

**Salvation from Empire:**

the Roots of Anishinabe Christianity in Upper Canada,

1650 – 1840

by

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in conformity with the requirements for

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examine the cultural interaction between Anishinabe people, who lived in what is now southern Ontario, and the Loyalists, Euroamerican settlers who moved north from the United States during and after the American Revolution. Starting with an analysis of Anishinabe cultural history before the settlement era the thesis argues that Anishinabe spirituality was not traditionalist. Rather it inclined its practitioners to search for new knowledge. Further, Anishinabe ethics in this period were determined corporately based on the immediate needs and expectations of individual communities. As such, Anishinabe ethics were quite separate from Anishinabe spiritual teachings.

Between 1760 and 1815, the Anishinabe living north of the Great Lakes participated in pan-Native resistance movements to the south. The spiritual leaders of these movements, sometimes called nativists, taught that tradition was an important religious virtue and that cultural integration was dangerous and often immoral. These nativist teachings entered the northern Anishinabe cultural matrix and lived alongside earlier hierarchies of virtue that identified integration and change as virtues.

When Loyalist Methodists presented their teachings to the Anishinabeg in the early nineteenth century their words filtered through both sets of teachings and found purchase in the minds of many influential leaders. Such leaders quickly convinced members of their communities to take up the Methodist practices and move to agricultural villages. For a few brief years in the 1830s these villages achieved financial success and the Anishinabe Methodist leaders achieved real social status in both Anishinabe and Euroamerican colonial society.

By examining the first generation of Anishinabe Methodists who practiced between 1823 and 1840, I argue that many Anishinabe people adopted Christianity as new wisdom suitable for refitting their existing cultural traditions to a changed cultural environment. Chiefs such as Peter Jones (Kahkewahquonaby), and their followers, found that Methodist teachings cohered with major tenets of their own traditions, and also promoted *bimadziwin*, or health and long life, for their communities. Finally, many Anishinabe people believed that the basic moral injunctions of their own tradition compelled them to adopt Methodism because of its potential to promote *bimadziwin*.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In June of 1845 Anishinabe chiefs and village representatives gathered on the eastern shore of Lake Huron, at Saugeen. They had a lot to talk about. For just over sixty years Euroamerican settlers had been taking over the territory that they used for hunting in the winter and fishing in the summer. At the time of the council, the new settlers were expanding their land holdings and intensifying their intimidation tactics, and the Anishinabe leaders needed to discuss strategy. Still, the council members did not hurry to get to business. According to an 1845 report in a Methodist newspaper, they began their proceedings by attending a Methodist camp meeting to seek the guidance of the Great Spirit. Having duly prepared themselves with songs and prayers, the chiefs and village leaders convened the business portion of the grand council and elected the Methodist chief of River Credit, a community on the north shore of Lake Ontario, to be the Chairman of the Council. Chiefs from Owen Sound in the Bruce Peninsula then put forward a proposition, “That all the Ojebway Indians be one people, and all have a share of the Territory in possession of the Saugeeng and Owen Sound Indians.”<sup>1</sup> Within two generations of settler colonialism in their territory -- the basin between Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Huron -- Anishinabe chiefs were using Christian rituals to prepare for general councils convened for the purpose of resisting colonial incursions.

It might appear that something quite new had happened among the Anishinabeg, a cultural revolution even. Certainly, that is how Methodist missionaries, who proudly

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<sup>1</sup> A brief account of the 1845 meeting, including the quotations in this paragraph, was printed in Upper Canada’s Methodist Newspaper *Christian Guardian*. See “The Indians of Canada West,” *Christian Guardian*, August 27, 1845.

reported Anishinabe uses of their teachings and traditions, perceived the practice.<sup>2</sup> Non-Native Methodists dearly hoped that embracing Methodism would bring about a deep realignment of Anishinabe ethics. However, those missionaries would have been disappointed to learn that the Chiefs and community members who called on the power of the Christian God saw him as an ally, rather than a great and terrible judge or a merciful forgiver of sins. In fact, the Anishinabeg of what would become Upper Canada did not recognize the Methodists' God as an arbiter of ethics at all, seeing him rather as a source of power and prosperity. From the Anishinabe point of view, the Methodist God could help individuals to behave better. He could do this, not because He, or His Bible, taught them what right was, but because He offered them the spirit power necessary for a return to older forms of Anishinabe ethical practice from which they had departed. The Methodist's God could provide a revitalization of Anishinabe culture.

Such revitalization was nothing new for the Anishinabeg. Their philosophy predisposed them to watch for new knowledge and power, rather than to rely on inherited traditions. The non-Native Methodists believed that individuals who adopted new ideas demonstrated the incompleteness of their own cultural inheritance; the Anishinabeg did not believe that any culture possessed complete wisdom. Indeed, believing that both

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<sup>2</sup> The significance of Anishinabe Methodism to non-Native Methodists in Upper Canada is demonstrated by the extensive coverage that it received in general histories of early North American Methodism. See: J. Carroll, *Case and His Cotemporaries or, The Canadian Itinerants' Memorial: Constituting a Biographical History of Methodism in Canada from its Introduction into the Province Till the Death of the Rev. William Case, in 1855*, 5 vols (Toronto: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1869); George Playter, *The History of Methodism in Canada: With an Account of the Rise and Progress of the Work of God among the Canadian Indian Tribes and Occasional Notices of the Civil Affairs of the Province* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1862). Further, missionaries to the Anishinabeg found publishers for their own accounts of their experiences. See: Benjamin Slight, *Indian Researches; or, Facts Concerning the North American Indians; Including Notices of their Present State of Improvement in their Social, Civil and Religious Condition; with Hints for their Future Advancement* (Montreal: printed for the author, J.E.L. Miller, 1844); Nathan Bangs, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church from its Origin in 1776 to the General Conference of 1840*, 4 vols (New York: G. Lane & P.P. Sandford, 1844-1857); Rev. John H. Pitezel, *Lights and Shades of Missionary Life: Containing Travels, Sketches, Incidents, and Missionary Efforts, During Nine Years Spent in the Region of Lake Superior* (Cincinnati: Western Book Concern by R. P. Thompson, Printer, 1861).

invisible spirits and knowledge in general were too vast and complex to be fully understood by any individual person, Anishinabe people followed a moral imperative to search for, and accept new knowledge and power when it proved useful to their community. It followed from this position that the Anishinabeg did not see accepting Methodist wisdom as the final step in their cultural journey. This fact did not bother their non-Native Methodist friends, because it did not occur to them.

Leaders of the Anishinabe Methodist movement have not been recognized as cultural innovators in the way that eighteenth-century First Nations leaders who espoused spiritually-driven resistance to colonialism, like Neolin and Tenskwatawa, have been. Despite the obvious difference, that both Neolin's and Tenskwatawa's movements ostensibly rejected Christianity as useless, and possibly even harmful to their communities, the revitalizations that they started bore striking similarities to the Anishinabe Methodist movement in the first part of the nineteenth century. All were explicitly fashioned to help their community members recapture the ethical traditions and material prosperity of a remembered, but distant, past. All three movements described their own communities as living through a time of cultural and material decline. All of the movements identified non-Native influence as the cause of that decline and all offered rituals that would allow people to access new sources of spirit power to help them escape from their current sufferings.

Methodism did not become popular among the Anishinabeg until the 1820s, forty years after non-Native settlers arrived in their territory. When the Euroamerican settlers first arrived in the St. Lawrence lowlands they introduced themselves as useful allies who would share resources with their hosts. The Anishinabeg had some expectations of a

positive relationship with these new settlers -- the British -- because they had cooperated with them to help First Nations people in the United States defend themselves from American settler encroachment. Further, before their arrival, the settlers' representatives had arranged land treaties with the community leaders. However, not all of the Anishinabeg in the area were equally willing to hope for good things from the settlers. The Anishinabeg living in kinship groups along Lake Ontario, known as the "Lake Anishinabeg," had had closer alliances with the British than had the Anishinabeg communities further north and west of Lake Ontario.<sup>3</sup> This second group, the so-called "Back Anishinabeg," had greater political sympathies with the anti-Euroamerican nativist movements in the U.S. than had their Lake Ontario compatriots. However, by the 1810s, the treaties that the Anishinabeg had made with the new settlers had been broken and their alliance rendered almost meaningless. By the early 1820s, the political strategies of both the Back and Lake Anishinabeg had failed to achieve balanced economic and social conditions for any of the communities. The result was a new strategy: the Anishinabe Methodist movement.

For the next three decades, the Anishinabe Methodist movement grew and spread throughout the territory. Its leaders promoted social and economic reform along with spiritual teaching. Communities where members adopted Methodism also relocated to permanent farming villages, in which children attended schools and men and women adopted new work patterns. Both the colonial government and the Methodist non-Natives supported the move to farming villages. During this brief era of Upper Canadian history, political and economic cooperation between Anishinabe people and settlers was a reality. It seemed possible to Natives and non-Natives alike that Anishinabe people

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<sup>3</sup> Peter S. Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 8.

could maintain their cultural identities and also participate in Upper Canada's political life. In the late 1830s, the colonial government began to pressure Anishinabe people to give up more land than they had already, and as a result the farming villages began to fail economically. The brief possibility of stable Anishinabe farms ended. This thesis will address three questions: what were the historical antecedents to the Anishinabe Methodist movement? What social and economic changes did the movement bring about? What did Christian practices mean to the Anishinabeg of the Great Lakes basin?

The form of Christianity that developed in the territory that is now Ontario had a sharper political edge than did most cultural movements arising from collaborations between First Nations peoples and colonial settlers. This was because it was a response to violent conflict with settlers in the eighteenth century, rather than a cultural collaboration embarked on by parties untainted by bitter memories. Settler colonialism in North America often led to cultural collaboration between First Nations people and newcomers. Frequently, when the newcomers began to steal large portions of land and mistreat indigenous peoples, such collaborations foundered. When this happened anti-colonial or "nativist" cultural movements arose to critique the settlers and offer an alternative to collaboration.<sup>4</sup> In the case of the Anishinabeg of present-day Ontario, a different cultural progression occurred.

The pivotal event in the process of contact between the Anishinabeg in the Great Lakes Basin and Euroamerican settlers came in the late eighteenth century in the United States, during Pontiac's Rebellion and the Northwest War. Until they began participating in southern wars contact between the Anishinabeg north of the lakes and

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<sup>4</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Nativism and Revivalism" in David L. Sills, ed., *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 11th ed. (New York: Macmillan Company and Free Press, 1968), 75 – 79.

Euroamericans had been limited to the fur trade and a brief encounter with Jesuits. Nevertheless, these northern communities sent warriors to help Pontiac's First Nations alliance defend the Ohio territories against non-Native settlers. The returning warriors brought nativist teachings home to the as yet un-invaded communities north of the Great Lakes. As a result, anti-colonial, nativist teachings spread through the Anishinabe communities of what would later become Ontario *before* permanent non-Native settlers arrived. The Anishinabe Methodist movement that eventually did form was more than simply a combination of ancient Anishinabe practices and Christian practices; it also incorporated Nativist ideas. Because the new movement included a critique of settler colonialism, it appealed both to communities that had been eager to participate in eighteenth century anti-colonial resistance and to those who, in the 1820s, looked for a smoother path. The influence of Nativism shaped the presentation, reception, and execution of Anishinabe Methodism by layering an aggressive campaign to form alliances between First Nations communities onto Methodist evangelism. It added sharp critiques of settler morality onto Anishinabe Methodist discussions of personal sin and incorporated into the Methodist call for social reform the idea that local suffering resulted from unhealthy relations with settlers.

This thesis will treat the Anishinabe Methodist movement as a cultural phenomenon involving a realignment of philosophical and cosmological attitudes as well as a shift in attitudes towards the economic and the social. Such an approach is necessary because there is no direct correspondence between what is meant by “religion” in the western intellectual tradition and what Anishinabe people in the nineteenth century, or today, refer to as “spirituality.” Today, many First Nations people assert that before the

arrival of non-Natives their societies did not have “a religion.”<sup>5</sup> Although I do not claim to understand the total significance of this, often adamant, statement, it likely points to a functional difference between religious teaching and ritual in European societies and sacred teachings and rituals in First Nations societies. While western religions offered universal ethical codes, the Anishinabe spiritual tradition focused on individuals creating relationships with *Manitous* in order to achieve health and wealth.<sup>6</sup> Non-Native religious traditions emphasized the ability of their religion to explain the universe. They must, therefore, reject other explanatory systems. From such a perspective changing religions means rejecting one explanatory system for another. The Anishinabe tradition did not use spirituality to explain the universe. Relations between humans and spiritual beings were valued, not for what they could explain, but for what they could achieve.

“*Manitous*,” as the Anishinabe called spiritual beings, were important because they provided the power that humans needed to secure health, food, and long life.

Ethics is an important element of the western concept of religion. Deriving from the will or character of an other-worldly deity, ethics in western traditions are interpreted and enforced by religious specialists who have been trained in knowledge of that deity.

The Anishinabe tradition did not tie spiritual power to ethics, or identify particular *Manitous* as entirely good or evil. *Manitous* were beings with lots of power whose ethics

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<sup>5</sup> Michael D. McNally, *Ojibwe Singers: Hymns, Grief, and a Native Culture in Motion* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 66; Lee Irwin “Native American Spirituality: an Introduction,” in Lee Irwin ed., *Native American Spirituality: A Critical Reader* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 2000), 3; Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw, eds., *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis* (London and New York: Rutledge, 1994), 10; Joseph Epes Brown, *The Spiritual Legacy of American Indians* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), 68.

<sup>6</sup> David J. Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation: Creating Wampanoag Christianity in Seventeenth-Century Martha’s Vineyard,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 62:2 (2005), 3,4; Susan Elaine Gray, “*I Will Fear No Evil*”: *Ojibwa-Missionary Encounters Along the Berens River, 1875 – 1940* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 19; Mary Black, “Ojibwa Power Belief System,” in Fogelson and Adams, eds., *The Anthropology of Power* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 145.



were mixed between good and bad, just as the ethics of humans were. Local communities, not *Manitous*, determined what was ethical, according to the demands of *Bimadziwin*, a pragmatic principle that asserted the virtue of a long, healthful life for individuals and their communities.

The differences between the two traditions illuminate the Anishinabe understanding of what they were doing when, in the period after the War of 1812, they adopted Methodist teachings. Leaders of the Anishinabe Methodist movement sought to revitalize their communities by offering a programme that supported long-held ethical commitments such as industry, stoicism and generosity; offered a strong basis for alliance with both non-Anishinabe First Nations communities and Euroamerican communities; promised reunion with dead relatives; and offered the possibility of a new guardian spirit who could promote *Bimadziwin* in the context of settler colonialism. The historical particularities that motivated and defined Anishinabe Methodism made the movement different from either of the traditions from which it derived (Anishinabe ethics and Methodist social reform and theology), while matching goals and strategies with the Nativist movements that Anishinabe Methodists, and First Nations Christians in general, disavowed. Anishinabe Methodists were not rejecting an inferior explanation of the nature of the universe for a more satisfying explanation. Nor were they betraying a God that should have had monotheistic claims on their loyalty. The Anishinabe Methodists were not, finally, accepting a new set of ethics, and, with some important exceptions, generally rejected the idea that deities should dictate ethics.

The Anishinabe Methodists of early nineteenth century Upper Canada lived in a world marked by dramatic changes. The society created when six thousand

Euroamerican and Six Nations refugees moved into the Great Lakes basin formed very quickly.<sup>7</sup> From 1790 until the late 1810s, the Anishinabeg attempted to create peaceful relationships with the Euroamerican settlers in their territory. Hoping to benefit from new forms of wealth and knowledge, and to gain military support, the Anishinabeg settled land treaties ceding to the immigrants use rights over most of present-day southern Ontario. However, the new residents showed little inclination to share much of anything with the Anishinabeg, and soon began forgetting their treaty promises and treating the land they had been allowed to use as if it were bought and paid for. Problems mounted for the Anishinabeg when the colonial government signaled their long-term intentions for the territory, which they now called Upper Canada, by recruiting more immigrants from Europe to live there. By 1820, it was clear to the Anishinabeg that not only was their access to hunting territories in danger, but that the land they had reserved for their own exclusive use in the treaties would soon be encroached on by the growing number of settlers. Only after they perceived how the Euroamerican settlement in their territory would play out did the Anishinabe Methodist movement begin. While the timing suggests that the movement was motivated by material and social concerns, the argument of this thesis is that in the context of Anishinabe culture, material and social concerns were tightly bound to spiritual conditions. As such, religious movements motivated by material conditions are not necessarily less spiritual on that account.

To understand why Methodism looked like a useful resource to the Anishinabeg one must understand their cultural history. As mentioned above, the Anishinabeg of

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<sup>7</sup>For a good sense of the timeline see: Donald Smith, "The Dispossession of the Mississauga Indians," *Ontario History* 73:2 (1981). Also Peter S. Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Helen I. Cowan, *British Emigration to British North America: the First Hundred Years* (University of Toronto Press, 1961); R. Cole Harris and John Warkentin, *Canada Before Confederation: a Study in Historical Geography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

Upper Canada had several wells of experience to draw on in formulating their response to the settler crisis. Their own political and social traditions, characterized by innovation and flexibility, had seen them through wars with the Iroquois, the restructuring of their subsistence practices in response to the fur trade, and a large-scale migration in 1690 from Sault St. Marie to their current location.<sup>8</sup> In their recent history, the Anishinabeg of Upper Canada had gathered a store of knowledge about settler colonialism while volunteering their help in pan-Native resistance movements south of the Great Lakes.<sup>9</sup> The Anishinabeg's first-hand experience of resisting colonialism was supplemented when Iroquoian refugees, who had been long-time allies of the English, entered the Anishinabeg's territory and offered direct guidance on forming and maintaining alliances with English settlers. Once the settlers had been living with them for thirty years and the Anishinabeg encountered the Methodists, Anishinabe leaders discerned a fault line within settler society between those who favoured aggressive incursions on First Nations' land holdings and others, like the Methodists, who believed that such incursions contravened foundational values of English culture. Knowledge and experience from each of these four sources – their political and social traditions, their experience south of the Lakes, the guidance of the Iroquois, and their own experience living with the settlers – provided the cultural content, the evidence if you will, deployed by Anishinabe leaders and community members in debates and lectures through which they puzzled out how to remake their communities under the conditions of settler colonialism.

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<sup>8</sup> For an account of the Anishinabeg's seventeenth-century relocations and their resultant cultural effects see Theresa Shenck "*The Voice of the Crane Echoes Afar*": *The Sociopolitical Organization of the Lake Superior Ojibwa, 1640 – 1855* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1997).

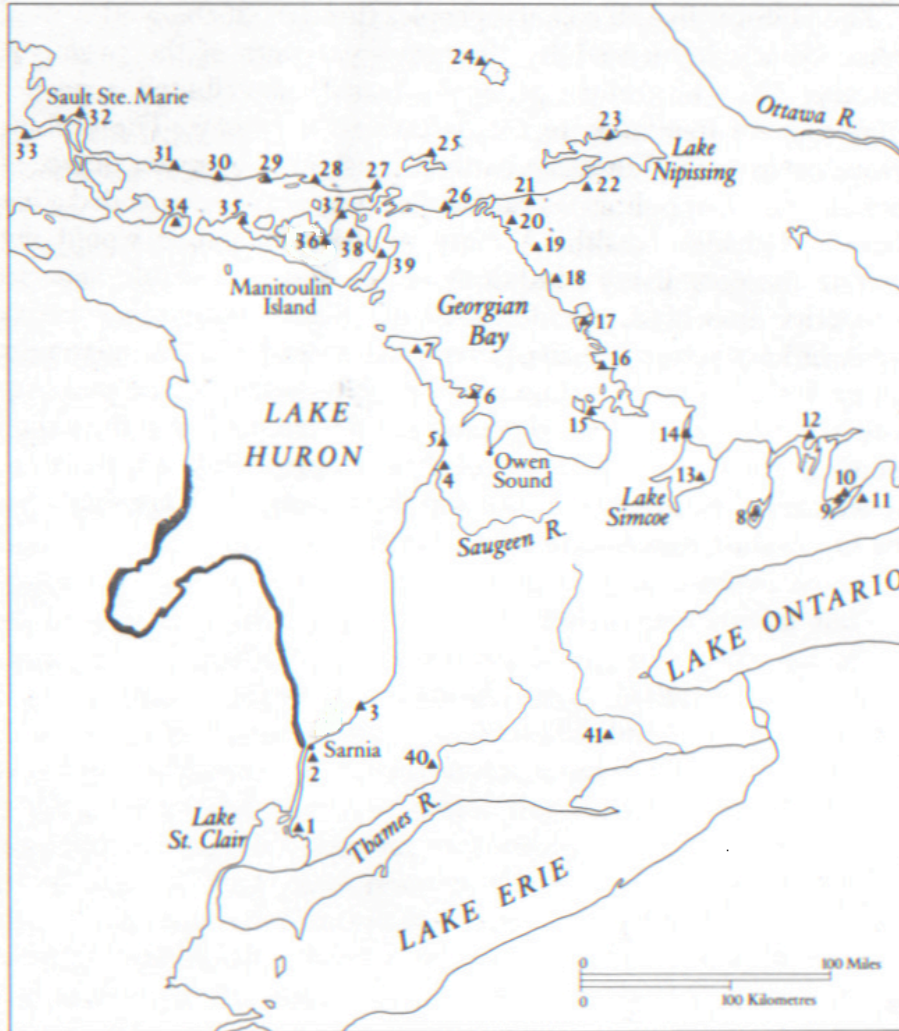
<sup>9</sup> Referred to as the "North-West Indian War" in American historiography and the "Northwest War" here.

The Anishinabe Methodist movement was one of the solutions arrived at in the early nineteenth century. As seen in the Grand Council example, enough chiefs and community leaders approved of Methodism that by 1845 Methodist practice was integrated into the highest levels of inter-community organization. The Anishinabe Methodist movement began in 1823 among the River Credit community on the northwestern shore of Lake Ontario, see Map 1. The combination of spiritual teachings, practices and social reforms that constituted the Anishinabe form of Methodism spread quickly east along Lake Ontario to the Bay of Quinte, then west along the Trent Severn waterway to Rice Lake, then further afield – west to the Georgian Bay area and south to communities on the Thames river. Once the movement took hold in an area, community members would organize weekly Methodist meetings, host visiting Methodist preachers, and participate in inter-village religious meetings with other Methodist communities. As the movement grew, news of its initial successes spread. Travelers, sometimes even chiefs, from other Anishinabe communities came to the River Credit from Sault St. Marie and other north-western communities to learn the rituals of the new practice. Not content to foster the movement at home, Anishinabe Methodists themselves traveled to other communities, mostly Anishinabe, to persuade them to join as well.

The movement was helped by the non-Native Methodists' willingness to train Anishinabe people as ministers. Historian Ramon Gutierrez found that Fransiscan missionary efforts were limited by their unwillingness to allow Pueblo people to join their order, seeing Pueblos as incapable of leading and unworthy to become “married” to God.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ramon A. Gutierrez, Ramon A., *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality and Power in New Mexico, 1500 – 1846* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 166.



Many of the reserves listed here have been Ojibwa settlements for centuries:

1. Walpole Island
2. Sarnia
3. Kettle & Stony Point
4. Saugeen
5. Chief's Point
6. Cape Croker
7. Saugeen-Cape Croker hunting reserve
8. Scugog
9. Rice Lake
10. Sugar Island
11. Alnwick
12. Mud Lake
13. Georgena Islands
14. Rama
15. Christian Islands
16. Moose Deer Point
17. Parry Island
18. Shawanaga
19. Manetawan
20. Henvey Inlet
21. French River
22. Dokis
23. Nipissing
24. Wahnapiatal
25. Whitefish Lake
26. Mattagami
27. Whitefish River
28. Spanish River
29. Serpent River
30. Mississagi River
31. Thessalon
32. Garden River
33. Bay Mills
34. Cockburn Island
35. Sheshegwaning
36. West Bay
37. Sucker Creek
38. Sheguianda
39. Wikwemikong
40. Caradoc
41. New Credit.

Map 1: Anishinabe Villages in Southern Ontario

Map taken from Peter S. Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p xvi.

It is important to note at the start that the Anishinabe Methodist movement affected only a portion of the Anishinabeg living in present-day Ontario. Even in the communities that were started with the help of, and according to the principles of, the Anishinabe Methodist leadership, less than half of the residents were church members by 1840. Further, the scope of the movement was limited by the relatively small number of Anishinabe people living in the territory that became Upper Canada – less than 2000 in the 1780s.<sup>11</sup> However, the influence of the Anishinabe Methodist movement was out of all proportion to its size. During the period from 1823 to 1850, Anishinabe Methodist leaders wrote hymn books and biblical translations in the Ojibway language. The teachings of the Anishinabe Methodist movement, and its accompanying texts, was carried by its practitioners to communities to the northwest in Canada and into the Minnesota territory in the United States (where Anishinabe people still employ their teachings today).<sup>12</sup>

The practice of Anishinabe Methodism centred on the relationship between individuals and the supreme Christian deity, whom the Anishinabeg referred to as *Gitchi Manitou*. According to the proponents of Anishinabe Methodism, *Gitchi Manitou* could enable people to achieve greater happiness and wealth under the conditions of settler colonialism. Relations between humans and *Gitchi Manitou* were very similar to the relationships that Anishinabe people formed with guardian spirits both before and after the arrival of settlers, as both provided humans with the power to achieve prosperity. It

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<sup>11</sup> Smith, “Dispossession.”

<sup>12</sup> E.S. Rogers described the influence of Anishinabe Methodism on the Anishinabeg at Round Lake in *The Round Lake Ojibwa* (Ottawa: The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, 1962), D2- D10. The effect of Anishinabe Methodist teaching on the community at Berens River is described in Susan Elaine Gray, *I Will Fear No Evil: Ojibwa-Missionary Encounters Along the Berens River, 1875 – 1940* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006). Michael McNally has described how Enmegabowh, a young initiate into the movement, was trained in Upper Canada and then brought the teachings to his community in present day Minnesota: see McNally, *Ojibwe Singers*, 98.

will be argued that the Anishinabe of Upper Canada believed that Methodist rituals provided access to the same spiritual blessings that had so enriched the Euroamerican settlers in their midst. With no cultural taboo against incorporating new powerful beings, or *Manitous*, into their spiritual practices, and a cultural imperative to watch for spiritually powerful people wherever they might appear, the Anishinabeg followed the direction of evangelists from within and outside of their communities and took up the veneration of the Christian deity in order to secure the particular blessings that He offered.

When recounting their experience of the *Gitche Manitou* blessing, Anishinabe people used the phrase “getting happy” to identify a moment which led to improvements in their life. Getting happy was not an intellectual paradigm shift, but a gift of power that enabled them to live well. That is, they did not learn ethics from meeting God; they had ethics from their own culture. According to the Anishinabe Methodists, what they received from Methodist rituals was the spiritual power that they needed to live up to their own ethical standards. Anishinabe and Methodist ethics converged to a great extent. Anishinabe Methodists identified freedom from alcohol and the comfort of a heavenly afterlife as further benefits of “getting happy.” Significantly, from the Anishinabe point of view, the specific afflictions that Methodism addressed – alcohol, poverty and disease – were brought on by the fur traders and settlers. They were not failings indigenous to their culture.

The experience and beliefs of leaders of the Anishinabe Methodist movement differed from that of ordinary Anishinabe people who adopted the movement’s teachings. Of the three leaders who will be discussed in depth in this study – Peter Jones, John

Sunday and Peter Jacobs – both Jones and Sunday were also elected by their local councils to serve as chiefs.<sup>13</sup> The Anishinabe Methodist leaders paid more attention to the political elements of the tradition than did most of the movement's adherents, who focused on its affective aspects. Jones and Sunday in particular served as political leaders in their communities and were tireless proponents of First Nations' interests in non-Native colonial society. Also, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders were more inclined to attempt to deny the importance and influence of older forms of Anishinabe spirituality on the new movement than were Methodist community members. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders used the language of Methodism both to articulate their political ideas to non-Natives and to promote spiritual revival among their own communities. For their part, Anishinabe community members experienced Methodist baptism ceremonies and tent meetings as opportunities to grab hold of spiritual power that would enable them to achieve personal ethical reform. Further, starting in the seventeenth century, when Jesuit missionaries visited the southern Anishinabeg's ancestors at Sault St. Marie, Anishinabe people identified the Euroamericans' God with death and the afterlife. During the early settler era, when deaths from disease were rampant in their communities, the Anishinabe of the Great Lakes basin welcomed the opportunity to attach themselves to a *Manitou* who promised them reunion with lost loved ones in a heaven.

Both leaders and ordinary members of the Anishinabe Methodist movement explained the historical significance of the movement in terms that were already familiar to them from Neolin and Tenskwatawa's revivalist movements. They identified their own era as a time of spiritual renewal and healing from the suffering of the fur trade era.

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<sup>13</sup> In this thesis English names will be used for Anishinabe people when the individual in question regularly used an English name in communication with non-Native people. Peter Jones was also known as Kahkewaquonaby, John Sunday was called Shawundais and Peter Jacobs was called Pahtahsega.



Anishinabe Methodists divided history into three eras. First, there was a somewhat distant era, before the fur trade, in which they had been collectively wealthier and more ethical. This time had ended with the arrival of Europeans and the beginning of the fur trade, which many nineteenth century Anishinabeg saw as the beginning of a cultural dark age for their people, a time of moral and material decline.<sup>14</sup> The Anishinabeg referred to the quality of life that they had lost as *Bimadziwin*.<sup>15</sup> Anishinabe Methodists saw the problems facing their communities in the early nineteenth century as a broad phenomenon and they explicitly assigned most of the blame for it to Europeans. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders charged that fur traders had contaminated and destabilized Anishinabe communities by introducing alcohol and spreading contempt for spiritual beings, thus bringing punishment from the spirit world.<sup>16</sup> According to the Anishinabe Methodist leaders Methodism would provide cleansing, reformation and the return of *bimadziwin*.

The Anishinabe Methodist leaders charged the new settlers and their colonial government with continuing the fur traders' damaging legacy. By breaking treaties and stealing land, they were undermining Anishinabe subsistence and hurting Anishinabe culture. In response, Anishinabe Methodist leaders took up a political campaign directed at colonials, which they prosecuted alongside their spiritual/reformist campaign.

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<sup>14</sup> Anishinabe leaders expressed this opinion in their public statements and writings, but in their private reflections and in their spiritual rituals leaders and practitioners of Anishinabe Methodism often took responsibility for ethical lapses that they perceived to be of their own making, that is, they believed in personal sin but saw it in a larger context of colonial injustice that inclined victimized individuals toward sin.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of the written and oral history of the meaning of *Bimadziwin* see Lawrence W. Gross "Bimaadziwin, or the 'Good Life,' as a Unifying Concept of Anishinabe Religion," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 26:1 (2002), 15-32.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians: with Especial Reference to their Conversion to Christianity* (London: A W. Bennett, 5 Bishopsgate Street Without. Houlston and Wright, Paternoster Row, 1861), 165-172.

