

Prophetic Identities
Indigenous Missionaries on British
Colonial Frontiers, 1850-75

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Preface

AFTER FINISHING MY master's degree in history, I became a school-teacher. My first job was teaching teenagers on a remote Indian reserve in northern Saskatchewan. Most striking to me about the students, and the community as a whole, was their strong identification with Catholicism. In many ways, being Catholic was as important as being Dene: their religion was a key feature of their sense of self. As I spoke with community members and students about their Catholicism, I was continually reminded of my graduate work on the role of evangelical Christianity in nineteenth-century southern Africa. The linkages between the twenty-first-century Saskatchewan community around me and the nineteenth-century African one I had studied piqued my curiosity about a number of themes: How had European-based Christianity reshaped indigenous communities during the last two hundred years? Were there similarities between the ways in which indigenous communities in Canada and southern Africa had used and responded to Christianity? Finally, what features accounted for the diverse reception of Christianity in different parts of the indigenous world?

This book provides some answers to these questions. It compares the lives and legacies of two indigenous men – Henry Budd and Tiyo Soga – who became ordained missionaries of British-based Christian churches during the mid-nineteenth century. Admittedly, these men, Budd in Western Canada and Soga in southern Africa, were exceptional: few other indigenous people in the nineteenth century were as closely tied to the teachings and networks of the British missionary culture. Yet, their lives provide an interesting perspective on what it meant to be “Native” and Christian in the 1850s and 1860s, and how these experiences were similar and different across the globe. The central argument of this book is that Budd and Soga articulated new ways of thinking about indigeneity; that

is, they fashioned new definitions of their own “nativeness,” given their status as Christian missionaries with ties to a global British Empire. This is a story, then, of how religious affiliation created continuity – and also significant change – in the lives of two nineteenth-century indigenous people. The Dene community in Saskatchewan, and its Catholicism, does not feature in the pages that follow. However, it remained in the back of my mind throughout this project, reminding me of the importance of religious faith, the complex legacy of the colonial project across the nineteenth-century world, and a sense of what it can mean to be Christian and indigenous.

Acknowledgments

THE COMPLETION OF this work, like the two men who are its focus, relied on many people and institutions in Britain, Canada, and South Africa. Several archivists and other scholars helped track down the many records about and by Henry Budd and Tiyo Soga. In Britain and Canada, I enjoyed brief visits to the National Library of Scotland (Edinburgh), the Church Missionary Society Archives (Birmingham), and the Archives of Manitoba and the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (both in Winnipeg). The Archives of Manitoba kindly granted permission to use the images of Budd and The Pas. In South Africa, I benefited from long periods of research at the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town), the National Archives of South Africa (Cape Town), and three archives in the Eastern Cape: the Howard Pim Library at Fort Hare University, the Amathole Museum in King William's Town, and the Cory Library for Historical Research in Grahamstown. I was especially comfortable at the Cory Library, which became my home away from home in May and June 2005. Toward the end of the project, Liz de Wet and Jeff Peires of the Cory were helpful at tracking down several images for the book. The Cory Library kindly allowed me to use the picture of Janet Soga.

I am thankful to Donovan Williams for his permission to quote at length from his edited version of Soga's writings, and to members of the University of Fort Hare faculty who helped Williams translate and produce this valuable collection: J.J.R. Jolobe (translator of Soga's *Indaba* articles), E.M. Makhanya, Z.A. Qangule, R.G.S. Makalima, M.A. Stofile, and C. Zama Gebeda. Without these pioneering scholars of Soga, my study would not have been possible.

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Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Eleanor Luxton Historical Foundation, and the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Alberta. A SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Saskatchewan allowed me to present some of this material at seminars in Britain and gave me valuable time and space to work on the text.

I am indebted to many people whose feedback, conversation, and support have contributed to this project. Kerry Abel, John Barwick, Jennifer S.H. Brown, Elizabeth Elbourne, Gerry Friesen, Catherine Hall, Chelsea Horton, Lize Kriel, Ann McDougall, Peter Midgley, Adele Perry, Andrew Porter, Jane Samson, Don Smith, and Scott Stephens offered advice, ideas, information, and mentorship at various stages. Gerhard Ens was a tireless supporter of this project, and his critical questions were crucial in shaping my approach, particularly toward the final two chapters. I greatly benefited from interaction with two networks of people: the faculty and graduate students of the Christian Missions in Global History seminary at the Institute of Historical Research in London, England, during the winter of 2010; and several members of the Department of History at the University of Saskatchewan, particularly Jim Miller, who took the time to read and comment on the manuscript, Bill Waiser, who gave me sage advice on the writing process, and Keith Carlson, Erika Dyck, Mandy Fehr, and Simonne Horwitz, each of whom offered advice and support during the revision process. In the final stages of preparing the manuscript, I was fortunate to have discussions with Jo Davis, David Dinwoodie, and Donovan Williams, which helped me solidify my approach and chase up several important citations. The anonymous reviewers of the manuscript for UBC Press were extremely helpful at drawing my attention to several important details about each of the case studies. Thanks also to Darcy Cullen and Ann Macklem at UBC Press, whose patience and attention to detail made this such an enjoyable publishing experience.

During the last six years, while I lived with Henry Budd and Tiyo Soga, I relied on the day-to-day help of friends and family for proofreading, accommodation, and needed distractions. For their support, I thank my parents, my siblings, my wife, Lesley, and the newest member of my family, Ewan.

Note on Terminology

THIS BOOK USES A range of terms to discuss various peoples and regions. “Indigenous” and “indigeneity” refer collectively to non-European people in southern Africa and British North-West America. “Indigenous missionary” applies to all non-European ordained ministers working in regions of the British Empire, even though these men were historically referred to as Native missionaries. I use “Euromissionary” when speaking specifically about European-born missionaries. “Native” and “Aboriginal” are employed interchangeably to describe indigenous people (Metis and Indian) in Canada. “Metis” (capitalized, unaccented) refers to a specific ethnic identity associated with people of mixed Aboriginal-European ancestry who lived in self-identifying Metis communities. The term “metis” (unaccented, lower-case) is used broadly to describe all people of mixed Aboriginal-European ancestry whose self-identification is not clearly revealed by the historical evidence.¹ “Indian” refers to Aboriginal people (some of whom were of mixed ancestry) who chose to live in or identify with a band, as opposed to a Metis or fur trade post community. Given my argument that Henry Budd fostered a localized Cree village community and had little interest in, or understanding of, the Cree as a “nation,” I avoid using the contemporary Canadian term “First Nations.” “African” and “black” both apply to Xhosa and other non-Europeans in the eastern frontier zone of the Cape Colony.

The two main geographical terms used in the book are “British North-West America” and the “eastern frontier zone of the Cape Colony.” British North-West America (or the British North-West) was the area of North America that lay north of the forty-ninth parallel and stretched from Lake Superior in the east to the Rocky Mountains in the west. Nominally governed by the London-based Hudson’s Bay Company through a royal charter and a series of licences granted by Britain, much of this territory was

part of “Rupert’s Land” – the region of North America whose rivers drained into Hudson Bay. In 1870, it was transferred to the Dominion of Canada, and until 1905, save for a small area around the Red River Colony, which became the province of Manitoba, it was known as the “the Canadian North-West Territories” and administered by the Ottawa-based Canadian government. In 1905, the region became the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta (see Figure 3 on page 17). The “eastern frontier zone of the Cape Colony” was a large area stretching from Port Elizabeth in the west to beyond the Kei River in the east (see Figure 4 on page 38). This zone ultimately became part of the Cape Colony and then the Republic of South Africa, but during the period discussed here, it was comprised of a mixture of areas, some of which were controlled by the Cape Colony, others of which were land reserves established through treaties, Crown colonies administered by Britain, or African-controlled territories. Given the complexity of the Cape frontier and the need to construct a clear comparison, I found it effective to speak of the region as a single frontier zone.

