

secondary literature. Reports, personal letters, even financial accounts were written by people who had a vested interest in presenting the most optimistic (or sometimes the most pessimistic) picture of their situation.

The use of a comparative approach is a useful way of forcing a certain amount of objectivity on the writer. For example it is not possible to claim that superiority of the Roman Catholic missionaries' austere lifestyle (as Choquette does in his *Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*) without admitting that the more extravagant Anglican missionaries produced remarkably similar results in terms of Native conversions. Nor is it possible to dismiss the Catholic Thibault's mass baptisms of Native people at Île-à-la-Crosse as being far-fetched and lacking in the educational component normally accorded to the sacrament by both Anglicans and Catholics (See page 44 of the dissertation), without acknowledging similar claims by the Anglican missionary, Kirkby, in the Yukon (page 93).

Comparing the works of Duchaussois, the most prolific recorder of the acts of the Roman Catholic priests, nuns and lay brothers in the Canadian Northwest, with his near contemporary Eugene Stock, author of the *History of the Church Missionary Society* provides a good illustration. Duchaussois was an active Oblate missionary in the Canadian Northwest between 1890 and 1915, had access to all the documents produced in the period of the study, and knew many of the Oblate participants personally. Although he could be regarded as an apologist for the Roman Catholic Church, his works are valuable in terms of the factual information contained. His three books on the Oblate priests, lay brothers, and the Grey Nuns have been

consulted and cited extensively in the paper, but not for any of his expressed opinions.¹²

Eugene Stock, was as devoted to Anglicanism as Duchaussois was to Catholicism. Stock had been associated with the CMS for thirty years prior to the publication of his works in 1899 and was well acquainted with the strategic and day-to-day operations of the Society during the period of this study. Notwithstanding the large number of countries served by the CMS, Stock still provided a large amount of data about the missions to the Canadian Northwest. Having served for some time as the General Secretary of the society, Stock was well aware of the social, political, and financial pressures under which the society operated. He was unashamedly an advocate of Protestant values, attitudes and beliefs, though that did not prevent him from expressing harsh criticism of the Church for her intransigence with respect to overseas missions: “It is a humiliating thought that this one great Commission which the Church’s risen Lord gave her to execute is the very thing she has not done.”¹³ Stock cannot be accused of ignoring the opposing side. Along with many English writers of Victorian history, Stock carried an almost visceral hatred of the Roman Catholics.

Blackie’s eight-volume *Comprehensive History of England*, published at the same time as Stock’s *History of the Church Missionary Society*, shares the same bias, reflecting a prejudice shared by much of the population at that time.¹⁴ Recognizing this prejudice, the work is otherwise an excellent source of information. It makes a greater use of state papers than any books consulted in the bibliography of this paper and provides a good perspective of nineteenth-

¹² Pierre Duchaussois, *Les Soeurs Grises dans le Extreme-Nord: Cinquante Ans de Missions* (1917); *Mid Fire and Ice* (1917); *Hidden Apostles: Our Lay Brother Missionaries* (1937).

¹³ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol.1, 5.

¹⁴ Blackie’s *Comprehensive History of England: Civil, Military, Religious, Intellectual and Social: from the Earliest Period to the Jubilee of Victoria, Queen and Empress* (8 vols.; London: Blackie’s, 1896). Note: Neither authors nor editors are named.

century British attitudes and beliefs. A similar source of factual information from the late nineteenth century is the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*.¹⁵ Unlike Blackie's *History of England*, the authors of the articles are named, but all the articles bare the stamp of the official censor, so anything at all critical of the Roman Catholic faith is excluded.

Other primary materials used in the study have included letters and reports housed in the Alberta Public Archives (A.P.A.). Much of the CMS documentation pertaining to the missions to the Northwest has a microfiche record and the Oblates have their records under a dedicated (and very helpful) custodian. Project Canterbury, an initiative by the Anglican Church to make non-sensitive records in its archives available on the Internet, has proved to be an excellent source of letters and journals and books written in the period.¹⁶ For example, an account of John West's three-year stay in Red River is available and is complemented by a related work by West himself.¹⁷ Bishop Mountain, the Anglican Bishop of Quebec, wrote a short history of the activities of the CMS missionaries, together with a journal of his visit to Red River in 1844. The visit took place immediately before the advent of the Oblates into Western Canada and at the point where the Anglican missions began to take on a diocesan character. Bishop Anderson's account of his journey to visit to Moosenee in his journal published as *The Net in the Bay* is also available through Project Canterbury.¹⁸ The account provides a glimpse of a contemplative man who prefers the wonders of creation to the "slings and arrows" of administration. The bishop's

¹⁵ *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*. Cited 15th February 2013. Online: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>

¹⁶ Project Canterbury is the on-line home of Anglican texts, with emphasis on classical Anglican documents expressing the Catholic identity of Anglicanism. Online: <http://anglicanhistory.org/canada/index.html>

¹⁷ John West, *The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, 1824* (London: S.R Publishers Limited: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966).

¹⁸ David Anderson, *The Net in the Bay, or Journal of a Visit to Moose and Albany* (London: Thomas Hatchford, 1854).

own account contrasts with that of Frits Pannekoek who places Anderson always in the centre of controversy in Red River.¹⁹ Henry Cody's *The Apostle of the North* is probably as hagiographic an account of the works of William Bompas as it is possible to produce, but nevertheless has been a useful guide in establishing the facts.²⁰

A valuable primary source relating to the Roman Catholic mission in Red River prior to 1830 is Grace Lee Nute's *Documents Relating to the Northwest Mission*. Letters to and from Bishop Provencher, Bishop Plessis, Lord Selkirk, and Catholic priests have been collected in a single volume, all of which are accompanied by a very competent English translation.²¹

1.2.2 Secondary Sources

With respect to secondary sources, the most useful was by Philip Carrington, a former Anglican archbishop of Quebec. Carrington wrote a history of the Anglican Church in Canada in 1963, in which he gave an excellent, though brief, account of the missionary activities in the Northwest.²² His insights were valuable, coming as they did from the highest official in the Anglican Church, and his work is refreshingly free of a negative attitude towards other denominations. A similar work on the Catholic side is by Donat Lavasseur, an Oblate himself, who wrote the *Histoire des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculé: Essai de synthèse* (1986).²³ His work is certainly not a hagiographic account of the missionaries, but neither is it a totally critical piece of work. Like Duchaussois, he says very little about attempts at

¹⁹ Frits Pennakoek, "David Anderson," Dictionary of Canadian Biography On Line. [cited 15th February 2013]. Online: www.dictionarycanadianbiography.ca

²⁰ H.A. Cody, *An Apostle of the North: Memoirs of the Right Reverend William Carpenter Bompas* (1908, rpr., Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002).

²¹ Grace Lee Nute, *Documents Relating to Northwest Missions, 1815-1827* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1942).

²² Philip Carrington, *The Anglican Church in Canada: A History by Philip Carrington, Formerly Archbishop of Quebec* (Toronto Collins, 1963).

²³ Donat Lavasseur, *Histoire des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculé: Essai de synthèse* (2 vols. Montreal: Maison Provinciale, 1986).

Christianization by other denominations. More recently, Robert Coutts has provided a modern perspective on the Anglican Church in Red River in his brief but comprehensive work, *The Road to the Rapids*.²⁴ Complementing Coutts' work is a compilation of essays collected and edited by Barry Ferguson under the title of *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada*.²⁵ Among other essays, one by George van der Goes Ladd, entitled "Father Cockran and His Children: Poisonous Pedagogy on the Banks of the Red," represents an attempt to apply the techniques of psychohistory to one of the notable Anglican missionaries.

Interest in Canadian mission activity soared in the 1980's and 90s with the revelations of the sexual and physical abuses associated with some of the residential schools. Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Churches had joined in an alliance with the Canadian Government to provide health and educational services to people of the First Nations. Not only did the conduct of individuals come under scrutiny, but a whole debate about attempts at assimilation and the suppression of the Native culture was initiated. Anxious to make its history transparent to the public, the Oblates in Canada commissioned several works to provide the full history of the Order in Canada since its debut in 1841. Martha McCarthy wrote *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to Dene, 1847-1921*,²⁶ which was also published in 1995 as the second of a three-volume series. Her work is an unbiased account of missionary activities in the northern area covered in my dissertation. A chapter in the book provides some information about the Anglican missionary strategy and a detailed account of

²⁴ Robert Coutts, *The Road to the Rapids: Nineteenth-Century Church and Society at St. Andrew's Parish, Red River* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000).

²⁵ Barry Ferguson ed., *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada, 1820-1970* (Winnipeg: Hignell Printing Limited, 1991).

²⁶ Martha McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to Dene, 1847-1921* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press and Western Canadian Publishers, 1995).

attempts by both contestants to wrest control of “territory” for themselves in the Mackenzie valley. Raymond J. A. Huel’s *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and Métis*, published in 1996, was the third volume in the series.²⁷ What separates Huel’s work from those of the other two authors is that he provides a view of the Christianization process from the perspective of the First Nations people who were on the receiving end. Huel’s research, based on oral history, challenges many of the “facts” that have come from accounts by the missionaries.

1.2.3 Analogies

Robert Choquette’s *The Oblate Assault on Canada’s Northwest*, which appeared in 1996, is an exception in that as well as describing the tactics employed by the Oblates it does so in the context of competition with the Anglican missionaries.²⁸ The title of the work invokes a strong militaristic tone with which Choquette projected an image of a very well-organized army of dedicated Oblates systematically selecting and taking territory in the face of a somewhat decadent and poorly organized group of Anglicans. Much of the work is well organized and quite convincing, but it is from the same “stable” as the three-volume series described above and carries the military analogy further than the facts would seem to allow. Certainly, analogies are useful devices for understanding complex situations like the Christianization of the Northwest, but it is my position that a *race* between two reasonably matched teams with the same goal presents the clearest and most easily understood analogy. In a race, the two competitors strive for a common goal and use all fair means to win. Commentators after the race analyse the teams in terms of their origins, the handicaps or advantages with which they entered the race, the way they conducted themselves during the race, and how they took advantage of situations or failed

²⁷ Raymond, J.A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and Métis* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press and Western Canadian Publishers, 1996).

²⁸ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995)

to grasp opportunities and so on. This is not to say that Choquette's analogy is not a useful one. As will be demonstrated later in the dissertation, Bishop Taché's grasp of logistics, strategic planning, and excellent leadership are all those characteristics that go to make successful generals. However, the title and indeed the characteristic of his work is about an assault, which implies armed conflict between two deadly enemies. Certainly, there was a competition to save as many souls as possible, but it was only in the Mackenzie Valley in the 1860s that missionaries of the two denominations came into near contact, and then the only similarity to military action was in a series of marches and counter marches to attempt to be the first in a particular territory. The danger of using a misleading analogy is that one can carry it too far and miss some of the essential elements, which I believe to be the case with Choquette's work. The analogy of a race, particularly that between two commercial enterprises vying for market share, provides a much closer fit.

1.3 THESIS STATEMENTS

Based on the foregoing, and the study made of relevant primary and secondary sources discussed above, this paper will provide a brief but comprehensive account of how the two missions worked in competition with one another to Christianize the people of the Canadian Northwest in the nineteenth century. Separate narrative accounts of the missions, including brief biographical sketches of some of the more notable characters, will be given as Chapters Three and Four. The information contained in them, together with material about the fur trade and the First Nations people of the Northwest, forms the basis for a critical analysis in Part Five.

The analysis will be directed towards two main areas: the role that the Hudson's Bay Company's policies, practices, and employees played in the missions, and characteristics of the organization of the missions that had a significant effect on the overall outcome. A third

objective of the analysis is to suggest the foundation of the somewhat un-Christian opinions that each side had of the other and show how those attitudes wasted resources and sowed confusion in the minds of the First Nations people.

2 Factors Common to Roman Catholic and Anglican Missions

2.1 THE FUR TRADE

2.1.1 Introduction

No history of the Canadian Northwest since 1600 is complete without reference to the fur trade. It was the fur trade that opened up the west, provided transportation into the interior, and introduced most of the indigenous population to European goods, customs, and to some extent European religion. The fur trade established the hundreds of trading points that facilitated the partnership between the traders and the indigenous people of Canada and indirectly helped the process in which many First Nations people abandoned their nomadic life in favour of a settled one.

It was the insatiable European demand for fur in the sixteenth century that drove hunters to trap the European beaver, *castor fibis*, to extinction. “When French traders first came back to Europe with pelts from the European beaver’s first cousin, *castor canadiensis*, a whole industry was born.”²⁹

2.1.2 The Hudson’s Bay Company

The Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) came into being in the late seventeenth century, when King Charles II granted a charter to a group of entrepreneurs anxious to profit from the resources known to be in abundance in Canada. Quoting from the Hudson Bay’s on-line archives: “The charter of 1670 made the Hudson’s Bay Company ‘true and absolute Lordes and Proprietors’ of Rupert’s Land,’ the vast drainage area of the Hudson Bay basin.” This is equal to almost a million and a half square miles of western and northern Canada, more than 40% of the modern nation. Charles believed that the land was his to give because no other Christian

²⁹ James Raffan, *Emperor of the North: Sir George Simpson and the Remarkable Story of the Hudson’s Bay Company* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2007), 71.

monarch had claimed it.³⁰ Initially the company built trading posts at the mouths of the rivers flowing into Hudson's Bay, such as York Factory and Mosinee, in the expectation that the Native people would bring their furs to the trading posts. The French, on the other hand, employed traders who met with the Native people in their own milieu. The traders learned the languages and customs of the various tribes with whom they did business, and many of them married Native women. So great was the number of men involved in the fur trade that a large and distinctive race of people came into existence. These people, known as the Métis, were equally at home in both a French and an aboriginal milieu, and were therefore ideally suited to work as *voyageurs* and *coureurs des bois*. The *voyageurs* navigated the rivers and lakes of the hydraulic highways that connected eastern Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, the Hudson's Bay, the Great Plains of the mid-west, and the Arctic Ocean.

2.1.3 Fur Traders as Carriers of the Christian Message

The *coureurs des bois* were the traders who provided the interface with the various tribes and bands of the First Nations; they knew the languages and the customs of the people and were trusted by them. In 1681, it was estimated that there were 500 Métis engaged in the French fur trade; by the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were at least 800. Most, if not all, followed the Roman Catholic version of Christianity.³¹ When La Verendrye, a French Canadian military officer, fur-trader and explorer, set out on an expedition to discover the "sea in the west" in 1731, he employed *voyageurs* to handle the boats and *coureurs des bois* to act as mediators with the tribes along the way, enabling him to accomplish his "extraordinary feat of exploration and pacification."³²

The effect of these incursions into areas in which the Native people had not been exposed to European influence was far reaching. When Thomas E. Jesset wrote about contact in the Oregon, he could easily have been speaking of the Canadian Northwest:

³⁰ "Hudson's Bay Company Archives," [cited 24th February 2013]. Online: http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/about/hbc_history.html

³¹ Guy, Mary-Rousseliere, "Exploration and Evangelization of the Great Canadian North : Viking Coureurs des Bois, and Missionaries." *Arctic*. vol. 37, no. 4 (December 1964), 596.

³² Guy, Mary-Rousseliere, "Exploration and Evangelization of the Great Canadian North," 597.

The British and American fur traders who came to the Oregon Country cared only for the fantastic profits to be made from trading with the Indians. They sought merely to exploit not to colonize. Their impact had two effects upon the natives. It raised their standard of living by the introduction of new tools and materials, and it caused them to question the effectiveness of their own religion and to develop an interest in the white man's religion. For to the Indian [sic] religion meant power; and the obviously superior level of white man's culture meant that his gods must be greater.³³

This interest was translated into action when they sent messages to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions asking for a teacher.³⁴ In fact, when George Simpson visited Fort George in 1825, he decreed that services should be held in the trading posts on a regular basis in accordance with the Anglican Book of Common Prayer.³⁵ On behalf of the CMS, Simpson asked for two boys from Oregon to be educated at Red River; Spokane Garry and Kootenay Pelly arrived there in 1825 and after four and a half years returned home armed with a good knowledge of Christianity. According to Jessett, they told their own and neighbouring tribes about what they knew of Christianity: "Such was the breakdown of the Native religion that the tribes immediately adopted the simple Christianity they expounded."³⁶

2.1.4 The North West Company

After the defeat of the French in Quebec in 1758, the spoils of the fur trade reverted to the English. Several independent fur-trading companies continued to trade with Natives in eastern Canada, but during the American Revolution the British government forbade cross-border trading. Several companies were liquidated, but the survivors amalgamated to form the

³³ Thomas E. Jessett, "Christian Missions to the Indians of the Oregon," *Church History*, vol. 28, No. 2 (Jun., 1959): 147-156.; Cambridge University Press for the American Society of Church History), 148. [Cited 15th October 2012]. Online: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3161454>

³⁴ Thomas E. Jessett, "Christian Missions to the Indians of the Oregon," 148.

³⁵ Thomas E. Jessett, "Christian Missions to the Indians of the Oregon," 148.

³⁶ Thomas E. Jessett, "Christian Missions to the Indians of the Oregon," 149.

North West Company (NWC) in 1783. The company's headquarters were in Montreal and they took advantage of a wave of Scottish immigration to augment their field staff, which were largely francophone Métis. Like their francophone counterparts, the Scottish traders married Native women, and a new division of anglophone Métis came into existence. The NWC took over much of the French fur trade and continued to meet the Native people on their own ground. As the NWC's operating territory did not at first overlap those of the HBC, the latter ignored the new company, but as the NWC's operations moved west, the HBC's business was recognizably affected. The race between the two companies and the tactics used foreshadowed the race between the Roman Catholics and Anglicans:

Unlike the sedentary Baymen, the men of the North West Company were constantly on the move. The Nor'Westers, as they were known, lived, wintered and worked mostly to the west of Hudson's Bay. Vigorous competition for the fur trade took them over the Rocky Mountains and even to the Arctic Ocean. Most of the key explorers of these regions - Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser, David Thompson and Peter Pond - were Nor'Westers. They showed their disdain for HBC's Charter rights by building their forts right beside those of HBC at strategic trading points. One such location was Edmonton where HBC's fort and the NWC's Fort Augustus were neighbours.³⁷

From that time until the forced merger of the two companies in 1821, a state of virtual war existed. The HBC scored a major victory when one of its principal shareholders, Lord Selkirk, was granted a huge block of land at the junction of the Assiniboine and Red rivers in 1811 for the foundation of a colony. The acquisition included a thriving pemmican-production facility run by the Métis, but more significantly, it allowed the HBC to control the hydraulic trade route to Montreal, the North West Company's destination for its furs. The NWC shipped its furs through Montreal, but the HBC used the shorter route offered by trans shipping their furs at York Factory on the Hudson's Bay.

³⁷ Hudson Bay Company Heritage Site:[cited 6th January 2013]. Online: <http://www.hbcheritage.ca/hbcheritage/history/acquisitions/furtrade/nwc.asp>

In 1816, Miles Macdonell, the original governor of the colony, and his men were attacked by a large contingent of North Westerners. Rather than incur bloodshed, Macdonell surrendered the fort and was taken prisoner to Montreal. Much of the infrastructure of the colony was destroyed and the HBC employees fled to Pembina, about 90 miles south of Red River, to found a temporary settlement there. The HBC appointed a new governor, Robert Semple, who arrived later in the year with a large number of settlers from Sutherland in Scotland.

The former governor, Miles Macdonnell wrote to Bishop Joseph Octave Plessis in April of 1816, reporting the problems of the previous year and announcing that Lord Selkirk would be visiting the ravaged colony the following year. Selkirk would “see the foundation of his colony laid on a permanent basis; with authority civil & from the Crown & a force sufficient, I trust to put down all opposition to his just rights.”³⁸ After this declaration, Macdonnell came to the point of his letter:

You know, Monseignor, that there can be no stability in government of States or Kingdoms unless religion is made the corner stone. . . . We have many catholics [*sic*] from Scotland and Ireland and besides those Canadians already with us. . . . There are hundreds of free Canadians who have families with Indian women, all of whom are in the most deplorable state for want of spiritual aid. A vast religious harvest might also be made among the natives round us, whose language is that of the Algonquins of this country, and who are very tractable and well disposed considering the corruption of the morals introduced among them by opposition traders in the free indulgence of spirituous liquors and other corruptive habits.³⁹

Lord Selkirk himself followed up with a letter to Bishop Plessis reinforcing Macdonnell’s letter and suggesting that a permanent mission be established at Red River. Plessis replied to

³⁸ Letter from Miles Macdonnell to Msgr. Plessis, dated April 4th 1816, in *Documents Relating to Northwest Missions, 1815-1827* (ed. and trans. Grace Lee Nute; Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1942), 4.

³⁹ Letter from Lord Selkirk to Msgr. Plessis, dated April 4th 1816, in *Documents Relating to Northwest Missions*, 6.