In sermons and speeches both in Upper Canada and Britain, Anishinabe Methodist leaders denounced the colonial government's failure to offer presents when and where they should and to honour treaty promises. They decried its attempts to steal protected land. Acting as diplomats, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders wrote letters and took meetings with colonial officials to raise money and secure aid for the Anishinabe farming villages, and to keep the colonial officials apprised of Anishinabe interests. The leaders also organized pan-Native alliances, a strategy that they had borrowed from the Nativist prophets to the south. Finally, the Anishinabe Methodists believed that adopting Euroamerican-style farming could create a solid economic base for their communities and so they created farming villages in which they congregated as many people as would join. Anger at their people's suffering, and real confidence that it could be overturned, fueled the Anishinabe Methodist leaders' message with hope and radicalism.

In its initial form, the Anishinabe Methodist movement lasted only a short while. From the mid 1820s to the mid 1840s, the ideas and practices spread and were adopted. In the first generation, the movement achieved a working collaboration between Nativist communities, more pacifist Anishinabeg, non-Native Methodist preachers, and some colonial officials. It is with this brief window of collaboration that this dissertation is concerned. In the 1840s, a conservative colonial government appropriated some of the established Anishinabe farms. This action convinced Anishinabe Methodist leaders, particularly Peter Jones, that the collaboration was unsustainable and led to a shift in focus from promoting farms, in which Anishinabe communities could maintain their own ethical and political systems largely intact, to promoting residential schools for children, precisely because those schools would break down Anishinabe ethical and social systems.

This thesis offers an “emic” view into Anishinabe history. Commonly, ethnohistories present a historical situation from the point of view of a non-Native participant, or from non-Native received wisdom, and then demonstrate how that perspective deviates from the Native point of view. Though very useful in defamiliarizing triumphalist national histories, such an approach jars the narrative focus away from the indigenous point of view. Given the unavoidable limitations on achieving insight into First Nations’ history when the majority of historians are not Native, the added distraction of overemphasis on Euroamerican actions must be actively avoided. This thesis attempts to focus tightly on Anishinabe cultural history, including the subjective world of non-Native perceptions and intentions only when and where they are necessary to explain Anishinabe actions and perceptions. This thesis will look into the cultural environment of those nineteenth century Anishinabe people who decided to call themselves Methodists, searching in particular for the widely held beliefs, received traditions, and community stories that formed the epistemological framework through which the Methodist movement made sense.

The real danger of histories that, like this one, are written by non-Native historians, is that they will tell a story that adheres to the present-day demands of an academic discipline while damaging the political goals of present day descendants of the history’s subjects. I argue that First Nations people who adopted Methodism were following an indigenous cultural imperative. This could be taken to suggest that First Nations people who opposed cultural collaboration, here referred to as Nativists, were being in some way “inauthentic,” or that those who did not adopt Methodism were asleep at the switch. Like most historians, I do not believe that the age of an idea or practice

indicates its value or usefulness. Nativism was, and is, undeniably necessary to First Nations political movements. On the other hand, Canadian intellectual tradition has ignored the more complex aspects of indigenous philosophies for too long. I believe that the value of re-introducing the expansive, intellectually dynamic Anishinabe philosophy, here called the “*oten* tradition,” is greater than the risk of possibly harming the reputation of the very well-known, and well-loved, tenets of pan-Native teachings.<sup>17</sup>

The primary sources for this study are writings by the Anishinabe Methodist leaders and newspaper reports from *The Christian Guardian*, a newspaper published by the Methodist Episcopal Church in Upper Canada. Both the leaders and the newspaper openly promoted the movement as a curative to troubles within Anishinabe communities, and as a tool to support the Anishinabeg in political and legal battles with the colonial government. As such, the *Christian Guardian* articles record Anishinabe perceptions of settlers and of how the settlers perceived them. Both the preachers, in their diaries and sermons, and the newspaper spent much ink on the current state of the Anishinabeg, paying particular attention to the successes of the farming villages. They aimed thereby to encourage non-Natives to contribute money to the villages. The result is likely an exaggeration of the success of the villages, but also rich detail about the arrangement of work, gender roles, spiritual practices, and building projects. The *Guardian* also had reason to exaggerate the success of the farms in order to emphasize God’s faithfulness to

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<sup>17</sup> For historical monographs that assert the historical importance of Nativist movements see: Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745 – 1815* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Joel Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees’ Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991); Ronald Niezen, *Spirit Wars: Native North American Religions in the Age of Nation Building* (California: University of California Press, 2000); David R. Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

the Native Methodists.<sup>18</sup> Fortunately for historians, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders wrote a great deal about their philosophy of Anishinabe Methodist practice, how it related to their own cultural history and how they believed it would affect their spiritual and material condition in the future.

The *Christian Guardian* promoted Methodism generally. Its portrayal of First Nations people must be understood as an aspect of a campaign to interest people in Methodism and to encourage proper behaviour among readers who were Methodist already. To those ends, the *Guardian* focused on evidence of Anishinabe gratitude for Methodist teachings. It also used Anishinabe Methodists as examples of simple virtue. *The Christian Guardian* also wanted to entertain its readers, who found the story of evangelizing the Anishinabeg to be an exciting battle between truth and lies. The *Christian Guardian* supplied the details of that conflict by outlining the arguments of Anishinabe critics of the missionaries. In this way, the paper yields information about dissenters from the movement. Because regular community members did not participate in debates, records about their ideas about the movement are much harder to come by in the newspaper. Mostly, they can be found embedded in reports in *the Christian Guardian* of words that people spoke in public statements that they made during spiritual rituals. Because I assumed that most people would not criticize the Methodist movement openly during actual Methodist rituals but would discuss topics that their communities associated with the movement, I have used these testimonies to indicate the general ideas

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<sup>18</sup> It is necessary to interpret the *Christian Guardian* carefully because its authors and contributors had three goals: to promote piety among Methodists, to encourage non-Methodists to join the movement, and to critique the actions of the Anglican dominated colonial government. I have therefore been skeptical of material that shows the government at a disadvantage, or suggests a connection between Methodist piety and prosperity, or discusses the ethical failings of non-Methodists, looking for supporting evidence from other sources whenever possible.

that Anishinabe people associated with Methodism, rather than to indicate their feelings toward the movement as a whole.<sup>19</sup>

Cultural collaborations across the vast power differentials of colonial conditions are always built on uneven ground. Histories of such collaborations must not hide this fact. Early histories of the Anishinabeg experience celebrated the European missionaries who risked personal comfort and, occasionally, safety, to bring their message to indigenous people.<sup>20</sup> The literature then briefly turned to focusing on the ways in which the missionary project enabled the massive land theft undertaken by European countries in the colonial era.<sup>21</sup> In a recent work, American Native historian Daniel Richter has shown that neither of these narratives is very well suited to conveying information about First Nations people. Noting that “understanding colonialism requires a perspective reorientation” and that the “[m]aster narrative of early America remains essentially European-focused,” Richter calls for a history project that renounces fetishistic attention to the virtue or vice of European colonizers and tracks instead the “stories of North America during the period of European colonization” rather than

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<sup>19</sup> I used the *Christian Guardian* to learn what words and phrases came to Anishinabe people’s minds when they were explicitly discussing Methodism. For example, Chapter 6 is an extended discussion of the meaning of the phrase “getting happy” in the context of a nineteenth century Anishinabe world view. This is not to suggest that the phrase was unique to them, it was a stock phrase in Methodist rhetoric, rather I have analyzed the Anishinabeg’s deployment of the phrase to illustrate what it meant to the Anishinabeg in particular. Further, though the phrases attributed to Anishinabe Methodists in the pages of the *Christian Guardian* may well have been altered to sound more like standard, non-Native Methodist rhetoric, I have worked from the assumption that they are not total fabrications and that whatever construction was put on the expression, the *topic* of the expression was represented accurately. As such I have concluded that Anishinabe Methodists associated death, the afterlife, moral strength and a sensation of joy with Methodism.

<sup>20</sup> Carroll, *Case and His Contemporaries*; Playter, *The History of Methodism in Canada*; Slight, *Indian Researches; or, Facts concerning the North American Indians*; Bangs, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*; Pitezal, *Lights and Shades of Missionary Life*.

<sup>21</sup> Carol Devens, *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

recounting again, but from new perspectives the story “of the European colonization of North America.”<sup>22</sup>

In *Salvation and the Savage* Robert Berkhofer summarized many indigenous responses to Christian missionaries. He concluded that those Natives who were interested in Christianity converted totally and adopted European culture and Christian practice all at once.<sup>23</sup> Further, Berkhofer discounts the explanations that such people offered for their interest in Christianity saying that their interest was the result of long psychological processes, not fear of death or the promise of power as they claimed.<sup>24</sup> Berkhofer’s work must be revisited. He did not, as Richter suggests, place his inquiry in the context of indigenous worldviews. Further he drew his evidence from the writings of missionaries to many different nations and reproduced anecdotes stripped of the political and social circumstances in which they occurred. Finally, the Christian tropes that he so easily dismisses as real reasons for adopting Christian forms may resound more meaningfully in the context of the indigenous societies that he leaves unexplored.

Kenneth Morrison uses a line of reasoning similar to Richter’s to interpret missionary encounters with Algonkian Nations. Criticizing James Axtell for failing to consider the meaning of Native religious behaviour in terms of indigenous understandings of religion and spirituality, Morrison suggests that Algonkians did not convert as completely as Axtell suggests.<sup>25</sup> Morrison suggests that Christianity

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<sup>22</sup> Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 8, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Robert F. Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787 – 1862* (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), 111.

<sup>24</sup> Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 114.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth M. Morrison, Kenneth M., *The Solidarity of Kin: Ethnohistory, Religious Studies, and the Algonkian –French Religious Encounter* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 155.

introduced conflicts into the social structure of Algonkian communities, including the Anishinabeg, by interfering with the preexisting cultural imperative to dedicate all resources to kinship solidarity.<sup>26</sup> My findings suggest that, at least for the Anishinabeg, eighteenth century nativist movements introduced rifts before Christian teachings were widespread. Further I have found that the Christian Anishinabeg preserved the concept of using all new resources for the good of the local community.

Richter and Morrison's project of analyzing Native societies from the inside out seems safe enough when the "story of North America" focuses on politics or material culture. Showing how a First Nation established new political processes or food systems in response to colonial conditions presents First Nations people responding pragmatically to colonial abuses. Such studies do not blur the sharp divide between Natives and colonial aggressors. However, when a study shows that First Nations' people experienced a cultural change which appears to suit the ends of colonizers, it might appear callous to fail to denounce the colonizers who encouraged such a shift. In his overview of relations between First Nations, French, and English communities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, James Axtell delved into these treacherous waters, offering an extended and influential reflection on the dynamics of cultural exchange between First Nations groups and European colonizers. Contained within Axtell's analysis, and as a result within much of the field in general, are two familiar but ultimately unsatisfying propositions. The first proposition is that First Nations people

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<sup>26</sup> Morrison, *Solidarity of Kin*, 4.



adopted Christianity as “protective coloring”. The second is that First Nations religions were opposed to external influence.<sup>27</sup>

Proposition one, the protective colouring argument, suggests that Natives adopted a façade of Christian faith that, while neither deep nor earnest, protected some First Nations people against some colonial abuses and gained them privileges.<sup>28</sup> Recent treatments of First Nations’ uses of Christian practices have focused on the pragmatic value of a Christian identity under the condition of European colonialism. Drawing on the work of anthropologist James Scott, ethnohistorians have noted ways in which observing Christian practices served the social needs of indigenous communities by providing, among other things, a cover for cultural and political resistance.<sup>29</sup> In their study of Christian missions in South Africa, Jean and John Commaroff applied Scott’s work to indigenous African forms of Christian practice. The Commaroffs explained a Tswana chief’s invitation to missionaries to join his village as an attempt to secure protection from attack, and then demonstrated the chief’s attempts to limit the missionary’s social influence in the community once he arrived.<sup>30</sup> Such analyses simply cannot explain the Anishinabe Methodist leaders and followers described here who, as I will show, had a genuine commitment to Methodism. Further, this argument draws on a western world view which dichotomizes material experience and spiritual practice. The

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<sup>27</sup> James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). For First Nations religions only explained local phenomena see 332; for Christianity pacified First Nations communities see 329; for Christianity offered First Nations “moral rearmament” and religious revitalization see 332; for Christianity offered “protective coloring” see 332; and for adopting Christianity enabled resistance to external influences see 286, 302, and throughout.

<sup>28</sup> Axtell, *Invasion Within*, 332.

<sup>29</sup> James C. Scott *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 1-16.

<sup>30</sup> Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa, Volume 1* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 200.

concept of *bimadziwin*, which shaped Anishinabe practice, connected *Manitou* blessing directly and unapologetically with health and prosperity.

The thinly veiled rape metaphor in Axtell's title, *The Invasion Within*, further suggests the extent to which western epistemology pathologizes the exchange of spiritual wisdom as unnatural and violent. Axtell and others suggest that, broadly speaking, First Nations people experienced Christian teaching as a form of invasive intellectual penetration. Such a description assumes that ideological aggression and resistance characterized both sides of the relationship between the First Nations and the Europeans. In *The Heavens are Changing*, Canadian historian Susan Neylan observes that the Tsimshian of the Pacific Coast had a "long standing tradition of receiving religious forms from external donors."<sup>31</sup> First Nations people in general did not attempt to destroy the religious beliefs of other people. The Anishinabeg did not have any taboo against incorporating new beliefs into their cosmology and ethical systems. In the late eighteenth century when First Nations people from many communities received prophetic visions, people from other communities who had heard about the prophecies traveled to seek out the new teaching.

Attempting to interpret Anishinabe actions from the point of view of Anishinabe people, this thesis will acknowledge that in many instances Anishinabe people defined knowledge gain as a cultural victory rather than as a capitulation. This does not mean that it could not at some times be both or the latter. However, the orientation of Anishinabe spirituality was towards incorporating, rather than reifying, spiritual knowledge. If a geographic depiction of the history of Christianity might begin with a

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<sup>31</sup> Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 9.

map of the Roman world crossed over with the paths of Christian missionaries carrying their teachings outward to remote communities, a map of an Anishinabe religious movement would show the paths of religious pilgrims converging spoke-like on a single, unmoving teacher like Neolin or Tenskwatawa. In the Anishinabe Methodist movement, the River Credit community formed the hub of the prophetic wheel. However, combined as the River Credit phenomenon was with Methodism, the community also sent out evangelists. As has been noted, the argument that First Nations people resisted new religious teachings in order to protect their own culture rests on the problematic assertion that First Nations sacred stories commanded the exclusivist descriptive power with which Christian missionaries endowed their own sacred stories.

The early writing about Anishinabe people in Upper Canada did not follow the same analytical path as the American literature on First Nations-colonial relations has done. John Webster Grant's 1984 *Moon of Wintertime* offered a survey of missionary-First Nations relations in Canada. Grant's work provides an unparalleled source of detail about missionary actions and policies. Lacking information about indigenous cultures or history, however, the work suggests that the Anishinabeg adopted Methodist teachings out of desperation created by poverty.<sup>32</sup> A second work that also offers essential information for this study, and a close look into the daily lives of Anishinabe people in the early nineteenth century is Donald Smith's *Sacred Feathers*.<sup>33</sup> The work is a biography of the Anishinabe Methodist minister Peter Jones whose uncle, Joseph Sawyer, was chief of the River Credit Anishinabeg, who himself became a chief in 1829. Smith shows that Jones used Christian teachings to serve a wide variety of pragmatic needs in

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<sup>32</sup> John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 89, 90.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers*.

his community. Like Grant, Smith does not interpret Jones's actions in terms of Anishinabe cultural or historical imperatives. He leaves an impression that Jones's support of Methodism was motivated by desperation and that the changes brought about through his work were cataclysmic for his people.<sup>34</sup>

Employing the ethnohistorical method in her study of the Tsimshian on the west coast, Canadian historian Susan Neylan has argued that Christianity must be understood as "an aspect of Native history, not simply an external force acting upon it."<sup>35</sup> Likewise, a historian of the Tlingit, Sergei Kan, has criticized James Axtell for being overly pragmatic in his analysis.<sup>36</sup> Neylan and Kan have both inquired into how a particular indigenous religion shaped First Nations perceptions of, and reactions to, Christian missionaries and their teachings. By focusing on particular communities and considering Christian teachings in relation to Tsimshian and Tlingit worldviews, both authors offer much more attention to the actions and beliefs of First Nations people than do the synthetic works that preceded them.

Discussing Tsimshian uses of evangelical Christianity, Neylan uses the words convergence, syncretism, and dualism to describe how the Tsimshian people related the two traditions.<sup>37</sup> These same three descriptions apply in the case of Anishinabe Methodism. The divergent functions of Anishinabe spirituality and Methodist teachings limited the accommodations necessary to join the two traditions. In Upper Canada, Christianity offered rituals and teachings about death and poverty necessary in

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<sup>34</sup> Bruce Trigger, who pioneered the ethnohistorical method in Canada, studied the Huron. See Bruce Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: a History of the Huron People to 1660* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987.)

<sup>35</sup> Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Sergei Kan, *Memory Eternal: Tlingit Culture and Russian Orthodox Christianity through Two Centuries* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1999), xxiv.

<sup>37</sup> Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, 15.

communities facing those phenomena on an unprecedented scale. Further, on the level of ethics the two traditions converged, both emphasizing the responsibility of individuals to take care of themselves and their community, and their ultimate dependence on a relationship with a powerful *Manitou* to do so. Finally, dualism, as in holding multiple, not necessarily related or even coherent values, beliefs and practices, also operated. Not because the Anishinabe Methodists were insufficiently reflective to notice contradictions in their practice, but because Anishinabe philosophy rejected the concept of a singular, psychologically homogenous individual. When Anishinabe people accepted Methodist baptism they happily received new names, and added them, along with the power they contained, to the names that they had been given at birth and at their naming ceremonies.

Having argued that Anishinabe Methodism was experienced as a spiritual phenomenon by nineteenth century Anishinabe people, the material side of the movement must be addressed. Drawing on the work of anthropologist James Scott, ethnohistorians have noted ways in which the observation of Christian practices served the social needs of indigenous communities by providing, among other things, a cover for cultural and political resistance.<sup>38</sup> Ethnohistorians in North America have employed this technique of uncovering the complex motivations for taking on a Christian identity. Of particular interest for this study are the works that use this technique to explain Anishinabe responses to Christianity. Historian Carol Devens has argued that in the Great Lakes area Native men tended to align themselves with Christian groups because doing so increased their social power, while women resisted Christianity because adopting it could decrease their authority in the community.<sup>39</sup> Studying Ojibwa societies in Minnesota,

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<sup>38</sup> Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 1-16.

<sup>39</sup> Devens, *Countering Colonization*, 4,5.

ethnohistorian Rebecca Kugel traced the political meanings of Christian practices over an older grid of political tensions between civil and war chiefs and found that the rhetoric of Christianity provided a new discourse to rehearse old disagreements.<sup>40</sup> In both cases, Anishinabe Methodism was discussed as a means to a non-spiritual end, an interpretation which this study hopes to complicate by demonstrating the relationship between the material and spiritual goals of the movement.

The pragmatic arguments of Devens and Kugel, and even Grant and Smith, are highly plausible. Given the drastically unequal power relationship between colonizers and First Nations people in North America, the zealousness and political influence of non-Native missionaries, and the infinite variability of human behaviour, the likelihood that some First Nations people feigned Christian faith for material advantage with the colonizers cannot be denied. However, the connection between expressions of Anishinabe Christianity and social negotiation must be theorized. Indeed, the impulse to reveal the material foundation of ostensibly spiritual expressions arises from the modernist critique of Victorian rhetoric. When considering cultures like the Anishinabe, in which many people believed that spiritual realities (balanced relations between humans and non-humans) shaped material conditions (access to food, health), the primacy of material conditions as a historical motivator can never be assumed.<sup>41</sup> Many Upper Canada Anishinabeg believed that the spiritual practices of Methodism would render material benefits, not because enacting them pleased colonial rulers, but because they pleased the colonial ruler's deity.

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<sup>40</sup> Rebecca Kugel, *To Be the Main Leaders of Our People: A History of Minnesota Ojibwe Politics, 1825 – 1898* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>41</sup> A point made most dramatically by Calvin Martin in *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.)

Following the ethnohistorical imperative to employ anthropological findings to illuminate historical texts, this study will lean heavily on the anthropology of the Anishinabeg.<sup>42</sup> In a study of the Anishinabe at Round Lake, Ontario anthropologist E.S. Rogers observed that the community had identified Christianity as a source of spiritual power analogous to, but distinct from, the power that *Manitous* gave their dependants.<sup>43</sup> In Rogers' observation the Anishinabe did not replace old powers with new ones; they added a new power to the list of possible sources of help to which they could appeal in need. Anthropologist Mary Black-Rogers formulated a theory to explain how the concept of power functioned in the Anishinabe world view.<sup>44</sup> Black-Rogers argued that Anishinabe people believed that humans did not have enough power to survive on their own. They needed a relationship with a beneficent *Manitou* simply to acquire enough power to live.<sup>45</sup> Anthropologist A.I. Hallowell's work on Anishinabe thought systems and social arrangements has provided this study with numerous concepts that help to explain their reception of Methodist teaching.<sup>46</sup>

The most useful metaphor that I have encountered to describe what happened in the cultural exchange between Anishinabe people and the Methodist missionaries is found in a work that marries material condition and spiritual perception.<sup>47</sup>

Anthropologist Anthony F.C. Wallace offered his work *The Death and Rebirth of the*

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<sup>42</sup> Black, "Ojibwa Power Belief System"; A. Irving Hallowell, *Contributions to Anthropology: Selected Papers of A. Irving Hallowell* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976); A. Irving Hallowell, *Culture and Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955); Rogers, *The Round Lake Ojibwa*; Christopher Vecsey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion and its Historical Changes* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1983).

<sup>43</sup> Rogers, *Round Lake Ojibwa*, D3.

<sup>44</sup> Black "Ojibwa Power-Belief System", 141-142.

<sup>45</sup> Black, "Ojibwa Power Belief System", 145.

<sup>46</sup> Hallowell, *Contributions to Anthropology*; Hallowell, *Culture and Experience*, 5.

<sup>47</sup> Although Wallace employs the culturally inappropriate western schema of psychoanalysis to convey his findings about Seneca religious perceptions, the clarity of the model reveals more than its euro-centricism obscures.

*Seneca* as an extended application of his own theory of “revitalization movements.”

Defined as “a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture,” revitalization assumes that an existing indigenous culture was perceived by its members to be in some way inadequate to the demands of colonialism.<sup>48</sup>

Wallace’s own work compellingly describes how the revitalization movement of Seneca leader Handsome Lake gave people rituals that helped them cope with disease and alcohol troubles in their community.<sup>49</sup> Though Handsome Lake’s movement did not acknowledge its debt to Christianity, other movements that combined Christian and indigenous teachings have done so.<sup>50</sup> Rarely, however, do historians identify Christian movements in indigenous societies as revitalizations. When discussing Nativist movements, some historians have argued that instances of cultural change once seen as evidence of decline were merely individual examples of long term cyclical patterns of change that predated colonialism.<sup>51</sup> Anthony Wallace described the social and psychological effects of the Handsome Lake rituals without dismissing them as inauthentic or invalid expressions of Seneca culture because they did not begin in the prehistoric era. I argue that, concerned as it was with re-creating *Bimadziwin* at a moment of extreme pressure caused by settler colonialism, the Anishinabe Methodist

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<sup>48</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, “Revitalization Movements,” *American Anthropologist* 58: 2 (1956), 265.

<sup>49</sup> Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 249-254.

<sup>50</sup> For works on how specific communities integrated Christian teachings into their culture and political systems see Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries and Religious Translation,” 141-174; Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700 – 1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture, 2003), esp. chapters 3 – 6; Craig White, “The Praying Indians’ Speeches as Texts of Massachusetts Oral Culture,” *Early American Literature* 38:3 (2003), 437 – 467; Kristina Bross, “Dying Saints, Vanishing Savages: ‘Dying Indian Speeches’ in Colonial New England Literature,” *Early American Literature* 36:3 (2003), 325 – 352; Neal Salisbury, “Embracing Ambiguity: Native Peoples and Christianity in Seventeenth-Century North America,” *Ethnohistory* 50:2 (2003), 248-259.

<sup>51</sup> Wallace affords Handsome Lake’s tradition the status of a legitimate form of Seneca spirituality: Wallace, *Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*, 239-337.



movement shared more with other revitalization movements like Handsome Lake's and those led by the prophets Neolin and Tenskwatawa than it did with either earlier forms of Anishinabe spirituality or with English/American Methodism.<sup>52</sup>

Studies about Anishinabe people in Upper Canada have generally not contended with the questions raised by the work of American ethnohistorians and the new Canadian ethnohistorians (such as those discussed above). Rather, they have focused on land claims and material culture without taking into account the divergent perspectives of Anishinabe people and non-Native settlers on either of these issues. Considering only the politics and economics of early Upper Canada could lead to the impression that the Anishinabeg suffered a total defeat in a contest against the settlers.

Historian Peter Schmalz has written an account of Anishinabe history from the time of the Anishinabe/Iroquois wars of the seventeenth century through the early settler period in the nineteenth century. Arguing that the Euroamerican settlers' failure to adhere to the terms of the treaties, or to live up to the good will promises made by the treaty negotiators, destroyed the Anishinabeg's social and economic structures, Schmalz's work reveals the processes that led to the Anishinabeg's marginalization in the province of Ontario.<sup>53</sup> However, his work does not contextualize the events within the cultural matrix of Anishinabe life. Because the focus of the work is largely on politics and economics, the non-Native reader can unconsciously apply the assumptions of western political thought in determining the Anishinabeg's motivations, and assessing

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<sup>52</sup> Scholars of nativist religious and political movements that arose after European settlement in North America have described the religious innovations that they studied as organically formed critiques of colonialism, or applied traditionalism, rather than cultural capitulations. See Russell Thornton, *We Shall Live Again: The 1870 and 1890 Ghost Dance Movements as Demographic Revitalization* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1986); Weston LaBarre, *Peyote Cult* (New York: Schocken Press, 1969); Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet*.

<sup>53</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*; Peter Schmalz, *The History of the Saugeen Indians* (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, Research Publication No. 5, 1977).

their success or failure. From a material perspective, the story Schmalz tells is one of utter defeat. By considering Anishinabeg responses to Euroamerican settlers in terms of the long history of the Anishinabeg, this thesis will show that the settlement era was not the only important moment of cultural change in Anishinabe history, nor did the Anishinabeg fail to secure important alliances.

On a cultural level some of the Anishinabe Methodists' actions were motivated by a need to control the way that non-Natives perceived them. As historian C. L. Higham has explained, in the early nineteenth century two perceptions of, or stereotypes about, First Nations people existed in the British world.<sup>54</sup> One was that Natives were noble and deserving of respect, protection and admiration. Whatever undesirable qualities they exhibited were the result of the bad influence of French fur traders. The second idea was that they were "wretched" because of the limitations and weaknesses of their own cultures. The Anishinabe preachers discussed in this thesis were aware of these two perceptions and actively cultivated the first in order to combat conservative critiques of the schools and farms that were the institutional incarnation of Anishinabe Methodism. The extent to which the Anishinabe Methodists were able to cultivate and protect the now-derided image of the "noble savage" represents hitherto unacknowledged cultural success in their own terms.

Historian Janet Chute revised the total defeat conclusion by layering culture into her assessment of the Anishinabe leader, Shingwaukonse, who lived from 1773 – 1853. Chute explained his cooperation with the Canadian government as an attempt to preserve his community's culture as well as its economic well being. Further, Chute showed that,

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<sup>54</sup> C.L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians in Canada and the United States, 1820 – 1900* (Albuquerque and Alberta: University of New Mexico Press and University of Calgary Press, 2000), 111.

by cooperating with the government, Shingwaukonse fulfilled an Anishinabe expectation that leaders should not attempt to act authoritatively, but rather should take responsibility for their communities' prosperity.<sup>55</sup> From this perspective, an Anishinabe leader's primary responsibility was to protect the well-being of his community. As such, a cooperative approach to a militarily and economically more powerful group is understandable. To gain insight into the concerns of the Anishinabeg in Upper Canada, we must look, not at the magnitude of the concessions they made, but at the things they worked to create and preserve in the midst of those concessions.

The saliency of land claims issues today has motivated considerable research into the original treaties between the Anishinabeg and the British. Historians Leo Johnson and Donald Smith have written articles that describe the treaty process upon which the Euroamerican settlers, and their present day descendants, based their claims to the ownership of Ontario.<sup>56</sup> The underlying assumptions on which these articles are based are troubling. Smith's 1981 "Dispossession of the Mississauga" discusses the years between 1783 and 1805, when the majority of the land treaties for Upper Canada were signed. Smith's article draws out the ways in which the British manipulated the Anishinabeg to secure the surrender of their lands.<sup>57</sup> While focusing on the calumny of the British, Smith does not satisfactorily explain the motivations of the Anishinabeg in signing the treaties, stating simply that the Anishinabe had "become dependant" on

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<sup>55</sup> Janet Chute, "Shingwaukonse: A Nineteenth-Century Innovative Ojibwa Leader," *Ethnohistory* 45:1 (1998), 67; Janet Chute, *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse: A Century of Native Leadership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

<sup>56</sup> Leo Johnson, "The Mississauga-Lake Ontario Land Surrender of 1805," *Ontario History* 83:3 (1990); Donald Smith, "The Dispossession of the Mississauga," 67-87.

<sup>57</sup> Gerald Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 5; Smith "The Dispossession of the Mississauga," 68.

British presents during the American Revolution and desired the treaties as insurance of presents in the future.<sup>58</sup>

The problem with arguments that assume that the Upper Canada Anishinabeg were motivated by dependency is that they cannot explain the alliance that so many Anishinabe people made with the Methodist Episcopalians in the 1820s. By choosing alliance with Methodists rather than Anglicans, the Anishinabeg angered the colonial administration. Further, there is no conclusive evidence of such dependency among the Anishinabeg in the early nineteenth century.<sup>59</sup> Chute's insight that Shingwaukose's Garden River community sought reciprocally beneficial cooperation, not independence, is a better way to understand the question of the initial Upper Canada land treaties.

Smith goes on to speculate that the Mississauga communities surrendered land in order to exclude other communities from presents by securing them for themselves.<sup>60</sup> While this may be true, such an assertion has not been proven. Further, my research suggests that, during the later period of 1820 to 1850, Anishinabe communities pursued wide-ranging inter-village alliances as a strategy of colonial engagement. Such inter-village cooperation, as well as their participation in the late eighteenth century colonial struggles to the south, both suggest that the communities felt some level of responsibility toward one another.

While Anishinabe histories have been harmed by focusing on politics to the exclusion of culture, the opposite error has also been made, with consequences that

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<sup>58</sup> Smith, "The Dispossession of the Mississauga," 29.

