

THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE REVEREND EGERTON R. YOUNG
(1840-1909)

by

Tanya Middlebro', B.A.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts

Department of History
Carleton University
Ottawa, Canada
April 2003

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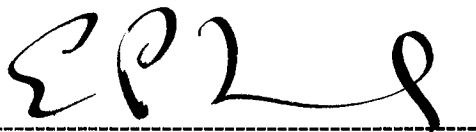
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2 May 2003

ABSTRACT

The Reverend Egerton R. Young (1840-1909) was a Wesleyan Methodist minister born in Ontario who served as a missionary among the Cree and Ojibwa in northern Manitoba from 1868 to 1876. From 1885 until his death in 1909, he lectured and wrote books in different popular genres based on his experiences in Manitoba. He was not an original thinker, nor is he well-remembered. But an examination of his ideas allows us to test the application of a current historiographical debate over whether the late nineteenth-century Methodist adaptation to modernity was an abandonment of essential Christianity. Using methods from literary history and the social history of ideas, this thesis demonstrates that Young adopted some modern ideas without abandoning his consistently traditional Wesleyan theology of experience.

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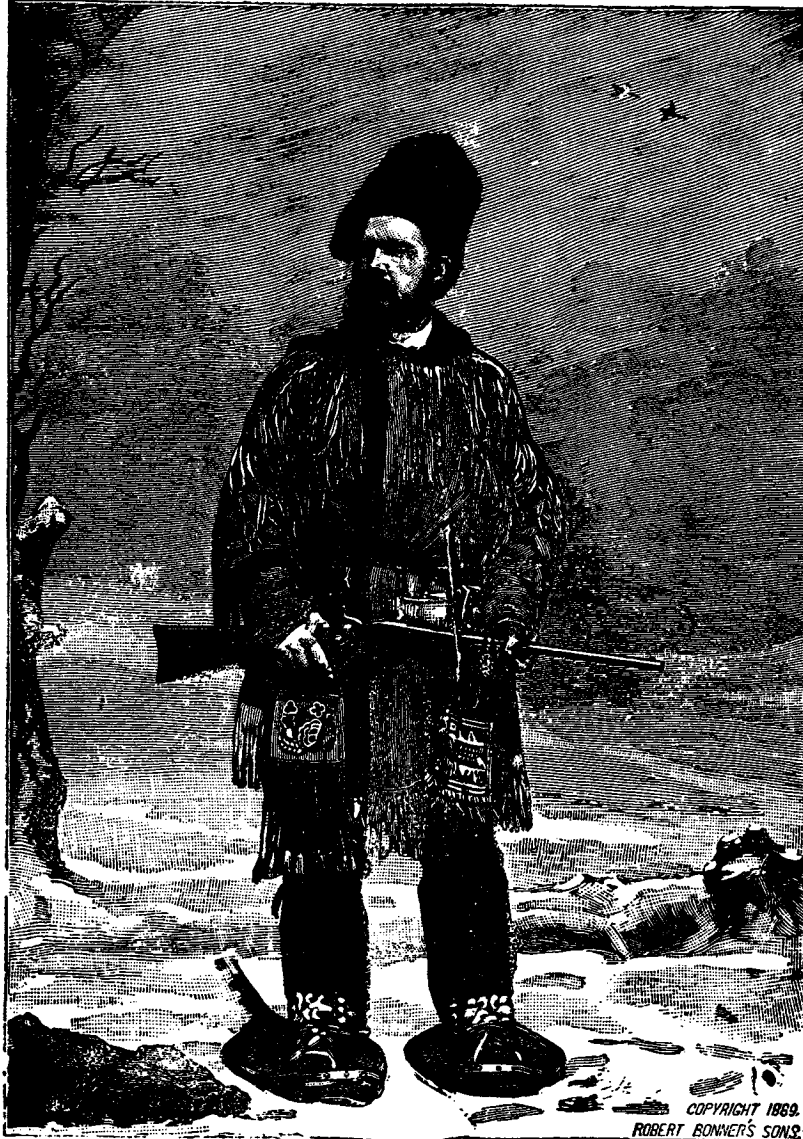
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THREE INTERESTING & THRILLING BOOKS.

"By Canoe and Dog-Train among the Cree and Salteaux Indians."

"Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Camp Fires."

"OOWIKAPUN; or, How the Gospel reached the Nelson River Indians."



Rev. EGERTON R. YOUNG IN HIS NATIVE COSTUME.

For Sale by the Author at his Week Evening Lectures.

The Rev. Egerton Ryerson Young has little need of an introduction. We have heard and read his stirring stories of missionary trial and triumph till our hearts have thrilled within us, and we have rejoiced in the trophies of the Gospel of Christ. We are glad that, in the providence of God, he has been called to recount these *gesta Christi*—these achievements of Christ in the fatherland whence came the first Methodist Missionaries to the Indian tribes of our great North-west. This book recalls the heroic days of those pioneer missionaries. And not a whit behind them was our brother, who followed in their footsteps, and endured hardships and privations even greater than theirs.—**Guardian.**

INTRODUCTION

THE IDEAS OF THE REVEREND EGERTON R. YOUNG: DEVELOPING A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Reverend Egerton R. Young (1840-1909) was a son of the parsonage from Ontario with Yankee roots. Soon after his ordination in 1867, he was called to serve as a Methodist missionary in northern Manitoba. Young served as a missionary for eight years, and was present at the signing of Treaty 5 by the Swampy Cree at Rossville in 1875. After leaving Manitoba for a series of small-town pastorates in Ontario, he toured England and the north-eastern United States lecturing on his missionary experiences. About 1890, he left active ministry to devote himself full-time to lecturing, and writing books in popular genres based on his missionary experiences. He does not appear to have become wealthy as his widow was living in reduced circumstances soon after his death in 1909.

No biography of the Reverend Egerton R. Young has ever been written, aside from the article in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* written by his granddaughter, Manitoba historian Jennifer H. Brown. Still, his name has come up at least once in every generation of Canadian historians, with judgments that varied enormously: he was a hero, he was an opportunist, he was exceedingly generous to his Swampy Cree constituents, he belittled Aboriginal people. Why should the student of early twentieth-century Canadian history care about the reputation of an obscure clergyman?

This thesis intends to search Canadian historiography in the hope of illuminating the issues involved in judging and interpreting an obscure missionary for an early twenty-first century audience. In particular, this thesis will attempt to determine the applicability of a debate current among Canadian historians of Protestant ideas at the end of the nineteenth century, using

the example of Egerton R. Young. This debate about nineteenth-century Protestant doctrine is occurring concurrently with a similar great theological divide among practicing Protestants. An examination of the ideas of Egerton R. Young can test the applicability of the main points in the historians' debate, and suggest its relationship with the current theological divide.

Canadian historians' judgments of Protestant missionaries in Western Canada have changed continuously and enormously since the death of Egerton R. Young in 1909. The treatment of the Methodist Church and her missionaries by academic and popular historians has followed every trend and been subjected to every new interpretation in twentieth-century Canadian historiography, with little argument. Canadian historians have made the history of religion and religious ideas fit the exigencies of other disciplines and ideologies: progressive national histories, sociology, anthropology, post-colonial studies. Simultaneously, according to church historian John S. Moir, the publication of religious historical monographs showed a great decline in the first half of the twentieth-century, and religious historians began to follow the intellectual trends set by academic historians. Therefore, in both religious and secular Canadian historical writing, expressions of faith, such as the missionary vocation of the value of bringing the Gospel to the Western Cree, have been presented as subservient to secular concerns. As the pre-eminent religious historian George Rawlyk said: "It is clear that English-Canadian historians throughout this century have significantly downplayed the importance of religion as a formative force in Canadian life."¹

In the 1960's, British church historian Owen Chadwick published histories of Christianity that used the framework of intellectual history to invigorate religious history. Owen Chadwick cautioned that even intellectual history cannot fully explain or capture the power and mystery of

¹ George A. Rawlyk, *Wrapped up in God: A Study of Several Canadian Revivals and Revivalists* (Burlington, 1988), page 97.

the religious experience, the personal encounter with God. Nearly simultaneously, Brian McKillop established Canadian intellectual history as a discipline with the 1979 publication of *A Disciplined Intelligence*. The book took seriously the subtleties of theology and treated them respectfully as ideas. The intellectual history approach proved to be tremendously fruitful in Canada from the 1980's on, with literally dozens of historians addressing the Methodist Church and her missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century. Many have concentrated on the ideas of intellectual leaders and the universities. Some, such as Phyllis Airhart, were trained in theology and bring insights from the sociology of religion,² which is an important discipline in the study of theology at Chicago (and at the University of Ottawa).

Since the 1980's, some historians of the Canadian Protestant churches at the end of the nineteenth century have concentrated on lining up specific religious ideas on one or the other side of a sometimes nasty split. This debate, named the secularisation versus continuity debate by Brian McKillop, concerns the breakdown of the "Protestant consensus" at mid-century³ and the changes in Protestant theology following the popularisation of the ideas of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and the German intellectuals who examined the Bible as a historical document. By the end of the century, a variety of Protestant theology flourished, from the assertion of the unalterable truth of fundamental doctrines to the Social gospel. Variety and debate are constant features in the history of Protestant ideas, and this debate between historians has interesting parallels to the historic debate between the ideas of the primacy of faith and the primacy of good works active since the time of Martin Luther. But some historians view mainstream Protestant practice at the end of the nineteenth century as a betrayal of essential features of Protestant

² Phyllis Airhart, *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada* (Montreal & Kingston, 1992), page 7. Airhart mentions Edward Shils from the University of Chicago on the concepts of tradition and change as being influential in her work.

³ William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario* (Kingston & Montreal), page 196.

Christianity; other historians have judged the changes as an adaptation to modernism that did not imply a loss of faith. Historians have not tended to treat the question as an essentially religious one.

This thesis will explore the coherence of Egerton R. Young's ideas, in order to test the application of this historiographical debate over whether the late nineteenth-century Methodist adaptation to modernity was an abandonment of essential Christianity. This thesis will use an intellectual history method, with the reservation suggested by British religious historian Owen Chadwick, that religious ideas be accepted as ends in themselves. In order to test the applicability of the theories of the debate, this thesis will attempt to ascertain whether the categorisation of those ideas common to the historians on the secularising side of the debate or those suggested by the continuity historians best illuminate Young's theology and explain him to an early twenty-first century audience. The thesis will use two general measures: first, whether Young can be categorised as an evangelical as defined by historians Gauvreau and Rawlyk, or a secularising clergyman, as suggested by David Marshall, or a continuing Wesleyan practicing a faith of experience as suggested by Airhart and Semple; and second, whether his essential faith, expressed as his world-view and his sense of his vocation as a missionary, endured the changes in popular theology at the end of the nineteenth century, or suffered a critical loss, possibly being diverted into the Social gospel or secular humanitarian concerns as suggested by Ramsay Cook.

The first chapter of this thesis will trace the historiographic treatment of the vocation of Methodist missionaries by Canadian historians from 1862 to 2001 in order to provide a foundation for the current historiographic debate. It will very briefly examine other disciplines used by historians to analyse religious ideas including social science disciplines such as anthropology and Cultural Studies.

The second chapter will examine Young's life generally, spelling out his background and reaction to issues of the day in both theological and non-theological areas, for evidence of the applicability of liberal or evangelical labels, and to determine whether, as a mature man, he lost his faith. This chapter will be based mostly on Young's writings, both published and unpublished.

The third chapter will investigate Young's theology in order to determine whether it is fruitful to label Young a liberal or evangelical Protestant, and whether he lost his faith. Egerton R. Young's ideas will be divided into three categories: traditional Wesleyan, ideas about Aboriginal people specific to his experience as a missionary, and modern. His ideas will be compared with those of his colleagues, particularly the reverends John Semmens, John McDougall, Robert Rundle, Thomas Crosby and George Young.

The fourth chapter will make use of the work of literary and social historians to provide the context for the environment in which Young wrote and published his ideas. It will examine Young's published non-theological ideas in a more chronological fashion, in the context of publishing and popular taste in order to determine whether the changes in his theology represent a loss of faith or break with his traditional Wesleyan views, or can be explained by the demands of his career as an author.

Finally, this thesis will conclude by using the above conclusions to comment on the applicability of the secularisation versus continuity debate to the study of late nineteenth-century Protestant ideas, and the relationship between the debate and the current theological divide in Protestantism.

An essential source for this thesis was the Egerton R. Young papers in the United Church Archives, Victoria University, Toronto. The collection is relatively small: four unpaginated

books of sermons, a notebook, five pocket diaries, and, several scrapbooks of newspaper articles by E. R. Young. All of these were examined. The collection also contains some personal correspondence and photos. As this thesis intended to concentrate on the ideas of E R. Young, no personal correspondence, except that relating to Jack London, was examined. Unfortunately there was very little material related to the business side of being an author.

Secondary sources for the first chapter include standard Canadian and some church histories of the twentieth century. The main source for the third chapter, aside from Young's writings, are the first fifty-two sermons of John Wesley (the doctrinal basis of Methodism), as well as contemporary published Methodist missionary diaries. The fourth chapter concentrates on contemporary popular literature featuring the North and animal stories, and some standard Canadian literary authorities. Some contemporary American anthropology articles are examined as well.

CHAPTER I – THE HISTORIES

“The brilliant theories in which the whole range of problems of a science appear simple and easily explicable have always preceded the periods of steady empirical work which makes necessary a complete revision of the original theories, and leads through a period of uncertainty to a more strictly inductive attack of the ultimate problems.”

- Franz Boas, “The History of Anthropology”, 1904.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, most people in the Western World have what might be called a subjective, secular world view. People do not search for Truth, but for personal truth, or things that are conditionally true, or true now. This worldview is present even among scholars and theologians. Also current in our own time, particularly in the United States, is a world view labelled by popular British historian Karen Armstrong as a reaction to the subjective, secular or modern world view. This view is often called the evangelical Christian world view.

The subjective, secular world view, more prevalent in Canada, can make it difficult for a student of history to evaluate and interpret the ideas and faith of people long gone who were searching for (or certain of) the Truth, inside a different worldview. The current animosity between holders of the secular world view and the evangelical world view also means that any interpretation of past religious ideas will never be regarded as politically neutral by one group of practicing Protestants. According to Canadian religious historian Phyllis Airhart, the stories and rituals of nineteenth-century Canadian Protestantism have tended to be “absorbed during the course of the twentieth-century by other religious traditions which focussed more narrowly on the salvation of the individual”.⁴ But meanwhile, the practice of their faith was, most often, described by historians subscribing to the secular world view.

⁴ Phyllis Airhart, *Serving the Present Age; Revivalism, Progressivism and the Methodist Tradition in Canada* (Kingston & Montreal, 1992), page 8.

Writing religious history, or intellectual history about religious ideas is, first and foremost, a search for a method that will both respect the faith of our ancestors, and interpret it to the present in a meaningful way. As John Moir stated in 1991, it may demand consideration of other disciplines:

Our national religious experience has been subject to most of the same forces as our secular experience – nationalism, regionalism, linguistic separation and secularism - but because religion is a universal or international experience the writing of Canadian religious history has also been subject to external forces largely unknown in secular history, and not confined or confinable to national dimensions. Modernism, fundamentalism, ecumenism, liberalism, electronic evangelism are the most obvious of those forces or developments that created elements in our religious history that do not parallel our secular experience.⁵

A particularly difficult concept for some secular historians has been the life and vocation of a missionary. What does it mean to leave your comfortable life to preach the Gospel among Aboriginal people? Why do it? What did the missionaries expect to achieve?

The Reverend Egerton R. Young believed all his life in the inherent value of bringing the good news of the Christian Gospel to the Swampy Cree and Ojibwa of Manitoba. Because he chose the vocation of missionary to northern Manitoba as a young man, and wrote and lectured about his experiences as a mature man, this belief that he was doing good in preaching the Gospel to Aboriginal people was central to his world view. Needless to say, it is a religious idea, and all his political and social ideas were subservient to it. It was officially the vocation of the other Protestant missionaries who went West in the second half of the nineteenth century for poor pay, their churches, and their mainly female supporters.

This chapter is a review of the interpretation of the vocation of Methodist missionaries by Canadian historians in an attempt to find a model that can evaluate and interpret that vocation in

⁵ John S. Moir, *Christianity in Canada: Historical Essays by John S. Moir*, Paul Laverdure (ed.), (Yorkton, 2002), page 140.

a meaningful way for the early twenty-first century, when most Canadians subscribe to either a secular or an evangelical world view. The chapter begins with a review of Canadian historians writing between 1862 and 2002. As the published material increases in the 1970's and 1980's, the review is narrowed down to Canadian historians' interpretation of the vocation of Western missionaries of the Methodist Church in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Canadian intellectual currents outside of church or religious history are considered.

In order to deal with religious ideas or events that did not have secular parallels, Canadian historians have often turned to other disciplines. This thesis intends to demonstrate the influence of sociology, anthropology, theology and Native Studies on interpretations of the Methodist Church and her missionaries' vocation. The main currents in the writing of Canadian history, such as the Whig interpretation of history, different economic determinisms and nationalism, will be examined for their interpretations of the vocation of late nineteenth-century missionaries. Some popular histories, which reveal the "intellectual commonplaces of an age,"⁶ will also be examined.

Historians' views on Methodists and missionaries changed so enormously during this 140 years that the historiography can be fairly easily subdivided into periods based on the generalisations current about Methodist missionaries at the time. The sub-chapters are: God's Fellow-Workers, Reformers at Prayer, Agents of Cultural Change, Agents of Cultural Imperialism, Indifferent Rain-makers, *Maîtres chez nous*, Sacred or Secular, and A Babel of Methods.

⁶ S.F. Wise, "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History", A.B. McKillop and Paul Romney (eds.), *God's Peculiar Peoples* (Ottawa, 1993), page 3.

God's Fellow-Workers

Until the mid-1880's when Canadian universities hired the first professional historians, histories were often written by retired Methodist ministers or "as a hobby of journalists and lawyers."⁷ There was a surprising number of Protestant histories written, perhaps reflecting John Wesley's dictum that personal reading should be limited to inspirational works. Canadian historian C.T. McIntyre stated that early histories of missions were designed to serve as a branch of theology.⁸ The most well-known popular history of the Methodist Church was *Case and His Contemporaries: or, the Canadian Itinerant's Memorial*, which appeared in five volumes between 1867 and 1877. *Case* has an inspirational narrative intended to reinforce the progress towards the Kingdom of God made, convert by convert, by the itinerant Methodist clergymen and women who crossed Ontario in the first half of the nineteenth century. Preaching the Gospel to settlers and Aboriginal people was a way to hasten this end-time when all sorrow would cease. Individual ministers were described in heroic terms and with personal details. Among those individuals were William Young, father of Egerton R. Young, and his uncle, Solomon Waldron.

Canadian Methodism: Its Epochs and Characteristics written at the request of the London, Toronto and Montreal Conferences was published in 1882, just after the death of its author, the Reverend Egerton Ryerson. This book quoted *Case* and other church histories, but was mostly concerned with justifying both the issues over which its author struggled during his long leadership of Methodism in Canada, and the changes in theology during his lifetime. As such, it was an institutional history written against a background of some popular doubt regarding that institution's success in bringing about the Kingdom. Ryerson wrote to prove that

⁷ Kenneth N. Windsor, "Historical Writing to 1920," Klinck (ed.) *Literary History of Canada* (Toronto, 1965), page 234.

⁸ C.T. McIntyre, "Approaches and Themes in the History of Missions", John S. Moir and C. T. McIntyre (eds.), *Catholic and Protestant Missions 1820s -1960s: Historical Essays in honour of John Webster Grant* (New York, 1988), page 13.

Canadian Methodism was loyal to the Crown from its beginnings, never strayed theologically from Anglican principles, and was the innocent party of ecclesiastical machinations in Upper Canada and England. He emphasized that the Church throughout the nineteenth century followed a doctrine true to the Apostles and the Reformation. He summed up this unchanging Methodist doctrine as:

...the natural depravity of the human heart; the atonement made by Jesus Christ as a full and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; the offering of salvation to every individual, on the condition of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, justification by faith alone; but from the faith which justifies, good works proceed; the witness of the Spirit, which may be enjoyed by every believer attesting his sonship; and the pressing after 'holiness without which no man can see the Lord' followed by the doctrines of future rewards and punishments, together with the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body.⁹

This was not a historic description of Methodist doctrine. Rather, with a few tweaks of the ideas of holiness and justification by faith, it was a description of the theology of the Methodist Church as Ryerson left it at his death. In 1882, Methodism was the largest Protestant denomination in Canada; it truly had triumphed. What Canadian historian William Westfall calls the evangelical consensus at mid-century¹⁰ could be summed up by the paragraph from Ryerson quoted above.

In his history, Ryerson justified to "sceptics and scorners" the church's usefulness to "the energetic, manly and Christian character which at all times, in war as well as peace, had distinguished the people of Upper Canada."¹¹ Ryerson pointed out that Methodist principles, rather than the philosophy of Tom Paine, were the roots of current liberal thoughts on universal

⁹ Egerton Ryerson, *Canadian Methodism, its epochs and characteristics: written at the request of the London, Toronto, and Montreal Conferences* (Toronto, 1882), page 74.

¹⁰ William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Kingston & Montreal, 1989), page 11.

¹¹ Egerton Ryerson, *Canadian Methodism*, page 28.

equality.¹² He suggested that early Methodist preachers were involved in a “struggle for religious right against religious proscriptions.”¹³ Religious rights included the doctrine of freedom of conscience, and sectarianism (volunteer, rather than state support of a denomination). Egerton Ryerson’s inspirational narrative was a pragmatic adjusting of doctrine and a utilitarian view of the Church’s vocation that has influenced historians’ view of Canadian Methodism to the present day.

Authors of later church histories interpreted the missionaries’ vocation through the theology of their time. A 1910 text on missionaries, *God’s Fellow Workers*, published by the Methodist Young People’s Forward Movement for Missions in Toronto showed the confident progressivism of both the early twentieth-century and its theology:

It took about one hundred years before 1896 to win the first million converts. The second million were won in twelve years; and, if the record of 1908 is maintained, the third million will be added in six years.¹⁴

Others showed the influence of *Case*, romanticising the early days and assuming a Canadian nationalism, which historian Doug Owram has suggested subsumed all other views of the Canadian West. Church historian William T. Gunn called Egerton R. Young one of the heroic builders of Western Canada in *His Dominion* (1918).

Reformers at Prayer

The first influential secular treatments of missionaries and their vocation were found in the popular national histories. These were what we would now call political or constitutional history, and because they were so dominant until the mid-twentieth century, their views of Methodism must be considered. Early Canadian professional and popular historians believed in

¹² *Ibid.*, page 116.

¹³ *Ibid.*, page 133.

¹⁴ C.B. Kenleyside, *God’s Fellow-workers and the House that is to be Built for Jehovah* (London, 1910), page 266.

a Whig or liberal interpretation of history. They were influenced for several generations by the Bostonian Francis Parkman and the amateur-turned-Cambridge-lecturer Lord Acton, both of whom believed that the course of history was that, in Tennyson's phrase, "freedom slowly broadens down" due mostly to the legal-constitutional efforts of the Anglo-Saxon race. Probably the most popular early national/political history was the tremendously successful *Makers of Canada* series sold by subscription after 1903. Methodism was represented in the series by a biography of Egerton Ryerson, though it is rather short on his religious beliefs and actions. Literary historian Kenneth N. Windsor suggests that since historians of this time could not classify Egerton Ryerson as a (good) supporter or (bad) opponent to "the extension of colonial liberty,"¹⁵ he was eulogised mainly as an educator.

Windsor's theory explains the treatment of Ryerson in one of the earliest political histories, *Canadian Portrait Gallery*, which J. C. Dent published in 1880. This illustrated volume was so popular that Dent founded a publishing company on the proceeds. Ryerson's sterling Loyalist background was mentioned, but his political loyalties were highlighted, as when he "made what many persons have pronounced the mistake of his life"¹⁶ in supporting Sir Charles Metcalfe's appointment of a Tory in opposition to the concept of "a genuine Responsible Government."¹⁷

W.L. Grant, in his 1917 high school textbook *History of Canada*, had Egerton Ryerson appear briefly as a political leader of the Moderates in 1837.¹⁸ The world-view of the Methodists, their vocation to preach to all the nations, was not considered worth mentioning in

¹⁵ Kenneth N. Windsor, "Historical Writing to 1920", Klinck, *Literary History of Canada* (Toronto, 1965), page 232.

¹⁶ J.C. Dent, *Canadian Portrait Gallery* (Toronto, 1880), page 197.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, page 198.

¹⁸ W. L. Grant, *Ontario High School History of Canada* (Toronto, 1917), page 202.

these histories. If Methodists could not be described as Reformers at prayer, the Whig historians left them out.

Canadian historians' treatment of early Methodism was never challenged by a Halévy thesis, such as happened in England. In *The Birth of Methodism in England* published in 1906, Halévy suggested that England escaped revolution between 1791 and 1848 because John Wesley and the Methodists turned working-class people's energies to the afterlife and governed their behaviour with a morality so powerful it eventually reached the middle class.¹⁹ This provocative thesis forced many British political historians of the twentieth-century to state their positions on whether early Methodism was a politically conservative or liberalising force. However, in early Canadian political histories, Methodism before 1850 was presented as a proto-liberal or progressive force, or left out. Once liberalism had triumphed in politics, the Methodists became unnecessary to the narrative. Thus the Methodist Church and her missionaries during their most popular and successful phase, between Confederation and 1900, were often ignored.

Methodist missionaries and the Aboriginal communities who inhabited the West disappeared from the Whig political histories except when the latter took up arms against the state. Incidents in which church members pointed out that freedom was not slowly broadening down, for example on Aboriginal reserves wracked by starvation, were ignored. This cannot solely be ascribed to the limitations of political history: Grant, Wallace, Lower and Careless included religion, the arts, sports, and pioneer life in their political or national histories.

Canadian religious historian John Moir claims that, among the few historians writing religious history after the First World War, "theologically there was an obvious shift from

¹⁹ Halévy, *The Birth of Methodism in England*, excerpted in Gerald Wayne Olsen (ed.) *Religion and Revolution in Early Industrial England: the Halévy Thesis and its Critics* (Lanham MD, 1988), page 15.

providential history towards a humanistic philosophy.”²⁰ An example of how radical a change this was is provided by American historian Kenneth Latourette, whose exhaustive books on missions remained the standard for a generation. Instead of assisting the arrival of the Kingdom of God, or the brighter future, missionaries were downgraded to unknowing harbingers of great material change. In his 1941 history of missions Latourette claimed: “In many instances the missionary contributed to the disappearance of the old life. Everywhere, however, it would sooner or later have occurred without him.”²¹ Some of the national historians may have been reacting to their fathers’ providential views of the world, offering a deliberate alternative. Methodists were still so dominant that the professional historian Arthur Lower was quite concerned that his disinterest might harm his career when he arrived at Wesley College, Winnipeg in 1929.²²

One substantial church history written in 1949 was the Reverend J. H. Riddell’s *Methodism in the Middle West*. As founder and long-time member of Methodist institutions in Manitoba, Riddell had considerable authority. He stated his goal: “I have attempted to give an account of an unselfish, ungrudging effort of one denomination to rescue a great area from heathen and economic paganism.”²³ This included the Red River settlement in the 1860’s, which, he maintained, suffered from “selfishness and the blighting control of economic paganism.”²⁴ In adding “and economic paganism” to his otherwise traditional view of the missionaries’ vocation, Riddell was applying his contemporary United Church theology to interpret what bringing the Gospel to Manitoba had meant.

²⁰ John S. Moir, *Christianity in Canada*, page 139.

²¹ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Great Century In Europe and the United States of America A.D. 1800 – A.D. 1914*, Volume 4 of *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* (New York, 1941), page 20.

²² Arthur R. M. Lower, *My First Seventy-five Years* (Toronto, 1967), page 163.

²³ J. H. Riddell, *Methodism in the Middle West* (Toronto, 1946), page ix.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, page 69.

Riddell knew many of the early missionaries personally, and described them as heroes. But Egerton R. Young is not among them, and is described in rather cooler language: “Those who profess to know Indian life intimately, contend that some of his stories are highly idealized accounts of some very ordinary incidents in the life of the noble Red Man.”²⁵ This is a reference to accusations leveled against Egerton R. Young in 1893 by the long-time Western Methodist missionary John McDougall. Riddell faults Young for spending only eight years in Manitoba. This debate will be explored in Chapter IV.

It can be difficult to distinguish between Canadian historians who believed in the Whig interpretation of history and included early Methodism as part of that great force, and church members who wrote history expressing a progressive theology that included liberalism. The librarian William Stewart Wallace in his 1930 Ontario textbook *A History of the Canadian People* stated:

Sunday may not be observed to-day with the perhaps excessive strictness of our grandparents; but there has been in the last sixty years a real growth in the spirit of Christianity. Faith and hope may have dimmed; but charity which is “the greatest of these” has grown brighter and brighter....Whatever one may think of the condition of doctrinal Christianity, there can be no doubt that practical Christianity has made great progress in Canada since the Dominion came into being.²⁶

Goldwin French’s 1962 book *Parsons + Politics; The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855* followed this progressive tradition of highlighting the early Methodist contribution to the cause of Reform.

In time, the Canadian Whig interpretation of history divided into separate progressive theories that tended towards economic determinism. One was the staples thesis of Harold Innis, which influenced such immensely popular books as Arthur M. Lower’s *Colony to Nation*,

²⁵ Ibid., page 60.

²⁶ William Stewart Wallace, *A History of the Canadian People* (Toronto, 1940), page 357.

published in 1946. These historians reacted against the constitutional histories by emphasising socio-economic causes, and generally treated early Methodism with much less detail and interest than had writers like J. M. Dent. In *Canadians in the Making*, Lower claimed that the unprivileged were the natural audience of Methodism, unimportant until they threatened the economic status quo:

As long as ignorant enthusiasts wished merely to make themselves ridiculous at their camp-meetings and their conversions, with their roarings, their speaking with tongues and their rollings on the ground, they were left alone; but when it came to giving them legal privilege, authority rallied and "ignorant enthusiasts" became "licentious fanatics."²⁷

Maurice Careless in *Canada: A Story of Challenge* (1953) said simply about the 1830's: "[Other sects] and the Methodists naturally joined with the rising forces of Reform in politics."²⁸ Missionaries (and Aboriginal people) do not appear in Careless' history of the period from 1869 to 1885, except those who took up arms against the state. Missionaries and their religious ideas were not mentioned unless these could be shown to have masked economic self-interest.

Agents of Cultural Change

The other immensely influential progressive theory on Canadian historians was the frontier thesis, which American Frederick Jackson Turner first presented in a lecture in 1893. The frontier thesis suggested that unique conditions were created at the edge of advancing American settlement, which changed the dominant culture and gave birth to American attitudes and institutions. The frontier thesis was not particularly concerned with Aboriginal peoples' fate in that encounter; it was a theory of change in American history.²⁹

The frontier thesis has had a lasting hold on popular national histories. In the illustrated *Religion in Canada* published in 1968, Canadian popular historian William Kilbourn recorded

²⁷ Arthur M. Lower, *Canadians in the Making* (Toronto, 1958), page 160.

²⁸ Maurice Careless, *Canada: A Story of Challenge* (Cambridge, 1953), page 171.

²⁹ Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native*, page 55.

the following joke, in which each Protestant denomination was ranked by its fitness to the frontier:

There is a story told about the arrival of religion on the frontier, which goes something like this: Ten men in an area meet, one takes out a Bible, and so a Holiness sect is founded. Some families arrive and a Methodist preacher comes through, to fight alcoholism and other forms of sin, and to establish Methodist “classes” or cells, and encourage the building of schools. Once a little town has grown up, a Presbyterian minister arrives, improves the school, encourages thrift, and builds a stone church from the people’s savings. Finally, when the railway is built into the town and the first train pulls into the station, out steps the Anglican priest who has been dispatched with all haste by his bishop to bring the people the blessings and beauty of true English spirituality.³⁰

A more nuanced use of Turner’s thesis was published in 1969 by professional historian W.J. Eccles. In *The Canadian Frontier*, a history of New France, Eccles posited the existence of overlapping frontiers, including a religious frontier. According to Eccles, religious authorities sought to create Roman Catholic Indian nations, while the traders sought an uninterrupted flow of furs.³¹ Eccles attempted to describe the Aboriginal view of the encounter. The Récollets and Jesuits struggled unsuccessfully to assimilate Aboriginal people into the dominant culture, until events in Huronia such as illness and war aided them in counteracting the authority of Aboriginal religion and “destroying their culture.”³²

The frontier thesis was amenable to sociologists as well. S.D. Clark, in his very influential *The Development of the Canadian Community*, suggested church union was a result of the closing of the frontier.³³ Clark reflected the theories of German-American anthropologist Franz Boas who described Aboriginal societies as distinct, whole, valid cultures and American

³⁰ William Kilbourn (ed.), *Religion In Canada: The Spiritual Development of a Nation* (Toronto, 1968), page 30.

³¹ W.J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier* (Albuquerque, 1976), page 44.

³² Ibid., page 52.

³³ S.D. Clark, “Religious Organisation in the Development of the Canadian Community” in *The Developing Canadian Community* (Toronto, 1962), page 122.

sociologist Tudholpe Parsons, who wrote (in the 1940's) about organic, balanced societies.³⁴ Religious systems were as dynamic as the social system that enveloped them, with evangelical ideas naturally appealing most to those who lacked status. S.D. Clark labelled church histories biased.³⁵

Canadian historians continued to write national histories, often dependent on economic determinism. Canadian historian William Westfall claimed: "In the study of Canadian history, ... religion became merely another factor that could help to round out the picture defined by political and economic forces."³⁶

The national school of history was challenged in 1969, when Ramsay Cook suggested that the Canadian identity might best be understood by exploring "regional, ethnic and class identities."³⁷ In a 1969 article, Maurice Careless concurred that there was a strong regional commitment in Canada. The most well-known regional historian of the day, whose substantial work remains the standard on the province of Manitoba, was W. L. Morton. Morton saw the clergy in Red River as a stabilizing force, bringing "general peace and order to the Colony" whereas the Hudson's Bay Company (hereafter the Company) could be accused of sloppy municipal administration.³⁸ To Morton, the church and the Company were competing interests. Among the next generation of historians, also demonstrating a regional perspective, Doug Owrarn wrote an intellectual history of an idea of the frontier. He explored central Canada's ambitions for Western Canada in *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900*. Owrarn saw the Protestant clergy and missionaries as

³⁴ for this insight I am indebted to Professor A.B. McKillop, "Twentieth-century Intellectual History of Canada" graduate seminar, September 19, 2001.

³⁵ S.D. Clark, *The Developing Canadian Community*, page 117.

³⁶ William Westfall, *Two Worlds*, page 17.

³⁷ Maurice Careless, "Limited Identities in Canada", *Canadian Historical Review* 50 (1969), page 2.

³⁸ W.L. Morton, "Introduction", *London Correspondence Inward from Eden Colville 1894-1852* (The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1956), page 51.

universally unsympathetic to the wilderness with a goal of spreading British civilization.³⁹

They were necessarily on the European side of the clash.

During this period, John Webster Grant continued, practically alone, to write institutional histories of the churches in Canada. The greatest and most prolific historian of Methodism in Canada published *The Church in the Canadian Era* in 1972, ten years after it was written. Grant gave church personalities, events and ideas their place in a national history, using a sociological concept of an organic society. Grant discussed the churches as institutions that adapted to national, and in particular, economic events in what he labelled an immature (or not yet self-sufficient) society.⁴⁰ Grant viewed late-nineteenth-century Protestant missionary activity among immigrants “who did not feel at home in the conventional churches”⁴¹ as an example of institutional adaptation. Social service joint actions were a “practical ecumenism among Protestant denominations” as early as 1907.⁴² Grant suggested that the pragmatic evolution of institutions in response to changing social pressures was the link between frontier evangelism, the prohibition movement and socially active theologies of the early twentieth century.⁴³ His conclusion was that “later controversies between modernists and fundamentalists would largely be internal struggles among heirs to the evangelical tradition.”⁴⁴

Grant was aware of colonial intellectual influences on Canadian Protestant denominations, and suggested that Canadian evangelism was imported to and then transformed by the frontier:

The evangelical strain in Canadian Protestantism represented the convergence of several streams of influence – voluntaryism native and imported, the missionary

³⁹ Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900* (Toronto, 1980), pages 25 and 148.

⁴⁰ John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (Toronto, 1984), page 80.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, page 99.

⁴² *Ibid.*, page 105.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, page 103.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, page 62.

vigour of the Free Church of Scotland, the militant anti-romanism of Irish immigrants, above all North American revivalism and the reforming activism that issued from it. . . . Basic to the evangelical position was insistence on the necessity of a definite experience of personal conversion to Christ. ⁴⁵

The Church in the Canadian Era dealt with all the major denominations over a hundred-year period, and is a remarkable feat of synthesis. If historians of late-nineteenth-century Canadian Methodism have had to react to the theories of Ramsay Cook, they have all depended on the scholarship of John Webster Grant.

The same year, historian Richard Allen published *The Social Passion*, which was concerned with “the conjunction of the movements of religion and social reform in Canada in the years 1914 to 1928.”⁴⁶ By religious reform, Allen meant the social gospel, the socially committed twentieth-century theology developed mainly by theologian Walter Rauschenbach in the United States, and the Reverend Salem Bland in Canada. But, perhaps inadvertently, Allen established a view of the social gospel as a marriage between separate political and religious ideas, and his view remains very influential. The marriage took place because reformers needed “...to forge links between proposed reforms and the religious heritage of the nation, in the process endowing reform with an authority it could not otherwise command.”⁴⁷ In his book, Allen attempted to prove these links by listing the clergy who attended the 1914 Social Service Congress in Ottawa, at which was born the idea of professional paid social work⁴⁸ supported by the resources of the state rather than voluntary (usually religious) contributions. Allen was a social democratic cabinet minister in Ontario in the late 1980’s. He welcomed the authority of religious ideas for reform ends in a manner that would have shocked Egerton Ryerson, who quoted reform ideas to bolster the authority of his church. Some historians have assumed that a

⁴⁵ Ibid., page 75.

⁴⁶ Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28* (Toronto, 1971), page xviii.

⁴⁷ Ibid., page 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., page 270.

neat reversal of this nature must have taken place in the public mind between the death of Ryerson in 1882 and the Social Sciences Congress in 1914.

1972 was indeed a fruitful year, for William Howard Brooks completed his PhD thesis that year: "Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century." Although it was never published, it has been consulted by most subsequent historians of the period, because of Brooks' thorough research of missionary reports and periodical articles. Brooks' theory of the importance of the missionaries was based on a modified metropolitanism, and a nascent Western Canadian nationalism. For Brooks, early, enthusiastic Methodism "appears to have operated quite effectively among people of British extraction in North American frontier conditions" as it was suited to them.⁴⁹ However the nineteenth-century Methodist church in Canada seems to have been rendered moribund through "institutionalisation,"⁵⁰ the chief symptom of which was the several Methodist splinter groups. Because of this moribund state, "when new currents of thought arose in the west it was found that the denominational loyalties of the east...were more easily overcome."⁵¹ The western contribution to the national church (i.e. the United Church, formed in 1925) was frontier vitality.

Brooks subscribed to the competing interest groups view of Western Canada after Confederation. The Hudson's Bay Company had power, and the Aboriginal people sought it: "Like all such people confronted with a superior technology, they imagined that the religion of the white man held the key to his supremacy and power and were anxious to share it."⁵² According to Brooks, Methodist missionaries such as James Evans, who wished to revert to a more heroic model, "misread their position" because the Hudson's Bay Company was practically

⁴⁹ William Howard Brooks, "Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth-Century" (Manitoba, 1972), page iv.

⁵⁰ Ibid., page xiii.

⁵¹ Ibid., page xiii.

⁵² Ibid., page 20.

omnipotent.⁵³ The Roman Catholic Church, a more experienced institution, was able to compromise with the powerful interests in the Territory, and therefore was more of a success in attracting converts. Brooks dismissed the religious ideas expressed by the Methodist missionaries as “much Wesleyan jargon.”⁵⁴ By the end of the nineteenth century, he suggests, distinct Methodist ideas were inseparable from Canadian middle-class attitudes because of their “excessive pragmatism.”⁵⁵

Brooks judged religious ideas by their social utility, and his sympathy for contemporary Aboriginal people. He labelled missionary work among the Aboriginal people “a failure,” particularly the industrial schools. This judgement became common among historians who shared Brooks’ assumptions. American historian Robert Berkhofer claimed in his 1976 book *Salvation and the Savage*: “Although the modern analyst can see only the inevitable failure of the missionary experience given the participants’ cultural assumptions...the religious observers of the time never saw clearly the extent of their failure.”⁵⁶ Brooks was dismissive of Egerton R. Young, claiming his optimistic 1872 report to the Conference “seemed to have discovered how to write exactly the type of thing everyone wanted to read.”⁵⁷ This charge will be dealt with in Chapter IV.