Lord Selkirk's letter almost immediately by offering to send Fr. Pierre Antoine Tabeau, the Chaplain of the General Hospital of Quebec, on a reconnaissance mission later that year, after which he (Plessis) would assess the feasibility of establishing a permanent mission.⁴⁰ On April 20,th 1816, Bishop Plessis commissioned Fr. Tabeau as an observer and an itinerant missionary with all the necessary powers to administer the sacraments outside the boundaries of the diocese and: "To secure for religious purposes a thousand or more acres of land, if possible as a free concession."⁴¹ He was to go to Red River in the canoe arranged by Selkirk in late May or early June.

However, events in Red River had taken a turn for the worse. In June of 1816, Cuthbert Grant, a Nor'westerner, led an armed party of more than seventy Métis and attacked Governor Semple and twenty of his men, apparently unarmed, at Seven Oaks. Semple and all his men were killed in the massacre. Because of the on-going "war," Tabeau recommended against the establishment of a permanent mission, but Plessis went ahead and sent two missionaries there in 1818. Evidently, Selkirk considered that the presence of the missionaries would not only solve the problem of civil unrest by the Catholic majority, but would likely attract Protestant missionaries, which in turn would lead to greater permanence for his colony.⁴² Vera Fast cites a letter from Lord Selkirk to John Bird in Red River: "The company's protestant servants might perhaps be disposed to view this establishment with jealousy, if they do not consider that it may serve as an example and encourage their friends in England to send out a Protestant clergyman

⁴⁰ Letter from Msgr. Plessis to Lord Selkirk, dated April 4th 1816, in *Documents Relating to Northwest Missions*, 6.

⁴¹ Letter from Msgr. Plessis to Christ Master, Pierre Antoine Tabeau, April 20th 1816, in *Documents Relating to Northwest Missions, 1815-1827* (ed.: Grace Lee Nute; trans. Rev. Wm. Busch; Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1942), 10.

⁴² Vera Kathrin Fast, "The Protestant Missionary and Fur Trade Society: Initial Contact in the Hudson's Bay Territory," 1820-1850" (PhD Diss., University of Manitoba, 1983), 37.

likewise.”⁴³ As a major shareholder of the HBC, Selkirk was in a position to make his prediction come to pass. The first of many Anglican missionaries would arrive two years later as we will see in Chapter Four.

Hostilities between the companies ceased in Red River, but continued in the Athabasca region until 1822, when the two companies amalgamated. The HBC assumed the position of managing partner for the joint enterprise.

2.1.5 The Transportation System

The Hudson’s Bay Company was responsible for the civil administration of the whole of the lands that drained into the Hudson’s Bay. They also had *de facto* jurisdiction of territories that drained into the Arctic Ocean and a virtual monopoly of the fur trade of the whole of these lands. The HBC controlled the transportation system, which used the hydraulic highway of rivers traversing the interior of the country, which enabled access from the St Lawrence and the Hudson’s Bay to the Rocky Mountains in the west and the Arctic Ocean in the north. The company hired permanent voyageurs to navigate freighter canoes, which were a larger version of the traditional birch bark canoes that the Native people had developed. Each year at the beginning of May, the voyageurs assembled convoys of canoes to travel from Montreal to the interior, carrying supplies to the various trading posts. They returned with the pelts of fur-bearing animals for trans-shipment to England in the fall. The most frequently used route was from Montreal via the Ottawa and Mattawa rivers to Lake Nippissing, thence by way of the French River to Lake Huron and Lake Superior. From Fort William on the northwest shore of Lake Superior the route continued via the Kaministiquie River to Lake of the Woods, the Winnipeg

⁴³ Letter from Lord Selkirk to John Bird in Red River, dated 24th May 1824, cited by Vera Kathrin Fast in “The Protestant Missionary and Fur Trade Society,” 37.

River, and finally to Red River. The journey was 1,400 miles and included fifty rapids and eighty portages to traverse. Depending on the weather, the journey took approximately sixty days.

With the large number of voyageurs involved, the length of the trip, and the amount of food consumed in transit, it was not surprising that the travel was expensive; in 1848, Bishop Mountain's round trip visitation to Red River from Montreal cost nearly £450, the equivalent of three-year's salary for an Anglican missionary.⁴⁴ In the 1860s a railway connected New York to St Paul's in Minnesota, reducing the travel time from Montreal to Red River to an average of twenty-eight days.

The HBC was controlled by a Board of Directors in London, some of whom were also members of the board of the Anglican CMS. At the beginning of the study period, the board had been made acutely aware of the East India Company's public relations nightmare over their alleged abuse of native Indians and the denial of access by missionaries to India.⁴⁵ The HBC Board had no intention of facing similar charges. They decided to appoint a chaplain and sent instructions to their in-country staff to respect and assist missionaries in any way possible. Notwithstanding the board members were Anglicans in good standing, the HBC board did not direct their employees to give preferential treatment to the Protestant missionaries over their

⁴⁴ Based on Rev. David Jones reported salary of £150 per annum, in Letter from Rev. David Jones to the General Secretary, CMS, July 24th 1824 in A.P.A.: CMS, C.1/L.1 Reel A-75 pp.10-14.

⁴⁵ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society* (London: The Church Missionary Society, 1899), vol. 1, 103.

Roman Catholic counterparts. Indeed the HBC management and staff maintained a careful neutrality in their dealings with all missionaries in the Northwest.⁴⁶

2.1.6 Governor George Simpson

In 1821 the Board turned over the day-to-day management of the company's operations to Governor George Simpson, who from his biography appears to have been an autocratic leader who instilled a mixture of fear and respect in all who knew him.⁴⁷ Simpson had a personal dislike of missionaries, whatever their denomination. In his view the missionaries were attempting to change the Natives in a way that was detrimental to the operations and profits of the fur trade.⁴⁸ Mindful of the need to be seen helping in the Christianization process, he instructed his staff to treat all missionaries equally. Nevertheless, he managed, through intimidation and diplomacy, to ensure that the missionaries were contained within the confines of Red River where he could exercise effective control over them by granting or withholding travel and subsistence privileges. When Rev. John West dared to challenge Simpson's control and to openly criticize HBC policy, he was quietly removed and replaced by Rev. David Jones, a man of a much more accommodating disposition.

The twenty-year period when few attempts were made by the missionaries beyond Red River were not totally wasted as far as the Christianization process was concerned. The *voyageurs* and *coureurs des bois* who regularly transited through Red River *en route* to trade

⁴⁶ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 166.

⁴⁷ James Raffan, *Emperor of the North: Sir George Simpson and the Remarkable Story of the Hudson's Bay Company*, (Toronto: Harper Collins, 2007).

⁴⁸ Robert J. Coutts, *The Road to the Rapids* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), 70.

with native tribes in the Northwest, spread the knowledge of Christianity by word of mouth.

Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau comment:

The larger significance of the Red River contact zone lay in its role as a communications centre of the fur trade, with a large mixed-blood community to serve as cultural intermediaries for the transmission of Christianity to areas further west and north. Indeed, the period before 1860 was characterized by considerable Native initiative in the appropriation of Christianity without the apparatus of European clergy.⁴⁹

In the 1840s when the pressure of the migration of Native peoples to Red River made it expedient for the HBC to agree to the opening of more missions, the Governor had another instrument of control. As dependency of the Native people on the fur trade increased, more and more people chose to live near the trading posts on a year-round basis. By establishing their missions at or near the trading posts, the missionaries had a static congregation and were able to enjoy some of the comforts of the post. Simpson tried with some success to prevent both denominations from competing over the same territory because of the perceived threat to civil peace.⁵⁰

2.2 THE FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE OF THE NORTHWEST

2.2.1 Principal First Nations in the Northwest

The map at Fig. 1 shows the distribution of the First Nations at the time of European contact. When Alexandre Taché arrived in the Northwest, he described the various First Nations who lived in the Canadian Northwest. The Blackfoot, Assiniboine, and the Sioux lived along the southern borders. Further north in present-day Manitoba and Saskatchewan were the Saulteaux and the Cree; in an area bounded in the north at latitude 67⁰, in the west by the Rockies, and in

⁴⁹ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *Christian Churches and Their Peoples, 1840-1965*, 115.

⁵⁰ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 166.

the east by the Hudson's Bay, were the Chipewyans or Déné, which included the Caribou Eaters, Beaver, Sarcees, Dogribs, Yellowknives, Slavey, Hares, and Loucheux. North of 67⁰ were the Inuit and the Algonquin.⁵¹ The three tribes that comprised the Blackfoot of the southern prairies were the most warlike of the nations. They regularly engaged in inter-tribal warfare and proved highly resistant to efforts by the missionaries to Christianize them. Up to the 1870s the buffalo was an abundant and constant source of food, clothing and shelter, so the Blackfoot had not engaged in trade with the Europeans to the same extent as other tribes. While the Blackfoot frightened many of the missionaries by their hostile disposition, the Oblate Fr. Lacombe achieved a number of converts for the Roman Catholics by preaching the gospel while travelling with them and engaging in their lifestyle.

2.2.2 First Nations' Religious Beliefs

The First Nations people all had a set of religious beliefs based on “natural” religion. Most knew of a creator who had provided all things necessary for survival, and there was a spirit world inhabited by a great many malevolent and a few benevolent ones. There was very little in the way of organised worship or religious ceremony, but people prayed to the Creator before the hunt or during times of sickness. According to Taché, the Chipewyan believed that there had been giants on the earth and a great flood had covered the whole surface of the Earth; some animals were saved on a small floating island.⁵²

⁵¹ Alexandre Antonin Taché, “Alexandre Antonin Taché: Letter to his Mother Concerning His Life with the Chipewyan Nation,” trans. Fr Gaston Carriere [cited 15th February 2013]. Online: www.iportal.usask.ca

⁵² Alexandre Antonin Taché, “Alexandre Antonin Taché: Letter to his Mother Concerning His Life with the Chipewyan Nation,” trans. Fr Gaston Carriere, [cited 15th February 2013]. Online: www.iportal.usask.ca

Gifted men of their societies, typically known as medicine men or shamans, could sometimes influence these spirits to ensure a successful hunt or to heal the sick. The spirits could also transmit visions from the otherworld warning of imminent disasters or providing directions to migratory game routes, provided proper ritual was observed. The more sedentary the tribe, the more sophisticated was their religion and the harder it was to convert them to Christianity. For example, the Haida of the Pacific coast included some components of their religious beliefs that had similarities to Christianity--an all-powerful creator, an equally powerful tempter, and an after-life for those who lived the "good" life.

2.2.3 Mixed-Race and Métis People

There was also a large population of mixed-race people, or Métis, who had retained parts of the Christian religion from their fathers and disseminated the knowledge among the Native tribes. In addition, during the period when ministers of both denominations were engaged in preaching to the converted in Red River, Métis members of their parishes were instrumental in informally spreading the Word during their trading activities. Thus when missionaries first made contact, they were usually afforded a friendly reception. Because most Métis were francophone, there was a natural attraction to the preaching of the Oblates, which gave the latter a decided advantage over the Anglicans.

Map No. 1 Showing the Distribution of First Nations People at the Time of Contact with the Europeans.⁵³



Reproduced from "Geoff Magnum's Guide to North American History and Culture," [cited 17th February 2013] Online: www.puttingzone.com

3 Roman Catholic Missions to the Northwest

3.1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This part of the thesis is about the attempts by the Roman Catholic Church in Canada to extend its religious dominion to the Canadian Northwest through the Christianization of the Native people beginning in 1818. It will show how the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec became the primary representative of the francophone residents there with respect to the British governing body. It will also show how a policy of collaboration by the Church hierarchy, combined with a fear of an American-led invasion of Canada, ameliorated an attempt to “convert” the francophone *canadiens* to Protestantism, by a coalition of Protestants led by the Church of England. That policy of collaboration through the 1830s succeeded in getting the temporal authorities to lift all the restrictions on the immigration of French religious people, which in turn allowed the entrance of many regular and secular priests into Quebec. Amongst them were members of the Order of Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate (Oblates), who would go on to play a decisive role in the Christianization process in the Canadian Northwest.

Having described the political events, the focus of the paper will shift to the Canadian Northwest and how the Red River mission developed from its small beginnings in 1818 to an ecclesiastical area covering the whole of the Canadian Northwest.

3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CANADA

After the British victory over the French at Quebec in 1759, the Church of England's representatives in Canada naturally assumed that its position as the official church in Canada would be extended to Quebec. They therefore planned a large-scale conversion of the *canadiens*, in concert with other Protestant churches in Canada. Realising that such an act would alienate the population at a time when the new American government aimed at annexing Canada, the British governor at Quebec persuaded the Anglicans to adopt a policy of conciliation towards the *canadiens* and insisted that the Anglicans cease and desist from overt proselytisation.

However, the governor did impose certain measures that the Anglican Bishop of Quebec hoped would result in the demise of the Roman Catholic Church through attrition. Repatriation of priests to France was actively encouraged and immigration of French clergy from France banned. As well, the British refused to provide any grants towards the operation of the Roman Catholic Church, nor would it underwrite the costs of war reparations. This meant that the Roman Catholic Church had to manage on half its former income until such times as increased tithes could be imposed.⁵⁴

These measures, combined with a rapid rise in population, caused the Church some difficulty in maintaining an effective ministry to its home congregation. Between 1750 and 1840, the ratio of priests to lay people rose from 1:500 to 1:1400. As well, the output of "home-grown"

⁵⁴ Gilles Chaussé, "French Canada from the Conquest to 1840," in *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (ed. Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin; Don Mills Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1996), 58.

priests from Laval, the only operational seminary in Quebec, had all but dried up.⁵⁵ Under these circumstances, continuing a practice of sending missionaries to the Native people within Lower Canada was extremely difficult; sending missionaries to western Canada was not viable.

However, while the success of the American revolution was a blow to the British, the threat of an invasion of Quebec by the revolutionary forces worked to the Church's advantage. The British feared (and the Americans hoped) that the francophone population of Lower Canada would rise up *en masse* against British rule and with the British army occupied with the European war the British could not hold the country by force. The governor decided to pursue a policy of a gradual devolution of state power to the francophone population. At the same time, the Roman Catholic Church, fearing that a take-over by the Americans would likely result in the demise of Catholicism, became a powerful and influential ally of the British Crown. For example, when he learned of the English naval victory over the French fleet in Aboukir Bay in 1798, Joseph Plessis, then the coadjutor bishop of Quebec, declared: "How fortunate for us that Providence separated us from France before she abandoned herself to this terrible blindness, and instead subjected us, through a kindness we did not deserve, and for which we cannot be too grateful, to the generous and beneficent government of His Most Gracious Majesty, the King of Great Britain."⁵⁶ For this, and other demonstrations of loyalty, the British Crown was prepared to make concessions, including the recognition of Joseph Octave Plessis as the Bishop of Quebec in 1801. Plessis combined superb organizing ability with a great skill as a diplomat. When the War of 1812 threatened the very existence of the British colony in Canada, Plessis was successful in convincing his fellow Quebecers that subservience to a British rule that was somewhat tolerant of the Catholic Church was a much better proposition than that of annexation

⁵⁵ Gilles Chaussé, "French Canada from the Conquest to 1840," 57.

⁵⁶ Gilles Chaussé, "French Canada from the Conquest to 1840," 80.

by an American Republic committed to the expansion of Protestantism. The Crown rewarded Plessis for his loyalty in 1818 when the British Governor and the Vatican announced his appointment as Archbishop of a newly created Archdiocese of Quebec. Plessis was able to travel to Rome to receive his ordination and on his return set about restoring the position of the church as an equal, if not superior, partner in the governance of Lower Canada.⁵⁷

Through a lifetime of consistent loyalty to the British Crown, Plessis had earned the respect of the temporal British authorities while at the same time neutralising any opposition from the Church of England. Without British approval, the expansion of the Roman Catholic mission to Christianize the Canadian Northwest could not have taken place.

In keeping with the concept of demonstrating leadership in the temporal estate, as well as the spiritual one, the Catholic Church in Quebec assumed responsibility for education and social welfare, prompting the founding of religious sororities, which provided a socially acceptable religious vocation for women. Five hospitals opened by various nursing orders were good examples. The legitimization of the role of the church in education was made possible by the passage of the Education Act of 1824, which ensured that new generations of God-fearing Catholics would be raised that were immune from the proselytizing ambitions of the Protestants on the one hand and the rationality of the secularists on the other. Said Bishop Lartigue, in a letter written in 1829: “We ought to urge parish priests through a pastoral letter to set up parish schools. In this way, we can show the Protestants who are always accusing us of discouraging education that in fact we are the only ones promoting it in an effective manner.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Gilles Chaussé, “French Canada from the Conquest to 1840,” 88.

⁵⁸ Gilles Chaussé, “French Speaking Canada to 1840,” 94.

But there were other changes taking place in Catholic Europe in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars which would affect the Church in Quebec. From the fourteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, the government of the Catholic Church in France was based on a system known as Gallicanism, in which the Church's incomes, appointments, and policies were subject to the approval of the monarch.⁵⁹ However, after the fall of Napoleon's empire, a reaction against Napoleon's earlier attempts to make the Church in France a department of government, led to a repudiation of national control by the Church in favour of a close alignment with the Roman Church. Pope Gregory XVI (1831-46) seized the moment and imposed a highly centralised system of church government which demanded subservience of the churches to Rome in all the countries that comprised the Holy See. Rigid discipline within the churches was required and common policies in terms of worship, moral teachings and the establishment of missions at home and abroad was demanded. This system of governance was known as "ultramontane" rule, and it was quickly embraced by the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec. The Roman Church became a rigid hierarchy where only those changes initiated and decreed by the Vatican could be put into effect. As historian Roberto Perin writes:

The Church was seeking to centralize ecclesiastical power in Rome, instil uniform liturgical and devotional practices throughout the Catholic world, emphasize Catholic dogmas in opposition to Protestantism and impose ideological conformity based on the rejection of revolution and liberalism.⁶⁰

The ultramontanist policy suited the Quebec church perfectly. Having been abandoned by the Mother Country, France, and presently subject to temporal control by the British, it could

⁵⁹ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*, 4.

⁶⁰ Roberto Perin, "French Speaking Canada from 1840," in *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (ed. Terence Murphy and Roberto Perin; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 196.

turn to its spiritual father, the Pope. Martha McCarthy notes that the triumph of ultramontanism was in the way that “Italian piety was substituted for the more austere French devotion of the seventeenth century.”⁶¹ Bishop Lartigue of Quebec and Bishop Bourget of Montreal took this to heart and poured all their efforts into sustaining this newfound enthusiasm for the faith; the *habitants* responded with equal enthusiasm. The adoption of ultramontanism was to have a profound effect on the character of the Roman Catholic missions to the Northwest. The hierarchical structure was rigidly enforced; priests had to wear the black cassocks at all times, even in the remote areas of northern Canada where one would have expected informal organizational structures to prevail. Robert Choquette comments on ultramontanism in his *Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*:

The ultramontane mindset is characterized by a profound distrust of the modern, liberal, secular societies that were the product of the French Revolution. The ultramontane Catholic sees Satan and his minions everywhere—always on the prowl, laying snares for the elect of the Lord. The world is a vale of tears; a battlefield; liberalism is the font of all heresies; human nature is weak and cannot be trusted; women are the devil’s amazons, with their tresses; their bare arms, and their seductive wiles; the forces of evil are consolidated in worldwide conspiracy movements such as the Freemasons. In sum, for an ultramontane Catholic, human beings cannot be trusted; they must be protected from themselves. Moreover, things have reached such a state that there is no room for negotiating with the enemy. Whoever is not with the Church is against it.⁶²

While the church grew more confident in its effective control of the francophone population, it was not without a serious challenger from an emerging middle class of professionals. Informed by the seductive influences of the “Age of Enlightenment” and their disgust with the ready collaboration of the priests with the British, the leaders turned to an absolute form of secularism and lost no opportunity to agitate for self-government. This would-be revolutionary movement gained momentum after the threat of an American invasion subsided.

⁶¹ Martha McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth*, 6.

⁶² Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*, 21.

Fears of being overwhelmed by an influx of anglophone Protestants persuaded many of the *habitants* that their lot was best served by a radical party of Lower Canada led by Louis- Joseph Papineau. The Church, however, remained steadfast in its neutrality, refusing to side with revolutionaries in spite of losing a lot of support for not doing so. When the revolutionary sentiments ignited in armed insurrection, the church gave the British their full support, calling on all Quebecers to throw down their arms and desist from acts of violence. The British army soon re-established stability; some of the leaders of the insurrection were hanged; some were imprisoned, and a few exiled. The Church emerged as the “Saviour of Quebec,” at least in the eyes of the British. The lifting of the ban on the importation of French priests, grants to finance the restoration of church buildings, and the admission of the Bishop to a seat in the Legislative Assembly further added to the Church’s standing in the country. It also paved the way for a large-scale immigration of priests and religious orders from France into Quebec.