Prophetic Identities

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Missionaries, Identity, and the Colonial Frontier

IN JULY 1860, THE Xhosa missionary Tiyo Soga visited a small Ngqika Xhosa settlement on the eastern fringe of the Cape Colony in South Africa.¹ After dispensing some medicine, he held a meeting with prominent members of the community. “I asked them,” he later wrote in his journal, “Now what difference is there between You & me – I am one of you – a Kaffir as well as you – One of your own tribe & nation – Why is it, that I have not on a painted blanket like you – or have not my ankles & wrists ornamented with those tinkling chains that ornament your own?”² It was a powerful question. On the one hand, Soga and his audience were relatively similar. Like them, he identified as a Xhosa, was born and raised in the rugged landscape on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, and showed loyalty to the same Xhosa leadership and chieftainship. Yet, on the other hand, he looked, felt, and acted very differently. He wore manufactured clothing, not painted blankets; he carried a Bible that taught him about sin, not wrist ornaments to ward off bad spirits; and he lived in an agrarian-based mission station complete with a plastered house and church, not a homestead run by a hereditary chief. Soga quickly answered his own question. He explained that, although he was part of the same language and ethnic group as his audience, his deep connection to British missionaries had turned him away from several “Kaffir” practices.³ Unapologetic about shunning the painted blankets and wrist ornaments of his listeners, he stated, “I would not for the world exchange positions with you – bec[ause] I know that to live like you are now living, is sure and certain future ruin.”⁴ Soga had reinvented himself and his understanding of Xhosaness. He hoped that his audience would do likewise.

Although he was the first Xhosa to be ordained as a Christian minister, Soga was not alone in this act of reinvention. By 1860, hundreds of other indigenous missionaries throughout the British Empire were actively re-making how they thought about themselves and their own identity as Natives. Henry Budd was one of these. Living thousands of miles away from Soga, in the sparsely populated landscape of British North-West America, he endeavoured to combine his Cree upbringing with his position as a missionary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Like Soga, he was the first ordained minister from his ethnic community, and also like Soga, he saw significant differences between himself and the established Cree order around him. “What a contrast between the worship of God, and that of the Devil!” he remarked after a Sunday service in 1864. “Here we were quietly assembled in the worship of God; while the heathen yonder was making all the noise they could with the drum, singing & yelling at the top of their voice.”⁵ And like Soga, Budd never dismissed his indigenous identity. Rather, he created something fresh, reinventing the way in which he, and others around him, thought about “Creeness.” This new identity would blend his missionary zeal for Christianity with his connection to his Cree heritage, language, and sense of land. Like Soga, he combined his Christian training with his ties to indigenous communities to remake indigeneity into an identity that was explicitly modern and Christian.

This book is about the way in which Soga and Budd constructed these new understandings of nativeness, or indigeneity. It argues that both men modernized and globalized their understanding of indigeneity (being Xhosa or Cree) by moving it from an identity that was local, and rooted in religion and lifestyle, to one that was set in a global context and based in land and language. For both, this move was an attempt to escape their liminal position between the “quiet” of the church and the “noise” of “heathenism,” and to understand how they were connected to the global world they had learned about from missionaries. Their answer was to base their identity on two elements that their Christianity, and even their new global consciousness, could not deny: their indigenous language and their ties to ancestral land. For Soga and Budd (and probably for other indigenous missionaries), these attributes – not the “heathen rituals” they associated with Xhosa and Cree society – would define their link to their indigenous communities and differentiate them from the otherwise interconnected global world.

Budd and Soga cultivated distinct versions of this modern Christian indigeneity. Building on his familiarity with the horizontal organization of Cree bands, and the generally peaceful interracial interactions of the fur trade, Budd fashioned a version of indigeneity that was extremely local, and above all else emphasized the need for the religious and economic transformation toward an agrarian-based Cree society. He employed this vision to create a modern Cree village community that was church-centred and part of a series of small, relatively independent Cree groups scattered across British North-West America. Soga, by comparison, advocated for an overtly political and global conceptualization of indigeneity. His goal was the development not of a localized village but rather a broadly based Xhosa community that looked to race and shared histories to connect all Xhosa in southern Africa as a single nation. He even extended this community to include the larger African diaspora created by the slave trade. Thus, whereas Budd assumed that indigeneity retained an ethnic-linguistic meaning, Soga saw it as a political category of identity.

This book also shows that although colonialism shaped the kinds of missionaries that Budd and Soga became, at its heart, being and becoming an indigenous missionary was a process driven by family and personal faith. As children, both men moved into the mission context because of choices made not so much by colonial agents as by their mothers, their siblings, and themselves; later, their decision to seek careers as missionaries was based on their conviction that Christianity and the larger project of modernity offered material, political, and spiritual benefits to their communities. As adults, their faith and family continued to sit at the centre of their world views: their respective wives and the way in which they raised their children enabled them to reinforce the centrality of Christianity and the “civilizing mission” in their lives. Although European missionaries and colonial aggression (or opportunity) shaped and constrained the outcome of these choices, Budd and Soga were ultimately driven by the personal and the spiritual.

PLACING THE INDIGENOUS MISSIONARY

Despite the recent explosion of research about the policy of missionaries and the use of Christianity by indigenous groups, except for the slim biographies of Budd, Soga, and others, no full-length study is devoted exclusively to the experiences of indigenous missionaries in the

nineteenth-century British Empire.⁶ This book engages this breach in the scholarly literature and frames the experiences of indigenous missionaries in two novel ways. First, it emphasizes that indigenous missionaries must be seen as more than people “in-between.”⁷ Although it is certainly true that Budd and Soga, and others like them, inhabited a liminal terrain, they were also able to make a new space between worlds: a space that I argue was largely defined by “modern indigeneity.”⁸ Some scholars have recognized this middle ground in religious terms – Gideon Khabela, for instance, argues, as I do here to some extent, that Soga was a prophet rooted in African and Old Testament traditions – but many studies of indigenous missionaries contend that a defining feature of these men was their “doubly discriminated,” “agonistic,” “ambiguous,” “middlemen,” or “in-between” position.⁹ Although I have no intention of overlooking this in-betweenness, I suggest that it is fruitful to move beyond the discussion of positionality to see, as John Peel does in the context of West Africa, how Budd and Soga were also making new identities, new strategies, and even new forms of indigeneity that reflected their lives and religious experiences.¹⁰

A related aspect of this argument is that, contrary to the assertion of Jean and John Comaroff that British missionaries were “footsoldiers” of imperialism who were able to “colonize the consciousness” of indigenous missionaries, my history places considerable emphasis on the limits of missionary power (especially in Budd’s case) and the importance of indigenous agency in shaping the mission encounter. While not forgetting about the real significance of colonial power and violence in framing the expansion of nineteenth-century Christian missions, I argue that indigenous missionaries were individuals making decisions based on an array of personal and contextual circumstances and that to reduce their history to an account of the imposition of Christianity by British missionaries overly simplifies Budd and Soga, and their world view. This approach, then, offers important nuances missing from the overly structural method adopted by the Comaroffs.¹¹ In doing so, it treats Budd and Soga as people shaped by family and faith as well as by the actions of British missionaries and the accompanying colonial encounter.¹²

Second, this book challenges the assumption that indigenous missionaries were parochial or local figures.¹³ By explaining that both men, although in very different ways, used transregional mission networks to build a Christianized global consciousness for themselves, this study builds on work about British imperialism that argues for more examination of

the way in which transnational networks remade identities.¹⁴ Although indigenous missionaries' perspectives on so-called imperial networks differed from those of European missionaries, like their British-born colleagues, they, too, used global networks to both understand their local region and, by linking their needs to those of a wider community around the world, empower their own agendas. South Africanists in particular will note that my depiction of Soga employs new research about his Scottish connections to explain that his sense of pan-Africanism relied heavily on his time in Scotland, his contact with a transregional abolitionist rhetoric, and his familiarity with Biblical world history.¹⁵ Budd never achieved such dramatic results, but he too used the Bible and mission periodicals to understand the wider world and to reinforce his own sense of purpose and position as an indigenous Christian.¹⁶ Together, the global dimensions of these men reveal how the nineteenth-century world was slowly drawing together people like Budd and Soga in ways that forced them to remake their identities.