John Webster Grant turned his considerable scholarship to the field of missionaries in 1984. *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* took the view that “missionaries, by the nature of their calling, were agents of change”⁵⁸ and attempted to track the impact of this change on Aboriginal culture and history. Grant’s work was

⁵³ Ibid., page 369.

⁵⁴ Ibid., page 14.

⁵⁵ Ibid., page 367.

⁵⁶ Berkhofer quoted in William McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries 1789-1839* (New Haven & London, 1984), page 328.

⁵⁷ Brooks, page 140.

⁵⁸ John Webster Grant, *In the Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto, 1984), page 107.

a pioneering one, and he was the first to read Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries' writings across five centuries, and attempt to classify them, all in lively, readable prose. In his synthesis of such an enormous amount of material, John Webster Grant theorised a pattern of missionary behaviour.

In its pioneer stages, the Christian approach to the Indian inevitably involved a large measure of improvisation. As missionaries applied experience gained in other parts of the world or adopted procedures from the United States or from their predecessors in Canada, however, there gradually emerged what might be described as a classical pattern. One of its presuppositions, if not indeed its primary one, was the necessity of settling Indians in permanent locations where they could be subjected to sustained programs of acculturation.⁵⁹

Missionaries' appeal was imagined from the Aboriginal point of view. Grant assumed that the Protestant Missionaries were easier to accept, being similar to HBC factors in appearance and manners. Although their message and morals set them apart, they were patently part of the advancing British culture and promised readier access to the white man's secret of power.⁶⁰

Grant recognized that bringing the Gospel to the Aboriginal people might be a more complicated affair than earlier church historians had acknowledged. He distinguished missionaries by dividing them into those who would first Europeanise (civilise) Aboriginal people and those who would Christianise them first. Most missionaries did not earn his praise, although he gave a slight edge to the Oblate Fathers for cultural respect. The invention of Cree syllabics by James Evans at Norway House earned his highest praise: "The triumph of syllabics represented a dramatic admission that the traditional formula of Christianity and civilization could not be applied without modification in the north."⁶¹ Bringing the Gospel to Aboriginal people could be a worthwhile vocation, if unpacked from more imperial tendencies. Grant

⁵⁹ Ibid., page 170.

⁶⁰ Ibid., page 114.

⁶¹ Ibid., page 111.

concludes that the error of missionaries, and their legacy, was the failure to make the encounter a dialogue.⁶²

Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era 1880-1920, an influential book on Protestant and Roman Catholic missions to Africa and China, was published in 1982. The book consisted of papers given at a conference, at the University of Durham, on the distinction between solely evangelising Aboriginal people, and attempting to civilize them as well. In order to assess individual missionaries against this dual process, the historians at the conference (none was Canadian) reported on whether individual missionaries had supported the advancement of Native churches, or assumed that their parent European churches would remain in charge of the church in the colony indefinitely. Editor and Danish historian Torben Christensen summed up the papers thus:

If the missionaries' own agenda – their program for converting others to the faith – was univocal on such matters as the finality of Christianity and the inadequacy of other religions, these papers confirm that the relation to imperialism produced no similar party line, no simple pattern of attitudes or actions.⁶³

In other words, when the historical record was examined carefully, no assumptions about the political or cultural allegiances of individual missionaries could be made.

Historians took up the challenge to examine the correspondence of individual missionaries more carefully, and to not automatically assume an imperial attitude among all missionaries. Practitioners of the new American school of “missiology,” a subset of the study of the sociology of religion, were also suggesting that care be taken to examine the theology of missionaries. Brian J Fraser wrote in 1988:

In collaboration with social historians [mission historians] should look at the theology/ideology of the senders as a source of understanding the formation and

⁶² Ibid., page 223.

⁶³ Torben Christensen & William R. Hutchison (eds.), *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era 1880-1920* (Stuer, Denmark, 1982), page 7.

motivation of the missionaries sent, as an aspect of the social history of the cultural aspirations of the senders and as an agent of change in the sending society.⁶⁴

This approach bore fruit in a thorough and fascinating story of the political relations between missionaries from several denominations and “the most civilized tribe in America” by American historian William G. McLouglin in *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789-1839*, published in 1984. McLouglin demonstrated the variation in individual missionaries’ reaction to the collusion of federal and state governments in their attempts to make refugees of the Cherokee nation, which had its own constitution, courts, syllabic alphabet and newspaper by 1825. A more modest Canadian history that also carefully traced the contribution of individual missionaries to the political fortunes of a single community was Peter S. Schmalz, *The History of the Saugeen Indians* (1977).

Agents of Cultural Imperialism

In one of the papers of *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era 1880-1920*, Norwegian historian Nils E. Bloch-Hoell pointed out that the use of the paradigm of imperialism to describe the missionary-Aboriginal encounter was weakened when historians begin to consider Aboriginal people as active agents in their own history.⁶⁵ The Canadian evolution of this view will be considered in the next sub-chapter. But other voices were proclaiming theories of de-colonisation, a 1960’s Marxist school of thought that rose in reaction to France’s occupation of Algeria. Post-colonial theories were taken up by some Canadian specialists in the inter-disciplinary schools of Native Studies and Ethnic Studies. Religious ideas (and many others) were interpreted as flimsy excuses for the exercise of naked aggression and the

⁶⁴ Brian J. Fraser, “For the Uplift of the World; the Mission Thought of James A. Macdonald 1890s – 1915”, *Historical Essays in Honour of John Webster Grant*, page 193.

⁶⁵ Nils E. Bloch-Hoell, “Norwegian Mission to South Africa 1880-1920”, *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era 1880-1920*, page 18.

exploitation of non-white peoples. Historian Frits Pannekoek claimed in 1991 that all the Protestant clergy abetted class struggle and racism in Red River.⁶⁶

Many historians sympathetic to historic and contemporary Aboriginal struggles accepted the idea that the missionary was inherently an agent of cultural imperialism.⁶⁷ A most fanciful embroidering of this idea appeared as late as 1997 in the popular history by Peter C. Newman, *Caesars of the Wilderness*:

Proud hunters who had survived unimaginable hardships by following their own ancient codes were told that worshipping the white man's God, handling a fork correctly and using handkerchiefs would save their souls. What these opinionated parsons [at Red River] really meant when they railed about converting "the heathen savages" was that they were determined to make Indians not quite so outrageously un-British.⁶⁸

There could be no exceptions. Missionaries' sorrow at the destruction of Prairie Aboriginal communities was only a form of "imperial nostalgia"⁶⁹ according to Ethnic Studies specialist Shari M. Huhndorf in her 2001 book, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*.

Indifferent Rain-makers

Two events that took place in the 1970's greatly stimulated an interest in the history of Aboriginal people in Canada, according to geographer and historian Arthur Ray. The first was the transfer of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives to the Province of Manitoba. The second was the 1973 Supreme Court ruling that recognised the principle of Aboriginal land title, the ramifications of which Aboriginal communities would need to research in order to fully

⁶⁶ Fritz Pannekoek, *A Snug Little Flock: The Social Origin of the Riel Resistance of 1869-70* (Winnipeg, 1991).

⁶⁷ Robert Coutts, "Anglican Missionaries as Agents of Acculturation: The Church Missionary Society at St. Andrew's, Red River 1830-1870", *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada 1820-1970* (Regina, 1991), page 51. Also John S. Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy and War 1790 to 1870* (Winnipeg, 1988), page 105.

⁶⁸ Peter C. Newman, *Caesars of the Wilderness: Company of Adventurers Volume II* (Markham 1987), page 323.

⁶⁹ Huhndorf, *Going Native*, page 76.

exploit.⁷⁰ Ethno-historians, including those researching land claims, admitted their debt to anthropologists and ethnologists who had been working in this field.⁷¹ Ethno-historians worked to combine the methods of both history and anthropology, and to move beyond the ahistorical static view of pre-contact Aboriginal societies that had dominated in anthropology. They worked to define the nature of change, in particular around the Aboriginal-European encounter. In *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade* (1974) anthropologist Charles Bishop defined historical change as “augmentation, replacement and reinterpretation.”⁷²

The Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, one of the largest corporate archives in the world, provided an extraordinary resource for economic historians of Aboriginal people and the fur trade. Arthur J. Ray was among the first to suggest that Aboriginal people were shrewd and successful partners in the fur trade, “economic actors”⁷³ on their own. The Archives could also provide another voice in the dialogue between missionaries and Aboriginal people, as Frank Peake demonstrated in a 1972 article. Using the correspondence of fur trade post officers, particularly around Fort Simpson, Peake was able to flesh out the individual implementation of the Hudson’s Bay Company directive that all missionaries were to be assisted with transportation, but no favouritism was to be shown among the three main players: the Oblate Fathers, the Church Missionary Society and the Methodist Church.⁷⁴

In 1984, historian Kerry Abel examined “the Indian response to the work of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Church Missionary Society in the Mackenzie Valley”⁷⁵ in her PhD

⁷⁰ 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, 1974), page xvi.

⁷¹ Cornelius Jaenen, *Friend and Foe* (Toronto, 1976), page 8.

⁷² Charles Bishop, *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade* (Toronto, 1974), page 19.

⁷³ Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, page xiii.

⁷⁴ Frank Peake, “Fur Traders and Missionaries: Some Reflections on the Attitude of the Hudson’s Bay Company Towards Missionary Work among the Indians,” *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* volume III no 1 (1972).

⁷⁵ Kerry Abel, “The Drum and the Cross: An Ethnohistorical Study of Mission Work Among the Dene 1858-1902”, (Doctoral dissertation, Kingston, 1984), page i.

thesis “The Drum and the Cross: An Ethnohistorical Study of Mission Work Among the Dene 1858 –1902.” Abel used an ethnohistorical approach because it assumed the encounter was a dialogue. She related theological ideas to their implementation by the Roman Catholic and Anglican institutions examined. In particular, she identified the classic Christian tension of faith versus good works as often the root of the question of whether to push the Dene to abandon their cyclical lifestyle of hunting, fishing and gathering for farming. In doing so, she agreed with John Webster Grant that the Oblates were the more adaptable institution, but concluded that all the churches in the north stressed individual spirituality over social reform, unlike missionaries on the Prairies.⁷⁶ She maintained that Dene culture adapted successfully to both the fur trade and the presence of the missionaries into the twentieth century.

In a similar vein, David Nock in *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis or Cultural Replacement* (1988), assumed that some Aboriginal communities involved in the fur trade flourished during the 1870’s.⁷⁷ Ethno-historian Bruce Trigger, the author of a rich two-volume history of the Huron, was also confident that Aboriginal societies could withstand contact. In his influential book *Natives and Newcomers*, (1985) he often assumed an Aboriginal point of view in interpreting the missionaries. For example, he claimed that the behavior of a Recollect missionary “may have caused the Hurons to suspect that the shamanistic activities of the priests might extend to malevolent sorcery.”⁷⁸ Mischievously, for he worked in Quebec, he wrote of Father Jean de Brébeuf, a towering mythological figure in francophone school texts even after the Quiet Revolution:

Brébeuf remained among the Hurons until 1629, mastering their language, winning a reputation for his shamanistic skills, especially as a rain-maker....yet

⁷⁶ Ibid., page 323.

⁷⁷ David A. Nock, *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis or Cultural Replacement* (St. Catharine’s, 1988), page 93.

⁷⁸ Bruce Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers* (Kingston & Montreal, 1985), page 201.

he was no more able to undertake an effective mission program than the Recollects were.⁷⁹

For Trigger, the failure of the Jesuit missions in Huronia was part of his proof that Aboriginal societies could successfully negotiate contact; the implication is that any missionary success would be equivalent to cultural genocide. In 1999, historian Sarah Carter summed up the achievement of the social historians and ethnohistorians who stressed human agency as establishing that contact “is no longer seen as one dominant group imposing will and authority on another oppressed group; rather it is seen as a process of reciprocity and exchange among all participants.”⁸⁰ Unfortunately, as with Trigger, her implication is that missionaries wanted to commit cultural genocide, they just were not successful.

Maîtres chez nous

The mid-1970's saw the growth of social history in Canada. The practitioners of social history assume that the entire workings of a society (and not simply politics) are of central importance. It assumes both the importance of ideas, in which it resembles intellectual history, and the importance of social structures, for which it consults sociology.⁸¹

Social historians were quick on the heels of economic historians to investigate the treasures of the Hudson's Bay Archives. Sylvia van Kirk, in her 1980 article “Fur Trade Social History: Some Recent Trends” stated that she, Jennifer Brown and Frits Pannekoek all “share a commitment to the idea that the fur trade produced an indigenous society in early western Canada.” In 1980, Van Kirk published “*Many Tender Ties*”: *Women in Fur Trade Society 1670-1870*, in part an exploration of country marriages, the long-lasting unions between fur-traders and Aboriginal or Métis women. She criticized the unbending theology of the Red River

⁷⁹ Ibid., page 202.

⁸⁰ Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto, 1999), page 10.

⁸¹ Stanley Mealing, “Canadian Historiography”, graduate seminar, January 8, 1991.

clergy and the social aspirations of white women such as Mary Evans as disruptive to this society.

The argument put forward by the presenters at the University of Durham conference in 1982, that the encouragement of a native church was a useful indicator in the Christianising versus civilizing debate, had an influence on Canadian social historians who studied the ideas of Henry Venn, British secretary to the Anglican Church Missionary Society from 1842-1872. In her 1971 article “Apostles and Aborigines: The Social Theory of the Church Missionary Society,” social historian Jean Usher explored this indicator. The Anglican Church Missionary Society never resolved the issue of whether Aboriginal people had to be civilised to be Christianised. Usher paid particular attention to the work of Henry Venn, who insisted that the most important duty of a missionary was to educate native pastors. In 1974, social historian Ian Getty critically examined the implementation of Henry Venn’s native church policy in the West in “The Failure of the Native Church Policy of the CMS in the North-West.” He prefaced his article by suggesting that the Church’s vocation had been neglected, and that social historians should pay more attention to the “tools and modes of persuasion which the missionary employed to civilize and Christianize the native people.”⁸² Anthropologist David A. Nock wrote a biography in 1988 of one of Venn’s missionaries that he hoped “would be seen as a step towards more social scientific history.” *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis vs. Cultural Replacement* is a study of the ideas and anthropological publications of the Reverend E.F. Wilson, an exact contemporary of Egerton R. Young who was an Anglican missionary to the Ojibwa community at Garden River (near Sault Ste. Marie). As the title suggests, Nock was concerned with determining whether the missionary was civilizing along

⁸² Ian A.L. Getty, “The Failure of the Native Church Policy of the CMS in the North-West”, Richard Allen (ed.), *Religion and Society in the Prairie West* (Regina, 1974), page 19.

with Christianising, or whether the Aboriginal people were creating a new religion (as a feature of cultural contact). Nock explored Wilson's early disillusionment with Venn's ideas, the roots of Wilson's anthropological and historical ideas, and his later newspaper articles in favour of native self-government. However, Nock's reliance on anthropological theories of change does not leave room for a discussion of the role of the sacred in both the lives of the Reverend Wilson and the Garden River Ojibwa.

Social historians also began to discover examples of synthesis between Christianity and Aboriginal spirituality. Anthony Wallace's *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* published in 1972, like Kerry Abel's work on the Dene, emphasized the synthesizing of Aboriginal and European religions after the Gospel had first been preached in Aboriginal societies. These historians, like Trigger, began from the assumption that the spiritual insights of Aboriginal religions were equally valid to the revelation of the Christian Gospel. Social historians had moved beyond S.D. Clark's approach that had assumed that bringing the Gospel to Aboriginal communities automatically meant disharmony. Religion could accommodate and become a dialogue. As historian Helen Buckley described one Prairie reserve:

What seems to mark Island Lake is a high degree of social cohesion....Traditional customs, morals and values are still respected and followed, yet Christian churches, in several denominations, are also a living part of the communities. Somehow, the two are reconciled.⁸³

Social history also began to contribute to a revision of religious history in other ways. A 1996 social history by Lynn Marks addressed the influence, numbers, pastime and popularity of churches in three Ontario towns. *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* questioned how leisure and religion shaped

⁸³ Helen Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces* (Kingston & Montreal, 1992), page 21.

identity. Her analysis of demographic and qualitative information allowed Marks to refine the population in two small towns into types based on gender and class. She demonstrated that overwhelming female membership was a characteristic of late-nineteenth-century Protestant churches, and that the moral suasion applied in religious classes was disproportionately aimed at working-class people. She also explained the appeal of the Salvation Army revival once Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian churches in these small towns had become middle-class institutions, exemplified by their big new Gothic buildings. Most recently, the social approach to intellectual history has been used by Yvon Lamonde in his *Histoire sociale des idées au Québec*, in which he considers the “circuit complet des idées, de leur production, de leur diffusion, de leur réception.”⁸⁴ Unfortunately, he does not consider religion in the current volume.

Sacred or Secular?

In 1975, British church historian Owen Chadwick wrote a post-script to his multi-volume history of religion, *The Secularisation of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*. Although he was adding his ideas to a long-standing debate among British historians, it was Chadwick’s conception of the issues in late nineteenth-century intellectual life that has been enormously influential on Canadian historians. Chadwick saw intellectual life at the end of the nineteenth century as a struggle between sacred and secularising forces against a force of unchanging Christian values working in men’s hearts. Chadwick was a religious man who clearly stated the beliefs that underlay his writing. For him, the term “sacred” had two related meanings: that all causalities come from God (an idea expressed throughout his brilliant book by such editorial comments as “the advances of science could hardly touch God”⁸⁵) and that religious belief was a valid and distinct category of experience throughout history. In support of

⁸⁴ Yvan Lamonde, *Histoire sociale des idées au Québec 1760-1896* (Quebec City, 2000), page 9.

⁸⁵ Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Middlesex, 1975), page 167.

the second meaning he quoted Emil Durkheim: “The sacredness of an object was not caused by rational thinking. Therefore the end of that sacredness could not be caused only by rational thinking.”⁸⁶

Chadwick was a religious historian who insisted on freedom from intellectual determinism even as he clearly favoured its methods. He stated: “A theological doctrine and a passion for social reform can lie side by side in the mind. One need not rise from the other.”⁸⁷ He also suggested a compromise with social historians, with their material determinist bent.⁸⁸ Chadwick stated: “in explaining intellectual or religious changes we ought always to be conscious of the social and economic changes with which they are connected.”⁸⁹

Chadwick’s view was that religious ideas are capable of change: “Let us not confuse secularization with the perpetual task of adjusting religious understanding of the world to new knowledge about the world.”⁹⁰ As a prelude to suggesting a shrinking of the sacred at the end of the nineteenth century, Chadwick enlarged its influence in earlier public life. He re-claimed early liberalism for the sacred, supporting Egerton Ryerson’s view that “the ultimate claim of the liberal was religious. Liberal faith rested in origin upon the religious dissenter.”⁹¹ Chadwick reclaimed the Radical traditions as well. He suggested that the Chartist movement and Karl Marx both criticised churches because they had not lived up to the ideals of Christianity.⁹²

⁸⁶ Ibid., page 6.

⁸⁷ Ibid., page 102.

⁸⁸ Ibid., page 13.

⁸⁹ Ibid., page 61.

⁹⁰ Ibid., page 15.

⁹¹ Ibid., page 26.

⁹² Ibid., page 85.

For Chadwick the turning-point in the influence of the sacred seemed to be John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, "the first modern exposition of a theory of the secular state."⁹³ The popularisation of Darwin and the new scientific knowledge "in crude form"⁹⁴ led to "an extension of the area of intellectual agnosticism within the realm of religion, especially for religious men."⁹⁵

The great Canadian religious historian George Rawlyk stated his view of the sacred in his 1988 book, *Wrapped Up in God: A Study of Several Canadian Revivals and Revivalists*. Rawlyk agreed with American religious historian George Marsden that a Christian historian should concentrate on recording observable cultural forces. Rawlyk had a providential view of history; he believed that history should be written to demonstrate the working out of God's will before the coming end of time. The role of the historian is one which:

Provides material which individuals of various theological persuasions can use to help distinguish God's genuine work from practices that have no greater authority than the customs or ways of thinking of a particular time and place.⁹⁶

In 1979, the first substantial Canadian intellectual history, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era* was published by Brian McKillop. The book aimed to examine the tension between "critical inquiry...[and] the assertion of moral authority". Broadly speaking, it was an intellectual history of the effect of the sciences on the teachings of influential individuals within, or connected to, the universities. Although not specifically about religion, religious ideas and ideas about education made up the anglo-

⁹³ Ibid., page 30.

⁹⁴ Ibid., page 170.

⁹⁵ Ibid., page 184.

⁹⁶ George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-century Evangelicalism 1870-1925*, page 230, quoted in George A. Rawlyk, *Wrapped Up in God: A Study of Several Canadian Revivals and Revivalists* (Burlington, 1988), page 151.

Canadian moral imperative⁹⁷ according to McKillop. He therefore treated religious ideas with due respect. For example, in contrast to Careless and Lower, he distinguished some of the religious ideas that divided the nonconformist groups in the early nineteenth century.⁹⁸ This may have made him the first Canadian historian to debunk from its position of historical fact Egerton Ryerson's clever mid-century synthesis of Protestant theology. McKillop stated that Canadian intellectuals after 1860, including even Salem Bland "the most radical of the social gossips,"⁹⁹ were influenced by the British idealist philosophers.

While McKillop acknowledged Owen Chadwick in a footnote, senior Canadian historian Ramsay Cook reported being "influenced particularly"¹⁰⁰ by Chadwick's book in the introduction to his *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (1985). However, in looking for expressions of the sacred in late nineteenth-century Canadian life, Cook found none, at least not in its Protestant religions. He suggested that in a "supreme irony,"¹⁰¹ the Christianised social order that the reformers sought to create did not happen, but their efforts and ideas brought secular reform instead. Cook's view of the sacred could not include any compromises with modernism. He stated:

...the religious crisis provoked by Darwinian science and historical criticism of the Bible led religious people to attempt to salvage Christianity by transforming it into an essentially social religion. The orthodox Christian preoccupation with man's salvation was gradually replaced by a concern with social salvation: the traditional Christian emphasis on man's relationship with God shifted to a focus on man's relationship with man. This union of the sacred and the secular was followed, in my view, by the substitution of theology, the science of religion, with sociology, the science of society....That theology was founded upon a denial of God's transcendence and an insistence upon his immanence in the world.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ A.B. McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era* (Kingston & Montreal, 2001), page 3.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, page 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, page 219.

¹⁰⁰ Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian Canada* (Toronto, 1985), page 5.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, page 4.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, page 5.

Through portraits of influential free-thinkers and social commentators, Cook built a picture of Canadian public debate after 1859 (when Darwin published the *Origin of Species*) that showed how the materialists had won over Canadian public opinion and eventually the Canadian clergy, particularly the Methodists. As his idea of the sacred, or the proper sphere of theology, appears to be quite limited, consequently his use of the term secularisation is very broad. It could be confused with modernism.

In the mid-1980's, a large number of books on Protestantism were published by two main publishing houses, the University of Toronto Press and McGill-Queen's University Press. Nearly all of the books deal specifically with the turbulent time in intellectual life generally acknowledged to begin with the publishing of the *Origin of Species* and to end with the First World War. There is no doubt that there were enormous changes in many people's understanding of very basic questions about the origin of life, God, time, humanity and technology during this period. Nearly all of these books reacted to Ramsay Cook's claim that the sacred disappeared from late nineteenth-century Methodism. *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* appeared to have produced Canada's own version of a Halévy debate. However, to understand how the debate divided into two camps, it is essential to understand Owen Chadwick's use of the term secular, and by extensions, secularisation. This experienced religious historian had suggested that the challenge was to clarify how people of faith in the late nineteenth century experienced the sacred or the presence of God, in other words to investigate religious belief as a separate category of experience. In order to qualify his comments, Chadwick stated his own faith, which appeared to be in the resistant presence of the sacred. George Rawlyk, another religious historian, also considered it important to

reveal his own beliefs about the role of the sacred. However, Canadian intellectual historians have not seen the need to express their own definition of the sacred before reaching conclusions about how religious belief was lived in the late nineteenth-century. This is a concession they should consider making in order to fully participate in what is, in the end, a religious discussion as well as a historical one.

Ramsay Cook, and other historians who concluded that a loss of contact with the sacred by many leaders and others in the Methodist church took place at the end of the nineteenth century, apparently believe in a narrower evidence of the sacred, and so have defined secularisation very broadly. Church historian John Moir warned about the broad definition of secularization in 1980:

Secularism, an ill-defined and perhaps indefinable word, means, according to the dictionary, concern with worldly affairs. According to the sociologist, it describes a decline of measurable religiosity; and for religious conservatives it is any alteration in the supposed religion of our grandparents.¹⁰³

Other historians, who believe in a broader evidence of the sacred, see evidence of a continuing contact with the sacred among Methodist leaders at the end of the nineteenth century. Thus McKillop has named the debate, secularization vs. continuity.

Historians' personal belief in the working of God in history, or definition of secularisation, is one key to understanding the debate. The other key concept is the word "evangelical" and its relationship to the necessity of a sudden conversion experience. George Rawlyk wrote *Radical Evangelicalism in British North America 1775-1812* to prove that Upper Canada and Nova Scotia experienced a more politically radical Protestant form of evangelism, based on a "defining evangelical moment." For Rawlyk "the New Birth – which was often a sudden and transforming experience involving all

¹⁰³ John Moir, *Christianity in Canada*, page 6.

sensory perceptions ... permanently brand[ed] Christ's salvation upon the 'redeemed of the Lord'."¹⁰⁴ Rawlyk suggests that the definition of the new birth as the defining moment began with Wesley's experience in Aldergate Street in 1738, and remained the defining experience in the nineteenth century. George Rawlyk and Sharon Cook also reclaimed social action, such as temperance, for this tradition.

Historian Margaret Van Die, however, explicitly warned against projecting on earlier centuries the current definition of evangelical, because it is synonymous with contemporary Protestant conservatism. For Van Die: "Evangelicals shared a strong conviction of the importance of individual salvation through repentance and conversion and the acceptance of a disciplined life that reflected a spiritual transformation."¹⁰⁵ Phyllis Airhart disputed that Wesley viewed a sudden conversion an all-or-nothing doctrine, considering his emphasis on the evidence of change, holy living. According to William Westfall, the term evangelical came into being in the 1830's, and merely indicated a good Methodist¹⁰⁶ attempting to reach out and convert the unchurched in the spirit of Wesley's claim that the world is my parish.

Historians therefore dispute the importance of a sudden conversion to nineteenth-century Methodists, the period when the conversion experience became an essential requirement to those who defined themselves as evangelicals, and the relation of conversion to other religious ideas judged conservative or modern. There are many other aspects of nineteenth-century Methodism that historians debate. However, historians favouring Ramsay Cook's view that modernism was catastrophic to Christianity tend to

¹⁰⁴ George Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire: Radical Evangelicalism in British North America 1775-1812* (Montreal & Kingston, 1994), page xiii.

¹⁰⁵ Margaret Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada 1839-1918* (Montreal and Kingston, 1989), page 9.

¹⁰⁶ William Westfall, *Two Worlds*, note 83 on page 223.

agree with George Rawlyk's insistence on the continuous historical necessity of the sudden conversion experience in Methodism. Historians who favour the idea that modernism may not have caused all people to lose their faith in Christ, though the authority of the churches as public institutions was obviously reduced, tend to agree with Van Die and Phyllis Airhart that the historical necessity of the conversion experience is not proven. Without downplaying the many nuances of the secularisation versus continuity debate, it appears that Canadian historians' often unspoken religious beliefs are an important predictor of which side they are on.

In *The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression*, Michael Gauvreau challenged historians' tendency to see secularisation as triumphant by mapping a separate "evangelical accommodation"¹⁰⁷ of such nineteenth-century discoveries as Darwin and particularly the higher criticism among certain influential Protestant clergy-professors. He claimed that "the theology of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches survived the encounter with various currents of secular thought through a flexibility forged in the ambiguous evangelical encounter with the eighteenth century."¹⁰⁸ Gauvreau traced the evolution and vigour of the inductive method of theology taught by, among others, Chancellor Nelles at Victoria University during the 1870's and 1880's.¹⁰⁹ He also traced the accommodation to the Higher Criticism introduced into Canada in the 1860's through a form of "reverent history," and the continuing vigour of what he called the triad of theology, prophecy and history. The popularity of this approach, he claimed, meant that most Methodist clergymen of the 1890's held "the assumption that the relationship between God and humanity recorded in

¹⁰⁷ Michael Gauvreau, *The Evangelical Century* (Kingston & Montreal, 1991), page 228.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, page 6.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, page 99.

the Bible could explain the rise and decline of all human societies, past, present and future.”¹¹⁰ Gauvreau supported American religious historian George Marsden’s view that the Protestant churches faced a crisis partially due to the loss of authority of evangelical doctrines such as the inerrancy of the Bible inside the Protestant churches, in concert with a rising relativism in culture, which eventually overwhelmed this evangelical accommodation.¹¹¹

Gauvreau’s definition of secularisation was much broader than Owen Chadwick’s, although he disagreed with Ramsay Cook about the dominance of the tendency among the Presbyterian and Methodist clergy. Gauvreau’s symptoms of secularisation which had to be resisted included abandonment of the idea of inerrancy of scripture (such clergy he labels “idealist philosophers”),¹¹² any challenge to a personalised definition of sin¹¹³, and comparative religion (“relativism”).¹¹⁴

Gauvreau’s interpretation has been influential among historians, such as retired minister Peter Bush. In *Western Challenge: The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s Mission on the Prairies and North 1885-1925* (published in 2000), Bush states that he shares Gauvreau’s view in the continuing presence of the evangelical passion in the mainstream churches till 1925.¹¹⁵ Bush claims that the defection by a few Presbyterian church leaders to what he calls “Canada’s social religion” meant that the church “lost its way” between 1910 and 1916.¹¹⁶ Bush views religion as a sub-set of culture, and is interested in the idea that a middle ground might have developed between Aboriginal culture and British-Canadian culture. He is interested in the fact

¹¹⁰ Ibid., page 187.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pages 220-222.

¹¹² Ibid., page 141.

¹¹³ Ibid., page 210.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., page 234.

¹¹⁵ Peter Bush, *Western Challenge: The Presbyterian Church in Canada’s Mission on the Prairies and North 1885-1925* (Winnipeg, 2000), page 19.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., page 13.

that three successive Presbyterian missionaries at the Oak Lake reserve were Dakota.¹¹⁷ The first, Solomon Tunkosiuciye, had to be accompanied by a translator to the 1877 conference as he spoke no English.¹¹⁸ Bush maintains that Canadian social religion featured racism towards Aboriginal people's ability and their languages.¹¹⁹

Church historian Marguerite Van Die used ideas from religious sociology and intellectual history in *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada 1839-1918*, published in 1989. *An Evangelical Mind* is the biography of an intellectual leader of the Methodist Church. Van Die compared the evolution in the thought of Nathanael Burwash with that of the Church he led over nearly half a century. Van Die described the irreducible in peoples' experience of the sacred, noting that evangelism was "not...a logical set of beliefs, but rather... a series of vivid and compelling personal experiences."¹²⁰ She suggested that Wesley's concept of Christian perfection inspired a wave of social reform, which was a precursor to the social gospel.¹²¹ For her, Burwash was able to maintain his religious faith as he grappled with the new critical thinking.

The year that Van Die's book was published, Canadian historian William Westfall published *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario*. Like Chadwick Westfall insisted on the religious as a meaningful category of historical analysis. He stated: "the sacred must be returned to the history of religion in Canada, for it is the sacred that makes religion a meaningful category of historical analysis."¹²² For, he reminded the reader: "If our age reduces all things to material and psychological causes, ages past tied all things to God." Other

¹¹⁷ Ibid., page 98.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., page 95.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., page 110.

¹²⁰ Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind*, page 35.

¹²¹ Ibid., page 66.

¹²² William Westfall, *Two Worlds*, page 18.

historians were reaching similar conclusions. In her 1991 article “Bishop Bompas and the Canadian Church,” Kerry Abel added: “Clearly it makes sense methodologically to examine the missionary on the terms which were fundamental to his/her personal world view.”¹²³ Westfall’s gently dualistic book, with alternating chapters about the contrasting Anglican and Methodist world views, ends with what he interprets as the creation of a mid-century evangelical consensus among Protestant churches in Ontario. His interpretation has been widely accepted.

Phyllis Airhart, in her 1992 book *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada*, echoed Van Die’s conclusion that John Wesley did not consider a conversion experience a requirement for the true Christian. In Wesley’s time, the conversion experience was “not an end but the beginning of active piety. New converts were admonished to become ‘useful Christians’”.¹²⁴ For her, two camps came out of the breakup of the Protestant consensus:

One of these is often presented as fundamentalist in theology, conservative in social outlook, and heir to the name “evangelical” earlier shared by most Protestants in North America. The other is characterized as liberal in theology, progressive in its social outlook, and increasingly reluctant to lay claim to the evangelical tradition which had shaped its past as well.¹²⁵

Like Van Die, Airhart suggested an interpretation built on the conversion theories from the sociology of religion. She suggested that the defining characteristic of the Methodist Church was not a doctrine or idea, but a pattern of behaviour known as revivalism. Airhart supported the insight of the Reverend Salem Bland in his 1926 biography *James Henderson D.D.* Bland saw changes in the authority of experiences, such as conversion or revivalism, as key to change in the church at the end of the nineteenth century. According to Airhart, revivalism experiences in

¹²³ Kerry Abel “Bishop Bompas and the Canadian Church”, Barry Ferguson (ed.), *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada 1820-1970* (Regina, 1991), page 113.

¹²⁴ Phyllis Airhart, *Serving the Present Age*, page 26.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, page 4.

different forms (such as the holiness movement of the 1870's) made the adjustment to intellectual change easier:

The response to evolution, philosophical idealism, and biblical criticism suggests that a world shaped by the persistence of revivalism enabled some Methodists to move relatively easily towards theological liberalism. Methodist tradition, with its emphasis on experience as component of theological method, played a significant role in this process.¹²⁶

Like Gauvreau, Airhart was challenging Cook's triumph of secularisation, but with a very different conclusion about its effect on church and faith. By combining insights from sociology with the methods of intellectual history, Airhart suggested that a change in theology might not have been experienced as catastrophic by late nineteenth-century Methodist believers. Airhart, who teaches at a liberal theological college, stated that the changes in theological ideas did not indicate that individual people were less committed to God in Christ. She shares this belief in the continuity of the sacred, despite great changes in society and theology, with William Westfall, Marguerite Van Die, and Brian McKillop.

Canadian historian David Marshall would not agree. In 1992, he extended the secularisation thesis to include Egerton R. Young's fellow missionaries in Western Canada, in *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief 1850-1940*. Marshall defined secularisation very broadly, as a process that had been going on since the eighteenth century, and to which evangelism itself had emerged to counter.¹²⁷

Marshall proposed that the Canadian Protestant churches were secularised from the inside. Like Ramsay Cook, Marshall seems to substitute "secularisation" for rationalism (a

¹²⁶ Ibid., page 54.

¹²⁷ David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief 1850-1940* (Toronto, 1992), page 20.

challenge even in Wesley's time) or modernism. In agreement with Cook, Marshall stated that secularization was inevitable as religion did badly in the new "free marketplace of ideas."¹²⁸ Marshall suggested that Protestant clergy in the late nineteenth century, in search of a "preachable gospel,"¹²⁹ abandoned reference to the supernatural, and to the essential "revelation of God and his word in the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ." For Marshall, Wesley's ambiguous concept of Christian perfection must include a sudden conversion experience or "religious life was merely a matter of education."¹³⁰ In condemning the clergy, Marshall gave considerable weight to a series of articles written in *Saturday Night* magazine in 1888 in which E.E. Shepherd complained that he visited sixteen Toronto churches without once hearing "how shall I be saved?"¹³¹

Marshall saw a link between these changes in Canadian Protestantism and mission work. "The growing resistance to evangelical activity within Canadian society accounts for the flood-tide of Canadian missionary activity overseas and in the Northwest" he wrote.¹³² Marshall suggests that Mid-Victorian missionaries were supremely self-confident about their evangelical superiority, but lack of progress in western Canada led to disillusionment and a shift to secular concerns. Thus later mission field "reports often became detailed accounts of successful orphanages and schools, better medical care and standards of health, and the introduction of improved agricultural techniques."¹³³ These pragmatic missions, such as the missions to China after the Boxer Rebellion, which he considered inspired by the Social gospel in their emphasis on medicine and education, Marshall equated to "the moral equivalent of imperialism."¹³⁴ Marshall

¹²⁸ Ibid., page 6.

¹²⁹ Ibid., page 8.

¹³⁰ Ibid., page 33.

¹³¹ Ibid., page 85.

¹³² Ibid., page 99.

¹³³ Ibid., page 104.

¹³⁴ Ibid., page 108.

discussed at some length representations of missionaries in the novels of Presbyterian minister-turned-author Charles Gordon (Ralph Connor). Marshall attempted to prove that Ralph Connor began by writing about “exploits of heroic missionaries...[and] dramatic deathbed and conversion scenes”¹³⁵ but that his popularity peaked soon after his novels became full of social gospel ideas. Certainly Gordon sold more books in the English-speaking world than any other Canadian author before the First World War, and was, according to literary scholar Archibald MacMechan, the first Canadian to become wealthy through writing fiction.¹³⁶ The career of Ralph Connor and the market for inspirational novels will be discussed in Chapter IV.

A Babel of methods

If the 1980's brought a debate about secularization, the 1990's produced a number of books on a wider range of topics in religious history. To John Moir, who complained that the Canadian history of religion had gone “from providential to humanistic to sociological history,”¹³⁷ it appeared as a Babel of methods. In 1990, Ruth Compton Brewer published *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions 1876-1914*, a social history of Presbyterian women missionaries who served overseas. Brewer wrote: “by 1880, missionary wives and unmarried women workers already outnumbered their male colleagues in the field”¹³⁸ and there was an increase in the particular missionary endeavors undertaken by women, such as elementary schooling and nursing. Practical qualifications were required for women missionaries,¹³⁹ but theological education was not available to them. Brewer tells the fascinating stories of several early female medical graduates who chose to serve Christ in India.

¹³⁵ Ibid., page 141.

¹³⁶ Archibald MacMechan, *Headwaters of Canadian Literature* (Toronto, 1974), page 207.

¹³⁷ John Moir, *Christianity in Canada*, page 149.

¹³⁸ Ruth Compton Brewer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions 1876-1914* (Toronto, 1990), page 19.

¹³⁹ Ibid., page 59.

Brewer suggested that women missionaries' vocation could include mixed motives without denying their faith.

An earlier American treatment of Protestant women missionaries noticed the same pragmatic preoccupations in "Sisters All: Feminism and the American Women's Missionary Movement," delivered at the 1981 University of Durham conference. Shirley S. Garrett pointed out that "Most missionary tracts about women abroad were not theological, but were litanies of social problems."¹⁴⁰ Garrett claimed that women missionaries were essentially preaching feminism in late nineteenth-century Japan. Like many of the other papers delivered at Durham, this one seemed determined to challenge accepted historical interpretations, in this case that women missionaries and missionaries' wives were tolerated in the public sphere only because they aimed at the "domestication of the public sphere."¹⁴¹ Other historians examining the lives of individual missionary women and wives were discovering that these women had roles much greater than could be captured by this concept of wider domestication. Rosemary R. Gagan in her 1992 book, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient*, disputed that the term "maternal feminism" covered the work missionary women overtook overseas for pay.¹⁴² Margaret Whitehead demonstrated that, in the case of Methodist missionaries' wives in British Columbia, "Practicalities determined that women might undertake a wider ministry in the mission field than they would be allowed in either urban or rural

¹⁴⁰ Shirley S. Garrett, "Sisters All: Feminism and the American Women's Missionary Movement", *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era*, page 224.

¹⁴¹ Phillippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism 1850-1900* (Tallahassee, 1987), page 14.

¹⁴² Rosemary K. Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient 1881-1925* (Kingston & Montreal, 1992), page 8.

situations.”¹⁴³ Indeed, Emma Crosby, wife of Egerton R. Young’s colleague the Reverend Thomas Crosby, preached regularly when her husband was travelling his circuit.

Graduate student Vanessa L. McKenzie has shown that by 1890, a woman at home was called “old-fashioned” in the pages of the Methodist periodical the *Christian Guardian*. She suggests that progressivism was the underlying value that supported the expansion of women’s roles because it was believed women would bring their better nature to politics.¹⁴⁴ However, historian Sharon Cook reclaimed social activism for the conservative or evangelical tradition: “women who combined evangelical religiosity with temperance reform and voluntarist social activism tended more to reflect conservative evangelicalism.”¹⁴⁵

Clearly, female missionaries and missionaries’ wives could not be understood only as bringing domestic values into the public sphere or as suffragettes. The recent historical work on missionary women has shown that religious ideas cannot be reduced to, or be assumed equivalent to, political ideas. Young’s feminism and his support of the activities of his wife Elizabeth Bingham Young will be treated in Chapter IV.