<sup>59</sup> Charles Bishop has shown that the Northern Ojibwa were not dependant in this time period but no one has analyzed the economic condition of the Anishinabeg in Upper Canada: Charles Bishop, *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: an Historical and Ecological Study* (Toronto and Montreal: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1974), 228-304.

<sup>60</sup> Smith, "The Dispossession of the Mississauga," 32.

continue to affect Anishinabe communities today. In his work on treaties, historian Leo Johnson took for granted that the Anishinabe treaty strategy was to ensure the best possible outcome of the treaties for themselves. Johnson did not attempt to determine what would constitute a good outcome from the perspective of the Anishinabe communities. Specifically, Johnson focused on how the treaties transferred land without discussing the obligations that colonial officials took on in payment for the land. There is no basis for assuming that the Anishinabeg did not want at least some Euroamerican settlers in their territory as a physical barrier against American invasion.

Ignoring the political circumstances under which the treaties were signed, Johnson describes the events of the late eighteenth century in the language of cultural difference and racism rather than the political language of international relations.<sup>61</sup> In Johnson's piece, the Anishinabeg's objections to the treaty process and its implementation arose from their emotional distress. According to Johnson, "Disaffection among the Indians was increased by what they believed to be British contempt for them – a contempt that they saw expressed in the government's failure to observe the ancient ceremonies and to give the presents."<sup>62</sup> As evidence for this analysis, Johnson offers the words of a nineteenth century European observer: "The Indians...are so much attached to antient [sic] Customs and forms as to be very averse to any deviation from them."<sup>63</sup> The observer implies that the Anishinabeg's objection to changes in their diplomatic relations with the British arose from a nostalgic attachment to meaningless ceremonies – cultural pique, if you will. By accepting the analysis of a European observer Johnson denies both

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<sup>61</sup> For a critique of cultural analyses that elide the material realities of colonialism see Cole Harris, "How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94:1 (2004), 165-182.

<sup>62</sup> Johnson, "The Mississauga-Lake Ontario Land Surrender of 1805," 236.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 236.

the validity of the Anishinabeg complaint and its prescience. Historian John Long has discovered that the pattern of British denial of treaty promises began at the time of the treaties themselves. Colonial officials failed to note the oral promises that they had made in treaty negotiations in their official reports.<sup>64</sup>

Both historians Smith and Johnson evaluate Anishinabe treaty negotiations using a European index of failure or success.<sup>65</sup> However, more telling moments in Anishinabe history are found when chiefs commented on the state of the relationship between Anishinabe people and settler farmers in general, because the Anishinabeg were more interested in securing an alliance with the British settlers than with acquiring capital. This thesis will help to fill in the context of Anishinabe expectations and intentions in the early nineteenth century by focusing not on what they lost, but on what they built.

Beginning by tracing the branches and shoots of cultural forms that established both the context, and, as will be shown, much of the content of the Anishinabe Methodist movement, this thesis will proceed to explore the more immediate political history that shaped the finer lines of the movement. It will reveal when, how, and why it developed as it did. Then, having established the conditions in which Anishinabe Methodism was born, this thesis will explain the major tenets of the movement, and how it contributed to a deep reordering of Anishinabe social life and a not so fundamental, but still significant, alteration of Anishinabe philosophy. Along the way, concepts like religion, conversion, knowledge and power will shift meanings between Anishinabe and Euroamerican worlds,

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<sup>64</sup> John Long, "How the Commissioners Explained Treaty Number Nine to the Ojibway and Cree in 1905," *Ontario History* Volume 98:1(2006), 1 – 29. For rewriting the context of treaty negotiations see also Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Walter Hildebrandt, Dorothy First Rider and Sarah Carter, *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

<sup>65</sup> Johnson, "The Mississauga-Lake Ontario Land Surrender of 1805," 249.

and following their winding path will show us how and why some Anishinabeg saw in Christianity salvation from empire.

In order to explain the ease with which the Anishinabe understood and appropriated European religious concepts, the first chapter of this thesis offers a long history of Anishinabe cultural collaborations with other First Nations and Euroamerican groups. Arguing that Anishinabe spiritual practices were dynamic and prone to integration, I will offer readers a context for understanding the cultural changes of the nineteenth-century settler period. This chapter will show that throughout its history, Anishinabe spirituality derived more from spontaneous spiritual revelations than from inherited wisdom, and so was oriented forward and outward, toward the next revelation from the next prophet, rather than inward to a central text or ritual.

Having established the Anishinabeg's predisposition toward external sources of wisdom, the second chapter will analyze the cultural dynamic formed between the dissonant expectations of the Anishinabeg and the Loyalist settlers to whom they offered land after the American Revolution. The settlers' understanding of the new relationship as one of land sharing, in which discrete pieces of land would be distributed to individual Euroamericans, clashed with the Anishinabeg's understanding of the new relationship as an alliance sealed with kin responsibilities of knowledge sharing.

The third chapter will take up the story thirty years into settlement, at the point when the Anishinabeg became convinced that their alliance was built on a misunderstanding with the Euroamericans and turned to a dissenting group within the settler colony to form a new alliance. Methodist preachers and their followers offered the Anishinabe their ritual knowledge and the songs that they used to call the *Gitchi Manitou*

to their aid. Further, they provided the ritual circumstances for the Anishinabe to seek dreams from the *Gitchi Manitou* and in doing so presented themselves as the kind of spiritual leaders that the Anishinabeg had always sought out, and the kind of allies which suddenly needed.

Although the Anishinabe Methodist movement affected individuals from every part of the social spectrum, not all individuals had the same experience of, understanding of, or relationship to the movement. In the third chapter, I will also argue that the Anishinabe preachers who travelled to communities, visited with political leaders, and offered religious ceremonies, saw their role as both protectors of the Anishinabeg and servants of the *Gitchi Manitou*. As Anishinabe chiefs, they presented arguments to each community's council, carrying wampum from their own council to demonstrate their community's support of their words. Their travels to England provided a forum for them to spread their communities' influence beyond the restrictive circle of settler government. One Anishinabe preacher, Peter Jones, worked to convince the English audiences who flocked to hear him preach that their understanding of the world was limited and that the Great Spirit wanted them to see their responsibilities to their Anishinabe kin. Further, Anishinabe preachers led the creation of farming villages, thereby taking responsibility for their communities in a way that fulfilled Anishinabe expectations of leadership.<sup>66</sup> As ministers of the Methodist church, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders submitted themselves to the authority of the Methodist hierarchy in the same way that they submitted to the authority of a chief. They generally cooperated with, but felt no obligation to agree with, their clerical superiors, and when they strongly disagreed they simply went their own way.

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<sup>66</sup> Chute, "Shingwaukonse," 67, 68; Mary Black Rogers, "Ojibwa Power Belief," 146.



The fourth chapter will explore the message of revitalization that the Anishinabe Methodist leaders offered. Containing many of the tenets of the teachings of the Nativist prophets Neolin and Tenskwatawa, the Methodist Anishinabe message promised more than a return to pre-settlement prosperity. The leaders promised that *Gitchi Manitou* would make the Native's fortunes equal with those of the Europeans. In an attempt to address Nativist concerns that the Christian gospel was intended only for Europeans, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders taught that Jesus had intended to bring the Christian teachings to the Anishinabeg but that he could not because he had been murdered by the English. However, the Christian teachings could bring the Anishinabeg power to find balance in their new situation. As preacher John Sunday said, *Gitchi Manitou* would put a "good fire" in the Anishinabeg's hearts to smoke out the flies that swarmed around them.

While the Anishinabe Methodist leaders knew Methodist theology, the community members who followed them did so without such knowledge. It follows that Anishinabeg who attended the rituals of tent meetings, love feasts, and baptisms experienced them in terms of their own Sacred Stories (*adisokanag*) and *Manitou* rituals (shaking tent, Medicine ceremonies, *Manitou* feasts). In the fifth chapter I show that based on their experience with spiritual rituals and their perception of Methodism, many Anishinabe people believed that the Methodist rituals would help them achieve a state they described as "getting happy," which they believed helped them to resist alcohol and prepare for death.

## Chapter 2:

### Cultural Formation of the Southern Ontario Anishinabe to 1780

On a recent tour of the Anishinabe pictographs at Ontario's Bon Echo Provincial park, the tour guide explained to the mostly non-Native tourists that First Nations people believe that Thunderbirds live in nests on cliffs. There are stories, or *adisokanag*, in the Anishinabe tradition in which Thunderbirds live in nests on cliffs. Further oral history teaches us that many Anishinabeg tell stories about the Thunderbirds, and anthropologists confirm that Anishinabe people in recent history conversed with the Thunder.<sup>1</sup> But what does it mean to say that Anishinabe people "believe in Thunderbirds?" And what did it mean in the nineteenth century when they met up with Methodists who settled in Upper Canada?

The problem with the statement "The Anishinabeg believe in Thunderbirds" is that it implies that, like Christianity or Islam, Anishinabe spirituality is both unchanging and reducible to a series of shared beliefs and practices. Neither of these is true as will be shown in this chapter. Anishinabe spirituality assumed the inevitability and potential benefit of change at a structural level. The anticipation of new power, new spiritual leaders, and even new spiritual beings and new teachings was built into the tradition.

This chapter will detail some of the new and changing traditions that the Anishinabeg adopted in the two centuries they before encountered Methodist settlers. Further, it will establish how Anishinabe people perceived the Methodist movement by presenting not only their pre-contact cosmological teachings and practices but also by

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians; with Especial Reference to their Conversion to Christianity* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), first published 1861, 85 – 87; A. Irving Hallowell, "Ojibway Ontology, Behavior, and World View (1960)," in *Contributions to Anthropology: Selected Papers of A. Irving Hallowell* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 372.

tracking their adoption of new ideas from various cultures between the seventeenth century and nineteenth and how these ideas interacted with one another as they were discussed in Anishinabe communities. The purpose of this chapter will be to establish the cultural context in which Methodist preachers interacted with the Anishinabeg in the nineteenth century and, specifically, to identify which assertions would be seen as controversial; the Methodist assertion that ethics and spirituality were related; or other assertions that were more acceptable such as the Methodist promise of greater prosperity through spirit power. Finally, it will be shown that many of the teachings of the Methodists were accepted because they cohered with deeply held Anishinabe values.

Heterogeneity, complexity, and change, not simplicity and consistency produced the people who would, in the nineteenth century encounter Methodist teaching. The remembered cultural history of the Anishinabeg who lived in Upper Canada in the nineteenth century can be divided into three distinct phases. During the first stage the eastern Anishinabeg living on the northern shores of Georgian Bay and east to Lake Nipissing, traveled in kinship groups that congregated regularly in summer and fall. Because they lived in autonomous groups their spiritual practices of vision quests, listening to prophets, and *Manitou* stories, were highly decentralized, dynamic and future oriented. In the seventeenth century pressure from Iroquoian enemies to the south forced many Anishinabe groups to gather at Sault St. Marie.<sup>2</sup> There, contact with the *Midewiwin* society, an organized religious society, and with Catholic priests, introduced

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<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of the political and cultural condition of Sault St. Marie before the emigration of the Anishinabe to southern Ontario see Theresa M. Schenck "*The Voice of the Crane Echoes Afar*": *The Sociopolitical Organization of the Lake Superior Ojibwa, 1640 – 1855* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1997), 37 – 54.

more regulated and stratified forms of spiritual practice which operated alongside the dynamic kinship group forms.<sup>3</sup>

During this second era, Anishinabe people adopted divergent, but not necessarily conflictive practices. Prophets who practiced non-*Midewiwin* rituals sometimes competed with *Mide* priests and *Mide* priests competed with each other.<sup>4</sup> In the same time period, some Anishinabeg interpreted the Jesuit's deity, Jesus, as a powerful *Manitou* who ruled over matters of life and death, as well as war and disease. Many Anishinabeg were baptized by Christian priests.<sup>5</sup> During this same time, Anishinabe people also began participating in the Feast of the Dead with their fur trading allies, the Huron Nation. Again, heterogeneity of spiritual experience, between those who sought baptism, those who followed the *Midewiwin*, those who relied on prophets and visions, and those who combined any of the three, marked the tradition.

In the 1790s, a third era introduced a countervailing impulse into the cultural life of the southern Ontario Anishinabeg. When they moved to what is now southern Ontario in 1701, the Anishinabeg began to share borders with European settlements and First Nations groups who had been radicalized by border wars with settlers. The embattled southern First Nations, including the Shawnee, Mingo, and Delaware of the Ohio territory, had developed an essentialist spiritual philosophy that eschewed heterogeneity. Now often referred to as "Nativism," this philosophy, articulated in the 1760s by the Ottawa prophet Neolin, and in the 1770s by the Shawnee Prophet Tenskwatawa, condemned cultural collaboration with non-Natives. So influential was Nativist ideology

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<sup>3</sup> On the role of the *Midewiwin* in the large village see William Whipple Warren, *History of the Ojibway Nation* (Minnesota: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1957), first printed 1853, 80.

<sup>4</sup> Ruth Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin* (Madison & London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 45.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Vecsey, *Paths of Kateri's Kin* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 209.

that when Methodist Anishinabe preachers spoke to audiences in the nineteenth century, their words were often shaped to defend their position against the prevailing Nativist critique of First Nations people adopting European practices. Despite the influence of Nativism on the Anishinabeg many continued to accept the integrationist traditions from the *oten* era and time when they lived together at Sault St. Marie. In the nineteenth century, the Anishinabe community followed divergent and *conflictive* teachings since the Nativists' exclusivism and traditionalism ran counter to the *oten* era's expansive approach to spiritual teaching. Study of both the changing life circumstances under which Anishinabe communities adopted new practices, and the nature and import of the spiritual system into which the new practices were integrated, reveals deep structures of continuity between all eras of Anishinabe spirituality and the nineteenth century era of Anishinabe Methodism.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Oten Era*

The oldest spiritual practices of the Anishinabeg had their origin in the small, close knit kin-based community called the *oten*, or kinship group. The larger ceremonials were shared at the summer village where many kinship groups gathered together. During the era of *otens*, before the migration to Sault St. Marie, the Anishinabe spiritual tradition possessed three defining characteristics. At its heart, the tradition centred on the relationship between individual humans and individual *Manitous*. The *Manitous* gave the humans spiritual power to achieve success in the hunt and in war. According to the Anishinabe worldview of this era, a relationship with a *Manitou* was the necessary

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Joyner advocates attention to what he calls cultural "deep structures" maintained by marginalized people in a process of cultural Creolization, whereby one culture adopts the outward forms of another culture but organizes them according to the first culture's own values, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), xxi.

prerequisite for life.<sup>7</sup> An individual could not survive without the *Manitou's* power. The well-known vision quest ritual was the primary way that individual Anishinabeg acquired the blessing of a *Manitou*. A second characteristic of the tradition in the *oten* era was its outward focus. Not dependant on a received canon of teachings, the Anishinabeg relied on local prophets and healers for guidance and healing when crises occurred. Prophets, called *djessakid*, rose up spontaneously when an individual received the gift of prophecy from a *Manitou*. The unpredictability of their arrival did not undermine the prophet's importance because the community relied on them to communicate with the *Manitous* or to cure sicknesses. Finally, ethics in the *oten* era Anishinabe communities derived from the authority of the community rather than from the authority of the *Manitous*. The concept of *Bimadziwin*, or the good life, tied ethics to the well-being of the community so closely that no external or traditional teaching could transcend the needs of the community as arbiter of virtue.

The vision quest, still well known today, was the central event in the Anishinabe spiritual life. In 1855, a German ethnologist named Johann Georg Kohl conducted interviews with Anishinabe people living on the western shores of Lake Superior. Kohl particularly wanted to collect accounts of a coming-of-age ritual fast known as a "vision quest" or a "dream of life." He approached a man named Shining Cloud and asked him to share his story. Shining Cloud, like other people whom Kohl approached, was reluctant. However, Kohl persisted and Shining Cloud relented. As he told it, Shining Cloud had accomplished his vision quest with some difficulty. The first time he had attempted the ritual he failed to complete it because he got too hungry and ate a plant

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<sup>7</sup> Mary Black-Rogers, "Ojibwa Power Belief System" in Fogelson and Adams ed. *The Anthropology of Power* (New York: Academic Press, 1977) 145.

when he was meant to be fasting. The following year the boy tried again. He built a nest for himself and laid down to wait. This time he endured his hunger for four painful days; when the pains diminished, he descended into a limp, dreamy state. Shining Cloud reported that on the eighth day a man emerged from the trees and asked why the boy had come there. Shining Cloud explained that he wanted “to gain strength, and know my life.” The visitor informed the boy that a council had been held on that very subject and invited him to a presentation of that council’s “favourable outcome.” Shining Cloud obliged, leaving his weak body and following the man in spirit form to the door of a tent. Inside four men sat waiting. The men invited Shining Cloud to sit on a rock between them. When the boy obeyed, the rock began to sink. Immediately, one of the men told Shining Cloud to stand up, explaining that they had forgotten “the foundation.” One of the men placed a tanned white deerskin over the rock and when Shining Cloud sat down again the rock supported his weight.<sup>8</sup> At this point in the story, the ethnologist Kohl could no longer contain his interest and he interrupted, “What was the meaning of this deer-skin: who was it that gave it to thee?” Halting his story for only a moment Shining Cloud said: “On that point I have remained in uncertainty. A man does not learn everything in these dreams.”

The European ethnologist and the Anishinabe dreamer perceived the dream differently. In the space between their perceptions, misunderstandings have grown up that persist in the writings of historians and anthropologists today. This is because the complex of rituals, cosmological beliefs, and ethics that composed what herein is referred to as “Anishinabe spirituality” served very different functions in Anishinabe society than

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<sup>8</sup> This account is taken directly from a book that Kohl published to report his findings, see Johann Georg Kohl, *Kitchi-Gami: Life among the Lake Superior Ojibway* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985), 234 – 239.

the religion of Christianity served in European society.<sup>9</sup> In western societies, religions taught universal truths; Judaism venerated wisdom, Christianity espoused a singular, capitalized “Truth”, and Islam claimed ownership of the most perfect divine revelation in the Koran. In Anishinabe society, spirituality helped people to get spiritual power through relationships with *Manitous*.<sup>10</sup> Although there was a tradition of storytelling in Anishinabe society, the *adisokanag*, which are spiritual teachings, were used primarily to convey spiritual “power” or “blessing” to their hearers while teaching ethical norms, and explaining cosmology were secondary functions. This is not to suggest that western religions contained no emotional or social aspects, nor to suggest that Anishinabe people had no philosophy. Rather, I wish to highlight the unique absence of a truth-orientation in Anishinabe spirituality. Shining Cloud explained that he undertook his vision quest “to gain strength, and know my life.” Certainly, Shining Cloud wanted knowledge. He wanted to know what path he should follow in his life, to “know his life.” However, this knowledge that he sought differed from the universal Truth Christian followers revere in that it applied only to him. He did not believe that his dream would be useful to other people and so saw no reason to share it. Given that the dream included gifts of power to him personally, he was actually reluctant to describe his experience.

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<sup>9</sup> Although Anishinabe spirituality and Christianity exist today they are here referred to in the past tense because as they are described here they emerged from a particular set of historical events and were enacted by their adherents in response to particular historical conditions that no longer exist; “Anishinabe spirituality” will be used to describe the complex of beliefs, rituals and ethics shared by Anishinabe people, rather than religion, out of respect for a contemporary rejection of the word “religion” in Anishinabe society arising from the vernacular connotation of “religion” with a more monolithic cultural form than any that existed in Anishinabe society, and further because Anishinabe cosmological teachings did not fill the same role in their society that religions serve in other societies.

<sup>10</sup> Subgroups within Christianity or Judaism and Islam also claim that their religions are primarily about gaining power through relationships. However such groups tend to define their religions more narrowly than do the majority of those religions’ members. When Christianity is referred to in this dissertation it will be using the broadest sense of that word, including the heterogeneous cultural, political and social forms that Christianity has historically encompassed.



Anishinabe traditions differ from more evangelical practices in that local knowledge and historically-derived ethical complexes supersede the kinds of universal teachings generally associated with the concept of “religion.”<sup>11</sup> The ethnologist Kohl searched Shining Cloud’s dream for a particular kind of knowledge, information about invisible beings and perceptions of human obligations to those beings. Kohl’s association of transferable knowledge (Shining Cloud’s report of his dream) with religious understanding arose from post-enlightenment Christianity’s focus on theology, the study of the nature of God. Because theology was central to his own tradition, Kohl believed it to be so in all traditions. Unintentionally, Kohl had attempted to fit Shining Cloud’s experience into the organizational structure of his own culture. Kohl associated spiritual experiences so closely with acquiring knowledge that he could not hear the story of the quest as a narrative of an event, something that had happened to a person; instead he heard it as a metaphor, a vehicle to deliver a message. Shining Cloud, on the other hand, wanted a *Manitou* to show him what he should do with his life and to give him the power to make a success of the suggested path; or, as Shining Cloud said “a man does not *learn* everything in these dreams” (my italics.) Shining Cloud pursued a vision quest in order to build a life long relationship between himself and a *Manitou*.<sup>12</sup>

In order to achieve a good life, the Anishinabeg believed, humans needed “power.”<sup>13</sup> Power in the Anishinabe worldview is similar to both the European concepts of “life” as an animating force that distinguished individual living beings from one

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<sup>11</sup> As a scholar of Ojibway hymns put it “Native traditions have largely been relativistic in ethos- that is, concerned less with the falsehood of other traditions than with the truth that the sacred cannot be exhausted by any particular comprehension of it.” Michael McNally, *Ojibwe Singers: Hymns, Grief, and a Native Culture in Motion* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11.

<sup>12</sup> Ruth Landes *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin*, 10.

<sup>13</sup> Lawrence W. Gross, “*Bimaadiziwin*, or the “Good Life,” as a Unifying Concept of Anishinabe Religion,” 20; Mary Black Rogers, “Ojibwa Power Belief System”, 145.

another and “blessing,” a quality added to an individual human life by an invisible being. However, in the Anishinabe view, power referred to a quality that was found not only in humans, but also in *Manitous*, and in other beings, like animals and physical objects that people from European cultures consider non-persons. Further, while the European concept of “life” describes a quality which is either present or absent and incapable of partiality, the Anishinabe concept of “power” describes a variable quality. For the Anishinabe, all things that possessed some degree of “power” were persons.<sup>14</sup> Distinctions between persons arose from how much power they possessed. For the Anishinabeg, the difference between humans and *Manitous* was not that they were *essentially* different – like different species who possess distinct combinations of characteristics. Rather, *Manitous* were believed to be persons who had more power than ordinary humans. On the other side of the spectrum, animals and objects who possessed power were on that account perceived to be people. The difference between animals and objects who had power, and humans, in general, was that the animals and objects were thought to have less power.<sup>15</sup> Also, unlike the European conception of “life”, Anishinabe power could be divided and transferred between persons. *Manitous* gave power to humans in vision quests and humans could give power to each other through rituals. The Anishinabeg believed that the ability for individuals to carry out their personal and social responsibilities like hunting, dreaming, fighting and so on, rested on their possession of sufficient power. Next to the significance of this invisible power, external qualities like wealth or even health were thought to be insubstantial because without power they could not be maintained. Anishinabe culture encouraged people to

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<sup>14</sup> Mary B. Black “Ojibwa Power Belief System,” 144.

<sup>15</sup> Mary B. Black “Ojibwa Power Belief System,” 146.

understand entities primarily in terms of the power that they possessed. For example, Anishinabe people tended to avoid open conflict, not out of an inherent gentleness, but because they believed that it was impossible to tell how powerful someone was simply by observing them.<sup>16</sup> Provoking a person whose power was unknown could be foolhardy.

What Shining Cloud got out of his vision was something quite different from universal truth. He began a relationship with a spiritual being. According to Anishinabe tradition, the man who visited the fasting boy, by his appearance, declared his willingness to enter into a relationship of mutual obligation with Shining Cloud. The terms of the relationship varied depending on the persons involved. Always, the spiritual being gave the human a gift of power that would help the human to achieve some function necessary to their role in their community. Warriors might dream of a fish and be given speed, or dream of a bear and be given tremendous size and strength during battles to defend their communities. Hunters blessed by the water spirit would find game plentiful when they went in search of it to feed their communities. Dreamers who met a turtle became *djessakids*, capable of seeing into the future and seeing distant events. Pursuit of his own portion of such “power,” not a desire for philosophical understanding, motivated Shining Cloud’s vision quest.

Like the European concept of “life”, the Anishinabe concept of power was morally neutral. Because its source was morally ambiguous, Manitou power could also be used in morally complex ways. By extension, Anishinabe spiritual beings, whose defining characteristic was a possession of great power, were not considered morally good or evil. Instead of a spiritual universe occupied by spirits and deities who were

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<sup>16</sup> Janet E. Chute, *The Legacy of Shingwaukose: A Century of Native Leadership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p 6.

either entirely good, or entirely evil, the Anishinabe cosmology offered a series of *Manitous* who were both. For example, the Anishinabe trickster spirit, called *Nanabozho*, used his ability to transform his shape to seduce young women but also brought humans fire and healing teachings. The water spirits loved to eat the children who fell into their grasp but, if appealed to with proper respect, could use their power to guide hunters to game. The *Manitous'* moral complexity shaped their relationship with humans into something quite different from the object of veneration/worshipper model of western religions. The Anishinabeg used the word “amusement” to describe the state of being affected by a *Manitou's* gift of power.<sup>17</sup> Once acquired, *Manitou* power could elevate the social status of the dreamer which could potentially lead to self destructive arrogance.

The literature and accounts of Anishinabe visions suggest that the relationship between humans and their guardian *Manitous* was marked by respect and ambition on the human side, and tolerance and indulgence from the *Manitou*. The only suasion humans could call on to gain the *Manitou's* favour was their own weakness and neediness. In the vision quest, the Anishinabeg dramatically exaggerated their continual and total dependence on the favour of the *Manitous* by laying down, draining their strength through fasting, and isolating themselves from the supporting structures of their community.<sup>18</sup> Such a posture of weakness appealed to the *Manitou's* pity rather than a presumed sense of obligation. Stripped of obligation, the start of a guardian – human relationship mimicked the Anishinabeg's perception of their unpredictable relationship to the world outside of their kin group.

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<sup>17</sup> Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin*, 21.

<sup>18</sup> Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin*, 21.

However, the human-*Manitou* relationship was not unidirectional. Humans benefited from the spiritual power of the *Manitou* but the *Manitous* made requests of their own. Each *Manitou* made their own unique demands. The human dependant was required to fulfill these demands for their entire life.<sup>19</sup> As a result, a visionary appearance of some *Manitous* brought no comfort to prostrate vision seekers. For example, *Manitous* like *Michipichu*, the Lynx shaped leader of the underwater *Manitous*, filled human visions seekers with dread. Although he could offer tremendous powers, he also made extreme demands. *Michipichu* forbade his dependants to have sex with humans and killed people who broke the taboo.<sup>20</sup> Not only did vision seekers know better than to address *Michipichu* flippantly, many attempted to escape him altogether. Some Anishinabe visionaries reported ignoring dreams of *Michipichu* and continuing their dream quest in the hope that a different *Manitou* would visit them, freeing them from the demands of the Water Lynx.<sup>21</sup>

Fulfilling the demands of their guardians ensured that the Anishinabeg would continue to receive the blessings of the *Manitous*. However, none of those demands included commands regarding inter-human obligations. The *Manitous* seemed unconcerned with how humans treated one another, concerned only with how they themselves were treated. When asked about what the *Manitous* thought of stealing, one Anishinabe man observed that the *Manitous* did not care about theft and would not bother to punish a human who committed it.<sup>22</sup> As a result, Anishinabe *Manitou* rituals, the more formally “religious” aspect of Anishinabe spirituality, did not focus on ethics. Though

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<sup>19</sup> Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin*, 26 – 30.

<sup>20</sup> Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin*, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Vecsey, *Traditional Ojibway Religion and its Historical Changes* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1983) 31.

<sup>22</sup> John M. Cooper “The Northern Algonquian Supreme Being” *Primitive Man* VI: 3,4 (1933), 47.

the Anishinabeg showed great respect toward the *Manitous* in the ceremonies, they did not use the ceremonies as vehicles for *Manitou* worship, or to ask for forgiveness from the *Manitous*. Instead, they asked the *Manitous* for blessings of power, insight, favour and skills.

The first ritual that Anishinabe infants participated in was a naming ceremony. The purpose was to protect the child through the extension of an adult community member's own *Manitou* power to the child. New parents invited their extended family to a naming feast. The responsibility to name the child fell to an elder selected by the parents. When asked to name a child, an elder was really being asked to let a child in on their private relationship with their own guardian. At the feast, the elder would hold the child against their chest and announce the name to the assembled family. The name itself was related to the *Manitou* who guarded the elder.<sup>23</sup> Once named, the child was taken under the guardianship of the elder's *Manitou* until the child was old enough to form their own *Manitou* relationship in a vision quest. The naming ceremony shaped the child's identity both by associating them with the qualities in their new name, but also by associating them with the power and abilities of their naming elder. Although the ceremony included great reverence for and gratitude to the *Manitous*, the fundamental purpose of the ritual was to convey *Manitou* power to the new human.<sup>24</sup>

In Anishinabe society, the *Manitous* set behavioural restrictions only on their dependents. The Anishinabeg believed that the guardian spirits desired particular acts of

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<sup>23</sup> Christopher Vescey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion*, 121; see also Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Customs* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1929), 53 – 56.

<sup>24</sup> It is difficult to ascertain how such ceremonies varied according to the gender of the child. In Densmore and Vescey it would seem that both male and female children received the naming ceremony. Anthropologists have not gathered much evidence as to gender roles in Anishinabe spirituality with the exception of Ruth Landes, whose findings have been questioned. See: Ruth Landes *The Ojibwa Woman* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938); see also Shirley Williams "Woman's Role in Ojibway Spirituality" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27:3 (1992), 100 – 104.

reverence, but not general piety or “goodness” from their dependants. Instead of universal dogmas, Anishinabe ethics derived from the particular and immediate needs of local, human communities. Further, the object of Anishinabe ethics included more than humans. Perceiving all beings, animate or inanimate as capable of possessing power, the Anishinabeg extended the purview of their ethical standards to include interactions between humans, animals and objects.

Though they did not determine Anishinabe ethics, *Manitous* were not entirely outside of the Anishinabe ethical universe. *Manitous* provided power to humans, and Anishinabe ethics were all about how and when humans should use their power. Power could only be transferred in relationships between persons and therefore relationships were the most important aspect of Anishinabe society. Power was never an abstract potential held in reserve by an unattached individual. “Power” connected all living things in a network of relationships and carried with it a moral obligation to take responsibility for others. The Anishinabeg believed that such responsibility extended across the spectrum of living things and was bounded by networks of kinship and geography. Each person’s primary obligation was to share their power with people in their kin group and then, secondarily, with the people who interacted with them most regularly. Because power was transferred only through relationships, Anishinabe society dictated that individuals should avoid being drawn into unbalanced relationships in order to protect themselves from harmful exchanges of power. Therefore, a primary tenet of Anishinabe social organization was that individuals should not be dependant for their survival on humans who were not their kin relations because people outside of their kinship group

would not feel responsible for their well-being.<sup>25</sup> Kinship conveyed responsibilities to individuals that inclined them to share their wealth and power with each other.