The end of the revolution signalled the opening of a new British policy towards Lower Canada when Lord Durham recommended the merging of Upper and Lower Canada into one political union. Fearing for the loss of its dearly won influence in government, the Church firmly opposed the measures. The move did much to restore the confidence of the population in the Church and helped to heal the rift that had opened up because of the Papineau Revolution.

Chaussé summarises the turning point well:

These threats notwithstanding, by 1840 the Catholic Church had once again become a respected institution in French Canada; after turning their backs to it for a time, the *Canadiens* returned and dutifully let themselves be formed into a Catholic society that would last more than a century. . . . A new chapter was beginning for the Canadian Catholic Church, which from now on would become increasingly Roman and Ultramontane.⁶³

⁶³ Gilles Chaussé, “French Speaking Canada to 1840,” 106.

3.3 THE MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE

Ignace Bourget was born in Lower Canada and trained in the seminary of Laval. He was ordained a priest in 1822 and his talents soon gave him the opportunity to become the assistant (and protégé) to Bishop Plessis and then, in 1837, he became the coadjutor to Bishop Lartigue.⁶⁴ A committed ultramontanist, Bourget proved to be an impressive leader with boundless energy, consolidating the gains made by his predecessor and making the Roman Catholic Church in Canada East at least equal, if not superior, to the temporal leaders of the province.

Although the seminaries in Lower Canada were turning out more ordained priests than ever, they could not even keep up with the demand of the francophone population, let alone provide any more than a token presence in western Canada. The situation with respect to regular priests was critical; Montreal's 22,000 Catholics were served by nineteen Sulpician and two secular priests; in the whole of Quebec, there were only five hundred priests for a total population of about 500,000.⁶⁵ The situation was made even more urgent by the news that the Anglican Church was preparing to send out missionaries from its base in Red River and that the HBC had invited British Methodists as missionaries to Native people on the Prairies. As well, Bishop Joseph-Norbert Provencher was urging Bourget to send more reliable and obedient priests, preferably regular priests, to Red River. With the immigration ban lifted, Bishop Bourget left for France in the middle of 1841 on a recruiting drive.⁶⁶ His mission was well-timed, because the revolution of 1830 had installed a government that was not at all sympathetic to the church in France. Consequently, Bourget's invitations met with a flood of positive responses from both the

⁶⁴ Paul Bruchési, "Ignace Bourget." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Cited 24, February 2013. Online: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02721a.html>.

⁶⁵ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*, 7-8.

⁶⁶ Paul Bruchési, "Ignace Bourget." *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*. Cited 24, February 2013. Online: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02721a.html>.

disaffected and those eager to work in a vast new world with equally vast challenges. The most fruitful of Bouget's efforts came from a meeting with Eugene de Mazenod, who twenty-three years earlier had founded the Order of the Oblates of the Immaculate Mary.

Bishop Bourget engaged the Oblates to fill vacancies in the parishes in Montreal and Quebec City and also to evangelise the First Nations people who occupied northern Quebec, beginning in 1841.⁶⁷ Terrence Murphy comments: "There is little doubt that wherever they went these communities energised the old ones and gave them a new sense of mission."⁶⁸ Provencher followed up with a visit to de Mazenod in 1843 and obtained an agreement for Oblate missionaries to be sent to the Diocese of the North-West. The order had been founded by de Mazenod as the Missionary Society of Provence in 1816. At that time the country was in the midst of economic chaos after the Napoleonic Wars, and poverty in Provence was widespread. De Mazenod gathered a small group of dedicated followers who agreed to follow the pattern of his own solo ministry:

My intention in dedicating myself to the ministry of the missions, working especially for the instruction and conversion of the most abandoned souls, was to follow the example of the apostles in their life of devotedness and self-denial. I became convinced that in order to obtain the same results from our preaching, we would have to walk in their footsteps and, as far as we could, practice the same virtues as they.⁶⁹

The mission was a huge success. De Mazenod established the movement as a religious society and wrote the rules for it in 1818. He applied to have the Order, then called the Oblates of St. Charles, officially recognized by papal authority and accordingly sought and obtained an

⁶⁷ Terrence Murphy, *History of Christianity in Canada*, 212.

⁶⁸ Terrence Murphy, *History of Christianity in Canada*, 203.

⁶⁹ Alfred A. Hubenig, *Living in the Spirit's Fire* (Toronto: Novalis, 1995), 63.

audience with Pope Leo XII. The Pope approved de Mazenod's order under the name of the Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary.⁷⁰

However, recognition of an Order within the Catholic Church did not necessarily mean that the operations of the Order would be funded by the Curia. Instead, the petitioners had to find money from voluntary sources within the laity. Pauline Jaricot, a rich heiress of Lyons, had founded a voluntary society known as the *L'Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi* (Institution for the Propagation of the Faith) in 1810 for the purposes of raising funds for Catholic missions in France and around the world. Pauline's family was connected to the de Mazenods and she readily agreed to Eugene's suggestion to include the Oblates as a recipient. Evidence of the success of the fund-raising initiative does not come from a Roman Catholic source, but from the London-based Church Missionary Society (CMS), the organization that funded the Anglican worldwide missions. Eugene Stock, the chronicler of the *History of the Church Missionary Society*, was complaining about the inconstancy of the donors who supported the Anglican missions, contrasting their back-sliding with the dedication of the Catholics who had helped to raise the funding for the Institute of the Propagation of the Faith from £13,000 in 1813, to more than £200,000 in 1850. Stock goes on to state that the money was used to send priests of various Roman orders and societies to "girdle the globe with Missions."⁷¹ He goes on to quote from the CMS annual report of 1847:

Each successive year affords fresh proof of the war-like activity in the Romish camp and sees the multitudes sent out on Foreign Missions who have been trained in the College of the Propaganda. . . . While we are meditating to send a catechist to a distant tribe of

⁷⁰ Margaret Whitehead, *The Cariboo Mission*, 14.

⁷¹ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol. 1, 378.

North-West American Indians, 1,000 miles from the headquarters of both parties, we hear that four Romish priests are already amongst them!⁷²

As we will see the funding was a key to the Oblates' relative success when they began operations in the Canadian Northwest.

3.4 FRENCH CANADIAN ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN THE WEST, 1818

Having followed the development of the Church within Quebec up to the coming of the Oblates, it is necessary to return to 1818, when the so-called Seven Oaks massacre at Red River in 1817, the Governor of the colony asked Bishop Plessis to send priests to help restore order in the predominantly Roman Catholic population. Accordingly two French Canadian missionaries, Abbé Joseph-Norbert Provencher and Abbé Sèveré Dumoulin, together with young seminarian William Edge, were dispatched to Red River Colony in 1818.⁷³ According to Lucien Lemieux, Plessis had given them two objectives for their mission: to convert the “Indian nations scattered over that vast country” and to care for the “delinquent Christians, who have adopted there the customs of the Indians.” The missionaries had specific orders to learn the First Nation languages, to instruct and baptize native women who had married French Canadians *à la façon du pays*, and then to bless these unions. They were to remain neutral in the conflict between the two companies and to teach “by word and deed the respect and allegiance owed to the sovereign.”⁷⁴

Dumoulin and Edge left Red River to set up a mission at Pembina in North Dakota, where several families had formed a community after a crop failure in Red River. All was proceeding well at the mission, but the HBC was anxious to strengthen the Red River colony and in 1820 ordered the colony at Pembina closed. Provencher agreed to the closure, but delayed

⁷² Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol. 1, 378.

⁷³ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*, 30.

⁷⁴ Lucien Lemieux, “Provencher” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography On Line*, [Cited 24th February 2013]. Online: <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?BioId=38265>

closing the mission until 1823, using the fact that the Red River community could not absorb the returning colonists. In fact, Provencher helped to resettle them at St François Xavier, in the White Horse Plain on the Assiniboine River. Disheartened, Dumoulin returned to Lower Canada.⁷⁵

By that time, Provencher had been consecrated as the Bishop in a newly created diocese of the North West. He and his priests had been successful in pacifying the colony and were well-respected in the community as a whole. Of more importance to the HBC, they adopted a tolerant attitude to the prevailing culture of the colony, particularly with respect to the irregular matrimonial arrangements of the country-born Métis. They also refrained from criticising HBC commercial practices, which endeared them to the HBC management. Lady Selkirk, the wife of Lord Selkirk, the colony founder, proved to be an exemplary sponsor of the mission. Though nominally a Protestant, she provided them with a handsome building for a chapel and “everything required for Mass—including vestments.”⁷⁶ In recognition of their exemplary service, the HBC made a donation of £50 to the mission and provided several square miles of land on the eastern side of the junction of the Red River and the Assiniboine, on which to build a church. This site would house the future community of St Boniface.

Although it had been the intention of Plessis to expand the new diocese beyond the boundaries of the colony, Provencher’s efforts were thwarted by the HBC and by a lack of a

⁷⁵ Lemieux, Lucien, “Provencher” in Dictionary of Canadian Biography On Line.

⁷⁶ Letter from Abbé Dumoulin to Mgr. Plessis in *Mid Snow and Ice* by Pierre Duchaussois, 81.

⁷⁰ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Northwest*, 32.

⁷¹ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Northwest*, 32.

sufficient number of priests. Not that Bourget had neglected to send more priests, but the ones who came stayed only for a short time before urgently wanting to go back home.⁷⁷

George Simpson, the newly appointed governor of the HBC in Canada, had made no secret of his antipathy to missionaries. Although by 1830, Simpson had outwardly concurred with the HBC Board directive to provide every assistance to the missionaries, he firmly believed that their presence was detrimental to the interests of the HBC and routinely placed any obstacle in their way that could not be not be seen by London as harassment.⁷⁸ There is no question that Simpson controlled the gate to the outside world. As previously mentioned in Chapter Two of this dissertation, Simpson could provide or withhold favours, such as free transportation and reduced prices for goods. The Church, led by Provencher, had become somewhat complacent in its attitude. The original mandate to Christianize the Native people was largely forgotten, as was the requirement that all priests should be able to take the Gospel to the Native people in their own language.

However, there was a temporary resurgence in evangelism in 1831, when Abbé George Belcourt arrived from Quebec. Belcourt had a talent for foreign languages, and by 1833 could speak Saulteaux sufficiently well to establish a temporary mission at Baie St. Paul, a few miles north of St. Boniface on the Red River. The action was against the better judgement of Bishop Provencher, who wanted his missionaries to follow the Native people in their itinerant lifestyle, preaching the gospel in the natural environment. Belcourt, on the other hand, was of the opinion that Natives had to be civilized and educated before they could become Christians and that this could only happen if they gave up their nomadic life and lived in permanent

villages. Belcourt's mission to the Saulteaux, was later taken up by the Oblate missionaries Abbé Pierre Aubert, Francis Xavier Bermond and Brother Henri Faraud in 1846. The mission was moved to the site of an HBC post, Manitoba House on the west shore of Lake Manitoba, but despite intensive efforts, the Saulteaux would only accept Christianity on their own terms, which were totally unacceptable to the Oblates. The decision was made by Provencher to close the mission in 1847 on the basis of the Saulteaux' refusal to listen to the missionary or heed his message.⁷⁹

3.4.1 A Mission to the West Coast

Still, the momentum for outside mission had begun and in 1838, Bishop Provencher responded to a request for priests from white Catholic settlers of Wilamette in present-day British Columbia. Provencher was able to arrange for two French Canadian priests, Frs. Norbert Blanchet and Modeste Demers, to go there from the Diocese of Quebec. They arrived in Fort Vancouver from St Boniface at the behest of the settlers, but their mission was also to Christianize the numerous Native people living in the diocese.⁸⁰ The territory was vast and two lay brothers were recruited to help. In 1842, two Oblates, Frs. Langlois and Bolduc, arrived in Fort Vancouver by way of Cape Horn. They had been refused passage with the Hudson's Bay Company's resupply convoy across Canada because of objections raised by the Rev Herbert Beaver, the Anglican chaplain of Fort Vancouver.

This incident in which an Anglican initiated an obstacle to the Catholics was to characterize interdenominational relations during the period covered by this essay. There was

⁷⁹ Raymond A. J. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 18.

⁸⁰ Margaret Whitehead, *The Cariboo Mission: A History of the Oblates* (Victoria, B.C. : Sono Nis Press, 1981), 15.

heavy competition between the denominations as settlers began to occupy the area. Methodists were ever-present, and in the Willamette Valley had blessed the marriages of several *voyageurs*.⁸¹ Although Catholic Church law would have accepted the union, Blanchet and Demers objected. They apparently preached a sermon “that lasted several days [after which] they persuaded the couples to be remarried by priests, implying that the Methodists were little better than frauds when they witnessed these nuptials.”⁸²

It was actually Fr. Blanchet who devised the “Catholic Ladder,” a teaching aid consisting of a carved stick, with notches depicting the history of the world, the coming of Christianity, and the evolution of the Church. It was very popular in its original form, but it was subsequently produced as a coloured-picture. A fork in the ladder, corresponding to the date of the Reformation, led to a blazing inferno in which Protestant ministers suffered eternal damnation. This appealed to the Natives who took it as a literal truth. The Protestants responded by producing their own version of the ladder in which Catholics replaced the Protestants.⁸³

The rivalry between the Catholics and the Protestants intensified shortly afterwards. Dr. Marcus Whitman, a Presbyterian missionary, and his wife were amongst several Americans massacred by Cayuse Natives at the Presbyterian Mission near Walla Walla. A surviving minister accused the Catholic clergy of inciting the massacre, an accusation which was probably groundless, but which ignited strong anti-Catholic feeling in the United States, especially when

⁸¹ Wilfred P. Schoenberg, “Frontier Catholics in the Northwest” in *U.S. Historian*, Vol. 12, No 4, Frontier Catholicism (Fall 1994) pp. 65-84, Catholic University of America Press, 1994) 67, Cited 15th October 2012. Online: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25154044>

⁸² Wilfred P. Schoenberg, “Frontier Catholics in the Northwest.” 68.

⁸³ Wilfred P. Schoenberg, “Frontier Catholics in the Pacific Northwest,” 69.

Archbishop Blanchet visited, instructed, and baptized five Cayuse First Nation`s people several days before they were executed for their part in the attack.⁸⁴

In 1843, the Pope declared the region to be a *Vicariate Apostolic*, indicating that the cost of its development and overall direction would be from Rome, with Bishop François-Norbert Blanchet as its Vicar General. In 1846, Father De Smet arrived at Fort Victoria with four Jesuit priests, some lay brothers and six sisters of the Notre Dame de Namur in France. In 1846, the area was re-designated as an Ecclesiastical Province with three dioceses: Oregon City, headed by the newly promoted Archbishop Blanchet; Vancouver and New Caledonia, headed by Bishop Demers; and Walla Walla, headed by Bishop Magloire Blanchet, brother of the Archbishop.⁸⁵

The Catholic missionaries pursued a circuit system of visitations in which they would descend on a village for a week, during which they would engage in intensive preaching, examinations, church services, and the celebration of the Eucharist. They would also administer public reprimands and sometimes even corporal punishment on transgressors. Baptism was greatly desired by the First Nations peoples, but missionaries would only perform the ceremony for infants, or when adults had learned a sufficient amount about the faith. Those who were classed as catechists would spend two to three hours studying dogma and learning about the moral conduct expected of them.⁸⁶ The lessons about the possibility of hell and damnation for unforgiven sins were readily absorbed. According to Mulhall, commenting on the experiences of Father Adrian Gabriel Morice, an Oblate missionary in British Columbia, “it was because they had substituted a traditional fear of the malevolent power of natural spirits for the wrath of God.

⁸⁴ Margaret Whitehead, *The Cariboo Mission*, 15.

⁸⁵ Margaret Whitehead, *The Cariboo Mission*, 15.

⁸⁶ David Mulhall, *Will to Power: The Missionary Career of Father Morice* (Vancouver: University Press of British Columbia, 1986), 23.

Consequently, they readily accepted physical punishment from their peers, and occasionally from the priests, as an atonement and propitiation for sins committed.”⁸⁷

3.3 EXPANSION OF MISSIONS BEYOND RED RIVER

By the end of the 1830s the number of Native people and Métis who chose to make Red River home was becoming embarrassingly large. Both the Anglican Church Missionary Society and Simpson agreed that a mission at the north of Lake Winnipeg was desirable and preparations were made to develop a mission at La Pas. Simpson’s apparent about-face with respect to mission expansion was brought about by the success of Red River in attracting migration of Native people. The mission would “curtail Indian migration to Red River, prepare them for a more sedentary agricultural life and thus, in the face of a sharply reduced beaver supply, relieve the company of some of the expenses of feeding a potentially starving native population.”⁸⁸ However, Simpson, apparently afraid that the CMS was becoming far too influential with the London HBC Board, took it upon himself to invite the Wesleyan Methodists Mission Society to send missionaries to the west. The invitation was not initiated by the Board in London, which would have most likely supported the national Church of England.⁸⁹

Whatever Simpson’s reasons, Provencher was alarmed. He had few human resources at his disposal, but decided to send Fr. John Baptiste Thibault on a speculative mission to the western prairies. Simpson’s travel restrictions on missionaries were still in force, so Thibault was obliged to go on horseback, first to the Fort of the Prairies (present-day Edmonton) and then to Devil’s Lake, fifty miles to the west, where he made a temporary mission, renaming it the

⁸⁷ David Mulhall, *Will to Power: The Missionary Career of Father Morice*, 71.

⁸⁸ Vera Kathrin Fast, “The Protestant Missionary and Fur Trade Society: Initial Contact in the Hudson’s Bay Territory,” 1820-1850” (PhD Diss., University of Manitoba, 1983), 41.

⁸⁹ Vera Kathrin Fast. “The Protestant Missionary and Fur Trade Society,” 43.

Mission of Ste. Anne. He visited the area around Rocky Mountain House and then made for the portage at La Loche where he had heard that one of the Methodists, Evans, had arranged a meeting with the “Chiefs and Braves of Lake Athabasca at Île-à-la-Crosse.”⁹⁰

The Grand Portage, La Loche was a terminus for the fur trade at which outward-and inward-bound HBC boats converged and where many hundreds of people were employed in hauling the barges, furs and general supplies around the rapids. Thibault arrived before Evans and stayed for six weeks. Apparently word that a “black-robe” was going to be present attracted a huge crowd. They camped at Île-à-la-Crosse, a natural meeting place of many hundreds of Natives and Métis who were involved in the fur trade. After the ice break-up, usually in June, the Dene of the north brought fur pelts by way of Great Slave Lake; the people from the Peace River country brought their furs by way of the Athabasca River; and the Saulteaux brought theirs from the south via Lake Winnipeg. The HBC agents exchanged European goods for furs and then transferred the furs to York Factory for shipment to Europe.

After a stay of six weeks, Thibault wrote to Bishop Provencher reporting his success in baptizing 353 people and solemnizing twenty marriages.⁹¹ Thibault left for Ste Anne, promising to return the following year. This number seems very high and raises the question as to how it was possible to impart the necessary knowledge of Christian beliefs to so many people in so short a time given Thibault’s probable lack of knowledge of the languages of the northern tribes. A possible explanation lies in the Catholic belief in the importance of the sacrament itself, but the following account by Duchaussois about Thibault’s success helps to explain why the Native people received the missionaries cordially.

⁹⁰ R. P. Duchaussois, *Mid Snow and Ice: The Apostles of the North-West* (London : Burns, Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1923), 82.

⁹¹ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*, 37.

“Old Beaulieu of Salt River” was one of the HBC’s Fort Resolution employees. His father, Francois Beaulieu, was the Frenchman who guided Alexander MacKenzie to the Arctic in 1789, and his mother was a Montagnais. Old Beaulieu was a giant of a man and had been the “bullyboy” of the HBC, earning a fearsome reputation during the “wars” between HBC and NWC. He worked at the HBC depot in Fort Resolution as a trader, had numerous wives and a correspondingly large number of children, and showed no interest in religion. When a pious trader, M. Dubreuil, came to work alongside him, Beaulieu was fascinated by the man’s regular prayer sessions and heard the Christian story from him. When Beaulieu heard of the coming of Fr. Thibault, he took all his wives and children to Île-à-la-Crosse to be baptised. From then on Beaulieu became the language teacher and general mentor to Taché and several of the Oblates, including Frs. Gascon and Grandin.⁹² He also became a catechist and a sacristan and provided assistance to the missionaries until his death in the 1870s.

Given that he would return later, Thibault probably assumed that any deficiencies in the knowledge of religious beliefs would be made up prior to confirmation and penance. His return journey from Lac Ste Anne in 1844 was delayed by several weeks and by the time he arrived at Île-à-la-Crosse the Native people had left. Apparently, “someone” had told them that the missionary was paid to baptize people; that the sacrament was meant only for white people, and anyway, the Blackfoot had killed Thibault.⁹³ Discouraged, Thibault left the area and returned to Lac Ste Anne, from which he and his colleague, Fr. Joseph Bourassa, pursued an itinerant mission among the Blackfoot and Cree until the arrival of Fr. Lacombe in 1852.⁹⁴

⁹² Pierre Duchaussois, *Mid Snow and Ice*, 88-90.