In 1996, Neil Semple published *The Lord’s Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism*, a full-length “history of mainstream Canadian Methodism [to provide] the interested general reader with basic factual information.”¹⁴⁶ Semple’s work was written in “a broad institutional and intellectual context,”¹⁴⁷ and sought to highlight in contemporary language the unchanging values of Methodism. Like Phyllis Airhart, who used a religious sociology approach

¹⁴³ Margaret Whitehead, “‘Let the Women Keep Silence’: Women Missionary Preaching in British Columbia 1860’s – 1940’s”, Elizabeth Gillam Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whitely (eds.), *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada* (Toronto, 1995), page 121.

¹⁴⁴ Vanessa L. McKenzie, “This Vexed Question: Womanhood and the ‘Woman Question’ in the Methodist *Christian Guardian*, *Presbyterian Record*, *Anglican Canadian Churchman* and *Canadian Baptist* 1890-1914” (Master’s dissertation, Kingston, 1996), page 19.

¹⁴⁵ Sharon Cook, “The Ontario Young Woman’s Christian Temperance Union: A Study in Female Evangelicalism 1874-1930”, *Changing Roles*, page 301.

¹⁴⁶ Neil Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal & Kingston, 1996), page 3.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, page 4.

to propose that changing ideas about conversion illustrated how Methodist theology evolved, Semple applied the same approach to the debate over the class meeting. As regular attendance at these semi-confessional sessions was required by Wesley and the early Church, abandoning this requirement was characterized by Semple as the dividing line between “ a broad religious fellowship” and “a body of earnest converts.”¹⁴⁸ His example was less convincing than Airhart’s, mainly because it depends almost entirely on interpreting the political motivation of the wily Egerton Ryerson, who bluffed a resignation from his church over the issue in 1854. Semple tries to find a compromise in the secularization debate by emphasizing that social gospellers never lost sight of individual salvation as the goal, and evangelists had always been concerned with social problems.

Semple’s view of the missionaries in the West was a careful summary of modern scholarship and interpretations. The missionary was still an agent of cultural imperialism, but the field of battle was no longer settlement patterns as John Webster Grant had described, but the family. Semple claims that re-organisation of Aboriginal personal relations was an important goal of the missionaries:

The native family was to provide the same discipline, nurture and religious training as the best British households and to become the central element in social development and spiritual progress. To achieve this, the traditional roles and relations among men, women and children were to be transformed to imitate a balanced, patriarchal, European-style system.¹⁴⁹

Like Grant, however, Semple suggested that Aboriginal people were attracted to a denomination by more than its access to power: “They assessed the churches for their access to power and their commitment to Aboriginal rights, as well as for their religious message.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., page 230.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., page 156.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., page 159.

The subject of missionaries and their encounter with Canadian Aboriginal people has remained popular with social scientists, though they now pay more attention to the intellectual content of the missionary's message. Brett Christopher, in *Positioning the Missionary: John Booth Good and the Confluence of Cultures in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia* (published in 1998), began from the perspective that mission work was a Christian form of colonialism.¹⁵¹ He was concerned with rescuing his subject from some of the generalizations of post-colonial theory. Although he called the class meetings held by Anglicans "a hierarchy of surveillance,"¹⁵² he also gave the Church Missionary Society credit for discounting race, and thus rescued John Booth Good from bearing the white man's colonial burden entirely. If one can get past the jargon, Christopher has done good work in researching Aboriginal reaction and adaptation. In the British Columbian context, which was significantly different from the Manitoba one, he suggested that the Ntha7kápmx converted in order to retain the missionary's influence in land negotiations.

Which brings us back to the present, and the current subjective secular world view. Michael Gauvreau, writing in 1991, warned historians against reading backwards a "dialectic of secular thought as victor and religious orthodoxy as victim, constructed by late twentieth-century historians."¹⁵³ Hopefully the events of September 11, 2001 have made this triumphalism less attractive, and will send intellectual historians back, as Franz Boas suggested in the passage heading the chapter, to a period of uncertainty and a more strictly inductive method. This thesis does not propose to weigh in on the meaning and extent of the enormous changes that took place in theology and society at the end of the nineteenth century, although it

¹⁵¹ Brett Christopher, *Positioning the Missionary: John Booth Good and the Confluence of Cultures in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia* (Vancouver, 1998), page xix.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, page 105.

¹⁵³ Michael Gauvreau, *The Evangelical Century*, page 220.

never doubts them. However it will use the methods of intellectual history, enlightened by Owen Chadwick's caution that the religious experience cannot be entirely captured, to examine one Methodist clergyman's thought and life, and whether he lost his faith during the changes, and whether the categories of faith proposed by intellectual historians involved in the debate are sustained by his example. This thesis can do no more.

What will the future bring for readers of Canadian history concerning the Methodist Church at the end of the nineteenth-century and missionaries in the West? We can always hope for the discovery of more archival sources and artifacts. Discoveries in Aboriginal-church relations may continue to serve the needs of the treaty industry, which considers history mostly from a legal perspective. We must pray that government lawyers use their findings wisely in facing hundreds of lawsuits brought forward by Aboriginal people who claim to have been abused in residential schools. The decision of the shrinking United Church to close its retail Book Rooms across the country in 2002 reduces the market for general or institutional Methodist religious histories like *Prairie Spirit* or *The Lord's Dominion*. Individual parish histories and biographies of ministers will continue to be written. Undoubtedly too, the splintering of nationalist history into sub-groups will continue, which may lead to some interesting histories of minority religions, such as the Sikh or Hindu faiths in Canada.

The modest upswing in mainstream church attendance recorded by John Stackhouse in 2001 may reflect an interest in or a search for new theologies, perhaps of electronic interconnectivity, in which case the past will have to be scoured for evidence of origins of new patterns. Or will the past seem too foreign, and will the mainstream denominations continue, as Phyllis Airhart has warned, to abandon their evangelical heritage to the more fundamentalist Protestants? Tellingly, Egerton R. Young's *By Canoe and Dog-Train* was printed in an edited

version by the Northern Pentecostal Alliance in 1991. Should the more fundamentalist churches, underwritten by conservative American trusts, continue to re-interpret and publish Canadian Methodist church history, it seems unlikely that Neil Semple's suggested truce in the secularisation debate will last. In any case, we will, no doubt, continue to see Canadian church history re-written to fulfill the needs of the present.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF THE REVEREND EGERTON R. YOUNG

As part of an evaluation of the applicability of the categories of faith suggested by the secularisation versus continuity debate, this chapter intends to sketch out the life of the Reverend Egerton R. Young from published and unpublished sources. This chapter will pay particular attention to aspects of Young's life that might help situate him along the liberal versus evangelical spectrum, and that might demonstrate whether he kept his faith in old age. The Canadian Methodist church as it developed until mid century, is also briefly described as a context for his faith. As well, since an individual's religious world view may help shape his political opinions, a brief outline of the political events while Young was in Manitoba is included.

Egerton R. Young was born in 1840 in Crosby, Ontario, between Smiths Falls and Kingston, while his father was stationed there as a travelling Wesleyan Methodist minister. The Reverend William Young was a contemporary of William Case and Egerton Ryerson: "one of that heroic band of pioneer missionaries in Canada who had laid so grandly and well the foundations of the Church,"¹ and who named his son after the latter.²

Egerton R. Young's mother was Amanda Waldron Young. The Waldrons had emigrated from New York State in 1800 to the Newcastle District, when their eldest son Solomon was five years old. Mrs. Waldron had been born and raised among the Society of Friends, and Mr.

¹ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train among the Cree and Salteaux Indians* (London, 1890), page 30.

² Jennifer Brown, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Volume XIII*, page 1121.

Waldron had had “the advantage of a good English education.”³ They had a total of fifteen children, including Amanda, who was born in Upper Canada.

In 1819, Amanda’s oldest brother, Solomon Waldron, moved to work a small farm his father had given him at Percy, and opened a Sunday school at Murray,

the first in the place, in which the work of religion commenced among the children whom he taught to call on the name of the Lord. The Reverend Wm Young was among those praying children... Wm Young was subsequently married to his [Solomon Waldron’s] sister and became a useful itinerant preacher in the Canada Conference.⁴

Solomon Waldron was received on trial in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1823-24⁵ and served around Ontario. He was known for being “full of life and fire”.⁶ In 1836, he was married to Susannah Farley, a New England Methodist⁷ whose preaching the Reverend Peter Jones, a prominent Mississauga clergyman, admired.⁸ They had several postings in Aboriginal communities, including Munceytown on the Thames River in southwestern Ontario.

Munceytown was a large community of a thousand people in the 1840’s, roughly half Ojibwa and Munsees, with the remainder Oneidas, newly arrived from New York State.⁹ Susannah’s sister Maria Farley lived with them and ran the Aboriginal children’s school.¹⁰ From Munceytown, Solomon wrote a letter decrying the “firewater” among the Native people.¹¹ As was decreed by John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, the Waldrons changed circuits

³ Solomon Waldron, “A Sketch of the Life, Travels, and Labours of Solomon Waldron, A Wesleyan Methodist Preacher Written By Himself”, United Church Archives, manuscript 86.180C/TR, page 1.

⁴ Solomon Waldron, “A Sketch of the Life”, page 9.

⁵ John Carroll, *Case and his Cotemporaries*, volume II (Toronto, 1869), page 440.

⁶ John Carroll, *Case and his Cotemporaries*, volume III, page 299.

⁷ Elizabeth Gillan Muir “The Bark Schoolhouse: Methodist Episcopal Missionary Women in Upper Canada 1827-1833”, *Historical Essays in Honour of John Webster Grant*, page 31.

⁸ Elizabeth Gillan Muir, *Petticoats in the Pulpit: The Story of Early Nineteenth-Century Methodist Women Preachers in Upper Canada* (Toronto, 1991), page 178.

⁹ Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers* (Toronto, 1987), page 192.

¹⁰ Egerton R. Young, *The Battle of the Bears: Life in the North Land* (Boston, 1907), page 294.

¹¹ *Case and his Cotemporaries* volume IV, page 71.

frequently. Among their placements, they served the Aboriginal community at Walpole Island from 1858 to 1861.¹²

William Young received his license to exhort at Cobourg in 1830. In 1831, he taught at the Methodist mission school in the Rice Lake community of Mississaugas.¹³ Sixty children were enrolled in the school in 1828.¹⁴ Elizabeth Barnes, another New York-born woman Methodist preacher, taught at Rice Lake with William Young.

Egerton R. Young seems to have grown up on several circuits, mostly between Frontenac and Durham counties, fronting on Lake Ontario. In October 1840, Solomon Waldron “baptised three children of my brother-in-law’s”¹⁵ including presumably Egerton R. Young who would have been a few months old. Amanda Waldron died in 1842, and William Young then married Maria Farley.¹⁶ Of Maria Farley, who raised him from the age of two, Egerton said: “My mother before her marriage had been a beloved teacher among the large and powerful tribe of Ojibway Indians. When I was very young she had the joy of seeing me converted to Christ.”¹⁷ William Young was superannuated for ill health in 1845, and shortly after the family moved to Bowmanville.

Egerton R. Young had a strong Yankee pedigree. This was not unusual among Methodists, because New York State had provided itinerant preachers for Upper Canada since the late eighteenth century, when John Wesley ordained American bishops (and precipitated his break with the Church of England). The War of 1812 left anti-American sentiments in Upper Canada, and Solomon Waldron recorded that he had been called a Yankee when he attempted to

¹² George Cornish, *Cyclopaedia of Methodism in Canada* (Toronto, 1881), page 349.

¹³ *Case and his Co-temporaries* volume IV, pages 268 and 339.

¹⁴ George F. Playter, *The History of Methodism in Canada with and Account of the Rise, and Progress of the Work of God among the Canadian Indian Tribes* (Toronto, 1864), page 357.

¹⁵ Solomon Waldron, “A Sketch of the Life”, page 32.

¹⁶ Jennifer Brown, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Volume XIII*, page 1121.

¹⁷ Egerton R. Young, “Clippings album 1868 –1889”, Egerton Ryerson Young Papers F976, UCA, page 33.

remove the degenerate whites living at Muncey Island.¹⁸ However, Canadian church historian George Rawlyk has shown that the movement of preachers and ideas back and forth from the New York to the Upper Canadian circuits continued in the early nineteenth century. Methodist preachers remained under the supervision of the Genesee conference of New York State until 1824, when Canadian Methodists organized their own Conference.

Lieutenant-Governor Colborne feared that Canadian Methodists were inseparable from reform party supporters¹⁹ and by inference, republicans. The Lieutenant-Governor's anxiety was concentrated on the five Methodist minister sons of the Loyalist soldier Colonel Ryerson, among whom the most prominent were John, William and Egerton. These three brothers guided the Canadian church through its separation from its American parent, the founding of Victoria College, the creation of *The Christian Guardian* newspaper in 1829 and the struggle to join the British church without disappearing into it. Their role in elections and other political issues has been much debated by historians, but they were clearly not republicans, and they did not trust the British Radicals when they met them. Goldwin French suggested that by publishing an explicitly political letter in the *British Colonist* in 1844, Egerton Ryerson forced the Conference to leave ministers "free to exercise their own judgments in political and civil affairs".²⁰ Finally, John and Egerton wrote a history of the Methodist church in Canada under Egerton's name²¹ that assured their place in Canadian historiography (as mentioned in the first chapter). The influence of the Ryersons on Canadian Methodism cannot be exaggerated. It must have been as a tribute that William Young named his son after Egerton Ryerson, as there is no record that they had been close friends.

¹⁸ Solomon Waldron, "A Sketch of the Life", page 20.

¹⁹ Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics: The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada* (Toronto, 1962), page 135.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, page 231.

²¹ Thomas H.B. Symons, "John Ryerson," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography X*, page 639.

On the invitation of Lieutenant-Governor Colborne, British Wesleyan missionaries began to arrive in Upper Canada in 1832.²² Bowing to the inevitable, and perhaps to disassociate the Canadian Church from its increasingly unpopular American parent, the Ryersons led an amalgamation with the British Church in 1833.²³ The Canadian Wesleyan Methodists seemed to have been culturally quite different from the British Wesleyans. The following letter signed by “A British Methodist” in *The Patriot* of 6 September 1833 suggested that the difference was a shock to at least one British immigrant:

They submitted patiently for some time to laxity of discipline, and various indignities, together with the rudeness of vulgar and ignorant men who occupied the pulpit. They had never been accustomed in England to see ragged and dirty preachers with beards ‘that shewed like a stubble at harvest home’, nor had they ever been outraged and disgusted, by seeing their minister put his finger on his nose, and lean over the pulpit first on one side, and then on the other, and blow like a snorting horse, and then wipe off with the cuff or the lap of his coat, and after vociferating nonsense for an hour, sit down in the pulpit and cram his hands into his waistcoat pockets, and bring out of one a plug of tobacco, and a short pipe, and out of the other a Jack knife, and deliberately cut his plug, and fill his pipe, then light it at the pulpit candle and come down puffing away to salute his brethren.²⁴

During this period in Britain, under the lengthy leadership of Secretary Jabez Bunting, the British Wesleyan Methodist church actively discouraged any reform sympathies in ministers.²⁵

Following amalgamation, British Methodist policies were applied in Canada, with significant consequences. One was that local class leaders, the leading Christians who preached and held weekly classes between the itinerant minister’s visits, could no longer expect eventually to be ordained.²⁶ A professionalisation of the Methodist clergy was taking place in Britain, and lay

²² Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics*, page 135.

²³ *Ibid.*, page 141.

²⁴ quoted in Elizabeth Gillan Muir, *Petticoats in the Pulpit*, page 198.

²⁵ Robert Currie, “Methodism Divided”, Gerald Wayne Olsen *Religion and Revolution in Early Industrial England: The Halévy Thesis and Its Critics*, page 81.

²⁶ Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics*, page 141.

readers there were losing their status. In Upper Canadian communities like Munceytown and Rice Lake, the class leaders were Aboriginal. As well, the British church had forbidden women to preach.²⁷ Both female and Aboriginal leadership in the Methodist church declined from this point in Canada. The amalgamation may have affected Canadian Wesleyan theology as well. George Rawlyk suggests that early Canadian Methodists believed in an emotional, anarchistic Wesleyanism centred on provoking the conversion experience, what he calls radical evangelicalism. Rawlyk proposed that this approach to Methodism “was gradually pushed to the periphery by a leadership pre-occupied with British order, British respectability, and a growing suspicion of democratic and populist evangelical enthusiasm.”²⁸

The 1833 Union did not last, as the Canadian Conference refused to grant the British church authority over its internal matters.²⁹ Solomon Waldron recorded his dismay at the dissolution of the Union, and complaining that he had “learned that Indians had been written to on the subject, advised not to join the Yankee Methodists - mean & base!”³⁰ In 1847, the British Wesleyan and the Canadian Conference re-united. Under the terms of the second, more lasting union, Canadian missions to the Aboriginal people were to be subject to a general superintendent of missions appointed by the English Conference. The British-based Wesleyan Missionary Society would distribute the funds to missions to which the auxiliary Canadian society would contribute.³¹ It was in the midst of these changes that Egerton R. Young was born.

Young was tremendously interested in the missionary life of his father, stepmother, aunt, uncle, and their contemporaries. In 1897 he wrote: “As a child, I used to listen with intense

²⁷ Elizabeth Gillan Muir, *Petticoats in the Pulpit*, page 132.

²⁸ G.A. Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire*, page 207.

²⁹ Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics*, page 188.

³⁰ Solomon Waldron, “A Sketch of the Life”, page 33.

³¹ Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics*, page 253.

interest to my beloved father, who for many years had been a pioneer missionary in what were then known as the wilds of Upper Canada – tell of his adventures.”³² He recorded sitting as a child enthralled by tales of mission work in the West at the feet of Mary, James Evans’ widow.³³ As an adult, he wrote a biography of James Evans. When he travelled to England in 1892, Young visited 81-year-old Robert Rundle in Lancashire.³⁴ Rundle had served as the first Wesleyan Missionary at Edmonton House in the 1840’s, under the supervision of James Evans at Norway House. Young seems to have accepted the judgment of Carroll in *Case and his Contemporaries* that the early Wesleyan itinerants were heroes of a golden age, and to have identified with this generation.

As well, Egerton R. Young took a great interest in the Aboriginal Methodist preachers prominent in his father’s generation. His first book, *By Canoe and Dog Train*, begins with brief biographies of Aboriginal missionaries Peter Jones, John Sunday, and Henry Steinheur.³⁵ Peter Jones and John Sunday were among the first generation of Aboriginal leaders who rose in Ontario and were trained for the ministry by the Methodist churches. John Sunday was a frequent guest in William Young’s house.³⁶ As a young man, E.R. Young copied an 1840 letter from the Reverend Peter Jacobs, then stationed at Lac La Pluie, into his notebooks.³⁷ Jacobs was born at Rice Lake in 1805,³⁸ and had been sent west with missionary Robert Rundle and James Evans. However, he was a known philanderer, and died an alcoholic, at Rama (in central Ontario).

³² Egerton R. Young, *On the Indian Trail: Stories of Missionary work among the Cree and Salteaux Indians* (New York, 1897), page 33.

³³ Egerton R. Young, *Reverend James Evans, Apostle of the North* (New York, 1899), page 253.

³⁴ Gerald M. Hutchison “Introduction”, *The Rundle Journals* (Calgary, 1977), page lxiv.

³⁵ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-Train*, pages 17-26.

³⁶ Egerton R. Young, *Apostle of the North*, page 65.

³⁷ Egerton R. Young, Notebook B-1, Egerton Ryerson Young Papers F 976, UCA, unpaginated.

³⁸ John Maclean, *Vanguards of Canada* (Toronto, 1918), page 106.

The Reverend Henry Steinheur was a generation older than Egerton R. Young, but their paths crossed in Western Canada. As an Ojibway boy, Steinheur participated in a children's choir, which William Case took on tour to New England to raise funds for missionary work.³⁹ With the financial assistance of an American patron who heard the choir, and whose name he took, Steinheur studied at Victoria College. His long service began with a position as James Evans' assistant in 1840. Steinheur served as an ordained Methodist missionary in a number of places across the Prairies. The Reverend John McDougall married one of his daughters.⁴⁰ His son, whom he named Egerton, presumably from affection for E.R. Young, served as a missionary on Lake Winnipeg in the 1890's.⁴¹ Steinheur's status as senior missionary was recognised by Chairman George Young at the 1883 meeting of the Manitoba and North-west Conference.⁴²

Egerton R. Young followed the careers of other Aboriginal leaders of his father's generation. Young's ideas on how to solve "the Indian problem," which he published in several newspaper articles after the 1885 rebellion, seem to have been influenced by George Copway, an influential lecturer and best-selling author in the United States during the 1840's and 1850's,⁴³ who was originally from the Rice Lake community.

Egerton R. Young was issued a teaching certificate by the Council of Public Instruction in June 1860 and studied at the Toronto Model School in 1860-61.⁴⁴ In 1861, he began teaching school in Madoc, Ontario. He never attended university.

³⁹ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-Train*, page 22.

⁴⁰ John McDougall, *Parsons on the Plains* (Toronto, 1971), page 192.

⁴¹ Terence Craig, *The Missionary Lives: A Study in Canadian Missionary Biography and Autobiography* (Leiden, Netherlands, n.d., c. 1990), page 8.

⁴² George Young, *Manitoba Memories: leaves from my life in the prairie province, 1868-1884* (Toronto, 1897), page 363.

⁴³ Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, page 229.

⁴⁴ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1121.

In May 1863, Young was received on probation into the Wesleyan Methodist Church. His first circuit was the Hungerford Circuit, through which he travelled from his base in Bridgewater (Actinolite).⁴⁵ Although there were many settled communities in Ontario by this time, junior, unmarried ministers could be expected to be appointed to a pioneer circuit as traditional saddle-bag preachers, having to visit two or three churches and their families some distance apart every week. These were charges that could not afford to pay their own minister, and so were under the supervision of the district. Ministers were to aim to make the congregation self-supporting, and able to contribute financially to mission work as soon as possible.

In a pocket diary he kept during his probationary year, Egerton R. Young frequently expressed anxiety about the constancy of his calling. He wrote on February 21, "May God help me to love more in the spirit of prayer".⁴⁶ On Monday January 11, 1864, Young wrote in his diary:

Six months ago today I preached my first funeral sermon, at the funeral of Geo. Benn. Saved by the skin of his teeth. He came to me on the Campground; went forward as a penitent. Prayed earnestly. Got up and said he had been a great sinner. But he had found a precious Savior. Bro Hall gave out the chorus 'I love Jesus'. He now said [?] get up all who think they do love Jesus even if it is only a little hold up... geo's hadn't went up slowly and trembling but still getting higher and higher and with all the earnestness he could command. He said I love Jesus. He went home was seized with fainting fits (for he had ruined himself with that curse of our country, whiskey)... His poor rum soaked body sleeps in the ...graveyard...his soul is in heaven.⁴⁷

Young's first funeral was for a humble man (not dignified with the moniker Mr.) whom he had met and had seen converted at a Methodist camp meeting. By this time, according to William Westfall, the number of camp meetings had fallen off dramatically in favour of established

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Egerton R Young, "1864 Diary", E.R. Young Papers F976, UCA, unpaginated.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Sunday services and Sunday schools. The increasingly urbane Methodist churches were somewhat embarrassed by the emotional excesses of camp meetings by mid-century, and tried to play them down in the name of respectability.⁴⁸ However, the itinerant preacher and the periodic camp meeting may have remained more influential in the rural outposts and isolated settlements, according to George Rawlyk.⁴⁹ In burying a camp meeting convert, the young preacher Egerton R. Young was practicing a style of ministry that was associated mainly with rural life. His use of rural dialect and spelling in the description of George Benn's conversion in his diary conveys a distancing that may show that he was aware of this.

Egerton R. Young was ordained into the Wesleyan Methodist Church on June 9, 1867.⁵⁰ He was called to the pastorate of First Methodist Church in Hamilton, Ontario. On Christmas Day, 1867, he married Elizabeth Bingham of Bradford, Ontario.⁵¹ The 1871 Ontario census showed three male Bingham in Bradford, all Wesleyan Methodists. The eldest was an innkeeper and may have been Elizabeth's father or other close male relative. This suggests that Young and his bride were from the same social class, as the Wesleyan Methodists included "respectable shopkeepers."⁵²

At the time that Young was ordained, university-educated ministers were becoming more common and institutes of higher learning were introducing theological studies. The Canadian Methodist college, Victoria College in Cobourg, would add a faculty of theology, in 1873.⁵³ Victoria College had received its royal charter in 1836 and was originally dependent on both American Methodist colleges' curriculum and teachers.⁵⁴ Victoria College decided to affiliate

⁴⁸ William Westfall, *Two Worlds*, chapter three.

⁴⁹ George Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire*, page 121.

⁵⁰ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1121.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church* Volume I (London, 1966), page 372.

⁵³ Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, page 250.

⁵⁴ Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash*, page 41.

with the University of Toronto in 1887. The College allowed students to “embrace and pursue any religious creed and attend any place of worship which their parents and guardians may direct.”⁵⁵ The most influential Canadian theologian during Egerton R. Young’s adulthood was his exact contemporary, Nathanael Burwash. Burwash spent his life at Victoria College. According to Marguerite Van Die, he defined the Church’s interpretation of Wesley and, during a period of immense change in public ideas, “consistently sought to apply the old evangelical teachings to new institutions and scientific thought.”⁵⁶

While serving in Hamilton, Young received a letter from the Reverend Dr. E. Wood and the Reverend L. Taylor asking him to “go as a missionary to the Indian tribes at Norway House” which he handed, without comment, to his “bride of but a few days.” He quotes her as answering: “The call has come very unexpectedly, but I think it is from God, and we will go.”⁵⁷

Egerton R. Young was one of a small party of Methodist missionaries who were given a send-off, including a service, breakfast meeting and “grand valedictory services”⁵⁸ at Richmond Street Wesleyan Church on May 7 and 8, 1868. The others in the party were the Reverend George McDougall, the Reverend George Young (who would be Egerton R. Young’s supervisor), the Reverend Peter Campbell, their families and several lay assistants. Present at the send-off were the Reverend James Elliott, President of the Conference; the Reverend Dr. Wood, General Superintendent of the Conference; the Reverend W. Morley Punshon, the British Superintendent; the Reverend Egerton Ryerson; Mr. A.W. Lauder M.P.P; and many clergy. The Methodist periodical the *Christian Guardian* of May 13, 1868 established the importance of that valedictory service as follows:

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., page 12.

⁵⁷ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 28.

⁵⁸ Ibid., page 30.

Not only was the Methodism of Toronto fully represented in the gathering, but from adjoining districts east and west large numbers came thronging in, affording good evidence that the flame of missionary zeal was still burning in the heart of Methodism as warmly as when Wesley went forth in the spirit of the well-known motto, “the world is my parish”. There was also a good representation of sister denominations, affording pleasing evidence of kindly feeling, and of deep interest in the missionary work.⁵⁹

In 1868, the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada was the largest Protestant denomination in the new Dominion, an optimistic body aware of itself as the “national church of Protestant Canada,”⁶⁰ according to William Westfall. A general feature of this optimistic church was a form of nostalgia for the good old itinerant days. The flame of missionary zeal was quoted as a symbol of continuity with the past and the theology of founder John Wesley. The author was reassured of this continuity by the number of attendees at the service. The quotation from Wesley – the world is my parish – was a well-known Methodist cliché by this time. It had originally been John Wesley’s response to the accusation that he was an Anglican clergyman preaching without permission in other men’s parishes as he travelled around England exhorting people to “desire the grace of God”⁶¹ in the 1730’s and 40’s. The use of the quotation in the 1868 article seemed to suggest that an opportunity to preach and live as John Wesley had modelled (under the Canadian Church), was to go West. Egerton R. Young and his bride were choosing a path in imitation of Wesley and Young’s parents, early Yankee Wesleyan itinerants who had worked among Aboriginal people in Upper Canada.

At the send-off service, the Reverend Dr. Wood gave the first speech after Bible reading and prayers. According to the *Christian Guardian* of May 13, 1868:

The doctor said it was twenty-six years since James Evans went to the great North-West, and so faithfully did he labor that scarce any part of the vast territory

⁵⁹ quoted in George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 29.

⁶⁰ William Westfall, *Two Worlds*, page 52.

⁶¹ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley Volume I*, (Nashville, 1984), page 393.

could now be found where that devoted missionary had not preached the Gospel. Mr. Evans was well-known as the inventor of the “syllabic characters”, into which the Word of God had since been translated, and which was much better adapted to the Indian tribes than the ordinary Roman characters. Through the labor of Mr. Evans, and others who had succeeded him, thousands in that far-off region had been brought to Christ.⁶²

James Evans was an accomplished linguist in Aboriginal languages and an experienced missionary who had been sent from Upper Canada to Norway House in 1839 to supervise the inexperienced British Wesleyan missionaries sent out to Rupert’s Land at the request of Sir George Simpson, governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Dr. Wood chose him as a model for the new missionaries, rather than Robert Rundle, who had laboured the same years and had not been recalled over a scandal, or Henry Steinheur, who spent his whole life as a Methodist missionary in the West, because of Evans’ invention of the syllabic alphabet. James Evans taught the alphabet (and therefore literacy in Cree) and distributed “portions of the work of God, and a goodly number of hymns translated into the Cree language”⁶³ until he was recalled to England to defend himself against a sexual scandal.

The necessity of education and the Bible in the language of the people were central tenets of the different Protestant societies dating back to the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Young certainly held these ideals, for he continued Evans’ work by teaching the syllabic alphabet and distributing religious materials printed in syllabic Cree among the Saulteaux (or Ojibwa). The syllabic alphabet that Evans developed was adopted and adapted by the Oblate Fathers and the Anglicans working among the Inuit.⁶⁴ The Anglican version remains the preferred orthography of Inuktitut today.

⁶² quoted in George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 32.

⁶³ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 56.

⁶⁴ John Webster Grant, *In the Moon of Wintertime*, page 111.

The Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Canada had divided Rupertsland into two enormous districts, Red River and Rocky Mountain District, in 1868. With their own horses and canvas-covered wagons, the Youngs set out from Hamilton with a party led by the new chairman of the Rocky Mountain District, the Reverend George McDougall.⁶⁵ As “an old experienced western traveller...[he] was the guide of the Party.”⁶⁶ McDougall and his family had been living in the West since 1860, when he had been appointed to the Rossville Mission (where E.R. Young was headed) as chairman of the district, which then stretched to the Rocky Mountains. George McDougall and his family now lived at a mission they had founded in 1863 on the North Saskatchewan River. He was a vigorous, outspoken pioneer, an expert axe-man and hunter. His son John, who grew up in the Saskatchewan country, also became a Methodist missionary to the Prairie peoples. George McDougall buried three daughters in the smallpox epidemic of 1870, and, like Young, was instrumental in persuading his flock to accept treaty in the 1870’s.⁶⁷

Another member of the party was the Reverend George Young (no relation) who had been an itinerant on the Hamilton Circuit when he heard McDougall plead in Whitby for a missionary for Red River.⁶⁸ George Young set out as chairman of the Red River Settlement. Egerton R. Young wrote of his chairman, “more to him than to any other man is due the prominent position which the Methodist Church now occupies in the North-West”.⁶⁹ In 1883, the church structure was changed and George Young became the superintendent of the Manitoba

⁶⁵ J.H. Riddell, *Methodism in the Middle West*, page 52.

⁶⁶ Egerton R. Young, *By canoe and Dog-train*, page 32.

⁶⁷ J.E. Nix “George Millward McDougall”, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Volume X (Toronto, 1972), page 472.

⁶⁸ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 27.

⁶⁹ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 41.

and the Northwest Conference.⁷⁰ He had a long and successful career in the Methodist Church, mostly in Manitoba.

Egerton R. Young recounted the journey from Toronto to Norway House in his first book, *By Canoe and Dog-Train Among the Cree and Salteaux*. The party travelled by steamer to Milwaukee, then by flat-bottomed steamer to St Paul's, and then by horse and wagon for thirty days to the Red River settlement. Elizabeth Bingham Young drove her own wagon.⁷¹ Young's account emphasized the primitive travel, impressions of the American cities, and first impressions of the Sioux (who were currently demonized in the popular press following the Battle of Little Bighorn). An anecdote about George McDougall revealed a competitive edge to their relationship. Young recounted being "stung by the remark" that he did not know how to guard his horse against horse thieves. As a result, he narrowly missed shooting one of their own party.⁷² Young never criticised any other Methodist personnel by name in his books, so the incident was significant. In two books, he repeated that George McDougall made cutting remarks about his outdoorsmanship – adding in 1897, "it was not the first time that he tried to wound."⁷³ Later, John McDougall, the son, was a bitter critic of Egerton R. Young's first two books, and specifically of his knowledge of Aboriginal languages and practices.

After thirty days of wilderness travel, "Fort Garry and its environs fell short of our expectation" according to George Young.⁷⁴ It had been a difficult year. There had been a grasshopper plague in the spring, and the spring buffalo hunt, on which depended the Métis in St. Boniface for food and employment, had failed.⁷⁵ In general, the standard of living of the Métis,

⁷⁰ J.H. Riddell, *Methodism in the Middle West*, page 119.

⁷¹ E. Ryerson Young, "Mrs. Egerton R. Young", E.R. Young Papers F976, UCA, unpaginated.

⁷² Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 36.

⁷³ Egerton R. Young, *On the Indian Trail*, page 20.

⁷⁴ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 64.

⁷⁵ Maggie Siggins, *Riel: A Life of Revolution* (Toronto, 1994), page 72.

who represented about half the population of the Red River area, was eroding.⁷⁶ New settlers from Ontario were arriving in large numbers looking for arable land. These tended to view the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company and its governing council as backward and undemocratic, and were hoping the territory would soon be acquired by Canada.⁷⁷ The appointed Council was unable to make its justice stick and there was, claims popular Canadian historian Maggie Siggins, a lawless atmosphere.⁷⁸ British soldier William Francis Butler commented in 1872 that: "Gambling houses and drinking-saloons, made of boards and brown paper, crowded the black, mud-soaked streets."⁷⁹ George Young said: "This land is rum-cursed, and I feel it my duty to preach temperance everywhere."⁸⁰

The party was formally received by the Hudson's Bay Company at Lower Fort Garry. Egerton R. Young recorded his first impression of the enormous, wealthy, powerful corporation that would be the prime employer of his parishioners, and responsible for all his mail and luggage in *By Canoe and Dog Train*, as follows:

We were a little amused and very much pleased with the old-time and almost courtly etiquette which abounded at this and the other establishments of the flourishing Company....Another singular custom, which we did not like, was the fact that there were two dining-rooms...one for the ladies, and the other for the gentlemen of the service....As the arrangement was so contrary to all our ideas and education on the subject, we presumed to question it; but the only satisfaction we could get in reference to it was, that it was one of their old customs, and had worked well.⁸¹

This slightly condescending attitude could be interpreted as a mis-reading of the situation as to who still held most of the power, which historian William Brooks suggests was common among the Methodist missionaries. However, Young never mentioned any personal difficulty dealing

⁷⁶ Ibid., page 82.

⁷⁷ Ibid., page 78.

⁷⁸ Ibid., page 80.

⁷⁹ William Francis Butler, *The Wild North Land* (New York, 1903), page 13.

⁸⁰ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 88.

⁸¹ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 41.

with the Company, and in one interview in later years, he praised it. Rather, the passage clearly associates the Company and its system with the past, which Maggie Siggins identified as a common view among other newly arrived Ontario immigrants.⁸² Young's tone may also be due to sympathy for Mary and James Evans, who, along with many other clergy,⁸³ had clashed with the Company on issues such as working or travelling on Sunday.

The Youngs then travelled by York boat to Norway House to succeed Charles Stringfellow and his wife, in charge of the Rossville Mission there.⁸⁴ The trip took fourteen days in an open skiff, in the company of several oxen. The Youngs began to make the acquaintance of the citizens of Norway House, who would be their parishioners.

Our days always began and closed with a religious service. All of our Indian companions in the two boats on this first trip were Christians, in the best and truest sense of the word. They were the converts of the earlier missionaries of our Church. At first they were a little reserved, and acted as though they imagined we expected them to be very sedate and dignified. For, like some white folks, they imagined the 'black-coat' and his wife did not believe in laughter or pleasantry. However we soon disabused their minds of those erroneous ideas, and before we reached Norway House we were on the best of terms with each other. We knew but little of their language, but some of them had a good idea of English, and, using these as our interpreters, we got along finely.

They were well furnished with Testaments and hymn-books printed in the beautiful syllabic characters; and they used them well.⁸⁵

Norway House, four hundred miles north of Red River, was a community in transition when the Youngs arrived. This settled community of about a thousand had been founded in 1819 by the Hudson's Bay Company as the site of the exchange between furs coming from Athabasca and European goods coming from York Factory, on Hudson's Bay. Norway House residents provided labour to the Company.

⁸² Maggie Siggins, *Riel*, page 78.

⁸³ Kerry Abel, "James Evans," *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860* Volume I (Oxford, 1995), page 369.

⁸⁴ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1121.

⁸⁵ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 49.

The largest source of employment was manning the fur brigades that went down to York Factory every summer. The highest-earning employees of the Company at Norway House were the trippers to York Factory, who were paid in “made beaver”, a standard of exchange established in London,⁸⁶ and redeemable at the Company store. (By the 1860’s, the Hudson’s Bay Company also issued its own shillings and pounds.)⁸⁷ In his biography of James Evans, based to some extent on the oral recollections of Aboriginal people living at Norway House in the late 1860’s, Young recounted that, at its heyday, Aboriginal employees from the Rockies to the Athabasca region mixed at Norway House. The Company imported large quantities of buffalo meat, pemmican, grease, and agricultural produce from Red River.⁸⁸ Local people provided venison, geese and ducks to the post to vary the fish diet,⁸⁹ and varied day labour. The post was never a serious supplier of trade furs to the Company.⁹⁰

The resident Aboriginal people at Norway House were mostly Swampy Cree, and today identify themselves as the Swampy Cree First Nation. Arthur Ray suggested that the Cree-speaking nations who lived mostly in the boreal forest became interdependent with the European trade about fifty years before the Plains people. Because of the disappearance of large game animals in eastern Manitoba, the woodland Cree switched to fishing and trapping small animals and wore European clothing from about 1825.⁹¹ During James Evans’ tenure at Norway House from 1840 to 1846, the inhabitants founded a new town by building small wooden dwellings around the mission church. Rossville was a few miles from Norway House and closer to the fisheries. On his 1854 tour of the West, John Ryerson described Rossville as “a most

⁸⁶ Arthur J. Ray and Donald Freeman, *‘Give Us Good Measure’: An Economic Analysis of Relations between the Indians and the Hudson’s Bay Company before 1763* (Toronto, 1978), page 54.

⁸⁷ John McDougall, *Parsons on the Plains*, page 131.

⁸⁸ Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, page 128.

⁸⁹ Richard A. Enns “The Fur Trade at Norway House 1796-1875 Preliminary Considerations in the Discussion of Treaty 5” (Manitoba, 1998), page 76.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, page 71.

⁹¹ Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, page 147.

comfortable and well-furnished parsonage ...with a Christian Society far advanced in knowledge and practical piety".⁹²

From 1846 on, summer gardens appeared in Rossville. However, according to graduate student Richard Enns, a relatively traditional annual cycle continued to govern the lives of the Norway House Cree: early summer and fall fisheries, summer gardening, and moving back into the bush for fall and winter hunting, interrupted only by Christmas and New Year's celebrations at the post.

The Norway House Cree who wore European clothes, gardened, and had been Methodists for a generation, were a model Christian community from the point of view of many Church officials who visited Norway House. John McDougall claimed that many people spoke English well by Young's time.⁹³ Robert Rundle, the young British Wesleyan, had stayed two months in Norway House in 1840. He wrote:

June 23 [1840] Met the Indians again this evening: as usual when they saw me in the boat they flocked to the House of Prayer. I found them all seated in order. The Word of Life they prefer to everything else. It is quite a privilege to visit this interesting village.⁹⁴

Clearly, life at Norway House was appealing for some of the missionaries, for Rundle wept when he left Norway House for his posting at Edmonton House. When chairman George Young visited in 1874, he wrote:

Probably one thousand Indians or more consider this place and neighborhoods adjacent, their home. The mission itself embraces a large number of families who live in very comfortable and clean-looking little houses, not far from the church and school and mission house.⁹⁵

⁹² quoted in William Howard Brooks, "Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century", (Toronto, 1972), page 101.

⁹³ John McDougall, "*Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*": A Criticism (Toronto, 1895), page 8.

⁹⁴ Rundle, Robert, (Hugh Dempsey, ed.) *The Rundle Journals 1840-1848* (Calgary, 1977) page 24.

⁹⁵ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 294.