This book also offers ways to rethink aspects of the regional histories of the Cape and British North-West America. Since the 1970s, and especially after 1990, scholars and activists have hailed Tiyo Soga as an African nationalist and early member of "the struggle" against white colonialism in South Africa.¹⁷ This rather heroic image of Soga has proved popular in a South African context, where racial categories are charged with deep historical and political significance. Although my study does not completely depart from the argument that Soga was a kind of Xhosa and/or African nationalist, it makes the case that he was also – if not most explicitly – a Christian missionary committed to bringing British modernity to his Xhosa community. This emphasis on Soga's Christian identity and British connections complicates the story of Soga-as-nationalist just as the comparative framework, and my discussion of his Scottish connections, reminds us that Soga was part of a global process of religious encounter and indigenous response occurring across the British imperial world. In painting this broader, slightly less heroic, portrait of Soga, I hope that scholars familiar with Xhosa history will take note of how a mixture of forces, including the Cape's interracial violence and his access to published texts, led Soga the missionary to become a kind of African/Xhosa nationalist.¹⁸

Scholars of Western Canada will be struck not only by the similarities between Budd and Soga, but also by the way in which Budd's experience challenges the argument of Sylvia Van Kirk and Frits Pannekoek that the arrival of missionaries during the 1820s led directly to a more

race-conscious colonial society in the British North-West.¹⁹ One of the most remarkable aspects of Budd's story, in fact, is the absence of "race" in his conceptualization of identity. More broadly, Budd's ability to articulate a new kind of indigeneity offers a fresh perspective on how religious change, along with the fur trade, shaped Aboriginal responses to the colonial encounter in the North-West.²⁰ Religion and Christianity, and Budd's life in particular, have been given short shrift in histories of the pre-1870 North-West. This book suggests a need to take religion more seriously, especially in the years culminating in the great upheavals after the 1870s.²¹

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY, MODERNITY, AND THE INDIGENOUS MISSIONARY

By the 1840s, British mission societies, and the CMS in particular, began a concerted campaign to ordain indigenous people to the status of missionary or pastor with the full authority of European clergy. The decision to do so was grounded in a mixture of administrative and financial challenges (how to get more missionaries into the field with less money) and a theological imperative: by the 1840s, there was an increasing belief that Christ's Second Coming would occur sooner than expected; thus, there was a renewed urgency to spread the Word.²² Henry Venn, chief administrator of the CMS from 1841 to 1873, was the most important and vocal proponent of indigenous ordination. His father had been a key figure in the abolitionist Clapham Sect, and Venn himself embodied the humanitarian impulses of the mid-nineteenth century. What distinguished him from previous CMS organizers were his superior administrative skills and his concern for encouraging indigenous peoples to lead their own churches in their own way. Venn recognized that Christianity would never succeed in Africa or North America unless it was fully adopted and adapted by indigenous communities. To implement this goal, he spent much of his energies throughout the 1840s, '50s, and '60s pushing the CMS to train and ordain what he called "Native missionaries" who could go on to lead "Native churches." Unfolded in a series of statements collectively known as the Native Church Policy, Venn's plan outlined how these Native missionaries, after a period of supervision from a European superior, would eventually assume leadership of an independent church that was self-governing, self-sustaining, and self-extending. By the 1850s, Venn's initiative had been adopted by other Protestant mission organizations, and

before the 1870s, men like Budd and Soga were employed by Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Anglican mission societies in all corners of the empire. Although several scholars have written about Venn and his policy, few have explained how his plan played out across the empire from the perspective of the Native missionaries themselves.²³

As I argue here, the ordained indigenous ministers who emerged in the wake of Venn's policy stood apart from other indigenous Christians for two reasons. First and foremost, more than most indigenous converts, they identified with the evangelical impulse to go out into the world and transform non-Christian societies into Christian communities that recognized individual sin and were prepared for the expected Second Coming. Although evangelicalism was a spiritual enterprise, it was shaped by several secular realities, specifically the expansion of the British Empire, which provided the movement with an international geography to continue its mission of converting and transforming people and communities.²⁴ A central feature of this intensifying British evangelicalism was the emphasis on individual sin and individual conversion.²⁵ This focus on the individual became a major source of contention and confusion once missionaries reached indigenous communities, where the concept of original sin did not exist, and "good" and "bad" were commonly seen as arising due to an imbalance in the spirit world. In both Xhosa and Cree cosmologies, this loss of balance could be caused when someone broke a taboo or performed other negative actions and, more usually, by "witchcraft" or "bad medicine." In short, for the Cree and the Xhosa, the individual was not sinful; the cause of bad events rested on the fact that a person had upset the balance of the spirit world.²⁶ As will be shown, Budd and Soga adopted both a sense of individual sin and the importance of spreading the message of salvation through conversion to a Christ-centred religion. This decision – evidence of a significant conversion on their part – would mark them off from the majority of Cree and Xhosa they served, forcing them to construct a new kind of identity.

Second, indigenous missionaries such as Budd and Soga believed in the values of "modernity," or what they would have called "civilization."²⁷ Theorist Alberto Martinelli suggests that "modernity" as it came to be understood in the nineteenth century was based on three core values – individualism, rationalism, and progress – each of which emerged as the result of specific historical events, namely, the French Revolution, the Enlightenment, and industrialization.²⁸ These three values were intimately entwined with the evangelical mission project. We have already seen

how important individualism was to the movement. It was particularly prevalent in the evangelical definition of conversion as an individual choice. More broadly, individualism challenged the importance of indigenous collectives such as clans, kinship, and rank by insisting that each person, regardless of “race” or social status, had the ability to control his or her own life and was equal before God.²⁹ Similarly, rationalism was important in shaping how evangelicals saw the world. It provided an essential justification for the missionary project, convincing missionaries that all people and environments could be rehabilitated. Although it was most active in the mission schoolhouse, the belief in the changeability of humans and their environment is evident throughout the mission enterprise, in the way that missionaries preached, taught, and tried to transform indigenous people and their use of the physical landscape. Without a belief in rationalism, the activist agenda of the evangelical movement would have had little validity: to convert people, the missionary must first believe that they could change.³⁰

Faith in progress was perhaps the most important feature of modernity. As Christopher Bayly points out, more than anything else in the nineteenth century, being “modern” meant having a forward-looking perspective and faith in the endless innovation that would occur into the future.³¹ Martinelli agrees with Bayly, arguing that modernity changed the manner in which people viewed the past: it became a point from which to move forward, not something to be romanticized and celebrated in its own right.³² In the context of evangelical missions, this forward-looking orientation is noticeable in the attempts of missions to create an “empire of Christ” that, as Jeffrey Cox observes, was designed to continue into the future, well after the “empire of Britain” had fallen.³³ This would be a future that, although guided by Biblical history, was forward-looking and enthusiastic about the changes that would accompany Christ’s Second Coming.

Evangelical activism and modernity’s trend toward individualism, rationalism, and progress are all apparent in the ways that Budd and Soga thought about their missionary work and their own indigenous communities.

COMPARING INDIGENOUS HISTORIES

To explain the influence of evangelicalism and modernity on Budd and Soga, this book presents what might be called a “comparative indigenous

history.”³⁴ Although inspired by the growing literature about transnationalism and the study of the British world as a system of networks, this approach marks something of a methodological departure from such scholarship. Except for parts of Chapter 3, *Prophetic Identities* is not really about the connections between, or forged by, indigenous missionaries. Rather, its methodological emphasis echoes an earlier historiography about frontiers and comparative studies of race relations.³⁵ My purpose is to use comparison to explain how a single global process (the emergence of indigenous missionaries) operated in distinct ways across the British Empire. In this sense, although this study recognizes – and indeed assumes – the connectedness of the nineteenth-century British Empire, the use of comparison places considerable emphasis on the way in which differences developed across the empire and on what these differences say about how evangelical Christianity remade indigeneity at each frontier of the empire.

There are, of course, challenges with using comparative approaches. Some readers will inevitably be left wanting more discussion and details about the particular region in which they are interested. However, the purposes of comparisons differ from those of conventional nation-based scholarship. Although this book does have some novel things to say about each regional case study, its primary focus is explaining a common global process and how it operated in different sites of the British Empire.

It is useful to end this introduction with brief sketches of Budd and Soga. Budd (1812-75) was the more modest and deferential of the two (see Figure 1). Introduced to missions by his mother, who sent him to the CMS residential school at the Red River Colony, from the age of eight Budd was deeply entwined with the CMS and its representatives in British North-West America and Britain. He worked briefly for the Hudson’s Bay Company, but was employed by the CMS for most of his life. In the 1830s, he married a metis woman who also had strong ties to the CMS and with her spent the rest of his life establishing missions at The Pas and Nipowewin, along the Saskatchewan River. Budd died at the Devon mission at The Pas in 1875, about a year before the Cree at The Pas signed Treaty 5, one of the major land treaties in what became Western Canada.³⁶ The defining feature of Budd’s mission was his wish to transform the Aboriginal hunters and trappers of Western Canada into settled Christian farmers. This goal was especially apparent after his time among the Plains Cree, who, by the 1860s, were facing disease and mass starvation in the wake of dwindling buffalo herds.



