Baptists and First Peoples of Canada 1846-1976: A History

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Introduction

History always occurs in context. Not only the context of the past, but the context of the present in which the story is being recounted. These realities then, must shape our ways of looking back. They must shape *who* we listen to and *how*. They must inform our practice of recounting history and must direct our ways of moving into the present in light of the past.

To write a history of the church and Indigenous people in Canada in 2016 one must take into account the reality that as a nation we have just come through a seven year Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The scope of the commission was to look at the legacy of the Indian Residential School system that was in place in this country from 1865 to 1996. This was a government mandated church run project aimed at removing indigenous children from the influence of their families, language and culture. While as Baptists we held no contracts for these schools we and all people of Christian faith must look at the past, present and future in light of this experience that has touched all Indigenous people in this land in one way or another.

As Baptists we are brand new to this journey of looking afresh at our history through the lens of past sins. We have asked forgiveness for our part in the legacy of colonization and cultural genocide, but our repentance requires that we "turn aside" and travel a new path in light of our acknowledgement of our sins of commission and sins of omission. This paper is an attempt to look back to see where we have been that we might more clearly be able to look forward to that new path.

Acknowlgement

One such turning is to acknowledge that this paper has been written and is being presented on the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueaum (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), Squamishc(Sḵwx̱wú7mesh), and Tsleil-Waututh peoples of the coast. It is the author’s hope and

intention that these words will contribute to healing and justice in our relationship with these neighbours.

Limitations

It is also important to recognize that this paper was written without the voices of the indigenous people of this land. All historical accounts referenced were in the voice of the non-indigenous missionaries, pastors, or supervisors speaking *about* indigenous people; nowhere are the voices and perspectives of the indigenous peoples themselves recorded.

One aspect of this reality has to do with a cultural value held by many indigenous peoples in Canada who feel that history and important stories are too precious to be set down in writing. Stories need instead to be entrusted to those with life and breath in them who can keep the stories and ensure they are used in a good way.

That said, we do not have the stories of how indigenous people who encountered Baptists felt about those encounters or how they saw the situation. In the absence of voice, we will not presume to give voice, but must acknowledge the silence here and what it says about our Baptist work.

Language

Before we proceed any further, let me provide a quick guide to the terminology I use when referring to the indigenous people of Canada. There are a variety of designations given to the First Peoples of this land. The three legal terms used to designate First Peoples in Canada are as follows: Aboriginal, Metis, and Inuit. Older terms used in common parlance were Indian, Metis, and Eskimo. The latter terms are no longer acceptable, but will be used in historical designations throughout the paper. Increasingly in the world today, it is most acceptable to use

the term *indigenous*, which applies to the first peoples in every land, but when referring to a particular grouping, it is appropriate to call them by their particular nation, tribe, or band name.

The Church and First People in Canada

Baptist engagement with indigenous peoples in Canada is a spotty one. A more coherent story is told if we put this engagement in the broader context of the missionary endeavor across denominations in Canada and then compare and contrast where, why, and how Baptists dipped into and out of that stream.

Missionaries arrived on the shores of what we now call Canada with the very earliest explorers. The Jesuits in particular travelled with and ahead of non-indigenous hunters, trappers, and traders. As they made contact with various tribes, they learned language, sought converts, and established churches. Soon there were missionaries from other denominations who did the same. While all churches built in Canada prior to the twentieth century had the look and feel of European churches, slight differences could be detected in strategy through the placement of the church building. Some placed the church in the center of existing communities or villages. Others placed the church some distance off, inviting the faithful to literally depart from their old ways and come and make a new home oriented to Christian faith. In some cases, whole villages did relocate, and in other cases, the church stayed alone on the edge of existing settlements. In still other cases, villages picked up and moved away from the church.

There were some early efforts by the churches, at doing translation work, but there was a stronger tendency to encourage use of the English or French language, since acquisition of these languages was seen as a "civilizing" influence, and "civilizing" the native people was a precursor to conversion. In notable contrast to this trend was Baptist missionary Rev. Silas Rand.