John Semmens recounted how “the work here has been eminently successful [among the] quiet, teachable Crees.”⁹⁶ On his tour of the western missions in 1873, the Reverend Dr. Lachlan Taylor praised Norway House to the skies: the natural beauty of the lake, the view of Aboriginal and Highland Scottish parishioners arriving by different water craft, the neatness of the work in the Sunday school. “It is doubtless the finest Indian mission in the Dominion, if not in America,” he wrote.⁹⁷ Egerton R. Young had a different reaction to the visit, and in a private letter to his wife he bemoaned the effect of Dr. Taylor’s drinking in front of his Aboriginal parishioners.⁹⁸

Egerton R. Young credited the life he saw in Norway House to the beneficial effects of adopting Christianity. On this, he grafted his sympathy for the plight of women and the aged:

We found ourselves in a Christian village surrounded by paganism. The contrast between the two classes was very evident. Our Christians, as fast as they were able to build, were living in comfortable houses, and earnestly endeavoring to lift themselves up in the social circle. Their personal appearance was better, and cleanliness was accepted as next to godliness. On the Sabbath, they were well dressed, and presented such a respectable and devout appearance in the sanctuary as to win the admiration of all who visited us. The great majority of those who made a profession of faith lived honest, sober, and consistent lives, and thus showed the genuineness of the change wrought in them by our glorious Gospel of the Son of God.

One of the most delightful and tangible evidences of the thoroughness and genuineness of the change was seen in the improvement of family life. Such a thing as a genuine home life, with mutual love and sympathy existing among the different members of the family, was unknown in their pagan state. The men, and even boys, considered it a sign of courage and manliness to despise and shamefully treat their mothers, wives, or sisters.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ John Semmens, *The Field and the Work* (Toronto, 1884), page 24.

⁹⁷ quoted in George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 255.

⁹⁸ Harcourt Brown, (ed.), “Letters of Egerton Ryerson Young”, *Manitoba Pageant*, Volume XVII No 1, page number undecipherable.

⁹⁹ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 63.

By 1885, the *Christian Guardian* was echoing the idea that Christianity, and Methodism in particular, raised the status of women.¹⁰⁰ It is difficult to distinguish whether thirty years of Christianity or some other factor, like reliable employment and a higher standard of living, were more responsible for the contrast between the status of women who lived at Norway House and those who lived in the hinterland, many of whom were Ojibwa and dependent on trading furs. The Company hired Aboriginal women at Norway House. Methodist missionary John Semmens mentioned that “semi-widows” (ex-wives) were often given preference in paid employment by the Company.¹⁰¹ Young himself hired an Aboriginal woman to snare rabbits for him. Young, however, credited Christianity with raising the status of Aboriginal women who settled in town. He recorded:

Very quickly after they become Christians does all this change. Then happy homes begin. Mother and wife and sister and daughter are loved and kindly cared for. When they become aged and feeble the warmest place in the little home assigned to them, and the choicest fish and the daintiest piece of game is given them.¹⁰²

The fur trade that had created Norway House was largely built on a credit system, with the necessities of the hunt normally advanced on credit in the spring, and paid off in the fall. But beginning in the 1850’s, free traders began to appear at Norway House, and factor George Barnston noted that even the “Christian Debtors” would sell to these independent traders instead of settling their debts with the Hudson’s Bay Company.¹⁰³ John McDougall, who arrived at Norway House as an adolescent in 1860, recorded that the chief employment was “boating for

¹⁰⁰ Cora Kermmenhoek, “The Church Should Have Championed the Woman’s Cause: Women’s Liberation and the Methodist Church in Canada 1874-1925”, Neil Semple (ed.) *Canadian Methodist Historical Society Papers* volume 9 (Toronto, 1993), page 149.

¹⁰¹ John Semmens, *The Field and The Work*, page 167.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Richard A. Enns, “The Fur Trade at Norway House,” page 86.

the Hudson's Bay Company and free traders."¹⁰⁴ During the 1860's and 1870's, due possibly to this new competition from the free traders, each person received from the Company "a cake, a small piece of pemmican and a plug of tobacco at Christmas."¹⁰⁵ Life seems to have been good at Norway House and the Rossville Mission. Richard A. Enns claims there is no reason to believe the Swampy Cree "became dependent or suffered materially as a result of their participation in the commercial fur trade at Norway House before 1875."¹⁰⁶

However there were warning signs that change was coming. In a letter to the *Christian Guardian* in 1860, the practical Reverend George McDougall warned that there was no extensive arable land at Rossville, and that all humans and animals depended on the fisheries, which would soon be destroyed by overfishing. He said that the Aboriginal people were gradually drifting south, and that one-third of the Rossville congregation had originally come from farther north.¹⁰⁷ Egerton R. Young recorded the unreliability of the food supply among families, particularly when they were out in the bush during the winter hunts. Many times, in his books, the missionary enters a wigwam or wooden house to find the family on the verge of starvation. In 1870, he wrote his superiors that trapping would soon cease and that thirty new farms had been marked out for the support of the population,¹⁰⁸ presumably former trappers.

Both James Evans and George McDougall warned that the Swampy Cree could never be expected to live on agriculture. Although Young praised the incipient fertility of the Prairies, a common projection in 1890 according to Canadian historian Doug Owsram, he always maintained that the Swampy Cree and Ojibwa living farther north must continue to live by fishing and

¹⁰⁴ John McDougall, *Parsons on the Plains*, page 66.

¹⁰⁵ Richard A. Enns, "The Fur Trade at Norway House", page 91.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, page 80.

¹⁰⁷ quoted in William Howard Brooks, "Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century", page 115.

¹⁰⁸ quoted in William Howard Brooks, page 135.

hunting.¹⁰⁹ In fact, the Norway House Cree were mainly labourers for the Hudson's Bay Company, the *de facto* government, which was about to transfer the administration of the entire Rupert's Land territory to the Canadian government.

The Youngs learned Cree at Norway House. Learning the Aboriginal languages was the ideal among most of the missionaries in the Northwest, and some Oblate Fathers became multi-lingual. The Methodists were the first denomination to teach literacy first (Cree using the syllabic alphabet), and English (or French) later. Egerton R. Young's practice when touring northern Manitoba was to preach, then spend several days teaching syllabics. As he recorded, "I left them with several dozen copies of the New Testament, hymns books and Catechisms, in their own language."¹¹⁰

Because their lives were itinerant, Methodist missionaries had to support local Christian leaders to assume pastoral duties during the missionary's long absences. Local leaders could preach and teach, but they could not administer the Lord's Supper, marry or bury parishioners. Egerton R. Young worked with Timothy Bear, William Memotas, Tom Mamanowatum and Edward Papenakis at Rossville. In *Three Boys in the Wild North Land: Summer*, Tom Mamanowatum leads the nightly Bible-reading and hymns, in Cree, of the York Factory brigade.¹¹¹ In the absence of an ordained missionary since he had moved to Berens' River, E.R. Young placed Edward Papenakis in charge of Norway House in 1874. In 1883 Papenakis wrote from his posting of Oxford House to the Reverend John Semmens:

Have had no word from Nelson River lately. The people there are different from when you were there. Most of them can read in Cree characters. Even old Friday, though lately baptized, can read. They are trying to serve God and walk in the ways of righteousness.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 185.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, page 123.

¹¹¹ Egerton R. Young, *Three Boys in the Wild North Land: Summer* (New York, 1896), page 37.

¹¹² John Semmens, *The Field and the Work*, page 189.

Papenakis was teaching and preaching to the Aboriginal people who lived around Nelson River in Cree, as he mentions their proficiency in Cree syllabics; he may not have been attempting to teach them English. Comments he made in 1888 show he was still preaching in Cree. Papenakis was promoted to local preacher from a position as interpreter, as fluency in Cree and English would be a pre-requisite. George Young recalls attending an “eloquent oration” given by a local preacher Daniel Betton that only E. R. Young and Mr. Sinclair understood, presumably because it was delivered in Cree.¹¹³

All of the Aboriginal leaders and clergy regularly translated religious material into Cree. Missionary efforts as linguists and translators were recognised by American ethnologist James Constantine Pilling, who listed portions of the Bible, and prayer- and hymn books available in the Algonquian languages in his 1891 *Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages*. Often first to be translated by Methodists were hymns, as hymns were an important method of transmitting theological ideas. Owen Chadwick stated: “Liturgy mattered less because the Methodists gave hymnody to England.”¹¹⁴ Egerton R. Young and Steinheur clearly followed in this tradition, using Cree hymns.

In preaching and singing exclusively in Cree, Papenakis, Tom Mamanowatum and Daniel Betton may have been following an example set by the older Aboriginal missionaries from Ontario. The friendly Anglican missionary Smithhurst was scandalised when the Reverend Peter Jacobs, whom he invited to his pulpit, preached to his flock “in Indian” in 1840. The Reverend William Mason (later James Evans’ assistant, and after 1854 an Anglican clergyman at York

¹¹³ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 258.

¹¹⁴ Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church Volume I*, page 372.

Factory)¹¹⁵ wrote in 1841 of the Reverend Henry Steinheur: “He has translated the Liturgy which we use twice a day”¹¹⁶ presumably in the Cree translation. Methodist archivist John Maclean distinguished a member of Steinheur’s congregation as knowing portions of the English Bible by heart – which would suggest that Cree versions of the text were more common.

Because of their promotion of the Cree language, John Webster Grant and other historians have assigned a greater degree of respect for Aboriginal culture to the Methodist missionaries’ vocation. But if the Methodists were more open to Christianity in Cree from the point of view of preaching and education, they failed to follow through in the crucial area of supporting a new Cree leadership. In placing Edward Papenakis, and in his advancement of other Aboriginal class leaders, Egerton R. Young behaved as if he expected a new Aboriginal clergy to emerge from Norway House, as it had from the Rice Lake of his boyhood. Thomas Crosby also supported Aboriginal preachers, and in 1884 one-fifth of all Methodist Missionaries in British Columbia were Aboriginal.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately an ordained Aboriginal clergy did not emerge. The Aboriginal class leaders of Crosby and Young’s time never received the support given Peter Jones and Henry Steinheur a generation earlier in Ontario. The strict adherence to education prerequisites for ordination by the Canadian Methodist churches from the 1830’s appears to have been the main barrier. The distance from Victoria College and the cost of tuition may also have been a disincentive for potential Western Aboriginal students. Striking also was the absence of interested sponsors, such as Steinheur of Philadelphia, William Case and others who had paid the tuition of promising Aboriginal students earlier in the century. Interestingly, the mid-century African superintendents in the Protestant churches of Sierra Leone and

¹¹⁵ Michael Payne, *The Most Respectable Place in the Territory: Everyday Life in Hudson’s Bay Service York Factory, 1788 to 1870* (Ottawa, 1996), page 116.

¹¹⁶ John Maclean, *Vanguards of Canada*, page 107.

¹¹⁷ Margaret Whitehead, “‘Let the Women Keep Silent’ Women Missionary Preaching in British Columbia 1860s – 1940s”, page 128.

Yorubaland had been replaced by white leaders by the 1880's as well.¹¹⁸ This would suggest that increasing racism cannot be discounted as a factor as the nineteenth-century progressed, as first identified by Sylvia Van Kirk.

Without the full authority of the ordinand, the class leaders could not serve all the people's religious needs. On his tour of the missions around Lake Winnipeg in 1888, Superintendent James Woodsworth was met by several delegations, from Oxford House, Cross Lake and Nelson House, all pleading for missionaries and teachers, as they had only the native class-leaders of limited authority. Edward Papenakis pointed out to Woodsworth the inconvenience of not being able to marry couples.¹¹⁹ The *Canadian Methodist Magazine* commented on the unprecedented deficit of ministers in 1888.¹²⁰ Papenakis was eventually ordained, rather grudgingly it seems, on the basis of his service, and the needs of the Church.

It would take nearly a hundred years for a Christian Cree to be elected to the top leadership position in the successor church to the Methodist tradition. In 1992, the Right Reverend Stan McKay from Fisher River was elected Moderator of the United Church. Fisher River was the community founded by the Christian Swampy Cree upon the dissolution of Rossville.

Three children were born to the Youngs in Manitoba: Eddie, Lillian and Nelly. According to *Algonquin Indian Tales*, the fictionalised biography of the two surviving children, the children learned Cree as quickly as they learned English. They had a carefree childhood with their Cree nanny, Mary Gibb. They ran their own dog trains, played pranks and visited elders to beg for stories, dressed in the deerskin clothes Mary made them.

¹¹⁸ Andrew F. Walls, "British Missions", *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era*, page 162.

¹¹⁹ John Maclean, *Vanguards of Canada*, page 233.

¹²⁰ Doug Owsram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900* (Toronto, 1980), page 147.

Egerton R. Young began a journal, very different from his official reports. The Rossville – Berens' River journal is not long, and is obviously a notebook for non-work related musings. It contains a few quasi-anthropological entries, many beginning to be shaped into stories. There are anecdotes about camping on the ice, celebrating Christmas, bear stories, and two pages on missionary James Evans. There is a description of all the fur-bearing animals of the territories, and copies of letters to supporters in Montreal and Ontario.

Among the regular events of this community, Egerton R. Young seems to have particularly enjoyed the annual New Year's Feast at Norway House. Despite its likely Scottish roots, he described it as a Cree tradition that had been adopted by the missionaries. It was a community effort, preceded by months of collecting game, which was frozen. Eight hundred to a thousand people participated in the feast that was held in the Church building:

According to seniority the tables were filled, and the feast began as soon as the "Grace before Meat" had been sung. Mrs. Young had her own long table, and to it she invited not only the Hudson's Bay Company's people, but as many of the aged and worthy from among the poor Indians as we wished specially to honour. Sometimes we filled one table with wild pagans who had come in from some distant forest home, attracted by the reports of the coming great feast. Through their stomachs we sometimes reached their hearts, and won them to Christ.¹²¹

Speeches were given on reviewing the past year, on hunting and fishing, on potential Treaty matters, and on religious subjects. "Some were bright and witty, and were received with laughter and applause. Others were of a serious, religious character, and they were equally welcome, and touched responsive hearts."¹²²

As soon as he and Elizabeth were settled at Rossville, Young set out by canoe to visit Oxford House and Nelson House, between Lake Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay.¹²³ Eventually, his

¹²¹ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 70.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1122.

circuit enlarged so that: “it extended irregularly north and south over five hundred miles, with a width in some places of over three hundred. I travelled over it in a birch canoe, and in winter with my dog-trains.¹²⁴ Young determined that he would have to be on the move most of the winter “if those who longed for the Word of Life were to be visited.”¹²⁵ He therefore put together his own dog team of Newfoundland and St. Bernard dogs, with the financial assistance of patrons in Montreal and Hamilton. Young enjoyed most of the outdoor activities his missionary life afforded (although he told anecdotes about being a poor shot), but it was really in driving a dog-team that he seems to have come into his own. He truly loved dogs. In four rather stiff books of working sermons the most original image includes a dog. In “Thy Love to Me Was Wonderful” he described the human urge, despite our fallen nature, to love: “it matters not who, or what it is, though but the dog that barks and bounds, and wheels in joyous welcome on our return, ‘the first to welcome, the foremost to defend’.”¹²⁶

Young’s enthusiasm for driving a dog-team unleashed his creativity, and these happy adventures are the meat of the series of missionary books he wrote, based on lectures he gave to raise money for missions. Even his biography of James Evans had a long digression on driving dog-teams. It is not unlikely that his success in popularizing his vocation rode on the backs of those sled-dogs.

In April of 1869, the anti-French newspaper the *Nor’wester* announced that the Dominion government would be purchasing Rupert’s Land from the Hudson’s Bay Company.¹²⁷ The Ontario immigrants celebrated. Métis fears that they would not be a part of the new government, and that their traditional land tenure and way of life would be lost were compounded by the anti-

¹²⁴ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 90.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, page 93.

¹²⁶ Egerton R. Young, “Thy Love to Me Was Wonderful”, in “Sermons Book III”, UCA, unpaginated.

¹²⁷ Maggie Siggins, *Riel*, page 96.

French rhetoric of the Canadian Party, the lack of official announcements or consultations, and the appearance of surveyors staking out square townships on the narrow river-front lots claimed by the Métis. On November 2, Louis Riel and forty Métis men captured Lower Fort Garry, without firing a shot.¹²⁸ Keeping the appointed Lieutenant Governor (whose authority did not begin for another month) at the American border, Louis Riel formed a provisional government for Red River, or Manitoba as he was already calling it. All regular business of the Company at the Fort ceased. At Rossville, Egerton R. Young did not get any mail or provisions that fall and was reduced, with his family, to eating the hindquarters of a lynx. During this difficult time, the family adopted a teen-aged boy from Nelson River, who had been crippled in a hunting accident and could not expect to support himself. Pe-pe-qua-na-pu-a, or Sandy, lived with the Youngs until they moved to Berens' River. At that point, Sandy returned, as a Christian, to Nelson River.¹²⁹

George Young was in the thick of things at Red River, and both pleaded for the life of, and ministered last rites to, Thomas Scott, who was imprisoned and executed by Riel's men at Fort Garry. Later historians have concluded that Scott could be "foul-mouthed, bigoted and outrageously abusive."¹³⁰ However, in his autobiography, George Young dedicated the rest of his life to clearing the Ontario Orangeman's name.

Egerton R. Young and his supervisor had different interpretations of the situation of the Métis. In his autobiography, *Manitoba Memories*, George Young had sharp words for those "of the milk and water class" who only speak of "the troubles" rather than calling the incident an organised rebellion.¹³¹ He and his son both served in the Pembina militia.¹³² For George Young,

¹²⁸ Ibid., page 109.

¹²⁹ Egerton R. Young, *Indian Life in the Great Northwest* (London, n.d.), page 49.

¹³⁰ Maggie Siggins, *Riel*, page 159.

¹³¹ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 100.

any Métis grievances were overshadowed by the treason of armed rebellion. He was most indignant at the lenient treatment accorded Riel and Lépine.¹³³ On the other hand, Egerton R.

Young respected the Métis who:

have some of the most aristocratic names of France, and profess to have in their veins some of the best blood of some of the noblest families of that old historic country...[They are] vastly superior to the Indian tribes around them, with whom they have become allied by marriage. The word 'Métis' is the one used by themselves to designate the children of these peculiar marriages.¹³⁴

Unlike George Young, he blamed the rebellion on government actions and racism from the Ontario settlers:

The news of the Riel Rebellion, a few years ago, suddenly brought into prominence the fact that there existed in the heart of this American continent a proud, high-spirited people of mixed Indian and French origin. Of that war and its causes I am not now going to write. However, it was very evident that 'someone had blundered'....the Métis was at first treated with scant courtesy by the never overpolite incrowding English-speaking immigrant, who looks upon his poor attempts at farming with disgust, and listened to his *patois* with contempt.¹³⁵

"Someone had blundered" is a paraphrase of William Francis Butler's expression "someone had bungled," by which Butler meant that the Imperial and Dominion governments had not consulted the Métis concerning the transfer. The phrase appeared in his popular memoir of travels through the Northwest, *The Great Lone Land*. Butler's phrase was such a well-known summation of the events, that a surveyor involved in Riel's second rebellion published his field diary as *Reminiscences of a Bungle by one of the Bunglers*.¹³⁶ However it suggests that Young was aware of Butler's opinion and may have read his book. Chapter IV will suggest that Young, in

¹³² Ibid., page 220.

¹³³ Ibid., page 231.

¹³⁴ Egerton R. Young, *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires* (Toronto, 1893), page 61.

¹³⁵ Ibid., page 60.

¹³⁶ R.C. MacLeod, (ed.) *Reminiscences of a Bungle by one of the Bunglers and Two other Northwest Rebellion Diaries* (Edmonton, 1983).

fact, used it as a model for his own. In a later book for children, Young described Riel as a “bright, clever lad [who became] a born agitator.”¹³⁷

Egerton R. Young clashed with his supervisor on another important matter as well, and that was the degree of material assistance the missionary should provide his charges. He was considered too generous. Upon visiting Egerton R. Young at Berens’ River, George Young wrote: “In my judgment our missionaries will have to insist on a little more self-help among them”.¹³⁸ Young’s theological ideas on the matter will be dealt with in Chapter III.

These clashes may prove a clue as to why Young left missionary work in Manitoba in 1876, and judged that he was offered only unsatisfactory parishes afterwards. He wrote kindly of George Young in his first books and in a surviving letter from 1873. However, George Young seems to have supported John McDougall’s opinion of *By Canoe and Dog Train* and *By Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*, as he called Young’s lectures and books “extravagant and imaginative.”¹³⁹ These were grave insults from a fellow nineteenth-century Canadian Methodist. Thereafter Egerton R. Young dropped all mention of George Young from his writing.

Morley Punshon, the British Superintendent of Canadian missions, visited Manitoba in 1871.¹⁴⁰ He was known as a great orator, and had raised money for missions preaching and lecturing throughout Britain in the 1860’s.¹⁴¹ Egerton R. Young recorded:

One evening, when walking in the garden of my beloved chairman, Rev. George Young D.D. at Winnipeg, Dr. Punshon put his arm around my neck and said, in his pleasant way, “Egerton, I want you to come to England, and tell our people some of those beautiful things about the Indians...in the meantime I want you to write some accounts and stories of the work among these Cree Indians, and send it by mail to ...one of our missionary periodicals.”¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Egerton R. Young, *Indian Life in the Great Northwest*, page 19.

¹³⁸ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 300.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, page 304.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, page 207.

¹⁴¹ Rupert Eric Davies, *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain vol. 4* (London, 1988), page 129.

¹⁴² Egerton R. Young, “A criticism reviewed by the author and Wigwams defended”, John McDougall, “*Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*”: *A Criticism*, page 20.

In fact, he was already writing and publishing. In 1869, Egerton R. Young had received a letter of censure from Superintendent Enoch Wood for sending copies of “what he writes to the Mission Rooms to any of his friends; for they are given to publishers of local papers, and have anticipated what we had prepared for our own publication.”¹⁴³ At this point, Young and his friends obviously considered an unadulterated account of his success in converting Aboriginal people to be of interest to people in Ontario.

Young continued his outreach to distant posts, leaving Elizabeth in authority at Norway House for six weeks at a time. As he explained,

There was a great deal to do at the Home Mission, but the number of good, earnest Christians was increasing; and Mrs. Young, with the interpreter and schoolmaster, and the strong band around them, could get on with the work so grandly, I kept on the move among the outside pagan tribes as much as possible.¹⁴⁴

Young seems to have been a popular visitor. Once a deputation of Aboriginal men who had never had a missionary but were literate in the syllabic alphabet, travelled thirteen days to Rossville to invite him to come and preach east of Lake Winnipeg.¹⁴⁵

In 1872, John Semmens, originally a miner from Cornwall, Ontario,¹⁴⁶ was sent to assist Young. The Youngs were very glad for the company, and Semmens spoke very highly of Young in his own memoir, *The Field and the Work*. They often travelled together. John Semmens seems to have been badly treated by George Young, despite his talents for building up congregations among the new immigrants in Winnipeg, and was offered nothing but a succession

¹⁴³ William Brooks, “Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century”, page 162.

¹⁴⁴ Egerton R. Young, *Indian Life in the Great Northwest*, page 38.

¹⁴⁵ Egerton R. Young, *Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*, page 105.

¹⁴⁶ William Brooks, “Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century”, page 328.

of poor parishes. William Brooks claims, on this basis, that the chairman was capable of vindictive action.¹⁴⁷

In March 1873, Egerton R. Young formally asked to spend the winter in Ontario, and then to be moved to Berens' River.¹⁴⁸ John Ryerson had recommended that a mission be established at Berens' River as early as 1854. Young was assigned to develop the mission¹⁴⁹ in 1873. Elizabeth Bingham Young travelled south to Red River in July for a holiday before the move, in an open skiff, in advance of Egerton. Their five-year old daughter died on the trip. "Darling Nelly" was buried in the Anglican churchyard at Red River.¹⁵⁰ From there, Elizabeth and the two surviving children returned to Ontario for the year.

Young left Manitoba in September 1873 to attend a meeting of the General Board of Missions in Peterborough, Ontario. He was assigned, as was the custom for missionaries on furlough, to a local speaking tour to raise money for missions. Young was accompanied by the Reverend Thomas Crosby, who was on furlough after twelve years as a missionary among the Ankemenum on the Pacific Coast. Crosby recorded:

At the request of the Board, Mr. Young and I together visited most of the leading cities between Quebec and Windsor, Ontario, in the interest of the mission work. The results were most encouraging. The whole Canadian Church became aroused. The meetings were carried on in the old campaign style. We generally conducted the regular services on Sunday and held week evening rallies at each center. The association of Mr. Young and myself was pleasing to both of us and to the people, as the difference in our fields of labor offered a variety of interest.¹⁵¹

Crosby recorded the names of leading citizens and patrons of missions who attended the meetings in Montreal, Hamilton, and Kingston. Among them were Senator and Mrs. W.E.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pages 328-331.

¹⁴⁸ Egerton R. Young, "Journal Rossville and Berens' River 1868-1876", UCA, unpaginated.

¹⁴⁹ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1122.

¹⁵⁰ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 46.

¹⁵¹ Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down the North Pacific Coast By Canoe and Mission Ship* (Toronto, 1914) page 28.

Sanford of Hamilton, who, at E.R. Young's request had bought and shipped him two Newfoundland dogs, Jack and Cuffy. The tour raised twenty thousand dollars for the Society.

Crosby insisted that:

We not only had good success with regard to finances, but the services were often of great spiritual power and blessing. Souls were converted, and many decided to devote their lives to God's service at home or in the mission fields. These volunteers were not confined to the Methodist Church.¹⁵²

Among the list of men and women who stated that their first missionary impulse was felt during this campaign, Crosby included the Reverend H. J. Robertson, who became a prominent Presbyterian leader in Winnipeg. Crosby also met and married his wife during the tour.

On their return from furlough, the Youngs were assigned to develop the mission at Berens' River. Berens' River, with its "hard-hearted and long-neglected Salteaux,"¹⁵³ was a very different place than the settled Rossville. It was mostly a meeting place for Ojibwa families who lived scattered throughout the surrounding bush. On his tour of the missions in 1874, George Young described Berens' River as follows:

Each Sabbath service is conducted in the Tabernacle at 11 a.m., in Indian, through an interpreter, and at 6 p.m. at the fort, in English. Class and prayer-meetings and a Bible-class are conducted in the afternoon or during the week. At the three services I attended the congregations were very encouraging – about twenty received the Sacrament and three were baptized.¹⁵⁴

While in Berens' River, Young continued to travel out to meet other Aboriginal people who had not been Christianized. On a journey to Sandy Bar (Whitemud) 100 miles south of Berens' River, he was surprised to meet many people he had known at Norway House:

I met a very warm welcome from these people. The greater part of them were Indians I had met in other years. Many were from Norway House. To this place

¹⁵² Ibid., page 31.

¹⁵³ John Semmens, *The Field and the Work*, page 28.

¹⁵⁴ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 301.

they had come, attracted by the stories of its valuable fisheries and productive soil. So rapidly had the Mission at Norway House increased that fish and game were beginning to fail.¹⁵⁵

George McDougall's predictions were being realized.

An even greater hardship was on the horizon. Beginning in 1870, smallpox gradually made its way north from the American plains, exterminating whole communities. When George McDougall heard of the approach of the disease he wrote, "If God does not avert the calamity, we shall see suffering greater than ever witnessed in this country."¹⁵⁶ According to the senior McDougall, nearly half the Blackfoot and Stoney nations had perished by the fall of 1870. McDougall himself lost three daughters.¹⁵⁷ A general ban on travel into the Saskatchewan country was enacted, but Mr. Stewart of the Company asked Egerton R. Young to enquire if there were Christian Indians at Norway House who might risk running supplies in to the white settlements that were in danger of starving. Egerton R. Young's recruitment speech is a snapshot of his theology and his attitudes towards Aboriginal people:

I know your race on this continent has not always been fairly treated; but never mind that. Here is a grand opportunity for you to do a glorious act, and to show to the world and to the good Lord, Whose children you are, that you can make sacrifices and run risks when duty calls, as well as the whites can.¹⁵⁸

However, it turned out to be the measles that was the "strange new disease that terrified the people"¹⁵⁹ at Berens' River and among the surrounding nations one winter. The Youngs turned the mission buildings and a buffalo leather tent into a hospital. Elizabeth served as nurse and Young as grave-digger. Using his season's supplies of beef, mutton and rice to make soup,

¹⁵⁵ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 168.

¹⁵⁶ quoted in James Ernest Nix, *Mission Among the Buffalo: The Labours of the Reverends George M. and John C. McDougall in the Canadian Northwest, 1860-1876* (Toronto, 1960), page 61.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, page 65.

¹⁵⁸ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 202.

¹⁵⁹ Egerton R. Young, *On the Indian Trail*, page 142.

and “with heaven’s blessing on our efforts, we were successful in bringing about the recovery of every case under our immediate care.”¹⁶⁰

In June 1874, the Christian Cree at Norway House wrote Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris in Winnipeg that their employment as trippers to York Factory was about to cease, and that they would be without work.¹⁶¹ The Hudson’s Bay Company was abandoning the centuries-old route through Hudson Bay to England and would, in the future, be using steamers to connect with the road from Winnipeg to St. Paul, Minnesota. The Cree therefore asked the governor to come to Norway House and make a treaty with them.¹⁶² Richard Enns suggests that, to the Cree, this “treaty was seen as a document that was designed to deal with future contingencies.”

Lieutenant Governor Morris arrived in Norway House to negotiate Treaty 5 in September 1875. Each Indian was to receive five dollars a year (headman and chiefs \$15 and \$25 respectively), and clothing every three years. Each family of five was to be given 160 acres of land, and schools would be established. A one-time payment of farm animals, implements and tools, and \$500 annually to buy ammunition and twine would be made. The right to hunt, fish and trap subject to undefined government regulations was included. The treaty was discussed and signed in one day, on September 24, 1875.¹⁶³

With the employment gone, the community at Norway House broke up. The Christian Indians asked to move to Grassy Narrows, but were refused by Morris, and instead they accepted a reserve at Fisher River. E. R. Young was disheartened and surprised by this news. He copied into his journal a letter he wrote from Berens’ River on October 9, 1875:

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., page 144.

¹⁶¹ Richard A. Enns, “The Fur Trade at Norway House 1796-1875”, page 111.

¹⁶² Ibid., page 119.

¹⁶³ Ibid., page 106.

The “Queen’s Man”, as they call the governor, has come and gone. A treaty was made with them. A fine reserve, twelve miles square, has been marked out for them. Our Mission property, on a fine, larger piece of land (say 160 acres) has been specially marked out as centre. It has been deeded to the Methodist Church of Canada.

Provision is made for the coming of a hundred and fifty families to settle here within two years. I was confident that all our surplus Norway House Indians would settle here. However, word has just arrived that some of them are to go to Fisher River, a place about seventy miles from here, on the western side of Lake Winnipeg. The reason for the whole not coming here seems to be the fear that this Reserve would be over-crowded, as a larger number of the Indians in the country east of this are to come down from the interior and make this place their home.

They are mostly pagans, and of course a grand field for usefulness will be before the one whose work it will be to point them to Christ crucified. Still, I must confess I am somewhat disappointed, as I had so set my heart upon seeing all of our own people who left Norway House coming here.¹⁶⁴

The Youngs had been witnesses at the signing of Treaty 5.¹⁶⁵ Early Methodist historians like William Gunn assigned the missionaries great credit for witnessing treaties, suggesting that their presence as advisors and intermediaries prevented bloodshed.¹⁶⁶ However, the events that followed the treaty suggest that E.R. Young may not have been the powerful, fully-briefed intermediary Gunn envisioned. In 1902, Young suggested in *My Dogs in the Northland* that his influence was limited to persuading the Cree that there was no point in requesting free passes on the railway.¹⁶⁷

Life with a growing family at Berens’ River strained Mrs. Young’s health and posed other problems as the eldest son approached school age.¹⁶⁸ Young’s state of mind in 1876 may have been reflected later in the novel *Oowikapun, or How the Gospel Reached the Nelson River Indians* in which the missionary suggests that life was just too hard: “No wonder men quickly

¹⁶⁴ Egerton R. Young, “Journal Rossville and Berens’ River 1868-1876,” unpaginated.

¹⁶⁵ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1122.

¹⁶⁶ William T. Gunn, *His Dominion*, page 143.

¹⁶⁷ Egerton R. Young, *My Dogs in the Northland* (Toronto, 1903), page 65.

¹⁶⁸ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1122.

broke down and had to retire from such work. The prisoners in the jails and penitentiaries of the land live on much better fare than did these heroic men and their families.”¹⁶⁹ In 1876, the Youngs left Manitoba, and returned to a succession of rural parishes in Ontario. A resentment of the penny-pinching rebukes when he had raised twenty thousand dollars for missions on tour in 1873-1874, an estrangement with George Young over the Rebellion, and disappointment over the breaking up of the model Christian community of Rossville may have all contributed to the decision.

The Youngs settled in Port Perry, Ontario. In an unpublished memoir written in his eighties, E. Ryerson Young (Eddie) recalled what a shock it was to go to school in Ontario, where the boys taunted his bi-cultural ways by calling after him: “Indian, Indian.”¹⁷⁰ Three years later, the Youngs moved to Colborne. In 1883, they moved to Bowmanville, and a few years later to Meaford.¹⁷¹ Young did not have a university degree, and, according to Neil Semple, late in the nineteenth century such ministers usually found the cosmopolitan better-paying urban circuits closed to them.¹⁷²

Egerton R. Young began to publish and lecture more frequently when he returned to Ontario. A long article called “The Indian Problem” was published in the *Canadian Methodist Magazine* in June 1885, and he lectured on the same topic in Toronto. In it he claimed: “our whole system of Reserves is a failure and a great mistake. My theory is the formation of a large Indian Province north and east of Lake Winnipeg.”¹⁷³ This idea will be explored further in Chapter IV.

¹⁶⁹ Egerton R. Young, *Oowikapun, or How the Gospel reached the Nelson River Indians* (London, 1895), page 128.

¹⁷⁰ Jennifer S.H. Brown, “A Cree Nurse in a Cradle of Methodism: Little Mary and the Egerton R. Young Family at Norway House and Berens River”, in Mary Kinneer, *First Days, Fighting Days: Women in Manitoba History* (Regina, 1987), page 32.

¹⁷¹ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1122.

¹⁷² Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, page 236.

¹⁷³ Egerton R. Young, “The Indian Problem”, n.d. article in scrapbook, UCA

In May 1887, the Reverend Mark Guy Pearse of Cornwall, England, visited Egerton R. Young at Meaford.¹⁷⁴ Pearse invited Young to England and urged him to apply his speaking and writing skills to the much-needed task of “renewing the popular interest in foreign missionary enterprise.”¹⁷⁵ Morley Punshon, who had planted this idea in Young’s mind, had unfortunately “died early”¹⁷⁶ in 1881. Pearse visited Young while on a lecture tour of Canada. During one sermon he called “Holiness, Perfection in Christ” in Saint John, New Brunswick, Pearse reminded parishioners that it was more important to let Jesus rule the heart than to chase after happiness.

Later that same year, the Reverend Hugh Price Hughes founded the city mission in the London slums that would make him the most famous of the British Social Gospellers. Mark Guy Pearse was his assistant for fourteen years. Phyllis Airhart maintains that the London mission inspired several similar missions to the urban poor in Canada, most famously the All People’s Mission in Winnipeg where worked J.S. Woodsworth, son of the Methodist Superintendent of Missions.

In 1888 and early 1889, Young made an extended lecture tour of the eastern United States.¹⁷⁷ This had become a popular method to raise money for missions. Some of Young’s personal heroes had toured Great Britain to raise money for Aboriginal missions: Peter Jones in 1831, John Sunday in 1837, and of course Morley Punshon, who encouraged Young. The Cambridge Seven who toured Great Britain in 1884 were, according to British historian Clifton Phillips, the first touring missionaries who became popular talking about personal sacrifices. Popular Scottish theologian Henry Drummond toured American university campuses talking

¹⁷⁴ Phyllis Airhart, *Serving the Present Age*, page 76.

¹⁷⁵ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1122.

¹⁷⁶ Rupert Eric Davies, *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London, 1988), page 129.

¹⁷⁷ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1122.

about the necessity of missions in 1885. Different recruiting tours in the United States and Canada led to the setting up of the Student Volunteer Movement for foreign missions in 1888.¹⁷⁸ During his tour, Young spent a “delightful and profitable hour” in discussion with President and Mrs. Cleveland, “talking about the best methods which ought to be adopted for the Indian’s progress in Christianity and civilization, both in the United States and Canada.”¹⁷⁹ From October of 1889 to June of 1890, he lectured in Britain. His lectures were illustrated with coloured lantern slides of Norway House.

Meaford seems to have been Young’s last pastorate. His touring successes in 1873-1874 and 1888-1890 appear to have convinced him to devote himself solely to lecturing and writing. He gave up being a small-town Methodist minister, expected to move every three years. He had personal letterhead commissioned on which he described himself as “Missionary, Lecturer, etc.” He published his first full-length book, *By Canoe and Dog-Train* in 1890. The introduction was by Mark Guy Pearse, who was also an author of inspirational articles and books. *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires* followed in 1893.

There followed an unpleasant exchange of letters in the pages of the *Christian Guardian* between John McDougall and Egerton R. Young, in which McDougall attacked the accuracy of some of Young’s description of Cree words and customs. The criticisms seem surprisingly minor now: that the illustrations do not show the Norway House people in their regular European dress, that the deadfall method of trapping lynx is incorrect, that Young was a spendthrift. The gist seems to be rather that McDougall felt compelled to defend his authority as a life-time missionary in the West: “I have travelled three times as many winters under more difficult

¹⁷⁸ Clifton J. Phillips, “Changing Attitudes in the Student Volunteer Movement of Great Britain and North America 1886-1928”, *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era*, page 132.

¹⁷⁹ Egerton R. Young, *Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*, page 125.

circumstances than Mr. Young. I have camped in the cold twenty times to his once.”¹⁸⁰

McDougall’s criticisms will be dealt with at greater length in Chapter IV.

Egerton R. Young answered from his 1894 lecture tour of England, Scotland, Paris and Ireland:

Mine is the joy and privilege of telling of His power to save, and thus advancing the great cause of missions, before from five to ten thousand different people every week. Missionaries have been before these churches from other lands for many years, and so the work among our American Indians is a new story. I am very happy in this work, and it is a great joy to make honourable mention, and to tell of the noble deeds of America’s Indian missionaries, from Eliot and Brainerd, to Case and Sunday and Evans, Steinheur and Crosby, Semmens and George McDougall.¹⁸¹

Young was traveling under a different financial arrangement in 1894 than he had on furlough in 1873. Missionaries were paid a pittance while on furlough. But as an independent contractor, Young was paid a fee, with the sponsoring church keeping the remainder of the gate receipts.¹⁸²

Young continued lecturing in England in 1895, following which the Youngs travelled quietly to France, Italy, Switzerland and around Great Britain. In the absence of any evidence of any other source of income, the travel suggests that lecturing provided the Youngs with the most comfortable income of their lives.

Young’s first novel, *Oowikapun, or How the Gospel Reached the Nelson River Indians* was published in 1895. He then wrote two books for boys: *Three Boys in the Wild North Land, Summer* in 1896, and *Winter* in 1899. A mixed collection of articles and other anecdotes rewritten for boys was published as *On the Indian Trail* in 1897. As well, he continued to contribute articles to the *Young People’s Weekly* of Chicago.

¹⁸⁰ John McDougall, “*Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*”: *A Criticism*, page 12.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, page 20.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, page 21.

Young toured and lectured through the eastern United States and England until the end of the century. Notes in his pocket diaries show that in the eastern United States he often lectured at YMCA's, Presbyterian and Methodist churches. In 1902, he crossed Canada, and in 1904, the Youngs did a tour around the world, crossing the United States to California, and then steaming to New Zealand and Australia. They arrived in Great Britain via the Mediterranean in 1905. In 1903, *My Dogs in the Northland* was published.

About this time, the Youngs moved to Elizabeth's hometown of Bradford. The *Bradford Witness* reported that Young preached a sermon on the topic of temperance in September 1906. Young continued to tour, lecturing about his experiences in Manitoba. According to his 1907 pocket diary, he lectured in Cambellton, New Brunswick in January, and toured through New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, giving lectures in churches until May 1907. In November and December he lectured throughout southwestern Ontario: Hamilton, Ingersoll, Port Elgin, Southhampton, Paris, Fenwick, Dunnville, and Norwich.

In February 1907, Young became briefly famous as *The Independent* accused Jack London of plagiarising *My Dogs in the Northland* for his book *The Call of the Wild*, published to great acclaim and financial success in 1903. Identical passages were printed side by side. Small articles making the charge were reprinted in, among others, the *Toronto Star*, the *Chicago Evening Post* and the *New York Times*. In the interview in *The Independent*, Jack London admitted the plagiarism, but excused it as the creative use of non-fiction. Young never pursued the matter beyond one letter to Jack London. Young's publisher was cold and unhelpful when Elizabeth Bingham Young tried to pursue financial compensation after Young's death.