Failure to share power with kin members was believed to lead to many forms of sickness, most dramatically the *Windigo*, or cannibal sickness, named for the terrible *Windigo Manitou* who used his unnatural strength to murder humans, even his own kin, to eat. Such a betrayal of human obligation to kin members, combined with a misuse of power, made the *Windigo* so horrible to the Anishinabeg that many *Windigo* stories end with the entire community banding together to murder the monster.<sup>26</sup> The ultimate example of a self-serving individualist, the *Windigo* used his tremendous strength to destroy weaker individuals. No act could violate the Anishinabe principle of autonomous responsibility more completely than did the *Windigo*'s cannibalism.

Anthropologist A. Irving Hallowell has argued that for the Anishinabe the good life entailed more than individual happiness or following a set of ethics. *Bimaadziwin* denoted "life in the fullest sense; life in the sense of health, longevity, and well-being, not only for one's self, but one's family."<sup>27</sup> Pursuit of this communal goal gave Anishinabe people a pattern to follow. By relating individual prosperity and wealth to family or community prosperity and wealth, *Bimaadziwin* laid out a non-dogmatic ethics for decision making. However, the concept also described more than an individual's behaviour. It also suggested their external condition. That is, to have *Bimaadziwin* a person might need to behave in a certain way towards their community, but also,

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<sup>25</sup> A. Irving Hallowell, *Culture and Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 135; see also Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 82; Black-Rogers, "Ojibwa Power-Belief System", 145.

<sup>26</sup> John Robert Colombo, ed. *Windigo: An Anthology of Fact and Fantastic Fiction* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1982), 9, 31, 44.

<sup>27</sup> A. Irving Hallowell "Psychosexual Adjustment, Personality, and the Good Life in a Nonliterate Culture" in *Culture and Experience*, ed. A. Irving Hallowell (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955), 294; see also, Gross, Lawrence W. "Bimaadziwin, or the "Good Life," as a Unifying Concept of Anishinabe Religion", 15.



*Bimadziwin* was a condition in which people found themselves, a condition of health and prosperity. So, while ethics played a role in *Bimadziwin* it could not, in isolation, secure *Bimadziwin*.

The Anishinabeg did not believe in a single, unified, decontextualized ethical system. Anishinabe ethics were functional; they served the purpose of maintaining balance in society or *Bimadziwin* rather than being idealistic, reflecting the dictates of abstract concepts of virtue. By defining virtue in terms of particular conditions, Anishinabe ethics tied morality to the local circumstances of community life. Such a connection injected a moral dynamism, a creative impulse, into Anishinabe philosophy. Because no fixed rules dictated behaviour, behaviour could always be perfected, and responses shaped more adroitly to meet a complex situation. The absence of dogma also short circuited hierarchy by leaving a temporal rift between action and community vindication. The ideas of chiefs and medicine men found community approval when and if they turned out to benefit the community. The radical contingency of Anishinabe ethics placed all authority in a permanent state of probation and left open the possibility of cultural change should such change enhance community stability or *Bimadziwin*.

This dynamic ethical relativism from community to community and circumstance to circumstance did not translate into total relativism. Action that turned spiritual power toward the needs of the community was considered good and action that hoarded or diverted spirit power from the community was bad. The only ethical use of power in Anishinabe society was to promote *Bimadziwin* for the community.<sup>28</sup> Anyone who used the spiritual power given to them by the *Manitous* to control another person or to harm

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<sup>28</sup> For the most comprehensive treatment of scholarly literature on the concept of *Bimadziwin* see Lawrence W. Gross "*Bimaadziwin*, or the "Good Life," as a Unifying Concept of Anishinabe Religion."

another person was considered to be practicing witchcraft.<sup>29</sup> A chief who attempted to control their community imperiled their own position. Spiritual leaders who had received their power from the *Manitous* were expected to share it with the community when the need arose. Prophets who had been given the gift of speaking with the *Manitous* went into their ceremonial tent and asked the *Manitous* to locate people or objects who were lost, or find the cause of someone's illness. Healers who had been given skills to use healing plants helped people who were sick to achieve health and the long life of *Bimadiziwin*. Chiefs who had strong dreams protected all of the people in their family or community from witchcraft sent against them by other communities. Hunters who had been provided game by the *Manitous* were expected to share their meat. In turn, all those who received generosity and gifts were expected to repay the healers and prophets and hunters with the life sustaining gifts like tobacco and wampum.

Prophets also operated within the authority of, and through the power of, the community. When an individual was blessed with the ability to speak with the *Manitous* they became a *djessakid* or shaking tent practitioner. The turtle *Manitou*, called *Miniak*, served as an intermediary between the humans he guarded and all the other *Manitous*, giving his dependents access to all of the *Manitous*. *Djessakids* learned a ceremony, sometimes called the shaking tent ceremony, for calling on the *Manitous*. When people in a community needed information from the *Manitous* they would offer to pay the *djessakid* to perform the ceremony in front of the assembled community.<sup>30</sup> An Anishinabe taboo against the *djessakid* calling on the *Manitous* while alone demonstrates

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<sup>29</sup> Christopher Vecsey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion and Its Historical Changes* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1983), 155.

<sup>30</sup> Vecsey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion*, 104; A. Irving Hallowell, *The Role of Conjuring in Saulteaux Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1942), 41.

the importance of community participation in the shaking tent ceremony. The Anishinabeg believed that *djessakids* who used their powers when alone could send their spirits away from their bodies to attack their enemies.<sup>31</sup> This practice was called the “bearwalk.” It frightened all those who did not have the power of a *djessakid*.<sup>32</sup> The secret bearwalk unbalanced relations between individual humans, the community and the *Manitous* because the *djessakid* used *Manitou* power to harm the community rather than help it, thereby contravening the *bimadziwin* dictate that power should be used to promote full and healthy life for the entire community. Any ceremony intended to maintain or reassert community balance needed itself to be balanced. The *djessakid* had to be paid for their work, the *Manitous* had to be acknowledged for the power that they shared, and the community must reap the benefit of the ceremony.

Generally people consulted the *Manitous* through the *djessakid* to get information about lost objects, the welfare of distant family members, the location of enemies or to find out how to recover from sickness.<sup>33</sup> In one instance, a woman asked a *djessakid* to help her because several of her children had become ill. The children had been treated with medicine but it had been ineffective. The *djessakid* entered his tent and called out to the *Manitous* to get an explanation of the woman’s illness. The community gathered around the tent waiting to hear the answer. One of the *Manitous* told the *djessakid* that the medicine that had been used on the woman’s children had been blocked because the mother had committed improper sexual acts with her husband. The woman told the

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<sup>31</sup> Richard M. Dorson, *Bloodstoppers and Bearwalkers: Folk Traditions of the Upper Peninsula* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 27 – 31.

<sup>32</sup> In his mid-nineteenth century work based on oral history William Warren described a shaman undertaking a bearwalk in order to dig up a corpse to eat. Warren, *History of the Ojibway*, 110.

<sup>33</sup> Hallowell, “Occasions for Conjuring” in *The Role of Conjuring*, 53 – 61; Benjamin Slight *Indian Researches; or, facts concerning the North American Indians; including Notices of their present state of Improvement, in their Social, Civil and Religious Condition; with Hints for their future advancement* (Montreal: printed for the author, J.E.L. Miller, 1844), 95, 97.

assembled community that what the *Manitou* had said was true. After the ceremony and the woman's public confession, the medicine became effective in curing the children.

The community members believed that the reason that the medicine had begun to work was that the woman had made her shameful secret public knowledge.<sup>34</sup> When the *djessakid* informed the community that one of their members had engaged in socially unacceptable sexual acts and concluded that those acts had imperiled her children shared ethical standards were invoked. Not only did the announcement reinforce a taboo on the behaviour for all those present, it also provided a chilling object lesson in the potential cost of transgressing the groups' ethical standards. Although the ritual clearly invoked a common understanding of ethics among the assembled community, it did so without reference to the *Manitou*'s attitude toward those morals. The *Manitou* identified the behaviour; but did not condemn it. The power to restore health resided in the community.

The Anishinabeg believed that all events resulted from intentional action by some person. Mysterious forces, like fate or chance, did not enter into Anishinabe assessments of cause and effect. Sickness was often explained as the result of the sufferer's own actions, as one Anishinabe person observed "Because a person does bad things, that is where sickness starts."<sup>35</sup> So long as the individual who has committed the wrong action successfully hid it from the community the consequences continued unabated. However, by making a secret common knowledge the individual reentered the community.

There were no ethical standards determining which *Manitou* people could turn to for help. This is what would enable eighteenth and nineteenth century Anishinabe to

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<sup>34</sup> Hallowell, "The Social Function of Anxiety in a Primitive Society" in *Culture and Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1942), 41.

<sup>35</sup> Hallowell, *Ojibwa World View*, 410.

make use of the foreigners' deities. Further, although all *Manitous* required payment of some kind for their help there was no single way to honour them. This freedom of action made it possible for some community members to adopt entire ethical systems without alienating other community members who did not. The dynamic created by power and *Bimadiziwin* could integrate any new visions and new teachings if they could be turned to the service of life and community harmony.

Anishinabe ethics were oriented around relationships not truths. It is widely agreed that people in most Native societies made no reference to a concept of sin.<sup>36</sup> Wrongdoing in Anishinabe society was condemned primarily for its social consequences. Two categories of misdeeds were seen to have negative social consequences: disrespect to the *Manitou*, as in neglecting the ceremonies or in taking credit for their gifts by bragging; and failure to live up to one's responsibilities to the community. Misdeeds that dreamers committed against their guardians, such as eating sturgeon or bear, even if they were forbidden by the guardian, were not believed to be evil in and of themselves; they were only evil because of the dreamer's relationship to the guardian. No category of behaviours was strictly speaking offensive to the *Manitous*. Breaking the guardian's taboos brought punishment from the *Manitou* while failing to use *Manitou* power to help the community brought social repercussions but not supernatural ones.

Some misdeeds lay in not properly using the gifts of the *Manitou*. The most unacceptable behaviours in Anishinabe life were laziness and inhospitality.<sup>37</sup> These were likely to keep a person from a happy afterlife. A lazy hunter could not provide his

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<sup>36</sup>Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, and George E. Tinker. *A Native American Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 100.

<sup>37</sup>Peter Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians*, manuscript, Box 1, File 1, "Peter Jones Collection," Victoria University Archives, Toronto.

community with meat no matter how powerfully the *Manitou* had blessed him. A hunter who failed to show hospitality, invite his family over to eat after a successful hunt, or divide the meat between them was using the *Manitou*'s blessing for themselves and denying their responsibility to others. Laziness hoarded the gift of *Manitou* power by not using it and inhospitality hoarded meat.

The Anishinabe tradition of story telling demonstrates just how flexible Anishinabe spirituality was. The Anishinabe referred to their stories as *adisokanag*. *Adisokanag* could be translated into English both as "story" and as "grandfather." Their stories were more than inert narratives, rather there was an independent life to the stories themselves. The familial appellation "grandfather" could refer to both the spiritually powerful characters in the stories, and the *Manitous*. By identifying the whole of the stories with the persons contained in them, the Anishinabeg connected the act of telling the stories in the present with the life of its characters in the past and the present. The stories became the life of the *Manitous* which brought them to life in the moment of their recitation. Native religious scholar Joseph Epes Brown has argued that by laughing at *Nanabozho* stories people conveyed their interest in, and by extension, their attention to the exploits of *Nanabozho*. This in turn honoured *Nanabozho* who loved to hear people laugh at his craziness.<sup>38</sup> The telling of *adisokanag* was a family reunion, not a scholarly lecture.

Although the stories were passed down through the generations of an *oten*, the way that the story was told, what details were left in or left out depended on the teller, the audience and the immediate circumstances of both. *Nanabozho* stories, and other tales of

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<sup>38</sup> D.M. Dooling, "The Wisdom of the Contrary: A Conversation with Joseph Epes Brown" *Parabola* 4:1 (1979), 56.

powerful animal beings formed the narrative through which the Anishinabeg articulated the universe. Whether or not individual Anishinabeg believed that somewhere, just past the edge of personally remembered history, men got the best of water spirits and animals followed orders, all Anishinabeg people knew the stories and with that shared knowledge, extending back through generations, they built a language and culture animated by the figures in the stories.

Like the *Manitou* visions, the stories did not communicate or enforce unambiguous moral injunctions and ontological assertions. They constituted the set of the drama of Anishinabeg life, not the stage directions. The characters and basic events of the *adisokanag* remained constant but their significance varied depending on the speaker and the particular concerns of the community who absorbed them. In any telling of the *Nanabozho* creation story the violence could be more or less graphic. If, on one occasion, the storyteller emphasized the horror of a wolf's death, an outsider could speculate that believing his community to be in danger the storyteller wanted to brace the children for a violent future. However, his hearers, knowing both the story and the character of the storyteller might conclude more prosaically that the teller used the occasion of the story to indulge his dramatic streak.

Despite small variations, the general consistency of the *adisokanag* enhanced rather than limited their cultural significance. They were predictable in the way that people are predictable. Unlike fictional stories created by individuals, the *adisokanag*, spoken and remembered by communities extending horizontally in space and vertically in time, directed the people who told them. Ritual surrounded the presentation of the stories. Story telling was largely forbidden in the summer when the Anishinabeg

communities moved to the edge of Lakes Ontario and Huron too close for comfort to the listening ears of the powerful water beings who lived in the Lakes.<sup>39</sup> Rather, stories were told in the fall, winter and early spring among the more intimate and interdependent circle of a single hunting group.<sup>40</sup> After hearing the story, listeners thanked the storyteller with a respectful gift of tobacco and sometimes pressed for another tale.<sup>41</sup> Offering tobacco indicated the ritual importance of the story as tobacco always indicated a meeting between the Anishinabeg and the *Manitou* spirits. On another level offering tobacco in gratitude for a story indicated that the audience believed that they had been given a gift of power which would become useful to them only if they took an active role in receiving it.<sup>42</sup>

Although Anishinabe elders shared received teachings with their communities, they did not tell people who or what they should be. Each person was expected to search out their own strength and their own destiny. If all community members searched for their own *Manitou* helper then, hopefully, one would receive knowledge of herbs and medicines, one would receive prophecy and many would be hunters and warriors. Anishinabe spirituality pushed people outward, in search of *Manitous* who provided protection and help, and in search of prophets and healers whom the *Manitous* endowed with special power. Anishinabe spirituality in the *oten* era pushed people forward, anticipating the next person who received a vision of power, looking for a new version of

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<sup>39</sup> Theresa S. Smith, *The Island of the Anishnaabeg: Thunderers and Water Monsters in the Traditional Ojibwe Life-World* (Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho Press, 1995), 99.

<sup>40</sup> Anishinabe writer George Copway reported that people started telling stories in October and continued until May, and told a new story every evening. See George Copway, *The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation*, (Toronto: Prospero Books, 2001), first edition Charles Gilpin, 1850, 96.

<sup>41</sup> Slight, *Indian Researches*, 98.

<sup>42</sup> Landes *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin*, 47, 85, 86; for a detailed explanation of how payments were distributed in *Midewiwin* ceremonies see Howard Dorsey Paap, "The Ojibwe *Midewiwin*: A Structural Analysis," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: University of Manitoba, 1986) 127-131.



an old story to help the people in a difficult time, hoping for a community member to be given the power to heal. In contrast to the book religions like Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, which centred both their identity and their ethics on interpretations of a closed canon of sacred texts, the early Anishinabe worldview directed people to expect to find sacred wisdom anywhere. The canon of oral history and sacred stories never closed. However, while new sources could bring new specific teachings, the nature of the wisdom, and the use to which it should be put, remained constant – the pursuit of *Bimadziwin*.

Many nineteenth century Anishinabe people continued the ancient spiritual orientation of the *oten* era, with its characteristic anti-dogmatic inclusivity. However, as massive cultural changes came in the seventeenth century, that tradition was joined by others, to create a new cultural landscape. In the nineteenth century, the *oten* tradition would nonetheless reassert itself strongly when the Anishinabe in southern Ontario contemplated ways to form an alliances with the new settlers in their territory.

#### *The Seventeenth Century at Sault St. Marie*

In the early seventeenth century, pressure on the eastern Anishinabeg forced the *oten* groups to relocate east to Sault St. Marie. From 1610 to 1700, the Anishinabe lived together in a more condensed pattern than they had before. During this time, two major cultural movements influenced the Anishinabeg who would move into southern Ontario in 1700: the *Midewiwin* and Catholicism. Many members of the *Midewiwin* society came to the Sault from the western shores of Lake Superior and shared their rituals with the eastern Anishinabe there.<sup>43</sup> Jesuit missionaries built missions at Manitoulin Island, south

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<sup>43</sup> Although there is no general agreement about when and how the *Midewiwin* was given to particular groups of Anishinabeg, it is certain that the more easterly Anishinabeg would have learned the practice at

west of Sault St. Marie in 1648 and at Sault St. Marie itself in 1667.<sup>44</sup> During this same period, the Anishinabeg also shared in the Feast of the Dead with their Huron trading partners.<sup>45</sup>

Present day historians and anthropologists disagree over the origin of the *Midewiwin*. Many believe that the *Midewiwin* society existed prior to European settlement in North America.<sup>46</sup> Others suggest that the *Midewiwin* began as a defense against the incursions of Euroamerican culture.<sup>47</sup> All accounts agree that the *Midewiwin* came to the Anishinabe as a new teaching offered by the *Manitous* to help the Anishinabeg through a difficult time. In the origin narratives, the *Midewiwin* is presented as a revitalization.<sup>48</sup> Nineteenth century Anishinabe historian, William Whipple Warren, recounted one *Midewiwin* origin story set during the migration that the Anishinabe made from “the great salt water” to their home at Lake Superior. Warren explained that the sea shell, or *migis*, which had led the people on their journey, represented the *Midewiwin*. The community had suffered from terrible diseases and rampant death in the east. The Great Spirit, through *Nanabozho*, had sent the rituals of the *Midewiwin* to cure the people of their diseases and to help them to live healthy lives. The elder explained that, as they

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Sault St. Marie in the seventeenth century even if they had not had it before, see Michael Angel, “Midewiwin Origins: Anishinaabe and Euro-American Perspectives” in *Preserving the Sacred: Historical Perspectives on the Ojibwa Midewiwin* (Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2002), 47 – 77.

<sup>44</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 4, 5.

<sup>45</sup> Harold Hickerson, “The Feast of the Dead Among the Seventeenth Century Algonkians of the Upper Great Lakes” *American Anthropologist* vol 62 No. 1 (February 1960), 81 – 107.

<sup>46</sup> Warren, *History of the Ojibwa People*, 80; Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Ceremonies* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 95, 96; Edward Benton-Benai, *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* (Wisconsin: Indian Country Communications, 1988), 67.

<sup>47</sup> Christopher Vecsey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion*, 174 - 176; Harold Hickerson “Notes on the Post Contact Origin of the *Midewiwin*” *Ethnohistory*, 9:4 (1962) 404 – 426.

<sup>48</sup> Wallace, Anthony F.C. “Revitalization Movements” *American Anthropologist* vol 58, No. 2 (Apr., 1956), 265.

traveled, the people would sometimes forget the teachings of the *Mide* but would eventually remember them and build the *Mide* lodge and begin the rituals again.<sup>49</sup>

Another frequent oral account of the arrival of the *Midewiwin* describes the event as a revitalizing force designed to help the Anishinabe to respond to sickness and death. This account explains that the *Manitou*, *Nanabohzo*, sent the *Midewiwin* scrolls to humans, saying, “I have pity on the An’shina’beg and wish to give them life; Ki’tshi Mani’ido gave me the power to confer the means of protecting themselves against sickness and death.”<sup>50</sup> The *Midewiwin* in this story offered *Manitou* power to humans in the form of a set of teaching and rituals which, unlike the blessings from a vision quest, could be passed among humans.

The *Midewiwin*, in the form that the southern Anishinabeg staying at Sault St. Marie encountered it, combined the *adisokanag*, the shaking tent ceremonies and visionary practice into a healing society headed by trained priests. Similar as most of the elements of the *Midewiwin* were to other forms of Anishinabe spirituality, it differed both structurally and conceptually from the visionary tradition. Becoming a member of the society required more than receiving dreams of power, and more than being able to intercede with the *Manitous* on behalf of others. The *Midewiwin* used visions recorded on birch bark to instruct members and initiates in Anishinabe history and in the moral behaviour which would lead to health, long life, and a happy death.<sup>51</sup> Although not completely rigid, the written instructions created a less changeable set of knowledge than had the prophets’ dreams.

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<sup>49</sup> Warren, *History of the Ojibway*, 78 – 80.

<sup>50</sup> Angel, *Preserving the Sacred*, 53.

<sup>51</sup> Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Ceremonies*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1982), 95, 96.

On a conceptual level, the *Midewiwin* society modified the visionary model of *Manitou* help. What determined a patient's treatment in the *Midewiwin* was not the will and pity of a *Manitou* but rather the level of *Mide* instruction that the individual had achieved, and the availability and willingness of a more advanced *Mide* to instruct them. A first level *Mide* received instructions to move on to the second level and so on. However, the *Midewiwin* did not end other visionary and prophetic rituals. Anthropologist Ruth Landes, who did field work in the 1930s found that people with physical problems went first to the local visionary and then to the *Mide* priests as a second resort.<sup>52</sup> Further, Landes found that *Mide* leadership presupposed a powerful visionary life. Although visions alone did not make a *Mide* leader, leadership in the *Midewiwin* was impossible without them.<sup>53</sup>

Once initiated, the *Mide* leaders became responsible to learn and teach the collected wisdom of the *Mide*. Where once visionaries offered individuals in their communities revelations particular to their immediate questions, the *Mide* leaders possessed knowledge which they believed was broadly useful to all Anishinabeg. However, the knowledge could not be completely severed from the leader who first recorded it. The complex line drawings on each scroll required interpretation, being mnemonic devices to aid its creator's memory, rather than a direct representational account.<sup>54</sup> While not dogmatic or exclusivist in its teachings, the *Midewiwin* did not permit of the radical dynamism and relativism of the *oten's* visionary tradition.

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<sup>52</sup> Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin*, 50.

<sup>53</sup> Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin*, 44.

<sup>54</sup> Selwyn Dewdney *The Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 22.

*Mide* leaders conducted initiation ceremonies at the spring and fall meetings. Initiations began with the construction of a *Mide* lodge or a *Midewagamig*. Because the ceremony brought new life to its participants, and women were associated with giving life, women cleared the ground for the foundation of the lodge. A rectangular tent was built with doors opening toward the east and the west. One or two poles hung with figures of humans stood in the middle of the tent. To open the ceremonies, the gathered communities shared a large feast. When the meal was over, those who had already been initiated into *Mide* leadership went into the woods alone to prepare and sing. At night, the people entered the lodge and sat down between fires lighted at each entrance. *Mide* leaders played drums and led the assembly in singing and dancing. Eventually, the initiates stood in the centre in front of a *Mide* leader who charged them to remember to fast faithfully. Then, the assembled *Mide* took out their medicine bags or *Kahshkekeh mahahkemoot* and circled the lodge. As the *Mide* passed by the initiates, they shot *migis* shells into the initiates' bodies by touching them with their medicine bags. At each touch, the children fell on the ground as if they were dead. After a few moments, the children would stand, ready for the next injection of power from the medicine bags. When the last of the *Mide* leaders passed by, the children remained prone on the ground. While lying there, they hoped to have visions of power. Eventually, women, positioned behind each child, raised them by singing in their ears and drawing their attention to the four directions and then to the earth they were lying on. Finally, each leader addressed the children, identifying them as members of the *Mide* and welcoming them to all of the ceremonies of the *Mide*.<sup>55</sup> The ceremonies concluded with the elder's lecture on the

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<sup>55</sup> This *Mide* initiation ceremony was witnessed by James Evans at St. Clair in southern Ontario in 1834. This account was originally printed in the *Christian Guardian* but was reproduced in Elizabeth Graham,

responsibilities of a *Mide*. Later, Anishinabe people observed Euroamerican settlers falling down at camp meetings, overcome with spiritual power only to stand up again later, claiming to have been made stronger and better by the experience. The *Mide* initiation ceremony would make the Methodists' behaviour at camp meetings look familiar.

Perhaps even more significant than the *Midewiwin*'s teachings for understanding the Anishinabeg's later response to Methodism is how Anishinabe communities negotiated social relations between people who were in the *Midewiwin*, and those who were not. People who were *Mide* were not treated as members of a different religion. When an Anishinabe person wanted to make a feast to honour their *Manitou*, they invited people who were in the *Midewiwin*, people who were in another society, the *Wabeno*, and people who were in neither.<sup>56</sup> They did not achieve community by ignoring their differing spiritual practices, but rather signaled the importance of each of those practices by acknowledging them in the formal invitation itself. Different coloured quills were issued to members of different societies as invitations.<sup>57</sup>

A harmony of cultural expectations held the *Oten* tradition and the *Mide* practices together. Their variant rituals did not undermine their shared cosmological beliefs and ethics. Even disputes between visionary leaders and *Mide* were no more than an annoyance. The Anishinabeg never expected powerful people to behave nicely. Battles between *Nanabozho* and the other *Manitous*, and between the water *Manitous* and the sky

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*Medicine Man to Missionary: Missionaries as Agents of Change Among the Indians of Southern Ontario, 1784-1867* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1975), 101-104.

<sup>56</sup> Generally thought of as a movement designed to reinvigorate the failing hunt in the late eighteenth centuries, the *Wabeno* connected its initiates to *Nanabozho* who they hoped would restore the animals and give them power over fire. See Vecsey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion*, 191, 192.

<sup>57</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 95.

*Manitous* filled the *adisokanag*. Disagreement between dependants of different *Manitous* were to be expected in such a world and did not undermine the bedrock of shared beliefs. On the level of organizing cosmological principles the two traditions supported one another. People known to have powerful visions became important *Mide* priests. The major differences between the *oten* based visionary practices and the wisdom tradition were: the latter's tendency to identify a single, unified body of teachings, or a universal ritual, as a unique source of power that could be transferred, unaltered, from community to community, and the creation of a self taught priestly order.

Another group that influenced the Anishinabe community at Sault St. Marie during this period were the Jesuits, who were entirely dedicated to the idea of unchangeable, inherited wisdom. However, although the Anishinabeg did take up several Jesuit teachings, a commitment to rigorous orthodoxy as an ethical good was not one of them.<sup>58</sup>

In 1641, a traveling group of Anishinabeg from the Sault encountered two Jesuit priests and invited them for a visit.<sup>59</sup> The two priests, Issac Jogues and Charles Raymbault, took up the invitation a year later. During their visit, the Jesuits administered the ritual of baptism to a powerful Huron warrior who had asked them for a blessing because he was going to a battle.<sup>60</sup> From the warrior's baptism, the idea of Jesus as a warrior's *Manitou* was introduced into Anishinabe society. During the first visit, some of the Anishinabeg came to believe that the Jesuit's *Manitou*, Jesus, gave warriors protection. Jesus's servants also recommended themselves to the community by sharing

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<sup>58</sup> For the history of the Jesuit mission at Sault St. Marie see: Christopher Vecsey, *The Paths of Kateri's Kin*, 207 – 220.

<sup>59</sup> Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 116.

<sup>60</sup> Rueben Gold Thwaites ed. *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents Vol. xxiii* (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1898), 9.

some of their provisions and comforts with their neighbours. One warrior observed that “They are truly our Fathers...These black gowns who protect us and give life to the Sault, by receiving our women and children into their house, and by praying for us to JESUS, The God of War.”<sup>61</sup> In this, their first encounter with Christian missionaries, the Anishinabeg appeared unconcerned with the Jesuit’s aggressive ideological stance and were happy to take the benefit of their spiritual power. Believing that each *Manitou* offered its own particular blessings, the Anishinabeg saw no reason why they should not accept the protection of the Jesus *Manitou* so long as his blessings were powerful and promoted *Bimadziwin*.

Jogues and Raymbault reported that during their stay the Anishinabeg had invited the priests to live with them permanently. Commitments elsewhere forced the priests to decline. It was not until 1668 that Jacques Marquette established a Jesuit mission house and pallisaded compound at the Sault.<sup>62</sup> Ten years after their second arrival at the Sault, the priests performed a dramatic healing. As a result, an elder at the Sault declared that the “God of Prayer” as they had referred to Jesus, was also the “Master of Life.” The community credited the healing to the priest’s powerful *Manitou* and hundreds of Anishinabeg asked the priests to perform the Christian ritual of baptism on them.<sup>63</sup> Central to the Jesuit baptism ceremony was the naming of the initiate. For many Anishinabeg at the Sault the ceremony offered the protection and healing power that the Jesus *Manitou* had given the warrior twenty five years earlier.

The Jesuits also contributed to the formation of another lasting perception that Anishinabe people gained about Jesus. Many Anishinabeg came to believe that Jesus

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<sup>61</sup> Vecsey, *Kateri’s Kin*, 209.

<sup>62</sup> Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 116.

<sup>63</sup> Vecsey, *Kateri’s Kin*, 209.



was concerned with, or had power over, the land of the dead.<sup>64</sup> At the Sault, the Jesuits showed the Anishinabeg pictures of humans being tortured in another world. They explained that while they lived on earth these people had displeased Jesus and were now being punished for it. Believing that a powerful judge, God, punished the immoral and rewarded the virtuous in the afterlife, the Jesuits wanted the Anishinabeg to embrace their religion to avoid punishment. The Anishinabeg generally believed that the spirits of people who died went on a long journey to a place in the west which they called *Ishpeming*. The Anishinabeg's cosmological teachings did not include predictions of punishment in another life; at the same time, those who were attracted to the Jesuit's power did not know about how this new *Manitou* treated his dependants. Each *Manitou* meted out punishments as they saw fit, and the Jesuits' presentation suggested that eternal torture was Jesus' punishment.

By the nineteenth century, fear of going to “the bad place” was prominent among Anishinabe people and this was one of the reasons that many Anishinabe people gave to explain why they had adopted Methodist practices. Whether or not such beliefs were widely accepted in the seventeenth century, the Anishinabeg did value anyone, including Jesus, who could defeat disease in this life. Combining war strength with healing abilities, Jesus became a powerful ally for some of the embattled Anishinabeg.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the cultural world of the Anishinabeg who would soon move east into what is now southern Ontario and encounter Methodism had been affected by nearly a century of living closely with other Anishinabe communities. The idea of priestly orders, like the *Mide* or the Jesuits, who controlled repositories of

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<sup>64</sup> E.S. Rogers, *The Round Lake Ojibwa*, (Ottawa: The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, 1962), D2.

secret knowledge was in common currency and within any one community or *oten* some people were members of a distinct religious order while others were not. However, people who practiced the *Midewiwin*, people who received Christian baptism, and people who did neither all remained adherents of the same cosmological system and the ethical system of *Bimadziwin* inherited from the *oten* era, and could still participate in spiritual ceremonies together, just as people with different *Manitou* guardians had once done. The members of the *Mide* and the Jesuit initiates did not see themselves as, nor were they treated as, members of different religions.