FIGURE 1 Henry Budd (n.d., c. 1850). Archives of Manitoba, Photographic Collection, Rupert's Land Collection, 21(N10617), Winnipeg

Compared to Budd, Tiyo Soga (1829-71) was a dynamic and vocal character (see Figure 2). Born and raised in a Xhosa community near the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, Soga benefited from an association with a Christian Xhosa prophet named Ntsikana. Raised in a community that once adhered to Ntsikana, Soga was taught about Christianity and literacy by an elder brother, even as his father, a prominent Xhosa councillor, reminded him of his leadership potential. Soga's move into the mission context began in earnest when he was fifteen: his mother used the help of

a Scottish Presbyterian missionary to enrol him at the Lovedale Seminary. He grew closer to Presbyterianism when he visited Scotland in the mid-1840s to complete his training as a teacher. Returning to Africa in 1848, he taught briefly at a mission school before travelling back to Scotland for a longer stay from 1851 to 1857. During this second visit, he attended classes at universities in Glasgow and Edinburgh, was ordained by the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and married Janet Burnside, a Scottish woman associated with the United Presbyterian community in Glasgow. Returning with her to the Cape Colony in 1857 during the aftermath of the Great Cattle-Killing, Soga lived for only fourteen more years, dying of tuberculosis in 1871. Despite this relatively short career, he managed to establish two stations (Emgwali and Tutura) in the Ciskei and Transkei, and to write dozens of hymns, newspaper articles, and scriptural translations; he also completed the first Xhosa edition of part 1 of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.³⁷ Whereas Budd focused on economic change, Soga's major goal was transforming Xhosa society into a modern nation that followed the teachings of Ntsikana and was able to respond to the racial violence inflicted on Africans by the expanding settler frontier of the Cape Colony.

Fortunately for the historian, both men were prodigious writers. Budd's letters and journals extend over a twenty-five-year period, giving a nearly daily account of his work at various mission stations and his thoughts about the Cree people he met, the missionaries with whom he interacted, and his hopes for his family. Although Soga's writings are not as extensive as Budd's, because some of his letters appeared in newspapers and were addressed to personal friends, we gain a slightly wider appreciation of his voice. When placed in a clear context and read "against the grain" or "beyond words," these texts reveal a great deal about how Budd and Soga understood what the former called their "special circumstances" as indigenous missionaries.³⁸ Of course, even with this wealth of primary material and a careful methodological approach, some scholars might question the ability of a historian to reconstruct the perspectives and voices of the subaltern, or indigenous, subjects such as Budd and Soga. It is true that "hearing" these voices, especially from the vantage point of the twenty-first-century academy, is methodologically difficult and ethnically delicate – particularly in a comparative approach.³⁹ Yet, recovering them and placing them within a broad historical context must be attempted if we are to produce multi-dimensional narratives about missions, empire,



FIGURE 2 Tiyo Soga (n.d., c. 1856). John A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga: A Page of South African Mission Work*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1878), inside front page

and global processes. If we shy away from including the voices of people such as Budd and Soga in global histories because of theoretical or ethical concerns, we run the risk of writing transnational histories in which only Europeans speak. In July 1860, when Soga asked his Xhosa audience, “What difference is there between You & me?” he had a ready explanation, just as Budd could explain how he felt connected to his Cree heritage even as he dismissed the “noise” of the “heathens” around him. Only by focusing on these voices can we unpack the connections and differences between these explanations and what they tell us about some of the ways in which Christianity remade indigeneity.

PART 1: JOURNEYS TO ORDINATION

CHAPTER I

From “Orphan” to “Settler”: The Making of the Reverend Henry Budd

BY THE MID-NINETEENTH century, thousands of indigenous people had identified with Christianity. Yet, before the 1860s, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) had ordained fewer than seventy indigenous missionaries across all its fields.¹ This low number is not surprising. Becoming a missionary entailed a radical shift that went well beyond conversion. Ordination, particularly in the evangelical Protestant tradition, demanded a move from a simple affiliation with Christianity to espousing a strong conviction about both it and its value for others.² For Henry Budd and Tiyo Soga, this shift from affiliation to conviction, and from convert to missionary, is not easily explained: neither man was destined to become a missionary, and neither was forced to seek ordination by the hegemonic power that some scholars have associated with the missionary project.³ Rather, as the next two chapters show, Budd and Soga became missionaries largely for personal reasons. To begin with, their families' prior relationship with some form of British modernity or Christianity was crucial; had it not existed, it is unlikely that either man would have been introduced to missions at a young age, and thus unlikely that either would have become so familiar with the religion and the mission enterprise. Moreover, the family connection enabled the prospective missionary to see continuity between his previous indigenous context and his new missionary one. Also crucially important in their journey to ordination was the fact that they developed a strong faith in Christianity and the wider project of modernity. Pinpointing the emergence of this faith is difficult, yet it is clear that at some point in early adulthood, both Budd and Soga chose to become more fully integrated with the mission project and

the mission societies' extensive network, believing that service to it would benefit themselves, their families, and their indigenous communities.

These choices were not made in a vacuum, of course. The material and political realities of colonialism around them, and their association with indigenous social and cultural structures, restricted how and why they, and their families, decided to pursue a relationship with Christianity. In Budd's case, the fur trade frontier, with its emphasis on the fluidity of Cree-European interaction, and the flexible structure of the Cree band, allowed him and his extended family to relocate into a mission context without significantly disrupting any entrenched political or racial barriers.

A MOTHER'S "ORPHAN"

Henry Budd's journey to ordination was driven by his mother's relationship with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). Although his parents were not Christians, their intimate association with European fur traders from the HBC meant that they had some prior knowledge of Christianity, modernity, and Britishness. Since the eighteenth century, male fur traders had commonly entered into "country marriages" with Aboriginal women. These unions cemented trading relations and provided the traders with companions and domestic help during their years in British North-West America. The result of these marriages was not the same across the region. Most striking was the way in which the two fur trade systems – the Canadian system, based in Montreal, and the British, run out of London – produced different kinds of families in the wake of these unions. On the one hand, the offspring of French voyageurs and Aboriginal women coalesced into distinctive freemen (those whose HBC contracts had expired) or Metis communities that eventually based themselves in the Catholic parishes of Red River, such as St. François-Xavier.⁴ On the other hand, the children of HBC men and Native women, particularly along the Hudson Bay coast, remained largely within their mother's community as part of what came to be called "homeguard" or "post" Indian bands.⁵ For the most part, these bands followed a seasonal round that combined wintering inland from Hudson Bay with spring, summer, and fall visits to various posts along the bay coast. Although they lived outside the walls of the fur trade fort, many of these bands maintained a sense of connection to it through seasonal employment there, marriage, or by collecting an annual allowance left to them by their British fathers who had returned to Britain.



FIGURE 3 British North-West America, c. 1830-50. The posts of the Hudson's Bay Company were important sites for indigenous-European interaction at this time. The Red River Colony, the only permanent European settlement in the region, was home to Scottish immigrants, retired HBC men and their families, and a few thousand French-Catholic Métis. Adapted from Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 101

Henry Budd's parents were both offspring of Cree-HBC marriages. Little is known about Budd's father, who died before Budd was eight; his mother, Wash-e-soo-E'Squew, was the daughter of a Cree woman and Matthew Cocking, chief HBC factor at York Factory.⁶

Like members of other homeguard bands, Wash-e-soo-E'Squew and her family combined established hunting practices with close connections to the HBC. Several of her family and band, including Budd's older brother, worked for the HBC as seasonal labourers or hunters.⁷ Some may have traded meat or furs with the post. Some of the women, such as Budd's older sister, established relations with the men employed at the posts; and

still others, including Wash-e-soo-E'Squew, visited York Factory each spring to collect an allowance left by her father, by then retired from the HBC. In these ways, the homeguard band that raised Budd was enmeshed with the HBC yet able to continue its own lifestyle outside the influence of the company.⁸ Thus, as a child, Budd was probably comfortable in both the Cree band where he spent most of his time and in the various HBC trading forts visited by his family. Most importantly perhaps, he saw a certain degree of cooperation and partnership between the band and the company.⁹

It was probably through the HBC that Wash-e-soo-E'Squew and her family first learned about Christianity and modernity. By the 1790s, almost thirty years before missionaries arrived in the region, major HBC posts such as York Factory had taken tentative steps toward becoming formal settlements with schools, church services, and small agricultural initiatives. York Factory began cultivating a large garden that tried, only somewhat successfully, to produce turnips and potatoes in the short and wet growing season of the Hudson Bay coast. Although the geese and moose harvested by homeguard Cree and company hunters remained staples in the diet of HBC labourers, who were known as "servants," these tentative attempts displayed to people such as Wash-e-soo-E'Squew that agriculture could supplement the hunting economy.¹⁰ More so than agriculture, however, the establishment of a small school at York Factory probably left an impression on Wash-e-soo-E'Squew. By the turn of the nineteenth century, when she was a young woman, the HBC had started sending school supplies to York Factory and had hired a post employee to act as schoolmaster, the first known professional teacher in the British North-West.¹¹ When she visited the post with her young family, the schooling, although rudimentary, provided some basic literacy training to the children of HBC employees, particularly those who were destined for the company's officer class.¹² Although she had yet to encounter a missionary, by the 1810s, Wash-e-soo-E'Squew was aware of the value of literacy and the potential that existed in mastering agricultural practices.¹³