Silas Rand

A revival in the Maritimes in 1846 swept across denominational lines and resulted in Baptist missionaries answering the call to go to Burma while Rand was called to work among the Mi'kmaq peoples of Eastern Canada. Rand had a natural affinity for language, and over his 50 years of ministry, he translated the whole of the New Testament, as well as Genesis, Exodus, and the Psalms into the Mi'kmaq language. Rand is seen as the first "maverick" among only a handful who "took an interest in the Indians as they were and not merely in their potential for Christianity and civilization." His contribution stands in the overseas missionary trajectories of Baptists like Hudson Taylor and Adoniram Judson, but is unique at home in Canada.

The hope might be that Rand set the model for Baptist engagement, but his ministry seems to start and end with him. "He had neither predecessor nor successor." Despite the high commendations afforded Rand in history, among his contemporaries it seems he was not well supported and grew "disillusioned by the apathy and prejudice" he encountered in the church, moving away from evangelism and pastoral work and devoting himself almost entirely to linguistics and philology.

Western Expansion

As missionary efforts pushed west, the pattern of establishing churches was continued but the competition between denominational groups grew fierce, as churches raced to reach new indigenous communities and the influence that came with that. There are many cases of pastors also holding the role of Indian Agent in communities. Even apart from those formal roles, the missionary was often called upon as an intermediary in situations of conflict or legal matters. One indigenous man commented that, "often you did not know if you were dealing with a representative of the church or of the state."

With the move into the territories of the west and the north came a shift from evangelism and pastoral oversight towards social welfare initiatives. The major denominations, Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist, began to invest in schools and hospitals. On the coast of British Columbia, the Anglicans and Methodists joined forces to provide mobile medical missions on boats that plied the coast. This cooperative effort also brought other representatives from these churches into communities as doctors, nurses, and school teachers, increasing the points of interaction with Anglo-Christian culture.

By the 1880s, those three denominations were putting the majority of their efforts and resources into schools, believing that to be their best way of impacting indigenous communities. Some articulated the goal of these educational efforts as mission strategy, with the goal of raising up indigenous evangelists who could reach their own communities more effectively. Others stated that the only hope for indigenous people was assimilation into the dominant culture; and in order to do that, children needed to be removed from the influence of their families and communities. In eastern Canada, the first schools were developed in response to requests for education as a part of treaties, and the educational goals and strategies were decided together with indigenous leaders. In the west, there were no consultations with indigenous communities on the part of government or churches in the development of the schools.

By the 1900s it was generally agreed that the purpose of Indian schooling was “to prepare Indians for Christian citizenship.” The partnership between government and churches was also firmly established at this point. Baptist churches declined to enter the field of Indian education because they could not conscientiously accept subsidies from the state, due to their convictions about the separation of church and state.

These shifts in strategy seem to also imply a shift in attitudes about indigenous people themselves. If one looks at the pattern of leadership development within mission efforts, we discover "all denominations sought to make room for Indian leadership within the mission church…[but]for an Indian to rise higher in the ecclesiastical hierarchy was more difficult...The Methodists, once pace setters in making use of native preachers were reduced by the end of the 19th century to a few mainly aging clergy. Protestants found Indians useful in reaching their people but preferred whites as mediators of civilization."

Baptist Work in Manitoba 1889-1913

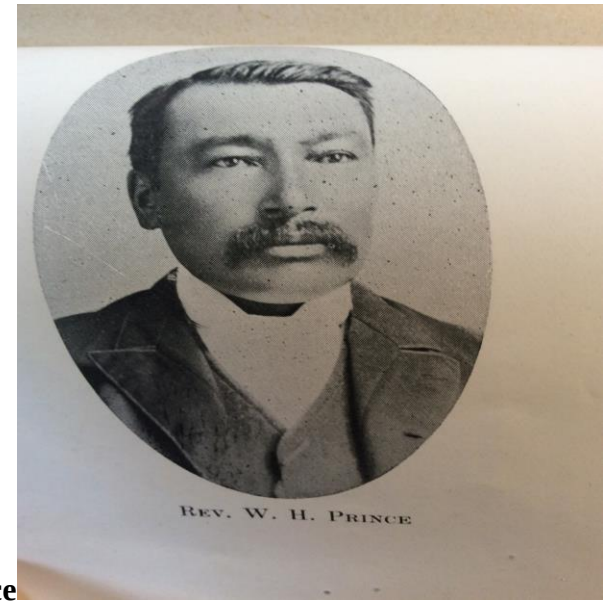
During this period of shifting attitudes and priorities in the broader Christian missionary movement in Canada, mission work began to take off among Baptists in Manitoba.