⁹³ Pierre Duchaussois, *Mid Snow and Ice*, 88.

⁹⁴ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*, 37.

Meanwhile, Provencher had continued to press for more and better-qualified staff. Attempts at securing the Jesuits failed and Simpson would not hear of bringing “foreign” priests into his domain. Provencher wrote to Bourget requesting regular priests on the basis that their disciplined approach and their obedience would make them easier to manage than his secular priests. He suggested that the Oblates might be suitable, especially if they were of Canadian origin. At the same time, he obtained the services of the Grey Nuns to “help in the fields of education, health care and social work.”⁹⁵

In 1845 the first of the Oblates, Fr. Alexandre Taché, and his superior, Abbé Pierre Aubert, arrived in Red River. Provencher was reportedly dismayed at Taché’s youth, but ordained him as a priest on the authority of de Mazenod. Taché was born in Boucherville into a distinguished Quebec family in 1823. He was educated first at the Catholic college of St. Hyacinthe and then at the Grand Seminary in Montreal. After orientation, the two Oblates spent the first winter learning the Saulteaux language from Belcourt, then Aubert was sent to Wabassimong, forty miles east of St. Boniface to evangelize the population there.⁹⁶ On the basis of Thibault’s success in the north and on the Anglicans’ establishment of a mission at Cumberland House, Provencher sent Laflèche and Taché to establish a permanent mission at Île-à-la-Crosse. With the influence of the Oblates, Provencher temporarily shelved his idea of ambulatory mission and embraced the policy of de Mazenod whose *Instructions on Foreign Missions* was specific: “Every means should therefore be taken to bring the nomadic tribes to

⁹⁵ Raymond J.A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 15-17.

⁹⁶ Raymond J.A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 18.

abandon their wandering life and select places where they may learn to build houses, cultivate fields and practice the elementary crafts of civilized life.”⁹⁷

Laflèche and Taché’s plan was to use St Boniface as a base, then select primary hubs to serve as major mission sites. The sites would have to be sufficiently large to house a church, a hospital and a school, and the senior priest at the site would provide pastoral oversight of adjacent missions. Site selection had to take into account the large amounts of food required. An average-sized mission, such as Île-à-la-Crosse, would house as many as eighty permanent residents, as well as fifteen dogs for transportation. Several tons of firewood, 25,000 fish, and grain and vegetables from several acres of land were required if the mission was to be self-sustaining. Proximity to places where Native people gathered naturally or close to HBC trading posts was also a major consideration. The task of constructing and maintaining the missions and of feeding the people who would live there required hiring labourers--an expense the missions could ill afford; worse, those who were engaged insisted on accommodation and sustenance for their families, which further added to the burden of the mission. The employment of lay brothers was the solution to the problem. The lay brothers, properly called Coadjutor Brothers, first made their appearance in North America in 1841. They had no formal theological training, but had taken the same vows as the priests.⁹⁸ They were responsible for all the temporal activities of the mission, caring for the fabric of the station and feeding the residents. Their work, together with that of the nuns who ministered to the sick and educated the children, allowed the priest to concentrate on missionary activity.

⁹⁷ Alfred Hubenig, *Living in the Spirit’s Fire: Saint Eugene de Mazenod* (Toronto: Novalis, 1995), 225.

⁹⁸ Pierre Duchaussois, *Hidden Apostles: Our Lay Brother Missionaries* (Buffalo, NY: Ottawa University Press, 1937), 15.

When Fr. Alexandre Taché and his colleague Abbé Louis François Leflèche arrived in the HBC trading post in 1846 with the intention of co-locating a mission there, they had no knowledge of any of the native languages, nor had they anyone to assist them in the heavy work that such an undertaking would involve. They had taken Jesus' commandment to the twelve to travel without spare clothing, money or even a staff as their personal direction (Matt 10: 13).⁹⁹ What the missionaries lacked in material goods they made up in faith and hard work: the two quickly expanded the facilities and immediately established a large garden and acquired a cow to provide butter and milk.

One year later, Taché made a journey to Fort Chipewyan and established a centre of operations called Nativity Mission. From there, northern Alberta, the Northwest Territories, and the Hudson's Bay region could be accessed by river.¹⁰⁰ Reinforcements came in 1848 and 1849 in the shape of Fr. Henri Faroud and lay brother Louis Dubé. Fr. Faroud left to develop the Nativity Mission and then went on to open a mission at Fort Resolution in 1856, while two other Oblates, Frs. Tissot and Maisonneuve, took up residence at Île-à-la-Crosse.¹⁰¹ Taché travelled to Île-à-la-Crosse, Fort Chipewyan, and Fort Providence and determined that they would be the primary hubs. Each was situated on a main branch of one of the major rivers that provided access beyond the mission. Like Provencher before him, Taché travelled to Montreal to enlist additional support from the Grey Nuns. They willingly volunteered and contingents of them arrived in Lac Ste. Anne in 1859, Île-à-la-Crosse in 1860, Lac la Biche in 1862, and Ft Providence in 1867.

Lafèche travelled along the Saskatchewan River system to establish a primary hub at Lac Ste. Anne, which Thibault had pioneered earlier. (In 1862, it was decided to down-grade the

⁹⁹ Raymond J.A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Metis*, 47.

¹⁰⁰ Raymond J.A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Metis*, 23.

¹⁰¹ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*, 58.

mission at Ste Anne and make St Albert the main centre for missions to the western Prairies.)¹⁰²

Taché was promoted to the rank of Bishop on the death of Monsignor Provencer in 1853, leaving Fr. Faraud with the responsibility of developing missions in the Northwest. Île-à-la-Crosse became a major logistic centre for supplying the Arctic missions, including the missions at Fort Providence and Fort Resolution. The mission also served as a training centre for arriving Oblates. Founded as the parish of St Jean Baptiste by Taché in 1847, it garnered a great deal of support for the mission by HBC Métis and was frequented by many hundreds of people from all the major northern tribes.

One of the specialities that the Oblates brought to the Catholic missionary initiative was in their insistence on preaching the Gospel in the Native people's own language. While the Catholic missionaries were confined to Red River where a large majority of the population were francophones, there had been little incentive to tackle the difficult task of learning the numerous languages spoken by the First Nations. The Oblates owed their early success in France through Mazenod's insistence that his members preach to the people in *Provençal*, a folk-language that the revolutionary government had banned during the excesses of the French Revolution.¹⁰³ The difficulty for a priest in the Northwest was the number of distinct tribes or Nations that he might have to deal with. However, the situation of Île-à-la-Crosse as a meeting point for the *voyageurs*, amongst whom were representatives of most of the First Nations was an ideal place to teach language skills to incoming missionaries. As those languages were recorded using syllabics developed by the Methodist missionary, Evans, and the rules of grammar were understood, communications became much easier. As well, the large number of multilingual Métis helped enormously; initial contact could usually be made through an interpreter.

¹⁰² Raymond A. J. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 47.

¹⁰³ Alfred A Hubenig, *Living in the Spirit's Fire*, 88.

Another means of communicating the Gospel was through music. Most people, regardless of race, liked to sing and hymns, using words in the local dialect, could be used to convey key scriptural messages, a sense of holiness, and communal enjoyment. The *Huron Carol*, originally known as *Jesus Anatonhia*, written by the Jesuit priest Fr. Jean de Bréboeuf, is a good example of an innovative adaptation of a hymn, which tells the nativity story in a way that was readily understood by the people of the forest.¹⁰⁴ Fr. Emile Petitot, in his first encounters with the Chiglit Inuit, recorded how a potentially explosive situation, caused by a miscommunication, was deflated when he broke into singing a well-known Oblate hymn which he translated on the spot as best he could into Inuktitut. The song appealed instantly to his hosts and became something of a favourite during subsequent fireside concerts. His translation, “The heavenly home Paradise is not bad, plenty of caribou meat, blessed place,”¹⁰⁵ may not have had the elegance of the lyrics of the Huron carol, but it conveyed the idea of heaven perfectly to the listeners. When permanent missions with schools became well established, a considerable hymnody written in many First Nation Languages became available, and most of the missionary schools could boast of accomplished choirs and even bands.

From a strategic perspective, the establishment of schools, orphanages, and hospitals at the larger residential missions was most effective in bringing people to the mission, rather than the other way round. Those who were educated from early childhood would grow up to be model Christians and would help in the long-term evangelisation of the people. The need to establish

¹⁰⁴ Terence Murphy, *History of Christianity in Canada*, 9.

¹⁰⁵ Petitot, Father Emile, *Among the Chiglit Eskimos*, 49.

schools on permanent mission sites was recognized when the first four nuns arrived in St. Boniface in 1844. It quickly became obvious that a division of labour between the nuns and the priests was possible in which the nuns taught and cared for the sick whilst the priests concentrated on apostolic duties.¹⁰⁶ Initially the education given was sufficient only for the adoption of the Catholic religion, but by 1860 it was realised that in order to maintain converts and to have them pass on their beliefs to future generations it would be necessary to civilize the converts, especially the females who anyway heavily outnumbered the boys.¹⁰⁷ As one of the Sisters said:

Another one of our works is to gather a number of half-breed and Indian children and to give them a good education so that they may be able afterwards to spread the knowledge of our holy religion among their relations and friends. Our school will also give us Catholics a higher place in the esteem of our separated brethren [Protestants] who attach great importance to the external advantages of education.¹⁰⁸

Accordingly, the curriculum was expanded and it immediately attracted the children of Métis who were employed by the HBC. There was a demand from senior members of the HBC staff resident in the north for the education of their children: hence the founding of the first residential school in Fort Providence in 1867.¹⁰⁹ By 1870, there were schools operating at Île-à-la-Crosse, Fort Edmonton, Lac St Anne, Lac La Biche, St Albert, and Fort Providence. Hospitals were established between 1867 and 1869 by the Grey Nuns at Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, and St Albert.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Martha McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth*, 157.

¹⁰⁸ Pierre Duchaussois, *The Grey Nuns in the Far North, 1867-1917*, 125.

¹¹² Martha McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth*, 159.

¹¹³ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Northwest*, 77.

Caring for the sick was a major part of the overall mission. Abandoned children formed a substantial number of the occupants, but the sisters also ministered to those of other people, including whites. Periodic plagues of measles, smallpox, and influenza were also responsible for the heavy load imposed on the sisters: not only were patients brought into the hospitals for care, but the sisters regularly travelled to the huts and tents of those in the near vicinity of the mission who could not travel.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Pierre Duchaussois, *The Grey Nuns in the Far North: 1867-1917* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, Publishers, 1919), 126.



Fr. Map No. 2. Showing Principal Oblate Missions in 1870

The above map has been reproduced from Raymond J.A. Huel: *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), facing page 99.

3.5 EXPANSION BEYOND THE SIXTIETH PARALLEL

Grollier, a French émigré with a penchant for exploration, established missions at Fond du Lac (1853), Fort Simpson (1858); Fort Rea (1859); Fort Norman (1859); and Fort Good Hope (1859). He was in competition with an Anglican minister, Rev. Hutchinson, but the latter was no match for the indefatigable Grollier. Good though he was as a pioneer, Grollier's interpersonal skills left much to be desired. He despised the First Nations people to whom he had come to minister and treated his Oblate colleagues, particularly those born in Canada, with disdain. His sudden death in 1860 pre-empted his dismissal from the ministry.¹¹²

Another controversial member of the Order was Fr. Emile Petitot. Like Grollier, Petitot was a prolific traveller and explorer, and his missions to the mouth of the Mackenzie and eastwards along the shores of the Arctic Ocean took him to the territory of the Chiglit Inuit with whom he lived for two years. Such was the personality of Petitot that during a three-month period he was able to perform 319 baptisms and 52 marriages and hear 1200 confessions. He was a brilliant linguist and an all-round scholar who could get on well with aboriginal peoples. He spent time in Fort Good Hope and Fort Resolution, where he made intensive studies of the Athapaskan languages and created a 367-page dictionary that gave the French equivalents of words in Chipewyan, Hare, and Loucheux in parallel columns on the same page. Petitot built on the works of other missionaries in the use of syllabics to create written forms of the languages.¹¹³

As well as his linguistic skills, Petitot had a strong artistic temperament and was responsible for the beautiful interior decorations of the Fort Good Hope Church. Petitot went on to publish some twenty books about his exploits and he became an immediate celebrity in France

¹¹² Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*, 58.

¹¹³ Father Emile Petitot, *Among the Chiglit Eskimos*, 7.

where he was inducted into the Geographic Society as an honorary member. The account of the Chiglit Inuit in his book and his detailed illustrations provide great insight into Chinglit society and culture.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately for one so talented, Petitot suffered from mental instability and this, together with strong rumours about his sexual orientation, caused his forced repatriation to France.¹¹⁵

The Athabasca Mackenzie campaign was successful from the Oblate point of view. By the end of the century, most of the Mackenzie Valley was considered to be Catholic territory, whereas the Anglicans took control of the Yukon and the Liard Valley.

3.7 TACHÉ AND THE RIEL REBELLION

While the northern and western missions were expanding, events in Red River and Ottawa occupied Bishop Taché. The government in Ottawa had announced its intention of annexing the Northwest Territory. Taché, who had a seat on the Council of Assiniboia, could foresee no advantage of annexation for the people of the Northwest. Annexation would lead to the immigration of Europeans and the Native people and the Métis would be marginalised. At first Taché worked with the HBC to try to resist annexation, but when he realized its inevitability, he worked to ensure appropriate representation of Native and Métis on a new Provincial Government. Events moved quickly. In 1869 while Taché was in Rome for the election of a replacement for de Mazenod, Riel announced a provisional government. Taché was recalled and was asked by Governor General Sir John Young, Sir George-Étienne Cartier, the minister of the Militia and National Defence, and the Prime Minister, Sir John A. McDonald to

¹¹⁴ Petitot Emile, *Among the Chiglit Eskimos* (trans. E.H.Höhn; 1887; Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press, 1999).

¹⁰¹ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Northwest*, 66.

act as the government's negotiator with the Métis. Taché did his best with Riel and his associates, but the Government of Canada had been bargaining in bad faith and had no real intention of allowing for a Métis homeland. The government had negotiated treaties and associated land reserves with the Natives during the 1870s, but ignored the claims of the Métis. Taché was successful in averting a civil war, but in 1885 when Dumont and Riel resorted to armed rebellion, Taché could only appeal for peace. He could not prevent its suppression by the military, nor could he deliver on a promise made for clemency for Riel.

From 1860 to 1875, great changes had occurred; railways had arrived on the prairies and the settlers that Taché had tried to discourage arrived in strength from 1883 onwards. Still he had made impressive gains in the Northwest with seventy-four Catholic schools in forty parishes. There was a chain of major missionary sites that stretched from Red River northward through Île-à-la-Crosse, Fort Chipewyan, Lac la Biche, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, and Fort Good Hope. To the west, there was Edmonton and St Albert. There were also satellite missions from which missionaries could operate.

3.4 SUMMARY OF PROGRESS MADE BY THE ROMAN CATHOLICS IN THE NORTHWEST

This chapter has described the way that the Roman Catholic Church evolved from being the spiritual head of New France to the major representative of the francophone people of Lower Canada under the British Government. The Church pursued a policy of collaboration, which earned them the trust of their British overlords and allowed the lifting of the ban on clerical immigration to Quebec in the 1840s. The character of the Church and the subsequent character of

the missions was formed by the adoption of ultramontanism which reinforced its allegiance to a highly-centralised, traditionalist Church authority situated in Rome.

The missions to the Northwest began with an invitation from the founder of the Red River colony, to send two priests to help restore law and order there. Fr. Provencher, one of the priests, established the church and school in Red River before being promoted to bishop of a new diocese called the Diocese of the Northwest. The Church consolidated its position there until the 1830s when an attempt was made to establish a separate mission at Baie St Paul. In 1838, Provencher responded to a request from settlers in present-day British Columbia and arranged for two French Canadian priests to go there. They were eventually joined by Oblates directly from France and together they founded the Diocese of Cariboo.

In response to the news that the Anglicans in Red River were about to establish a mission at Cumberland House, approximately two hundred miles from the colony, Provencher sent Fr. Thibault on a horse-back mission, first to Lac Ste Anne, near present-day Edmonton, then to Grand Portage, La Loche. La Loche was not far from Cumberland House and was the site where hundreds of HBC voyageurs and Native tribesmen engaged in the fur trade congregated each year. Thibault laid the foundation for major mission centres at Île-à-la-Crosse and Lac Ste Anne. Provencher's last major accomplishment was in contracting the services of the Grey Nuns to Red River. Three sisters of the order arrived in 1844 just prior to the arrival of two Oblates. The Oblates arrived in Canada at a time when there was a Catholic revival taking place. Their immediate task was to fill vacancies in parish churches in Quebec, but when Provencher requested more assistance in the Northwest, the Oblates were more than happy to oblige. The vast majority of the approximately two hundred or so Oblates and Grey Nuns and lay brothers who were involved in missions between 1840 and 1885 endured almost unbelievable hardships

imposed by the climate, the vast distances that had to be travelled, and the loneliness of their missions. They bore them with patience, fortitude, and good humour as befitting a member of a religious order. Some, of course, did not stay the course, but many earned a good reputation among the white men and the First Nations people they served: their order continues to exist one hundred and seventy years after its debut in Canada.

4. Anglican Missions in the Canadian Northwest

4.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four of the paper will begin by describing the origins of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1799, its values, attitudes, beliefs and its policies, which made it into one of the most successful missionary organizations in the Protestant world. The Society was unofficially connected to those clerical members of the Church of England who were considered to be evangelical in their religion. The CMS was also connected to the Hudson's Bay Company through some of the HBC board members who were also on the CMS board. We will show how those connections enabled the CMS to adopt the Canadian Northwest as one of its many world-wide missions. Over the course of the duration of this dissertation, there were relatively few missionaries responsible for the spread of the Anglican form of Christianity in the Northwest and the leadership practiced a *laissez-faire* form of management in sharp contrast to their Catholic counterparts who maintained a strict centralized control of their missionaries. Thus, the history of the Anglicans is best understood by examining the beliefs and practices of individual missionaries. The missionaries built churches, established parishes and founded Native schools in Red River. As well as teaching religion and the "three Rs" they taught boys to farm and girls to master home-making skills such as might be taught in rural England, taking those practices to Native people at missions they established beyond the Red River colonies to the Hudson's Bay area, northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and eventually through the Mackenzie Valley to the Yukon.

4.2 CONTEXT OF THE ANGLICAN MISSIONS

At the close of hostilities that marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars in France, England was emerging as a major world power. Prosperity was booming partly as the result of the war, and partly because of the great advances in technology of the eighteenth century.

Notwithstanding that rationalism led to a rejection of religious belief, there was a major religious revival in the Western world that was common to Britain, France and the United States. One of the by-products of this revival in Britain was a deep conviction that there was an obligation to take the Gospel to the rest of the world, particularly to those places where Britain had a controlling interest. The Church leadership played a role in this movement, but voluntary missionary societies like the Church Missionary Society (CMS) provided the enthusiasm, the drive, and the funds that sustained the movement. These societies functioned as not-for-profit corporations and were governed by a board consisting of both lay and clerical members.

4.3 THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

In the late 1780s, a group of liberal-minded people founded a society that became known as the Clapham Sect. Their principal objectives were charity, philanthropic acts, the abolition of slavery, foreign missions and the distribution of Bibles. They considered themselves evangelical in their religious outlook and disagreed with the policies of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), a long-established mission society, which they believed represented the conservative ruling elite of the Church of England.¹¹⁶ Accordingly, the group formed a separate missionary society, one that would ensure that their missionaries would be like-minded evangelicals. The CMS began in 1799 under the leadership of the Rev. John Venn with the stated aim to of taking the Gospel to native people around the world. A resolution passed at its first

¹¹⁶ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol. 1, 69.

meeting encapsulated the purpose and the spirit of the society: "It is the duty highly incumbent upon every Christian to endeavour to propagate the knowledge of the Gospel among the Heathen."¹¹⁷ They also articulated a few operating principles including (1) to employ only missionaries with evangelical leanings, (2) to emulate the missionaries of the early Church, (3) to begin humbly on a small scale, (4) to rank money after prayer and study, and (5) to depend on the Holy Spirit. By 1815, the CMS had sent missionaries to India, Africa, the South Pacific and China. All served large populations of "heathens" and attracted a relatively large number of well-educated recruits. In contrast the Northwest of Canada held a population of less than 100,000, considerably less than the population of most of the cities in Britain.