In 1908 Young wrote: “Very busy all this month of January on my new book: ‘The Evangelization of the Indians’.”¹⁸³ This long work, his last, has never been published. It attempts a history of the evangelisation of the entire north half of the continent, dealing with Acadia, early Quebec and Ontario, British Columbia, the independent republic founded by the Choctaws and Cherokees in Oklahoma, the Quakers in Alaska and others. The book is founded on the premise that the gospel of Christ was the greatest gift anyone could have given Aboriginal people. It is completely different in subject matter from any of his published works and much more sombre in tone. The source of this change will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Late in January, and throughout February of 1909, Young lectured in New York State: Buffalo, White Plains, two full weeks in New York City, and Albany. A newspaper announcement stated: “A Trip by Dog team and Canoe into the Haunts and Homes of the Indians. One hundred and five views will be shown by the Speaker”. In November, he was in Hartford and New Haven, in Connecticut. His pocket diary included addresses of people who wished to order his books, details of royalty payments, and traveling expenses. It was a punishing schedule for a man in his late sixties, and may suggest that book royalties never provided a sufficient income for Young to give up lecturing. On January 1909 he recorded from New York City: “Left in a gold Automobile...”

Egerton R. Young died October 5, 1909 in Bradford at the age of sixty-nine. He was buried in Bowmanville,¹⁸⁴ not far from the Rice Lake community that had provided inspiration throughout his life.

Young’s eldest son, the Reverend E. Ryerson Young, became a member of the Toronto Conference of the Methodist Church. Eddie wrote fanciful short stories about hearty Christian

¹⁸³ Egerton R. Young, “1908 Diary”, UCA.

¹⁸⁴ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1122.

ministers in lumber camps and mining towns, somewhat like Ralph Connor's stories.¹⁸⁵ Eddie's son, the Reverend H. Egerton Young, served as a United Church missionary at God's Lake, in northern Manitoba in the 1930's, and was still living, in 1994, in Toronto.¹⁸⁶

Lillie married R.N. Helme of Lancaster where she lived from about 1890. Florence married the Reverend A .B. Fitzgerald and lived in New Jersey from about 1907. Elizabeth Bingham Young survived her husband by more than twenty years, living with Lillie.¹⁸⁷ His daughters' children include the Manitoba historian Jennifer S.H. Brown who states: "in personal life, he was an affectionate, beloved, and warmly remembered husband, father and grandfather."¹⁸⁸

In conclusion, Egerton R. Young grew up in a itinerant Wesleyan milieu with a tradition of Yankee-inspired radical evangelicalism, Aboriginal mission work and temperance. He grew up among women with an active Wesleyan vocation who preached and taught. Young seems to have consciously copied this tradition in choosing to serve as a missionary on Lake Winnipeg. Throughout his life Young promoted the reputation of his father's colleagues, particularly James Evans and Aboriginal colleagues such as Henry Steinheur. He also promoted Aboriginal class leaders in Manitoba, although apparently only one, Edward Papenakis, was ever ordained. In 1873-1874, in the company of the Reverend Thomas Crosby, he completed a highly successful preaching tour that resulted in many conversions and much financial assistance for missions.

David Marshall writes that the missionaries in the west tended to be conservative theologically, and that a high number were sons of the parsonage. This characterization fits Egerton R. Young very well. However, also according to David Marshall, these ministers were

¹⁸⁵ The short stories by E. Ryerson Young in *Heroes of the North Shore* feature a harmonica-playing missionary among lumbermen.

¹⁸⁶ Jennifer Brown, personal correspondence, February 20, 1994.

¹⁸⁷ Harcourt Brown, *Letters*, page illegible.

¹⁸⁸ Jennifer Brown, *DCB*, page 1122.

marginalized by a church that believed increasingly in pragmatic teaching and medical missions, founded on the Social Gospel. Yet Young also believed in pragmatic assistance. Chapter III will consider whether “good works” were a break from his Wesleyan theology, or a continuation. It could be said that Young became estranged from the institution of the Methodist Church of Canada, as he was resentful of the parishes offered him and, after his successful lecture tour of 1890, gave up active ministry. However his perceived ill-treatment seems more likely to be related to his differences with his Chairman over the legitimacy of Métis grievances, and his generosity to the Cree and Ojibwas, his lack of a university education, and the criticism of his books. There is no evidence that Young and the Methodist Church parted over theological issues, in particular the incompatibility of traditional mission and the church’s drift towards secularisation as suggested by Marshall.

At his death, Egerton R. Young was working on a large history, which was a re-statement of his belief in the value of his missionary vocation. An examination of his life does not support the distinctions in doctrines and claims of secularization made by secularist historians such as David Marshall.

CHAPTER III - THE MISSIONARY

Fundamental to any judgment as to how to classify an individual's theological position and if his faith endured is an examination of his religious ideas. This chapter will divide Young's theological ideas into three broad categories and compare them to ideas judged similar. Young claimed all his life to be a Wesleyan, so it makes sense to compare his ideas to those of John Wesley, and to those of Young's Wesleyan contemporaries. To address the uniqueness of his position as a missionary, his theological ideas about Aboriginal people will be compared with those of contemporary missionaries in the Canadian West. Third, newer ideas that Young adopted from the controversies of his time will be specifically compared with his Wesleyan theology to determine if they compromised it. Young's non-theological ideas are dealt with in Chapter IV. By comparing the ideas of Egerton R. Young to Wesley, Young's colleagues and modern influences, this chapter intends to test the applicability of the categories of doctrine established by Canadian historians involved in the secularization versus continuity debate.

Egerton R. Young produced three separate bodies of work that demonstrate his theological ideas. The first consists of four unpaginated, undated books of sermons, which he began writing in the early 1860's when he was on probation in Ontario, and to which he added until the mid 1870's. The second includes his twelve published books, the first four of which are based on lectures he gave while touring extensively from 1888 to 1909. The third source is a collection of chapters that he intended to shape into a history of the evangelisation of the entire north half of North America, dealing with Acadia, early Quebec and Ontario, British Columbia, and in particular the great, tragic story of the independent republic founded by the Choctaws and Cherokees in Oklahoma.

Egerton R. Young and the theology of John Wesley

Egerton R. Young was an ordained minister in the Protestant denomination founded by John Wesley, who lived from 1703 to 1791 in England. During Wesley's lifetime, Methodism was a revival movement inside the Church of England. American religious historian Albert Outler has described Wesley as an "Anglican folk theologian" because he was not particularly original, did not intend to found a new church, and rarely contradicted any Anglican official doctrine. Rather, Wesley's genius was in the clarity with which, in his sermons, he proposed that the quality of an individual's relationship with God was the heart of faith. Wesley lived in a time of broad and continuous religious debate in England, and he trod a pragmatic and tolerant middle ground through the religious positions of his age. Calvinists (represented by Puritan ideas in America), with what Lord Acton called "the stringent logic of their system"¹, emphasized that the individual's eventual destination in eternity was pre-decided, and most people were the losers. Also significant were various Antinomian movements whose adherents believed their fervour released them from any need to follow a moral code of behavior, particularly around sexuality. Finally, nominal Christians (and atheists) followed the exciting ideas of the *philosophes* in France – that man was not so bad after all, and guided by reason, could build the good life in the here-and-now once the veils of superstition were ripped from his eyes.² Wesley borrowed from all of them, and from others, particularly an early German Protestant sect whose members he met in Georgia; in England they were called the Moravians. He said he was preaching "plain truth for plain people"³ and that "This alone is religion, truly so called..."

¹ Lord Acton, *Lectures on Modern History* (London, 1926), page 201.

² Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven, 1932), page 103.

³ John Wesley, *Works Volume I*, page 104.

righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”⁴ Wesley was famous for preaching a balance between faith and good works, or piety and philanthropy. On the Moravian model, Wesley organised Thursday evening sessions which he called classes, but which were a mixture of Bible study and support groups, led by experienced Christian women or men, called elders. Either ordained Anglican ministers or class elders who might feel the call were to travel around preaching, but were never to stay in one parish too long. Wesley never came up with a single doctrinal statement that a person must accept to be considered a Methodist, as did the Anglican, Baptist and Presbyterian churches. Rather, he indicated in his will that his first forty-four sermons should be regarded as the doctrinal basis of Methodism.

At the center of Wesley’s many ideas stands his strong belief in God’s personal presence, as the Holy Spirit, in the heart and will of each believer.⁵ Wesley’s originality was that he emphasized the importance of a personal relationship with God. He preached salvation by faith, an idea of Martin Luther’s,⁶ meaning that it was through this relationship that an individual would be forgiven his many sins and receive grace. The individual’s responsibility was to call on God, to pursue God, by means of prayer. Like Wesley, Egerton R. Young reminded his flock to “banish then, every thought of salvation by works.”⁷ He urged them to pursue God, to “enter upon his service with energy and zeal.”⁸

The key to the relationship with God was prayer, which Wesley called chief of the “ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men preventing, justifying or sanctifying grace.”⁹ Wesley stated that it was man’s duty to pray to God as a form of discipline, and to ask

⁴ Ibid., page 221.

⁵ Albert C. Outler, “Introduction”, John Wesley, *Works Volume I*, page 75.

⁶ John Wesley, *Works Volume I*, page 129.

⁷ Egerton R. Young, “Lay Hold Upon Eternal Life 1st Timothy IV.12”, “Book of Sermons III”, UCA, unpaginated.

⁸ Egerton R. Young “Acts XXIV 25,” “Book of Sermons III.”

⁹ John Wesley, *Works Volume I*, page 381.

for assurances of pardon. “Prayer is the birth-cry of the soul”¹⁰ preached Egerton R. Young. Wesley preached that one was to pray to be relieved of sin and to be inspired to work for the glory of God. However, one could also pray for assistance that is more mundane. Young likewise asked, “in answer to those prayers how often has the arm of God been made bare on their behalf and they have been rescued from dangers or even death by divine intervention?”¹¹

Wesley believed that the actions of God could be discerned in the here-and-now. As early as the 1820’s, the Methodists had been mocked by that rationalist Anglican, the Reverend Sidney Smith, over their credulity in seeing the hand of God in every piece of good fortune. In the 1870’s, a debate began in Canadian periodicals over prayer:¹² could a prayer for a personal favour bring God to interfere in the world so as to counteract the “laws of nature”?

This providential view of the world was a firm belief of Young and other Methodist colleagues in the field. Young preached that prayers could bring travelers home safely in his 1860’s sermons. He showed his awareness of the prayer debate by placing one of his heroes, James Evans, in the traditionalist camp in his biography *Apostle of the North*; “Mr. Evans was a man who firmly believed in the supernatural in religion.”¹³ In the 1908 manuscript, Young was still using examples of the efficacy of prayer in bringing divine intervention. Young’s missionary colleague in British Columbia, the Reverend Thomas Crosby, demonstrated a similar belief in God’s influence. He recorded several stories of dreadful accidents visited upon those who broke the Sabbath.¹⁴

If and when God answered prayers, an individual might experience the terror and ecstasy of a conversion experience. Historians have disagreed on the necessity of the conversion

¹⁰ Egerton R. Young, “I Thessalonians V chapter 1 7 – Pray Without Ceasing”, “Book of Sermons I”.

¹¹ Egerton R. Young, “Romans VIII 26 & 27,” “Book of Sermons II,” unpaginated.

¹² Brian McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence* (Montreal and Kingston, 2001), page 157.

¹³ Egerton R. Young, *Apostle of the North*, page 143.

¹⁴ Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down the North Pacific Coast*, page 69.

experience to Wesley and early nineteenth-century Methodists. Maldwyn Edwards, a Methodist historian from Wales, suggested that Wesley received the Moravian version of the doctrine of justification by faith bound up with the expectation of a sudden conversion, and that their Moravian spiritual advisor Peter Böhler primed Charles and John Wesley to have their conversion experiences, just days apart.¹⁵ John Wesley's conversion experience occurred in 1738, and was recorded in his journal:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the *Epistle to the Romans*. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.¹⁶

Wesley preached repeatedly of the importance of coming to God, or being born again. However, his theology is concerned with two phases: justification (being pardoned by God) and sanctification (the long process of growing in grace till one is close to, or without, sin). The change in behavior over the long term is firmly established as just as important as any single event. Wesley also believed that God, through the Holy Spirit, could move among assembled people. Thus, without a parish, he followed the example of the great British preacher George Whitfield, and preached to outside gatherings. The Methodist multi-day camp meetings of early nineteenth-century Ontario were a continuation of this tradition. Mississauga leader Peter Jones recorded his conversion experience on the fifth day of a camp meeting held in Ancaster in 1823.¹⁷ It was common to experience sudden conversion as an adolescent or young person, and to wear that conversion as the mark of the proud believer. The Reverend George Young began his memoirs: "The two births of which I have been the subject occurred at the following dates;

¹⁵ Maldwyn Edwards, *Wesley and Early Methodism*, in *Religion and Revolution in Early Industrial England*, page 36.

¹⁶ quoted in James Downey, *The Eighteenth-Century Pulpit* (Oxford, 1969), page 193.

¹⁷ Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, page 58.

The first on the last day of the year 1821, and the second in October 1840.”¹⁸ Nathanael Burwash also referred frequently to his conversion as an adolescent.

There is some evidence that the necessity and meaning of a conversion experience in the religious life of an individual changed a great deal in the century between the deaths of John Wesley and E.R. Young. The often emotional conversions of the camp meeting had become something of an embarrassment for the Methodist Churches by mid-century, William Westfall suggests. The Reverend Salem Bland stated that the requirement for a sudden conversion experience had become an area of disagreement in the Methodist Church by the end of the nineteenth-century. Even the authoritative Egerton Ryerson stated in 1882 that: “No one from Wesley to the present day has ever insisted upon the necessity of sudden conversion; but he and his followers have recognised it as the true work of God when followed by the fruits of a true conversion.”¹⁹

Egerton R. Young never mentioned a conversion experience of his own in his books or sermons. He stated rather wistfully in *Apostle of the North*, possibly written for young people:

It is a grand thing to have a religious date in one’s history. To all this is not given. Multitudes of God’s dearest, grandest children know not the time or place when “He took their feet out of the horrible pit, and the miry clay, and set them upon a rock, and put a new song into their mouths”.²⁰

One newspaper interview quoted Young as saying that he had been converted to Christ at a very young age, but he never mentioned such an experience throughout his own writings. Was he mis-quoted? Marguerite Van Die has suggested that the pressure to demonstrate such an experience was such that Nathanael Burwash appears to have constructed a conversion

¹⁸ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 11.

¹⁹ Egerton Ryerson, *Canadian Methodism*, page 107.

²⁰ Egerton R. Young, *Apostle of the North*, page 16.

experience out of several different youthful spiritual experiences. Could Young have been bowing to the same pressure in this single interview?

In Young's published books, a conversion experience is preferable, but not necessary. *Indian Life in the Great NorthWest* consists of biographies of Christian Aboriginal leaders such as Maskepetoon. Most have traditional sobbing conversion experiences, but So-qua-a-tum, probably a Saulteaux, announces he is switching allegiances from the shaman to the missionary who nursed his small son back to health.²¹ Young's assistant and colleague John Semmens recorded an incident to demonstrate that the lack of a sudden conversion experience could occasionally blind the preacher to a person's worth. Semmens recorded his surprise at the great piety of Angus Pimastum, whom he and E.R. Young had met on the Churchill River in 1875: "He had been baptized and was called a Christian, though we did not regard him as having experienced a change of heart"²² (note the phrase from Wesley).

In an early sermon, Young mentioned that one can come to God either by a "new birth" or by adoption, when one is taken into the family and given a name. Either way, a convert must show signs of the Spirit according to Wesley's definition.²³ Young's reference to adoption probably meant baptism, when Aboriginal people usually assumed Christian names. According to Wesley, baptism was not equivalent to a conversion, being only, as the Book of Common Prayer said, the outward sign of an inward change.²⁴ Van Die suggests that Canadian Methodists became even more firm on this point in opposition to the mid-century Anglo-Catholic Oxford Movement, which argued for the regenerative powers of baptism.²⁵ Certainly Young considered Timothy Bear devout enough to be class leader among the Ojibwa, although he had not been

²¹ Egerton R. Young, *Indian Life in the Great NorthWest*, page 113.

²² John Semmens, *The Field and the Work*, page 60.

²³ Egerton R. Young, "John III 2", "Book of Sermons III."

²⁴ John Wesley, *Works Volume I*, page 381.

²⁵ Margaret Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind*, page 27.

baptised.²⁶ In an early sermon Young warned against depending on church sacraments: “We must not trust to our creed our church our praying friends... It is not a difficult matter to [?] whither or not we have an interest in our shepherds care; My sheep hear my voice. Do you?”²⁷ Young, like John Semmens and Egerton Ryerson, seems to have considered the fruits of the spirit to be a more reliable indicator of an individual’s relationship with God than a sudden conversion experience or the sacraments of the church, such as baptism. Wesley was quoted as an authority on this point. Whether this was indeed Wesley’s opinion, is a point on which historians on each side of the secularisation and continuity debate disagree strongly, in an echo of the quarrel between early twenty-first century liberal and evangelical Protestant churches over ownership of his authority.

John Wesley wrote frequently about the fruits of the spirit, both piety and philanthropy, or faith and good works. God working in one’s heart felt like: “the revelation of Christ in our hearts: a divine evidence or conviction of his love, his free, unmerited love to me a sinner, a sure confidence in his pardoning mercy, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost.”²⁸ A convert had to demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit working in his soul:

...lowliness of mind, in self-denial and mortification, in seriousness and composure of spirit, in patience, meekness, sobriety, temperance, and in unwearied restless endeavors to do good in every kind unto all men, to relieve their outward wants and to bring their souls to the true knowledge and love of God.²⁹

Young wrote of his satisfaction at the genuineness of the conversion of the Ojibwa at Nelson River in his official January 1869 report to the Missionary Society of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada:

²⁶ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-Train*, page 191.

²⁷ Egerton R. Young “Psalm XXIII,” “Book of Sermons I.”

²⁸ John Wesley, *Works Volume I*, page 405.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, page 176.

By the fall packet I wrote you an account of my summer visit to the Nelson River Indians, and the baptism of scores of souls. During the winter just closed I have been enabled to again visit that place, to endeavour to establish and confirm in the Faith those children of the forest who had at my previous visit so gladly and promptly accepted of salvation in the name of Jesus. I rejoice to be able to write that I found the most encouraging proofs of the genuineness of their conversion... After an absence of several months, I was cheered to meet them as sincere and firm believers in Christ. The conjuring tent was neglected, the magic drum was thrown away; and instead of sacrifices and incantation to the devil, from around many a camp fire and lodge in the forest, earnest and sincere prayers were being offered up to God in the all-prevailing name of Jesus.³⁰

Sometimes, a conversion would not last. Wesley devoted his forty-sixth sermon to the problem of “backsliders,” and mentioned them often. Likewise E.R. Young preached: “How hard it is for the backslider to find comfort and happiness in the world. Its fleeting deceitful pleasures are but husks and chaff and do not satisfy the cravings of the soul.”³¹

The nineteenth-century debate about the nature and necessity of a conversion experience was also influenced by a debate about the nature of childhood. By mid-century, John Wesley’s belief in the natural depravity of man began to clash with the middle-class Victorian sentimentalisation of childhood. Marguerite Van Die has demonstrated that there was a generation-long debate in the Methodist Church about the nature of children. Could they grow up in the church, the little innocents about whom the Victorians sentimentalised? Or should they be terrified with tales of their own sinful nature and imminent descent into hell and pressured towards a conversion experience? Young, by all accounts a fond family man, came down squarely on the side of the natural innocence of children. He wrote in his journal from Berens’ River that he comforted a man whose six children had all died in an epidemic in 1874: “They are

³⁰ Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, *Forty-Fifth Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Wesleyan Methodist Church In Canada* (Toronto, 1872), page xii.

³¹ Egerton R. Young, “The parable of the Prodigal Son Luke XV 11 to 32,” “Book of Sermons I.”

all there, for Jesus takes all the little ones to heaven.”³² He published a sentimentalised memoir about his two eldest surviving children at Norway House. In his story, two lovely missionary’s children, Sagasto and Minnehaha, are beloved and protected by the Cree among whom they circulate to hear legends and play.

Wesley believed that during his/her life span, the Christian grows in grace and holiness. In one famous sermon, he even claimed that a Christian can grow to such near-perfection as to be free from sin, though he seemed to qualify that to mean no *habitual* sins. Like most of Wesley’s ideas, it was not original; Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* was perhaps the most popular illustration of this idea. Wesley was more democratic about this Christian’s journey than the Puritans, and suggested that this personal progress in spirituality could be the trajectory of everyone’s life. There has been considerable contention, ever since, about what Wesley meant by holiness and perfection. Egerton R. Young was aware of the controversy when he stated in an early sermon:

That blessed state of holiness against which so many malignant shafts are hurled, from which so many shrink as unobtainable or irksome and unendurable, really consists only in an entire abstinence from what is degrading and sinful and a steady and constant pursuit of what is ennobling and delightful.³³

Young took particular pleasure in writing about individuals whom he met, particularly at Rossville/Norway House, whose lives reflected growth in grace and holiness. Of William Papenakis, who was a centenarian living in Norway House when Young arrived, he wrote: “He was not only a blessed Christian but a natural gentleman.”³⁴ Affection shines through his portrait of William Menotas:

one of the sweetest, purest Christians it ever was my lot to become acquainted with in any land....He was a very happy Christian. As he was a Local Preacher and Class Leader, I was much in his society, and I can say, as many others have

³² Egerton R. Young, “Journal Rossville and Berens’ River 1868-1876,” page 187.

³³ Egerton R. Young, “Acts XXIV 25,” “Book of Sermons III.”

³⁴ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 130.

said, that William since the day of his conversion was never heard to utter an unkind word about any one, or do anything that could give the enemies of the Lord Jesus an opportunity to scoff at his profession of loving the Lord with all his heart.³⁵

The purpose of preaching was another point in which Young's views were in accord with Wesley's. Wesley stated that the purpose of preaching was to bring others to conversion. The purpose of his weekly classes was careful and loving supervision, which would lead to lives of holiness. Following this model, Young set up classes at Norway House with great success, as he was able to assign elders from Norway House to other posts such as Nelson House and Fisher River. Whereas the necessity of weekly class attendance for Methodist membership had become a matter of debate in the cities of Ontario by the 1860's, it was unquestioned among the missionaries working in the West.³⁶ Robert Rundle had no luck in setting up any classes among the Aboriginal nations around Edmonton House in the 1840's, but as late as 1896, Superintendent Carman commented on the large number of Aboriginal people who attended weekly classes in British Columbia.³⁷

Conversion was important to John Wesley and Egerton R. Young because they both believed in the existence of a Day of Judgment after death. The biggest question in an individual's life was: "shall I be with the damned cast out or numbered with the blest?"³⁸ Young counselled his flock to pray for deliverance. In an early sermon given at Norway House, Young described a lake of fire, without any hope of an end to the misery, where partners in sin and

³⁵ Ibid., page 172.

³⁶ Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, page 230.

³⁷ Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down the North Pacific Coast By Canoe and Mission Ship*, page 393.

³⁸ Egerton R. Young, "Peter I, II verse, [sic]", "Book of Sermons I."

wickedness will turn on each other and where no minister will speak comforting words.³⁹ The next sermon in his working book of sermons warned:

And thus these followers of Voltaire and Fontaine like the Sadducees of old, scoff at an all wise and over ruling Providence forgetting that there is a retributive eternity, in which all will be rewarded or punished according to the deeds done in the body.... Let us stop and ponder over the solemn fact that perhaps there are some lost spirits in hell who are trembling lest we too should go there.⁴⁰

Despite these colourful images, Young admitted in another sermon to a more abstract concept of heaven. He listed as “idle surmisings” the ideas of an Aboriginal happy hunting ground, the Islamic heaven, the musings of Saxon warriors to whom heaven would provide the joy of drinking wine out of the skulls of their enemies, and the place where labour shall cease for the “downtrodden sons of Ham” [presumably Afro-Americans].⁴¹ During his lifetime, the existence of heaven, and in particular, hell, was a matter of debate in Canada and England. Although the conception of these places was becoming increasingly abstract, the idea of a retributive afterlife was tenacious. Henry Drummond referred to a retributive afterlife in his popular sermons.⁴² In his 1908 historical manuscript, Young referred to Moravian missionaries who “gained the martyr’s crown,”⁴³ an expression that refers to the greater glory in heaven awaiting those killed while preaching the Gospel. The retributive afterlife was banished around 1914: heaven by John Watson at Queen’s, according to Brian McKillop⁴⁴, and hell by the Reverend James Henderson at a series of sermons in Ottawa given mostly to grieving mothers of young dead soldiers, according to Salem Bland.⁴⁵

³⁹ Egerton R. Young, “Matthew XVI 26,” “Book of Sermons I.”

⁴⁰ Egerton R. Young, “Luke XV t.30.1,” “Book of Sermons I.”

⁴¹ Egerton R. Young, “Set your affections on things above Col III 2 verse,” “Book of Sermons III.”

⁴² Henry Drummond, *The Ideal Life* (Toronto, 1898), page 95.

⁴³ Egerton R. Young, “Chapter IX -The Moravians, Their work among the Indians 1735 –1759,” page 6.

⁴⁴ Brian McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence* (Toronto, 2001), page 215.

⁴⁵ Salem Bland, *James Henderson D.D.* (Toronto, 1926), page 165.

In 1905, the canine narrator of Young's *Hector, My Dog* pleaded for recognition of his immortality:

Since that day when there dawned on me, a young foolish dog, the knowledge that I had a sense or gift, call it what you may, that no man or woman had, I have often wondered why it should be, that we creatures thus gifted, even if we are defective in other ways, should be called mere brutes, and doomed to utter and complete extinction, while our masters, defective where we are gifted, but having as we also have, the power of intense and undying love, should alone have immortality in wider and grander surroundings. Surely it cannot be. That which is within us dumb creatures, call it spirit, if you will not let us call it soul, which can be loyal and true, and can trust and love even unto death, is surely not to be annihilated or even dissipated in immensity.⁴⁶

The idea that dogs might go to heaven is about the most radical theological idea Young ever expressed. He was a great dog lover, and might have found support for this idea among his Cree friends at Norway House, for Diamond Jenness recorded it as a common belief among the eastern Cree. However, it was still a retributive afterlife. For E.R. Young and John Wesley, the Day of Judgment was an event that would mark the end of historical time (and the world), which had begun, as described in the Bible, with creation. The Day of Judgment would see retribution handed out, and usher in the final triumph of the Kingdom of God. In his sermons, Egerton R. Young described the end of time as an imminent event adding urgency to a personal search for conversion. "Pay attention!"⁴⁷ he preached, and urged his flock to renew their prayers and efforts.

Wesley maintained that the Kingdom was not only a future event, but was also present in this world wherever the Gospel was preached.⁴⁸ According to William Westfall, this belief continued unchanged among the Victorians.⁴⁹ Young also saw the Kingdom in two places, in heaven and on earth. He preached of the gradual increase in the Kingdom; "The great multitude

⁴⁶ Egerton R. Young, *Hector, My Dog* (Boston, 1905), page ?.

⁴⁷ Egerton R. Young, "Behold he cometh with clouds Rev. 17", "Book of Sermons II."

⁴⁸ John Wesley, *Works Volume I*, page 225.

⁴⁹ William Westfall, *Two Worlds*, page 160.

is continually on the increase. The glorified company before the throne is innumerable and they are not confined to one sect, nation or tongue.”⁵⁰ In this case, those already before the throne are in heaven, and their increase is a sign of the imminence of the Final Day. Later in the same sermon, Young described the holy on earth, Luther and Wesley, as evidence that God was working in this world.⁵¹

William Westfall suggests that by the 1860’s, the Protestant churches in Canada pushed the Second Coming further into the future and suggested that it might be a more spiritual than physical change.⁵² By the time Young wrote his unpolished 1908 history manuscript, he had also distanced the Day of Judgment. In “Chapter Six - The Destruction of the Hurons – The Breaking up of Missions”, the Huron disaster is placed in a Biblical context, with Jesuit missionaries working, on an unspecified time-scale, to bring about the Kingdom of God. Young interrupts the flow of unattributed passages from Francis Parkman to say:

Thus as completely destroyed have been these Huron missions, as were blotted out of existence the seven churches of the Revelations. But as the latter, there are lessons to be learned by God’s people in all ages; so in the case of these Indian churches in the Huron wilderness, there is much for the thoughtful, devout student to ponder over. The bright light in the dark cloud of almost continuous disasters has been the heroic courage and constancy of the workers in the Field.⁵³

To Young, the Christian Muncseys who were massacred by settlers in retaliation for Pontiac’s uprising of 1763 were martyrs who could expect future rewards:

The recital of these dark deeds of treachery and bloodshed is saddening in the extreme. The only light in the cloud is the evidence of the marvelous results of the transforming power of the Gospel as seen in the conduct and heard in the utterance of the Christian converts. Even when being butchered in their little

⁵⁰ Egerton R. Young, “My Kingdom Come Matt VI 10th verse”, “Book of Sermons I.”

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² William Westfall, *Two Worlds*, page 185.

⁵³ Egerton R. Young, “Chapter VI - The Destruction of the Hurons – The Breaking up of Missions”, page 23.

civilized abodes they sang praises unto God, offering up prayers beseeching forgiveness for the enemies, and died as genuine Christian martyrs.⁵⁴

Young was still using a view of providential time to counteract the unending list of desecrations worked on the Aboriginal people by white greed and treachery. The view of white treatment of Aboriginal people as a cycle of treachery and violence repeated as America moved west was popularized by American author Helen Hunt Jackson.⁵⁵ However, Young's theological asides in this manuscript are infrequent and uncertain bright lights in a dark cloud. Would they have been strengthened in a completed book? However what is conspicuously lacking from the manuscript is either of the two beliefs that the late Victorians inserted into the greater gap caused by the distancing of the Day of Judgment – the idea of progress, or the idea that the Church should concentrate on bringing about the Kingdom of God on earth. Young's view of progress will be discussed in connection with his modern ideas in Chapter Four.

In demanding that the fruits of the Spirit work in one's soul, Wesley was staking his position in the controversy of whether one could be saved by good works alone. He based his answer on Jesus' response to his disciples' confusion over who was an authentic prophet or healer: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Wesley was siding with the traditional Anglican response that one is saved by faith, but adding his own emphasis that the fruits or proof of faith were to be found in holy living. For Wesley, this meant that withdrawing from the world as a hermit or monk was not a proof of faith. Wesley was reacting against the Calvinist and Puritan claim that there was no proof of faith, one had to spend one's life anxious about whether one was of the few elect, and no good works could influence that. The faith or good works controversy has continued unabated until our own time.

⁵⁴ Egerton R. Young, "Chapter IX - The Moravians", page 15.

⁵⁵ Helen Hunt Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor: The Early Crusade for Indian Reform* (New York, 1965) particularly the introduction.

Historian Kerry Abel has concluded after examining the 1830's debate among the Oblate Fathers about evangelising the Dene or teaching them to farm, that the mission context often brought the natural tension between faith and good works into sharp focus.⁵⁶ The choices made could have as much to do with practical denominational matters (such as money) as with theology. The question of how much to emphasise faith and how much good works represented a tension among the Methodists as well. Young's view caused tension with his supervisor. Young stated his theology of faith and good works thus:

It did seem such a mockery to offer the 'bread of life' to poor, hungry, gaunt half-starved men and women and little children, some of whom were so weak for the want of food that they could hardly stand. I tried it a few times [passing by without giving aid] and then gave it up for the better way of sharing my limited supplies with some of these poor sheep in the wilderness, and then, when the wolfish, famished look had left their eyes and there was a comfortable dinner under their belts, it was astonishing how much better they listened and how much greater was their confidence in me and the message of salvation which I brought them.⁵⁷

Young's generosity (or spendthriftiness, according to his critics) was recognised by his peers.

According to John Semmens, who seems to have gotten along with few of the Methodist personnel with whom he worked:

No missionary was ever more liberal-hearted than this good brother. Many hearts were won over by the practical exhibitions of his unselfishness. Many were added to the Church as a result of his faithfulness. With many a widow old and alone, with many a hunter dim-sighted and decrepit did he divide his scanty store. When wife and children were poorly off at home, medicines and nourishing things were sent to the sick and infirm in the villages hard by.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Kerry Abel, "The Drum and the Cross" (Kingston, 1984), page 145.

⁵⁷ Egerton R. Young, *Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*, page 178.

⁵⁸ John Semmens, *The Field and the Work*, page 60.

Generosity, or good works, was expected in Cree society. William Francis Butler recorded that the Cree shared all game.⁵⁹ Both Young and Semmens emphasized the beneficial outcome of Young's good works, but the point is more clearly made by John McDougall:

The preacher may preach ever so good, but he himself is to these people the exponent of what he preaches, and by him they judge the Gospel he presents. If he fails to measure up in manliness and liberality and general manhood, then they think there is no more use listening to his teaching.⁶⁰

For McDougall, the preacher who met Aboriginal expectations of "manliness" and generosity was, of course, his father, a resourceful and expert outdoorsman, and a generous host. John McDougall often went buffalo hunting to support his father's liberality. These were the virtues admired in the Prairie societies: to be a skilled and generous hunter. John McDougall saw self-reliance as an essential characteristic for life on the Prairies; "The chicken-hearted and the weak-willed had no place in this new land."⁶¹

Egerton R. Young himself never admitted to being influenced in his theology by Cree moral standards, but only by their living conditions. William Francis Butler judged the Swampy Cree on Lake Winnipeg to be "very poor".⁶² For Young, generosity was the way of the Gospel. He modified Wesley's famous phrase: " 'We are saved by hope', and yet somehow I like the religion of helpfulness as well as hopefulness."⁶³

George Young, who was responsible for the finances of the District, could see no reason why the relative poverty of the Swampy Cree was any reason to alter theology, observing that the "idea that he who would teach them ought to feed them to a considerable extent" might be

⁵⁹ William Francis Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, page 242.

⁶⁰ John McDougall, *Parsons on the Plains*, page 96.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, page 158.

⁶² William Francis Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, page 127.

⁶³ Egerton R. Young, *The Battle of the Bears*, page 168.

one of several “obstacles in the way of their Christianisation” but that these obstacles “are surmountable, and have been surmounted in thousands of instances.”⁶⁴

The living conditions of different Aboriginal nations among whom were found Methodist missions varied enormously, which may have led to different emphases in the theology of good works. Thomas Crosby lived among Aboriginal people who worked at the salmon canneries for wages in the summer, and had more access to cash: “From the first, we tried to teach the people self-reliance, or a practical gospel. They gave liberally, helped to build their own Churches and Schools and made their own houses, roads and bridges.”⁶⁵

The discussion about faith and good works continued through Young’s lifetime. In a sermon published in 1884 the Reverend C.W. Brown apologised that Christ “has not explained what He means by fruit, whether the fruit of holy living or that of usefulness leading to steady increase of His followers in the world...inference would lead us to decide that He included both.”⁶⁶ This explanation probably would have suited Egerton R. Young.

Several historians of female foreign missionaries have suggested that the balance between faith and good works was altered in favour of good works by the gradual preponderance of women in the field, either as Protestant missionaries or wives of missionaries. The importance of the unpaid work of missionary wives was acknowledged by Dr. Lachlan Taylor in his 1880 obituary for Mary Holmes Young, wife of George Young. He wrote: “for verily, we think too little of Methodist Ministers’ wives, both at home and abroad, who, by their sacrifice and efforts contribute largely to their husbands’ success and the prosperity of their varied

⁶⁴ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 301.

⁶⁵ Thomas Crosby, *Up and down the Pacific Coast*, page 79.

⁶⁶ Reverend C.W. Brown, “God Glorified in a Fruitful Church,” S. G. Gillespie (ed.), *The Methodist Pulpit: A Collection of Original Sermons from Living Ministers of the United Methodist Church in Canada* (Toronto, 1884), page 110.

institutions of the Church.”⁶⁷ Historian Margaret Whitehead has shown that several Methodist missionary wives in British Columbia had quite a large pastoral role. Emma Crosby, the wife of Thomas Crosby, preached regularly to men, women and children.⁶⁸ It seems likely that when Methodists and Presbyterian women began ministering overseas to women and children, their role was based on the successful unpaid work of missionary wives. Missionary reports from women serving overseas tended to emphasize their medical and community work.

Historian Cora Kermmenhoek characterized such pastoral work as evidence of the emergence of the “new woman” in the mid-nineteenth century, after a lapse in active women’s pastoral work since the earliest Wesleyan preachers.⁶⁹ There was clearly no such lapse in Young’s experience. He was the nephew of a Methodist woman preacher, and his step-mother had lived away from her parents as a mission teacher before her marriage. His father worked for at least a year with Elizabeth Barnes, another New-York-born Methodist preacher credited with a revival in 1829.⁷⁰ Young supported the pastoral work of his wife, as shown in a daily conversation over breakfast he recorded:

“My dear”, I would say, “what are you going to do to-day?”
 “I am going to have Kennedy harness up my dogs, and drive me up the river to Playgreen point to see how that old sick woman is getting on, and take her the warm blanket I promised her. I will also stop to see how those sick babies are, and how Nancy’s little twins are prospering. In the afternoon I want to drive over to York village and see Oosememou’s sick wife – what is your day’s programme?”⁷¹

⁶⁷ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 337.

⁶⁸ Margaret Whitehead, “‘Let the Women Keep Silence’ Women Missionary Preaching in British Columbia 1860s – 1940s,” *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada*, page 123.

⁶⁹ Cora Kermmenhoek “The Church Should Have Championed the Woman’s Cause: Women’s Liberation and the Methodist Church in Canada 1874-1925,” Neil Semple (ed.), *Canadian Methodist Historical Society Papers volume 9* (Toronto, 1993).

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Gillan Muir, “Beyond the Bounds of Acceptable Behaviors: Methodist Women Preachers in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada*, page 169.

⁷¹ Egerton R. Young, *On the Indian Trail*, page 48.

As well, Egerton and Elizabeth Young participated in a particular joint effort to emphasise the importance of Methodist values of cleanliness and thrift in the domestic sphere when ever a new Aboriginal family moved to Norway House-Rossville. E.R. Young described the type of pastoral visit he and Elizabeth undertook.

When we were aware that some new houses had been erected and taken possession of by families who had known no other habitations than their wigwams, I would announce from the pulpit on Sabbath, that during the week, in connection with my pastoral visitations, Mrs. Young and I would dine at Pugamagon's house on Monday, on Tuesday with Oostsemou, and Wednesday with Oosmemmou. These announcements at first caused great consternation among the families mentioned....⁷²

Elizabeth would head off in the morning, in her own dog-train with a "liberal supply of food, with plenty of tea and sugar... a large tablecloth, dishes, knives, forks, spoons, and other essentials".⁷³ She would arrive to find an anxious family in a well-scrubbed house. Egerton R. Young described the scene when he would show up at noon:

The snow white tablecloth was spread out on the almost equally snow white floor, and upon it were placed in order plates, cups and saucers, knives and forks. Then the dinner, which had been cooked in various pots, and pans, at the capacious fireplace, was served up, or rather, down, and in our assigned places we seated ourselves Indian-like, upon the floor. After heaven's blessing was asked, the feast began... For perhaps three hours, Mrs. Young had been the instructor of that Indian mother and her daughters, and under her direction they prepared that dinner, and they were very proud of their teacher.

The dinner was pronounced a great success, and after it was over, and all had had an abundance, the Bible in syllabic characters was brought out and read, when all devoutly kneeling, the missionary with a glad heart offered up an earnest prayer for heaven's blessing ever to abide upon that home.

After prayers I was expected to leave, while Mrs. Young remained for the rest of the day. When she returned to our mission home in the evening, tired, but very happy over her day's work, she would give me some glimpses into the doings of the afternoon. Of course, the first thing, was to teach the woman how, nicely and carefully, to wash and put away the dishes; then the house was once more swept up, when they were ready for the afternoon's work [dressmaking, patching, darning].⁷⁴

⁷² Ibid., page 55.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., page 58.

George Young must have been furious about the expense, and later historians would label this surveillance and cultural imperialism of the worst kind, but the Youngs probably felt that they were practicing practical Christianity by bringing a meal and housewares to new neighbours. Egerton R. Young was supporting a version of good works traditionally associated with missionary wives, and thus his wife's vocation.

In Young's published books, Elizabeth Bingham Young is essentially portrayed as a hard-working assistant minister. The Youngs had a Cree nanny, Mary Gibb, to whom is assigned the fond, over-protective maternal role in *Algonquin Indian Tales*. Elizabeth, "my brave, practical wife"⁷⁵ probably played a significant pastoral role at the Rossville Mission when Young was absent on the trail for up to six weeks at a time. There is no record that Elizabeth led a service or preached, though it seems to have been reasonably common in British Columbia when the male missionary was out on his circuit.⁷⁶ Elizabeth led the Sunday morning class for children under eight, and may have had to assume the adult class in Egerton's absence. Class leaders Timothy Bear, Sandy Hart and Edward Papenakis presumably led the Sunday evening service, provided there was no communion, which Young served only four times a year. The conclusion that Elizabeth identified herself as a missionary can be gleaned from the fact that, after her husband's death, she was a delegate at the Thirty-first Annual Conference of the International Missionary Union in 1914 in New York State.

Young's support of his wife's pastoral work in the domestic sphere was co-incidental with his belief in the equality of women. Young records that he never asked any woman "red,

⁷⁵ Egerton R. Young, *The Battle of The Bears*, page 184.