The *Midewiwin* and Catholicism did suggest a possible limitation on the radical epistemological open-endedness of the *oten* tradition. If any group began to venerate received wisdom, new contradictory teachings would create conflict. Such a practice could potentially limit a communities' eagerness to integrate new ideas. There is no evidence that such a conflict arose during the Sault St. Marie era. However, given that the next cultural influence to affect the Anishinabe strongly opposed integration of non-Native ideas into Native cultures, it important to note that the preconditions for such an approach to spirituality was laid during that time.

#### *The Anishinabeg in Southern Ontario 1690 - 1775*

Just as fur trade conflict in the form of pressure from the Iroquois motivated the Anishinabeg to congregate at the Sault leading to their contact with new spiritual traditions there, the weakened state of the Six Nations confederacy occupying what is now Ontario allowed the Anishinabeg to move south again in the late seventeenth century leading to a new series of cultural exchanges. During the fur trade era, the Anishinabeg and the Huron to the south were allied with, and provided furs for, the French. The Six

Nations, with their British trade partners, competed against the Anishinabe/French alliance.<sup>65</sup> In the mid seventeenth century, the Six Nations had managed to take over the land between Lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron from the Huron Nation. The French and the Anishinabeg had resisted this Six Nations' intrusion on what they considered to be their hunting territory. Eventually, in the 1680s, when the Iroquois were weakened by the ongoing war with the French, the Anishinabeg began to force them out of the former Huron territory, hoping to push them back across Lakes Ontario and Erie and into what is now New York. The Sault St. Marie Anishinabeg pressing down on the Six Nations from the north were reinforced by other Anishinabeg warriors who put pressure on the Iroquois from the south west at the St. Clair River. They then used their foothold on the east side of the St. Clair to extend the pressure to the Saugeen River and finally, to Penetanguishene. From Penetanguishene, the Anishinabeg warriors from the south, possibly joined by the Sault St. Marie warriors, split in order to pursue the Six Nations to the east along the series of lakes between Georgian Bay and northern Lake Ontario and to the south.<sup>66</sup> The Six Nations who had been living as far west as the Narrows of Lake Simcoe retreated to Rice Lake just west of Lake Ontario.<sup>67</sup> By 1700, the Iroquois had left entirely and the invading Anishinabeg controlled the trading posts of southern Ontario.

The Anishinabe communities that took up residence in the new territory developed unequal levels of prosperity after 1700 because those to the far east, along

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<sup>65</sup> For information on the Anishinabe role in the fur trade see: Charles A. Bishop, *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: An Historical and Ecological Study* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1974); Leroy V. Eid "The Ojibwa-Iroquois War: The War the Five Nations Did Not Win" *Ethnohistory* 24:4 (1979), 297 – 324; Bruce Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660*, 2 vols (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976); Arthur Ray "Give us good Measure": *An Economic Analysis of Relations Between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company Before 1763* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).

<sup>66</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 22, 23.

<sup>67</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 26

Lake Ontario, had access to English and French trading centres that those along Lake Huron and Georgian Bay did not. The former, who came to be known as the “Lake Anishinabeg”, established summer villages on the Bay of Quinte, near what would become the city of Kingston and at the River Credit, less than twenty kilometers south west from what is now downtown Toronto.<sup>68</sup> From 1700 until 1763, this population of about one thousand Anishinabeg, some of whom were Ottawas, Ojibwas and Mississaugas, had traded with both the French and the English at Kingston, River Credit, and in Amherstburg. A second, western group who lived farther from the colonial trading centres came to be known as the “Back” Anishinabeg.<sup>69</sup>

Moving south after the expulsion of the Six Nations brought the Anishinabe communities into occasional contact with settler colonialism for the first time. The Ohio territory lay to the south of the new Anishinabe settlements. There, First Nations groups including the portions of the Delaware, Shawnee, and Seneca Nations, who had been forced out of their territory east of the Appalachian Mountains in the early eighteenth century had gathered in retreat from British farmers.<sup>70</sup> Having been displaced and forced to live together by circumstance rather than choice, some people in the Ohio Territory nations, included the Shawnee, Mingo, and Delawares, made a virtue of their circumstance by reimagining their communities as pan-Native havens for a renewal of

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<sup>68</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 32.

<sup>69</sup> The Anishinabeg who came into the area from the Michigan territory on the west side of the St. Clair River, established settlements between the Saugeen River and Lake St. Clair. Influenced by their experiences with settlers in the United States the immigrant communities’ colonial policies resembled the isolationist stance of the “Back” communities and so they will be grouped together in this thesis. Also some Anishinabeg settled around Lake Simcoe. These may have come from either of the two immigrating groups or may have been a combination of both.

<sup>70</sup> For information on the Ohio Territory see: Daniel P. Barr, *The Boundaries Between Us : Natives and Newcomers Along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory, 1750-1850* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2006); Oliver Zeltner, “Crossing the River: Attitudes of Invasion in the Revolutionary Ohio Country” *Indigenous Nations Studies Journal* 5:1 (2004), 51 – 72; Richard White, *The Middle Ground*.

indigenous spirit power. The so-called “Nativist” movements that grew up in the Ohio territory espoused three basic ideas. First, First Nations communities had suffered because they had displeased the *Manitous* and, therefore, needed to purify themselves. Second, the greatest misdeeds that such communities had committed were that they had adopted too much Euroamerican culture and technology and had allowed Euroamericans to live on their land. Third, the Nativists claimed that all First Nations people were “one people.”<sup>71</sup> The southern Anishinabeg came into contact with the Nativist teachings by traveling south to support the Nativists in a military resistance against the British empire, an engagement commonly known as Pontiac’s Rebellion.<sup>72</sup>

In 1754, a military conflict in North America pitted England and the Six Nations against the French and all of their First Nations allies. Later known as the Seven Year’s War, this conflict became the final contest between French and English colonial powers in North America. In 1763, signatories from both of the European countries involved in the conflict ended hostilities by signing the Treaty of Paris in which France ceded all of their forts in North America to the British, effectively ending their ability to trade furs with the Anishinabeg. Following the war, the British laid out their new policy toward First Nations land in the “Royal Proclamation.” Intended to stop British settlers east of the Appalachian Mountains from inciting wars with the First Nations by stealing their land, the Proclamation made it illegal for non-Native settlers to purchase First Nations

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<sup>71</sup> Gregory Evans Dowd, *Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745 – 1815* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) xix; for further information on the Ohio territory see: Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>72</sup> Richard Middleton, *Pontiac's War: Its Causes, Course, and Consequences* (London: Routledge, 2007); Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); William R. Nester, “*Haughty Conquerors*”: *Amherst and the Great Indian Uprising of 1763* (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2000).

land from First Nations people. Instead, all land that transferred to non-Natives first had to be ceded by First Nations peoples to the British crown through a legal, public treaty.<sup>73</sup>

Two dangers faced the Anishinabeg around the lower Great Lakes at the end of the war: first that their trading system, upon which they depended for food and necessary tools for community survival, would collapse, leaving them at the mercy of the English; and second, that the English would bring settlers into what had once been areas of French influence, as they had brought settlers into the First Nations' lands east of the Appalachians. France's departure from North America forced the Anishinabeg and their allies to address the double task of attempting to create working trading relations with the English, while at the same time limiting English territorial ambitions now unchecked by French presence.

Post-war British policy toward the First Nations did nothing to calm political tensions. General Jeffery Amherst was put in charge of drafting England's policies toward the First Nations. Amherst did not understand that all alliances between First Nations groups rested on, and were symbolized by, giving gifts. Nor did he realize that the gifts were themselves part of the trading system. He ordered a discontinuance of the long standing practice of both English and French traders of giving gifts to First Nations people who visited the forts. Amherst also decided to limit the English supply of guns and gun powder to the First Nations which threatened their ability to hunt.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> The Royal Proclamation of 1763 formed the foundation of all of the treaties that were made between Britain and First Nations people in what would become Canada. Although the practice of making land treaties declined in the mid nineteenth century, the peace and friendship treaties that covered southern Ontario and the numbered treaties that extended from Northern Ontario to British Columbia followed the formula laid out by the Royal Proclamation.

<sup>74</sup> R. David Edmunds, *Potawatomies: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 78, 79.

In 1762, the Shawnees, Delaware, and Mingos, of the Ohio Valley sent a war belt west to the Huron and Anishinabeg proposing war with the English. In 1763, the Ottawa chief, Pontiac, organized a war council in Detroit where he addressed the assembled representatives of many Anishinabe nations including Ojibway, Ottawa, and Pottawattamie whose communities were suffering food shortages because of Amherst's new trading policies. Pontiac told the council not to trust English assurances that they would be faithful allies. Instead, Pontiac said that the English were determined to destroy them. This assertion was the critical point in determining how the Anishinabeg in southern Ontario would respond to the British. Those who believed, at the time and later, that Britain desired the actual destruction of First Nations communities could do nothing but fight. However, the actions of many Anishinabeg living in the Great Lakes basin were shaped by a somewhat less apocalyptic assessment of British intentions.

Pontiac's initial council sent war belts north to Sault Ste. Marie and north east to the Anishinabeg living on the Thames river in what is now southern Ontario. Almost all of the Anishinabe chiefs from Amherstburg, east to Lake Ontario and North to Sault Ste. Marie sent warriors to assist Pontiac in the rebellion.<sup>75</sup> A notable exception to this was chief Wabbicomicot from present day Toronto. As part of the Lake Anishinabeg Wabbicomicot and his community had been trading with the English since the 1740s.<sup>76</sup> Having maintained his community's *Bimadziwin* much more effectively than the Back or northern Anishinabe by trading with the French and the English, and not believing that

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<sup>75</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 72.

<sup>76</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 73.

the English wished their destruction, Wabbiommicott wanted peace with the English.<sup>77</sup> Wabbiommicot unsuccessfully urged other communities not to fight the British and even informed the British of First Nations' plans of attack.<sup>78</sup> Public opinion went against Wabbiommicot and all but two of the southern Anishinabe communities sent warriors to help Pontiac, including 170 warriors from the Thames River.<sup>79</sup>

For a time, the rebellion successfully destabilized England's grip on the Great Lakes area. In the months of May and June of 1763, the First Nations' alliance succeeded in capturing eight British forts, effectively taking control of the Great Lakes territory.<sup>80</sup> In 1764 the alliance abandoned the siege of Detroit and retreated to gather more supporters from western Nations. However, in 1765, the Ohio First Nations made a separate peace with the British and later that same year Pontiac agreed to end hostilities. Despite their failure to hold any of the forts, the rebellion successfully addressed the two major problems left by the French departure. It secured the return of presents ensuring that a sustainable trading arrangement would develop with the English, and it slowed the progress of immigration into First Nations' territory.

The cultural significance of the Anishinabeg's participation in Pontiac's rebellion lay in the exposure of Anishinabe warriors to Pontiac's colleague, the Delaware Prophet, Neolin.<sup>81</sup> Before the Seven Years War, Neolin had received a vision showing him that the First Nations needed to renounce the cultural influences of European society and

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<sup>77</sup> Schmalz shows that as early as 1718 the Anishinabe at Lake Superior were suffering from food shortages while the Lake Ontario Anishinabe were relatively wealthy throughout the eighteenth century, see Schmalz, *Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 36.

<sup>78</sup> Schmalz, *Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 71.

<sup>79</sup> Schmalz, *Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 72.

<sup>80</sup> On the course of the rebellion see: Middleton, *Pontiac's War*; Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven*; Nester, "Haughty Conquerors".

<sup>81</sup> For a summary of Neolin's vision and teaching see Albert A. Cave "The Delaware Prophet Neolin: A Reappraisal" *Ethnohistory*, 46: 2 (1999), 265 – 290.



return to traditional forms of subsistence living. One evening, when he was lost in thought over the “evil ways he saw prevailing among the Indians,” a mysterious stranger gave Neolin a representation of a path on which his own ancestors had once walked through life to reach happiness.<sup>82</sup> The map showed bars blocking the way to happiness. Neolin taught that those bars were the vices which Europeans had introduced into Native societies of which alcohol was the most destructive. In order to break through the bars and reach happiness Neolin instructed his followers to stop using alcohol, to work toward breaking off trade with Europeans, and to observe new rituals of purification.<sup>83</sup>

Concerned that members of their communities had defiled themselves through their own actions, Neolin and other Nativist leaders who emerged during this period wanted their followers to admit to their wrongdoing and embrace rituals that would purify them in order to allow them to once again receive power from the *Manitous*.<sup>84</sup> In the 1770s, one Delaware leader in the Ohio territory instructed people to drink an emetic to induce vomiting and thereby “cleanse themselves from sin.”<sup>85</sup> Nativist leaders described Europeans as contagions who had broken down First Nations’ societies.

Divergent reactions to Pontiac’s Rebellion created divisions between Anishinabe communities that would continue after the war. Wabbicomicot, the Toronto chief who had betrayed Pontiac’s plans to the British, died and was replaced by Monoghquit.<sup>86</sup> Monoghquit garnered the contempt of the so called Back chiefs north and west of Lake Ontario by carrying on his predecessor, Wabbicomicot’s, close relationship with the

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<sup>82</sup>Quoted from Journals of Charles Beatty by Gregory Dowd in, *A Spirited Resistance*, 33.

<sup>83</sup> Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 33.

<sup>84</sup> Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 3.

<sup>85</sup> Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 40.

<sup>86</sup> Schmalz, *Ojibway of Southern Ontario*, 88.

British.<sup>87</sup> At a council in 1771 Nanebeaujoy, a chief from Georgian Bay reprimanded Monoghquit and his followers among the Lake nations for their stand. The tone of Nanebeaujoy's comments suggested a chief in a position of authority reprimanding a lesser chief for deviance from established tradition. Moreover, each of his criticisms of Monoghquit echoed Neolin's criticisms of First Nations communities. Nanebeaujoy acknowledged that Monoghquit needed an ally but condemned him for choosing the British as that ally. He reminded Monoghquit that if his community needed protection they would be both welcome and safe with Nanebeaujoy's community at Georgian Bay.<sup>88</sup>

In earlier times, Anishinabe communities acted independently of each other, forming alliances and trading relationships according to their own best interests. For over a century, Anishinabe communities had maintained individual relationships with European traders, trading companies, religious leaders and political representatives. Only in times of open war with the Six Nations or the Sioux did the Anishinabe communities form a united front that required policy concurrence.<sup>89</sup> That Nanebeaujoy would presume to direct Monoghquit's actions at all suggests a cultural change. More telling still was the content of Nanebeaujoy's admonitions. He urged Monoghquit to end an alliance with the English and to seek protection with the culturally similar people at Georgian Bay. Just as Neolin had condemned reliance on the English and urged the formation of interdependencies between First Nations communities, Nanebeaujoy asserted the primacy of shared Anishinabe culture over existing alliances, and preferential reliance on one

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<sup>87</sup> Schmalz, *Ojibway of Southern Ontario*, 73.

<sup>88</sup> Schmalz, *Ojibway of Southern Ontario*, 88.

<sup>89</sup> For the historical unity of the Ojibway, Ottawa and Pottawattamie see William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway Nation*, 81 – 83; for their formal alliance in time of war see William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway Nation*, 146.

community over another based on their ethnic background rather than political arrangements.

Nanabeaujoy further accused Monoghquit of begging “visiting Indians from the North” for alcohol and greedily drinking rum at the British forts with the soldiers rather than taking it home to the community. In an offer of military protection, Monoghquit promised that he would supply the Toronto Anishinabeg with corn, but made no mention of supplying them with rum. Neolin had condemned alcohol and identified it as the major obstacle standing between First Nations people and the good path. By suggesting that Monoghquit’s rum drinking had led him to violate *Bimadziwin*, Nanebeaujoy accused him of forsaking the primary Anishinabe ethical dictate of individual responsibility. It was not a rhetorical flourish that led Nanebeaujoy to point out that it was wrong to drink in British forts rather than with the community. In this case, it was not a foreign community that Nanebeaujoy had forsaken, but his own. Being accused of not sharing with his own community, to whom he, as chief, had special obligations, carried with it a charge of both greed and lack of self control. Recognizing something either true, or at least culturally compelling, in Nanabeaujoy’s words Monoghquit apologized for his weakness and promised to lead his warriors on a proper hunting trip immediately.<sup>90</sup>

The encounter between the two chiefs suggests that two constellations of characteristics were developing around the Back and Lake first Nations. Self-reliant and community-centred, the Back First Nations were living out the demands of *Bimadziwin* while articulating their attitude toward the British in terms of Nativism. Achieving *Bimadziwin* through close cooperation with the British yet uncomfortable with the

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<sup>90</sup> Schmalz, *Ojibway of Southern Ontario*, 88.

tension that this policy created with their western neighbours, the Lake Anishinabe tended to rely on the *oten* era's inclusivity. However, it is clear that they had not yet settled on a satisfying policy.<sup>91</sup>

Neither the settlers who soon arrived in the Anishinabeg's territory, nor the Anishinabeg themselves had much leisure in which to come up with their strategies of engagement. Within a decade of the end of Pontiac's Rebellion, the continent was shaken by an even larger conflict in the form of the American Revolution.

Euroamericans pitted themselves against British forces and their own community members who supported British rule in North America. Some of the Anishinabeg from the Great Lakes basin participated in the war but their real dilemma emerged once the conflict was over and thousands of the defeated supporters of British rule moved into their territory.

Through their participation in Pontiac's rebellion the Anishinabeg of the Great Lakes region incorporated three of Neolin's teachings into their culture. Though these teachings did not have universal support in what would become Ontario, they did become widely known over the years. In the nineteenth century, when some of the Anishinabeg adopted Methodist teachings, they phrased their insights against the backdrop of three Nativist concepts: first, that people needed to be purified; second, that First Nations people should not depend on Europeans; and third, that all First Nations people shared some common identity. Of the three, the concept of cultural consistency as an ethical good was the most significant. Ideas about purification and suspicion of non-kin relations were not entirely new to the Anishinabeg. However, celebration of actions as ethically good, not because they brought power and promoted *Bimadziwin*, but because

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<sup>91</sup> Schmalz, *Ojibway of Southern Ontario*, 89.

they had been done by previous generations, was very new. Enough Anishinabe people took up the idea that by the 1820s opponents of Methodism could cite traditionalism as a reason for rejecting the new spiritual teaching.

The Anishinabeg who migrated into the basin between Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Huron influenced, and were influenced by the ideas, political struggle, military actions and cultural movements of nations who lived thousands of miles to the south and west. Before Nativists introduced the concept of cultural purity and redefined traditionalism from the general promotion of *Bimadziwin*, to the preservation of specific traditional rituals and ideological positions, the Anishinabe had no taboos against cultural or technological change. Quite the opposite: the demands of *Bimadziwin* required them to search out power that benefited their community whether in the form of spirit power from the *Manitous* or the power that lay in alliances with other communities.

As a result, by the late eighteenth century, Anishinabe culture contained three conflictive spiritual currents. The first, derived from the *oten* era in which small groups of people built, adjusted, and rebuilt their spiritual system as new prophets received new teachings, exhibited dynamism and adaptability. The centre of this era was the pursuit of *Bimadziwin* and a belief that humans relied on help from the *Manitous* to achieve it. *Mide* teachings introduced multiplicity into the heterogeneity of the *otens*, allowing some community members to follow a less open-ended course, directed by received wisdom from a priesthood. The Jesuits' Catholicism served a similar function, offering access to a new *Manitou* whose power helped community members achieve *Bimadziwin* by aiding warriors and healing the sick. Through their participation in the southern Nativist movements, the Anishinabeg picked up a third teaching that celebrated traditionalism and

constancy as an important spiritual value while redefining responsible independence to include a special proviso that mutually beneficial kinship relations could not be formed with non-Native people. The sudden immigration of thousands of non-Native settlers into southern Ontario in the last decade of the eighteenth century would draw out the exclusivism of the Nativists and the integrationist impulses of other Anishinabe people forcing the search for a resolution between the two.

### **Chapter 3:**

#### **The Anishinabe Perspective on Settler Colonialism 1791 - 1825**

Over a three decade period, from 1791 – 1823, the Anishinabeg of southern Ontario went from doing business with traveling Europeans and fighting wars against settlers in other communities' territories, to being surrounded by Euroamerican settlers in their own territory. To navigate this, the most dramatic change they had ever faced, the Anishinabeg drew on the full variety of cultural experiences they had undergone. Both the integrationist strategy of the *Oten* era and the defensive cultural isolationism of the Nativist movements were expressed by different communities in the new Upper Canada. Over the course of the first thirty years of their residence in Anishinabe lands the new settlers' aggressively anti-social behaviour caused all of the Anishinabeg, regardless of their initial attitudes, to alter their strategies of engagement.

The context of the Euroamerican and Iroquois immigration into Anishinabe territory was what has been called the "Sixty Years' War".<sup>1</sup> This began with the Seven Years' War and ended with the War of 1812. Generally thought of as colonial struggles, there were several major conflicts of the Sixty Years' War: the Seven Years' War, 1754 – 1763; Pontiac's Rebellion, 1763-1764; the American Revolution, 1775 – 1783; the Northwest War, 1785 – 1795; Tecumseh's War, 1811; and the War of 1812, 1812 – 1815. They all held a different meaning for the First Nations participating in them than they did for the non-Native participants. First Nations' historians have renamed all of the events the Sixty Years' War because in each of them First Nations people allied themselves variously with the French, the English, the Americans, and with other First Nations in

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<sup>1</sup> David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson, eds. *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001).

order to protect their land rights against aggressors. The effect of Pontiac's Rebellion on the Anishinabeg of the Great Lakes has already been discussed. The American Revolution affected them more through the immigration that resulted from it than from their direct participation in the conflict.

Despite their proximity to the fighting, most of the southern Anishinabeg had stayed out of the American Revolution. The British attempted to rally First Nations' support north and south of the Great Lakes by emphasizing their efforts to stop American settlers from encroaching on First Nations' land before the fighting broke out.<sup>2</sup> The Americans unwittingly assisted the British recruiting campaign by loudly embracing anti-First Nations rhetoric which confirmed British tales about the American settlers' malice and greed in the minds of the Anishinabeg north of the Great Lakes.<sup>3</sup> The Americans' cruelty became even more well-known north of Lake Erie when a group of Delawares arrived as refugees at Amherstburg telling an incredible but true story. As followers of the Moravian Christian tradition, these Delawares were committed to pacifism. In March of 1782, American soldiers had offered to protect the Delawares, then had trapped and killed ninety-six members of their community at once.<sup>4</sup> The Anishinabeg at Amherstburg and beyond were horrified by the Delawares' story and, in May of 1782, a

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<sup>2</sup> Though not much involved in the war 44 Lake Anishinabe warriors from the north shore of Lake Ontario joined a British officer, Captain William Caldwell in the war: Peter Schmalz, *The Ojibway of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 97-100; for information on First Nations and the revolution see: Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006); Liam Riordan, "Identity and Revolution: Everyday Life and Crisis in Three Delaware River Towns" *Pennsylvania History* 64:1 (1997) 56 – 101; David Curtis Skaggs, *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001); Isabel Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant, 1743-1807, Man of Two Worlds* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984); on the Six Nations Loyalists who moved to Upper Canada see: James W. Paxton, "Kinship, Communities, and Covenant Chains: Mohawks and Palatines in New York and Upper Canada, 1712-1830." Ph.D. dissertation, Queen's University, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed account of how the American press turned a military action into the "Massacre of Wyoming" see Schmalz, *Ojibway of Southern Ontario*, 97, 98.

<sup>4</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa*, 100.



small contingent of the non-Nativist Lake Anishinabeg volunteered to join a British regiment to attack the Americans.<sup>5</sup> However, most Anishinabeg felt no need to travel south to join the battle. The Nativists from the Northwest and the Thames disliked the British and didn't want to help them maintain their influence over North America.

After the American Revolution, many of the Euroamericans and First Nations people dispossessed by the conflict moved into the Great Lakes Basin. Although the Anishinabeg of southern Ontario had had contact, trade, and cultural exchange with Euroamericans for over a century, they had never experienced the oppressive colonial relationship of living as indigenous people in a settler colony until after the American Revolution. While communities in the Ohio Territory had faced a long, slow, process of dispossession as they were violently pushed off their land by "pioneers," the Anishinabeg in the Great Lakes Basin had no long history of aggressive settler conflict. When settlers did arrive after the American Revolution, they came in dense waves of large numbers and made a show of meeting with First Nations leaders to sign land treaties to determine where the settlers would live. Negotiating with British authorities to determine the terms of the new arrivals' tenure in the territory, and living with the settlers once they arrived, intensified the Back Anishinabeg's inclination to resist relationships with Euroamericans while providing many opportunities for the Lake Anishinabeg to expand their policy of relationship building.

The settlers' arrival did not end the northern Anishinabeg's participation in the Ohio Territory conflict. The Back Anishinabeg supported the Ohio First Nations in the Northwest War, which followed the revolution. The Ohio First Nations resisted the victorious American settlers' sudden movement into their territory. The Back

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<sup>5</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa*, 100.

Anishinabeg also pressured the Lake Anishinabeg to maintain distance from the settlers during this first generation of non-Native settlement. Meanwhile, the Lake Anishinabeg negotiated and signed treaties. Regardless of their initial attitude toward the British, however, both groups grew to dislike and distrust the Americans.

Another influence on the strategies of the Back and Lake Anishinabeg at the end of the American Revolution resulted from the presence in and around their communities of First Nations immigrants from the south who had been arriving since the end of the Seven Years' War. As European settlers had begun to move into the region south of the Great Lakes, Anishinabe people had been migrating west and north to avoid contact with them. After the Seven Years' War, Anishinabe people living in the Thirteen Colonies formed alliances with the British and made annual trips to Fort Malden in Amherstburg to participate in alliance rituals. The English gave presents to these Anishinabeg who in turn offered oaths of loyalty to the English.<sup>6</sup> After the Americans defeated the British and took over control of southern North America, a steady flow of Anishinabe immigrants entered Upper Canada at the St. Clair River and moved into the Anishinabe communities at Drummond Island and Penetanguishene.<sup>7</sup> Such immigrants were not always welcome and found themselves shifted back and forth between various communities in Upper Canada.<sup>8</sup> Their experience and knowledge of settler society nonetheless added to the resources that the Anishinabeg of Upper Canada had access to.

*The Treaties: Building Reciprocal Relationships or Buying Land?*

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<sup>6</sup> James A. Clifton, *A Place of Refuge for All Time* (Ottawa: Canadian Ethnology Service Paper No. 26, 1975), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Clifton, *Place of Refuge*, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Personal conversation with Margaret Sault, Community Researcher at New Credit First Nation, July 2003.

When the American Revolution was over, many Euroamericans needed new homes.<sup>9</sup> The British government seized on the lightly populated Anishinabe territory north of the southern Great Lakes for their relocation. The Anishinabeg who lived between Georgian Bay and Lakes Ontario and Erie had been there for a century but their population was small. When the settlers arrived, the Anishinabeg counted for fewer than two thousand people living in traveling hunting groups, and settling in summer villages only for a short portion of each year.

The relationship between the Anishinabeg and the American Loyalist settlers needed to be worked out according to the customs of both of those cultures. For the Anishinabeg, that meant oral agreements reached at councils. For the English, that meant describing their relationship to the earth and to the Anishinabe in terms of their own legal system. In other words, they wanted to “buy land” from the Anishinabeg. Treaty negotiations in Upper Canada always included face to face exchanges between leaders of First Nations groups and English government representatives. In these meetings, the English representatives engaged in mediation rituals which held binding significance in Anishinabe societies. The Anishinabeg were given to understand that the new settlers in their territory would benefit them culturally by sharing their technology and wealth with them; militarily, by standing with them against American incursions; and materially by offering annual presents of essential goods like European medicine, clothing, guns, and cooking tools.<sup>10</sup> Further, as the Anishinabeg testified later, they did not surrender the

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<sup>9</sup> Jane Errington "Loyalists" *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History*. ed. Gerald Hallowell. (Oxford University Press, 2004. Oxford Reference Online.); Elizabeth Jane Errington, *Emigrant Worlds and Transatlantic Communities: Migration to Upper Canada in the first half of the Nineteenth Century*, (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007); Elizabeth Jane Errington, *The Lion, The Eagle and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa*, 124; see also Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 130, 131.

land entirely. Rather, they offered the settlers use-rights to the land. When making the treaties, the Anishinabeg expected to maintain full use of the surrendered land for hunting.<sup>11</sup> The Anishinabeg were ratifying a cultural and political alliance cemented by sharing, not transferring, land. Neither group knew, or in the case of the English, chose not to know, what the others were doing. It must be noted, however, that because of the nature of the power imbalance between the two groups this misunderstanding predictably redounded to the benefit of the English. Clearing up the misunderstandings would have revealed the extent of Anishinabeg expectations of European contributions to their community in the post-treaty era. It is reasonable to imagine that the English negotiators may have suspected this and were both aware of, and content with, a high level of cultural miscommunication in the treaty process as clarity could only hurt their property interests.<sup>12</sup>

The treaties outlined an exchange of First Nations land for European goods and sometimes money. They described a reciprocal relationship based on the two groups' ability to provide the necessary elements of each other's subsistence.<sup>13</sup> In Anishinabe terms, the government promised to help them achieve *Bimadziwin* by providing material goods which would help to maintain health and to procure food and shelter. According to the ethics of *Bimadziwin*, the British government's provision of protection, goods, and

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<sup>11</sup> Quinipeno's Address at River Credit, September 6, 1806, RG10: A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor a) Upper Canada, Civil Control, 1796 – 1816, 1841 – 1843 reel C-10 996, N.A.C.

<sup>12</sup>For an on the ground explanation of how some treaty negotiators intentionally manipulated misunderstanding even one hundred years after the original negotiations see John Long, "How the Commissioners Explained Treaty Number Nine to the Ojibway and Cree in 1905" *Ontario History* Volume XCVIII no. 1(2006): 1 – 29.

<sup>13</sup> Older interpretations of the treaties tend to see them primarily as land transfer documents because that is how the Euroamericans saw them. See Leo Johnson. "The Mississauga-Lake Ontario Land Surrender of 1805," *Ontario History*. LXXXIII:3 (1990), 233 – 253; Donald Smith, "The Dispossession of the Mississauga Indians: A Missing Chapter in the Early History of Upper Canada," *Ontario History* 73:2 (1981): 67 – 87.

money required an equal gift, in this case a share of the hunting territories. The British need for the land was obvious. Therefore, giving access to the land to the British ensured an ally near at hand and a permanent supply of European trade goods to enrich their own communities.