Initially, the CMS recruits were from ordained ministers or from university graduates specializing in religious studies. Some training was given to the latter by a form of internship with individual ministers, but no systematic training for missions was available. Those who were ordained, but not in possession of a "living," occupied a position on the lowest rung of the British middle class. They could improve both their financial position and social status by becoming a missionary.¹¹⁸ As the number of qualified recruits dropped, the CMS was forced to take people with very little formal education. In fact, the majority of those people recruited for missions in the Canadian Northwest fitted into this latter category. Annual salaries of between £100 and £200 were offered to missionaries, which was far in excess they might have expected in England. In addition, they and their wives were provided with travel expenses for a furlough in Britain

¹¹⁷ Church Missionary Archives: "General Introduction and Guide to the Archives." Rosemary Keen, ed. [Cited February 1st 2013] On line at: http://www.ampltd.co.uk/digital_guides/church_missionary_society_archive_general/editorial%20introduction%20by%20rosemary%20keen.aspx."

¹¹⁸ Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 58,59.

after five years of service in the field. This represented a powerful incentive to enter the missionary field.

In contrast, the Roman Catholic missions were supported by a class of lay brothers who acted as support workers for ordained priests. Like the priests they had taken the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and could allow priests to concentrate on conversion. Another important consideration was that they did not draw a salary. The CMS had debated the introduction of a Protestant version of sisters and lay brothers, but had decided against it.¹¹⁹ The concept of free labour, while attractive to the accountants of the CMS, may have smacked too much of slavery. Also, the concept of free labour was not in accordance with the Biblical text: “The labourer is worthy of his hire.”

In 1825, the CMS opened a training centre in Islington in North London to educate non-university trained recruits to a level necessary for their ordination as ministers and the means through which they could be prepared for the somewhat daunting task of spreading the Gospel in foreign lands. It was a formidable task because of the diverse educational background of the students. Stock quotes five categories of students recognised by the college: returned catechists, English non-graduates, graduates, Germans and others. The most common student was the second category, the non-graduates, who came from the whole spectrum of English society, but who generally had not attended university; the other common denominator, not surprisingly, was that they all had pious parents.

There were also a number of native students who had been recruited from CMS missions overseas. Of these, we should note Henry Budd jnr., the son of Rev. Henry Budd, who was the

¹¹⁹ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol.2, 72.

first aboriginal to be ordained in Rupert's Land. Sadly, the young Henry exhibited the symptoms of consumption and was obliged to leave the course before graduating.

Another "star" student who attained the rank of arch-deacon in Manitoba was Abraham Cowley who was described by Childe in these terms: "He is a stonemason by original calling, and he is able either to build a stone wall, or go through one, as occasion may require."¹²⁰ Two other notable graduates of the school were James Hunter and Robert Hunt, both of whom served in Rupert's Land. Hunt was the author of the syllabic system for reducing languages to writing. Another Canadian was D.A. Watkins who was the first missionary to the Inuit.

As part of the curriculum, students at the college were obliged to do missionary work in the adjacent parish. It was one of the worst districts in London containing as it did, seven Irish "courts" near the "Angel." "These courts were crowded with poor Roman Catholic Irish noted for their lawlessness and drunkenness, among whom no policeman used to go alone." However, they proved to be excellent training grounds for the would-be missionaries who could confidently expect to be confronted with some awful situations in their future careers. Students made pastoral visits and held Sunday services for families and Sunday school for children. Whilst some students were threatened—one by an Irishman wielding a red-hot poker—few sustained actual injuries and in general they were well-regarded by the populace. Eugene Stock noted with some irony that the programme must have been effective because it was "publically denounced from the altar in the large Roman Catholic Church in Duncan Terrace (an area adjacent to Islington)."¹²¹

¹²⁰ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol. 2, 77.

¹²¹ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol. 2, 80.

The problem of ordaining missionaries with such abbreviated qualifications before their departure overseas was solved by the introduction of a section in the Colonial Service Act of 1819 that empowered the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London to ordain men For His Majesty's Colonies and Possession under certain restrictions. Invariably, the Bishop of London ordained the men on the recommendation of the CMS.

While the Church of England was a state-financed institution, it did not provide any financing to the CMS. In fact up to the 1850s when missionary work was enthusiastically adopted by the upper classes, the church treated their evangelical-minded members with disdain. Their only concession was to allow missionaries to speak from the pulpit about their experiences and attempt recruitment. Otherwise, funding came entirely from public subscriptions; sometimes from bequests, but mostly from donations made at public lectures given by retired missionaries or from missionaries on furlough. Funds had been sufficient to meet the needs of the missions until a slowdown in the economy at the beginning of the 1840s, combined with the adoption of a more ambitious mission programme by the CMS caused a major deficit. As will become apparent, this was at a time when opportunities for expansion of the Anglican missions beyond Red River presented themselves and it also coincided with a time when the Catholic's Institute for the Propagation of the Faith's fund-raising efforts were at an all-time high.

The auditors of the CMS wanted the society to taking drastic action, including the closure of some of the smaller missions, such as "North America." They also recommended that no new missionaries were to be hired, except to fill vacancies in the missions, and no new students were to be sent to the Islington College. Several principles were articulated or rearticulated; the most pertinent to the North American mission was as follows:

All missionary operations should, from the first, contain within themselves the germ of the self supporting principle. . . Native converts should be habituated to the idea that the [financial] support of a Native ministry must eventually fall upon themselves. . . . It is not meant that native converts should contribute toward the maintenance of European agents; but it may be reasonably expected that they should, from the first, bear some portion of the necessary expenses of Native ministrations and of the Christian education of their children.¹²²

The Annual General Meeting where the financial report was to be approved was a stormy one. The four bankers who comprised the Finance Committee held that since missions were sacred duties it was incumbent on everyone to stay within their budgets. “It is our full persuasion that Divine Blessing cannot be expected without a firm adherence to this principle.”¹²³

Venn appealed to the founding principle of relying on the Holy Spirit:

Let it not be supposed that it is on gold, or silver, or patronage, that they [the Finance Committee] found their hopes of success. God Forbid! It is the faithful, plain, and full maintenance of those great principles of the truth as it is in Jesus, by all the agents and missionaries of this Society, without compromise and without reserve. . . . upon which the Blessing of God has rested, does rest and ever will rest.¹²⁴

The meeting approved the principles of the report, but not the recommendations relating to closures, recruitment or training. The North American Mission had been saved.

Evidently, the Holy Spirit came through. An appeal was launched and the following year the revenues of the society rose to £115,000, an increase of 30%, more than enough to wipe out the accumulated deficit. Nevertheless, the message went out that the utmost economy had to be practised. The decision to use Native personnel as catechists, teachers, and eventually ministers was reinforced by the 1842 AGM.¹²⁵

¹²² Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol.1, 483.

¹²³ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol.1, 483

¹²⁴ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol.1, 484.

¹²⁵ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol.1, 483.

As already discussed, the majority of recruits and funds provided to the CMS were for the more exotic destinations like India and China. However, the CMS decided to consider the addition of a mission to the Canadian Northwest for a number of reasons. One was the popularity of the accounts of Alexander Mackenzie's journeys in Canada. Not only did he write about the customs and practices of the native people, but he also wrote extensively about the difficulty that native people had in readapting to the old ways when traders like the HBC moved on to other areas after exhausting the supply of animals.¹²⁶ The second, and much more compelling, reason was that some of the board members of the CMS were also governors of the HBC. When the public learned that the East India Company, a similar trading organization operating in India, had exploited the Indians and denied access to missionaries, a wave of anti-corporate sentiment swept Britain. Shortly afterwards, details of the Seven Oaks massacre in Red River became known and the public spotlight shone on the HBC. Lord Selkirk, a major shareholder of the HBC and founder of the Red River colony, had already moved to protect the colony's reputation by inviting Roman Catholic priests to help restore law and order, and he rightly determined that such an action would provide the necessary incentive for the HBC to encourage the dispatch of Anglican missionaries. Accordingly, the HBC Board appointed Rev. John West as the company's chaplain in 1816. He in turn used his position as a member of the founding group of the CMS to persuade the latter to adopt the Canadian Northwest as one of its mission targets. The CMS agreed that West would conduct an assessment of the feasibility of a mission to the Northwest and in the event that West's report was favourable, they would commit financial and human resources to the Christianization of the "heathen."

¹²⁶ Robert Coutts, *The Road to the Rapids*, 25.

4.4 ANTI-CATHOLIC SENTIMENTS WITHIN THE CMS

The students graduating from the Islington College would have been hard-pressed not to have absorbed the anti-Catholic bias that permeated much of British society in the early nineteenth century particularly in the lower-middle class, the home of the evangelical arm of the Church of England, and by extension, the CMS.

The visceral hatred that characterized English attitudes towards Catholics in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries had their beginning in the sixteenth century when Queen Mary attempted a forced return of Protestant England to Catholicism through a nation-wide persecution. Those sentiments were somewhat ameliorated by the excesses of religious piety imposed on the English people by the Puritans during the Commonwealth (1649 -1660), but were reignited when James II (1685-1688) again tried to turn England back to Catholicism. The “Glorious Revolution” of 1688 forced James to abdicate, but a series of conspiracies by his supporters culminated in a near civil war in 1745. Bonnie Prince Charlie, the grandson of James II, attempted to seize the throne by leading a Scottish army into England. The invasion failed and the Scottish forces were routed, but the anti-Catholic sentiment that followed forced a number of Acts of Parliament that disenfranchised Catholics and outlawed their religious practices.

Measures by the government to pass an Act of Union with Ireland determined that it would be prudent to ameliorate the measures against Catholics and various reforms passed in Parliament allowed Catholics to practice their own form of Christianity, to vote, and to hold public office. However, the pro-Catholic leanings of the governing classes were not shared by the common people. The popular press poured out a steady stream of vituperative articles whenever the subject of Catholicism appeared. That these views were current within the

evangelically-biased members of the Church of England and the CMS can be readily discerned in the writings of Eugene Stock and in the words in the CMS Annual Report of 1847.¹²⁷

Anti-Catholic sentiment was also evident in the Anglican Church in Eastern Canada.

Robert Black, commenting on attitudes of protestants in Quebec in his paper “Multiple Divisions,” says:

They [Protestants] believed Roman Catholic Catholicism was a superstitious, corrupt system, and a caricature of truth, because of such matters as the strong political influence of the Roman Catholic Church clergy, the Roman Catholic prohibition against individual perusal and interpretation of the Bible, and the absence of significant educational provisions for Roman Catholics--all matters which evangelicals regarded as restrictions on the individual’s “right of private judgement”--Roman Catholicism was to evangelicals a system inimical to the liberties and responsibilities and hence the prosperity and peace of Anglo-American Protestant civilisation. Protestants generally believed that the progressiveness of their civilisation was a sign of God’s blessing on it, and at least some French Canadians were inclined to agree with them.¹²⁸

These sentiments which were well-formed in the minds of the graduating missionaries can be readily discerned in their writings and their future actions in the field.

4.5 ANGLICANS IN THE RED RIVER COLONY

4.5.1 The Appointment of the Rev. John West at Red River

As noted above, the HBC appointed John West as chaplain in or about 1818. As a member of the Clapham Sect, West found it easy to persuade the CMS to provide a missionary presence at Red River especially with the anti Catholic sentiment within the CMS and the encouragement of HBC’s major shareholder, Lord Selkirk. Consequently, West went to Canada

¹²⁷ Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, vol.1, 483.

¹²⁸ Robert Merrill Black, “Different Visions: The Multiplication Of Protestant Missions To French-Canadian Roman Catholics, 1834 To 1855” in *Canadian Protestant And Catholic Missions, 1820s to 1960s : Historical Essays In Honour Of John Webster Grant* (ed. John S. Moir and C.T. McIntire; New York: Peter Lang, 1968), 52.

in 1820 with a mandate from the HBC to open a school for the children of HBC employees and a mandate from the CMS to examine the feasibility of sending missionaries to the Native people in the region. There was no interest on the part of the HBC in educating any children other than those of their employees, so the CMS agreed to pay two thirds of West's £350 per year salary. Mr. George Harbridge, engaged as a teacher by the HBC, accompanied West on his outward journey.¹²⁹

West was from an aristocratic family, was highly educated and was an experienced parish priest. He was an odd choice for the chaplaincy, especially as it related to the Red River colony where the majority of Protestants were Selkirk's highlanders whose primary loyalty was to the Church of Scotland. The Scots had repeatedly petitioned the HBC to provide a Presbyterian minister, but for unknown reasons the HBC had been unable to recruit anyone willing to go. The HBC, mindful of the need to keep the peace with the Catholics, reasoned that West, with his "high-church" sensibilities would be an acceptable compromise. In the event, Scottish attendance at West's church during his three-year stay in Red River was "minimal."

Governor Simpson of the HBC had impressed on West the need to preserve stability in the colony and on no account to interfere with the smooth running of the Catholic institutions whose school and church were flourishing. Simpson also wrote to Provencher asking him to afford a maximum amount of courtesy to the newcomer.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Winona L. Stevens, "The Church Missionary Society Red River Mission and the Emergence of a Native Ministry 1820-1860, with a Case Study of Charles Pratt of Touchwood Hills," (MA Diss. University of Manitoba, 1988), 24.

¹³⁰ A.N. Thompson, *The Expansion of the Church of England in Rupert's Land From 1820 to 1839 Under the Hudson's Bay Company and the Church Missionary Society* (Edmonton: High Level Book Bindery Ltd., 1962).

West first went to the main port-of-entry of the HBC's western headquarters at York Factory on the shores of the Hudson's Bay to meet with HBC officials there and become familiar with the habits and customs of the indigenous people. He developed a plan for the foundation of a school at Red River which would best suit the needs of the HBC, but which at the same time could be used for the education of the Native people. On his journey from York Factory, West had asked his native host whether he would consider sending his child to a school in Red River if one were available. The father willingly consented. West recorded in his journal entry on May 10, 1821: "Thus was I encouraged in the idea, that native children might be collected from the wandering tribes of the north, and educated in the knowledge of the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent."¹³¹ In order to be viable, he reasoned, the school would have to be residential in nature and therefore would need the willing consent of the Native people to part with their children. West was not able to get agreement for the opening of a school for the children of the HBC employees because his projected cost was too much for the HBC, but the CMS agreed to finance a school for native children. When West arrived at Red River, he immediately found temporary accommodation for a school, which was to be run by Mr. Harbridge and his wife. West wrote about the school in 1822 in his journal:

I had now several [Native children] under my care who could converse pretty freely in English and were beginning to read tolerably well, repeating the Lord's Prayer correctly. The primary object in teaching them, was to give them a religious education; but the use of the bow was not to be forgotten, and they were hereafter to be engaged in hunting as opportunities and circumstances might allow. As agriculture was an important branch in the system of instruction, I had given them some small portions of ground to cultivate, and I never saw European school-boys more delighted than they were in hoeing and planting their separate gardens.¹³²

¹³¹ John West, *Substance of a Journal During Residence at the Red River Colony* (1824), (Toronto: Sand R. Publishers Ltd., Johnson Reprint Company, 1966), 59.

¹³² John West, *Substance of a Journal*, 91.

Here was the foundation of the education policy, which was perfected by West's successors.

A log church soon followed and attendance in both buildings increased to the extent that when West left for England in 1823, the school housed fifty children, including a few native children and several of mixed race. Average church attendance was 150 and the foundation for the new stone church of St Andrew's was begun soon after West's departure.¹³³

West travelled extensively to other trading centres like Qu'Appelle and met with a large number of native people *en route*. He continued to be appalled at the moral depravity of the natives and regularly harangued the manager of the HBC for his lack of action in insisting his employees set a good Christian example by marrying their partners and baptizing their children.¹³⁴

In his travels, West had formed a number of opinions about what might constitute a good approach to missions. First, he decided that it would be better to concentrate his energy on native children, teaching them English, so that they would be able to absorb the message of the Gospel. Second, West concluded that the nomadic life of the native people would interfere with the conversion process, and he believed that farming was a suitable alternative.¹³⁵ West's school plan did not include the outright rejection of the native culture, nor their language. His long-term goals were that his pupils should return to the land after graduation to play a major role in the conversion process. For that reason, he insisted that his pupils maintain their hunting and

¹³³ George Jehoshaphat Mountain, *The Journal of the Bishop of Montreal, during a Visit to the Church Missionary Society's North-West America Mission*, n.p. [Cited on May 8th 2012]. Online: <http://anglicanhistory.org/canada/gjmountain/journal1849/intro.html>

¹³⁴ Robert J. Coutts, *The Road to the Rapids*, 28.

¹³⁵ Winona L. Stevens, *The Church Missionary Society: Red River Mission*, 27.

trapping skills and the use of their native language so that they would not be rejected by their kinfolk.¹³⁶ Among the native children whom West recruited were Henry Budd, James Hope, Charles Pratt and James Settee. All were raised at the Red River Academy and all became missionaries, teachers or catechists in their own right.

When Sir John Franklin arrived at Red River on his way to explore of the Arctic, West accepted his offer to travel with him as far as Fort Churchill to meet the Innu people there. The 200-mile journey on foot proved arduous, but West received a cordial reception from the Innu and received permission from the parents of two Chipewyan children to take them back to Red River to be educated.¹³⁷ After the trip, West prepared for a furlough in Britain not knowing that his employment as an HBC chaplain would be terminated.

Neither West's imperious demeanour nor his ideas for the education of native children endeared him to Governor Simpson, who wanted the natives to be maintained in their original condition so that they could remain useful to the fur trade. As well, West had campaigned for the abolition of alcohol as an instrument of trade to the fury of Simpson. Simpson ensured that West's proposed vacation in England would be permanent.¹³⁸

West is credited with forming the blue-print for Anglican missionary work in the Northwest and particularly in the education of young children. As well, his reports to the CMS were widely distributed and contributed to greater public subscriptions to the society. It also

¹³⁶ Winona L. Stevens, *The Church Missionary Society: Red River Mission*, 64.

¹³⁷ Sarah Tucker, *The Rainbow in the North: A Short Account of the First Establishment of Christianity in Rupert's Land by the Church Missionary Society* (London: James Nisbet, 1851). [Cited on May 9th 2012] Online: <http://anglicanhistory.org/Canada/rainbow/02.html>.

¹³⁸ Robert J. Coutts, *The Road to the Rapids*, 30.

assured the CMS's continuing interest in Canada. Alan Hayes sums up West's contributions nicely in his book, *Anglicans in Canada*:

During his time in Red River, West led the church services, gave religious instruction, offered pastoral care, baptized, persuaded people “living in sin” to marry, evangelized Indians and opened the church and the school to which St John's Cathedral and St John's College in Winnipeg traced their origins. He envisaged the Red River Settlement as a missionary centre for the whole of the Northwest—which indeed is what it became.¹³⁹

4.5.2 The Rev. David Jones

During the period between West's departure for Europe and the assumption of the chaplaincy by Rev. David Jones, the schoolteacher, Mr. Harbridge, had taken on the duties of the pastor, providing the settlers with the sacraments as necessity dictated. Rev. Jones was a very young man and had not had the benefit of the missionary school in England. His first concern was that Harbridge was not an ordained minister and therefore his officiating at marriages and baptisms was not strictly in accordance with canon law. The low moral climate in the settlement horrified Jones—at the tender age of twenty-two, he had not been exposed to the “world of sin,” but the fact that he might make matters worse by performing the marriage ceremony a second time horrified him even more. In a letter to the CMS he asked “If a couple had been married by a lay person would the children of the union be illegitimised [sic] if I were to marry them again? Secondly, should I baptize people who had no inkling of the gospel or of any religious principles?” There was some urgency here because, as Rev. Jones put it, “people who want to justify living in sin say that they will not marry a heathen. That is, a native who has not been

¹³⁹ Alan Hayes, *Anglicans in Canada: Controversies and Identity in a Historical Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 21.

baptised.” The third question was to what extent he, Jones, was justified in withholding the sacrament to a dying person who asks for it if that person was a heathen.¹⁴⁰

These questions were reasonable in the light of Jones’ inexperience. He had had only a few weeks with West at York Factory before West had left for England, and Jones might well have been in awe of the highly experienced West. Knowledge of the basic tenets of Christian beliefs that are embodied in the Ten Commandments, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer are generally considered necessary for an adult seeking baptism. However, in the case of native people who had only a rudimentary knowledge of English and a minister who had no knowledge of the Native languages there was indeed a need for expert advice. West had solved the problem by getting the children in the school to learn the catechism in English by rote, even though they had no knowledge of the actual meaning of the words. This question was not exclusive to Jones; all the missionaries had to wrestle with the issue and do the best they could.