⁷⁶ Margaret Whitehead, " 'Let the Women Keep Silence' Women Missionary Preaching in British Columbia 1860s – 1940s," page 124.

black or white to say obey” in the marriage ceremony.⁷⁷ He personally arranged a circle of Aboriginal men to shame a violent husband into changing his behavior. He said nothing about the “irregular” marriages of Métis women, but rather:

These women make excellent wives and mothers, and, being ambitious to learn, they often become as clever and bright as their white sisters, to many of whom they are superior in personal appearance. Into many a cozy home can the adventurous tourist go, and never would he dream that the stately, refined, cultured woman at the head of the table, honoured by her husband and beloved by her children, if not of pure Indian blood, was at least the daughter or granddaughter of a pure Indian.⁷⁸

Weekly classes, conversions, revivals: was Egerton R. Young preaching an old-fashioned theology for the benefit of “simpler” Aboriginal people? No doubt, the practices at Norway House were more traditional than in the cities where people were debating the holiness movement, the role of classes and Darwin. In this sense, David Marshall’s claim that the clergy who served as missionaries in the West were evangelicals is true. Certainly if one compares the theology Young taught at Rossville to that taught in downtown Toronto that so offended E.E. Shepherd, Young’s old-fashioned evangelicalism is clear. But perhaps it was not so different from the theology in the eastern Ontario counties where Young grew up. George Rawlyk pointed out that a revival took place at Sydenham Street Wesleyan Church in Kingston 1853 which increased numbers of members in the surrounding counties of Napanee, Newburgh and Wilton.⁷⁹ The scribbled notes of the sermon Young gave in Bradford in September 1906 has slightly more sophisticated language (the Youngs had just toured the world) – but the topic is temperance, a burning issue common to most Ontario clergy, whatever their theology, at the end of the nineteenth century.

⁷⁷ Egerton R. Young, *The Battle of the Bears*, page 277.

⁷⁸ Egerton R. Young, *Three Boys in the Wild North Land: Summer* (New York, 1886), page 96.

⁷⁹ George Rawlyk, *Wrapped Up in God*, page 107.

John Wesley stated that the goal of preaching was to encourage a revival among people. However, by mid-century, claims that a revival had occurred had to be quantified. The attention to numbers among church administrators was greatly strengthened following the 1851 British census, according to British church historian R.A. Soloway.⁸⁰ In the autobiography, George Young gave estimates of the adherents and converts at every station around Lake Winnipeg in the 1870's. Egerton R. Young sent reports with specific numbers of baptisms, marriages, adherents, members and students to his supervisors, as he was required. His numbers, particularly at Rossville, were impressive. He reported at the 1872 conference of the two districts held in Winnipeg:

Norway House, Rossville Mission. Regular services are held in the church in the Indian village and in the Chapel in the Hudson Bay Company fort. the larger church is generally well filled and often crowded with attentive learners. with very few exceptions all the whites attend the services conducted in the English language. Numbers of members 320, Classes 14, [4?] native local preachers an efficient Sabbath and day School is also kept up, number of children 130. A good commencement has been made at Berens' river. Timothy Bear, a pious and efficient local preacher from Norway House, has within a month gathered in at this place 68 persons who daily receive instruction in the plan of salvation. he has also established a school containing 38 scholars. Nelson River has been visited by the missionary at Norway House and 110 adults and children have been baptized. This is an inviting field, ready for the reaper's sickle, but the difficulties of access are many.⁸¹

In his published works, however, Young reverts to an earlier justification or understanding of the purpose of missionary work than the number of converts. He refers to Wesley's concern for the tragedy of the "millions of unredeemed."⁸² But rather than referring to results, he refers to the "grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles."⁸³ This is a view

⁸⁰ R.A. Soloway, *Prelates and People: Ecclesiastical Social Thought in England 1783-1852* (Toronto, 1969), page 309.

⁸¹ Egerton R. Young, "Journal Rossville and Berens' River 1868-1976," UCA, page 170.

⁸² Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-Team*, page 221.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, page 88.

of missionary work that dates back to the eighteenth century. The diary of Puritan missionary David Brainerd, which Young read on Wesley's recommendation, is free of any worry about results. Results are in God's hands; being a missionary is central to one's own relationship with God. Brainerd writes of the "extreme danger of self-confidence" and suggests that depending on results is a form of bargaining with God, and so a sin.⁸⁴

When pushed, Young could quote results as the measure of a missionary's success, but he did not prefer to see it that way. In his last letter of defense against the accusations and insults of John McDougall published in the *Christian Guardian* during the 1890's, Young compared the large number of converts at Norway House to the somewhat meager numbers of McDougall (*père et fils*) converts among the Prairie peoples. But by 1906, Alexander Sutherland, Superintendent of Missions for the Methodist Church, warned against the over-valuing of numbers in a Methodist textbook:

Nothing is more common than to hear growth in numbers and wealth and fashion quoted as evidences of success, although the graces of the Holy Spirit, by which alone a true church is recognised, are sadly lacking. The fact is the spirituality and success of a church can be more accurately measured by its missionary spirit and enterprise than in any other way.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, it was perhaps inevitable that the mid-century Methodist church with an emphasis on faith and good works should adopt quantifiable methods and utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham's philosophy of measuring good, not by intent, but by results. Missionary reports emphasizing the improved material and moral lives of the people as a result of the adoption of the Gospel can be interpreted as utilitarian. In 1882, Egerton Ryerson was careful to describe the social utility of his church as even more irreproachable than its intent:

⁸⁴ Jonathan Edwards, *The Life of David Brainerd*, page 262.

⁸⁵ Alexander Sutherland, *The Methodist Church and Missions in Canada and Newfoundland* (Toronto, c. 1906), page 254.

...the skeptics and the scorners, who would bring religion into contempt by attacking the motives of its ministers and professors, have ever been compelled to admit that it was not the skeptic or the scorner that first pitied the moral destitution of the early settlers in Canada, and amid great exposures and dangers, traversed forests, and rivers, and lakes, to assuage the sorrows, encourage the hopes, and guide the morals of the first adventurers but it was those who had experienced the Gospel as the power of God...⁸⁶

Phyllis Airhart suggests that the pragmatic strain in Methodism, as well as the emphasis on good works, may have made an acceptance of popular utilitarianism easier among Methodists. In one early sermon, Egerton R. Young told a joke about a utilitarian who was not awed by Niagara but began to calculate how much machinery that waterpower would turn.⁸⁷ His ambivalent attitude to counting converts and judging the Gospel by its social utility demonstrated that Young was closer to Sutherland than his namesake. It shows he had mixed feelings over what Max Weber called the “process of rationalisation”,⁸⁸ as it was adopted in all aspects of life in the late nineteenth-century.

Young emphasized that Christian people were happier (Wesley had believed that only the holy are truly happy) but he was reluctant to discuss material progress. In this, he echoed the conclusions of the Reverend F. Frost, an Anglican missionary who worked among the Ojibwa north of Lake Superior for thirty-one years. In the concluding chapter of his 1904 memoirs, *Sketches of Indian Life*, Frost refused to commit himself to the very specific question of whether his parishioners’ lives were improved materially or morally by Christianity.⁸⁹ In 1907, Young compared the Catholic and Protestant missions in the Northwest unfavourably with the explosion of missionary work in China, India, and Africa:

⁸⁶ Egerton Ryerson, *Canadian Methodism*, page 28.

⁸⁷ Egerton R. Young, “Proverbs XI 30th verse”, “Book of Sermons III.”

⁸⁸ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York, 1958), page 75.

⁸⁹ F. Frost, *Sketches of Indian Life* (Toronto 1904), pages 281 – 297.

And yet we have to admit that, considering all the lives that have be sacrificed, the sufferings and hardships involved and the vast expense incurred, the results that are seen do not compare favourably with what may be seen in other mission fields.⁹⁰

His remarks would seem to be born out by the fact that, as several Canadian historians have demonstrated, the foreign missions were better staffed and better financed than the missions to the Northwest. David Marshall maintains that these missions, being mostly involved in medical and educational work, were of a less spiritual character than the missions to the Northwest. Young does not seem to judge them that way.

Young has been criticized for his claims about numbers of converts. William Brooks was skeptical of the numbers that Young reported, saying that Young “seemed to have discovered how to write exactly the type of thing everyone wanted to read.”⁹¹ It is unfair to single out Young, as George Young, John Semmens, and many others reported similar numbers at Rossville. However, the larger question remains among Canadian historians: how do we interpret the numbers of converts reported by missionaries?

Certainly, missionaries in the field tended to accuse other denominations of inflating numbers. Different denominations had different views of both the purpose of baptism, and the stage at which a person might be considered a convert. John Webster Grant claimed that the Methodists expected the most from their Aboriginal acquaintances, in terms of behavior, before they would call them converted.⁹² Kerry Abel claims that the Church Missionary Society missionaries in Athabaska, who were also evangelicals, required evidence of a conversion experience and a commitment just as restrictive as that of the Methodists. The Roman Catholics

⁹⁰ Egerton R. Young, *The Battle of the Bears*, page 341.

⁹¹ William Howard Brooks, “Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth-Century,” page 140.

⁹² John Webster Grant, *In the Moon of Wintertime*, page 90.

in British Columbia accused the Anglicans of excusing polygamy in order to gain converts.⁹³ Robert Rundle worried that the “fascinations and abominations of popery”⁹⁴ would attract converts among the Prairie peoples. Other historians have explained the number of converts by suggesting that courteous listening by Aboriginal people, or a willingness to borrow cultural practices, was sometimes interpreted as conversion by the missionaries.⁹⁵

In the expected style of missionary literature (which will be explored in Chapter IV), Young recorded individual conversions, not all sudden. He wrote frequently about the “consistent lives and triumphant deaths of our Indian converts”⁹⁶ in his books. The good death was a staple of missionary literature. Typical was Joe, a “wild” Sioux encountered on the first trip in to Pembina, who later caught smallpox and “died in sweet and simple faith in that Saviour who would light up his pathway.”⁹⁷ But other conversion stories illustrate Young’s slightly unconventional theology. In the case of Cha-koos, Young maintained that his ascent to heaven was assured despite the absence of a missionary or a sudden conversion experience. Cha-koos shattered his hand after sneering at the missionary’s commandment to avoid hunting on a Sunday.

In answer to my inquiries as to his absence they told me he was dead, but that about the only wish he had had during his sickness was that he might live till the missionary arrived to talk to him about Jesus and pray with him. When the end drew near his mind at times seemed to be wandering, and he talked about various things, but the most of the time he seemed to be in prayer. At the close he raised himself up and said to his son Jacob, “O how I wish the missionary were here!” Then he lay back and died.

The missionary was a hundred and fifty miles away, but he firmly believes the omnipresent Saviour was there and poor old Cha-koos found as he left his old

⁹³ Brett Christopher, *Positioning the Missionary: John Booth Good and the Confluence of Cultures in Nineteenth-century British Columbia* (Vancouver, 1998), page 124.

⁹⁴ Hugh A. Dempsey (ed.), *The Rundle Journals 1840-1848* (Calgary, 1977), page 75.

⁹⁵ John Badertscher “As Others Saw Us”, *Prairie Spirit: Perspectives on the Heritage of the United Church of Canada in the West* (Winnipeg, 1985), page 61.

⁹⁶ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 183.

⁹⁷ Egerton R. Young, *Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*, page 124.

mained body behind that he had exchanged his old wigwam for a mansion in the celestial city.⁹⁸

An attractive feature of Young's theology was that he showed respect for, and referred to, practical arrangements between Protestant denominations. In this he seems to have been influenced by Wesley's insistence that "to remove contention from the children of God, to restore peace among them"⁹⁹ was a great goal. Wesley emphasised that unimportant matters of process should not divide Protestant Christians: "Men may differ from us in their opinions as well as their expressions, and nevertheless be partakers with us of the same precious faith.... Their ideas may not be so clear, and yet their experience may be as sound as ours."¹⁰⁰ A hope for unity or co-operation among Protestant denominations, known as ecumenism, dates back to a wish expressed by Oliver Cromwell in the seventeenth century. Moreover, in fact, the various Methodist churches in Canada did manage to unite, with the biggest amalgamation taking place in 1884. The Methodist missionaries in Western Canada generally tolerated other Protestant denominations, as the field was large. While some historians have viewed the clerical class as destructively competitive, Rosemary Gagan mentions the practical co-operation between missionaries that was a form of ecumenism.¹⁰¹

George Young also had cordial relations with the Roman Catholic Archbishop Taché in Winnipeg. However, both Robert Rundle and George McDougall feared for the immortal souls of their charges should these come under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church.

Young demonstrated this ecumenism even in his personal life. The Youngs' daughter Nellie was buried in the Anglican graveyard while the "dear Archdeacon himself...read the

⁹⁸ Ibid., page 42.

⁹⁹ *The Works of John Wesley Vol I*, page 449.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., page 454.

¹⁰¹ Rosemary Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient 1881-1925* (Kingston & Montreal, 1992), page 64.

beautiful Burial Service of his Church [over our] darling child".¹⁰² In his choice of an Anglican burial, Young was practicing a form of ecumenism peculiar to the earlier Methodist Church, when Methodists often turned to the Anglican Church for marriages or burials, according to Owen Chadwick. Egerton R. Young was generous in describing most other denominations he encountered in Red River. He spoke warmly of the Church of Scotland at St. Andrew's. He wrote that the "Society of Friends...have always been the friends of the Indians,"¹⁰³ probably reflecting an attitude learned earlier in life. His step-grandmother Waldron was a Quaker and the Quakers were active among Aboriginal people in Ontario.

As a mature man, Young became much more accepting of Roman Catholic missionaries. His earliest rebuke, that they refused Aboriginal people a copy of the Bible,¹⁰⁴ is actually mild compared to the tone of some of Rundle and McDougall's comments. However, the unpublished chapters of "History of Evangelization of the North American Indians" make no moral distinction at all between Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries. Young describes the "Indian converts gathered by the incessant labors and toils and tears and often blood of devoted Christian missionaries both Catholic and Protestant."¹⁰⁵ Young credits the early Roman Catholic missionaries in Acadia with inculcating peaceful habits. Only the Mormons remain outside the pale for Egerton R. Young.

Ecumenism became increasingly evident among the Protestant denominations in Canada late in the nineteenth century. Brian McKillop suggests that the various strains of British Idealism taught in Canadian universities from the 1870's led to a decline in denominational identification among university-trained Protestant clergy. Some Western Canadian historians, as

¹⁰² Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-Train*, page 46

¹⁰³ Egerton R. Young, *Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*, page 71.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, page 89.

¹⁰⁵ Egerton R. Young, "History of Evangelisation of Indians in North America", page 3.

well as most United Church of Canada historians, believe that it was the influence of pioneer co-operation in Western Canada which broke down Protestant denominationalism¹⁰⁶ and led to the formation of the United Church in 1925. While often associated today with a liberal Christian outlook, Egerton R. Young's ecumenism was directly inspired by John Wesley.

When Egerton R. Young looked at the natural world around him he saw, as did Wesley, that the wisdom of God could be clearly deduced from the order and design in nature.¹⁰⁷ In Young's time, the view that studying nature, or science, revealed the amazing design of a Creator, was most nearly identified with the works of William Paley.¹⁰⁸ Brian McKillop suggests that the Scottish philosophy that included Paley peaked in popularity in Canada in the 1860's, though articles by a disciple of Paley's, James McCosh, were popular in the *Christian Guardian* into the 1870's. Methodist missionary John McDougall remarked on the great age of the Red Deer River valley in Paleyite terms.¹⁰⁹ In a sermon dated November 13, 1867 in Hamilton, Young preached: "We see the marks of design...in the regularity with which the seasons alternate. We see it in the grand and harmonious movement of the Heavenly bodies...genial sunshine and the refreshing shower just when they are needed ... it must have been originated by God alone and that it is an exhibition of infinite love."¹¹⁰

Young quotes an Ojibwa man at Nelson River expressing a similar understanding:

I hear God in the thunder, in the tempest and in the storm; I see his power in the lightning that shivers the trees into kindling wood; I see his goodness in the giving us the moose, the reindeer, the beaver and the bear; I see his lovingkindness in giving us, when the south winds blow, the ducks and geese...I have watched these things for years...So thinking about these things which I had observed, I made up

¹⁰⁶ William Howard Brooks, "Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century", page xiii.

¹⁰⁷ *The Works of John Wesley Volume I*, page 581, and also Carl Becker *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*, page 57.

¹⁰⁸ Brian McKillop *A Disciplined Intelligence*, page 63.

¹⁰⁹ John McDougall, *Parsons on the Plains*, page 102.

¹¹⁰ Egerton R. Young, "John IV 13 & 14" "Book of Sermons II", unpaginated.

my mind years ago, that this Great Spirit, so kind and so watchful and so loving, did not care for the beating of the conjurer's drum or the shaking of the rattle...¹¹¹

In conclusion, John Wesley was clearly the single greatest influence on the thought of Egerton R. Young. Young was a thorough Wesleyan in his belief in the efficacy of prayer, the need for faith and good works, in a providential sense of time including a retributive afterlife, in holiness, and in women's active religious vocation. He set up classes on the Wesleyan model.

Young reflected the mid-century Victorian understanding of Wesley in his belief about the nature of children, in the preference for a sudden conversion experience, in his ecumenism, and in his Paleyite view of nature. He was ambivalent about the utilitarian desire of his church to count converts, preferring to emphasise grace. The distinction demanded by the historians, such as Rawlyk and Gauvreau, for a sudden conversion experience, would unnecessarily disqualify Young from being a traditional Wesleyan, or evangelical, when his family history and most important doctrines show that he obviously was.

The encounter with the Aboriginal – The theology of Egerton R. Young and his fellow Missionaries

Historians engaged in the secularization versus continuity debate have not often considered the encounter of Aboriginal and missionary ideas. Exceptions are both David Marshall and a recent popular historian, Peter Bush, who consider changes to theology at the end of the nineteenth-century as catastrophic, and who claim that Canadian social religion included racism towards Aboriginal language and ability.¹¹² As well, to David Marshall, the importance in the encounter rested in its failure, which served to discourage the missionaries and undermine

¹¹¹ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 119.

¹¹² Peter Bush, *Western Challenge: The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Mission on the Prairies and North 1885-1925*, page 110.

their traditional faith. An examination of an individual missionary's encounter with the Aboriginal can illuminate these applications of the secularization thesis.

Egerton R. Young became a missionary equipped with the ideas of John Wesley. This sub-chapter will examine how ideas springing from Wesley's classical education led Methodist missionaries to respond to the encounter with Aboriginal people in the Canadian Northwest, and whether Young abandoned that traditional faith as a result of the encounter.

John Wesley believed in the natural depravity of man. However, he was a well-educated man, particularly fond of such classical authors as Horace, Virgil, Cicero, Seneca and Plato. How then could he believe such non-Christians were morally and intellectually inferior? By raising a high standard for man's innate or "natural" morality. He knew the Golden Rule was followed in the Talmud and the Sunni writings of Islam.¹¹³ Wesley expected the honour, truthfulness and chastity he read about in ancient Greece and Rome to be evident among Aboriginal people, or natural men.

Wesley had a brief, mostly unsuccessful encounter with Aboriginal people in Georgia before he felt his heart "strangely warmed" in Aldersgate Street. It does not seem to have much influenced his theology, for he seldom singled out North American Aboriginal people from the great mass of non-Christians or nominal Christians in the world that it was the duty of Methodists to enlighten. Followers of Wesley therefore, probably did not come to America expecting to find a blank slate, but a moral society. McDougall and Egerton R. Young tended to speak highly of Aboriginal people when they exhibited virtues praised in Classical Greece such as self-restraint, courage, sexual modesty and oratorical skills. Less palatable Aboriginal moral codes were not discussed in Young's published writings. In a private letter to him in 1871, George Young recounted that he had discovered on a second visit to a community sixty miles

¹¹³ *The Works of John Wesley Volume I*, page 133.

from Norway House that a senile old woman had been burnt in a tree, for fear that her babblings were from the devil.¹¹⁴ This incident never made it into any of E.R. Young's books. In contrast, Roman Catholic theology led the Oblate Father Henry Faraud to emphasize the credulity of the Saulteaux and the savagery of the Blackfoot in 1866. His emphasis served to justify his view that the Aboriginal people needed to become "des âmes régénérées par les eaux saintes du baptême."¹¹⁵

The Methodist missionaries were also ready to admit that Aboriginal people might have some understanding of God. Egerton R. Young, Robert Rundle, George Young and John McDougall all wrote of encountering people who obviously knew God and had legitimate versions of the afterlife. However, according to Protestant theology, meaningful interaction with the rather vengeful Father was possible only through the intermediaries: Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. John Wesley and the Methodists believed that Aboriginal people needed to hear the good news of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Young's fictional hero Oowikapun, of Nelson River, was lost without revelation:

He had had many evidences of a Creator, but had met with nothing that told him of a Saviour. The idea of being able to "Look up through nature unto nature's God" is an utter impossibility, unless the one looking has some knowledge of God in Christ Jesus.¹¹⁶

However, Aboriginal people were not granted any other method of knowing God. Young recalled an old man at Nelson River telling him:

Missionary, the Indian's mind is dark, and he cannot grasp the unseen. He hears the great Spirit's voice in the thunder and storms. He sees evidence of his existence all around, but neither he nor his fathers have ever seen the great Spirit, or any one who has; and so he does not know what He looks like. But man is the highest creature that he knows of, and so he makes his idols like a man, and calls

¹¹⁴ Egerton R. Young, "Journal Rossville and Berens' River 1868-1976," page 153.

¹¹⁵ Fernande-Michel, *Dix-huits ans chez les Sauvages: Voyages et Missions de Mgr Henry Faraud*, page 56.

¹¹⁶ Egerton R. Young, *Oowikapun*, page 80.

it his “Manito”. We only worship them because we do not know what the great spirit looks like, but these we can understand.

Suddenly there flashed into my mind the request of Philip to the Lord Jesus: “Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us;” and the wonderful answer: “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?”

I opened my Indian Bible at that wonderful chapter of disinterested love, the fourteenth of John, and preached unto them Jesus, in His two natures, Divine and human. I spoke of him as our elder Brother...¹¹⁷

Also, in *Oowikapon*, Young admonished a person who had been “talking pertly about God in nature.”¹¹⁸ This seems an unlikely description of an Aboriginal person, and it may describe a young white woman under the influence of the Romantic poets who eschewed churches to commune more freely with God in nature. Aboriginal people were therefore not the only persons susceptible to the heresy of not needing the Bible and its revelations. To Young, and some other Methodists, Aboriginal people who had received the revelation and had been converted were the moral, intellectual and social equals of whites. McDougall always spoke most highly of the “grand old chief Maskepetoon”¹¹⁹ and the many friends he made among the Prairie peoples as a young man. Young made clear in his writings that “of course there were many grand, sensible old Indians, like Mamanowatum, Soguaatum, Kennedy, Timothy Bear, Papanakis and others.”¹²⁰ Aboriginal people appear as individuals in his writings, usually with names, and never as types. However, later in the century, high expectations of the moral sense of Aboriginal people became less common among Methodist missionaries, as well as other white Canadians. Sylvia Van Kirk was one of the first Canadian historians to chart how Canadian

¹¹⁷ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 87.

¹¹⁸ Egerton R. Young, *Oowikapun: or How the Gospel reached the Nelson River Indians*, page 72.

¹¹⁹ John McDougall, *Parsons on the Plains*, page 87.

¹²⁰ Egerton R. Young, *The Battle of the Bears*, page 161.

society became “increasingly racist”¹²¹ towards Aboriginal people during the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1906, Alexander Sutherland, Superintendent of Missions for the

Methodist Church wrote:

An Anglo-Saxon may be moral after a fashion without religion, but not so an Indian, especially if he has come into contact with white civilization. He must be converted through and through if he is to make any headway against competition.¹²²

Sutherland’s definition of conversion, which seems to imply the sweeping away of all cultural identity, has become the common stereotype of the missionary. It is an anachronism to ascribe this definition to Egerton R. Young and many of his contemporaries.

As a corrective to his urging towards prayer and a conversion experience, John Wesley was very suspicious of the power of imagination. Methodists did not have any sympathy for dreams or supernatural powers. They were famous for their intolerance to novels and the theatre. Henry Faraud, a Roman Catholic missionary to the Northwest, suggested in 1866 that this was the weakness in the Protestant approach:

Le protestantisme a tenté de s’établir sur quelques points de ce lointain continent: nulle part il n’a réussi – le protestantisme est trop froid pour civiliser les peuples des ces régions de glace, il ne parle qu’à la raison où il faut parler qu’aux cœurs.¹²³

Dreams were an essential spiritual window used by many of the shamans encountered by the missionaries. The Anglican fur-trader George Nelson believed, from his own observation, that the shamans around Lac La Ronge interpreted their dreams wisely. He wrote in his 1823 diary:

These people are still in a complete state of nature: their ideas of the true God are far from clear or correct: they acknowledge him indeed as the supreme and absolute Master of all, but more or rather as a passive Deity than he really is: but

¹²¹ Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, page 7.

¹²² Alexander Sutherland, *The Methodist Church in Canada and Newfoundland*, page 238.

¹²³ Fernand Michel, *Dix-huit ans chez les Sauvages: Voyages et Missions de Mgr Henry Faraud*, page 281.

their notions of their other Deities come far more near the truth. Their wants indeed are also few, but they are arbitrary and cannot be dispensed with, at least for any time: it is therefore very natural that they should employ their whole thoughts and most of their time in procuring means to warding off or averting their dangers. And I do not know of any method more adapted to this than the one they pursue, i.e. Fasting and Sleeping to dream: and they do dream too...¹²⁴

Robert Rundle sniffed at dream interpretation several times, and disparaged himself for recording a vivid dream of his own, in which he was visited by his beloved dead elder brother, who in the dream had become a missionary.¹²⁵ E.R. Young was more tolerant of Aboriginal encounters with God through dreams, allowing God to speak to the fictional Oowikapun through a dream: “the Good Spirit in loving compassion speaks in dreams to help or warn those who have not yet received enough of the Divine revelation to be completely guided by it”.¹²⁶

Young accorded Aboriginal people an innate moral sense including the existence of God, and cautiously acknowledged the power of dreams among Aboriginal people moving towards Christianity. But he did not accord Aboriginal people any other spiritual power. No shaman was ever accorded any spiritual power or dignity by Young. Other missionaries took the power and the role of the shaman seriously. The gloomy eighteenth-century Puritan David Brainerd wrote a remarkably sympathetic description of a shaman, who, feeling his people had grown degenerate and corrupt, was living simply and alone in order to ascertain the will of God to try and save his people:

At length, he says, God comforted his heart and showed him what he must do; and since that time he had known God and tried to serve him; and loved all men, be they who they would, so as he never did before. He treated me with uncommon courtesy, and seemed to be hearty in it...[Lists his doctrinal errors] But I must say, there was something in his temper and disposition that looked more like true religion than anything I ever observed amongst other heathens.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ J.S.H. Brown & Robert Brightman, *The Orders of the Dreamed; George Nelson on Cree and Northern Ojibwas Religion and Myth, 1823* (Manitoba, 1988), page 82.

¹²⁵ *The Rundle Diaries*, page 44.

¹²⁶ Egerton R. Young, *Oowikapun*, page 157.

¹²⁷ Jonathan Edward, *The Life of David Brainerd*, page 330.

The Methodists tended to rationalize away the spiritual power of the shamans. Rundle refers to the “pretend power” of shamans in 1841 at Edmonton House.¹²⁸ Thomas Crosby described the medicine societies and the “deceptions”¹²⁹ practiced by the shaman.

Young showed some ambivalence about whether the shaman’s power could be rationalized away, or had to be taken seriously as from a rival spiritual source. In his 1869 report, he stated that the conjuring tent, the sacrifice and all other rites of Aboriginal religion were from the devil. However, his published books were a little less categorical. In *By Canoe and Dog Train*, he dismissed shamans as lazy old charlatans.¹³⁰ Both possibilities were considered by one of the adolescent heroes of *Three Boys in the Wild North Land*, in which Tastanum the shaman was unmasked as a “cunning imposter” by a test.¹³¹

Young was highly condemnatory of dances. He admitted that dances and other ceremonies might be part of an organized religion among the Ojibwa and Swampy Cree. In 1895, he described a dance in *Oowikapun* as: “religious ceremonies, such as this devil worship or their sun or ghost dances.” In his novel *Children of the Forest*, the villain meets with other shamans to initiate new members and hold ghost dances.¹³² Charles Alexander Eastman was a Dakota who recalled camping with his grandmother, a practicing member of a Grand Medicine Lodge, on Lake Manitoba. In his book *The Soul of the Indian*, published in 1911, Eastman stated that the dances were organised by medicine societies responsible for training new shamans. Ethnologist William Janes also described the existence of midêwiwin societies with formal

¹²⁸ *The Rundle Diaries*, page 50.

¹²⁹ Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down the Pacific Coast*, page 324.

¹³⁰ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-train*, page 83.

¹³¹ Egerton R. Young, *Three Boys in the Wild North Land: Summer*, page 134.

¹³² Egerton R. Young, *Children of the Forest: A Story of Indian Love*, page 49.

ceremonies among the Central Algonquin linguistic group in a 1905 article.¹³³ If this was also the case among the Swampy Cree, it might help explain the missionaries' nearly unanimous condemnation of Aboriginal dances. Dances could not be rationalized away as individual deceptions, but are evidence of an alternate religion or tradition.

Young, and other missionaries, minimised the existence of an organized religion in favour of the theory of individual spiritual blindness. But there is no doubt that the missionaries understood that they were in competition with shamans. In isolated postings, the missionary could take on many roles, which would increase his likelihood of competing with the traditional authority of the shaman. For example, Young and his wife delivered medical care during the measles epidemic at Berens' River. At Norway House, Young had many roles. He was the supervisor of the Aboriginal preachers who held regular classes to inquire into people's spiritual progress, a philanthropist, and a teacher of the syllabic system. John McDougall, who could be quite respectful of shamans, stated clearly how the Methodist missionary's many roles could reduce the authority of the shaman in unexpected areas:

Because the missionary became noted as a "medicine man" able to help the diseased, many were brought from afar that they might reap the benefit of his care. Then all the hungry and naked hunters, those out of luck, upon whom some spell had been cast (as they believed) so that their nets failed to catch, their guns missed fire, and their traps snapped, or their dead-falls fell without trapping anything – where else should these unfortunates go for help and advice and comfort but to the "praying man".¹³⁴

Some issues in Aboriginal society the Methodists could not solve. After his dog-sled tour of the Lake Winnipeg missions, George Young stated that the chief barrier to conversion among the Cree was not pride, but polygamy, and in the settlements, the bad example and available

¹³³ William Janes "Central Algonquin", Franz Boas (ed.), *Ethnology of Canada and Newfoundland* (Toronto, 1905), page 146.

¹³⁴ John McDougall, *Parsons on the Plains*, page 115.

alcohol of drunken white men. Because Aboriginal people were not seen to produce their own alcohol, the problem was universally portrayed as the corruption of Aboriginal communities by unscrupulous white men, often American traders. The Methodist Church encouraged a complete abstention from alcohol from members, and Young did not drink at all. Other denominations were not so strict; temperance could mean different things. However there was nearly unanimous agreement among missionaries of all denominations that the use of alcohol as a trade good impoverished and disrupted Aboriginal communities. Many Aboriginal leaders, including George Copway, and, after mid-century the Hudson's Bay Company, agreed. The Methodist model of total abstention was adopted by several Aboriginal leaders. Thomas Crosby recorded that the Municipal Council of Fort Simpson banned alcohol.¹³⁵ Young's view of alcoholism was never simply that it was a moral failing. Nor did he follow theories of racial susceptibility.

Polygamy (in which missionaries included the idea of remarriage after separation) stymied both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries throughout the West. There was no easy answer. "Monogamy versus polygamy was a burning question, and very often the preacher was sorely puzzled to know what to do in the matter," stated John McDougall.¹³⁶ Anglican missionary F. Frost, Young's contemporary north of Lake Superior, refused to condemn polygamy, seeing it as better than promiscuity.¹³⁷ In one case, when all parties agreed, Young consecrated a marriage between a man and his second wife. In this action, he was not acting outside the teaching of John Wesley, who wrote that there was no reason why divorced people should not re-marry. The Methodists have not been given credit for their sensitivity in this matter, as historians' attention has focused on the various churches' reactions to marriages between Scottish fur traders and Aboriginal or Métis women *à la façon du pays*.

¹³⁵ Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down the Pacific Coast*, page 65.

¹³⁶ John McDougall, *Parsons on the Plains*, page 148.

¹³⁷ F. Frost, *Sketches of Indian Life*, page 295.

In conclusion, Egerton R. Young, along with his colleagues, expected to find Aboriginal societies complete with a moral code and a relationship with God the Father. These societies lacked the revelation of Christ, which was why the missionary had come. Young and his colleagues were suspicious of dreams, intolerant of dances, and tended to rationalize away or ridicule the spiritual power of shamans. However Young and John McDougall, in particular, treated Christian Aboriginal people as equals in dignity and power. Traditional Methodist attitudes towards the dangers of alcohol were reinforced in the encounter with the Aboriginal. In the matter of social mores, the Methodists tended to impose their strict standards of thrift, hard work, chastity and monogamy. However in the matter of divorce, missionaries may have occasionally been more sensitive to the reality of Aboriginal lives than they are often given credit. They appear to have been faithful to traditional Wesleyan doctrine. In contrast to David Marshall's assertion, neither McDougall nor E.R. Young appear to have been discouraged by their missionary work, although Young found the life hard and poorly paid. In fact, Young's characterisation of Rossville became quite Utopian with time, as Chapter IV will demonstrate. Rather he was discouraged by the fate of Aboriginal people after the numbered treaties, as will also be discussed in Chapter IV.

Young and McDougall were life-long defenders of Aboriginal people against such stereotypes as alcoholic and lazy. It would be very difficult to prove a direct link between the increasing racism towards Aboriginal people shown in Canadian society from mid-century on and the succeeding progressive or the social gospel theologies. There certainly is no obvious link in the United States, where the great progressive preacher Henry Ward Beecher was an anti-slavery champion. Beecher charged the churches and related religious publishing houses in the

northern states of racism between 1830 and 1860, claiming that they censored themselves of any mention of doctrines or “of liberty that could be construed as condemning American slavery.”¹³⁸

Egerton R. Young and Modern Theology

Great changes in knowledge and theology took place during Young’s lifetime. Historians debating whether the change represented continuity with Wesley or a process of secularisation have concentrated on examining a number of theological doctrines in the Methodist church. This chapter has attempted to measure the ideas of E.R. Young against these. The first of these determinant doctrines is the necessity of a personal conversion, which was examined in the first section of this chapter. The second is the balance demonstrated between faith and good works. As I have argued, this particular tension is older than the secularisation debate, and was more than academic in the missionary field. Young was a generous man who, with his wife, practiced good works, but who never abandoned his belief that redemption was only available through Christ. The third concept considered significant, which this chapter addresses, is the concept of the Kingdom of God.

It would be difficult to discuss the changes in nineteenth-century theology without mentioning the public impact of the ideas of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and the historical criticism of the Bible, which had been taking place in Germany since earlier in the nineteenth century. *On the Origin of Species* was published by Charles Darwin in 1859, and debate and extrapolation of Darwin’s rather careful conclusions dominated the last quarter of the nineteenth-century. In the 1870’s, McKillop suggests, the concern seemed to be that Darwin meant there was an inevitable conflict between science and religion. E.H. Dewart, the very influential editor of the *Christian Guardian* stated in a sermon published in 1884, that

¹³⁸ Nowell Dwight Hillis (ed.), *Lectures and Orations of Henry Ward Beecher* (New York, 1970), page 189.

the apparent conflict between science and religion, which has sometimes been witnessed, has either been between what is a false theory in science as in some religious truth, or between some scientific truth and an erroneous human addition to religion. Between religious truths and attested facts of science, there can be no contradiction. The apparent conflict between the representatives of religion and those of science has been the natural antagonism between the old ideas and the new – simply opposition to change.¹³⁹

This optimistic vision, that all knowledge could be reconciled, has also been identified by Brian McKillop as an element of the influential Hegelian idealist philosophy taught at Queen's by John Watson beginning in 1891. It had the advantage of also being one of the conclusions reached by the most fervent believers in natural selection.¹⁴⁰ In his books, Egerton R. Young approvingly named two Spencerian optimists: Henry Ward Beecher and Henry Drummond.

Henry Ward Beecher was a generation older than Egerton R. Young, and was known as the most popular preacher in America. His *Christian Union* newspaper had a circulation of 100,000.¹⁴¹ He preached the abolition of slavery, the equality of women, Protestant ecumenism and the idea that "Americans are happier than any other people has ever been."¹⁴² Beecher also engaged the issues raised by Darwin and publicized by Herbert Spencer, who had come up with the phrase "survival of the fittest."¹⁴³ The *Origin of Species* did not contest the belief that God was the prime mover, nor Biblical ideas about the age of the earth (Lyell had done that). But because it suggested a mechanistic system to govern growth and change through the eons, it threatened the agency of God, God's immediate presence in our time. Beecher's answer was:

...when God hath great work on hand, the stars and everything that is beneath them, are working in one direction. The changes in government, the advance in laws, the development of a better political economy, the evolution of

¹³⁹ E.H. Dewart "Soul-Freedom", *The Methodist Pulpit: A Collection of Original Sermons from Living Ministers of the United Methodist Church in Canada*, page 13.

¹⁴⁰ McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence*, page 215.

¹⁴¹ Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston, 1955), page 29.

¹⁴² *Lectures and Orations of Henry Ward Beecher*, page 118.

¹⁴³ Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, page 39.

commonwealths, the progress of science and the mechanic arts, but especially the science of mind, are working out a final theology by working to the same great end, - the emancipation of man, the clarity of his understanding, the sovereignty of his conscience, the sympathies of his soul, and the full disclosure of God, over all, blessed forever.¹⁴⁴

That material progress was evidence of the agency of God in our time was not Beecher's original idea. However, he was the great populariser of it in America. Beecher was the guest speaker at the first Manitoba and Northwest Conference organized by George Young in 1883 in Winnipeg.

Similarly, Young also read Henry Drummond, a Scottish naturalist and theologian who stated: "God has arranged our life as progress, and its working principle is evolution."¹⁴⁵

Drummond was also considered a leader in American thought.¹⁴⁶ Young's original patron, his British superintendent Morley Punshon, also spoke of the church in evolutionary terms. Punshon published *Lectures and Sermons* in Toronto in 1878. These urbane addresses to young men reveal a faith anxious about its natural adaptivity, its ability to reconcile virtue and prosperity, and the demands of this new golden age. Punshon promoted Methodism in utilitarian terms – as "the source of all morals and the inspiration of all charity".¹⁴⁷

Young mentions favourably in his books these optimistic theologians who believed in a progressive, evolutionary Christianity. However, he never accepted the idea that material progress was evidence of God's will. He was too aware that material progress was not the lot of his Aboriginal friends around Lake Manitoba as the century ended, or the other Aboriginal nations about whom he read. Nor did he ever whole-heartedly endorse Darwin, stating dubiously in 1903, in *My Dogs in the Northland*: "If the theory of evolution is true..."

¹⁴⁴ *Lectures and Orations of Henry Ward Beecher*, page 161.

¹⁴⁵ Henry Drummond, *The Ideal Life: Addresses Hitherto Unpublished* (Toronto, 1898), page 86.

¹⁴⁶ Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism*, page 90.

¹⁴⁷ Morley Punshon, *Lectures and Sermons*, page 132.

Some theologically-minded people who could see that material prosperity was not reaching everyone turned to the social gospel. The theologians of the social gospel believed that the poverty and despair evident in the 1890 depression were theological concerns because they showed that the passage of time was not bringing about the Kingdom of God. The most well-known interpreters of the social gospel were Walter Rauchenbusch in the United States and the Reverend Salem Bland in Canada. In *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, published in 1907, Rauchenbusch stated that, based on his reading of the Old Testament, sin could be the characteristic of a whole people, or system.¹⁴⁸ Not only personal conversion, but a change for the better in entire economic (and political) systems was necessary to assist in bringing about the Kingdom of God. For Rauchenbusch, political and economic systems must be based on Christian principles, for only then could men find it easy to follow Christ and be moral.¹⁴⁹ Rauchenbusch and Washington Gladden, a Congregationalist preacher from Ohio, were identified by American religious historian John P. Ferré as moderate (between the socialist and conservative) social gossellers. “They emphasized the immanence of God in human affairs, the relevance of Christian love to the economy, and the increase of beneficence in social relations.”¹⁵⁰

Egerton R. Young seems to have stuck with a more orthodox view of the Kingdom of God, as expressed in an 1870’s sermon quoted earlier. However, there is some evidence that he did not disapprove of social gospel ideas, particularly those of moderate social gossellers, as identified by John P. Ferré. He was on friendly terms with Mark Guy Pearse, a well-known British supporter of the social gospel. Furthermore, in an interview published in Sydney,

¹⁴⁸ Donovan E. Smucker, *The Origin of Walter Rauchenbusch’s Social Ethics* (Kingston & Montreal, 1994), page 7.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, page 48.