The first treaties were conducted between 1781 and 1806. The first lands in question lined the northern shores of Lakes Ontario, Erie, and St. Clair as well as the rivers that connected those lakes.<sup>14</sup> Small areas along the lakes where Anishinabe groups traditionally met for summer fishing were excluded from the treaties. In 1784, the Credit River Anishinabe community ceded the entire Niagara Peninsula to the British and included a section of the hunting territory of the more Nativist Thames River Anishinabeg.<sup>15</sup> Three years later, the River Credit community sold the land on the north shore of Lake Ontario, between present day Toronto the eastern border of the earliest purchase. As of 1787, the British had access to unbroken territory between the present day cities of Toronto and Kingston. The Lake Anishinabeg negotiated all of the treaties and the more isolationist Back communities watched the procedure with growing alarm.<sup>16</sup>

The early treaties suited both parties of signatories because the British wanted the land along the water for farming while the Anishinabeg's intensive hunting took place in the interior. Anishinabe summer villages, on the other hand, did not require much land. Again, it should be noted that the Anishinabeg did not believe that they had offered the settlers full sovereignty over the lands that they would farm. Instead, they expected to

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<sup>14</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 120.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, "The Dispossession of the Mississauga", 32; this treaty was ratified in 1792 see *Canada: Indian Treaties and Surrenders. From 1680 – 1890* (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlain, 1891) vol 1, 5 – 7.

<sup>16</sup> Smith, "The Dispossession of the Mississauga", 32.

retain the right of free passage across the land and use of the water access along all of the lakes.

Within ten years of the first treaties, about six thousand Loyalists and their families had taken up land along northern shores of Lakes Ontario, Erie, and the length of the River Thames. By outnumbering the Anishinabeg almost six to one, by intimidating Anishinabeg people who approached their farms, and by bringing the experiences of southern land disputes to the land north of the Great Lakes, the immigration of Loyalists completely changed the face of Anishinabe territory.

Not all of the immigrants were Euroamerican. One thousand of the newcomers who eventually took up permanent settlement in Upper Canada were members of the Six Nations Confederacy.<sup>17</sup> When the Mohawk chief Joseph Brant convinced his nation to fight on the side of the British during the American Revolution he set in motion a chain of events that would lead to the Anishinabeg and Iroquois sharing the land that they had been fighting over since the fifteenth century. During the war, when the Six Nations had found themselves endangered by their support of the British, they had taken refuge at Fort Niagara. At the end of hostilities, it was not safe for them to return to their traditional territories. The British negotiated settlements for them in Upper Canada at the Bay of Quinte and along the Grand River which flows into the northern shore of Lake Erie. Some of the Anishinabeg were reluctant to allow their traditional enemies to settle in their territory. However, the new culture of Nativism came to the Iroquois' aid and

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<sup>17</sup> As allies of the British in the American Revolution the Mohawk, Onondaga, Seneca and Cayuga nations of the Six Nations had much closer political ties with the British through William Johnson the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, than did the Anishinabeg, see Paxton, "Kinship, Communities, and Covenant Chains"; Taylor, *Divided Ground*; Charles M. Johnston, *Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1964); on Johnson see: Fintan O'Toole, *White savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005); James Thomas Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet: a Biography of Sir William Johnson* (New York, Syracuse University Press, 1979).

particularly the claim that all First Nations people were one people. An Anishinabe chief named Pokquan argued that his community owed support to the Iroquois because “we are [all] Indians... and are bound to help each other.”<sup>18</sup> Such sentiments were not hollow rhetoric. The Mohawk Chief Brant would soon show similar solidarity with the Anishinabeg community when it faced conflicts with the Euroamerican Loyalist settlers.

During the first thirty years of settler colonialism in Upper Canada, the Lake Anishinabeg attempted to establish balanced, reciprocal relationships with the new colonial government. Their efforts were frustrated by the settlers themselves, who had no wish to fulfill the treaty obligations that the British treaty negotiators had offered. Further, the vast numbers of the settlers put pressure on game and fish supplies, while greater proximity to more Euroamericans spread disease through Anishinabe communities, decreasing their already small numbers.

From the time of the earliest settlers, and throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, Anishinabe communities in Upper Canada experienced wave after wave of disease. In 1793, a smallpox epidemic killed many people at a Lake Simcoe Anishinabe village.<sup>19</sup> The communities closer to the Euroamerican settlements along the north shore of Lake Ontario suffered a loss of more than half of their population to disease between 1788 and 1827.<sup>20</sup> The deaths affected the Anishinabeg psychologically, as will be discussed later in relation to their interest in Jesus as a ruler of the afterlife, but also limited their strategic options for relating to the settlers. If the Lake Anishinabeg

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<sup>18</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 101.

<sup>19</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 104.

<sup>20</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 104.

had been culturally disinclined to resist Euroamerican settlers before the epidemics, the death of so many potential warriors now added logistical reasons to remain peaceful.<sup>21</sup>

Food shortages compounded the suffering caused by disease. Anger with the settlers soon developed among the Lake communities who had signed the initial treaties. During the 1780s and 1790s, the settlers established their farms, which meant cutting down trees and clearing large areas of land. This disturbed animal habitats and affected the Anishinabeg's hunt.<sup>22</sup> Worse yet, the settlers themselves supplemented their farming with hunting and fishing which depleted the overall stocks. In 1805, a Euroamerican community near the River Credit summer village site set up a weir across the Credit River to capture salmon on their way to spawn, thus destroying an entire season of fishing for the River Credit community. The community's chief, Kineubinae, wrote to the colonial government to complain about the situation. The government responded by issuing a proclamation forbidding settlers from over fishing in protected areas.<sup>23</sup>

Relations between the colonial government and the Anishinabeg were not good, even without the settlers making things worse. Since 1755, the British had dealt with First Nations leaders through the military and the Indian Department. British officers negotiated alliances with the First Nations in order to secure their support in case of war with the French, and later the Americans. The British paid for the alliances with presents of weapons, tools, clothing, food, and drink distributed at ceremonial meetings.<sup>24</sup> The

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<sup>21</sup> On the effects of disease on First Nations colonial relations see Bruce Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: a History of the Huron People to 1660*. ( Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 588 – 601; Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: the Biological Expansion of Europe 900 – 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) first published 1986, 195-217.

<sup>22</sup> Smith, "The Dispossession of the Mississauga," 33.

<sup>23</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 106.

<sup>24</sup> R.J. Surtees, "The Development of an Indian Reserve Policy in Canada" *Ontario History* 61:2 (1969) 87, 88; see also L.F.S. Upton, "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8:4 (1973), 51 -61.



officials in the Indian Department were generally more willing to maintain presents at the level expected by their First Nations allies while military leaders resented “purchasing the good behaviour of Indians.”<sup>25</sup> In 1796, the government stopped giving annual presents to both the Back and Lake Anishinabeg, maintaining the practice only for the First Nations in and around their southernmost post at Amherstburg.<sup>26</sup> In response, chiefs from the northwest complained directly to the British authorities, arguing that the American immigrant Pottawattamie Anishinabeg in Amherstburg, south of Lake St. Clair, were also being given preferential treatment in trade despite their American heritage.<sup>27</sup> Beyond the material consequences of ending the presents, and applying differing trade policies to different communities, the British actions also conveyed to the Anishinabeg that the colonial government was willing to break long-standing promises if they found it useful to do so. To a community that had given up sovereignty over their own territory in exchange for the promise of ongoing support, such a realization was chilling.

In the same year that the presents stopped, Wabakinine, a chief from the River Credit, of the Lake Anishinabeg, was murdered by a British military officer.<sup>28</sup> The officer had attempted to assault Wabikinine’s sister. When the Chief stopped the assault the officer murdered him. The murder, combined with the loss of presents, pushed the Anishinabeg warriors into action. Convinced that things could not continue as they were, the elder chiefs consulted the newly arrived Mohawk chief, Joseph Brant. Brant advised the

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<sup>25</sup> Jeffery Amherst to William Johnson, August 9, 1761, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*. 14 vols. (Albany: State University of New York, 1921 – 1963) quoted in Paxton, “Kinship, Communities, and Covenant Chains”, 175.

<sup>26</sup> Johnson, “The Mississauga- Lake Ontario Land Surrender of 1805” *Ontario History* vol LXXXIII, no 3, (1990): 236; On the British policy of limiting presents see Paxton, “Kinship, Communities and Covenant Chains”, 177, 428.

<sup>27</sup> Johnson, “The Mississauga Lake Ontario Land Surrender,” 236.

<sup>28</sup> Smith, “Dispossession of the Mississauga,” 37 – 39.

Anishinabeg to cooperate with the settlers. Having fought on the British side during the Revolutionary War, Brant knew the extent of both British and American military strength. Brant told the chiefs that the numbers of the British exceeded anything in the Anishinabeg's experience. Further, the Mohawks had lived with Euroamerican settlers and understood the difference between colonial policies and settler practice. The warriors who wanted to follow Pontiac's example relented and submitted to the chiefs' decision to broker a deal with the settlers.

Although the chiefs rejected military resistance, they decided that Wabikinine's murder had changed their relationship to the British. On the advice of Joseph Brant, the chiefs adopted a new policy toward future land treaties. While the Anishinabeg had previously requested annual presents or promises of future obligation in the treaty councils, they no longer believed that such terms would be fulfilled and recognized that they had no method to force British compliance. Instead, they began to demand payments in cash to supplement the usual promises. Startled by the move, in 1798 government officials sent their Deputy Superintendent of the Six Nations, William Claus, to ask Brant to dissuade the Anishinabeg from this new policy. Brant spoke for the Anishinabeg, pointedly declaring that he had promised Wabikinine that he would act as a protector of the Anishinabe lands and so could not help the government take the land for less than it was worth. Brant pushed the point further by likening the British actions toward Natives in Upper Canada to Indian policy in the south.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, by directly linking the new Anishinabe policy of treaty making to the officer's murder of

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<sup>29</sup> Johnson, "The Mississauga Lake Ontario Land Surrenders," 239; see also Paxton, "Kinship, Communities and Covenant Chains", 436.

Wabikinine, Brant tacitly asserted that the British government had a responsibility to control, and account for, settler actions.

In 1797, the Lake Anishinabeg elected Brant to chief status and empowered him to negotiate on their behalf with the British government.<sup>30</sup> Their decision reflected their appreciation of Brant's advice. This move suggests that, by 1797, the Lake Anishinabeg, despite their general wariness toward the Nativist movements, agreed with the Nativists, at least to the extent that they saw their own interests more closely aligned with those of other First Nations people, even their long time enemies the Six Nations, than with Europeans'.

The behaviour of individual settlers or colonial officials was not the only problem facing the Anishinabeg in the early settlement period. A larger, systemic problem was coming into focus. In 1793, David Ramsay, a Euroamerican trader, sent a letter of complaint to the colonial government on behalf of the River Credit community. This letter outlined, for the first time, what would become an enduring subject of debate between the Anishinabeg and their new neighbours: the nature of the land trades. The Anishinabeg contended that when they had originally agreed to allow the war refugees from the United States to settle on their land, they did so with the understanding that the settlers would show their gratitude by offering help to the Anishinabeg. Further, the Anishinabeg claimed that they had in no way ceded their right to hunt on the territories now occupied by the settlers.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers: the Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) & the Mississauga Indians* (Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 3.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, "The Dispossession of the Mississauga," 34; The British government did not respond to the River Credit letter with a promise to control the activities of the European settlers, despite requests that they do so. In 1829 the Rice Lake Anishinabeg again asked the Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne to restrain

In response to Anishinabe pressure, and to promote its own view of the colony, the colonial government consciously pursued a policy intended to make the Anishinabeg dependent on them. First, the English needed to displace Joseph Brant's Iroquois community at Grand River from the position of the Anishinabeg's closest ally. The colonial secretary appointed a permanent Indian agent at York in hopes of drawing the attention of the Mississauga Anishinabeg at the River Credit away from Brant's territory to the south.<sup>32</sup> The colonial government also temporarily ceased land purchases from the Anishinabeg. As advised by the Mohawk chief Joseph Brant, the Lake Ontario Anishinabeg had requested a cash price in exchange for a piece of land at Burlington Bay in 1797. As the government had no intention of granting anywhere near the standard price for First Nations' land, any land negotiations for a cash price could now only end with open hostility.<sup>33</sup> Such a consequence would work against the government's attempt to cast itself in the role of benevolent provider, protecting the Anishinabeg from the rapacious settlers. Further, by not pursuing more land, the government ensured that the Anishinabeg's wealth diminished just when more and more settlers were flooding the already ceded portions of their hunting grounds. The colonial office believed that a long dry spell would eventually force the Anishinabeg to accept the low prices for their land.

The government strategy of building dependence was explicit. Indian agents were directed to distribute presents "in such manner, and with such suitable solemnities, and at such seasons, as to produce the most powerful effect on the Indians, and to leave the

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settlers who were stealing furs, abusing women, and killing animals. If the government had no law to prevent this behaviour the Rice Leaders requested that they draft one to do so see: "Petition to John Colborne from the Mississaugas of Rice Lake in the New Castle District" January 27, 1829, RG 10 A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor, a) Upper Canada, Civil Control, 1796-1816, 1841-1843, reel C- 10 997, N.A.C.

<sup>32</sup> Johnson, "The Mississauga Lake Ontario Land Surrenders" p 237.

<sup>33</sup> Johnson, "The Mississauga Lake Ontario Land Surrenders" p 241.

strongest impressions on their minds, of their dependence on His Majesty's bounty."<sup>34</sup>

The government's attempts to increase the Anishinabeg's belief in their dependence on the government may have worked against the rise of a more explicitly oppositional reaction in Upper Canada. During Pontiac's rebellion and the Northwest War, the spiritual leaders had required their followers to cleanse themselves of all European technology and learning. The British strategy of increasing presents, just at the moment when militarized youth were calling for cultural isolation, proved very effective. The more convinced the Anishinabeg were that they could not continue to feed themselves and fight their enemies without the assistance of the colonial government the less likely they were to form the kind of inter-community military alliance that had formed south of the Great lakes. For their part, well versed in settler politics through their participation in Pontiac's Rebellion and the Northwest War, the Anishinabeg of British North America faced the ostensibly benevolent, but deeply self-interested, colonial policies with a depth of understanding which might have surprised some of the new political appointees to the Indian Department.

The emerging division between the colonial government's understanding of the treaties and the Anishinabe understanding found articulation in the debate surrounding the renegotiation of a treaty known as the Toronto Purchase. In 1805, colonial officials realized that the text of the original 1787 treaty had been lost. William Claus, then the Deputy Superintendent General of the Indian Department, was dispatched to ask the council of the River Credit community to sign a new agreement. Quinipeno, one of the River Credit's chiefs, made a speech on the occasion of this second negotiation which

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<sup>34</sup> Duke of Portland to Peter Russell, Nov. 4, 1797, in *Russell Correspondence*, vol. 1, 278 -77, quoted in, Johnson, "The Mississauga Lake Ontario Land Surrenders" p 238.

illustrated both the misunderstanding at the heart of all of the early agreements between the Anishinabeg and the English, and the extent to which at least some in Anishinabe communities understood the peril of their new circumstance. Holding ten strings of white wampum, Quinipeno addressed himself to the Deputy Superintendent General with kinship language. The wampum indicated peace toward the British while the kinship language indicated that Quinipeno's council wished to continue in a mutually beneficial relationship of reciprocal obligation with the Crown. However, the content of Quinipeno's speech indicated that at least some of his people no longer believed that the British wanted to maintain their half of the relationship. "Father" Quinipeno began, "... we were told our Father the King wanted some Land for his people... when we found it was much wanted by the King to settle his people on it, whom we were told would be of great use to us, we granted it accordingly."<sup>35</sup> The British settlers' spectacular failure to "be of great use" formed the theme of the rest of Quinipeno's address, and indeed the theme of almost every letter of complaint or petition written by First Nations people in Upper Canada from that time until Confederation.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Quinipeno's Address at River Credit September 6, 1806, RG 10: A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor a) Upper Canada, Civil Control, 1796-1816, 1841-1843 reel C-10 996, N.A.C.

<sup>36</sup> Some examples of complaints of non-cooperation or abuse include: Non-Native settlers killing animals, stealing furs and abusing Anishinabe women, "Petition to John Colborne from the Mississaugas of Rice Lake in the New Castle District" January 27, 1829, RG 10 A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor, a) Upper Canada, Civil Control, 1796-1816, 1841-1843, reel C 10 997, N.A.C.; Government not paying non-Native settlers who had helped an Anishinabe community, "Ironsides to Mudge re. Chippewa of River St. Clair Petition in favour of M. Luc Reaume" September 24, 1829, RG 10 A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor, a) Upper Canada, Civil Control, 1796-1816, 1841-1843, reel C 10 997 N.A.C.; Government not paying annuities on land as agreed in treaties, "Petition from Muncey and Chippewa Chiefs to Colborne" February 19, 1830, RG 10 A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor, a) Upper Canada, Civil Control, 1796-1816, 1841-1843, reel C 10 998, N.A.C.; Government not repressing the whiskey trade in Native communities, Ezra Adams, "Letter to the Editor," February 4, 1835, *The Christian Guardian*, 49; Government failure to protect reserves leaving people fearful that they would lose their land, "The Indians of Canada West" August 27, 1845, *The Christian Guardian*, 179.

According to Quinipeno, the settlers had demonstrated their uselessness in two ways while the colonial government, for whom William Claus spoke, had perpetuated an even greater betrayal by stopping the annual presents which were the token and sign of their alliance. Not only had the settlers made no effort to share their knowledge of farming or medicine or language or spirit power with the Anishinabeg but, once they had established themselves on farms, they had immediately begun to use violence to enforce a physical border of space around themselves and their communities, thus ensuring that information could never be shared in the future. As Quinipeno reported at the meeting, “Colonel Butler told us the Farmers would help us, but instead of doing so when we encamp on the shore they drive us off and shoot our Dogs and never give us any assistance as was promised to our old Chiefs.”<sup>37</sup>

The various kinds of assistance that the River Credit community had anticipated included metal working support. However, Quinipeno noted that the blacksmith whom the government had promised to the River Credit community in the original treaty, had abruptly moved away from the community and returned to York. Once safely surrounded by settler society at the capital, the blacksmith in question had begun a grown-up game of make believe in which he pretended not to be obliged to work for the River Credit community. Quinipeno explained to William Claus and the rest of the government representatives how the blacksmith played out his charade: “When we go to York to get anything done by the Smith we are put off from day to day and get nothing done”. The chief continued, “We know you pay him for doing our work but he does us no good altho’ it was bargained for when the Land was sold”. The blacksmith’s dogged insistence

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<sup>37</sup> Quinipeno’s Address at River Credit September 6, 1806, RG10: A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor a) Upper Canada, Civil Control, 1796-1816, 1841-1843 reel C-10 996, N.A.C.

on an alternative reality in which the demands of his own busy schedule somehow nullified the government's treaty promise presaged the devastating diplomatic strategy of rescinding promises on the grounds of self interested pragmatism which the colonial government would use against the Anishinabeg for the next two centuries.<sup>38</sup>

In this case, the strategy deployed by a single blacksmith was sufficient to push Quinipeno to tacitly question the good faith of his British allies in a public meeting, an extreme gesture in a culture dedicated to avoiding open conflict at almost any cost.<sup>39</sup> Of course, the significance of Quinipeno's denunciation of the blacksmith was rhetorical as well as practical. Items found at the end and the beginning of Anishinabe discourses were meant to be understood as of primary importance while items which appeared to be unconnected with the main matter of a speech often contained parallel structures to the overall argument. The blacksmith's amnesia parallels the larger theme of the settlers' general denial of their obligations to the people who provided them with land when they were in need.<sup>40</sup> Quinipeno set the collective memory of his community: "We know you pay him for doing our work but he does us no good altho' it was bargained for when the Land was sold," against Deputy Superintendent Claus's unwillingness to recognize the specific obligations laid on him by the terms of the treaties.

Quinipeno's speech also drew attention to the colonial government's preoccupation with controlling the relationships between the various First Nations communities in

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<sup>38</sup> A recent work uses oral history to critique the Canadian government's intentional manipulation of the dissonance between the treaty writer's legal formulations with respect to European legal tradition and the First Nation's peoples' legitimate understanding of those documents see: Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council, Walter Hildebrandt, Dorothy First Rider and Sarah Carter *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 1996).

<sup>39</sup> Roger Spielmann has used linguistic analysis to make this point in *'You're So Fat!' Exploring Ojibwe Discourse* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 159 – 164.

<sup>40</sup> Quinipeno's Address at River Credit September 6, 1806, RG 10: A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor a) Upper Canada, Civil Control, 1796-1816, 1841-1843 reel C-10 996, N.A.C.



British North America. Quinipeno observed that “since we were attached to York we have got very little [of presents] – this happened when we had some transactions with Brant.”<sup>41</sup> In the speech, Quinipeno suggested that the government was punishing the Anishinabeg for forming an alliance with the Six Nations.

While the colonial government’s attitude toward their Native hosts changed dramatically in the early nineteenth century, the Anishinabeg saw no reason to allow the colonial government to end their obligations. By the early years of the nineteenth century, the formerly cooperative Lake Anishinabeg of Upper Canada were trying to find new terms of association with the European settlers that would protect their communities, limit land incursions, and provide new forms of subsistence.

#### *Pan-Native Resistance Suffers a Setback*

While the Lake Anishinabeg were attempting to hold the British to the promises of the treaties, another fight was brewing to the south. The American Revolution freed the American settlers from the limitations that the British had placed on their expansion. Settlers streamed across the Appalachian mountains into First Nations territory. Between 1786 and 1794, a defensive military alliance composed of the Shawnee, Miami, Delaware, Anishinabeg, Six Nations, Kickapoo, Kaskaskia, and Wabash fought to keep American settlers out of the Ohio Territory. The Lake and Back Anishinabeg, already occupied with their own settler troubles, did not immediately travel south to support the resistance. However, in 1794, the Lake Anishinabe communities on Lake Ontario and the Back Anishinabeg at Mackinaw near Sault St. Marie, received war belts from the south and sent warriors south to help the First Nations’ alliance.<sup>42</sup> It is most likely that

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<sup>41</sup> Schmalz, *Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 103, 104.

<sup>42</sup> Schmalz, *Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 103.

they did so not out of a sense of racial solidarity with their neighbours to the south but rather out of political solidarity and pragmatism. The warriors in the south were allied with the British government with whom the Anishinabeg were also allied. Further, the American settlers' aggressiveness posed a possible threat to the Anishinabeg if they decided to expand northward. Sending warriors to fight and discourage an enemy far from their home territory was strategically preferable to waiting for the fight to come north of the Great Lakes. The knowledge of the Americans' slaughter of the Moravian Delawares, who now lived with the Anishinabeg, likely heightened the sense of imminent threat.

Reports of the Anishinabeg's participation in the Northwest Indian War are limited and divergent. Canadian historian Peter Schmalz records that the Anishinabe warriors achieved one victory followed by a defeat and then faced an attack, not by American soldiers, but by food shortfalls, and disease. According to Schmalz, the warriors returned home leaving behind a few people who would be able to fetch the warriors should they be needed in battle. As a result, the northern contingent of the alliance missed the Battle of Fallen Timbers, at which Anthony Wayne's troops broke through the First Nations' lines and burned the warriors' corn fields, effectively ending the war.<sup>43</sup> American historian Gregory Dowd argues that the Anishinabeg who joined the resistance did so under the auspices of an unofficial, volunteer battalion made up of First Nations, French and English people from Canada. According to Dowd this group did stand on the field at Fallen Timbers.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745 – 1815* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992) 113.

<sup>44</sup> Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 106, 107.

Pragmatic as their motivations for entering the Northwest War may have been, the warriors who joined the fight certainly learned soon enough that there was a spiritual element to the battle that drove their allies forward. During the course of the Northwest War, the warriors used Nativist rituals both to prepare themselves for battle and to celebrate their victories. Before the Anishinabe contingent arrived in 1791, the alliance accomplished their largest defeat of American forces near the American Fort Jefferson in the Ohio Territory. After the battle, the allies celebrated with an elaborate ceremony. The warriors peeled the bark off all of the small trees in a field and painted them with symbols.<sup>45</sup> This “painted pole” ceremony reappeared later among the Anishinabeg in Upper Canada.

Other cultural phenomena related to the Northwest War also found their way into Upper Canada, reinforcing Neolin’s earlier teachings about purity and First Nations solidarity. The idea, articulated a generation earlier by Neolin, that First Nations people were suffering because they were being punished for acting wrongly was expanded in a Shawnee story in which the Great Spirit appeared and condemned the Shawnee for “forsaking the ways of their fathers” and for becoming proud, rather than kind.<sup>46</sup> In the Shawnee formulation, not only were First Nations people behaving badly by drinking and being unkind, they were also behaving badly in an abstract way, that is: by diverging from an older form of practice. Traditionalism, according to the new teaching, was now a cultural virtue, regardless of its utility. The Shawnee leader Painted Pole also observed

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<sup>45</sup> Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 102.

<sup>46</sup> Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 105, 106.

that the Great Spirit might prefer First Nations people to Europeans and suggested that the ultimate goal of the Euroamerican settlers was to enslave First Nations people.<sup>47</sup>

The Anishinabe warriors in the pan-Native resistance watched the aftermath of the defeat at Fallen Timbers. The participating nations were divided within themselves between moderates and radicals. Most of the participants no longer believed that they could defeat the American militia and Ohio chiefs acquiesced to the punitive land treaties that had motivated the Northwest War. A small group of radical Nativists accused these chiefs of witchcraft and had some murdered. One radical Nativist was the young Shawnee warrior, Tecumseh, who had stood on the field at Fallen Timbers and lived on to start another incarnation of the inter-tribal resistance to European settlement. In a bid to stop American settlement in the northern Ohio valley and in the northwestern United States, Tecumseh and his brother, Tenskwatawa, continued to resist the presence of American settlers. Like Pontiac and Neolin before them, the brothers led an intertribal resistance which aimed to recreate their communities and take back their land in accordance with an ethical vision of the future which drew authority from a veneer of traditionalism while instituting significant cultural change.<sup>48</sup>

The Shawnee prophet, Tenskwatawa, experienced a vision of the future for his people that he shared with his immediate community. The tensions that Tenskwatawa's criticisms of their chiefs created so disturbed their own community that Tecumseh and his followers were forced to leave and start a new one. In order to act out their vision of a new Native world, the brothers established a new village at Greenville, Ohio, a site

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<sup>47</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650 – 1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 510.

<sup>48</sup> Gregory Dowd points out the “newness” of the Nativist teachings, *Spirited Resistance*, xxii; On Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa generally see, David R. Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (Boston, Little Brown: 1984).

chosen for its symbolic power. Greenville was in an area that the chiefs had ceded to the Americans in a contentious treaty. In 1808, the community moved again to Prophetstown where the brothers welcomed all First Nations people who shared their vision for a new resistance. Openly hostile to the American settlers and chiefs who dealt with them, Tenskwatawa's movement embraced spirit power to fight against the corrosive forces of cultural and geographic invasion.

The continuing resistance and the new Nativist movement arose from a vision that Tenskwatawa had received while sitting at his fire feeling mournful about his people's behaviour. In his dream, Tenskwatawa stood on a road facing a fork which led off in two directions. Along one of the forks, Tenskwatawa could see many houses and in each of the houses people were being tortured. In one of the houses, spirits urged people to drink from steaming cups by people who reminded them of how much they enjoyed whiskey while they were alive. When they did drink, molten lead poured into their mouths and destroyed their stomachs. Many people walked down the road toward the tortures.<sup>49</sup> The other fork in the road led to a verdant place where food abounded. Tenskwatawa concluded that alcohol was destroying his people and would bring them further destruction after death. He taught his followers to renounce alcohol and the violence that it bred. Like Neolin, he also taught that the First Nations people should avoid using European technology wherever they could. He instituted new ceremonies which symbolized turning away from European strength and ingenuity and returning to older indigenous knowledge. Tenskwatawa advocated the ritual of the new fire. Followers were to extinguish the family fire, which had likely been lit using a European manufactured tinderbox, and to start a new fire with indigenous techniques. The new fire

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<sup>49</sup> Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 126.

should never be allowed to go out but should burn on as a symbol of the enduring power of Native life.<sup>50</sup>

Tenskwatawa's cosmology was more radical than that of Neolin and the Nativist alliance that had prompted the Northwest War. Neolin had avoided suggesting that the Europeans were essentially evil by saying that they were simply created by a different *Manitou* than were First Nations people. Tenskwatawa offered no such niceties: the "Whites," as Tenskwatawa called the Euroamerican settlers, were the children of the Bad Spirit and not of the Great Spirit. First Nations people and all other human societies were made by the Great Spirit.<sup>51</sup> By asserting that non-Natives were the product of an ethically bad *Manitou*, Tenskwatawa embraced a potent form of racial categorization that asserted that the differences between people groups were not only intrinsic but foreordained by supernatural powers.<sup>52</sup>

Tenskwatawa's teachings became diffused through Anishinabe communities north of the Great Lakes. His coherent critique of adopting European technology in general, and of accepting Christian teachings in particular, had a direct impact on how many understood Anishinabe Methodism in Upper Canada. However, Tenskwatawa's attack on properly appointed chiefs did not find sympathy in Upper Canada. There is no evidence that the Anishinabeg of Upper Canada ever publicly attacked their chiefs in the way that Tenskwatawa was willing to do.

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<sup>50</sup> Edmunds, *Shawnee Prophet*, 34 – 38.

<sup>51</sup> Edmunds, *Shawnee Prophet*, 27, 38.

<sup>52</sup> Nancy Shoemaker took up the subject of First Nations' constructions of racial identities, arguing that although in the seventeenth century many First Nations attributed good qualities to "white people" by the time of the Seven Years war "white" connoted a foreign group with more bad qualities than good, see *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 134, 135.

The first Anishinabeg from north of the Great Lakes to hear and spread Tenskwatawa's teachings were pilgrims who traveled to Tenskwatawa's community in order to hear his words and search for evidence of his spirit power. A much broader section of the Anishinabe community were exposed to the teachings after 1808 when Tenskwatawa and his community were forced to flee American territory and took refuge at the British fort at Amherstburg. Later still, Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh and their warriors fought alongside Anishinabe warriors to defend their now-shared territory in the War of 1812.

Tenskwatawa actively pursued pan-Native cooperation by sending out messengers to spread his vision to neighbouring Nations to encourage them to also give up the practices which he believed were draining their power. Tenskwatawa's missionaries went north to the Great Lakes region and east to the Iroquois still living in New York. Tecumseh himself traveled for several years after 1808 to spread his message and to bolster resistance to European settlements in the Ohio Territory.<sup>53</sup> Between 1808 and 1811, native messengers from the Northwest also went to Prophetstown to learn Tenskwatawa's teachings. Tenskwatawa's reach was extensive. A delegation of northern Anishinabeg spent more than a year with the Prophetstown community. When an epidemic of smallpox hit the community in 1808, the Anishinabe delegation returned home unconvinced that the Prophet had enough power to protect his own people.<sup>54</sup> However, their discouragement at his ineffectual spirit power did not indicate a lack of support for his political commitments. Tenskwatawa's movement upheld the political

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<sup>53</sup> Edmunds, *Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 40.

<sup>54</sup> Benjamin Drake, *Life of Tecumseh, and of his brother the Prophet: with a historical sketch of the Shawanoe Indians* (Cincinnati: E. Morgan, 1841), 105.

goals of Neolin and Pontiac and their purchase was broad and deep among First Nations in the Great Lakes area.