In a short chapter in her lengthy history of the Baptist work in Western Canada, Margaret Thompson begins, "[C]oncerning the Baptist work among the Indian people it was a period of ups and downs, of experimental and devoted service and, at the end, an unexplained lapse of interest and concern which closed down a work so bravely begun."

It was the women who were the instigators for a work to begin among the Cree of Manitoba. The Women's Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Society began to pray about starting a work in the early 1880s.

The first missionary dispatched to the reserves of Portage La Prairie was a nurse: Ms. Phoebe Parsons. There was conversation, however, with the leadership of the reserve that perhaps she could teach the children some English; but this suggestion was met with strong opposition from the reserve. Present in the early reports and letters was a sense that her goal was to "civilize" these people who "were so wild looking I wondered if they had souls to save."

At the same time a member of First Church Winnipeg met a fiery Cree convert and suggested he meet with Rev. Grant at First Church. That conversation launched the most significant ministry of Baptist history to date.



Ministry of William Henry Prince

The heart of the Baptist work among the Cree peoples in Manitoba was a heart that came *to* the Baptists not one that came *from* them. This heart took on flesh in the person of William Henry Prince, a Cree man living in the Winnipeg area who had been raised Anglican but later in life, upon reading his Bible, was stirred by the need/desire to be baptized as an adult. He sought out a Brethren community, who baptized him, but he was dissatisfied with the fellowship he found there and eventually presented himself to First Church Winnipeg. Prince declared to the leadership there that God had laid on his heart a desire to bring the message of the gospel to his people in the areas outside of the city and asked them then to commission him for itinerant work among his people.

As it turned out, Prince was a strong evangelist and a gifted linguist, speaking seven of the dialects spoken around the area. Prince focused his efforts on the St. Peters Reserve,

beginning in 1891, and soon had a worshiping community and was baptizing converts. First Church decided, however, that it was not "advisable" to organize a church on the reserve, in that accurate numbers of baptisms would be difficult to determine, since those baptized were to be recorded and enrolled as members of First Church Winnipeg.

The tie between the two worshipping communities, however, was fairly strong for this time, and the congregation in Winnipeg made a habit of visiting the reserve at Christmas, traveling all day by sleigh and receiving the hospitality of the new church members for a couple of days, closing off with worship services in both Cree and English.

By 1893, the people of St. Peter's Reserve had secured land for a mission chapel and began construction. The chapel was completed by the end of the year and was opened and dedicated as First Native Baptist Church in January 1894.

Prince was an itinerant evangelist at heart though, and upon the establishment of the church, was ready to head out into new territory. A white pastor was secured, a former missionary to the Bedouins of Syria, and Prince headed off to evangelize more remote communities. This began a pattern where a white pastor would stay for a couple of years and then leave; Prince would come back and take over pastoral duties until another pastor could be found, then off he would go to evangelize and check on the believers he had left behind in various

communities.

CONVERTS AT SANDY BAY, 1895
To the left Mr. Prince and Mrs. Mellick

A tie was maintained with the church in Winnipeg and the two congregations navigated various issues over the years, such as whether charity was helping or hurting the reserve communities.

In 1895, the General Superintendent (what is now referred to as an Area Minister) Rev. Mellick decided it was time to check in on the progress of Prince's itinerant work in the north. He recounts in a book titled *The Indians and Our Indian Mission* the details of that journey. Traveling by steamer, barge, canoe, and on foot Mellick and his companions met up with Rev. Prince and traveled around Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba.