Having her children learn about the written word and the techniques of farming would eventually pull Wash-e-soo-E'Squew into the mission context, but a short-term crisis also pushed her out of the homeguard Cree lifestyle. By the late 1810s, perhaps as a result of overhunting on the heels of conflicts between fur trade interests, Wash-e-soo-E'Squew's family was near starvation.¹⁴ She initially responded to these difficulties by moving to Norway House, where one of her sons had work in the

HBC. Within a year, another opportunity presented itself to Wash-e-soo-E'Squew. The Reverend John West, a missionary of the Church Missionary Society, offered to take her youngest son, Sakachuwescum, to the newly established Red River Colony for schooling. He promised to house, clothe, and feed the boy, and perhaps just as importantly, to teach him how to write and read and to cultivate crops. Wash-e-soo-E'Squew accepted this offer.¹⁵

A mixture of material, structural, and spiritual reasons probably encouraged her to make this crucial decision. She certainly must have hoped that her son would enjoy a more materially stable life with West than she was then able to provide at Norway House. West's promises of food, clothing, and agricultural skills must have appealed to a mother struggling to carve out an existence for herself and her family in the difficult environment of the boreal forest. Also, given that she had already relocated to Norway House, it seems likely that she was using the flexible and mobile practices of the Swampy Cree to her advantage. Moving her son (and later herself) into the mission milieu should be seen in this light as well: that is, as a measure that was at least partly facilitated by the Cree band system, which enabled the movement of people into and out of bands as they, or their family, felt able to do.¹⁶ Finally, her long relationship with the HBC, and indeed between the Cree and the British in general, must have given her confidence that her son would be in safe hands. After all, the British and Cree had been trading in British North-West America for over 125 years, with largely favourable results for both parties. Along with the material promises of West and the structural background of the band, this connection with the HBC goes a long way toward explaining why a mother would surrender her eight-year-old son to an as-yet-unknown missionary.

John West left his own account of meeting young Sakachuwescum and his mother. He wrote that he had "obtained another boy for education, reported to me as the orphan son of a deceased Indian and a half-caste woman."¹⁷ He probably described Sakachuwescum as an orphan to please CMS and HBC authorities in London, both of which, before the 1840s, were reluctant to let missionaries evangelize outside the Red River Colony. The HBC had direct ties to the CMS and thus was happy to provide some religious instruction through it, but the company insisted that missionaries were not allowed to relocate people – especially Aboriginal people – to the colony, for fear that Aboriginal families would leave the

hinterland and cease their work as trappers, hunters, and labourers for the HBC.¹⁸ Characterizing the boy as an orphan gave West some leeway to argue that he was not moving a whole family. When Wash-e-soo-E'Squew next saw Sakachuwescum two years later, he was going by his baptismal name, Henry Budd.

The decision to send Sakachuwescum to Red River, therefore, was the result of a dialogue between a mother wanting an education and material stability for her son, and a missionary wanting a young student who could one day act as a valuable translator and evangelist for the mission enterprise. Although West and Wash-e-soo-E'Squew had slightly different hopes for Sakachuwescum, the effect was the same: in the fall of 1820, the boy was separated from his Cree context and sent to the CMS's first school at Red River. For her part, his mother did not doubt the wisdom of her decision. Not only did she join the mission in 1822, taking up work as a matron, but she also sent a daughter to the school and encouraged several of her other children to move to the CMS parish of St. Andrew's.¹⁹ The relationship between mother and son would remain a feature of the latter's journey to ordination for another twenty years.

SCHOOL DAYS AND FAMILY TIES

Although Sakachuwescum's trip to Red River must have been difficult and lonely, arriving at the settlement would not have been too jarring for the young boy. Although it was British, the Red River Colony in the 1820s was largely a metis and Aboriginal community that did not greatly differ from those around York Factory or Norway House that Sakachuwescum had frequented with his mother. Although some divisions existed between the French-Catholic parishes to the south and the predominantly Protestant settlements to the north, on the whole, Red River was a peaceful place devoid of the racial tensions then brewing in other settler colonies. Even as late as the 1830s, as violence in the Cape Colony mobilized British humanitarians against unregulated settler colonialism, Red River was presented as an ideal example of how a British settlement could respect and protect the rights of indigenous peoples. CMS missionaries David Jones and William Cockran praised Red River, explaining that it differed from most colonies of the 1830s because it was organized not for "the benefit of the immigrant nor the emolument of the mother country, but the amelioration of the Natives of the land and affording to the worn

out voyageur an asylum and a home."²⁰ This evocation of North-West tranquility may be somewhat overstated; however, compared to other regions of the empire, 1830s Red River was a remarkably peaceful and racially fluid place.²¹ As a schoolboy throughout the 1820s, Budd had little reason to challenge this depiction of Red River as relatively harmonious and racially equal.

The schooling he received at St. John's Parish would irrevocably change his life. The classroom and the church challenged his family's basic values, encouraging him to discard the symbols of non-literate "heathenism" and replace them with literacy, agriculture, the Christian doctrine of original sin, and individual self-reliance. Aside from religious knowledge, literacy and farming were the skills most valued at the school.²² In 1822, when Sakachuwescum was baptized, it was not because of his spiritual progress but because he was "able to read the New Testament, repeat the Church Catechism, and to understand the chief truths of the Christian Religion."²³ Likewise, an 1824 report regarding the school noted that of the ten pupils, Sakachuwescum and another Cree boy, Pemuteuithinew (James Hope), were the most advanced because they could read English "with tolerable facility."²⁴ These literacy skills were absorbed at different rates by each pupil. Askenootow (Charles Pratt), later a CMS catechist at Touchwood Hills, was a classmate of Budd's in the 1820s. Although the school report of 1827 stated that he "will soon speak good English," Pratt's own writing from later in his life suggests that he was not nearly as fluent as Budd and that upbringing influenced the rates at which students absorbed English. As the report noted, "two boys from the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains [with little exposure to English] make much slower progress in learning than those who arrived from the neighbourhood of York." The reason for this, argued the schoolteacher, was that Aboriginal students from beyond the Hudson Bay region had difficulty "in acquiring the English pronunciations."²⁵

Agriculture was nearly as valued as religious knowledge and literacy. And like literacy, it was used to emphasize the importance of individual self-reliance. To teach cultivation, John West "allotted a small piece of ground for each child, and divided the different compartments with a wicker fence," instructing the students to care for and develop their own plot of land.²⁶ Though claiming that the "use of the bow was not to be forgotten" at school, West reported that Sakachuwescum and his classmates took "great delight in their gardens."²⁷ It was through agriculture,

he believed, that the children could help transform their bands into sedentary Christian communities.