Evidence of Tecumseh's cultural influence can be found in early writings about the Anishinabeg of Southern Ontario. In a story from a mid-nineteenth century text called "Objections to becoming Christians" a common Nativist critique of Christianity came from a powerful healer from a largely immigrant Anishinabe community at Lake St. Clair, very near Amherstburg where Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh had once been stationed. Pahegezhegwashkum said that his people would not become Christian because he had seen white people drink alcohol and fight. From such behaviours Pahegezhegwashkum concluded "Now the white man's religion is no better than mine. I will hold fast to the religion of my forefathers, and follow them to the far west."<sup>55</sup> Ideas of racial divides in the afterlife also created anxiety among the nineteenth century Anishinabeg as stories circulated about First Nations Christians being rejected from both the non-Native heaven and the Native heaven.<sup>56</sup> Yet another story suggested that First Nations people would be made to work as servants of the Euroamericans for eternity should they gain entrance to heaven. These teachings grew swiftly and found purchase among First Nations groups across the United States and into Canada. As will be shown, the concept of separate creators would later be contested within First Nations communities in nineteenth century Upper Canada by the Anishinabeg who adopted Methodism.

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<sup>55</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians; with Especial Reference to their Conversion to Christianity* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), first published 1861, 230.

<sup>56</sup> Vescey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion and its Historical Changes* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1983), 69.



The Northwest War also confirmed to many Anishinabeg living north of the Great Lakes the aggressive nature of the republic to the south. This had to be taken into account when determining how far they could afford to antagonize the new non-American settlers in their own territory. In 1812, relations between the Americans and the British deteriorated over perceived British support of First Nations radicalism and interference with American shipping. Tecumseh's First Nations alliance received some support from the British officers who remained in the Ohio Valley after the revolution and also from those at Amherstburg. This support of an aggressive internal enemy (the First Nations) by an ostensibly vanquished enemy (Britain) angered the American settlers. Further, the British, who were fighting a war against Napoleon's France in Europe, ordered the Americans to observe an embargo against France and enforced their order by boarding American ships. Angered by Britain's interference with their international trade and by the support that the British had shown to the First Nations in the Northwest War, the United States declared war on Britain in June of 1812.<sup>57</sup>

Tecumseh and his followers traveled to Amherstburg in July of 1812 to offer their military support to the British forces assembled there.<sup>58</sup> Britain accepted Tecumseh's offer and promised their new allies assistance in their fight for a greater share of the Ohio Territory. The British and Native alliance took control of the American fort at Detroit. The fighting then turned to the Niagara Peninsula between Lakes Ontario and Erie. On October 5, 1813, at the Battle of the Thames Tecumseh took a fatal wound and died. The

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<sup>57</sup> David Stephen Heidler, *The War of 1812* (New York: Greenwood Press, 2002); David Curtis Skaggs, "The Great Lakes Wars, 1754-1814" *Northwest Ohio Quarterly* 68: 3 – 4 (1996), 133 – 143; Robert S. Allen "His Majesty's Indian Allies: Native Peoples, The British Crown and the War of 1812" *Michigan Historical Review* 14:2 (1988), 1 – 24.

<sup>58</sup> David R. Edmunds *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership*, 169. For a full treatment of the Six Nations' participation in the War of 1812 see, Carl Benn, *The Iroquois in the War of 1812* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1998.)

First Nations alliance continued to support the British during the year and a half before the end of the war.

Many of the leaders who would shape relations between Natives and the colonial government in Upper Canada during the first half of the nineteenth century fought together between 1812 and 1814. Major James Givins, who would later become the superintendent of Indian Affairs for Upper Canada, had many Anishinabe warriors under his command.<sup>59</sup> Yellowhead, head chief or *ogimaa*, at Lake Simcoe participated in the defense of York in 1813 and was shot in the mouth by a musket.<sup>60</sup> Yellowhead's son, Yellowhead, would later negotiate several treaties with the colonial government and would preside over the Lake Simcoe community's first attempt at farming. Northern Anishinabeg who lived at Sault St. Marie, not having been part of the group that migrated south in 1700, also went south to join the battle. Among them were Chief Shingwaukonse, or Little Pine, from Garden River and Chief Assinack, or Blackbird, from Manitoulin Island.<sup>61</sup>

The alliance of necessity between Tecumseh, the British, and the Upper Canada Anishinabeg drew the communities more closely together. At the same time, it set the stage for yet another British betrayal of Anishinabeg assistance. When the war ended, the British broke their promise to Tecumseh and their other allies by failing to secure a First Nations' territory in the Ohio Valley. Indeed, the Treaty of Ghent that ended the war set aside no land at all for First Nations people either below or above the Great Lakes. The

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<sup>59</sup> Leslie, John, F., "Givins, James", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* (University of Toronto and Universite Laval, 2000).

<sup>60</sup> "In Collaboration", "Musquakie (Mayawassino, Waisowindebay, also known as William Yellowhead)", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* (University of Toronto and Universite de Laval, 2000).

<sup>61</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 114; On Shingwaukonse see Janet Chute, *The Legacy of Shingwaukonse: A Century of Native Leadership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.)

Ohio Territory that the Shawnee-led Confederacy had fought so hard to maintain as their own was quickly becoming a land of American settlement and Tecumseh's warriors remained in Upper Canada. In the following years, First Nations communities living on the western side of the Detroit River and farther abroad in Michigan migrated east to Upper Canada in increasing numbers to escape American control.<sup>62</sup>

Beyond ceding control over lands that the First Nations had hoped to gain, the Treaty of Ghent also gave away Anishinabe land. One chief from Drummond Island, to the west of Manitoulin Island, expressed his dismay at Britain's surrender of his community's territory saying, "Our chiefs did not consent to have our lands given to the Americans... you delivered us up to their mercy."<sup>63</sup> The relationships between First Nations leaders and the British officers who fought with them suffered from the terms of the Treaty of Ghent and established an unstable foundation for their cooperation in Upper Canada.

More significant even than the Anishinabeg's exclusion from the Ghent negotiations in breaking down Anishinabe/British relations was the colonial government's sudden and final abandonment of any pretence that European settlement in Upper Canada was a wartime expediency made possible by the generosity of the resident First Nations. After the war, the colonial elite became concerned about the number of American born citizens in the colony. Fearing a republican ideological invasion, they suppressed American immigration and actively recruited settlers from Europe to take over land in Upper Canada.<sup>64</sup> More Anishinabeg villages were affected by British

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<sup>62</sup> Clifton, *A Place of Refuge For All Time*, 19.

<sup>63</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 116.

<sup>64</sup> Elizabeth Jane Errington, *The Lion, The Eagle and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology*. (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1987), 173 - 181; Helen I. Cowan, *British*

immigration after the War of 1812 than by the Loyalist and American settler immigrations which had preceded it. In 1823, Peter Robinson, a commissioner from the Crown Lands Department, facilitated the sudden immigration of 548 impoverished settlers from Cork, Ireland, to a territory near what is now Ottawa. The scheme became very popular in Ireland and two years later, in 1825, Robinson brought 2400 people into the area that is now Peterborough, Ontario, which was directly adjacent to Rice Lake, a community that later became influential in the Anishinabe Methodist movement.<sup>65</sup> Further, the settlement bordered the eastern shore of the small Mud Lake, home of another Anishinabe summer village.

Beyond limiting access routes to hunting territory, the government-sponsored immigration had another effect. Any hope that the Anishinabeg had had that the settlers in their territory had come to live with them out of necessity and with good will ended. Clearly, dominance over territory to facilitate natural resource theft, rather than shelter from the storm, was motivating their new neighbours to take over land and block access to rivers and forests. The colonial administration's adoption of an active immigration policy revealed Upper Canadian society for what it was: a colony of England, with all of the theft, coercion and violence that that implied. The settlers living on the land would do more than support themselves. They would enrich Britain through lumbering, farming and eventually, mining.

From this time forward, Anishinabe diplomatic goals in Upper Canada shifted from negotiating equitable and mutually beneficial terms of interaction between

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*Emigration to British North America: the First Hundred Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961).

<sup>65</sup> Cameron, Wendy. "Robinson, Peter", Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, [www.biographi.ca](http://www.biographi.ca); Gerald Craig, *Upper Canada, Formative Years, 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1963), 128.

themselves and the settlers to attempting to protect land and rights which they now knew that the Euroamericans wished to take from them. What remained unclear, for the time, was what would happen now that the Lake Anishinabegs' strategy of cooperation could no longer be maintained and that the Back Anishinabegs' larger alliance system had splintered into radical (Tecumseh and his followers) and moderate (chiefs who signed treaties after Fallen Timbers) factions.

Although they did not know it at the time, the War of 1812 ended the Euroamerican battle for influence over the Anishinabeg's territory. The path of diplomacy and cultural engagement that the Anishinabeg chose to follow after it set a pattern that lasted for over a century. Tutored by settler disregard for First Nations' treaty rights, the self serving terms of the Treaty of Ghent, and the colonial government's active settler recruitment, the Lake Anishinabeg left the era of hopeful treaties behind them. The Back Anishinabeg found themselves without the strong defensive network once provided by the moderate Pan-Native alliance of the Ohio Valley. The defeat at Fallen Timbers, followed by the radical Nativists' repudiation of chiefly authority, weakened the popularity of Nativism as a strategy among the Back Anishinabeg. The spiritual teachings of the Nativists, however, including the categories of being suggested by their attributing the creation of the English to an evil *Manitou*, introduced concepts whose cultural relevance outlived the political decline of Nativism. Each of the Nativist teachings remained current among the Anishinabeg of Upper Canada: that traditionalism was a cultural virtue; that the *Manitous* preferred First Nations people to Europeans; and that the English wanted to hurt, not help, First Nations people. The Back and Lake communities searched for more beneficial and sustainable attitudes toward, and policies

for, living with the settlers than they had yet achieved but they also hoped for satisfying answers for the questions that the Nativists posed.

Having cooperated in the War of 1812, and searching for a new strategy, both the Back and Lake communities, who shared a cultural history, found themselves in parallel positions and with a common goal. They both wanted to protect their communities' *Bimadziwin* above all else. Over time, many Anishinabeg had also become convinced that their own communities needed to be cleansed to achieve *Bimadziwin* and believed that the experience of colonialism had damaged them. Restoring purity and overcoming colonial damage were both necessary precursors to achieving *Bimadziwin*. The social rifts and violent acts that Tecumseh's teachings had provoked provided a warning about the path that undermined Chiefly authority or promoted unbalanced community decision making. The hope that new teachings could arise to help them in their current condition did not abandon them. As they had watched for prophets in the *oten* era and welcomed the healing medicine of the *Midewiwin*, again, both the Lake and Back Anishinabeg looked forward and outward to see who the *Manitous* would send to help them in their distress. Their gaze fell on the Methodists whose political commitment to indigenous rights and belief in the importance of personal relationships with a spiritual being made them attractive as allies to the Anishinabeg.

## Chapter 4:

### Salvation from Empire: Methodism as a Means to Anishinabe Renaissance

In 1823, an Anishinabe warrior from Rice Lake of the Lake Anishinabeg attended a Methodist church service in Upper Canada. John Sunday, also known as Shawundais, later recorded his account of the event in the form of a conversion narrative to be shared with audiences in sermons.<sup>1</sup> According to his account, Sunday was drinking whiskey with his friends one day when someone approached the group and asked them if they wished to see “the Indians at Belleville” who were telling everyone about God. Offering no comment on his own motivation, Sunday explained that he and his friends arranged a trip to Belleville and arrived there at nine the following morning. Crowds prevented the men from entering the meeting house so they sat outside of the building until five in the evening when the meeting broke up. Sunday and his friends stood to greet the people exiting the building and to shake hands with them. Another meeting began at seven o’clock and Sunday joined in.

The preacher at the evening service took for his text the gospel of Matthew chapter 7 verses 13, 14: “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Sunday understood this teaching as an affirmation of the Nativist teaching that after death some humans go to a place of destruction while others find life. When Sunday retold the story later, he used

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<sup>1</sup> Although he shaped the story to encourage other First Nations people to become Methodists themselves, and to encourage First Nations and European people to donate money to the Methodists, the rhetorical structure of his story retains his understanding of the significance and meaning of his experience in terms of the particular history of the Anishinabe of Upper Canada. This first person account by John Sunday was sent to the *Christian Guardian* by Jonathan Scott. See: Jonathan Scott “An Indian Chief’s Conversion” *Christian Guardian*, October 22, 1834, 198.

the racial categories of Nativism to frame his words: “all the wicked white men, and wicked Indians, and drunkards, shall go there; [to the place of destruction] but the good white people shall go in the narrow way; but if the Indians also become good and serve the Lord, they can go in that narrow way.” “My parents taught me that all the Indians shall go where sun set,” Sunday observed “but the white people shall go in the Ishpeming [above].” Sunday had grown up believing teachings espoused by Tenskwatawa and the later, radical Nativists that First Nations people and Europeans were created by different *Mantious*. When each died, their souls would go to separate afterlives designed for them by their own *Manitou*. However, according to his account, the experience at the Methodist meeting convinced Sunday otherwise.

Sunday’s Rice Lake community heard his account as a proposed strategy of colonial engagement shaped to answer the concerns of people schooled in Nativism’s critique of settler colonialism. John Sunday’s announcement that “Good Whites” and “Good Indians” would share a single afterlife, while “Bad Whites and Bad Indians” would share punishment, realigned the old Nativist alliances to include the Methodists of English descent, a section of European society that he believed to be supportive of his community’s *Bimadziwin*. Like the Mohawk leader Joseph Brant, and like many Anishinabe chiefs before him, Sunday did not reject a strong alliance on the grounds of racial or cultural difference. At the same time, Sunday’s words did evoke the teachings of Neolin and Tenskwatawa. He perceived himself and his community to be at a moral crossroads, like Neolin’s fork in the road, which required a spiritual renaissance to overcome. He believed that his community was broken and contaminated and needed purification. However, Sunday also borrowed wisdom from the long tradition of the



Anishinabeg. He placed pursuit of *Bimadziwin* above all ethical concerns. Sunday chose the *oten* era's innovation over the Prophets' celebration of traditionalism by adopting a non-Anishinabe teaching. Like his ancestors in the *oten* era, he looked outside of his community's received wisdom in order to draw in teachings and relationships that could make them more successful in the future.

Sunday was one of three important leaders from the Lake communities who decided that Methodism provided useful spiritual, cultural, and material resources for the Anishinabeg in Upper Canada. The following will explain how Sunday, along with Peter Jones from River Credit, and Peter Jacobs from Rice Lake, first adopted Methodist teachings, what they made of them and how they presented them, and why their words were listened to, first by their own communities and then by communities further west in the Back communities. The deterioration of relations between settlers and the Anishinabeg laid the foundation for the alliance that the Anishinabeg Methodists formed with a subsection of non-Native settler society, the reform minded Methodists. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders were able to convince their communities of the value of their new teachings because they followed Anishinabe conventions of leadership both in their department and also by supporting community *Bimadziwin* by providing needed resources. Finally, the new movement's teachings explained both Christian philosophy and the experience of settler colonialism in a way that was both comprehensible and meaningful to the besieged communities of Upper Canada.

Two promising fissures within their new neighbours' society offered the possibility of an Anishinabe entente with a subsection of that society. The first fault line lay between the ruling Tory elites, who set colonial policy, and the settlers who offered a

reformist critique of the government in order to promote their own agenda of more responsible government and of developing the land and infrastructure of the colony.<sup>2</sup> Within the reformers, a subgroup wanted reform not only of the government's policies toward non-Native settlers, but also of their policies toward First Nations people. This second, smaller, group agreed with the rest of their society that First Nations people were less civilized than the British but believed that, as possessors of European civilization, they had an obligation to protect indigenous people whereas some portions of the Tory elite, for various reasons, did not.<sup>3</sup> Religious conflict between members of the Anglican Church, who formed the new society's elite, and Methodists who were numerous among the settlers, formed a second rift. Although there were reformers in both the Methodist and Anglican churches who believed that assimilation would help First Nations people, members of the two communions generally disliked each other. The Methodists differed from the Anglicans both spiritually and politically. Methodists characterized Anglican spirituality as overly concerned with forms and accused Anglicans of being unimpressed with the supernatural power of God.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Exemplified by Robert Gourlay who created a survey to discover what improvements and infrastructure farmers needed and wanted; see Robert Gourlay, *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*, abridged and with an introduction by S. R. Mealing (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974); The fullest account of the Upper Canada reformist movement can be found in Carol Wilton, *Popular Politics and Political Culture in Upper Canada, 1800-1850* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Grant describes the rhetoric that was later employed by Upper Canadians in the 1830s debate about First Nations' status in Upper Canada although he does not directly connect the two, for the discourse see: John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 73, 74; for the debate see Theodore Binnema, "The Emigrant and the Noble Savage: Sir Francis Bond Head's Romantic Approach to Aboriginal Policy in Upper Canada, 1836 – 1838," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39:1 (2005), 115 – 138.

<sup>4</sup> On conflicts between the Anglicans and Methodists in Upper Canada see: William Westfall, *Two Worlds: the Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989); Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996) esp. 21 – 50; Terrence Murphy "The English-Speaking Colonies to 1854" in *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*, Murphy and Perin eds. (Toronto, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 131 – 135; Goldwyn French, *Parsons and Politics: The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes From 1780 – 1855* (Toronto, The Ryerson Press, 1962), 105 – 120.

Although differences between Upper Canada's Tories and Reformers, and Anglicans and Methodists, created the conditions for the Anishinabeg to form new alliances, Euroamerican settlers did share certain basic beliefs about First Nations people. According to Canadian religious historian John Webster Grant, the question of indigenous rights in Britain's colonies became the subject of a public debate after England took the Cape Colony from the Dutch in 1806. Having emancipated the slaves, the English were left facing the question of what political rights the ex-slaves should have. Methodist missionaries comprised a substantial contingent of the British occupation force in the Cape of Good Hope. There they established their philosophy which later traveled to England and then on to Upper Canada. They believed that First Nations cultures could not maintain themselves when in direct, daily contact with British culture. In order to protect the health, and even the existence of colonized peoples, it was the moral obligation of colonizers to convey their own culture to the indigenous peoples - assimilation as prophylaxis. According to Grant, the Methodists' assimilation consisted of conveying the abilities to use European technology, comprehend European economics, and adopt European clothing and social manners. These would instill the European cultural values of "sobriety, frugality, industry and enterprise" and then enable the Anishinabeg to make a living in the new society.<sup>5</sup> The assimilation platform rested on the belief that colonizing powers should not impoverish aboriginal people. However, because of the experience in South Africa, reformers also adopted indigenous land rights as a cause. Geographer Alan Lester has described the conflict as it played out in South Africa as a "collision between, on the one hand, evangelical and humanitarian versions of cultural colonization that guaranteed Xhosa access to their land... and... the practice of

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<sup>5</sup> Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 75.

colonization founded upon settler-led conquest and dispossession.”<sup>6</sup> The non-Native Methodists in Upper Canada would later defend Anishinabe land rights.

Whether or not they would eventually support Anishinabe land rights, the colonial government agreed with the Methodists that the Anishinabeg should be assimilated into British culture. Assimilation became colonial policy in Upper Canada when, in 1828, the Colonial Secretary, Lord Goderich, suggested that the Indian Department be closed to save money. According to historian L.F.S. Upton, the Superintendent of the Indian Department, Major General Darling, proposed that the department’s goals be shifted from maintaining the First Nations people as military allies through present distribution, to promoting a humanitarian reform programme to assimilate the First Nations.<sup>7</sup> The proposal was accepted and control over the Indian Department was handed to the civil government with the mandate to pressure the traveling *otens* to settle in agricultural villages, provide them with tools and resources to begin farming, and build and administer schools for the children.<sup>8</sup>

Beyond seeing that the Methodist reformers shared their own interest in maintaining their community’s prosperity, even if through a switch to farming, the Anishinabeg also agreed with many of the Methodists’ spiritual teachings, preferring them to Anglican philosophy. The influential Anglican elite, who filled the ranks of government positions and owned much of the land in the colony, valued an orderly approach to the mysteries of life and relied on a combination of tradition and biblical

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<sup>6</sup> Alan Lester, “Settlers, the State and Colonial Power: The Colonization of Queen Adelaide Province, 1834 – 1837”, *Journal of African History*, 39 (1998): 221.

<sup>7</sup> L.F.S. Upton, “The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8:4 (1973), 56, 57; see also, R. J. Surtees “The Development of an Indian Reserve Policy in Canada” *Ontario History* 61:2 (1969), 87 – 98.

<sup>8</sup> Upton, “Origins of Canadian Indian Policy,” 57.

injunction to determine how to live a good life. Like their progenitor, the Church of England, the Anglicans advocated close cooperation between secular government and religious authorities. The Anglican system used religious teaching to maintain the social ethics it prescribed. The Anglicans' emphasis on the church, and by extension God, as the first and foremost source of ethics, contrasted sharply with both the Anishinabeg's and the Methodists' understanding of the significance of spiritual beings.

Like the Anglicans, the Methodists believed that their God determined and enforced human ethical systems. However, like the Anishinabeg, the Methodists believed that the most important aspect of the relationship between God and humans was the spiritual power that God gave to humans. This was the point of common ground on which the Methodist/Anishinabe alliance was built. The Methodist tradition taught that there were two central events in a human's life: the moment of salvation, when the spirit of God enters their heart, and the moment of sanctification, when the spirit of God gives them the power to follow God's ethical standards.<sup>9</sup> This emphasis on a transfer of power from a spirit to a human appeared to be a correct understanding of the spirit world to the Anishinabeg while the Anglicans' emphasis on social relations conflated ethics with spirituality which seemed incorrect. Further, the Methodists believed that God visited people individually and spoke to them privately, giving them direction and power throughout their lives. The Anishinabeg also believed that the relationship between a human and their spirit guardian was private and ongoing.

The popularity that the Methodists, rather than any other religious group, would achieve among Anishinabe people also had a pragmatic element. The Methodists

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<sup>9</sup> For sources on Canadian and Upper Canadian Methodism and how it changed over time see Westfall, *Two Worlds*, Semple, *Lord's Dominion*; George Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire: Radical Evangelicalism in British North America: 1775-1812* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

pursued an alliance with the Anishinabeg more actively and more efficiently than did any other group. Anglicans focused their work on non-Native settlers in cities and on the Six Nations at Grand River and Tyendinaga.<sup>10</sup> When Loyalist settlers moved to Upper Canada after the American Revolution they were shortly followed by streams of other settlers who came for free land. The American Methodists sent traveling or, as they called them, “itinerant” preachers north to live with the new settlers. Methodist congregations usually did not have a preacher to themselves. Instead, local congregations were led by “elders” who were chosen from within the community by the visiting preacher. The preachers traveled, usually on horseback, between many congregations, giving sermons and administering rituals while they were with each community. Their travels followed a regular “circuit” and so they became known as “circuit riders” or saddlebag preachers. Between 1790 and 1812 seventy-six of these preachers worked in Upper Canada.<sup>11</sup> At first, towns in Upper Canada were incorporated into the New York circuit. In 1791, the Methodist preacher William Lossee started an all Upper Canadian circuit on a sixty mile radius around the city of Kingston.<sup>12</sup> Membership in the Kingston circuit grew quickly. In 1810, there were 2600 official members of Methodist congregations in Upper Canada and many more who attended meetings who either belonged to other denominations or who had not yet completed the series of spiritual duties which qualified them for membership.<sup>13</sup>

The Methodists were not a homogenous group, however. In 1815, a second variety of Methodists joined the American Episcopalians in Upper Canada. British

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<sup>10</sup> On the early years of missionization in Upper Canada see Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 73 – 78.

<sup>11</sup> French, *Parsons and Politics*, 42.

<sup>12</sup> Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, 43.

<sup>13</sup> French, *Parsons and Politics*, 47.

Wesleyans, who were Methodists living in England, arrived to embark on their own evangelistic project.<sup>14</sup> The Wesleyans did not like the manners of the American Episcopal preachers, believed their education to be inferior, and thought that their religious services were embarrassingly rowdy.<sup>15</sup> After two years of conflict between the American and British missionaries, the parties agreed to divide the Canadas between them, with the British retreating to Lower Canada and the Americans remaining in control of the missions in Upper Canada. Canadian historian Goldwyn French has argued that the American Methodists' conflict with the British Wesleyans caused them to become more publicly critical of the British elite in the secular government of the colony.<sup>16</sup> By 1825, the leadership of the Methodist Church in Upper Canada, now called the Canada Conference, became involved in a political reform movement proposing a more distant relationship between Canada and Britain.

An example of how the Methodist missionaries presented themselves to Anishinabe communities will help to convey a sense of how these differences played out on the ground. In 1823, an American Methodist preacher named Seth Crawford packed his possessions into a wagon and left his home in Saratoga, New York, to move onto the reserve land of Joseph Brant's Iroquois community at Brantford. He joined another non-Native missionary, Alvin Torry, but unlike Torry, stayed on the reserve itself.<sup>17</sup> At Brantford, Crawford moved into the home of a Native family and paid them for his room and daily meals. He explained his motivation to members of his home church before leaving by saying that he had "received an impression on his mind that it was his duty to

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<sup>14</sup> French, *Parsons and Politics*, 72.

<sup>15</sup> French, *Parsons and Politics*, 72.

<sup>16</sup> French, *Parsons and Politics*, 109.

<sup>17</sup> Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, 154, 155.

preach to the Indians.”<sup>18</sup> However, although the preacher had intended to “preach” to the “Indians” he found himself spending most of his time teaching them how to read and write. It may be that he hid his secular intentions in order to gain funding from evangelical Methodists, or it may be that by “preaching” Crawford meant more than the dissemination of theology. In either case, as far as the First Nations living at Brantford could tell, Crawford arrived in their community with books of knowledge and offered his time to interpret them. They also knew that he represented a different church than the Anglican one of which many in their community had long been a part.<sup>19</sup> Although most of the community were Anglicans, the Methodist was allowed to stay. He lived with the Iroquois and did not try to become wealthy or take their land. The education he offered enabled the young people in Brantford to deal with the European colonizers on their own terms, negotiating treaties, protesting Indian Affairs policies, and providing access to European cash currency. Though the Anglican missionaries did the same for the Mohawks, it was Crawford and his colleagues who would offer these services to the Anishinabeg.

Like other settlers, Crawford’s attitude toward the First Nations in general, and the Anishinabe in particular, was ethnically arrogant and culturally exclusivist. However, the significant difference between Crawford and many of the settlers, which First Nations people at the time certainly noticed, was that while most settlers’ attention was fixed on ensuring their own families’ prosperity in Upper Canada, Crawford left his family behind in order to fight for First Nations people’s well being. This willingness to abandon

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<sup>18</sup>John Carroll, *Case and His Cotemporaries or, The Canadian Itinerants' Memorial: Constituting a Biographical History of Methodism in Canada from its Introduction Into the Province Till the Death of the Rev. William Case, in 1855* vol. 2 (Toronto: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1869), 410.

<sup>19</sup>Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 73.



members of non-Native society and place First Nations' priorities above personal interests was imitated by Methodist missionaries in Anishinabe communities throughout the 1820s and 30s.

*The Anishinabe Methodist Leaders*

The willingness to co-operate across ethnic divisions was central to the Anishinabe Methodist movement. The Anishinabe leaders who led the movement worked to break down the binaries of "Native" and "White." Although Nativist prophets for two generations had spread the message that ethnic distinctions could explain and predict behaviour, and many Euroamerican settlers also held the notion dear, many First Nations and Euroamericans contested such a position.<sup>20</sup> The Anishinabe leaders' decisions were shaped by their life experience with colonial culture and European settler societies. In the time that it took for the settlers to establish themselves to the point that they were capable of regulating social behaviour, representatives from most of the Anishinabe villages in southern Ontario had learned enough English to discuss treaties and policies with both settlers and colonial authorities. Many Anishinabeg knew enough English to conduct business with the settlers. The men who became Anishinabe Methodist preachers, like others in their communities, grew up in villages where Euroamerican settlers were common and where Euroamerican consumer needs shaped the work habits of First Nations communities to some degree. Although to contemporary Nativists they appeared to be living at the beginning of a contest between two oppositional cultures, their words reflect the perspectives of men who believed that Native culture and settler society already were, and should continue to be, combined within limits to the benefit of

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<sup>20</sup> For a related discussion of First Nations' racial ideas in the eighteenth century see Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness : Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (Oxford and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004).

all.<sup>21</sup> Despite their knowledge of the colonial government's failure to fulfill promises and their awareness of the settlers' aggressive intentions, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders pursued peace with the settlers through letters and negotiations.

Peter Jones, the first Anishinabe Methodist preacher, spent his adolescent years at the Mohawk loyalist town of Grand River in an environment in which people from European and Anishinabe and Mohawk backgrounds frequently treated people from the other cultures as equals. The two other Anishinabe Methodist leaders, Peter Jacobs and John Sunday, also believed that the Anishinabeg and the new European immigrants could achieve balanced, inter-ethnic social relations.<sup>22</sup> Their movement's mantra was "God is no respecter of persons."<sup>23</sup> However, like the Nativists, none of the Anishinabe Methodist leaders wanted Anishinabe communities to assimilate with European settlements. Their actions and writings reject ethnic hierarchies and promote Anishinabe people living in their own communities on their own land.

The Anishinabe Methodist movement began when Peter Jones, a prominent Anishinabe man from the River Credit community, became a promoter. Jones embodied the combination of European and indigenous culture. The son of Tuhbenahneequay, an Anishinabe woman from the River Credit community, and Augustus Jones, a Euroamerican surveyor who came to Upper Canada before the first waves of immigration, Jones' family life represents both the possibilities and the limitations of

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<sup>21</sup> Devens, *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 4,5.

<sup>22</sup> Because Jones, Sunday and Jacobs used their English names in conversation and correspondence with people whose first language was English they will be rendered so here in order to avoid anachronism and essentialism.

<sup>23</sup> This belief was popular among the Anishinabe of Upper Canada and later in Minnesota. Michael McNally, *Ojibwe Singers: Hymns, Grief, and a Native Culture in Motion* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 98.

relations between people within the two cultures. Jones' father, Augustus Jones, was married to two Native women at the same time, one being Tuhbenahneequay and the other a prominent Mohawk woman from Grand River. Although the arrangement could have been maintained within the Anishinabe cultural system, Augustus's commitments to the Euroamerican Anglican church compelled him to choose one wife over the other. Augustus Jones chose his Mohawk wife and left Tuhbenahneequay to raise their two sons, Peter Jones, and his brother, John, with the help of her relatives at the River Credit community on the northwestern shore of Lake Ontario.<sup>24</sup>

Jones's worldview drew on the two sets of stories and ethics, one taught to him by his mother and the other learned after the age of fourteen when he moved to the Mohawk community with his father. Life with his *oten*, the River Credit community, in the early nineteenth century provided Jones with training in hunting, fishing, herbal medicine, Anishinabe political structures, and Anishinabe spirituality. The *Manitou*, or Grandfather stories told by the elders, provided the linguistic structures through which his community interpreted their experience and determined how to act. When Jones was very young a village elder, possibly the chief, his uncle, Joseph Sawyer, gave him the name Kahkewaquonaby meaning sacred, or eagle feathers. The Anishinabeg associated eagles with the Thunderbird spirits who lived at the four corners of the earth, providing water and regulating the seasons to allow the earth to regenerate itself.<sup>25</sup> At some time after his naming ceremony, Jones received a shot bag emblazoned with a symbol of the Eagle. Jones demonstrated his own attachment to the Eagle identity by carrying the shot bag

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<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers: the Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) & the Mississauga Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 4 – 6.