They visited converts and worshipped with them, as well as holding evangelistic meetings from which 75 persons are baptized over a 3- week period.

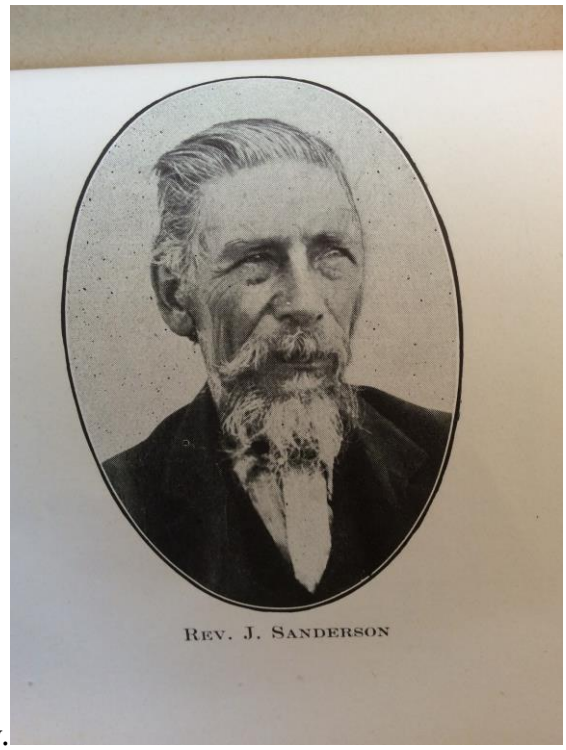
Not only were Cree people coming to faith in these communities through the preaching and witness of Rev. Prince, but he was also raising up and leaving behind in these communities lay ministers who continued on in the work. Three are named: John Sanderson, Albert Daffee, and John Passage. Two others are referred to in Mellick's account, but remain unnamed. It is worthy of note that one of the Baptist's largest concerns in the work in western Canada at this time was a lack of ministers to keep the work going. Prince was not only bringing in new converts, but he was discipling ministers. There is no record that the denomination contributed financially to any of these minister's salaries nor to this work, apart from the partnership between First Baptist Winnipeg and the church on the St. Peter's Reserve.

Albert Daffee was illiterate when he came to faith, but a desire to share the gospel with his community motivated him to learn to read English (no full Bible was available in the Cree language at that time, or even today), so he could translate the scriptures to Cree. When no white

missionaries were available to come to his community, he gave up trapping to minister to the congregation that had gathered in Little Saskatchewan and began to sell his cattle one by one in order to finance himself. When someone told him that no one in the Baptist church in Winnipeg cared about his wellbeing he said, "I am not working for the people of Winnipeg. I am working for the Lord."

Similarly, as Rev. Prince was pulled back to St. Peter's when white missionaries would leave after a year or two, John Sanderson, who was trained as a carpenter, carried on the work of the missions at Fairford, St. Martinis, and Sandy Bay, without remuneration. Eventually, he was ordained in First Church Winnipeg in 1897. Sanderson first heard the gospel from Albert Daffee, a disciple of Rev. Prince, and later was baptized by Prince himself. Sanderson grew up in the French speaking waterways between Winnipeg and Montreal, his father being a trader for the Hudson Bay Company and his mother "a slave" of Cree extraction. We know nothing more of this designation of his mother as a "slave". Slave to whom? And did she raise Sanderson? Were his parents married? Did he grow up in his culture at all? He recounted many stories from his grandfather on his mother's side, and had excellent rapport with the Ojibway/Cree to whom he ministered, so we can assume some connection. We also know that he followed in his father's

footsteps, trading in British Columbia with the Hudson Bay Company, and later learning his trade of carpentry.



Less is known of John Passage, except that he was a gifted preacher and evangelist and often travelled with William Prince. There is no record that he was ever ordained as a Baptist minister.