If Simpson was obliged to accommodate an Anglican minister, then Jones was his man. He was more easily intimidated than his predecessor and came with a more flexible approach to his ministry. Jones adopted a less critical stance in preaching. He removed those parts of the liturgy that the Scots found offensive and refrained from using the Book of Common Prayer. Although a few of the Scots still complained about the lack of a Presbyterian minister, the majority accepted the Rev. Jones and supported his efforts in the rebuilding and financing of a larger school building, which now included the children of the HBC employees. In building a new school at Image Plains, about ten miles downriver from the Forks, Jones enlisted the whole community and in so doing forged a more cohesive society within the colony. The HBC

¹⁴⁰ Letter from Rev. Jones to General Secretary Pratt, dated July 24th 1824 .: A.P.A.: CMS/C.1/L.1, Reel A-75, pp. 10-14.

management found Jones' congeniality much more acceptable than West's confrontational style and agreed to help both materially and financially with the church. Robert Pelly, the Governor of the Settlement, became its patron, and Simpson was reported to have worked on its construction. Upon completion, the church was already too small for the congregation: the first Native communicant was admitted at Christmas 1824 and there were 31 Native children and 40 children of HBC employees in the schools.¹⁴¹ Everything was going well for the Anglicans at Red River; Jones was fully accepted by settlers, and both the mission and the school were growing. The winter of 1824/25, however, brought disaster in the form of an exceptionally heavy snowfall, which lasted for several days. In the words of T.C.B. Boon, it "drove the buffalo beyond the hunters' reach and killed off most of the horses."¹⁴² Boon continues:

With the loss of the livestock, famine was a distinct possibility, and the severity of the winter with temperatures in the -45F range confirmed it. Spring came late and when it did the river rose nine feet in the course of twenty-four hours. The settlement was devastated; almost all the houses were swept away, but the external building of the Upper Church and the Lower Church and the parsonage survived. Desperate shortages and privation persisted through 1825 and 1826. Freedom from hunger was not achieved until the crop of 1827 was harvested.¹⁴³

Jones took a leave of absence to return to England to be married to his fiancée of five years. On his return, he broached the concept of an enlarged academy for the children of HBC employees "separated from the other children and the only language they would hear would be English." Surprisingly, considering his former antipathy to education, Simpson, who was mellowing in his opposition to missionaries—probably because he no longer saw them as a threat, agreed with the proposal and asked that a similar establishment for girls be built and staffed by the Church at the HBC's expense. A new schoolmaster and a governess were hired

¹⁴¹ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 24.

¹⁴² T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 25.

¹⁴³ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 25.

from England and the academy was open for business in 1832. Jones was now highly respected by the Protestant community and by the HBC. Under these circumstances, he had no qualms about asking the CMS for a raise in salary.

The calls for charity in the hard season of winter are more than I can meet, and there is a degree of respectability to be kept up, which if neglected would generate contempt in the minds of those with whom I have intercourse.¹⁴⁴

Jones continued to consolidate the Anglican bastion at Red River, which boasted three substantial churches, the Academy and the Church Missionary School.

Jones never mentioned the work of his Roman Catholic counterparts, but in a letter written to the CMS, he offered an enlightening comment about his relationship with them:

I am upon the best footing imaginable with the Roman Catholics as I seldom even meet them, except at the Governor's table and all our intercourse then consists of mutual civilities. They are touched to the quick at the aspect of things here at present, and I sincerely hope that should Governor Pelly be removed from us, a circumstance that I dread, that no one of the Catholic Creed will be put in authority.¹⁴⁵

Jones's wife died in childbirth in 1836, but he continued working until 1838 when, to everyone's regret, he announced his departure for England.¹⁴⁶

Before Jones left, Peguis, the Chief of the Red River band, asked Jones to deliver a message to the General Secretary of the CMS, which he, Peguis, had written when it seemed to him likely that the missionaries would abandon Red River entirely. It was an impassioned plea for the retention of the missionaries:

¹⁴⁴ Letter from Rev. Jones to General Secretary Pratt dated October 8th 1826: A.P.A. C.1/L.1, Reel A-75, pp. 18-20.

¹⁴⁵ Letter from Rev. Jones to General Secretary Pratt, dated July 24th 1824: A.P.A.: CMS/C.1/L.1, Reel A-75, pp. 10-14.

¹⁴⁶ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 34.

Mr. Jones is now going to leave us. Mr. Cockran is talking of leaving us. Must we turn to our idols and gods again? Or must we turn to the French Praying-Masters for protection and assistance, where a good three French praying masters has [sic] arrived in the River, and not one for us. What is this, our friends? The Word of God says, that one soul is worth more than all the world. Surely then, our friends, three hundred souls is worthy of one Praying-Master.¹⁴⁷

Apart from the not very subtle blackmail contained in the letter, Peguis obviously valued the ministry of the Anglican Church.

4.5.3 Rev. William Cockran

Jones' successor in Red River, Rev. Cockran, had actually arrived with his wife in 1826 and, after a brief familiarization period, took up residence at Grand Rapids. He had been born in Northumberland and had a strong north-country accent, which, when combined with his lower middle-class upbringing, did not endear him to the gentrified classes in the Church of England. He was a big man physically and larger than life in character, so that what he failed to do by persuasion he could achieve by brute strength. (Once he physically dragged an adulterous and recalcitrant husband away from his mistress and returned him to his wife and family. The man was said to remain faithful to his wife and the church ever afterwards).¹⁴⁸ Cockran was a dominating character, but also patient and particularly adept at training Native people. In many ways, he was the polar opposite of John West. Where West was distinctly "high church," Cockran was a pure evangelical. Where West complained about sin from the pulpit, Cockran enforced clean living on the streets—by the force of his personality. West had preached respect for native culture and believed in the ability of his native pupils to graduate as mission workers,

¹⁴⁷ Alan L Hayes: *Anglicans in Canada: Controversies and Identity in Historical Perspective* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 216.

¹⁴⁸ George van der Goes Ladd, "Father Cockran and his Children: Poisonous Pedagogy on the Banks of the Red" in *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada 1820-1970* (ed. Barry Ferguson; Canadian Plains Research Centre: University of Regina, 1991), 65-66.

but Cockran believed that it was necessary to educate them such as to renounce all aspects of their culture. Where West had emphasized the education of natives from a young age, Cockran believed that complementing that education with vocational training would be a more certain way to achieve their common goal.¹⁴⁹ Cockran had come from a farming background and believed that teaching Native people to farm would achieve a number of objectives. First, it would encourage the Natives to forsake their itinerant lifestyle in favour of living in fixed communities where regular religious instruction was available. Second, it would instil a “Protestant work ethic” where the immediate gratification of the hunter is replaced by labouring in the present to reap rewards in the future—what Bertrand Russell identified as “prudence, which readily distinguishes the civilized man from the savage.”¹⁵⁰ Thirdly, it would place communities on a solid economic footing, thereby eliminating the cycle of starvation and privation that is the common lot of hunters when the supply of game animals fails.

Cockran dedicated the seventeen years that he spent as archdeacon of Red River to putting into effect his original vision of creating rural English parishes in the wilderness by civilizing the Native people and making them into farmers. His reports to the CMS over the years reflect both the frustrations and joys as he toiled to make his dream a reality:

It is almost three years since I began preparations in the colony in raising a heathen church that would sing praises to the Redeemer in the wilderness and put the cares and toils and disappointments and grief in a scale opposite my encouragement. The former seems so much to predominate that I blush and am speechless and have to ease an overburdened heart with a deep sigh.

¹⁴⁹ Terence Murphy, “The English Speaking Colonies to 1854,” in *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (ed. Terence Murphy and Roberto Perin; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 154-156.

¹⁵⁰ Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge Classics, 2004), 25.

He followed this with an account of crop failures and the seeming impossibility of getting the Native people to work: “after a generation it might be possible.”¹⁵¹

On his approaching retirement as an active priest in the church, he could look back on a lifetime of hard work, having founded thirteen parishes, including St. Mary La Prairie at Portage La Prairie. He had suffered personal loss when his second son had died of fever at the age of fourteen, and took away a feeling of inadequacy for not achieving his personal objective of “establishing an unbroken chain of Anglican missions between Sault Ste Marie and Red River.” Rather unfairly, he blamed the Roman Catholics and other denominations for creating their own missions and “leading the Indians away from the truth”:

At Fort Alexander the Roman Catholic and the Wesleyans have both made an effort to convert, but have met with a spirit of indifference. At Fort William, the Roman priests have baptized the Indians and left them in the same state of ignorance in which they found them, but this suits their indolence and dispositions and they feel perfectly satisfied with what they know. . . . Neepigon is the only hope of founding a mission; there are three hundred souls who have not yet had their minds seared by opposite statements concerning the Christian religion [the Roman Catholics and/ or the Methodists].¹⁵²

He concludes his letter with an exhortation to future missionaries to “Go to the North and West and pray that God will command his blessings on OUR church—before popery and schism have poisoned and seared the mind of the Indians.”¹⁵³

Cockran was a blend of brute force and fierce dedication to a life-long cause. He was revered by most of his contemporaries and despised by a few. He suited the model recruit that

¹⁵¹ Letter from William Cockran to the General Secretary of the CMS in London, dated July 11th 1831; A.P.A. C.1/M. Reel A.75, pp. 112.

¹⁵² Letter from William Cockran to the General Secretary of the CMS, dated April 14th 1847. A.P.A. C.1/M. Reel A.75, pp. 203-204.

¹⁵³ Letter from William Cockran to the General Secretary of the CMS, dated April 14th 1847. A.P.A. C.1/M. Reel A.75, pp. 203-204.

¹⁵³ J.E. Foster, “William Cockran” in Dictionary of Canadian Biography On line. [Cited on February 15th 2013]. Online: http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4358

Bishop William Bompas had in mind: “They should be drawn from the lower classes in England whose reward would lie in the advancement in their standing as missionaries, so that they would not want to leave.” In Britain, Cockran would have been of little account, but in Canada he had the opportunity to become a lord. J. W. Brooks of the CMS commented, “. . . he [Cockran] would not suit a congregation in England, his origin is low, his wife, though a discreet and pious woman, was a servant maid, his manners unpolished and indicate his origins . . . his dialect broad and vulgar, even for a Scotchman.”¹⁵⁴

Cockran’s retirement from active duty marked the end of an era. Although there had been failures, the model farms/school system, which complemented the conversion of the Natives, became the standardized method of Christianization for both Protestants and Catholics alike; it also informed the policies of the Canadian government’s nineteenth-century treaties with the tribes of the western prairies.

4.6 VISITATION OF BISHOP MOUNTAIN AT RED RIVER IN 1844

By 1844, when the Bishop of Montreal, Jehoshaphat Mountain, made the first Episcopal visitation to the Red River Colony, the Anglican mission had been in existence for nearly twenty years, two years less than the Roman Catholic one. The Colony had grown to 5,143 people of whom 2,798 were Roman Catholic and 2,345 registered themselves as Protestants in the 1843 census. Of 870 heads of family in the colony, 571 were of the Native or mixed-race.¹⁵⁵ During

¹⁵⁴ J.E. Foster, “William Cockran” in Dictionary of Canadian Biography On line. [Cited on February 15th 2013]. Online: http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4358

¹⁵⁵ George Jehoshaphat Mountain, *The Journal of the Bishop of Montreal, during a Visit to the Church Missionary Society's North-West America Mission*, 1849, n. p. [Cited January 3rd 2013]. Online: <http://anglicanhistory.org/canada/gjmountain/journal1849/intro.html>

his three-week stay, the bishop held five communion services and confirmed 846 candidates in the three churches of St Andrew's, St Paul's and St John's. He also confirmed 204 native converts at the Native settlement church of St Peter's and ordained John McCallum and Mr. Abraham Cowley as priests.¹⁵⁶ Mountain sent a long report of his visit to the CMS in London. The report provided an account of his 1,500-mile return journey from Montreal to the colony, and a detailed account of the three weeks he spent in the colony. During the journey, he had had the opportunity to see First Nations people in their native state and was much impressed by the contrast between "the naked and depraved savages" and the well-dressed and well-mannered natives whom he met at the colony.

I had here an opportunity to see the great influence of the clergy and the willing acquiescence of the people, proceeding not from any artfully acquired authority, or determined by the established hand of an imperious authority, but as I verily believe, from the faithful devotedness of the men employed in the Mission for the concern which they have manifested for the souls of those committed to them; from the power of the Holy truths which have been pressed upon the acceptance of sinful man; and from the benefits also which have flowed in the most conspicuous manner, from the formation of the mission in the colony.¹⁵⁷

Mountain's complimentary remarks are addressed to the CMS. Up to the time of the visit, the Anglican Church in Eastern Canada had left the mission at Red River almost entirely in the hands of the CMS. However, the Northwest would soon become a discrete diocese and as the metropolitan of Canada, Mountain would have some involvement in its creation. For that, he needed the co-operation of the CMS and a continuation of its funding,

Mountain had good reason to be pleased with what he saw of the mission. Four well-attended churches had been built, well-cultivated farms were established and provided some of

¹⁵⁶ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 57.

¹⁵⁷ George Jehoshaphat Mountain, *The Journal of the Bishop of Montreal*, 57.

the dietary needs of the inhabitants. The school established by Rev. West in the 1820s had been enlarged to include a separate wing for girls, and the bishop was especially pleased by its neat and orderly appearance.¹⁵⁸

Mountain met the Governor of the colony and George Simpson, Principal of the Hudson's Bay Company. He also dined cordially with the Roman Catholic Bishop, but made no comment in his report about the content of any discussions held, if indeed anything of substance was discussed. Later, when he learned that the native Protestants were only half as likely to go on the annual buffalo hunt as their Roman Catholic contemporaries, he attributed it to "the mercurial temperament of the French whose blood had entered into the composition of the Romish population."¹⁵⁹

Mountain's visit came at a critical point in the development of the Anglican Church in the Northwest. A bishopric would have to be established at Red River, but there were two impediments. First, the establishment of a new Episcopal division would be an expensive proposition, and neither the Church of England nor the nascent Anglican Church of Canada had the necessary funds available. Secondly, the decision-making, the provision of trained clergymen, and the financing of the missionary initiative had been entirely the business of the CMS who would have to be consulted.¹⁶⁰

On his return to Montreal, he strongly recommended that Red River be established as a diocese from which to launch "a great missionary effort to Northwest America," and he wrote to the archbishops and bishops who constituted the Colonial Bishopric's Committee within the

¹⁵⁸ George Jehoshaphat Mountain, *The Journal of the Bishop of Montreal*, 96, 97.

¹⁵⁹ George Jehoshaphat Mountain, *The Journal of the Bishop of Montreal*, 96, 97.

¹⁶⁰ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 60.

Church of England recommending the urgency of the matter.¹⁶¹ Mountain, who kept a close watch on the activities of the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec, would likely have known intentions of the Roman Catholic Church with respect to missions in the Northwest. The Oblates had already arrived and were carrying out duties in the parishes of Quebec. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that he knew the advantages that would accrue to the Catholics when the Oblates were fully mobilised.

Mr. James Leith, a former partner of the independent XYZ Fur Trading Company, provided the major part of the solution to the financial problem. On his death in 1838, Leith left an endowment of £10,000 in trust for “the purpose of establishing, propagating and extending the Christian Protestant Religion in and amongst the native aboriginal Indians in that part of America known as Rupert’s Land, but now more generally known as the Hudson’s Bay Territory.”¹⁶² The Board of Directors of the Hudson’s Bay Company resolved to make an annual grant of £300 and donate a suitable house in Red River, which together with the interest from the endowment was judged to be sufficient for the sustainment of a bishopric in perpetuity, though not, in the short term at least, for a cathedral. The name of the diocese was to be called Rupert’s Land and its boundaries were concordant with those of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s original charter.¹⁶³

Some astute diplomacy between Bishop Mountain and Mr. Henry Venn, the General Secretary of the CMS, assured a nice solution to the second of the two problems. Venn had been appointed to the position in 1841 and had been a staunch advocate of a principle that missions should be “euthanized” as soon as properly educated indigenous people were ready to establish their own church. Thus, they could develop in a way that best served the peculiar needs of their

¹⁶¹ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 57.

¹⁶² T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 58.

¹⁶³ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 60.

own congregation. Better yet, if such a church were firmly anchored within an Episcopal framework, it would be less likely to form another independent Protestant church. Thus, the situation in Red River was entirely in accord with Venn's long-term strategic plans.¹⁶⁴ In spite of Mountain's earlier reservations about the difficulties of dealing with a CMS composed entirely of evangelicals, the arrangements for the launch of the new diocese and the selection of her bishop were seamless.

4.7 DAVID ANDERSON, FIRST BISHOP OF RUPERT'S LAND

David Anderson, the son of Captain Archibald Anderson of the East India Company, was born in London, obtained his BA at Oxford in 1836, and became a curate first at Liverpool and then at Everton before becoming Vice Principal of St Bee's College in 1841. He married in 1841, but his wife died in 1848, leaving him with three sons. The Archbishop of Canterbury nominated Anderson for the Bishopric of Rupert's Land in 1849 and he was consecrated at Canterbury on Whit Tuesday, 1849.¹⁶⁵

Before leaving England for Canada, Bishop Anderson was able to attend a meeting of the CMS, at which, as well as whole-heartedly approving the new diocese, the board voted five hundred pounds for the "establishment of a Seminary for the Education of Native Teachers in Rupert's Land," together with the travel costs and salary of a suitable teacher. They also underwrote the future costs of "maintaining a limited number of native catechists with a view to their Ordination and employment in the mission."¹⁶⁶ When Anderson arrived at the Red River

¹⁶⁴ Peter Williams, "Not Transplanting: 'Henry Venn's Strategic Vision,'" in *The Church Missionary Society and World Christianity, 1799-1999* (ed. Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 157.

¹⁶⁵ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 61.

¹⁶⁶ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 65.

Colony to take up his appointment, he had expected to begin to build up the diocese outside the colony, but the head of the Academy died just before Anderson's arrival. Thus, lacking anyone else to take over, Anderson assumed responsibility for its supervision.¹⁶⁷

Anderson appointed William Cockran and James Hunter as his Archdeacons, ordained the Native Henry Budd at La Pas, and sent James Settee to Stanley on the Churchill River. W.H. Taylor, another Native minister, went to the District of Assiniboine three miles up the river of that name, and John Horden went to Moose Factory on James Bay. Two of Horden's assistants, T. Vincent and J. Mackay, were ordained and gave "outstanding service." Robert McDonald and W.W. Kirby, a schoolmaster sent by the CMS to Red River, were ordained and became pioneers in the far north.¹⁶⁸

The Archbishop of Quebec, Philip Carrington, writing his history of the Anglican Church in Canada in 1963, described Anderson as "a small man who was socially agreeable and rather careful of his appearance."¹⁶⁹ This description seems rather at odds with Frits Pennekoek's biographical notes in which he emphasizes Anderson's frequent quarrels with the Red River people.¹⁷⁰ Anderson's first brush was with the Presbyterians when he insisted on restoring the liturgy of the English Book of Common Prayer. In 1851 when the Presbyterians finally obtained John Black as their own minister, they decided to form their own church, but demanded compensation for the interest on their pews during their thirty years when St John's was the only home for them. They also insisted on the right to continue to bury their dead according to

¹⁶⁷ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 67.

¹⁶⁸ Philip Carrington, *The Anglican Church in Canada*: 107.

¹⁶⁹ Philip Carrington, *The Anglican Church in Canada: A History*, 108.

¹⁷⁰ Frits Pannekoek, "David Anderson" in Dictionary of Canadian Biography On Line [Cited 11th February 2013]. Online: www.biographi.ca/index-e.html

Presbyterian practice. Anderson responded by announcing his intention to make St John's his cathedral and to re-consecrate its churchyard. This act prevented all but Anglican burials.¹⁷¹

Anderson persuaded the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), the Colonial and Continental Church Society, and the CMS to fund several ministers for parishes in Red River and for more missionaries. The number of ordained ministers in the Northwest had risen from five in 1849 to twenty-two in 1864, but the majority stayed in Red River.¹⁷² In the 1860s, discontent with the HBC's autocratic administration persuaded many European immigrants to petition the British government for a change in the governance of the colony. Anderson pushed for a Crown colony, but others wanted a more radical approach. Again, Anderson was the centre of a storm of dissent in the colony, which escalated to even greater fury when a sexual scandal that involved an Anglican clergyman became known.¹⁷³

One of Anderson's major contributions to the Northwest was the upgrading of the Red River Academy, which he renamed the St John's Collegiate School. Two graduates left the college to attend Cambridge University, another one went to Toronto, and eight went as either teachers or ministers to interior missions. Anderson had ordained twenty candidates during his ministry in the Diocese of Rupert's Land. Four of these were Cree, four were "countryborn," (of Scots and Native ancestry), and twelve came from England.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Frits Pannekoek, "David Anderson" in Dictionary of Canadian Biography On line, [Cited 11th February 2013]. Online: www.biographi.ca/index-e.html

¹⁷² Frits Pannekoek, "David Anderson," n. p.

¹⁷³ Frits Pannekoek, "David Anderson," n. p.

¹⁷⁴ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 83.