The school also taught Sakachuwescum to think about time and gender in new ways. The schedule laid out by West and his schoolteacher, punctuated by the ringing of the church bell, attempted, like the factory bell in industrial Britain, to remake the meaning of time for the students.²⁸ West and other mission schoolteachers divided each day and week into segments spent in the classroom, in the gardens, eating, sleeping, and attending church. For these children, raised in homeguard bands where clock-time and bells were absent, the disciplining of time at the school meant a significant change in lifestyle. Later in his life, when he identified more closely with a settled agrarianism than with a migratory hunting/trading lifestyle, Sakachuwescum became attached to the idea of schedules and clock-time. On establishing his residences at The Pas and Nipowewin, for instance, he had a clock in his house and also used his journal to record each day and each week as a series of events governed by a pre-arranged timetable based on the clock.²⁹ A journal entry from 1860 reveals how Sunday was scheduled around the clock-time he first learned at West's school: "March 4th: Sunday. In the Morning I held prayers at the usual hour 7 A.M. and at 9 we assembled the children for school. My daughter Elizabeth assisting me. And at 11 O'clock A.M. we had just got ready for the Morning Service."³⁰

The gendered nature of the Red River school was made equally clear to Sakachuwescum. The boys, according to West, would be taught to "see the advantage of making gardens, cultivating soil, so as not to be exposed to hunger and starvation ... [whereas] the little girls would be taught to knit and make articles of clothing to wear, like those white people wore."³¹ It was hoped that the girls could then work as domestic servants and/or marry a boy from the mission school and help maintain a small farm or mission. When Sakachuwescum's sister started at the school, she was trained in the same Scripture and language classes as he was but instead of farming, she learned domestic skills (cleaning and cooking) in hopes that she and the other female students "might be useful in that department."³² As with clock-time, Sakachuwescum would eventually incorporate these gender constructions into his own life. By the 1850s, not only did he employ "girls" from Red River to perform domestic work in his home, but he also intended his sons to become missionaries and his daughters to marry missionaries, a plan based on patterns of masculinity and femininity introduced to him at the mission school.³³

Although Sakachuwescum was recognized as a strong student in literacy and generally considered obedient by his teachers, like his classmates he resisted absorbing the theological teachings of the school. That he never convinced his teacher he had converted to Christianity suggests that even Sakachuwescum, described as the "most amiable" of the students, refused the complete change that the school hoped to produce in its pupils.³⁴ Indeed, his failure to convert is evidence of what the Reverend William Cockran observed with frustration of all the mission students in the 1820s: "They are perfectly satisfied with us; they look up to us for the supply of all their wants, and consider us their adopted parents; and every boy seems willing to reside with us; but they are Indian still."³⁵ Sakachuwescum's opposition to conversion is apparent in his teachers' descriptions of him. The 1824 school report stated that, for all the progress he and Pemuteuithinew (James Hope) displayed, "It is much regretted that nothing [of] faith can be stated of these two fine boys."³⁶ Likewise, the 1827 report declared that "the older boys [Sakachuwescum and Pemuteuithinew] are ... acquiring some head knowledge in divine things [and] ... it would be a most pleasing task to relate that a work of grace was evidently making similar advances in their hearts to what knowledge is doing in their heads, but nothing has appeared hitherto to gratify me in giving such animation [ill?]."³⁷

Sakachuwescum's failure to display the signs of faith for which his schoolteachers hoped may have been grounded in his discomfort with the English language. Although he was able and willing to learn new skills, and even a new language, he and his classmates resisted the new religious text and world view that were communicated to them in English, a language he later dismissed as a "foreign tongue."³⁸ He and the other pupils saw converting to Christianity as associated with a change in language and identity that would too greatly alienate them from their past lives in Native bands. When Budd began his own mission work in the 1850s, he was adamant that religious services and discussions should be conducted in Cree. Not only did he feel that preaching in an "Indian language" helped people understand Christianity, he shared Henry Venn's belief that evangelizing in an indigenous language would improve a missionary's general reception by prospective converts. For Sakachuwescum and his classmates, and for his future converts, language, identity, and spirituality were intimately connected.

Sakachuwescum differed from his fellow students in one crucial aspect: he developed a particularly close connection with the mission

school and with the CMS in general. Although the initial separation from his mother and his journey to Red River in John West's care has rightly been described by at least one scholar as traumatic, by the mid-1820s when he was twelve years old, he had developed strong ties to the mission school.³⁹ Wash-e-soo-E'Squew's decision to join the school as a matron and to enrol another child there was crucial in helping Sakachuwescum construct this deep attachment.⁴⁰ Equally important was his relationship with John West. In the few years after he "obtained" Sakachuwescum, West became a father figure to the boy. This bond was such that when West was called back to England in 1822, Sakachuwescum reportedly "felt much on his departure and wept on his being told of his [West's] not returning."⁴¹ He maintained this relationship with West into the 1840s, writing to him at one point to thank him for "gathering me with the rest of my fellows from the Wilderness for the purpose of education & cultivating our minds with sound religious truths, the benefits of which I for one do feel to this day."⁴² West's fatherly role, complemented by Wash-e-soo-E'Squew's presence at the school after 1822, allowed Sakachuwescum to see the school as a home-community and family. Moreover, when his mother's long relationship with the church finally led to her baptism in 1828, the link between Sakachuwescum's "real family" and the Anglican Church that adopted him was further cemented.⁴³ These fictive yet familial ties enabled the boy to sense considerable continuity between his pre-mission upbringing and his life at the Red River school.

The ties between Sakachuwescum and the CMS were confirmed by his baptism in 1822. This was a rite of passage that was meant to mark his transformation from a "heathen" to a Christian boy and to formalize his relationship with the CMS.⁴⁴ By being renamed after John West's English friend and mentor, Henry Budd of White Roding, the young Cree boy literally became part of the extended family of what he later called "the CMSociety." Moreover, undergoing the ceremony at age ten meant that baptism supplanted the Cree initiation ritual of the vision fast that Sakachuwescum may have undertaken had he not been living at the mission.⁴⁵ Thus, the baptism at once displaced Budd's past by renaming him, superseding the possibility that he would complete a vision fast, and presenting him with a new future where the CMS was his home-community. This intimate association with the CMS, created by his mother, John West, and baptism, played a key role in his eventual decision to become a missionary.

FAITH AND FAMILY CONFIRM HIM

By the mid-1830s, the results of this intimacy were becoming evident. After several years away from Red River, working as a labourer for the HBC, Henry Budd returned to the colony and began building a life centred at the Anglican Church in St. Andrew's Parish. He explained this return as a result of the pull of the church-community at St. Andrew's/The Rapids. He "longed for the privileges of God's house," noted one observer, "and wished to settle at 'The Rapids' on the Red River where he knew he should find a missionary settlement."⁴⁶ In 1837, David Jones, the missionary who replaced John West, celebrated the homecoming of the now devoutly Christian Budd with the following words: "This was the first lad Mr. West obtained as an inmate of the Indian School. He has been many years in the Company's service & has much improved since he left us [and went to work for the HBC] ... He bore the best character while in the service & since his return to the settlement has borne ... the name of a steady & pious young man."⁴⁷ Although the pull of his family, many of whom were by then living at St. Andrew's, was a crucial reason for his return, so too was his new-found faith in Christianity and modernity.

Budd's developing Christian faith emerged some time during his stint as a fur trader and was in part a reaction to it. In the late 1820s, when he left the mission school, work opportunities for literate Aboriginal men were limited. Because the CMS had yet to initiate its Native Church Policy, Budd found no employment there; conversely, because the HBC generally hired officers from Britain, he had little prospect of rising through the ranks of the company. Thus, his main option was to become a general labourer, a servant, for the HBC. He worked in this capacity twice, first at Red River and later at Fort Frances in the Lac La Pluie region (see Figure 3 on page 17).⁴⁸ The work was physically demanding, and as a company servant with a comparatively high level of education who had spent the previous twelve years in the relatively settled colony of Red River, he must have found life in the HBC particularly challenging. Because of the status-conscious hierarchy of the HBC, any literate HBC officers at the post would have had little interest in conversing with a Cree servant such as Budd.⁴⁹ Stuck in limbo as an educated servant in the HBC, Budd probably relied on prayer and written texts, and almost certainly a Bible, to cope with the isolation at Lac La Pluie; he may have attended Sunday services at the HBC post. It is likely that the world he encountered

outside Red River, particularly the various Ojibwa rituals and conjuring practices he may have seen near Lac La Pluie, fuelled his move toward the Red River mission. Having been taught since the age of eight that conjuring was “the invention of men” and therefore a false religion, Budd responded to it by clarifying in his own mind why he was a Christian and why that made him different from “heathen” Indians.⁵⁰ This realization helped him formulate a clearer understanding of himself and his Christian identity.