Which brings us back to Rev. William Henry Prince, the powerhouse and instigator behind the most significant Baptist work among indigenous people in Canada to date. Prince was the son of Henry Prince who was responsible for the signing of Treaty 1 in Manitoba. When his father died in 1899, William Henry was made Chief, a role he fulfilled until 1902. We do not know why this role ended in 1902, or what complications there may have been as a result of being both Chief and ordained minister. We do know that Prince's itinerant mission ended at this time as his duties required him to be in residence on the St. Peter's Reserve.

In 1899, the same year that Prince became Chief, Rev. Sharp was appointed to take on the pastoral charge of the church at St. Peter's. Perhaps there was conflict between the two; there

is nothing explicit recorded, but Rev. Sharp has an unexplained absence from the community for two years from 1900-1902. In 1902 Prince ceases to be Chief, and Sharp returns.

We never hear of Rev. William Henry Prince after this. Mellick simply says, "Mr. Prince has been much praised and much blamed...when judging the conduct of another we should keep in mind our own frailties and shortcomings." To what this blame and shortcomings refer, we do not know.

The work on the St. Peter's Reserve is then taken up by Rev. H.G. Mellick from 1907-1909. Tragically, at this point, the Reserve at St. Peter's is disbanded by the government in violation of Treaty 1, and the work among this group comes to an end.

What then of the northern work around Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba, established by Rev. William Henry Prince? It seems that these carry on for a time. Reverend Doctor J. S. Clark was a medical doctor and a pastor who, along with his wife, ministered in the north in the Cree language. The Clarks served from 1904-1913. As they were the last white ministers committed to this work, it may be that the link to the broader denomination was broken with their departure.

Baptist Work in British Columbia

Around this same time on the west coast there was a work begun just south of the Canadian border. This work was carried out by American Baptist Missionaries based in Seattle. There was a ministry to migrant workers in the hops fields. Many of these workers were indigenous and from up and down the coast of what is now known as British Columbia. It is worth noting as well that at this time the Baptist work in British Columbia was all under the jurisdiction of the American Baptists in Seattle.

Two missionaries of European background had an evangelistic ministry preaching to these workers and establishing camp churches for the converted. There are accounts of converts

from the Kitwanga, Haida and Tsimsham peoples. Many of these converts return home after the harvest and bring the gospel to their own communities. There are accounts of this ministry between 1885 and 1896.

One convert, a man simply named as "Joseph" insists on learning a hymn that was being sung by the congregation during one of their tent meetings, asking for it to be sung over and over until he had it down. He then returned home and on the basis of this hymn witnessed to his family and his tribe and many came to faith through his witness.

Baker also recounts the story of a woman who remains unnammed in the account, but is the daughter of a Tsimshian chief. She is fluent in six indigenous languages and is a powerful evangelist bringing many to faith wherever she preaches. Rev. J.P. Ludlow petitions the convention in 1896 to send her out as a denominational missionary. Nothing seems to come of that petition.

As with Manitoba it seems that Indigenous people come to Baptists rather than Baptists going to them. In 1896 a contingent of Ni'shga paddle 500 km down the coast to where the American Baptists are gathered for their annual convention in Victoria, BC. The paddlers petition the convention to send missionaries to their community. A committee is struck but there is no record that it was ever convened.

Promising Start to Startling Silence

Why did this work, begun so unexpectedly, yet fruitfully, die out so rapidly? Why is there such a long gap before any other works are undertaken among the First People of this land?

Some have speculated that the demise was related to a change in oversight structures and distribution of funds. Basically, the denomination's women's work moved from being financed directly from women's groups in Baptist churches to all monies from the women's groups going

directly to the BUWC's treasurer. Therefore, monies once independently controlled by Baptist women's organizations were now distributed without designation. This required women's groups to focus on the BUWC's mission emphases, not on the women's missional foci--working among First Nations, a ministry Baptist women had established and supported from the outset.

Others have argued that the demise was due to financial pressures. There was, as of 1909, a designation of $1600 annually going to the work of the Indian Mission. Into exactly what was this money invested? At the same time in Bolivia and India, Baptists were expanding missions by investing in indigenous leadership. By 1910, Baptist work in India was under the direction of Field Councils comprised of local leaders.

Why, when work among the Cree started as vigorously as those begun in Bolivia and India, did this work languish while the other thrived?