From 1854 to 1859, Rev. Cockran's son, Thomas, took up the vocation of principal of the Academy, but according to Pannekoek, Cockran's drinking habits and the general unpopularity of the Church of England in the settlement forced the closure of the school.¹⁷⁵

4.7.1 Rev. Henry Budd and Rev. James Hunter at Le Pas

Henry Budd was one of John West's Native protégés who attended the missionary school at Red River. He had graduated and found employment with the HBC then returned to the Red River Academy as a teacher. Budd was sent to Le Pas (close to Cumberland House) as a teacher in 1840. He was the first Native Anglican missionary in the Canadian Northwest outside Red River. Budd was very popular with the Native people in the area. The majority of people in the area were of Cree descent as was Budd, so that knowledge of the language and the customs of the people made him an ideal choice. When James Hunter and his wife arrived in 1844, he was pleased to see that the community had fifty-six children in school and an attendance of more than two hundred at services.¹⁷⁶ Hunter immediately set about building his own quarters and then followed the standard practice of putting the native children to schooling and farming. He began the building of Christ Church, a building 63 feet x 27 feet with a seventy-foot spire.¹⁷⁷ A year after the Hunters arrived, Mrs. Hunter died at the age of thirty-two. Hunter married Jean Ross, the daughter of the Chief Factor of the HBC at Norway House. Jean was an expert on Cree languages and provided the inspiration and the skills necessary to produce three Gospels, part of

¹⁷⁵ Frits Pannekoek, "David Anderson," Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online {Cited 11th February 2013}.

¹⁷⁶ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 61.

¹⁷⁷ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 61.

the Book of Common Prayer, Watt's Catechism, and numerous prayers and hymns in the Cree language.¹⁷⁸

In 1845, in response to a request from a native band at Lac La Ronge, a lake about two hundred miles to the north of Cumberland House, Hunter sent James Beardy, another Native Red River graduate, to begin a mission. Beardy's was a temporary appointment until James Settee, another of West's protégés, took over the site. The results were positive and the CMS agreed to establish a permanent mission there.¹⁷⁹

4.7.2 Rev. John Horden at Moose Factory

As mentioned above, an Anglican missionary centre was established at Moose Factory in 1850 at the same location where earlier a Methodist mission had closed after eight years of service. The CMS could not find an ordained minister for Moose Factory, but selected John Horden, a blacksmith and a successful teacher, as a catechist; Horden and his wife arrived in 1851. Bishop Anderson made the twenty-seven day trip to visit Horden the following year and was astonished at Horden's progress in the language. Anderson explained Horden's technique in his account of his visit to Moose Factory in *The Net in the Bay* after attending the examination of candidates for confirmation:¹⁸⁰

. . . the whole of the [Catechism] examination was conducted, without an interpreter, by Mr Horden being able to do all by himself. This is the best testimonial for holy orders, he has their hearts, affections, and their eyes turn to him at once. He tells me that he commenced by copying out long conversations taken down in their tents. Of these he obtained an

¹⁷⁸ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 62.

¹⁷⁹ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 62.

¹⁸⁰ David Anderson, Bishop of Rupert's Land, *The Net in the Bay: Journal of a Visit to Moose and Albany* (London: Thomas Hatchford, 1854), 125,

interpretation and wrote it down interlineally; long prayers in the same way as offered by Christian Indians he copied.¹⁸¹

After teaching himself Cree, he circulated translations of the Ten Commandments, extracts from the Gospels, and a few hymns, which he encouraged the people to copy. So impressed was the Bishop with Horden's progress that he resolved to ordain him then and there.¹⁸²

Anderson's visit to Moose Factory, his first since his assumption of the bishop's position in 1849, provides a good illustration of the difficulty in properly managing such a geographically extensive diocese as Rupert's Land. The round trip to Moose Factory required a canoe journey of about 2,400 miles and an absence from Red River of almost four months. During that time, he had ordained Horden and his assistant Watkins as deacons, and waived the normal probationary period in the case of Horden, so that the latter could be "priested" the following week and assume the duties of the minister of the Moosenee parish immediately. The bishop also appointed and directed Watkins to found a new parish at Fort George.¹⁸³

Horden's linguistic skills and his mastery of syllabics earned him a certain amount of fame, and with a printing press sent out to him from England in 1853, he printed 1600 copies of St Matthew's Gospel for distribution within the diocese. Between his arrival in 1851 and his departure for a vacation in England in 1865, he had baptized over 1800 Natives in Moose Factory and district.¹⁸⁴ Of greater importance, perhaps, was that in the course of his ministry he had taken part in building five churches and trained twelve native teachers. When the Diocese of Moosonee was created in 1872, Horden became its first bishop.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ David Anderson, Bishop of Rupert's Land, *The Net in the Bay*, 126,

¹⁸² David Anderson, Bishop of Rupert's Land, *The Net in the Bay*, 125.

¹⁸³ David Anderson, Bishop of Rupert's Land, *The Net in the Bay*, 127.

¹⁸⁴ T.C.B Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 78.

¹⁸⁵ Philip Carrington, *The Anglican Church in Canada*, 147.

4.7.3 Rev. Watkins at Fort George

The next Mission to be founded in the southern part of the diocese was at Fort George on the south-eastern side of Hudson's Bay in or about 1853. The post was to have been the destination of Rev. Horden, but when Bishop Anderson ordained him *in situ*, the mission was given to Rev. Watkins, who had recently graduated from the Islington School of the CMS. Watkins was later transferred to La Pas where he produced the first Dictionary of the Cree Language, printed by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) in 1865.¹⁸⁶

4.8 BEYOND THE ARCTIC CIRCLE:

MISSIONS IN THE MACKENZIE RIVER VALLEY

Rev. Hunter had been approached by one of the chiefs in the Athabasca area in 1848 to send teachers to his people, but it was not until ten years later that he took a leave of absence from his post at St Andrew's to journey to Fort Simpson. Being impressed by what he had seen *en route*, he wrote to the CMS recommending that two married missionaries be sent to the area with a view to establish a mission for the Anglican Church. With the concurrence of Bishop Anderson, Rev. William West Kirkby was transferred from his post as a priest at St Andrew's in Red River to establish a new mission in Fort Simpson in 1859.¹⁸⁷

4.8.1 Rev. West Kirkby

Kirkby settled into the new mission, but in 1861 made a journey to survey the western part of the Lower Mackenzie Valley. He travelled to the junction of the Peel River at which the HBC had established a trading post and was given every assistance from the Chief Factor and his

¹⁸⁶ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 79.

¹⁸⁷ Philip Carrington, *The Anglican Church in Canada*, 121.

wife. At this point, Kirkby was introduced to the Kutchin First Nation, or Gwich'in, as they are known today. Kirkby's knowledge of the Kutchin language was rudimentary, but the *lingua franca* of the fur traders was Cree, so Kirkby was able to converse reasonably well with the men of the tribes. The Gwich'in were a loose federation who occupied an area from about 67° N. in the south and with its eastern boundary at the western shore of Great Bear Lake.¹⁸⁸ The population was originally estimated at 3000, but the HBC census taken in 1879, gave only 1179. Petitot's 1865 estimate was 1,400 but by 1881 there may only have been 300 as the combination of European diseases, such as scarlet fever, measles, and warfare took their toll.¹⁸⁹

Kirkby determined to explore the whole of the Mackenzie Delta area, but turned back after meeting hostile Inuvialuit. On his return to Peel River, about 130 people came out to welcome him. Kirkby walked to La Pierre's House and on his way translated hymns which the Natives were eager to learn. Thence he went by York boat to Fort Yukon on the Yukon River, and at the junction of the Yukon and the Porcupine River, preached to a large group who had joined together to harvest the caribou during the annual migration. One of the shamans of the various tribes that had collected there was called Ba-chin-a-cha-ta, and he was Kirkby's first formal convert. In front of all the gathered natives, he confessed the sins of murder, incest, and polygamy and solemnly abandoned them as he committed his life to Christ.¹⁹⁰ As these were nomadic people, Kirkby used a well-tried method of taking the Word to the indigenous people. He selected the most promising young men, taught them a few selected hymns, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and some prayers in their own language, and then sent them

¹⁸⁸ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 78.

¹⁸⁹ Shephard Krech, "On the Original Population of the Kutchin, in *Interpreting Canada's North: Selected Readings* (Kenneth S. Coates and William R. Morrison eds. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd, 1989), 53-76.

¹⁹⁰ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*.82.

out to spread the word amongst their people. “Within days,” says Wooton, “the spreading of the gospel began.”¹⁹¹

When Kirkby arrived home in Fort Simpson he had travelled more than 3,000 miles. His accounts went to the CMS and became popular subjects of talks on fund-raising circuits. Kirkby made a second trip the following year and found that a Roman Catholic priest called Seguin had arrived a month earlier. “The Indians avowed themselves perplexed and knew not what to think.” Seguin and Kirkby travelled together all that summer, apparently without saying a word to one another, but after Kirkby left Seguin did not make a single convert.¹⁹²

4.8.2 Rev. Robert McDonald

In 1862, on his return to Fort Simpson, Kirkby met Rev. Robert McDonald, who had been sent by the CMS in fulfillment of Rev. Hunter’s appeal to assist Kirkby in the McKenzie mission. McDonald was actually en route to establish a mission at Fort Liard. Thus began a partnership between the two men of God that was to last for nearly forty years.¹⁹³ McDonald (1829-1913) was the son of a Scottish immigrant and an Ojibwa wife. He grew up in Red River and was ordained a priest in 1852 then went to Fort Yukon in the territory of the Gwich’in. He also worked in Old Crow and Fort McPherson. He was appointed as the Archdeacon of the Mackenzie diocese in 1875 under William Bompas. McDonald married a Gwitch’in woman with whom he raised nine children. Both Carrington and Hayes considered that McDonald should have been made bishop of the new diocese when it was created rather than Bompas. Certainly McDonald had the experience and the confidence of his congregations. Had he been allowed to

¹⁹¹ D. T. F. Wooton, “The Coming of Christianity to the Kutchin,” MA diss. St Augustine’s College, Canterbury, 1996.

¹⁹² T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 21.

¹⁹³ T. C. B. Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, 83.

become a bishop it could have led to the fulfillment of Henry Venn's ideal of a Native-run Church within an Episcopalian framework.¹⁹⁴

4.8.3 Rev. William Carpenter Bompas

In 1865, Robert McDonald became very ill to the extent that it was thought that he would die. An appeal to the CMS showed that no suitable candidate was forthcoming, but during Bishop Anderson's fund-raising tour in Britain, he talked to audiences about the Arctic and its ultimate challenge. Referring to MacDonald and the fortitude with which he stuck to his post in spite of his mortal illness, Anderson made an impassioned plea for his replacement. "Shall nobody come forward to take up the standard of the Lord as it falls from his hands and to occupy the ground?"¹⁹⁵ William Bompas, a curate at the church, heard the call and volunteered immediately. Born in London in 1834, Bompas was the son of an advocate in the court system, who was also a devout Baptist. Bompas followed in his father's footsteps, both in terms of his exemplary personal piety and in joining the legal profession. However, rather than remaining a Baptist he joined the Anglican Church and was ordained as a Deacon in 1859.

After accepting the call to the Arctic mission, Bompas was ordained a priest and sent by the CMS to Fort Simpson to relieve McDonald. He left London in June of 1865 and in a display of his determination, announced that he would arrive there on Christmas Day. He travelled by ship to York Factory, thence to Red River via the Churchill River system. Staying only briefly at Red River, he reached Portage la Loche, about eighty miles east of present-day Fort Mc Murray when the ice was just beginning to accumulate on the river and all commercial traffic stopped.

¹⁹⁴ Alan L. Hayes, *Anglicans in Canada*, 21.

¹⁹⁵ H.A. Cody, *An Apostle of the North: Memoirs of the Right Reverend William Carpenter Bompas*, 1908. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002), 20.

Undeterred, Bompas hired a canoe with a crew of three to take him to Fort Chipewyan. After an eight-day struggle, they reached Fort Chipewyan and were warmly greeted by the Chief Factor, Mr. Christie. Bompas' biographer, H.A. Cody, tells the story in the best traditions of hagiography:

Here Mr. Christie, the officer in charge of the post, gave him a hearty welcome; here the warm stove sent out its cheerful glow and here, too, were to be found many comforts for months, if he would only stay and rest. But no, it was ever up and on. Never before had such a man stood within the fort. Who could conquer the northern stream at such a season? But the missionary only smiled and asked for canoe and men. They were given a large canoe and three Indian lads. And once more, that dauntless herald of the Cross sped northward.¹⁹⁶

Against all advice and common sense, Bompas traveled on along the rapidly freezing Snare River until he could go no further and then walked through the bush with his companions to Fort Resolution on the south shore of Great Slave Lake. Here he was obliged to wait until the lake had frozen sufficiently to allow him to walk to Big Island. The Mackenzie River was still ice-free, sufficient for the mail packet to take him the rest of the way to Fort Simpson, where he arrived on Christmas Day as he planned.¹⁹⁷

Meanwhile McDonald had made a dramatic recovery so Bompas was sent temporarily to Fort Norman to set up a school. Returning to Fort Simpson, he was given a roaming commission, a job that required more of the long-distance travel that Bompas relished. He became fluent in all three of the distinct Native languages that predominated in the area and literally went tent to tent to preach the gospel, often following the tribe on their hunt. He travelled to the Arctic coast to visit the Inuit, but they took an immediate dislike to him, so Bompas left hurriedly. From there he travelled about 2,000 miles by canoe to the Peace River area to study the suitability of the

¹⁹⁶ H. A. Cody, *An Apostle of the North*, 37.

¹⁹⁷ H. A. Cody, *An Apostle of the North*, 41.

land to accommodate a reserve required for a land treaty. He stayed there over winter and then revisited Fort Chipewyan and Fond du Lac on Lake Athabasca. On his return up the Peace, he was within ten days' march of a recently discovered gold field on which it was reported that 2000 miners had descended. Bompas was eager to go there, but instead was told to travel back to Rocky Mountain Portage to minister to the people there and to vaccinate the Native people against smallpox. As he travelled north, he stopped at the settlements and seemed always to have found a ready audience—rather like St Paul. On reaching Hay River in 1872, he was told to return to Fort Yukon to replace McDonald who was leaving for an extended vacation.

4.9 THE CREATION OF THE DIOCESE OF ATHABASCA

Bompas was summoned to England in 1873 to be consecrated bishop of the newly created Diocese of Athabasca which covered an area of 1,000,000 square miles! He remained in England long enough to buy some goods for the people in the north, and to see to the printing of the hymns, scriptural passages, and prayers in seven different dialects and languages and a complete Gospel of St. Mark. He also married Miss Charlotte Cox in the presence of Bishop Anderson. Bompas and his new bride left for Canada one week later.¹⁹⁸

One of the defining moments of Bompas' period in office was his experience of widespread starvation due in part to the failure of supplies to arrive and the effect of the mild winter on the hunt. Everyone was obliged to eat beaver skins to survive. Bompas determined that this should not recur in his diocese and resolved to open a farm in Vermilion in the Peace River Valley. His plans included the acquisition of a steamer to transport the farm produce by river to his missions. The HBC pre-empted his plans for the steamship by building their own, but the

¹⁹⁸ H.A. Cody, *An Apostle of the North*, 197.

diocese developed a farm at Vermilion and another on the Smoky River together with enlarged missions.¹⁹⁹ Bompas continued his missionary work until his death in 1905. During his ministry, he had left the North only for his consecration as bishop and had resolutely refused to attend any of the Synods. Bompas did not share the benign view of the ability of aboriginal people to run their own church, preferring the idea of importing missionaries from England. Like Cockran, Bompas was convinced that paganism had to be rooted out from the Native belief system.

4.11 BISHOP ROBERT MACHRAY

Bishop Anderson resigned in 1864 to be replaced by thirty-four-year-old Robert Machray as the new bishop. Machray was a man of independent means, exhibited a high level of energy and was an excellent organizer of a similar calibre to Taché. On occupying the bishop's house in Red River, he immediately began to organise a synod and then left for an extended journey through his diocese. The British North America Act passed in 1867 making the Dominion of Canada a reality and ending the reign of the HBC. Machray made the most of the expanding opportunities and made visits to New York, attended the Fourth Provincial Synod in Montreal and interviewed all the leading politicians in Ottawa. In 1868, he travelled to Minnesota to consult with two bishops of the Episcopalian Church to discuss aspects of mass immigration and its effect on the church.²⁰⁰

4.12 SUMMARY OF THE ANGLICAN MISSIONARY EFFORTS TO 1875

The religious revival that occurred on both sides of the Atlantic combined with Britain's emerging imperial status gave rise to an enthusiasm for the founding of missionary organizations of which the CMS was the most prominent. The CMS was controlled by a Board of Directors, at

¹⁹⁹ H.A. Cody, *An Apostle of the North*, 204.

²⁰⁰ Philip Carrington, *The Anglican Church in Canada*, 140.

least two of whom were also board members of the HBC. The major shareholder of the HBC was Lord Selkirk who was a founder of the Red River Colony. Through the operation of this network, the HBC hired John West as the HBC's Red River-based chaplain and the CMS agreed to share the costs of West's initial appointment. West's favourable reports from Red River convinced the CMS to adopt the Canadian Northwest as one of its many mission destinations. In his three years at Red River West developed the vision which was to become the blueprint for all future missions in the Northwest—Catholic and Anglican. Education of Native children was the key to the long-term Christianization of the population. Residential schools that taught the three Rs and religious instruction to junior boys and girls would also be developed to teach farming and vocational skills to teenagers. West recruited voluntary pupils for his school and in due course, the best of them became ordained ministers.

The Anglican mission to the Northwest remained within the boundaries of the colony for the first twenty years of its existence, being kept there by a combination of the machinations of the HBC governor who did not want more missions in his territory and an acute lack of personnel from England. When the opportunity for missionary expansion did occur, the Anglicans were able to dispatch Native catechists and teachers to open mission stations in what is now northern Manitoba, northern Saskatchewan, and the area adjacent the Hudson's Bay. When the Bishop of Quebec visited Red River in 1844, he was able to ordain several of the Native clergy and to lay the foundation of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, which became a reality in 1849.

Bishop Anderson was unfortunately not a born leader, nor was he capable of forming a coherent strategy to expand the number of missions beyond Red River, in spite of a relatively large number of missionaries sent out by the CMS, many of whom remained in Red River until

Anderson's departure in 1865. Fortunately, his missionaries were able to act on their own initiative and develop strategies of their own. For example, Rev. Hunter acted on an invitation from a Native in Fort Simpson to teach his people about Christ. After making a visit during a leave of absence, Hunter was able to persuade Bishop Anderson to send two missionaries to the location, from which access to both the Mackenzie River and the Liard was relatively easy. A third missionary, Rev. Bompas, joined Rev. Kirkby and the Native minister, Rev. Macdonald, and the three of them prevented the Catholics from gaining total control of the Mackenzie Valley and the Yukon.

In summary, the Anglican's biggest achievement between 1820 and 1885 was in the use of Native clergymen, catechists, and teachers. West had laid the groundwork, Anderson had supported the concept and Machray, Horden, and Bompas continued the tradition. Unfortunately, as with the rest of the CMS missions, nobody had the confidence, or perhaps the courage, to take the step of creating a Native diocese with a Native Bishop.

Overall the Anglican missionary effort was characterized by a small number of dedicated individuals, well-motivated but poorly supplied, racing against a team of well-led Roman Catholic professionals who had an advantage of the support of the lay brothers and nuns.

5 Comparative Analysis of Roman Catholic and Anglican Missions

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having completed a brief but relatively comprehensive account of the establishment and operation of missions in the Northwest by the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, the task in this part of the paper is to analyse the performance of each of the players in areas, which could affect the outcome of the mission. The areas selected for comparison correspond to the objectives set in the thesis statements in 1.3 and are as follows: (1) the extent to which the fur trade helped or hindered the Christianization process; (2) the differences in leadership; (3) the quality and quantity of human and financial resources including the role of women in the missions; (4) the tactical efficiency; and (5) the attitude of the two competitors to one another.

The analysis recognizes two distinct chronological phases of the actual race: the first period from the establishment of the Catholic mission in Red River in 1818 until the advent of the Oblates in 1845, and the period from 1845 until the beginning of wide-spread immigration by Europeans into the Northwest in 1875

5.2 THE FUR TRADE AS A HELP OR A HINDRANCE

Without the presence of the fur trade in the Canadian Northwest, the missions of either the Roman Catholics or the Anglicans would not have been possible. The presence of the Selkirk Colony provided a relatively large and stable community in which both the Catholics and the Anglicans could establish a safe haven and from which they could become acclimatized to the operating environment, test their mission techniques, and learn about their subjects.

The two principal companies which operated the fur trade, The Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company, provided employment for both French and Scottish adventurers, who through intermarriage with Native women created the mixed race from whom the majority of *coureurs des bois* and *voyageurs* originated. These people introduced the missionaries to the Natives and provided the necessary translation services so that the Gospel message could be understood. The French missionaries, who ministered to a much larger population of francophone Métis, obviously had the advantage over the Anglicans.