¹⁵⁰ John P. Ferré, *A Social gospel for Millions: The Religious Bestsellers of Charles Sheldon, Charles Gordon, and Harold Bell Wright* (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1988), page 7.

Australia, in 1907, Young mentioned the “glorious awakening of the Churches in these latter years.”¹⁵¹ The Third Great Awakening was a term used by American preachers interested in a revival with a social dimension such as Washington Gladden and Josiah Strong, author of *The Next Great Awakening* (1901).¹⁵² Young was describing an event anticipated by social gossellers.

Historians such as Sharon Cook and George Rawlyk have cautioned that an interest in social causes should not be considered a monopoly of the social gospel. This is demonstrably true among clerical leaders known to Young. Morley Punshon, who believed that the Bible was divine and that Creation had taken place six thousand years ago, also preached that the poor had a claim on the state and the wealthy.¹⁵³ At the other end of the spectrum of theologians known to Young, Hugh Price Hughes insisted that all the work of his London mission converged “to the supreme end of personal conversion.”¹⁵⁴

Egerton R. Young welcomed the Third Awakening, befriended Mark Guy Pearse, and rejected progressivism. The fact that Egerton R. Young combined selected modern ideas with his traditional Wesleyan theology suggests that these theological doctrines may not have been experienced in the late-nineteenth century as mutually exclusive, as they are now judged to be by historians promoting a theory of secularization. Historian Neil Semple has concluded that few Methodists “had difficulty combining the holiness stress on personal regeneration with the social gospel emphasis on reshaping society.”¹⁵⁵ Young’s grafting of certain modern ideas on his traditional Wesleyan faith favours the position of the continuity historians such as Gauvreau,

¹⁵¹ Egerton R. Young, “Christianity among the Red Indians of America” *The Methodist* (Sydney, Australia, May 7, 1904).

¹⁵² Donald K. Gorrell, *The Age of Social Responsibility: The Social Gospel in the Progressive Era* (Macon, Georgia, 1988), page 69.

¹⁵³ Morley Punshon, *Lectures and Sermons*, page 316.

¹⁵⁴ Phyllis Airhart, page 75.

¹⁵⁵ Neil Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion*, page 353.

Airhart, Van Die and Neil Semple who state that the variety in theology at the end of the nineteenth-century is not a symptom of catastrophe to peoples' faith or their churches.

Brian McKillop has argued that the *Christian Guardian* considered the Anglican book *Essays and Reviews* of 1860 to be a larger threat to belief in God than Darwin.¹⁵⁶ This book introduced to Canadians the German school of historical investigation into the texts of the Bible, or higher criticism as it was called. Initially, higher criticism was controversial. Professor G.C. Workman, who suggested that the Old Testament should be read in a historical context in 1892, was dismissed from his theological teaching job at Victoria College. The Reverend E. H. Dewart supported Workman's dismissal.¹⁵⁷ However, higher criticism was quickly accepted by many people. In the popular sphere, the comparability of Old Testament stories with myths from other religions was popularised by Sir George Frazier in *The Golden Bough* (1890). By 1910, a professor teaching higher criticism at a Methodist college was vindicated.

Young's attitude towards the Bible changed over his lifetime, probably as a result of the popular acceptance of higher criticism. In his early sermons (probably from 1868 to 1876), he studied the lessons from the Old Testament using Wesley's hierarchy of interpretation which depended on accepting the Bible as a complete uncontradictory whole, in which clearer texts are used to explain the more obscure, and allegory is considered the least reliable method.¹⁵⁸ But by 1903, in the introduction to *Algonquin Indian Tales*, Young suggested that the stories in the Book of Judges could be compared to the "fables" of other cultures.¹⁵⁹ This is a considerable change in his theological perspective. For some historians, particularly Gauvreau, belief in the inerrancy of the Bible is an absolute line between secularisation and traditional theology by the

¹⁵⁶ A. B. McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence*, page 117.

¹⁵⁷ Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators*, page 21.

¹⁵⁸ Albert C. Outler "Introduction", *The Works of John Wesley Vol I*, page 59.

¹⁵⁹ Egerton R. Young, *Algonquin Indian Tales*, page 6.

end of the nineteenth-century. This would suggest that by 1903, no longer an active minister, and open to the concept of Biblical stories as myths, Egerton R. Young had crossed the line. However, other historians have suggested that this position on the nature of the Bible hardened later, most obviously with the foundation of the journal *The Fundamentals* in the United States in 1912.¹⁶⁰

Young's work shows three main influences: standard Wesleyan texts early in his life, popular theologians such as the well-known American Henry Ward Beecher and the Scottish theologian Henry Drummond, and, increasingly after 1900, contemporary American ethnology¹⁶¹ and popular history as written by Francis Parkman and Helen Hunt Jackson. Although Mark Guy Pearse, a British clergyman prominent in the social gospel movement, wrote the introduction to his first book, Young could not be labeled a social gospeller, or even an unqualified progressive. Young's awareness of the plight of Aboriginal people in the Canadian West made him immune to the popular progressive theology that God's will was evident in the enormous material progress (particularly in America) at the end of the nineteenth century. Young responded by distancing the Kingdom of God, as did many Victorians, but there is no evidence that he never assumed it could be created on earth by progressive economic and political policies. Nor did he abandon the belief that redemption was available only through Christ. Ethnographic references appear more frequently in his books after 1895, and reading ethnology may have influenced him in his acceptance of higher criticism. However, when it came to summing up his vocation, at the end of his life in his unpublished *History*, Young grafted the popular views of Francis Parkman and the pessimism of Helen Hunt Jackson onto an

¹⁶⁰ Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, pages 169-171.

¹⁶¹ Jennifer Brown, *DCB Volume XIII*, page 1122.

essentially Wesleyan framework of the advancement of the Kingdom of God, individual by individual, in the here-and-now, and in the afterlife.

Young is probably closest to the definition of an accommodating evangelical, suggested by Michael Gauvreau, who was able to graft certain modern ideas onto his traditional Wesleyan faith. Young's ideas fit well into the description of Protestant sermons in the 1880s offered by Canadian historian Arthur Lower: "virtually all of them orthodox, though many of them liberal."¹⁶²

However Young lacked several decisive ideas considered essential by Gauvreau and Rawlyk to be considered an evangelical, most notably a personal conversion experience and a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. Finally, E .R. Young could not be characterized as one of the ministers who secularized the Methodist Church from the inside out, according to David Marshall's interpretation, because he believed till the end of his life that the greatest gift to Aboriginal people was the Gospel.

Young never indicated in his writings that he felt compelled to defend his mix of theologies. He was not a brilliant mediator of competing ideas like Wesley. He did, at least once, attempt to wade into the debates about Christian perfection, and felt attacked for his excessive generosity, or good works. But even at his most bitter and personal, John McDougall never criticised Young's theology. McDougall and George Young, as will be demonstrated in Chapter IV, attacked Young's commitment to missionary life, but not his theology.

Egerton R. Young cannot be fit into the evangelical or secularizing categories suggested by some historians for late nineteenth-century Methodists, using the markers of a sudden conversion experience and a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. This does not seem to have bothered him, his colleagues, or, as Chapter IV will demonstrate, his audience. The lack of

¹⁶² Arthur M Lower, *Canadians in the Making*, page 320.

controversy around his mix of doctrines now considered mutually exclusive from a theological standpoint suggests that those markers are anachronistic to traditional late nineteenth-century Methodism. Young is probably best understood as an accommodating evangelical. William Westfall's "theology of experience," from the continuity school, fits him as well. Chapter IV will examine how he dealt with the relativism that, according to Gauvreau, defeated this position.

CHAPTER IV – THE AUTHOR

From 1888 until shortly before his death in 1909, Egerton R. Young lectured and published popular books on the subject of his eight years in Manitoba. At his death, he was working on a series of chapters that he hoped to publish as *The History of the Evangelization of the Indians in North America*. Although Young ceased to be an active minister about 1890, his theology featured prominently in his first four books published from 1890 to 1895. Then from 1895 to 1907, Young turned his experiences in Manitoba into popular fiction, and many of his theological ideas sank into the background. Young's writings fall into three groups: the missionary stories, the romances and the short stories (mostly animal stories). Young's vocation was clear in the missionary stories, as has been demonstrated in the last chapter. But that vocation was less evident when he turned to fiction, although he restated it in his last unpublished work. This chapter will examine Young's vocation chronologically, using methods of social and literary history to examine whether he lost his faith, and to further comment on the categories of doctrine suggested by historians involved in the secularisation versus continuity debate.

Many missionaries wrote about and published their experiences, leading one literary scholar, Terence Craig, to propose that missionary literature should be considered as a sub-genre of Canadian literature. Intellectual and cultural historians have dealt with the writings of late nineteenth-century missionaries as well. David Marshall has examined missionaries' books for evidence of specific ideas, particularly ideas considered significant in the secularisation versus continuity debate. Cultural historians, including such anthropologists as Brett Christopher, have

tended to be captured by post-colonial theory. Historian Sarah Carter claims that published missionary writings “justified and sanctioned the appropriation of Aboriginal land.”¹

Neither intellectual historians nor cultural historians have seriously considered a missionary’s literary production as a whole, in the context of the literature being published and read at the same time. (The one exception would be the work of the Reverend Charles Gordon, writing as Ralph Connor.) This chapter will suggest that placing Young’s work in the context of similar publications can provide perspective on the coherence of his ideas and the nature of his theology.

In general, Canadian literary historians have been most influenced by the theories of Northrop Frye, who suggested that literature is an internally coherent body of meaning, with its own categories, in which one book influences another. Without straying into literary criticism, this chapter will pursue two approaches influenced by this theory. First, this chapter will pursue what Quebec historian Yvan Lamonde calls the social history of ideas.² It will examine the production and dissemination of ideas, through the publishing and bookselling world in which Young needed to compete as an independent lecturer and author. Secondly, this chapter will discuss each book in the context of the leading examples of its genre at the time. Third, this chapter will also examine the non-theological influences in Young’s thought in a chronological order as they appear in his writings. Finally, this chapter will deal with the John McDougall criticisms and the Jack London controversy, and suggest how they may have affected Young very differently.

¹ Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto, 1999), page 78.

² le “circuit complet des idées, de leur production, de leur diffusion, de leur reception.” Yvan Lamonde, *Histoire sociale des idées au Québec (1760-1896)* (Fides, 2000), page 9.

Writing and Publishing in Canada, 1890-1909

The authors of Young's time whose influence has shaped serious literature, such as Tolstoy, Thomas Hardy, Ibsen and Turgenev, wrote in a style that American critics called realism. It was less prevalent in Canada than in the United States and Britain during Young's lifetime. There was a slight shift eventually from romance to realism in Canada, but the best known Canadian Prairie realist, F.P. Greve (writing as Frederick Philip Grove), published his first novel only in 1925.³ The realists were interested in the lives of common people, and attempted to write more naturally, particularly in reproducing speech. They featured frankness in describing the relations between the sexes.⁴ A standard of whether "the young girl" could read a book without being contaminated was common among American reviewers of the time.⁵ This standard acknowledged that most of the target audience for fiction was women and adolescent girls. Egerton R. Young did not attempt to write in a realist style, and always stayed well within the standards of propriety for a young girl. Instead, Young chose popular styles: travel diaries, romances, wilderness adventures and nature stories. This may suggest that Young was more concerned about popular taste than literary fame, in writing books that would sell and help him earn a living. Therefore Young's writings should be placed in the context of the popular literature of the time, which can be examined using the tool of the bestseller lists that were compiled in the United States beginning in 1885 and in Canada beginning in 1899. As Canadian historian Mary Vipond has suggested, best-selling fiction is written to appeal to and

³ Desmond Pacey, "Fiction 1920-1940", Carl Klinck (ed.), *The Literary History of Canada* (Toronto, 1965), page 679.

⁴ Gerald C. Knight, *The Critical Period in American Literature* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, n.d.), page 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, page 62

to confirm the experiences of the widest possible middle-class audience, and consequently reflects its attitudes.⁶

Egerton R. Young made the transition from lecturer to author at a time of great change in the publishing industry. His namesake, Egerton Ryerson, had instituted free public education in Canada in 1841. The Education Acts of 1870 and 1876 had created free public education in England. By the 1890s there was a large, mostly middle-class reading public. People bought books by mail or at booksellers, and there was a rising market for inexpensive novels.⁷ In the United States, the 1890's seem to have marked the beginning of the phenomenon of the author as celebrity, and of mass popularity for a single work. A craze developed when Rudyard Kipling visited the United States in 1890, with newspapers reporting on his every move, and large sales of many unauthorised American editions of his books.⁸

In 1891, after a generation of lobbying by, among others, Charles Dickens, the United States finally signed on to the 1886 Berne Convention, which committed countries to providing national treatment to copyrighted work, regardless of the country of origin. At issue was the flood of cheap and inaccurate pirated versions of popular British works being printed in the United States. The Convention meant that, in theory, authors could expect to receive royalties, should their publishers make arrangements with others in London, New York and Toronto to reprint separate editions of their works. However, American publishers did not immediately cease printing works without permission. Works that had been serialised in periodicals first, or published before 1891, seem to have been particularly vulnerable to flaws in copyright that allowed many unauthorised editions. The problem can be illustrated by Ralph Connor's first

⁶ Mary Vipond, "Best Seller in English Canada 1899 – 1918: An Overview", *Journal of Canadian Fiction* no 24, 1979, page 98.

⁷ John P. Ferré, *A Social Gospel for Millions: The Religious Bestsellers of Charles Sheldon, Charles Gordon and Harold Bell Wright* (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1988), page 9.

⁸ Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York, 1947), page 185.

novel, *Black Rock*, about a Presbyterian missionary in a mining town in the Selkirk Mountains, which was published in 1898. American literary historian Frank Mott wrote that the publishers of cheap editions discovered a defect in the copyright of *Black Rock*, and within the next three years (chiefly in 1901) eight publishers brought out editions ranging in price from twenty-five cents to a dollar. Eventually at least twelve publishers issued editions of *Black Rock*, and the sales went beyond half-a-million.⁹ Authorized or not, Ralph Connor had more bestsellers in both countries than any other Canadian writer during this period.

The 1891 treaty meant that Egerton R. Young should have been paid a royalty on nearly all of his publications. However, an examination of the existing copies of his works on AMICUS, the National Library's listing of holdings in Canadian university libraries, shows a bewildering array of publishers. Normally, an author will sign a contract with a single publisher in a given country. The publisher may print the book in several locations in that country under his own name, or he may occasionally assign the rights to a different publisher for fancy or special editions. However it is not common for a publisher to assign copyright to another in the same city. There is an equal number of publishers for Young's books published immediately after 1891 as before, many of which are clustered in New York. It appears that Young, like Ralph Connor, may have been plagued by the pirating of his works, which would have resulted in his receiving no royalties for many editions.

Aside from C.H. Kelly in London and William Briggs in Toronto who are known to have paid Young royalties, seven American publishers brought out *By Canoe and Dog Train among the Cree and Salteaux* after it first appeared in 1890. *From Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires* was published in 1891 by C.H. Kelly in London, William Briggs in Toronto and Eaton & Main in New York, after the American adherence to the international copyright treaty.

⁹ Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes*, page 197.

It had three known additional American publishers. In 1894, *Oowikapun; or How the Gospel Reached the Nelson River Indians* was published by Eaton and Main in New York, and the following year by C.H Kelly in London, and William Briggs in Toronto. There are also editions by two other American publishers. *The Apostle of the North* published in 1899 had at least two New York and two London publishers. *Three Boys in the Wild North Land*, also published in 1899, had at least three London and three New York editions besides William Briggs in Toronto. *Algonquin Indian Tales* was published by C.H. Kelly in London in 1900, and by F.H. Revell in New York and Toronto. The Abingdon Press reprinted it three times between 1903 and 1915, and R. Culley brought out an edition with coloured plates in London in 1907. The latter may well have been a legitimate arrangement for a fancier edition. Subsequently, the piracy seemed to have diminished.

This problem does not seem to have disturbed Young's relationship with his publishers, as C.H. Kelly in London and William Briggs in Toronto remained his publishers for ten years. In 1900, Fleming H. Revell became both his Toronto and New York publisher. W.A. Wilde of Boston printed *Hector, My Dog* and *The Battle of the Bears*; there does not seem to have been a Canadian publisher.

In English Canada, the publishing industry was centred in Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. William Briggs published a "significant amount of Canadian work"¹⁰ but most publishers were sustained by reprints of British and American works. Between 1899 and 1918, Canadian bestseller lists show, Canadians purchased 44% American fiction, 36% British fiction and 21% Canadian fiction.¹¹ A Canadian author had little incentive to publish in Canada first, if he could land a New York or London publisher, as it would not affect his Canadian sales to have entered

¹⁰ Mary Vipond, *Journal of Canadian Fiction* no. 24, page 99.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, page 108.

the more lucrative markets first. A Canadian publisher could be found to reprint his book published in the bigger markets, and Canadian readers would buy a book irrespective of the author's nationality. This is exactly what Young appears to have done, by publishing first with C.H. Kelly in London.

The churches also had publishing houses, and as an employee of a church, Young's missionary reports belonged to it. Missionaries were expected to produce reports to inspire and to raise money for the cause. William Brooks remarked that the vigorous McDougalls, *père et fils*, were censored for not producing enough, but that Egerton R. Young always produced a great deal and sent it back to Toronto.¹² From these raw materials, the churches published periodicals and books, and sold them by subscription in a tradition dating back to the *Jesuit Relations*. When the Methodist Church complained that Young was sending copies of his missionary report to friends who published in local newspapers what they intended to publish through their annual Reports, their concern appears to have been with a loss of potential revenue.

The Missionary Books

Egerton R. Young's first and most successful books sprang directly from his career as a lecturer on his missionary life. *By Canoe and Dog Train among the Cree and Salteaux; From Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires; Reverend James Evans, Apostle of the North; and Indian Life in the Great North-West* probably started life as lectures. *On the Indian Trail: Stories of Missionary Work among the Cree and Salteaux Indians*, which was published as a book for young people in 1897, was a collection of previously published articles, some from the Methodist publication *Young People's Weekly* of Chicago. These will be treated as the missionary books.

¹² William Brooks, "Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century", page 115.

E.R. Young was not the first missionary or speaker to tour England lecturing on either the financial needs of missions or Canadian Aboriginal people. Peter Jones had done a tour of England in 1831, Peter Jacobs had toured in the 1870's and Pauline Johnson, the Mohawk poet, toured in 1884. As a result there probably was an established market for tales of Aboriginal people, and many people in America and Britain may have had some knowledge and some opinions about Canadian Aboriginal people. As a lecturer, Young was not officially sponsored by the Methodist Church of Canada.¹³ Rather he made financial arrangements with individual congregations. As a self-supporting businessman, it must have seemed natural to turn these lectures into book form and earn more revenue from them, particularly as his lectures had developed an audience in three countries.

Terence L. Craig states that missionary biographies and autobiographies were collected and read by so many Canadians in the late nineteenth-century that they should be considered their own sub-genre of Canadian literature.¹⁴ According to Craig, missionary lives were inevitably about success: "the life is presented as divinely designed and therefore incapable of failure so long as faith persists."¹⁵ Craig viewed missionaries as instruments of colonisation, and as personifications of their culture, seeking to vindicate Homeness over Otherness.¹⁶ Craig makes no distinction between church reports assured of distribution and sales among the faithful by subscription, and books published by secular publishers for sale through booksellers and by mail order.

Craig's theory ignores the tension between the missionary's theology and his own society that has been explored by intellectual and cultural historians at least since the publication of

¹³ Mark Guy Pearse, "Introduction", *By Canoe and Dog Train among the Cree and Salteaux*, page 3.

¹⁴ Terence L. Craig, *The Missionary Lives: A Study in Canadian Missionary Biography and Autobiography* (Leiden, Netherlands, n. d. [c. 1970]), page xi.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, page 69.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, page 75.

Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era, as demonstrated in Chapter I. As well, Craig did not take into account the immense difference between Young's book and such classic Protestant diaries as *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners; or, a Brief Relation of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ to his Poor Servant John Bunyan*, (published in 1666) or *The Life of David Brainerd* (published in 1749). A brief examination of these two Protestant classics will demonstrate that Young's missionary books were profoundly different from them.

Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners lacks autobiographical information, being almost entirely concerned with "God's dealing" with the author.¹⁷ The book records a progression of spiritual struggles and victories, beginning with first consciousness of guilt. Bunyan also gives spiritual advice to his readers. Bunyan's crisis comes when he wishes Christ out of his life, and he spends the majority of the book trying to decide if this is the unpardonable sin, blasphemy (according to Mark 3, 29), and he is therefore damned. His struggle consists mostly of searching for or recollecting snippets of scripture for and against his case. This singularity of purpose is reflected by the text, which is free of any anecdotes or musings that might distract from the sinner's progress, against the brevity of life and perennial Biblical characters.

The Life of David Brainerd has been in print continuously since the mid-eighteenth century and was deemed required reading for Methodist clergy by John Wesley. It is a spiritual diary of the struggles of a man desperate for a sign of God's favour such as a conversion experience, but very suspicious of any imaginings that might be "sparks of my own kindling."¹⁸ Early in the diary, Brainerd despairs of "the work of conversion"¹⁹ on his own soul. He suffers from very mixed feelings about his call to become a missionary among the Aborigines in

¹⁷ G. B. Harrison, "Introduction", John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, page viii.

¹⁸ Jonathan Edwards, *The Life of David Brainerd*, page 117.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, page 106.

Massachusetts.²⁰ However, missionary work, which is presented as tiresome and miserable, is part of the soul's struggle to reconcile itself with its own powerlessness in the face of the awful majesty of God.²¹ Brainerd describes the beautiful hardwoods of lower New England in early October 1743, as "a howling wilderness."²² In this he echoes Bunyan, because he is not describing an autumn landscape, but an inner journey to the wilderness into which Moses led his people, and into which Christ retired before his great trials. *The Life of David Brainerd* is a spiritual journal that mentions missionary work as one means to try to ascertain the fate of one's own soul. Spiritual certainty was not necessary. In fact, Brainerd describes it as "the extreme danger of self-confidence."²³ Nor is the worth of a missionary to be judged by his outcomes, the number of souls he converts. Brainerd himself became depressed about his ineffectiveness among the Aboriginal people in February 1744.²⁴ Soon after, he did see some success, and eventually was rewarded with an awakening among sixty-five people at Crossweeksun. These he examined to make sure that their comfort from the terror of hell that he preached was "rational and scriptural"; five or six people, he judged, had had a "saving change."²⁵ Like Bunyan, Brainerd was very concerned about the quality and validity of the spiritual experience, and relatively indifferent to degrees of civilisation. For him, there was a danger of mistaking appearance for the real thing. He was verbally cruel to some Aboriginal visitors who had been converted by the Quakers. These people, he wrote, "being more civilized and conformed to English manners than the generality of the Indians," had "imbibed some of the Quakers' errors; especially this fundamental one viz., that if men will but live soberly and honestly, according to

²⁰ Ibid., page 158.

²¹ Ibid., page 210.

²² Ibid., page 267.

²³ Ibid., page 261.

²⁴ Ibid., page 285.

²⁵ Ibid., page 313.

the dictates of their own consciences (or the light therein) there is no danger or doubt of their salvation etc.”²⁶ Nor did he expect his Aboriginal flock to conform to European subsistence farming. Aware that they could not live without their hunting grounds he redeemed these from debt.²⁷ In the end, Brainerd baptised a total of forty-two adults.²⁸

Young’s works are infinitely lighter in tone and more entertaining than the classic spiritual autobiographies to which he referred. Missing from Young’s books is the personal journey through mortification to redemption, and there is no spiritual advice. Craig’s thesis that missionary books have enough in common to be considered a sub-genre does not add anything to an understanding of Egerton R. Young’s ideas, and his choice of a second career as an author. A comparison with the secular books popular in Canada in the late 1880’s and 1890’s is more revealing.

By 1890, there was a nascent indigenous literature in Canada. Well-known Methodists were involved, such as E.H. Dewart, the influential editor of the *Christian Guardian*, who published the first known collection of Canadian poetry: *Selections from Canadian Poets; with Occasional Critical and Biographical Notes and an Introductory Essay on Canadian Poetry* (1864). However, the book that sold more copies in Canada than any other in the 1880’s was *Canadian Life and Scenery*, a travel diary by the Marquis of Lorne, which provided the model for subsequent authors’ descriptions of the natural beauty of Western Canada.²⁹ Travel diaries were immensely popular at the end of the nineteenth century. Peak years in the production of travel books were 1885, 1895 and 1911.

²⁶ Ibid., page 346.

²⁷ Ibid., page 358.

²⁸ Ibid., page 433.

²⁹ Elizabeth Waterston “Travel Books 1880-1920”, Klinck, *The Literary History of Canada*, page 349.

Another very popular example was Lady Dufferin's *My Canadian Journal* (1891).³⁰ Lady Dufferin's book was a chatty paean to the beauties and potential of the new Dominion, arranged in the chronological order of a diary. Generally, each chapter consisted of one year, which gave the *Journal* a romantic circularity, with anecdotes hung on the familiarity of the change in seasons, annual rituals like Christmas, etc. The horseflies, corduroy roads, poor immigrants and French half-breeds who "rode beautifully"³¹ on a visit to Manitoba in 1877 were all equally treated in anecdotes, with approval reserved for hard work and romantic scenery. There was an absolute minimum of complaint, personal detail or politics. The intimacy came not from the detail, but from the tone, as of a wealthy hostess aiming to amuse a worthwhile guest. A third very popular and influential travel book about Western Canada was General Sir William Butler's *The Great Lone Land: a Narrative of Travel and Adventure in the Northwest of America* (1872), an amusing narrative which concentrated on the beauty of the scenery, quaintness of rural speech and character, and the dignity of Aboriginal people.

Young's first four books are very similar to these travel diaries in the important areas of shape, tone and choice of detail. As well, he used several expressions from Butler including "the great lone land." Discomfort is minimized in favour of amusing or colourful anecdotes. Each major trip (to Oxford House, to Nelson River, to Sandy Bar) or incident (arrival of John Semmens, smallpox) delineates a chapter. *By Canoe and Dog-Train* is filled with anecdotes and romantic descriptions of scenery. *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires* has essentially the same travel diary organization, though there are more thematic chapters fitted into the chronological scheme: one on abuse of alcohol, one on Aboriginal religion, one on the Hudson's Bay Company. These are the anecdotes and themes that Young had polished in

³⁰ Ibid., page 347.

³¹ Marchioness of Dufferin & Ava, *My Canadian Journal 1872-8* (London, 1891), page 341.

lectures on three continents; here they are arranged in the travel diary style so popular at the period. Other Methodist autobiographies, such as Thomas Crosby's *Up and Down the Pacific Coast*, also emphasized the beauties of the land and local characters in a chronological narrative, but were much more serious in tone.

The tone in Young's books is very similar to Lady Dufferin's: upbeat, amusing, and anecdotal. Neither Young nor Lady Dufferin often mention their spiritual or emotional state, and discomfort is minimized. As well, Lady Dufferin freely mixed interesting rumours or stories with personal observation. Of a visit to St Boniface she recorded:

In the evening we had a visit from eight or ten Indians, who came to dance and sing for us....The men were fine, good-looking and tall, of the Sioux nation. They all came over from the States fifteen years ago. They had feathers in their hair, and we are told that each white feather represents a white man's scalp taken by the wearer, and a coloured feather stands for an Indian's scalp... We dismissed them when we had seen enough, but D[ufferin] promised to go over in the morning.³²

It is clear from the entry that Lady Dufferin never spoke to the Aboriginal men, and the source of the scalp story is never given. Among British authors of travel diaries of North America (who established the genre), anecdotes regarding the life and customs of Aboriginal people were particularly common targets of this type of treatment. Sir William Francis Butler frequently and quite casually repeated anecdotes of Aboriginal life verbatim. One anecdote he prefaced with the remark: "I have told this story at length just as I heard it from the man who had been in charge of the party"³³ as if to excuse any lack of veracity. A similar mixing of entertaining generalizations and anecdotes about French Canadians were the staple of Gilbert Parker's hugely popular novels.

³² Ibid., page 325.

³³ General Sir William Francis Butler, *The Wild Northland: Being the Story of a Winter Journey, With Dog, Across Northern North America* (New York, 1903), page 64.

This style caused fury when Mrs. Trollope used it to describe the social customs of the Americans.

Finally, Young followed travel diary practice in his choice of mixing personal stories and third-hand anecdotes without distinguishing between them. Young re-used anecdotes and repeated what would now be called oral history. A representative use of oral history-cum-rumour is Young's account of the small-pox epidemic on the Prairies in 1870. Young had no direct experience of the epidemic, but he would have heard about this terrible event so close by. James Earnest Nix, the biographer of the McDougalls, confirmed that the report of smallpox south of the border came "with an intensification of war and rumour."³⁴ Young begins a chapter of *By Canoe and Dog-Train* with a rumour:

We were very much shocked, during the early spring, to hear that that terrible disease, the small-pox, had broken out among the Indians on the great plains of the Saskatchewan. It seems to have been brought into the country by some white traders coming up from the State of Montana. When once it had got amongst them, it spread with amazing rapidity and fatality. To make matters worse, one of the tribes of Indians, being at war with another, secretly carried off some of the infected clothing, which had been worn by their own dead friends, into the territory of those with whom they were at war, and left it where it could be easily found and carried off. In this way the disease was communicated to this second tribe, and thousands of them died from it.³⁵

Other oral histories Young recorded have since been vindicated. He included an account of the death of General Custer at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, an event that had galvanized the popular imagination, and was frequently referred to in the press. Young's account of Custer's death, gained from "survivors of the fights," indicated that Custer was shot twice at the end of the battle, once through the head and another through his body.³⁶ American

³⁴ James Earnest Nix, *Mission among the Buffalo: The Labours of the Reverends George M. and John C. McDougall in the Canadian Northwest 1860-1876* (Toronto, 1960), page 60.

³⁵ Egerton R. Young, *By Canoe and Dog-Train*, page 197.

³⁶ Egerton R. Young, *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*, page 222.

novelist Evan Connell stated in *Son of Morning Star: Custer and the Little Bighorn* (published in 1984), that “he had been shot twice: in the left side beneath the breast and in the left temple.”³⁷

In another case, Young recounted how Christian Aboriginal men, racing against time to transport furs and goods across the West, insisted on keeping the Sabbath, an important Methodist doctrine. As if to vindicate that doctrine, Young reported that the fur brigades who respected the Sabbath arrived at the final destination ahead of other brigades that had travelled on Sunday.

The incident probably originates in oral history, as it took place in the time of James Evans. It has been repeated by many historians since. Young also recorded, but never published, an eye-witness account of the overland Franklin expedition recited by an old man at Norway House.

Criticisms of the Missionary Books by the Reverend John McDougall

A controversy arose with John McDougall over the veracity of some of the facts in the first two missionary books which should be understood in the context of the use of anecdotes about Aboriginal life in the popular literary form of the travel diary. Young’s use of the travel diary convention, of mixing unsubstantiated story or oral history with the narrative (not unknown to popular historians today) caused Young great grief with John McDougall, and in the long run, his own reputation among Methodists. The fact that it was a literary convention may partially vindicate Young today, but it was certainly no excuse for nineteenth-century Methodists who tended to be suspicious of any products of the imagination. McDougall, who was described by another Methodist missionary’s wife as not one to suffer fools gladly,³⁸ wrote a long letter that was published in the *Christian Guardian*, criticising *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*. Young responded, McDougall wrote back. The exchange became too nasty to print in the Methodist periodical, and McDougall printed the letters privately, in 1895. McDougall

³⁷ Evan Connell, *Son of Morning Star: Custer and the Little Bighorn* (San Francisco, 1984), page 409.

³⁸ Nan Shipley, *Anna and the Indians* (Toronto, 1955), page 85.

began by criticizing the illustrations as “not true to life at the time”; Aboriginal people were shown wearing feathers and buckskin rather than the “white man’s or Hudson Bay employee costume”³⁹ they had been wearing for several generations. McDougall corrected details in Young’s account of the McDougall family history. The coffins provided for John McDougall’s sisters were not sawn, but were gifts from the Hudson’s Bay Company. George McDougall did not lie down and die in a snowstorm; the cause of death in the snowstorm was unknown. John McDougall corrected several other anecdotes: Maskepetoon never treated prisoners badly before his conversion; Joe, who accompanied the missionaries on their first trip to Winnipeg, was Cree, not Sioux; the Cree greeting is misspelled; lynx are not trapped in a deadfall trap; pemmican was poured hot into the skin bag. McDougall cried out: “I have travelled three times as many winters under more difficult circumstances than Mr. Young. I have camped in the cold twenty times to his once.”⁴⁰ Yet who was getting to tour England as the expert raconteur of Aboriginal manners?

Considering the trivial nature of most of the accusations, the level of vindictiveness became quite severe. McDougall suggested that only “mismanagement” could have caused the Youngs to dine on a wildcat during the Riel Rebellion, that their daughter’s nickname from Longfellow was unlikely Cree, that the word “squaw” was racist, and that refusing to lock the Rossville Mission was a slight on the Cree and previous missionaries. He suggested that Young had abandoned the ministry by going on tour.

Young pointed out that he was not responsible for the illustrations; illustrators were normally chosen and commissioned by the publisher. It was not until Young switched to publisher W.A. Wilde around 1902, that his books were illustrated with his own photographs. Young defended his Cree expressions, and pointed out that the nickname Minnehaha (from

³⁹ John McDougall, *“Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires”: A Criticism* (Toronto, 1895), page 1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, page 12.

Longfellow) was bestowed by Hudson's Bay Company officials on his daughter. He stated again that lynx were indeed caught in deadfall traps (an observation corroborated by F. Frost in his missionary memoirs).⁴¹ Young stated that he had never insulted Cree women or other missionaries.⁴² He used the word "squaw" only once: "The singular use of one of them is found in connection with an amusing story, and here it is correct as it is a Salteaux word."⁴³

Young stated that the criticism that hurt the most was that by touring England, preaching and lecturing, he had abandoned his Methodist calling. As he was shortly to give up parish ministry, his vehemence suggests both that he remained attached to the Methodist Church and his vocation, and that he felt that this was the most damaging of McDougall's accusations. By quoting his own greater experience of hardship in the field, McDougall was challenging both Young's integrity, and his dedication to the missionary vocation. The other charges are quite trivial, and not worth so much rancour. In response to this last accusation, Young, in his reply, also descended to nasty personal remarks: that McDougall's trading for furs made the Company more watchful of other missionaries, that McDougall presumed on family marriages with the Company, that he had left some women missionaries waiting overnight at the train station, and that he made few converts among the Blackfoot. At this point, the *Christian Guardian* declined to publish any more correspondence. In his private printing McDougall spelled out that Young had cost the Church \$19,000 while he was in Manitoba, whereas McDougall cost only \$10,000 over the same period, and that George Young was allegedly embarrassed to be taken for the Young who tells "the whoppers."

The McDougall -Young controversy seems to have damaged Egerton R. Young's reputation among Methodist churchmen. Egerton R. Young had only fine things to say in his

⁴¹ F. Frost, *Sketches of Indian Life* (Toronto, 1904), page 27.

⁴² John McDougall, "*Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*": *A Criticism*, page 17.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, page 22.

missionary books and in private correspondence about his chairman, but they had had different interpretations of the 1870 uprising, and cool relations between them may have contributed to Egerton R. Young's decision to leave Manitoba. In his memoirs George Young commented:

It has been thought by some (perhaps uncharitably) that missionaries sometimes have trenched rather closely on the extravagant and the imaginative in their reports given through the press and on the platform, of scenes witnessed, perils braved, and achievements effected by themselves.⁴⁴

The mention of the platform makes it likely that George Young was implying Egerton R. Young; McDougall, Semmens, and Crosby also published accounts of missionary life, but did not lecture professionally outside the church as Young chose to do. In fact, Young did not exaggerate his own role, usually portraying himself as an inferior outdoorsmen to his Cree friends. As in the McDougall-Young correspondence, the main issue seems to be the depth of Young's vocation and character once he chose to entertain around the world rather than to continue toiling in obscure Ontario pulpits. When Alexander Sutherland published in 1907 a list of suggested books for reading by young people, he included John McDougall's books and George Young's *Manitoba Memories* but only Young's hagiography, *Rev James Evans: Apostle of the North*. The two missionary books criticized by McDougall were omitted. It would seem that McDougall's criticism had had an impact.

Criticisms of Young's writing along the same vein persisted. Methodist church historian R.H. Riddell accused Young of adding untruths to the life of James Evans. Young's biography added the oral recollections of Norway House Cree, particularly about the famous incident in which Evans accidentally killed his assistant, to the information available in John MacLean's *James Evans: Inventor of the Syllabic System of the Cree Language*, published nine years earlier in 1890. There has been a long-standing controversy around the facts of James Evans' ministry

⁴⁴ George Young, *Manitoba Memories*, page 304.

and recall, so it is not possible to ascertain if it was the oral history Riddell was questioning. More likely it was Young's accusations that William Mason, who later joined the Anglican Church, framed James Evans. Most of the rumours about Evans' recall that were later proved untrue, historian Gerald Hutchison points out, arose from the fact that neither the British Methodists nor the Hudson's Bay Company would share any of their records. In fact, Evans' brother had written a letter in 1865 blaming William Mason.⁴⁵ Young's 1899 biography suggested that, based on his later disloyalty to Methodism, Mason was the likely villain who trumped up the charges against Evans. A recent M.A. thesis by Raymond Shirritt-Beaumont points out that Mason had been reprimanded for lying before he worked for Evans, and concludes that Mason may, indeed, have been the villain in the affair.⁴⁶

Young was not only accused of adding falsehoods to his writing, but of romanticizing other details. In *Methodism and the Middle West*, R.H. Riddell observed: "Those who profess to know Indian life intimately, contend that some of his [E.R. Young's] stories are highly idealized accounts of some very ordinary incidents in the life of the noble Red Man."⁴⁷ This suspicion has been picked up by more recent historians. In 1972, William Brooks suggested that Young was an unreliable writer who exaggerated the number of converts, but Brooks quotes no evidence. Certainly, this charge seems to be refuted by the fact that there was a revival at Berens' River (reported by John Semmens) after Young's return to Ontario, and that many people commented on the piety of the Norway House Cree, beginning with John Ryerson, who visited in 1854.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Gerald Hutchison, "British Methodists and the Hudson's Bay Company 1840-1854", *Prairie Spirit: Perspectives on the Heritage of the United Church of Canada in the West* (Manitoba, 1985), page 34.

⁴⁶ Raymond Shirritt-Beaumont, "The Rossville Scandal, 1846: James Evans, the Cree, and a Mission on Trial" (Winnipeg, January 2001).

⁴⁷ R.H. Riddell, *Methodism in the Middle West*, page 60.

⁴⁸ See for example John Ryerson, *A Missionary Tour in the Territory of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company* published in 1855, as quoted in Brooks, page 101; also George Young *Manitoba Memories*, page 294; and Robert Rundle, *The Rundle Diaries*.

Not all churchmen distrusted Young's stories. For example, William Gunn, in 1918, cribbed heavily from Egerton R. Young to describe "The Indians after the Gospel had come" in *His Dominion*.

The controversy marked Young. References to "my beloved chairman" disappear from later recountings of his years in Manitoba. He dropped George McDougall from his list of notable missionaries. The only mention of Church administration in *The Battle of the Bears* refers to the response to Young's request for a missionary at Berens' River and the "cold reply that there were no volunteers for such places, and if there had been, there was no money in the treasury with which to send them."⁴⁹ He recorded that the Ojibwa considered this to be a lie.

Young recorded oral history, and used it to enliven his narrative according to the conventions of the travel diary. There may be a hint of racism in his contemporaries' tendency to discount any stories that were not verified from white lips. His first two books of missionary stories brought on the wrath of John McDougall. McDougall's credibility as a life-long missionary in the West meant that Young would be considered less dedicated for having forsaken the mission field, and therefore a less reliable authority. This reputation followed him into the twentieth century.

It may be difficult to rehabilitate Young's reputation for early twenty-first century readers based on the conventions of the travel diary, despite the verification of a number of his oral stories, as the travel diary has been recently condemned as necessarily imperialist in intent, though post-colonial criticism. In an article published recently in the *Canadian Historical Review*, sports historian Greg Gillespie suggests that the published travel diaries of William Francis Butler and other English big-game hunters served to appropriate the Canadian west for the British Empire through the imposition of the Linnaean system, the romantic gaze and

⁴⁹ Egerton R. Young, *The Battle of the Bears*, page 305.

approaching order on their descriptions of the West.⁵⁰ Sarah Carter has examined how the travel notes of Samuel Hearne and Paul Kane were extensively altered, specifically to make Aboriginal people appear more savage, and Aboriginal women less independent, before being published as travel literature.⁵¹

Romances of E.R. Young

When Egerton R. Young ventured into fiction it was, ironically, with novels with much more authentic backgrounds about life in the Northwest than were otherwise being published. However, these novels were not such a change from his four collections of stories polished on the lecture circuit, as most of the fiction sold at the time was also inspirational. The American book of the 1890's that sold the largest number of copies was *In his Steps*, a novel about the prosperous members of a middle-class congregation who were inspired by the reproaches of a dying pauper, and abandoned wealth and success to assist the urban poor. Some taught or nursed, one woman gave up a brilliant opera career to sing at revival meetings, one man cleaned his newspaper of all sensationalist reporting of crime and vice. Charles Sheldon had originally given *In His Steps* as a series of cliff-hanging story-sermons, before they were published in 1892. Many subsequent pirated editions followed, and it may have sold six million copies by 1947.⁵² Popular religious books had been a mainstay of literate middle-class reading since the Reformation, but *In His Steps* would lead to decades of similar inexpensive inspirational novels read by the new middle class.⁵³

⁵⁰ Greg Gillespie, "I Was Well Pleased with Our Sport among the Buffalo': Big-Game Hunters, Travel Writing, and Cultural Imperialism in the British North American West, 1847-72" *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 83, Number 4 (Winter 2002), page 555-584.