Leaders were being raised up from among new converts. Indigenous people in a variety of communities were responding to the gospel as it was being presented. In fact, there seemed to be a strong retention of converts even when there were not missionaries who could be sent to minister in the community. Churches remained and grew in remote communities with only brief annual visits.

The shifts in oversight from Women's Mission groups to more national oversight was true for foreign as well as at home missions. It is also possible that losing Prince was the death knell for the work in Manitoba. We don't know what other factors might be included in the loss of his influence. We do know that the work seemed to hold steady right after his departure, but then steadily declined despite the ongoing presence of full-time missionaries in the community. Did the work need to be less mission and more church? Why did it retain a mission categorization when other similar works among German or Ukrainian immigrants, for example, were classified

as "churches in need of aid" and their pastor's salaries were supplemented or covered by denominational resources?

David Elliot raises two other questions that are worth considering for the sake of past analysis as well as future efforts. He notices that there seems to be no missiological framework to inform the work. Rightly, he wonders why there was so little cross-pollination with the missiological questions and strategies being implemented at the same time by Baptists in Burma and India? Elliot also wonders at Baptist polity being a barrier to pioneering evangelistic work among the unchurched of any background. By requiring rapid movement to the status of fully autonomous churches did this preclude Baptists from anything other than affiliating groups of believers into churches rather than establishing new works among non-believers.

At the same time, for the period it lasted, there were some very forward thinking ideas that marked this work. The concept of a contextualized work has already been raised where there was a commitment both to using the language of the people in worship and discipleship, and seeing the work led by local people. This seems to have grown organically from the influence and practices of Prince. But others, like Dr. Clark and Rev. Mellick, exhibit a commitment to these ideals as well. While there was a similar practice being developed in Foreign Missions at the same time, it certainly went against the grain of what was happening in other denominations among indigenous peoples.

Reverend Mellick was also an interesting character in this story. He was a Superintendent of the work in Manitoba and later took up pastoral duties on the St. Peter's Reserve. He takes the time at the end of that period to chronicle the work up to that point, and one feels as though this is his defense for continuing to invest in and expand this ministry. He is certainly a man of his

time and carries some of the assumptions and biases concordant with that reality. But he also demonstrates some very progressive thinking in respect to his opinion of Native peoples.

The beginning of *The Indians and Our Indian Missions* holds some ideas that are quite offensive to the modern mind, but Mellick is attempting, through a study of the people around him, to construct an evangelistic framework and is far more generous than many of his contemporaries in his assumptions about Cree culture. He takes various traditions and Native practices and from them draws parallels to ancient Hebrew culture or points out ways that the practice might be enriched and deepened by adding a gospel framework to the foundation of the cultural practice. In other words, Mellick does not assume a colonial framework of eradicating and replacing indigenous cultures, instead he assumes that Christian faith can enter a particular culture and transform it--a fairly revolutionary concept, given Mellick's own culture and time.

The end of his treatise then turns to a call to his readers, "Now that many of their own race are becoming preachers and teachers we may expect mission work to make more rapid and permanent progress. But it needs much prayer and earnest effort to reach the goal."

Finally, Mellick turns to an analysis of the situation of "Indian" people in Western Canada and offers many a critique. He strongly criticizes the union of church and state in the residential school project, arguing that the partnership is good neither for the church, government, nor Native peoples. He maintains that it is the duty of the government to provide quality education, and the duty of the church to lead people to Christ, but that the union of church and state is, in fact, yielding neither result. Mellick even goes so far as to criticize assimilationist thinking, which was pervasive at the time. While he may well tread into romanticism about the "noble savage", it was quite astonishing to read in a book from 1909 "Why do we want the Indians to be like white people?...I believe the Indian as an Indian is

naturally better than the white...If the Indian has sunk down since the white man came here, it is because we have put a stopper on his learning anything from us because of our insatiable greed. That the whole Indian population has not become perfect demons is evidence of their greatness. The great Indian warriors...were men of ability, discernment and power. There are Indian Washingtons and Lincolns lying beneath the sod who were murdered in cold blood by men of superior birth!" These are strong sentiments in a time where government policy was that we must "kill the Indian in the child so we might save the man."