Budd almost certainly underwent some form of conversion process or moment during his fur trade career. Writings from later in his life show that he recognized conversion as a difficult and critical step in a Christian’s life, marking a key instance of change and discontinuity. In 1853, for instance, he insisted that his nephew, Peter Erasmus, should not train to be a missionary unless he was fully committed to the church. According to Erasmus, Budd repeatedly told him that he “must make up his own mind” about whether to commit to the church, explaining that “your decision [to work for the church] must be of your own free will.”⁵¹ In the early 1850s, Budd likewise noted that conversion “is a rather bold step for them [the Indians] – to confess openly before hundreds of heathens, that they renounce heathenism and embrace Xtianity.”⁵² By the mid-1830s, he himself had taken this bold step. Other classmates followed him into HBC service, particularly James Hope and Charles Pratt, but Budd was the first to return to the CMS and to remain closely connected with it for the rest of his life.⁵³

Budd’s Christian faith was reflected in the new family and work-life he built at Red River during the 1830s. At the base of this new life was his marriage to Elizabeth Work, a mixed-ancestry Cree woman raised in the Anglican Church. She was an ideal partner for Budd. The daughter of a senior HBC officer, John Work, and an unnamed “Native woman,” she had a great deal in common with her new husband.⁵⁴ Born in about 1821 at either Fort Severn or Island Lake House near Hudson Bay, Elizabeth was sent to Red River as a child and placed, at her father’s wishes, under the supervision of missionaries.⁵⁵ Although he had discontinued his relationship with Elizabeth’s mother, John Work realized that if he wanted to provide his daughter with a viable future in the British North-West, he must give her a Christian, English education.⁵⁶ Once at Red River, Elizabeth was baptized (in August 1826) and presumably placed in the care of the CMS.⁵⁷ By the 1830s, her status in the colony was based on her father’s position as an HBC officer and her own education in the CMS

system.⁵⁸ Although her experience as a child from outside Red River who came to the colony for schooling may have helped her relate to Budd, it was probably their shared relationship with the church that drew them together and led to their marriage.

Elizabeth supported Budd's Christian faith and provided him with an excellent set of resources for his future mission work.⁵⁹ Her ability to speak fluent Cree and English, and to maintain a "Christian home," meant that she created a private sphere for him and their thirteen children.⁶⁰ Publicly, she and her children would play a crucial role in maintaining the mission house, garden, and school when Budd was away on month-long trips. The value of this marriage did not escape the attention of CMS officials. Commenting on it, a CMS official noted Elizabeth's good standing as the "daughter of one of the Company's officers."⁶¹ Even John Work, her absentee father, supported the union, giving Budd a £100 dowry.⁶² Like Budd's mother, Elizabeth and her extended family provided valuable encouragement and support in his decision to remain a Christian.

Budd's employment during the 1830s echoed his marriage choice. In 1821, when the HBC merged with its rival the North-West Company, several fur trade posts across the region were closed, forcing former employees (and their families) to move to Red River. This migration changed Red River in significant ways; most importantly, it created a large, fairly sedentary community organized into a system of parishes centred around Protestant or Catholic churches.⁶³ With these parishes came the demand for schoolteachers, preferably those who identified with Christianity and who would be able to relate to the *metis* children attending the schools. Budd fit this need nicely. Within a year of leaving the HBC, he was employed at the CMS Upper Church School (St. John's Parish), teaching literacy and basic arithmetic.⁶⁴ His decision to live at St. Andrew's Parish brought him even closer to the CMS and again drew praise from CMS missionaries, one of whom noted that Budd had "a lot of land & a good house in a state of forwardness in the vicinity of the Grand Rapids [St. Andrew's]."⁶⁵ That Budd was described as a "settler" in 1839 is further evidence of how perceptions of him had changed since his days as a student who "had a thoughtful turn of mind" but who displayed "nothing [of] faith."⁶⁶ By the 1830s, Budd was no longer the orphan boy whom John West had obtained from Norway House and transported to Red River; he was now a settler and a Christian man with a range of language and life skills that were useful to the CMS.

FAMILY, RESISTANCE, ORDINATION

Having confirmed his own faith and built his new family, Budd turned his gaze outward: by the late 1830s, he wanted to use his new position as a schoolteacher to bring religion and the agrarian lifestyle to other Aboriginal people in British North-West America. His first opportunity to make Christianity meaningful to Natives outside Red River came in 1840 when he was made schoolmaster in the Cumberland district. Originally located at the HBC's Cumberland House post, the school moved in 1841 to the site of an old French trading post at The Pas, southeast of Cumberland (see Figure 3). CMS missionary William Cockran explained that to start a mission in such an isolated area, the CMS needed a "religious adventurer" who was willing and able to perform the difficult physical labour of establishing a post and talking to potential converts.⁶⁷ More than any other CMS employee at the time, Budd had these qualities. As Cockran explained to a superior in England, "We appointed him [Budd to Cumberland] because he is a Native of that quarter, and understands the language, he will therefore act as Interpreter to the Missionary."⁶⁸ On departing for this posting in the summer of 1840, Budd was directed to "collect some children for instruction and to speak to the Indians on the subject of our Mission."⁶⁹ His own interests were similar to those of the CMS: he wanted to bring the CMS to the "Natives of that quarter" by making Christianity relevant to their lives.

Like other stages of his life, Budd's posting to The Pas was a family affair, for his wife and mother accompanied him.⁷⁰ Together, these three people faced the extremely difficult task of creating a mission school in a part of British North-West America where both Cree and HBC traders were generally hostile to missionaries. They set up a day school for children, established a small farm, and gave lessons and church services on Sunday for adults and children.⁷¹ The day school taught children English and Scripture. To attract and retain students, Budd – with the help of his wife and mother – provided the children with clothing and two meals a day.⁷² Most students lived with their parents and were thus removed from the school during periods of hunting and trapping, but by 1841, some thirteen pupils were "lodged" there, although Budd wished that more could be separated from their parents and live full-time at the school: "If they [the children] were kept from their parents they would be manageable," he wrote.⁷³ Whereas the school targeted children, the farm was intended to attract the parents to the mission and its message. Budd

reported that he had two cows at the mission and enjoyed a harvest of twenty kegs of potatoes and four bushels of wheat.⁷⁴ By 1844, he was planting barley and using an ox to plough the fields. Fishing and trading with the Indians supplemented his diet, but he continued to emphasize farming in his daily mission work, using the farm both as a source of food and a model of the lifestyle he hoped the Indians would adopt. The purpose of the Sunday school and church services was to teach children and parents alike about Scripture and original sin. A typical Sunday in the early 1840s at The Pas began with morning prayers before breakfast, a public service, and a Sunday school for parents and children; later, an evening meeting preceded hymn singing for the children, and the day ended with "religious conversations with the old."⁷⁵ Along with these formal tools of evangelization, Budd's home, run by his wife and mother, also played a part in his mission work.

Each person at The Pas responded to Budd's mission with their own interests and needs in mind. Some saw his presence in terms of material gains, whereas others identified with the spiritual and educational benefits of the mission. As Budd explained, parents sent their children to school for diverse reasons:

I think that most of them [the parents] are really desirous of having their children instructed because they wish to be instructed themselves, though there are others who are willing to send their children to school, who do not manifest a wish to know, and serve the living and true God. Of these I cannot say whether they are induced to send them [their children] to school because they get food and clothing for them. My opinion is that some of them do because they do not send them as regular now ... when they can find their food every where.⁷⁶

On the whole, convincing the Cree at The Pas to accept all the messages of Christianity and a settled agrarian existence proved difficult for Budd and his wife and mother. Most of the people were comfortable following a mixed-economy migratory life, combining summer work on the HBC boats with various hunting and trapping activities during the rest of the year. Skeptical of the benefits of a sedentary life and of Budd's ideas about individual sin and redemption, several Cree at The Pas ignored his message, and others tried to have him removed from the area. In 1844, for example, he was forced to deal with complaints from Indians (and

probably the HBC) that he was “not feeding the school children properly.”⁷⁷ He acknowledged these complaints but suggested that only a minority of people actively resisted his mission.⁷⁸ He speculated that the HBC had incited some Natives to resist it: “There must be some slander influenced by the HBCo,” he wrote, “that has been trying to prejudice the minds of the Indians respecting us, with regard to putting their children to the school.”⁷⁹ In his defence, he explained that the schoolchildren were “as well provided for as ever I was when I was a school Boy like themselves even at R.R. where plenty could be had.”⁸⁰

More often, Budd complained that though some Indians listened to his teachings, many were “still halting between two opinions [of Christianity and ‘heathenism’] not knowing which to pursue.”⁸¹ On the whole, he struggled to build a robust community of Native Christians at The Pas during the early 1840s. Years later, he recalled that except for his wife and mother, his only ally there was a freeman named John Turner.⁸² His remark that Turner “kindly sheltered me & my property from the Indians” when he first arrived at The Pas reveals that he felt threatened by the Indians he was meant to serve.⁸³ As Budd noted to his mentor John West in a letter from this period, “The Lord is pleased to bless me and mine, though we are quite alone ... No body but Indians around us.”⁸⁴