⁵¹ Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, page 46.

⁵² Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes*, page 194.

⁵³ John P. Ferré, *A Social Gospel for Millions*, page 12.

After religious books, the largest category of books found on the bestseller lists of both Canada and the United States, in the 1890's was the historical romance, often situated in colonial America and Regency England.⁵⁴ American literary scholar Grant C. Knight states that the typical romantic novel of the 1890's made use of fortunate coincidence to underscore a benevolent providence.⁵⁵ A Canadian, resident in England, was responsible for several best sellers of this genre. Gilbert Parker reached the American bestseller list with *The Seats of the Mighty* in 1896 and *The Battle of the Strong* in 1898.⁵⁶ He was the most popular author of this genre in Canada, until the end of the First World War.⁵⁷ His first success was a collection of linked stories about the Canadian West, *Pierre and His People*, which was published in book form in 1897. *Pierre and His People* features such stock characters as the silent policeman, drooling idiot, aristocratic women living in log cabins identifiable by their white hands, and Indians who say "How". Characters meet a herd of moose in Wild Hawk Woods,⁵⁸ or camp in the middle of the prairies in "a vast pine grove." The plots concern a series of rich British heiresses who meet their estranged lovers in remote cabins. The book was criticized at the time for inauthenticity, but it launched its author's career. Gilbert Parker wrote many more romances, and became a baronet and a member of the British parliament.

If the reading public wanted inspirational religious novels in which true love was rewarded, heroes morally improved by the wilderness on their way to financial success, and vast pine groves, all suitable to be read by a young girl, Egerton R. Young was surely equipped to provide it. He wrote two romances: *Oowikapun; or How the Gospel Reached the Nelson River Indians* published in 1894 and *Children of the Forest: A Story of Indian Love* published in 1904.

⁵⁴ Mary Vipond, *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, no 24, page 104.

⁵⁵ Grant C. Knight, *The Critical Period in American Literature*, page 17.

⁵⁶ Alice Payne Hatchett and James Henry Burke, *80 Years of Bestsellers 1895-1975* (New York, 1977), page 60.

⁵⁷ Mary Vipond, *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, page 101.

⁵⁸ Gilbert Parker, *Pierre and His People* (Toronto, 1897), page 54.

Oowikapun featured that staple of spiritual autobiographies and fiction such as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and *In His Steps*: the spiritual wrestling, and descent into despair of the hero. However it was not the missionary who was the Christian pilgrim, but the Ojibwa hero. This makes *Oowikapun* stand apart from the bestsellers with which it was in competition, like *Pierre and His People* or the novels of Charles Gordon. *Oowikapun* drew heavily on Aboriginal life around Berens' River, and Young and James Evans both appear as minor characters. The heroine was based on a little girl Evans briefly adopted. The first visit of the hero to the shaman repeated Young's own experience when he arrived at Nelson River.⁵⁹ Romance and fictional spiritual autobiography were married together as the hero and heroine sought Christ, and were denied to each other in Christian marriage until they converted. It does not seem to have gone through more than one edition in Toronto and London.

Children of the Forest: A Story of Indian Love, published in 1904, was different in a few subtle ways. This time, Young did not attempt to make an Aboriginal man into the hero of a *Pilgrim's Progress*. Rather there were three linked young couples, and a background of Sioux-Ojibwa warfare to add excitement. The story was a classical comedy, as defined by Northrop Frye, in that the choices of the young people, including marriage partners, trump the authority of their parents. The fictionalised missionary based on James Evans was much more important here than in *Oowikapun*. The last five chapters are based on the arrival of James Evans at Fort William in 1838. Young attempted to view the arrival of missionary through Aboriginal eyes:

Fresh runners had come in and even some of their own Ojibwa hunters who had been as far east as Thunder Bay and had not only spoken to these Black Coats, but had themselves seen the wonderful Book and had heard these palefaces tell out of it that the Keche Manito had made the heaven and the earth.

They also said that the wonderful Book had in it many other marvellous stories. Some of them they had never heard before, while some of them sounded like traditions of their own people, especially one that told of a great flood where

⁵⁹ Egerton R. Young, *Oowikapun*, page 147.

Nanaboozhoo made the raft and on it saved the animals, and then created the new world.⁶⁰

Chief Big Canoe spoke to the gathered people, his speech followed by “the principle address which was given by those who were opposed to change.”⁶¹ This very moving speech of several pages’ length began with a recitation of the Cherokee creation myth about the beginning of the different races and ended, “So my voice is against the new religion because it is of the white man, who has taken our lands, given us bad diseases, and killed so many of us with his fire-water.” Christianity was to be shunned because it could not be a good religion emanating from bad people. Dramatically, Evans listened, and answered only “Akwa ayumehata (Let us pray).”⁶² It is not hard to imagine that this vivid attack on Christianity, shaped like a good oration, may owe something to a Cree reproach Young originally heard in Manitoba. The last chapters of *Children of the Forest* are an imaginative, and much more effective introduction of the confident, multi-lingual Evans and Aboriginal reservations about Methodism than Young’s hagiography of Evans published in 1899.

Children of the Forest did not feature the narrator missionary, and that voice disappeared from Young’s subsequent writing, except for a few of the short stories published in *The Battle of the Bears*. In his later fiction about his Manitoba experiences, Young’s vocation retreated into the background. Based on the number of editions of his works that were published, it appears that his work declined in popularity. Another minister-turned-author, Charles Gordon (publishing as Ralph Connor) also suffered a decline in popularity with his later novels over roughly the same years. However, Connor’s books outsold any other Canadian before the First

⁶⁰ Egerton R. Young, *Children of the Forest: A Story of Indian Love* (London, 1904), page 235.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, page 246.

⁶² *Ibid.*, page 244.

World War,⁶³ and a contemporary literary critic pointed out that he was the first Canadian to become wealthy from writing fiction.⁶⁴

Historian David Marshall claims that Gordon's less popular later novels, which featured heroic narrators other than missionaries attempting to redeem society and the disenfranchised in lumber camps, demonstrate the decline in faith and popularity among Protestant missionaries who adopted the Social Gospel. But Young's books seem to have become less popular over exactly the same time, and he did not write social gospel novels. The disappearance of Young's vocation from his work and the decline of subsequent editions of his work and Gordon's work should be investigated from the point of view of the literary market place and the evolution of popular taste, rather than the secularisation thesis.

Young's view of the Canadian West and the 'Indian Problem'

There was a new note of nostalgia in *Children of the Forest*: "Of a vanished race I write..."⁶⁵ wrote Young. Canadian writer Daniel Francis states that the idea that Aboriginal people were disappearing was the most dominant belief in Canadian thinking about Aboriginal people at the end of the nineteenth-century.⁶⁶ Often this view of Aboriginal people is presented as co-incidental with a view of Western Canada as unused, empty land. As Doug Owram has pointed out, Western Canada was mostly described in terms of its agricultural potential in newspaper articles from the 1860's through the early 1880's.⁶⁷ However, before 1907, Young believed both in the future of the Swampy Cree, and of the Prairie Aboriginal peoples, although he admitted they would need assistance. Although he saw the Prairies as the potential home of

⁶³ Mary Vipond, *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, page 103.

⁶⁴ Archibald MacMechan, *Headwaters of Canadian Literature* (Toronto, 1974), page 207.

⁶⁵ Egerton R. Young, *Children of the Forest*, page 11.

⁶⁶ Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver, 1992), page 23.

⁶⁷ Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden*, page 76.

multitudes of immigrants,⁶⁸ Young never demonstrated the boundless optimism O'ram considers typical. For Young, the Prairies were another stage for the struggle for the Kingdom of God rather than real estate waiting to be developed. On remembering that he once ran his dog team where the Canadian Pacific Railway now ran, Young wrote:

Truly the world is advancing; for civilization is constantly pushing on into the wilderness, and the shrieks of the iron horse are arousing the solitudes from the sleep of centuries. God grant that Christianity may keep to the forefront, and, as those new regions fill up with inhabitants, may they come to be a people whose God is the Lord.⁶⁹

Young developed his own (albeit somewhat derivative) ideas about the causes of, and solutions to, the so-called "Indian Problem." In an article summarizing a lecture he gave at Central Methodist Church, Toronto (now Bloor Street United) in 1885, Young was quoted as accusing white Canadian hunters of ignoring Aboriginal game customs, and exterminating the buffalo. He accused Indian agents of corruption and withholding allowances without authority. Sarah Carter states that public debate including "charges of gross injustice and incompetence levelled" at the administration of Indian Affairs in the Northwest took place in these years, with little effect on government action.⁷⁰ The review of Young's lecture continued:

The Indians could not stand contact with unprincipled whites without being demoralized. His idea was to take all the Indians in the North-West and make a new Indian province north of Lake Winnipeg, where the fur-bearing animals of the country were plentiful, and where the Indians would be happy and contented, and could be looked after by less than 200 Mounted Police. This scheme, if carried out, would encourage immigration to the western part of the country.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Egerton R. Young, *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*, page 67.

⁶⁹ Egerton R. Young, *Apostle of the North*, page 160.

⁷⁰ Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, page 162.

⁷¹ "North-west Troubles – The Primary Cause of Halfbreed and Indian Discontent – The Government's Bungling Policy" scrapbook, Egerton R. Young Papers, UCA, page 117.

This idea of a separate Aboriginal territory had been first proposed by George Copway of Rice Lake, who promoted the idea of a large Indian Territory in the north-western United States, where Aboriginal people, with government assistance, would establish their own institutions. According to Copway's vision: "by the time the whites should reach there, the Indians would be so far improved as to be enabled to live as neighbours, and could compete with the whites in point of intelligence, and mechanical and agricultural skill."⁷² Young's vision was similar. His main rationale was the continued responsibility of the whites for the increasing poverty and discontent of Aboriginal people following the Western treaties.⁷³

However, by 1907, at the age of sixty-seven, Young was much more pessimistic, and predicted the disappearance of distinct religious communities such as Rossville, and of entire Aboriginal nations. He had given up on the idea of a separate province created by Aboriginal initiative: "No Tecumseh, with his dreams of a great Indian confederacy, will ever rise again."⁷⁴ The doomed community at Rossville of 1868 was now portrayed in a nostalgic glow. When Young arrived, he recalled:

... there was now but little real missionary work to be done there, beyond what is incidental to an ordinary church, in a Christian land. Every vestige of the old pagan life was now gone from the actual residents. The people regularly attended the house of God and by their consistent lives showed the genuineness of the transformation wrought by the power of the Gospel.⁷⁵

The complexities of the situation all disappeared in this 1907 account: the factions at Norway House, Treaty 5, the abuse of alcohol and violence towards women, the disappearance of the fur brigade employment, and George Young's cautions about spending. Instead, Young remembered his affection towards this community:

⁷² George Copway, *The Traditional history and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* (Toronto, 2001), page 274.

⁷³ Egerton R. Young, *The Battle of the Bears*, page 341.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., page 245.

A great solemn fact has come home to me with startling vividness, that the vast, weary, waiting multitudes, groping in the dark for something they cannot find, yet with a clinging consciousness that is in existence somewhere, are more ready to receive from our hands, this blessed boon, which is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, than most of us have any idea of. Once convinced that those who bring the message to them really love them, and that nothing but pure love has influenced them in coming, the Indians will come as never in the past, for the most constraining, drawing power in the world is love.⁷⁶

At his most nostalgic, Young fell back on Wesley, that faith without good works was empty. In this passage, it is clear that Young was relying on his vivid memories to supply a theological answer to the dreadful problems now overwhelming Aboriginal people in Western Canada. He was suggesting that a revival of piety among Christians was the best opportunity. Phyllis Airhart has labelled this continuous search by Methodism for renewal and success through a vivid personal experience of God, revivalism. Airhart's definition places her in the continuity camp of historians, who downplay the effect of the change in doctrine on people's continued experience of God, and God is working in history (or the sacred). In 1907, Young was essentially preaching a revival as a solution to complex social problems. He therefore can be classified either as an accommodating evangelical, according to Gauvreau, or a Methodist more concerned with the experience of God than doctrine, according to Airhart.

The Influence of Ethnography on Young's Thought

In 1900, Young published a sentimentalised account of the life of his two surviving children at Norway House that acted as a narrative frame for a collection of Ojibwa myths. *Algonquin Indian Tales* is a step into amateur ethnography. Before publishing the book, Young sent it to the most prominent Ojibwa in Ontario, Charles Big Canoe of Georgina Island, who was president of the united Ojibwa band councils. Big Canoe sent a kindly, but non-committal

⁷⁶ Ibid., page 248.

response, which Young used as a dedication. The collecting of Aboriginal myths was becoming professionalised, taken over from amateurs by the end of the century, and Young may have wished for an endorsement to forestall any criticism of his methods.

In his biography of Anglican missionary E. F. Wilson who worked out of Sault-Ste.-Marie in the 1870's, David A. Nock makes the point that missionaries often made a name for themselves as amateur anthropologists.⁷⁷ This work was partially based on their need to know Aboriginal languages for preaching and translating the Bible. For example, E.F. Wilson wrote *A Manual of the Ojibway Language* in 1874. Professional anthropologist James Constantine Pilling acknowledged his debt to missionaries in the introduction to *Bibliography of Algonquin Languages* published by the Bureau of Ethnology at the Smithsonian in 1891. Father A. Morice O.M.I. wrote a chapter in Franz Boas' *Ethnology of Canada and Newfoundland* (1905), in another chapter of which Father A. Lacombe O.M.I. is mentioned in a footnote.

Young mentions in the Introduction to *Algonquin Indian Tales* (1902) that he had begun reading bulletins from the Smithsonian Museum. This may have seemed a natural extension of his interest in Aboriginal people, which he had indulged by reading "early views of the Indians of North America"⁷⁸ at the British Museum as early as 1888. However, he appears to have understood that his gift was in popularising this information rather than contributing to scholarship.

Young's knowledge of ethnographic writing was sometimes reflected in his own work. For example, in *Children of the Forest* can be found the theory that Aboriginal languages were dialects that split, with time, from a central language.⁷⁹ This long-standing knowledge about the

⁷⁷ David A. Nock, *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis vs. Cultural Replacement*, page 109.

⁷⁸ John McDougall, "Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires": *A Criticism*, page 14.

⁷⁹ Egerton R. Young, *Children of the Forest*, page 219.

relationships between languages, which owed much to the work of missionaries, was sometimes extended into a larger theory about historic relationships between groups. In 1904, Franz Boas cautioned against extrapolating from language studies in this way.⁸⁰ At the same time, historian Robert Berkhofer claims, the Bureau of Ethnology worked under the evolutionary assumptions that equated North American Aboriginal societies with earlier, barbaric stages of European society.⁸¹ E.R. Young never speculated about the origins or historical movements of Aboriginal people. He did not stray from his concept of Biblical time and his idea of the equality of all persons under God, unlike his assistant John Semmens, who, in *The Field and the Work*, declared that Aboriginal people obviously came from Asia.

The ethnology Young read may have assisted him in accepting the higher criticism of the Bible, as demonstrated in Chapter II, but it did not affect his traditional Wesleyan faith.

Young also tried his hand at some juvenile fiction, a recognized market segment that, in Canada at this period, reproduced adult tastes concentrating on the outdoor adventure story or the historical romance.⁸² The most well-known books in this genre were the novels of R.B. Ballantyne and Robert Louis Stevenson. Even Mark Guy Pearse had published adventure tales in a boys' magazine. *The Young Fur Traders* was R. M. Ballantyne's first book, and it established him as an author of boys' adventures. It was based on his life as an adolescent employee of the Hudson's Bay Company at Red River. Among the characters is Mr. Conway, the vigorous, kindly Wesleyan clergyman devoted to Aboriginal people and practical ecumenism, who rode in a tin canoe. He is obviously based on the Reverend James Evans.

⁸⁰ George W. Stocking, *The Shaping of American Anthropology 1883-1911: A Franz Boas Reader* (New York, 1974), page 31.

⁸¹ Robert Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York, 1979), page 54.

⁸² Sheila Egoff, *The Republic of Childhood: A Critical Guide to Canadian Children's Literature in English* (Toronto, 1967), page 246.

Egerton R. Young published *Three Boys in the Wild North Land: Summer*, a wilderness adventure book for boys, in 1896. *Three Boys* falls into a sub-category of writing about nature at the end of the nineteenth-century described by Canadian literary scholar Alec Lucas. The novel uses the plot skeleton of three British boys who spend a year with a retired factor, Mr. Ross, at Norway House. On this skeleton hangs a great deal of lore about animal life in Manitoba. Senior Aboriginal men (all with names) are the boys' teachers. What jars the modern sensibility about this method of presenting nature are, as Lucas describes them, the "descriptions of the merciless slaughter of wildlife that fill early Canadian sportsman's books."⁸³ The boys kill large numbers of ducks, geese, sturgeon, loons, wolves, wolverines, pike, caribou and bears. The sportsman's code is evident in the slaughter of wolves and wolverines, which are trophy animals and are not eaten.

Young had a life-long interest in nature. He had written descriptions of all the fur-bearing animals of the Northwest in the notebook he kept at Beren's River between 1868 and 1871. *Three Boys* is full of interesting, accurate observations about wildlife, such as the fact that geese rise facing into the wind, and wolverines spray all their food with scent. The extent to which Young learned this information from the Cree is evident in a story about bear behaviour in *Three Boys*. In the novel, the Cree men are shocked when one of the boys runs from a black bear because the men believe that the bear will tell its fellows of the cowardice. Aboriginal men attribute many human characteristics to bears, the narrator remarks.⁸⁴ Later in the novel, Mr. Ross' two youngest children are lost in the woods (a common device, also used by Catherine Parr Traill in *Canadian Crusoes* published in 1852). In *Three Boys* the children are kidnapped

⁸³Alec Lucas, "Nature Writers and the Animal Story", Klinck, page 365.

⁸⁴Egerton R. Young, *Three Boys in the Wild North Land*, page 85.

and forced to pick cranberries by their adult bear captors.⁸⁵ Young himself has strayed into the attribution of near-human characteristics to bears that he ascribes to the Cree.

The Nature Stories of Egerton R Young

The boys' tales appear to have provided Young with the practice and success to move more boldly into writing about nature. Between 1902 and 1907, Young published in this genre a novel and two books of nature stories about his pets. *My Dogs in the Northland* is a series of linked short biographical sketches of Young's sled dogs, and is probably the most successful of his books. The linked adventure stories feature different sled dogs, the narrator-missionary and many Aboriginal people. *My Dogs in the Northland* is an unfettered account of Young's enthusiasm for his dogs, for crossing ice-bound Lake Winnipeg and for visiting Cree and Ojibwa families in their own milieu, episodes that are obviously among his fondest memories. Young assumed the sled dog's point of view in the full-length fictional animal biography, *Hector, My Dog*.

The most successful and popular books about pets of the period were two novels written to call attention to the plight of domestic animals, *Black Beauty* (1877) and *Beautiful Joe* (1894). *Beautiful Joe*, the winning manuscript in a contest sponsored by the American Humane Society, sold over a million copies for its Nova Scotian author, Marshall Saunders.⁸⁶ *My Dogs in the Northland* may be considered part of this genre, but it is not as didactic as the humanitarian pet stories. Alec Lucas suggested that *My Dogs in the Northland* was closest to the animal stories of the masters of the genre Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles D.G. Roberts.⁸⁷

Another of Young's animal studies, *The Battle of the Bears* (published in 1907), is a series of distinct short stories featuring outdoor adventure, missionaries and animals. The title

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, page 196.

⁸⁶ Gordon Roper, S. Ross Beharriell and Rupert Schieder "Writers of Fiction 1880-1920", Klinck, page 320.

⁸⁷ Alec Lucas, "Nature Writers and the Animal Story", Klinck, page 387.

story features the skill and cunning of Cree paddlers who surprise a bear on an island and outwit it, allowing the narrator in the canoe to shoot it. The narrator is never identified as a missionary, although the anecdote first appeared in *Stories from Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires*. The collection includes a story about the missionary introducing potatoes at Rossville. There are animal stories; one tale of a tame beaver chewing off chair legs prefigures Rawhide and his antics in Grey Owl's *Tales of an Empty Cabin*.

In writing animal stories, Young chose a new popular genre in which Canadian writers excelled, and which, in fact, produced such fine literature that the best stories remain in print today. One hundred years after they were first published, people have forgotten Gilbert Parker's *Seats of the Mighty* and Ralph Connor's *Black Rock*, but the best animal stories of Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles D.G. Roberts continue to be anthologised and read. Sheila Egoff claimed: "the realistic animal story appeared in Canada as a genuine native product and spread outward to influence the animal story around the world."⁸⁸ In the animal story, Alec Lucas stated, the author prided himself on presenting an accurate picture of an animal's life and on understanding animal psychology.⁸⁹ Young's work is a fine early example of this genre. In *My Dogs in the Northland*, Young describes the great Newfoundland dog sent to him from Hamilton, Ontario:

Jack's place was second dog in the train. He could lead splendidly and would respond to the various calls as promptly as a well trained horse does to the reins, but he was of too affectionate a nature, and he and his master were on too intimate terms of friendship, for him to be assigned to the post of leadership if the trail on which we were going was a dangerous one, and Jack became possessed with the idea that his beloved master was running any risk of disaster or peril. In the very worst spots, he would sometimes suddenly whirl around with the whole train, and with a rush, would come to the rear of the sled, where I was riding, and shoving his great face in mine, would as well as any dog could put it, say: 'Master, this is

⁸⁸ Sheila Egoff, *The Republic of Childhood*, page 105.

⁸⁹ Alec Lucas, "Nature Writers and the Animal Story", page 382.

a very risky place, and so I have come back for a minute to see if you are all right.⁹⁰

Young's sled-dog stories were about semi-domesticated animals, but they were less like the sentimental pet tales, and more like the wild animal stories. Even Seton wrote about an abandoned pet dog in *Wild Animals I have Known*, and Charles D.G. Roberts included a story about the cat that remained at the cottage all winter in *Neighbours Unknown*. *My Dogs in the Northland* does not deserve its present obscurity. Young's nature stories reveal his providential view of the world, faith demonstrated through good works, and the revelation of God in nature. He emphasized the protection and debt his audience owed to displaced Aboriginal people who could be better Christians than many of them. The Wesleyan missionary-narrator drops into the background to allow the dogs to take centre stage, but the missionary's vocation is implied, if not stated outright.

Jack London and My Dogs in the Northland

In 1903, a young American journalist from San Francisco who had spent one winter in the Yukon⁹¹ whipped together in weeks a manuscript that was published to immediate and enormous acclaim as *The Call of the Wild*. Jack London's only previous works were a few stories in magazines, but *The Call of the Wild* was an enormous success, which, by 1934, had sold a million and a half copies.⁹² It made London a rich man. Though he wrote many other books based on his travels, *The Call of the Wild* is considered his best book.⁹³ It is the story of a pampered dog named Buck from a California estate which is kidnapped and sold into servitude

⁹⁰Egerton R. Young, *My Dogs in the Northland*, page 70.

⁹¹ Peter Schmitt, "Wilderness Novels in the Progressive Era", *Journal of Popular Culture* III:1 Summer 1969, page 81.

⁹² *Ibid.*, page 73.

⁹³ Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes*, page 235.

as a sled-dog in the Yukon, where ruled “the law of club and fang.”⁹⁴ In the North, Buck’s gentlemanly nature is “a vain thing and a handicap in the ruthless struggle for existence.”⁹⁵ Buck is beaten into becoming a sled dog, and kills his way to the lead dog position, learning the “joy to kill...the ecstasy of life.”⁹⁶ He is sold, in turn, to various types: French-Canadians speaking doggerel, incompetent city gold-seekers, and a kind man who has escaped the city and who is ultimately killed by the Yeehats. Aside from this stone-age tribe that has never seen white men, (an echo of Jonathan Swift’s degraded men, the Yahoos), the North is remarkably empty of Aboriginal people. Buck kills one of these savages, and, as the novel ends, joins a wolf pack. The novel is myth about the return to the primitive with authentic scenes of dogsledding. It was voted one of the Best American Novels of All Time in 1927.

On February 14, 1907, *The Independent* of London, England, ran a long article by Mrs. Bodsworth called: “Is Jack London a Plagiarist?” Included in the article was a letter from Jack London, in response to his receipt of an advance copy of the article a month earlier. The article was set in narrow columns, placing E.R. Young’s anecdotes of the nature of sled dogs and incidents on the trail side-by-side with London’s use of them. Clearly, the character and description of Buck was based on Young’s favourite sled-dog Jack. Buck even had a companion Newfoundland dog Curly, based on Cuffy. In this “masculinist”⁹⁷ novel, the other dogs killed off kind Curly as soon as she arrived in the Yukon. Entire incidents were lifted, such as chopping open the crate of the furious dog which has arrived thirsty and hand-feeding it meat, being forced to camp on a frozen lake under a precipice and being attacked by huskies. Other characters were identical, including a mean one-eyed dog that hates being approached on its

⁹⁴ Jack London, *The Call of the Wild and Selected Stories* (New York, 1964), page 22.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, page 28.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, page 39.

⁹⁷ Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca and London, 2001), page 106.

blind side but is a fine leader, and a sled-dog that seeks out injured dogs in order to nurse them back to health. London, in his letter to *The Independent*, admitted the debt, but excused himself by saying that fiction writers always borrow from “published narratives of fact,”⁹⁸ and that he had written Young and thanked him for his assistance.

On March 21, 1907, *The Independent* printed a letter from E.R. Young in which he stated that Jack London had never written him:

When I read “The Call of the Wild”, of course I noticed the similarity of much of what was in it, to what, from my long experience, I had written, but in my *charity*, and I suppose my *simplicity*, I had supposed that, like myself, Jack London had undergone similar experiences during long years in some Arctic regions, and had written his book as the result of what he had seen and suffered. So I naturally congratulated myself that such a famous writer, from actual experience, should so endorse my assertions.⁹⁹

Young had projected a very different reaction in his response to the dispute with John McDougall years earlier. In conflict with McDougall, he had sounded triumphant, as he was touring England and McDougall was not. This time, London was famous and Young was reduced to writing letters to newspaper editors. Behind the naïveté, he sounded completely nonplussed. He did not even recognize his own memories. He may not have recognized them because London’s book featured a completely different worldview from Young’s, a type of social Darwinism. *The Call of the Wild* is probably the best remembered wilderness novel of all, but its message about the encounter between white men and the North (including Aboriginal people) is closer to Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, published in 1902, than to *My Dogs in the Northland*. Jack London and Joseph Conrad warned that a voyage through a colonized wilderness would strip the thin veneer of civilization and reveal men as brutal and selfish. *The Call of the Wild* also

⁹⁸ L.A.M. Bodsworth, “Is Jack London a Plagiarist?” (New York, 1907).

⁹⁹ Egerton R. Young, “Letter to Mrs. Bodsworth”, *The Independent* (London, March 21, 1907), unpaginated.

features a theme of the “celebration of life through sacrificial death”¹⁰⁰ which Canadian historian Modris Eksteins calls typical of European and American culture leading into the First World War.

Jack London wrote Young directly on March 18, 1907. In a disingenuous letter he clarified that he thought he had written to Young’s publisher, whose name he could not recall, following receipt of a book of Young’s, the title of which he could not recall, in order to mention his debt to *My Dogs in the Northland*. After receiving the letter, Young sounded out his publishers. W. A. Wilde Company of Boston corroborated that they had received acknowledgment of receipt of *Hector, My Dog*, from London, and that London had stated he was indebted for much valuable information, “but if the memory of the writer is correct he never asked us to communicate the same to you”.¹⁰¹ The publisher of *My Dogs in the Northland* was unhelpful. In February, Edgar Briggs wrote Young cautiously that the Fleming H. Revell Company would take advantage of the publicity to print 2000 copies of Mrs. Bodsworth’s article in *The Independent*.¹⁰² Young must have written again, but in a response of March 29, Briggs would only describe London as “careless.”¹⁰³ Young appears to have let the matter drop.

Twenty years later, Elizabeth Bingham Young wrote Fleming H. Revell to ask about seeking financial compensation from Jack London through a civil suit. Edgar Briggs, now manager, answered on May 16, 1927 that there was “no cause for legal

¹⁰⁰ Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring; The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Toronto, 1989) page xiv.

¹⁰¹ W.A. Wilde Company of Boston to Egerton Ryerson Young, dated March 20, 1907, Egerton Ryerson Young papers, UCA.

¹⁰² Edgar Briggs to Egerton R. Young, February 20, 1907, E.R. Young Papers, UCA.

¹⁰³ Edgar Briggs to Egerton R. Young, March 29, 1907, E.R. Young Papers, UCA.

action.”¹⁰⁴ An undated copy of a letter by E. (Eddie) Ryerson Young, presumably to his mother or other family members about the affair, states:

Mr. Briggs thinks the matter settled because if there had been any chance of getting damages father would have got them. And we know father – he wouldn’t have taken a murderer to law! However it seems to be hopeless now to untangle it.¹⁰⁵

However, it was not only the actions of Jack London as an unscrupulous rival that diminished E.R. Young’s literary career; it was what he represented in changing popular taste. Beginning in 1900, westerns and wilderness novels began to appear on the bestseller lists; for example Owen Wister’s *The Virginian*, which takes place on the Prairies, sold 300,000 copies in 1902 and 1903.¹⁰⁶ According to cultural specialist Peter Schmitt, a very large number of American popular writers began at this period to publish and sell formulaic novels of the long pioneer trail in the American West.¹⁰⁷ In the popular literature that Americans and Canadians were reading, the Prairies and the old Northwest (including Manitoba) disappeared under the juggernaut of the Western. The public was not seeking popular ethnology about Aboriginal peoples, while missionaries, if they appeared, had to conform to a formula of “rugged but charitable individualism on the frontier.”¹⁰⁸ This became true even of the fictional characters created by former missionaries themselves, notably Ralph Connor and Hiram Cody (who had been a missionary in the Yukon). There were other authors of the same style; apparently more than thirty clergy published fiction between 1890 and 1914 “related to adventure and frontier fiction.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Edgar Briggs to Elizabeth Bingham Young, May 16, 1927, E.R. Young Papers, UCA.

¹⁰⁵ E. (Eddie) Ryerson Young, undated, E. R. Young Papers, UCA.

¹⁰⁶ Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes*, page 236.

¹⁰⁷ Peter Schmitt, *Journal of Popular Culture* III:1 summer 1969, page 86.

¹⁰⁸ John P. Ferré, *A Social Gospel for Millions*, page 62.

¹⁰⁹ Gordon Roper, S. Ross Beharriell & Rupert Schieder, “The Kinds of Fiction”, Klinck, page 304.

The best selling of these books, and the first, was Ralph Connor's *Black Rock*, published in 1898 to raise money for Western missions.¹¹⁰ It is a tale full of military metaphors featuring an ecumenical young Presbyterian missionary who shuts down the saloon and converts men to temperance in a mining town in British Columbia. The isolated, transient employment of mining and lumbering is portrayed as a spiritual exile¹¹¹ for the unreliable Irishman, the canny Scot, the excitable French-Canadian, all complete with dialects. The heroine is a high-bred young heiress from Edinburgh who could have been lifted straight out of *Pierre and his People*. There are no Aboriginal characters at all.

The History of the Evangelization of the Indians in North America

When E. R. Young died in 1909 he was working on a radically different book in a genre he had never tried before – history. This was an abrupt departure into a discipline in which Young had no formal education. Young had been reading about Aboriginal people for some time, and at least one of the chapters is based on personal correspondence with a former Methodist missionary among the Cherokee. The manuscript chapters of *The History of the Evangelization of the Indians in North America* consist, in the main, of long quotations from Canadian and American missionary reports. The chapter on Huronia is interspaced with long quotations from Francis Parkman. The section on the Catholic California missions credits James Mooney, of the Bureau of Ethnology, as a source. There is some variety in vocabulary and emphasis among the mission reports, but the existing chapters add up to a monotonous narrative of missionaries' names, tallies of the faithful, and personal conversion accounts. The only movement in the narrative is the repeating cycle of injustices visited by the white man on the Aboriginal, a point of view that Young would have found in Helen Hunt Jackson's famous 1881

¹¹⁰ Gordon Roper, S. Ross Beharriell & Rupert Schieder, "Writers of Fiction 1880-1920", Klinck, page 323.

¹¹¹ Ralph Connor, *Black Rock*, page 26.

book, *A Century of Dishonor*. The heroes are Christian Aboriginal people, and the manuscript features many speeches in praise of the benefits of Christianity. The supporting cast are missionaries who teach literacy, support Aboriginal attempts to retain their land, and assist Aboriginal people materially as well as delivering “a faithful presentation of the Truth as revealed by the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”¹¹²

In copying long missionary reports into his manuscript history, Young abandoned the amusing anecdote and other successful writing techniques he had tested in years of lecturing, everything that had made him successful. It is possible that, as a result of Jack London’s plagiarism and its spectacular reward in the marketplace, his self-identity as a writer had suffered a severe shock. Did his belief in the rightness of his vocation suffer the same shock? The list of massacres and forced relocations in the *History* manuscript is occasionally interspaced with expressions of faith in eventual divine retribution and Providential time. However, these expressions are few and unconvincing. The intellectually thin manuscript may demonstrate the price that E.R. Young paid for living and writing for nineteen years on the memories of his eight years in Manitoba. Young’s main Wesleyan beliefs (the importance of a personal relationship with God, and faith demonstrated through good works) could survive both the progressive theology that he read, and Young’s encounter with ethnology. But Jack London’s theft of his Rossville memories and subsequent success with *The Call of the Wild* seem to have posed a deeper challenge, leaving him only the faintest of doctrines of Providential time and retributive justice to formulate a justification of his vocation. When he had his memories stolen and twisted to support a view of the Northwest, and by extension of the world, as ruled by “the law of club

¹¹² Egerton R. Young, “XIII - The Society of Friends”, page 7.

and fang,” and when that version proved more popular than his most heartfelt book, *My Dogs in the Northland*, he had little left to say.

In conclusion, the insights of literary history and the social history of ideas illuminate that Young’s traditional Wesleyan view of the world, though adaptable to such genres as writing for children and a memoir of his dogs, was annihilated by social Darwinism, or a brutally secular view of the world, in the marketplace in 1903. Young was never an agent of secularisation, but he seems to have had his confidence in himself as an author very shaken, as he abandoned the style and the content of the books that had brought him success. The content he abandoned was his memories of being a missionary in northern Manitoba for eight years. Young was working on a manuscript that restated his Wesleyan beliefs at his death, but it is a timid restating of his vocation beside the confident voice he abandoned. This suggests that Young’s faith, in the end, was based very much on his experience of God and the memories which he recycled, a concept best captured by the continuity school’s definition of Methodism as a theology of experience.

CHAPTER V - CONCLUSION

“Liberal Lutherans have more in common with liberal Anglicans or Presbyterians than with the more conservative members of their own denominations.”

- Protestant theologians Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright, (2000)

The unpublished sermons and published writings of Egerton R. Young reveal a committed Wesleyan who believed until the end of his life that the best thing one could do for Aboriginal people was to bring them the good news of the Gospel. He believed in the need for Revelation, for a life of faith demonstrated through good works, in the efficacy of prayer, in holiness, and in a providential sense of time that included the Kingdom of God and a retributive afterlife. Young went on a very successful “old campaign style” preaching tour to raise funds for missions in 1873-1874. Young also believed in women’s equality, in Aboriginal leadership, the immortality of dogs and Protestant ecumenism. He was shocked when his beloved Christian community of Rossville chose to disperse after the signing of Treaty 5 in 1875, and was soon expressing his disillusionment with the treaties in newspaper articles in Canada and England. In his books, Young approvingly mentioned the popular American progressive preacher Henry Ward Beecher and the Scottish progressive clergyman Henry Drummond, but never accepted their progressive suppositions. Nor did he ever preach or write the social gospel. When he lost his faith in the only political idea he ever expressed, that of a separate province for Aboriginal people in north-western Manitoba/Ontario, his analysis of evil remained personalized: the greedy white settler, the unscrupulous whiskey trader, the indifferent church administrator. However, Young had an amiable relationship with the prominent social gospeller Mark Guy Pearse in the late 1880’s, and expressed a hope

for a social gospel-inspired revival in an interview in 1902. Young was influenced by early ethnology, and accepted the idea of the Bible as a historical document. He never had a sudden conversion experience, and wrote that it was not an essential requirement to being a Christian.

Although Egerton R. Young was not an influential theologian, he was a lecturer and author in a series of inspirational genres popular in the 1890's in Canada and the United States. As such, his easy *mélange* of theological ideas poses a challenge to Canadian intellectual historians who have been debating the meaning and significance of changes in Protestant theology at the end of the nineteenth century, particularly those that identify certain concessions to modernism as a betrayal of essential tenets of Christianity, or secularisation. Historians who have stated that a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible, the necessity of a personal conversion experience and the acknowledgment of sin as a personal failing are signposts against which late nineteenth-century clergy (in particular) should be measured would reject a categorisation of Egerton R Young's as a traditional Wesleyan, or "accommodating evangelical" as Michael Gauvreau calls it. But, as this thesis attempted to demonstrate, Young's world view remained fundamentally Wesleyan all his life. Therefore, the secularisation thesis does not assist in explaining Young to a twenty-first century audience.

These same historians, in their emphasis, imply that the theological doctrines they judge most significant were mutually exclusive of more modern doctrines at the end of the nineteenth-century. Young's mix of doctrines, and the lack of friction in his life about his theology (as compared to the controversies about his knowledge of Aboriginal language and manners) challenge this tendency. The secularisation historians have

occasionally expressed a rancour about modern beliefs present in the late nineteenth-century that, Young's case would suggest, was not perceived by all believers at the time. Salem Bland remembered some bitterness about the changes, but, Young's case would suggest, the boundaries to positions known today as "evangelical" and "liberal" had not yet hardened. The historians in the continuity school, such as Airhart, Van Die and Semple, have used religious sociology to express the nature of the religious experience and to defend the continuing experience of the sacred despite great changes in theology. Semple has stated that most people did not express a contradiction between an emphasis on personal and social salvation. What is needed is for such historians to examine the ideas of more typical clergymen and congregations for proof of such ideas existing cheek by jowl, as the case of Egerton R. Young demonstrates.

The use of literary history methods reveals that while Egerton R. Young reacted to modern ideas in his church, he was much more personally affected by the changes in world view demonstrated by the readers of popular novels, that is to say in the change in middle-class reading taste from an inspirational to a social Darwinist view. For Young, it was the immense changes in world view outside the church that affected his confidence in his message more than any shift inside the Methodist Church to progressive or social gospel theories. This also challenges the secularist historians, particularly Ramsay Cook, Peter Bush and David Marshall, who claim that it was the disastrous choices made by the churches that led to their irrelevance. Young's example suggests that the choices in theology that the churches made may not have always been the decisive factor leading to the immense changes in world view of their parishioners.

The example of Egerton R. Young can therefore illustrate that some secularisation historians may have anachronistically imposed the dividing lines between late twentieth century Protestant churches on the end of the nineteenth. This suggests that there are aspects of the debate that are essentially religious, about the validity of basic Protestant beliefs, rather than historical, or about how they may have been practiced. As the liberal American theologian Marcus Borg and the traditional British theologian N.T. Wright pointed out at the beginning of the chapter, the division between those who would claim Martin Luther and John Wesley to support sudden conversion, individual sin and the inerrancy of the Bible, and those who would claim them to support otherwise is the most profound division in the Protestant world today. Entire congregations, colleges, magazines, publishing houses and retail bookstores in the Anglo-American world support only one or the other side of this division.

How can intellectual historians continue to investigate the historical experience of these and other doctrines in this atmosphere? The secularisation versus continuity debate has shown the impossibility of masking the bitterness which debate over such basic beliefs can bring, even if they are classified as intellectual history. Canadian intellectual historians of the twenty-first century tackling religious subjects would be wise to follow the example of religious historians such as Owen Chadwick and George Rawlyk, who understood it as their duty to state in their studies their particular belief in the sacred, that is to say on the role of God in history. This also implies accepting Chadwick's reservation that the experience of God must be accepted as a valid and distinct category of experience. The way beyond the secularisation versus continuity debate may be for intellectual historians to accept the challenge of writing religious history.

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