Mellick closes with this charge: "Now, if we are true to our Lord and trust he has committed to us the future of the Indians of our country, so full of possibilities and promise, will be noble and happy, and they will be our joy and crown. In days to come, and after much refining of both elements, we will blend into one family as at the beginning, and our voices will blend in songs of praises to the Redeemer, world without end."

Despite this moving rallying cry, there is little more heard about this work. In this same year there is a report to the Baptist Women's Missionary Society that a chief's son and daughter were baptized in the northern mission at Fairford. By 1913 a committee is appointed to "consider work among the Indians" though there is no indication that the committee ever reported. In 1914 there are 25 in "Indian Sunday School" and from 1915 on there are no listings of First Nations congregations or "posts" as part of the denomination's ministry.

The Long Silence

The only other mention of First Nations work from the Baptist Union of Western Canada until the 1970s happens in 1939 where CC McLaurin remarks, "[A]s Baptists we have not done much for the Canadian Indians. We have reasoned that they will be of little or no service to the Church as they continue to remain children and never help to send the Gospel to the next tribe or

even the next family. Reasoning thus, we have thought it better to spend our money among people like the new English and other European settlers of Western Canada." The author, a long serving superintendent in the denomination, probably reflects the general attitude of the denomination for this period.

A Foray into Residential Schooling

While not a part of the Baptist Union of Western Canada, there was a Baptist work in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, from 1946-1962. Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lee came to Whitehorse from Alberta, though sent through an American Baptist mission to Alaska. Their objective was to plant a church, but as they arrived, they were struck by the plight of the Inuit children they encountered and decided instead to start a school. There were already two schools in operation locally, one Catholic and the other Anglican, but both had fallen into a state of significant disrepair and parents were asking for an alternative option. Although education for indigenous children was mandatory at this point in time, many were not attending school.

Mr. Lee secured an old army building for the school and hired teachers, and the school was filled to capacity as soon as it opened. There were increasing requests for students to be enabled to transfer from the other schools into Whitehorse Indian School.

Soon Lee found his resources depleted, and he petitioned the government for subsidy. This began a back and forth conversation between Lee and the Department of Indian Affairs with further input by the Anglican Bishop who argued that any funds available should go to the Anglican school rather than this "interloper". He asked, "What is a Baptist anyway? Where did they come from and how long will they remain? They are hardly a stable partner with whom to enter into such an undertaking." Lee finally succeeded in securing a provisional grant but did not enter into a formal partnership with the government.

The legacy of the Whitehorse Baptist Indian School is mixed. Attendance at the Baptist school was never compulsory, though school attendance in general was enforced at various times through its history. The reputation of Rev. Lee and the early days of the school seems to be quite good. However, he died tragically in a car accident in 1952. Three hundred people, mostly students of the school and their families attended his funeral. His brother Earl took over the school from 1952-1962, and his reputation was less than commendable. He was abusive to students in both his actions and his policies, and those last ten years of the school's history were dark ones. The school closed in 1962.

Concluding Thoughts

Canadian Baptists, much like average Canadians, have largely not thought about the indigenous peoples of this land. We struggle with understanding what the legacy of residential schools has for us or what impact it has on our current efforts to engage indigenous peoples. As immigrants, we wrestle with finding our place in a history not our own.

We must begin with understanding our past in order to move into a new future. We who are immigrants find it hard to own the difficult parts of Canadian history, but not to enjoy the benefits of land and privilege that are legacies of that same past.

Billy Graham is alleged to have made the following statement in 1994, “The greatest moments of Native history lie ahead of us if a great spiritual renewal and wakening should take place. The Native American has been a sleeping giant. He is awakening. The original Americans could become the evangelists who will help win America for Christ! Remember these forgotten people.”

In Canada the TRC has been a prompt to our memory of what we as a nation and as churches have put out of our minds. We have not only forgotten the indigenous people, we have sought to erase them. But now begins the healing journey. Will we join it?

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