The CMS did little to ease the sense of isolation felt by Budd and his family. Indeed, the society’s emphasis on hierarchy and centralized administration exacerbated the problem. The arrival of the Reverend James Hunter at the Devon mission in 1844 brought Budd face-to-face with his relatively low status in the CMS. Almost immediately upon his arrival, Hunter made Budd into little more than a carpenter, a move that, for Budd, must have felt like a regression to his life in the HBC. Throughout the 1840s, Budd did little teaching and was instead put to work sawing wood and building a mission house for the Hunters.⁸⁵ By the summer of 1846, Budd and the other Native teacher at the station, James Settee, had reportedly collected “3000 planks and boards.”⁸⁶ Neither Budd nor Settee enjoyed this work. Settee was sharp in his complaints, stating that the Indians of The Pas were not being educated, because he and Budd were forced to collect wood:

The Indians is [sic] complaining on me and Henry, but what can we do, not even Saturday but must be devoted to labour and leave our Heathen brethren uninstructed ... Is this [wood cutting] what

the Church Missionary Society wishes us to do, and be employed about [?] ... The Indian remarks "we have been taught by the fur trader how to use an axe, and the use of other utensils but we want to be taught the word of God" ... Henry and I are advocating for Saturday [schooling] but without speed as yet.⁸⁷

Budd, more diplomatic in voicing his anger, wrote to a superior at Red River, "We hope this winter will do a great deal toward getting all the wood required for the Church and then it is to be hoped that we shall have more time to keep school more regularly."⁸⁸

Hunter's approach to Budd was framed more by issues of status and class than by race. He felt strongly that Indians were capable of being missionaries, but he was also a member of an Anglican Church that – even in its evangelical guise of the CMS – was concerned with hierarchy. He was especially sure that his higher level of education gave him a more sophisticated understanding of language and translation. Indeed, Budd learned a lot from Hunter about translation and the importance of using Cree written texts. From the moment he arrived at The Pas, James Hunter was obsessed with making translations and finding a way to "fix the language" by creating an orthography for Cree words that followed the rules in the "The Standard Alphabet of the Society" published by the CMS.⁸⁹ Earlier in the decade, James Evans had already generated a system of Cree syllabics, but Hunter was interested in understanding the complexities of the language and in producing written texts using roman characters that would be useful for English-speaking missionaries. Budd, and Hunter's second wife, Jean Ross, the metis daughter of HBC officer Donald Ross, were crucial aides in Hunter's attempt to learn the language and create these texts. Budd was happy to devote vast amounts of his time to helping Hunter translate sermons, psalms, prayers, religious books, and portions of the New and Old Testaments.⁹⁰ Remembering his own childhood discomfort with English-language religious services, he gladly supported Hunter's translation project. In February 1851, for instance, he recorded that, working under Hunter's supervision, he spent entire weeks "altogether to translations."⁹¹ His skill as a translator did not stop Hunter from relegating him to the status of mediocre assistant, however: "Mr. Budd is a great help to me in my translations but unfortunately he does not understand much of the Grammar [of Cree]," Hunter wrote.⁹² Such attitudes were not simply racist. Rather, these were prejudices based on

status and education: in Hunter's mind, without a proper education, Budd remained an outsider to the top echelons of the CMS system in the British North-West.⁹³

Henry Venn felt certain that once ordained, Budd and others like him would be regarded as equals by their British counterparts. By the late 1840s, Venn had begun asking his missionaries in the British North-West to suggest indigenous candidates for ordination. In the summer of 1850, Budd was hand-picked by the bishop of Rupert's Land, David Anderson, as a potential candidate. In preparation for his ordination, he left The Pas and joined five other "free students" selected to attend the newly established St. John's Collegiate at Red River.⁹⁴ At the college with Budd were several other Native schoolteachers, including Robert MacDonald, Peter Jacobs, and Budd's eldest son, Henry Budd Jr.⁹⁵ Budd was clearly the leader of the group. The oldest student, he was chosen as the college's first librarian and quickly moved through the program, gaining ordination as a priest in December 1850, only a few months after entering the college. He was now the only ordained indigenous missionary in British North-West America.⁹⁶

This ordination had mixed results. Initially, it brought Budd closer to Protestants (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) in Red River. Soon afterward, he thanked the CMS for its support over the years, remarking that "scarcely another of the Society's converts" had been as intimately connected with the society "for upwards of 30 years."⁹⁷ And he noted the responsibility he felt in his new role: "I cannot well describe what I felt, indeed I have no language to express it fully. I felt willing to do anything, or even endure any trial, if I may but win my poor countrymen to the knowledge of Christ and his great Salvation. If ever I felt anything like one who really feels his responsibility, I did feel it there and then."⁹⁸ Likewise, three days after his ordination, Budd gave a sermon at the Upper Church that "brought a large number of people together, Indians, halfbreeds, and even the Scotch [Presbyterians] to witness the preaching of the gospel of Christ for the first time in that Church in a Native language."⁹⁹ After the service, a Christian Indian told Budd that "he had come from the neighborhood of The Rapids, hearing that there were to be a sermon preached here this afternoon in a language that he could understand and that he felt thankful he came because he feels that he has not come here in vain."¹⁰⁰

As Budd left Red River and moved back toward The Pas and out to the plains, he remained an outsider to the still elusive Anglican elite in the

British North-West. Although he did acquire some additional responsibility at outstations such as The Pas, in compliance with the Native Church Policy, he remained under Hunter's "supervision" throughout the 1850s. Likewise, because the policy intended Budd to lead a separate Native church, he did not participate in the decision making of the Anglican committees at Red River. Only in the late 1850s did he establish his own mission station and work free of Hunter's oversight.

Concurrently, he encountered significant opposition from Aboriginal people outside Red River. At its heart lay the reluctance of many Aboriginal leaders to accept Christianity and the settled agricultural communities that Budd promoted. His passionate arguments with a Plains Cree man in 1851 revealed his awareness of resistance and his desire to overcome challenges from indigenous leaders. As he explained in his journal, the man voiced skepticism about Christianity and missionaries, charging that "the whitemen are not doing them [the Indians] any good, but rather harm, the best way for them to do [sic] is to prevent the Company from trading on their land, and also the Praying people [missionaries], for they would soon kill and eat up their animals, for they are already getting few, and leave nothing for their children after them."¹⁰¹

Budd's reply was clear. Asserting that missionaries were the solution, not the cause of these economic difficulties, he stated, "It was not the missionaries that was killing up their Buffalo and their Moose but it was themselves, that it was evident they cannot always last, and as to their children having nothing after them to live upon the only remedy for that was to farm and cultivate their fine and extensive soil so when the Buffalo and the Moose fail, they will have something to depend upon as the means of their support."¹⁰² Budd explained that the missionary "would teach them to get their livelihood from the soil, [and] keep domestic cattle."¹⁰³ He added that, regardless of the man's opinion, Indians could not stop the dissemination of Christianity and the missionaries: "I told him also it was not in the power of the Indians to prevent the Gospel from spreading among them for it is God's work, and He is Almighty ... He hath said that the knowledge of God shall cover the earth, even as the waters cover the sea, so whatever men may do to prevent and oppose the Gospel of God, it will still grow."¹⁰⁴

Twinning the secular and the sacred, Budd made a powerful argument in support of missionaries and of the need for the Cree to convert to Christianity and create a new kind of community that engaged with agriculture and the doctrine of original sin. These confrontations produced

mixed results. Sometimes, he persuaded a Cree leader to his way of thinking, sometimes not; sometimes, he converted various members of a community. Likewise, he was sometimes accepted by some CMS missionaries, but sometimes not. Being an ordained indigenous missionary placed him in an uncertain position.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Both rupture and continuity marked Budd's journey to ordination. He had gone from living in an oral culture that subscribed to a Cree cosmology concerned with maintaining good relations with a spirit guardian and combining a range of economic activities to dressing in manufactured clothing, reading and writing in two languages, believing in individual sin and salvation through Christ, and arguing zealously in favour of agricultural economics. And yet, the precedent of the fur trade and existing Cree band-based interactions with British traders, and especially his family's intimate relationship with the HBC and the CMS, provided a sense of continuity during this journey. This background encouraged Budd to move into the mission context and helped him cope with the traumatic changes of that move.

Over time, the material opportunities of the mission, along with family and faith, would shape the kind of missionary Budd became. Although British North-West America remained a peaceful, racially fluid frontier throughout most of the nineteenth century, by the 1850s, a constellation of events, especially the rise of settler colonialism, interband warfare, and the extinction of the buffalo, irrevocably changed the economy of its Aboriginal communities.¹⁰⁵ As these alterations created pressure on Aboriginal land and economies in the 1860s and beyond, the material motivation for conversion became more apparent. For Budd, these developments helped guide his purpose as a missionary: he needed to convert both the souls and the economies of "his countrymen."

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