Given that many of these people of mixed race were probably influenced by the religion of their Christian forefathers, it is reasonable to suppose that they provided some knowledge of Christianity to their progeny. That knowledge could well have been the reason for the friendly reception given when the missionaries first made contact. In Chapter Two, we saw that representatives of the Red River's Métis community petitioned Bishop Plessis for priests in 1816 and in Chapter Three, Duchaussois provided an account of "Old Beaulieu," who used his influence to bring people to see the Catholic missionary at La Loche, "Old Beaulieu" in turn having been influenced by a devout *coureur des bois*. In Chapter Four, Jessett describes how two Native graduates returning to their homes in British Columbia from a four-and-a-half-year stay at the Native school in Red River were able to persuade their respective tribes to adopt a simplified form of Christianity. As cited earlier, Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau in their book underline the importance of informal communication links in the Northwest to explain how Christianity was spread quickly over a wide area without the need of missionaries.

The management of the HBC provided the reason for both Catholic and Anglican missionaries to go to the Northwest; the Catholics to mediate in the feud between the HBC and the NWC; the Anglicans partly to help the HBC to head off a potential public relations problem

in Britain and partly to ensure that the Catholics did not have the exclusive rights to the salvation of souls in the colony. Contrary to expectations the HBC were scrupulously neutral in their dealings with both the Catholics and the Anglicans. The only exception was the assistance given to the Anglicans in the Athabasca/Mackenzie area when the HBC factor and his Native wife, who had a considerable influence over the local people, persuaded the local people not to attend any religious gatherings of the Catholic missionaries.

The HBC provided generous land grants to both denominations and often waived the charges for transportation. The HBC governor in Canada, George Simpson, resisted any attempts to spread the missions beyond Red River because of their possible negative effect on trade, and his covert efforts were successful in preventing missions beyond Red River until 1840. Nevertheless, during that time, he personally helped with the actual buildings of schools and the recruitment of students.

5.3 LEADERSHIP

5.3.1 Leadership in General

The most important attribute of an organization in terms of its being able to achieve its goals is the quality of the leaders in the field. This is as true of missionary work as it is of military operations or sales drives. Leaders exercise tactical judgement in matching the primary objectives to available resources, dividing field tasks among their subordinates, communicating expectations, monitoring performance and setting performance standards. They also motivate their staff by demonstrating their own personal commitment to the success of the individual.

5.3.2 Leadership of Msgr. Provencher's

The overall responsibility for Roman Catholic missions in Canada was vested in the bishop of the diocese of Montreal. When the Red River Colony became a part of the diocese of the North-West in 1820, Msgr. Provencher assumed the responsibility for the parishes within Red River and for the expansion of missions to the hinterland. Provencher's actions over the period to 1845 suggest that his main task was to ensure a proper ministry to the Catholics in his parishes and more importantly, to remain on good terms with both the governor of the colony and the governor of the HBC. In this, he was continuing the policies of the Church in Quebec by following a policy of collaboration with the temporal authorities. Those actions suggest that Provencher failed to lead or motivate his staff properly. For example, correspondence suggests that the Pembina mission was left entirely in Fr. Dumoulin's hands with Provencher providing little or no guidance either on temporal or spiritual matters; Dumoulin corresponded directly with Msgr. Plessis. It would also seem that Provencher failed to inform Dumoulin of his concurrence in the closure of the Pembina mission for at least a year. Small wonder that Dumoulin was disillusioned. The next fifteen years witnessed a steady stream of priests sent by Msgr. Bourget from Quebec, but almost all the priests left after a short time, "officially" because they were unable to withstand the privations and loneliness of the frontier, but it was likely that Provencher's poor leadership was the main factor. The Anglicans, after all, endured the same conditions, and during the period ending 1845 built three churches in Red River. They also established a Native school with a large number of pupils, and originated the farming projects, both as a subject of instruction and as an alternative lifestyle for Native people. It should be noted that the Roman Catholics copied these innovations exactly.

5.3.3 Leadership of John West

Anglican John West, on the other hand, was given similar responsibilities to those of Provencher when the CMS voted to make the mission to Red River permanent in 1821. West provided the vision and articulated the blueprint of future missions in terms of Native education for males and females, residential schools, and the need for Natives to abandon their nomadic existence in favour of fixed villages. West visited the Native people in the Qu'Appelle Valley and never hesitated to take Simpson and his staff to task for failing to set the correct moral tone in the community. He paid for his forthright leadership by his unexpected dismissal and the CMS replaced him with Rev. Jones, who grew to be an excellent parish priest, but who chose the same path as Provencher in following the wishes of his "patron," George Simpson.

5.3.4 Leadership of Alexandre Antonin Taché

In the late 1840s, Fr. Taché became the *de facto* leader of the Roman Catholic team in the Northwest. From 1850, when Taché relieved Provencher of most of his decision-making responsibilities and Bishop Anderson became the resident bishop of the Anglicans, the Roman Catholics assumed the leading position in the "race." As we have seen, Taché was an exemplary leader with an intensely loyal staff, most of whom were Oblates who accepted the ultramontanist style of discipline without question.

5.3.5 Leadership of Bishop David Anderson

Unlike Taché, Bishop Anderson's talents did not lie in the operational field. His heart was in academia and when the incumbent principal of the academy in Red River died soon after Anderson's arrival, Anderson quickly assumed a leadership role in the institution. Anderson allowed himself to become embroiled in scandals and trivial matters in Red River and seemed unable to rise above these distractions. His relationship with George Simpson and the HBC staff was poor, as was his relationship with the Presbyterians. Anderson did manage to persuade the CMS to increase the number of clergymen from eight to twenty-two during his sixteen-year tenure, but lacking any concrete plan for their deployment beyond Red River, most did not leave the boundaries of the colony. He also diversified his sources of funding to include the Colonial and Continental Church Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). He also famously recruited William Bompas on one of his infrequent lecture tours in England.

5.3.6 Leadership of Robert Machray

When Bishop Robert Machray replaced David Anderson as bishop in 1865, he proved to have a similar set of skills to Taché. He was thirty-four years old and had energy, vision, organizing ability and charisma. The Confederation of Canada arrived soon after his appointment and with it the annexation of the Northwest Territories by Canada and the purchase of the HBC lands. Like Taché, Machray knew that widespread immigration would occur within his jurisdiction, but unlike Taché, he welcomed it with open arms. Rather than concentrating on leading the expansion of missions in the North, Machray was preoccupied with reorganizing the diocese to meet the challenge of ministering to settlers rather than native people. When Riel

announced the creation of a provisional government, Machray joined Taché in providing leadership in the years of uncertainty. When stability was restored, Machray created two new dioceses: Moosenee with Horden as the new Bishop, and Mackenzie headed by Bompas. Machray presided over the much smaller diocese of Assiniboine. Later he created the diocese of Saskatchewan, which included three missions with native lay readers or catechists. The team led by Bishop Bompas, Rev. West Kirkby, and the talented Native minister Robert McDonald, now reported directly to the CMS and their efforts made the Yukon and the Liard Valley an Anglican enclave.

5.4 OPERATING PERSONNEL

5.4.1 Priests, Nuns and Lay Brothers

Ultimately, the most effective instruments of conversion were the people who were directly in contact with the First Nations people. The Catholic work force included only secular priests up to 1841, but in 1845 the Oblates and the Sisters of Mercy, or Grey Nuns, arrived. Shortly afterwards they were joined by the lay brothers; all of these had made vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The majority of priests had completed a four-year course in the seminaries of France or Quebec and had completed at least a year as an intern before taking their vows. The fact they were celibate meant that they were able to put in long hours in some awful conditions without having to worry about the effect it might have on a wife or a family. The fact that the Oblates had taken the vow of poverty meant that only travel and subsistence costs were incurred in their employment. The fact that they had taken a vow of obedience meant they would go wherever they were told without consultation.

5.4.2 Anglican Ministers, Native Catechists, and Teachers

Contrary to the practice of the religious orders, the CMS allowed freedom of choice of the destination of their missionary candidates, and most preferred the exotic countries like India or China. The consequence of the shortage of skilled and experienced people was that the CMS had to accept those with less academic or religious qualifications and from a lower social class.²⁰¹ People like Cockran, a tenant farmer, and James Hutchinson, a qualified blacksmith, became the standard for Anglican Canadian missions. Provided the candidates had the proper attitude and were committed to Anglican values and beliefs, they were hired by the Society. A year's training course at the Islington training centre in England was thought to be adequate for mission work in Canada. From the 1840s onward, the distinguishing quality of the Anglicans was in the training and deployment of Native ministers, teachers, and catechists at permanent missions.

5.4.3 Employment of Women in the Missionary Process

One of the major differences between the Roman Catholic and the Anglican approach to missions was in the employment of women. The presence of the Grey Nuns was the largest group of women involved in the Christianization process. Like the priests, they had taken the three-fold vows and, like the priests, endured much the same level of hardship. Their presence was extremely effective, both from the point of view of the Native people, whose spiritual beliefs placed the healing arts at the centre of their culture, and from their assumption of education and pastoral care. The latter allowed the priest to concentrate on the spiritual needs of his congregation. Of course, there were strict rules against priests and lay brothers from

²⁰¹ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 108.

fraternization with the nuns, even to the extent that the meeting of a priest and a nun was only allowed with a chaperone.

Anglican missionaries, on the other hand, were either married before their arrival in Canada, or became so shortly afterwards. Wives could share the everyday events of the minister's life, possibly become fluent in the language, help in the day-to-day running of the church, care for the disadvantaged, and act as a catechist and teacher. They had more influence over native women than their men-folk and those who had small children could find it much easier to interact with the women of the community because there were always things they had in common.²⁰² The family group could become the moral example of the ideal unit of a Christian community.

From the perspective of their contribution to the "race," the presence of the nuns gave the Roman Catholics a decided advantage.

5.5 TACTICAL EFFICIENCY

Prior to the advent of the Oblates, the Catholics and the Anglicans were evenly matched in numbers and competence. However, when the chance of opening missions appeared outside the Red River settlement, the Anglicans took the initiative using Native teachers or catechists to establish and hold missions until an ordained missionary was available, or until the Native could himself be ordained. The important thing was to be the first in any given area and experience showed that unless the original priest or minister was particularly offensive or neglected his flock, another competing group would have difficulty in luring people away from the incumbent.

²⁰² Jocelyn Murray, "The Role of Women in the CMS 1799-1917," in *The Church Missionary Society and World Christianity 1799-1999* (Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley, ed; Cambridge, U.K. : William Erdman's Publishing Company, 2000), 69.

In that context, the employment of a Native person, familiar with the language and the culture of the people in the area was a major advantage. From a strategic point of view, the CMS had decreed that overseas missions should give way as soon as practicable to permanent churches run entirely by Natives within an Episcopal framework.²⁰³ As has been highlighted above, one of the first actions taken by John West in Red River was to recruit native children into his school and to educate the best of them to be ministers of the church. Fifteen years later, when the opportunity came to expand beyond Red River, these same recruits had graduated and were able to establish a mission, build a self-sufficient community, and prepare native people for baptism before the English recruits had arrived in Canada.

The concept of establishing a chain of interdependent missions that Taché adopted was logical, but it required a large number of staff, which initially the Anglicans could not afford. The personal relationship that Taché cultivated with de Mazenod, combined with the success of the Institute for the Propaganda of the Faith's fund-raising, meant that priests, nuns and lay-brothers were available to the Catholics. During that period, the Anglicans had to be content to co-locate missions on the edge of the Catholic territory.

The situation north of the sixtieth parallel was similar in the disparity of numbers between the Catholics and the Anglicans; the former had a clear advantage in the Lower Mackenzie, but the Anglicans achieved a near monopoly in the territory of the Gwich'in and the Yukon.

²⁰³ Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley, eds., *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity 1799-1999*, 148-161.

5.6 ATTITUDE OF THE ANGLICANS AND CATHOLICS TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER

Considering that both the Roman Catholic and the Anglican Churches demanded that their respective members follow the example and the teachings of Jesus Christ, an impartial observer would consider it odd that the mutual attitude of the one to the other should be so negative. The observer would also be amazed that those who preached brotherly love to their respective congregations could pass such harsh, and frequently false, witness against the other denomination and that each would rarely cooperate with the other even to the demonstrable detriment of those to whom they had been sent to bring salvation. Given the prevailing antagonism at the time, it is hardly surprising that representatives of each of the two churches could fail to cooperate when both were engaged on a sacred commission ordered by Jesus himself. The Anglicans regarded the Catholics with a visceral hatred that had been nurtured by successive Protestant rulers over the almost three hundred years since the English Reformation. Rev. Cockran was heir to this irrational hatred when he exhorted his Anglicans to make haste in taking his version of Christianity to the “heathen” before “popery and schism have poisoned and seared the mind of the Indians.”²⁰⁴ This, in spite of clear Biblical direction that Jesus had given when told by John that others were casting out demons in Jesus’ name: “Do not stop him” said Jesus, “No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything against me, for whoever is not against us is for us (Mark 9:39,40).” The phrase “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few (Matt.8:16),” also comes to mind when considering the implications of the “race.”

On the Roman Catholic side, the reaction against the damage done to the Church’s authority during the French revolution and subsequent European wars had resulted in

²⁰⁴ Letter from Wm Cockran to the General Secretary of the CMS, dated April 14th 1847. C.1/M. A.P.A. Quoted earlier in Part 4, page 15.

ultramontanism, with its insistence on absolute obedience to papal doctrine and a deep distrust of anything or anyone other than Catholics. The Catholic hierarchy regarded Protestants in general as an enemy, and an agent of the power of darkness, and had ordered all good Catholics to resist this devil-inspired conspiracy. Instead of “Whoever is not against us is with us,” they had turned the words on their head: “Whoever is not with the Church is against it,”²⁰⁵ a much more restrictive command. The individual bishops and priests had no other choice but to obey, regardless of their own personal feelings.

Between 1818 and 1841, the interdenominational relationship was characterized as a miniature form of the “two solitudes” with respect to the attitudes of the one to the other. The Red River divided Anglicans from the Catholics and both went about their business ignoring the actions of the other. Rev. Jones, in the letter cited in Chapter Four, wrote that the relationship between himself and the Catholics was good because he only saw them at the monthly dinners hosted by the governor of the colony.

The situation changed when the Anglicans led the creation of missions outside Red River with a mission at La Pas in 1840. The Catholics under Msgr. Provencher responded by sending Fr. Thibault to La Loche to try to neutralize the Anglican advantage. Later, when the Oblates arrived they established a mission at Île-à-la-Crosse; similarly co-located missions were established at Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, and Fort Chipewyan.

This pattern of establishing rival missions on the fringes of an already-established mission was a policy in which both sides indulged. It could be argued that the practice allowed a freedom of choice of a church for the Native people, but considering the very small number of

²⁰⁵ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on the Canadian Northwest*, 4.

people who called the missions home, one can only conclude that those policies wasted resources, spread confusion among the native people, and introduced European interdenominational antagonism.

The following example described by Barbara Kelsey in her book *Alone in Silence* occurred outside the chronological boundaries of the dissertation, but illustrates better than any of the many examples found in the literature how far the “race” warped the judgement of otherwise caring and Christian people.

Three Oblates went to Aklavik on the Mackenzie Delta to survey the town for a possible mission school and a hospital. Aklavik at that time was a tiny settlement with possibly twenty families, half of whom were Inuit while the rest were Dene or mixed-blood. It was no accident that the OMI and Grey Nuns were building a mission at Aklavik; the Anglicans were doing the same, and the competition for souls and government funds was fierce. The two Aklavik hospitals epitomize the ludicrous nature of that religious race. It would have surely been more sensible to expand the hospitals further south to provide services to the Dene, but the Inuit proved too much of a temptation and the cause too important for the missionaries to procrastinate. Fr. Duport wrote to Mother Dugas in 1924, begging her assistance. He explained that the OMI had declared war on the Anglicans [who were] attempting to establish a mission in an old cabin in poor condition. The expense was prohibitive. But they were still eager to fight and had decided to find a new form of attack which included the Grey Nuns.²⁰⁶

As a postscript, the Anglicans built a cathedral in the hamlet in the 1920s. In the late 1950's the Government of the Northwest Territories transferred its Northwestern administrative centre from Aklavik to Inuvik, because of Aklavik's poor ground conditions and the propensity of the area to flooding.

²⁰⁶ Barbara Kelsey, *Alone in Silence: European Women in the Canadian North before 1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001), 133.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of the paper given in Chapter One, paragraph 1.3, has been justified by the dissertation given in the narrative Chapters two, three, and four, and demonstrated adequately by the comparative analysis in Chapter Five. It is not the intention of the author to repeat the arguments made in Chapter Five, but simply to comment on the results.

The first objective was to show that the fur trade had been essential for the Christianization of the Northwest. We showed that the HBC not only provided the logistical support for the Catholic and Anglican missions, but also that its staff, especially the *coureurs des bois* and the *voyageurs*, spread the message of Christianity through an informal communication network colloquially known as the “moccasin telegraph.” This may have been the reason that the missionaries received such a friendly reception when they first established contact.

The corporate policies of the HBC had provided the necessary logistical support equally to both the Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries in spite of the fact that the CMS board consisted entirely of practicing Anglicans. It was also shown that the Canadian governor of the HBC, George Simpson, was successful in restricting the missionaries to Red River for several years, but after 1840 the HBC was co-operative and generally even-handed with respect to their dealings with both sides in the race.

The second objective was to demonstrate the essential similarities and differences in techniques that the missionaries of the two denominations employed during the study period and to explain how the differences affected the outcome. The Roman Catholic and the Anglican missions were obeying Christ’s Great Commission to “Go to the World and baptize all the

nations in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” There is no question that all participants on both sides sincerely believed in the Commission; both believed that the process of effective Christianization demanded the abandonment of a nomadic lifestyle in favour of living in fixed communities with farming replacing hunting as the means of subsistence and education of the young a primary goal. The Catholic and the Anglican missions were financed almost entirely from private or corporate donations: the Roman Catholics’ mission by the Institute for the Propagation of the Faith and the Anglicans’ by the CMS. The former enjoyed a larger and more constant income than the CMS and, because the Catholic missions’ unit labour costs were much lower than those of the Anglicans, they were able to field more priests and support staff.

In terms of the major differences between the two, the Roman Catholic leadership in the field was superior to that of the Anglicans. John West had a more benign view of the Native people’s inherent abilities than his contemporaries, and launched a successful Native school programme that produced Native ministers. However, he failed to manage the relationship with the HBC at the field level. Taché proved to be the best of all the leaders in the field. For the twenty years ending in 1870 his whole focus was on expanding the missions to the Native people in the Northwest. The relations he built with his stakeholders in Quebec, France, Red River, and his staff were all directed towards that single goal. After 1870, his focus shifted to preserving the rights of Roman Catholics in a newly formed province dominated by Protestants. In contrast, the Anglican leader, David Anderson, was Taché’s polar opposite in that he lacked the vision necessary to develop a coherent strategy with respect to mission expansion. Without such a strategy, the resources available to him languished in Red River rather than being deployed in the field. Perhaps his greatest deficiency as a leader was his propensity to attract controversy and then fail to rise above it. Anderson’s successor, Robert Machray, had similar leadership

characteristics to Taché and the same level of commitment to his chosen strategy. While he certainly did not neglect the northern missions, his focus was towards developing a church organization that would serve the anticipated wave of European immigration.

In terms of the quality and quantity of field personnel, the Roman Catholic priests were better educated, more professional, and better linguists than the majority of their Anglican counterparts. As well, being unencumbered by a wife and family, they could endure greater hardships and work longer hours. The assistance of lay brothers and nuns proved to be a major asset for the Roman Catholics.

In spite of the seeming advantages that the Catholics enjoyed, the Anglicans performed remarkably well, possibly because the individuals in the field exercised their own judgement and exploited opportunities when they arose. That quality was exemplified by Bishop Bompas, Rev. McDonald, and Rev. Kirkby, who gained a near monopoly of the loyalty of the people of the Loucheux First Nation in the northwest of the Mackenzie Valley and of the First Nations people of the Yukon.

Perhaps the most far-reaching achievement of the Anglicans was in the training and deployment of Native catechists. The CMS formulated a policy which would have had the missionaries develop a Native-led church within an Episcopalian framework, but did not properly communicate that policy until Henry Venn became General Secretary of the society in the 1850s. John West had the vision and began to put in place a long-term strategy for training and development of Natives towards ordination. The results of West's foresight and his early efforts at recruiting native children proved a tactical and a strategic blessing for the Anglican side. However, the final part of the policy which required the development of Native-run diocese with

Native bishops was not completed in the Canadian Northwest until the latter half of the twentieth century.

The final objective was to demonstrate how the attitude each of the contestants to the other was neither Christian, nor conducive to the maximization of the benefit to the Native people who were the focus of the missionary effort. Sufficient examples of the negative effects of the competition have been given in the narratives to show that both sides engaged in behaviour which was not in accordance with absolute Christian values and that behaviour wasted resources, and confused the native people who were the witnesses to it. The only positive outcome was that the competition accelerated the process of reaching out to the Native population of the Canadian Northwest.

It was indeed an Amazing Race.

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