<sup>25</sup> Johnston, *The Manitou: the Spiritual World of the Ojibway* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), 121.

with him for the rest of his life.<sup>26</sup> The Anishinabeg revered the Thunderbirds, or Thunderers, as powerful warriors. In the *adisokanag*, the Thunderers fought an unending battle with the Water Lions who lived under the Great Lakes. The Thunderbirds had both wisdom and great strength. In a Thunderbird story which Jones included in his 1861 *History of the Ojebway Indians*, a group of foolish men uncovered a Thunderbird nest with babies in it.<sup>27</sup> One of the men began to torment the babies, laughing that the mighty Thunderbirds he had heard so much about couldn't even defend themselves. His friends failed to stop the foolish man's dangerous play. The adult Thunderbirds returned suddenly and tore the man apart.<sup>28</sup> The Anishinabeg, who believed that names carried with them the power of the *Manitous* they represented, would not be surprised if someone with an Eagle name became a community leader who provided for and defended his people.

As a young adolescent, Jones demonstrated some signs of being blessed by the Thunderbirds. He became a remarkably good shot and developed a love of knowledge.<sup>29</sup> These qualities brought him respect from both the Anishinabe and non-Native settlers in Upper Canada. The Anishinabeg believed that the *Manitous* showed their favour by helping men hunt successfully.<sup>30</sup> Further, loving education gave Jones entrée into the

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<sup>26</sup> The bag is memorialized in a photograph taken of Jones holding it in Scotland in 1845. See Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 228.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians: With Especial Reference to their Conversion to Christianity* (London: A.W. Bennett and Bishopgate Without, 1861).

<sup>28</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians*, 86, 87.

<sup>29</sup> Vescey explains that hunting was so important to Anishinabe culture that it provided a central linguistic metaphor see *Traditional Ojibway Religion*, 10, 11; acknowledging that it is not best historical practice to accept a person's word about their own hunting prowess see Jones, *Life and Journals of Kah-Ke-Wa-Quo-Na-By* (Rev. Peter Jones,) *Wesleyan Missionary* (Toronto: Anson Green, At the Wesleyans Printing Establishment, King Street East, 1860), 34.

<sup>30</sup> Vescey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion and its Historical Changes* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1983), 76.

powerful social classes of Euroamerican society which valued shared knowledge of a body of literature.

After fourteen years of living with the River Credit community, Jones accompanied his father to live with the Iroquoian Loyalists at Grand River. At his new home, Jones underwent another naming ceremony in which an Anglican priest gave him the name Peter Jones. Jones later claimed that he felt no identification with the spiritual family of Christians or with Jesus as a result of this encounter.<sup>31</sup> Jones did however use his new English name when dealing with Europeans for the rest of his life. While he lived at Grand River, Jones studied the Christian religion as well as mathematics, geography, and literature with a Euroamerican teacher. When he was not learning at the school, Jones assisted with farm work.<sup>32</sup> For five years, Jones worked with his father on the farm. His extensive knowledge of farming would prove invaluable in the years to come when his Anishinabe community took up agriculture to supplement their economy.

At Grand River, Jones and his father lived with the Loyalist Mohawks who had fought for the British during the American Revolutionary War. In 1821, William Case, a presiding elder in charge of one of the circuits in Upper Canada, visited a Mississauga community at Burlington Bay. Shocked at the impoverished state of the people there, Case concluded that they needed help and that the Methodists could help them. At an annual conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in July of 1821, Case and four other Methodist ministers formed the “Committee on Indian Affairs” with the goal of bringing help to Natives who had been oppressed by settler society and culture.<sup>33</sup> Shortly

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<sup>31</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 48.

<sup>32</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 44.

<sup>33</sup> John Mclean, *James Evans, Inventor of the Syllabic System of the Cree Language* (Toronto: W. Briggs ; Montreal: C.W. Coates, 1890), 39.

thereafter, another Methodist preacher by the name of Alvin Torry told Case that he wanted to visit the Six Nations communities. Torry became the first Methodist Episcopal missionary to the Six Nations community of Mohawks at Grand River in Upper Canada.<sup>34</sup> In 1823, the same committee approved the preacher Seth Crawford to live with the Mohawks at Grand River. Although his early years with the community yielded few results, the tide turned in 1823 when Peter Jones and his sister Polly decided to attend a camp meeting that Torry had planned for the Euroamerican community at Ancaster near Grand River.

Camp meetings were outdoor religious services lasting three or four days. They started in the United States during the religious revivals of the eighteenth century and attracted huge popular followings.<sup>35</sup> The activities included hours of singing, sermons that featured drama and poetry rather than philosophy and theology, and all night, ecstatic prayer ceremonies. Many preachers would work together to lead the services at a single camp meeting. The purpose of the lengthy and intense arrangement was to encourage people to examine their lives for sin and consider their own relationship with God. Should they discover that their lives needed moral repair or that their relationship with God was less than they would like it to be they were able to call on many people to help them pray for change. Such requests were received with great excitement and seriousness. Participants would group around a person asking for support and pray out loud for God to help them. Meanwhile, a sermon might be continuing or a song would be

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<sup>34</sup> Methodists in the United States took the name Episcopal when John Wesley removed them from the control of the British Methodists by granting them Bishops with the authority to ordain ministers and other Bishops.

<sup>35</sup> On the importance of camp meetings see: George Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire: Radical Evangelicalism in British North America, 1775 – 1812* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 143 – 161; Russell E. Richey, *Early American Methodism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 21 – 32; William Westfall, "Order and Experience: Patterns of Religious Metaphor in Early Nineteenth Century Upper Canada", *Journal of Canadian Studies* 20:1 (1985), 15, 16.

sung. On the last day of the meeting, the baptism ceremony, which was a cleansing, dedicating, and naming ritual, was performed. People who had had especially powerful experiences, or those who had not been baptized before, could request baptism. A feast marked the end of the event.

Peter Jones described his experience at his first camp meeting in 1823. At the beginning, he related, he felt a growing sense of his own unworthiness, which led to sadness. Eventually, he lost control of his emotions and cried. Horrified at his own weakness, and not comforted by the knowledge that other camp meeting worshippers frequently cried at such events, he retreated into the woods, alone, to pray.<sup>36</sup> Later, he returned to the tent meeting having, as he put it, “found the Great Spirit... Before all was darkness, I could not see.” He explained,

but when Jesus spoke peace to my soul, all was light, old things were passed away, and all things became new. The people looked all so heavenly, the trees so beautiful, as though they would clap their hands and shout for joy.<sup>37</sup>

Unlike the usual procedure in which people would consider their lives in the company of other participants, Jones treated his encounter with the Methodist god like a vision quest. He went into the woods alone in a state of weakness (sadness) and received a vision.

Shortly after Jones’s experience a Mohawk chief at the Grand River, Thomas Davis, also became a Methodist and the leader of a group of Mohawk Methodists which Peter Jones joined. They held prayer meetings at Chief Davis’s house. The Methodist Mohawk spoke with excitement and hope about their plans for the future.<sup>38</sup> While

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<sup>36</sup> Jones, Peter. *The Sermon and Speeches of the Reverend Peter Jones, Alias, Kah-Ke-Wa-Quon-A-By, the converted Indian Chief, Delivered on the occasion of the Eighteenth Anniversary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, for the Leeds District; Held in Brunswick and Albion Street Chapels, Leeds.* (Leeds: H. Spink, 1831), 13.

<sup>37</sup> Jones, “Sermon and Speeches,” 13.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 53.

participating in worship and weekly class meetings with the Mohawk Methodists and his parents who had also joined the movement, Jones opened a store near Grand River. Despite the suffering that settlement was causing for other Anishinabe people, life in Upper Canada was comfortable for Jones.

By now, Jones had been away from the River Credit community for five years. Living with his father gave him many opportunities to study, make money, and learn technical skills. Jones also had ample opportunity to observe the growing imbalance in social influence between migratory Anishinabe communities and the sedentary agricultural Mohawk Methodists. A year after his spiritual experience Jones decided to return to his mother's community with the intention of giving them the tools which he believed would help them to achieve the Mohawk's level of stability.

In 1824, Jones traveled home to the River Credit. What he told the community sparked enough interest to motivate a delegation of representatives to travel back with him to Grand River. The area was not foreign to them. In past hard times, the community had camped on the grounds of Augustus Jones' farm.<sup>39</sup> The group remained at Grand River for several months. Their experience inspired confidence in the Methodist project and the group sent for the rest of the community to join them. The River Credit community spent the winter of 1825 at Grand River in the company of Mohawks and Methodists.<sup>40</sup> During their stay at Grand River, the adults received instruction in farming techniques and the children attended day school to learn to read in their own language, Anishna'bowen. The following spring, they returned to River Credit where the lieutenant governor had ordered the construction of twenty houses and a meeting house for them.

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<sup>39</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 44.

<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary: Missionaries as Agents of Change among the Indians of Southern Ontario, 1784- 1867* (Toronto, London and Buffalo: Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1975) 14 – 16.



Before they arrived, Jones and a group of the men from the community went ahead to clear land for fields. From the time that they arrived at the new settlement, the entire community pursued farming as well as hunting and fishing.

In his lifetime, Jones became famous among the Anishinabeg in Upper Canada and also among Upper Canada's settler population and in Great Britain. Two other Anishinabe Methodists also became popular in Upper Canada. Peter Jacobs, an Anishinabe man from the Rice Lake community northwest of Coburg, first heard a Methodist sermon about the *Gitche Manitou* from William Case, the head of the Methodist Episcopal connection in Upper Canada, in 1824.<sup>41</sup> Born two years later than Peter Jones, Jacobs himself had experienced less hardship in the turbulent first years of European settlement. Jacobs, known as Pahtahsega by his community, was familiar with European culture, having been raised in a community frequented by Euroamerican hunters and fishers.<sup>42</sup> However, in his own account of his conversion, Jacobs claimed that, like many others in his community, he had at first believed that the God that the Methodist preacher William Case spoke of, and the power and protection he offered, was available only to Euroamericans. Jacobs' belief that spiritual beings offered blessings only to particular ethnic groups fit with the prophecy of separate creators for separate races known in his community. However, as Jacobs explained in a brief autobiography, he had abandoned his ethnic assumptions some time later when he saw Peter Jones praying in his own language, *Anishna'bemowen*.<sup>43</sup> Whether Jacobs ever actually

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<sup>41</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 15.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Jacobs, *Journal of the Reverend Peter Jacobs, Indian Wesleyan missionary, from Rice Lake to the Hudson's Bay territory, and Returning: commencing May, 1852: with a brief account of his life, and a short history of the Wesleyan mission in that country*. (New York, published for the author, 1857), 7.

<sup>43</sup> Because Methodists believed that each person who became a Methodist did so because of a personal experience with God, they believed each faith story could give everyone insight into the nature and actions

believed in cosmological ethnic distinctions or simply cited them to communicate a distinction between the two teachings to an audience well versed in Nativist teaching, his positioning of Methodism as a post - Nativist development suggests two conclusions; first, that Jacobs understood and rejected the Nativists' isolationist position; and second, that his audiences would want to know how his message related to Nativism. Like Peter Jones, Peter Jacobs believed that non-Anishinabe practices could safely be used to benefit his own community. Unlike some Nativists, Jacobs did not believe that the European's God was a different entity from the Anishinabeg's *Gitche Manitou*, or Great Spirit.

A third Anishinabe Methodist leader, John Sunday, also known as Shawundais (Sultry Heat) was born in New York in 1795, two years after the Nativist defeat at Fallen Timbers. Sunday's family had remained in the United States only briefly. When he was still a child, they had moved to live with an Anishinabe community that spent summers at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River near Kingston in Upper Canada.<sup>44</sup> While still in New York, Sunday's family had experienced the colonial border raids, land theft, and settler violence that constituted the North West War for the Ohio territory (1785 – 1795).<sup>45</sup> When Sunday encouraged Anishinabe people to embrace Methodism, as he did throughout his adult life, he did so, not from a naïve trust in the good intentions of European settlers, but rather with a vivid understanding learned from his own family history of what European settlement could entail.

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of God. Such narratives were told and retold so frequently that they obtained a predictable formula, for Jacobs' account of his interest in Methodism see, Peter Jacobs, *Journal of the Reverend Peter Jacobs*, 4.

<sup>44</sup> G.S. French, "Shah-Wun-Dais", Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, 2000, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/index.html>.

<sup>45</sup> David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson, eds. *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001).

Jones was from the River Credit community, Jacobs from Rice Lake and Sunday from Kingston. All three men were from the “Lake” communities. The Anishinabe Methodist movement started in the Lake communities and traveled to the Back communities later in the 1820s and early 1830s only after leaders from the Back communities visited the Methodist villages to evaluate the content and effects of the new practices. Although they did not receive formal education at a Methodist seminary, all of the new preachers were recognized as “exhorters” and had official positions in the Methodist church.<sup>46</sup>

*The Message: Renaissance for a Crisis*

Very quickly, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders constructed Methodism as a cure for the disease of colonialism, specifically as a remedy for harms that their communities were currently suffering and had experienced in the recent past. Poverty, caused by the decline of the fur trade and the settler’s over-hunting and over-fishing, married with waves of epidemics, had created an era of unprecedented death in Anishinabe communities. The Jesuits’ teachings about eternal damnation in the afterlife, which had been reinforced by the southern Prophets’ predictions that people who behaved badly in life would be tortured after death, tormented many Anishinabeg. When the Anishinabe Methodist leaders began preaching, they themselves reinforced these messages about danger in the afterlife by telling audiences that they needed to become Methodist to avoid punishment after death. In an 1833 sermon, the reverend John Sunday said “are we sleep yet in sin, not to think about religion of Jesus Christ? Oh! if we are, we are danger to go

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<sup>46</sup> *The Christian Guardian* noted that among Upper Canada’s Methodists the Anishinabe communities of Grape Island, River Credit and Rice Lake were considered seminaries of a kind, see *The Christian Guardian* April 24, 1830, 181 quoted in Hope MacLean *The Hidden Agenda: Methodist Attitudes to the Ojibwa and the Development of Indian Schooling in Upper Canada 1821 - 1860* M.A. Thesis U of T Department of Educational Theory, 1978, 36, 43.

into hell. We do not know when our death would come upon us. Death will not say to us, Now I come, be ready now. Death will not wait for us. My brothers and sisters, now is the time to be prepared to go into heaven.”<sup>47</sup>

The teachings that Jones, Sunday, and Jacobs carried with them to their communities cannot be reduced to a creed of beliefs. They proposed that people begin an exclusive relationship with the *Gitche Manitou*. This included learning what behaviours *Gitche Manitou* demanded: that is identifying oneself as a “servant” of *Gitche Manitou*, and learning the songs and prayers necessary to call on Him. People who did these two things would be saved and have peace. Addressing a congregation in England in 1831, Peter Jones explained what it meant to become Methodist: “repentance towards God, deserting all our crooked ways, and giving our whole hearts to Jesus Christ, being determined to serve him all the days of our lives.”<sup>48</sup> What Jones and the others meant by giving their hearts to Jesus and serving him is suggested by what they first taught communities about the new practice. When describing his missionary travels, John Sunday repeatedly mentioned teaching communities to memorize the Ten Commandments and teaching them the words and tunes to hymns.<sup>49</sup> Anishinabe Methodists believed, and taught others to believe that the spirit *Gitche Manitou* could and would give them blessings if they followed his teachings and became his servants. The teachings they focused on were the Ten Commandments which are largely social in

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<sup>47</sup> Carroll, *Case and his Contemporaries*, vol 4, 89.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Jones, “The Sermon and Speeches of The Rev. Peter Jones, Alias, Kah-Ke-Wa-Quon-A-By, the converted Indian Chief, Delivered on the Occasion of the Eighteenth Anniversary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, for the Leeds District; Held in Brunswick and Albion Chapels, Leeds” September 25 – 27, 1831, W.D. Jordan Special Collections, Queen’s University Library.

<sup>49</sup> John Sunday, “John Sunday’s Journal,” October 2, 1833, *The Christian Guardian*, 186; “Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist E. Church in Canada,” February 29 1832, *The Christian Guardian*, 61; William Case traveled with three unnamed First Nations leaders and brought hymns, the Ten Commandments as well as Anishinabe translations of the Gospels of John and Matthew and the Apostle’s Creed, William Case, “Mr. Case’s Report” July 17, 1833, *The Christian Guardian*, 142.

nature. The procedure was analogous to gaining a guardian spirit. The spirit required certain practices and bestowed particular blessings. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders' messages explained to people what the *Gitche Manitou*'s blessings were and what behaviours he required in his dependants.

Further, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders believed that the words of Jesus had special power and that by reciting them and talking about them power could be conveyed to listeners. Just as reciting the *adisokanag* attracted *Manitous* and gave people a chance to be near them, Peter Jones believed that simply speaking aloud the stories of the Bible and Jesus' teachings in the Bible would give power to listeners. In fact, according to Jones, the only way for people to start a relationship with *Gitche Manitou* was to hear someone reciting stories about him. Jones said that ministers could make people Methodists by "preaching him [Jesus], and by declaring all the truth, all the words, that he left here on earth."<sup>50</sup> The words of the hymns and the Ten Commandments were the tools that Anishinabe Methodists encouraged followers to use to secure a working relationship with the *Gitche Manitou*: they were not abstract principles.

Not all of the Anishinabe Methodists' spiritual teachings cohered with Anishinabe traditions. The most significant difference between the two concerned ethics, although the depth of the conflict between the two groups' perspectives was not apparent in the early years of the movement. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders followed an ethical system which they believed emanated from the will of the *Gitche Manitou*. In contrast, in the Anishinabe tradition ethical standards were set by a combination of the needs of the community and the sometimes contradictory demands of particular *Manitous*.<sup>51</sup> A

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<sup>50</sup> Peter Jones, "Sermon and Speeches."

<sup>51</sup> see Chapter 1 of this thesis pp 18 – 27.

Methodist person could imagine a virtuous act which was condemned by their community whereas in Anishinabe tradition virtue derived in large part from community approval. The convergence between the Methodist Anishinabeg's pursuit of community prosperity and the pre-existing Anishinabe pursuit of *Bimadziwin* obscured this philosophical fissure in the early years of the movement.<sup>52</sup>

The Methodist belief in abstract forms of good and evil gave rise to the belief that these two forces were oppositional and could not co-exist peaceably in a single individual. As we have seen, many Anishinabeg believed quite the opposite. They believed good and evil inclinations always co-existed in people and were relative in degree to the amount of power that the person possessed.<sup>53</sup> The Methodist ethical system inclined its adherents to view the human moral condition in a binary fashion. In a sermon entitled "The Perfect Man", Peter Jones celebrated "fixedness" of heart and temper as a characteristic religious virtue saying of a virtuous religious person, "He is not a saint today and a devil tomorrow."<sup>54</sup> In stark contrast, the most powerful religious people in the Anishinabe tradition were feared because they could, and might, use their spiritual power to harm others.<sup>55</sup> By equating religious power with ethical standing, Anishinabe Methodists would one day change social relations in Anishinabe villages by devaluing the role of community in regulating virtue.

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<sup>52</sup> The one early incident in which an Anishinabe Methodist leader attempted to override the community's ethical authority ended with the Methodist leader submitting to the authority of the council. See discussion in this chapter, 35, 36.

<sup>53</sup> On the indivisibility of good and evil in persons see A. Irving Hallowell "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and Worldview" in *Contributions to Anthropology: Selected Papers of A. Irving Hallowell* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976) 359 and 377.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Jones, sermon, "The Perfect Man" Box 2, File 1, "Peter Jones Collection" V.U.A.

<sup>55</sup> Mary Black Rogers, "Ojibwa Power Belief System" in Fogelson and Adams ed. *The Anthropology of Power* (New York: Academic Press, 1977.)

The message that the Anishinabe preachers related offered a way forward and also explained the massive social change and colonial persecution that the Anishinabeg were suffering and offered a salve to their grief for family members and anxiety about the afterlife. Combining cosmology and events from their own past, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders explained the history of First Nations in North America as a three part continuum with eras distinguished by changing material, moral and spiritual conditions. First, they identified a time before any European influence on their society, when the First Nations lived in freedom, enjoyed a predictably adequate level of prosperity, and displayed admirable moral characteristics. According to the Anishinabe Methodist leaders of the 1820s, the arrival of non-Natives with the fur trade ushered in an age of moral decline among the First Nations, marked by excessive alcohol use, disease, and deprivation. Men like John Sunday, Peter Jones, and Peter Jacobs presented themselves as heralds of the third era in which the powerful blessings of the Great Spirit would restore the First Nations' lost health and wealth and improve them in character and happiness until they ultimately transcended even their pre-contact spiritual state of prosperity, happiness, and virtue. Moreover, people who received the Great Spirit's blessing would go to a happy, safe afterlife when they died.

Because the Anishinabe Methodist leaders called for reform in the Anishinabe community it might appear that they, like the non-Native missionaries, believed that Anishinabe culture was less moral or advanced than British culture. However, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders respected their people's earliest traditions but believed that in recent years their communities had declined because of colonial influence. Many of the critiques that the Anishinabe Methodist leaders leveled at their own people were

aimed at actions and trends from this recent past. This is not to suggest that the Methodist Anishinabeg celebrated traditional Anishinabe spiritual practices. They did not, rejecting many as ineffectual and tolerating others as necessary stop gap measures. Past traditions that the Methodist leaders perceived as evil, such as honouring *Manitou* other than the Great Spirit, they tried to eliminate and replace. More benign traditions however, such as thanksgiving celebrations, painted pole dances, tobacco exchange, and gift giving could be kept and sometimes turned to the service of the Methodist project.<sup>56</sup> The Reverend Peter Jones argued that Anishinabe spiritual beliefs and practices did not contain the totality of spiritual truth and were, therefore, open to expansion. Because the Anishinabe spiritual teachings did not contain the figure of Jesus they could not provide the happiness that Jesus, as the *Gitche Manitou*, could give.<sup>57</sup> Jones, using a term common among evangelical Christians, identified what he called the “light of nature” as the source of pre-Methodist Anishinabe virtue. He believed that a morally perfect God created the universe and, therefore, moral truth could be discerned through careful observation of the natural world.<sup>58</sup> According to Jones, before contact with the Methodists this light of nature had taught the Anishinabeg how to live well.<sup>59</sup>

Although not all Anishinabe people in the nineteenth century would have agreed that Jesus’s teachings were true, they likely would have agreed with the proposition that Anishinabe teachings were not complete or exclusively and uniquely true. As was discussed in Chapter 1, elders related *adisokanag*, or *Manitou* stories, to train young

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<sup>56</sup> New interpretations of older ceremonies will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Jones, “On the Work of God” (sermon) Box 2, File 1 “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.; Peter Jones “The Work of the Lord in Christ” Box 2, File 1, “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Jones, sermon “The Work of the Lord in Christ,” preached 1848-1855; Peter Jones, sermon “The Work of God,” preached 1844, both in Box 2, File 1 “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

<sup>59</sup> Peter Jones, “On the Works of God” 1844, Box 2, File 1, “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.



people in history and ethics but made no effort to ensure that each child came to the same conclusion about the meaning or significance of the stories each time it was told. The *djessakid* in the shaking tent conveyed the spirits' answers to people's questions about particular situations, but the spirits came when called and did not lay down foundational, universal truths. Even the *Mide* priests, who placed a far greater emphasis on a single body of knowledge than had dreamers or shaking tent practitioners, did not deny the spiritual powers of non *Mide* who interpreted dreams or healed with herbs.<sup>60</sup> The Anishinabe Methodist leaders' introduction of new teachings appropriate to a particular time in history would not have seemed odd. However, their insistence that these teachings could, in themselves, answer all questions would have been startling.

Despite limitations of the first era, Peter Jones stated that Anishinabe elders had told him that their "forefathers informed them that previously to the arrival of the white man in America the Indians were far more virtuous than they are now."<sup>61</sup> Accepting this assessment, Jones attributed the First Nations' decline from a state of virtue to the behaviour of the fur traders. In his *History of the Ojebway Nation*, Peter Jones identified the relationship between fur traders and First Nations people as the source of all of the material woes suffered by North America's First Nations, from the Seminoles in Florida to the Plains First Nations in the American west, to the Anishinabeg in Upper Canada.<sup>62</sup> According to Jones, the first Europeans in North America were "destitute of moral

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<sup>60</sup> Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin* (Madison, Milwaukee, and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 44, 45.

<sup>61</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 165.

<sup>62</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 169, 170; Jones's belief that the fur traders degraded First Nations' cultures likely derived from the larger missionary discourse of the early nineteenth century in which First Nations people were seen as noble. See C.L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians in Canada and the United States, 1820 – 1900* (Albuquerque and Alberta: University of New Mexico and University of Calgary Press, 2000,) 31 – 61.

principles” and therefore were inclined to “introduce vice instead of virtue.”<sup>63</sup> Jones identified five destructive legacies from the fur trade. He argued that alcohol, liberally distributed by the fur traders, had destroyed First Nations people’s sense of responsibility and made them act immorally. Second, he argued that learning the French and English languages had enabled First Nations people to dishonour the *Gitche Manitou* by taking his name in vain.<sup>64</sup> Although he excused the swearing as unintentional, in most cases Jones presented drunkenness as a nearly unstoppable force of cultural destruction, leading to violence against children and many deaths.

Three other ill effects that Jones and the other Anishinabe Methodist leaders attributed to the fur trade were disease, land loss, and the practice of deception. Disease damaged the First Nations people with death, land loss led to violence and material deprivation, and the practice of deception broke down First Nations’ people’s sense of personal wholeness and integrity.<sup>65</sup> Jones described a situation in which European traders would demand to know of a passing trapper if he had any furs with him: “In order to save some skins for the one to whom he is indebted, [the First Nations hunter] will conceal part of them, and then say he has no more. Their furs are often taken from them by force, or very poor remuneration paid for them.”<sup>66</sup> In Jones’s estimation, this habit of protecting wealth in cases of unequal physical strength created a pattern of dishonesty in First Nations’ people’s dealings with Europeans and with each other that had been unknown before.

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<sup>63</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 165.

<sup>64</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 167, 168.

<sup>65</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 168, 169.

<sup>66</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 168, 169.

The most far reaching consequences of the fur trade that set up the conditions for First Nations' suffering and declining virtue in the second era of history, according to the Anishinabe Methodist leaders, were epidemics of disease and loss of land. Though Jones did not elaborate on diseases, he noted that whole communities had been destroyed, leaving "miserable survivors" behind.<sup>67</sup> Jones identified "The loss of [the First Nations'] country and game, for a trifling remuneration" as an event that "the poor Indian feels keenly" provoking them to lust for revenge.<sup>68</sup> Jones made no distinction between First Nations groups who lost their land through treaty processes or through wars. He noted that the Seminoles "struggling in vain against the power of the United States" could not get their land back. And though Jones observed that such struggles are doomed to failure due to the power differential between colonial powers and First Nations, he did not condemn the Seminoles for making the effort. Instead, he noted that "ruin and degradation will be the result of these unequal struggles, and the poor Indians will be obliged to lay down the tomahawk with shame and disgrace."<sup>69</sup> Such disgrace, combined with alcoholism, defensive dishonesty, and mourning left the First Nations, in Jones's view, in a state of unprecedented moral and spiritual decay.

When Jones and his colleagues preached about the moral failings of members of their own communities, it was not to condemn their own cultures, rather it was to call their audience's minds back to a time when their forefathers were "far more virtuous than they are now" and to point the way toward a new era in which both their virtue and their happiness would return. However, the way forward was not to return to the past. Despite observing that he had experienced more kindness and hospitality among communities

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<sup>67</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 168.

<sup>68</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 169.

<sup>69</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 169.

who had the least contact with Europeans, Jones concluded his thoughts in his *History of the Ojebway* with a wish that what remained of the game would disappear entirely. He noted that this was a surprising position for a First Nations person to take but explained that he believed that the hunt was already depleted to the point that it could not sustain Anishinabe life and that any attempt to continue it would only bring suffering. Only a wholesale change from hunting to farming could help the Anishinabeg in the new era of *Gitche Manitou*.<sup>70</sup> In Jones's mind, pragmatism determined the limits of *Gitche Manitou*'s prosperity blessing. He did not tell people to pray for the return of the animals, but to learn to farm.

Because Anishinabe *Manitous* almost always blessed their dependents with skills that helped them to make a living, early nineteenth century Anishinabeg living in Upper Canada would not have been surprised to learn that there was a *Manitou* who could give people the skills and materials to become good farmers. In the hands of the Anishinabe Methodist leaders, the *Gitche Manitou* filled that role and was indistinguishable in character and attributes from the non-Native Christian's Lord or Jehovah. However, all of the Anishinabe Methodist leaders mapped the Methodist God onto the already existing Anishinabe cosmology. According to the Anishinabe Methodist leaders, Jehovah was *Gitche Manitou*, a figure in Anishinabe cosmology whose nature had been misunderstood by the Anishinabeg until the arrival of the Methodists. Methodist Anishinabe preachers like Peter Jones and Peter Jacobs explained that the Anishinabeg had known about the existence of the head *Manitou* before the Methodists' arrival but that they had never asked him for help because they believed that he felt no concern for human well-being.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 172.

<sup>71</sup>Jacobs, *Journal*, p 3.

Before the arrival of Methodism, Jones said, the Anishinabeg believed that the Great Spirit did not concern himself with their daily problems. But when he had his experience at the camp meeting, Jones realized that the Great Spirit was not only interested in the Anishinabeg but that he also cared for them.<sup>72</sup> Jones grafted the person of Jesus into Anishinabeg cosmology by identifying him as the Great Spirit's son.<sup>73</sup> The Great Spirit's "care" for the Anishinabeg was more than a feeling. It was the foundation of the entire Anishinabe Methodist movement because it was the source of the spiritual power that would provide material benefits to the Anishinabeg and thereby equalize relations between them and the settlers.

Within the worldview of Anishinabe Methodism, *Gitche Manitou's* position as the most powerful *Manitou*, in combination with his wish to benefit his Anishinabe followers, altered the relationship between Anishinabe people and the more dangerous *Manitous* of their cosmology. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders did not cease to believe that the old *Manitous* existed. Rather, they believed that the Great Spirit could control all of the others. For example, in 1831, while visiting Mahjedusk, a community on the eastern side of Lake Superior, the Anishinabe Methodist preacher John Sunday asked the local leader, Chief John Assance of Mahjedusk, to pray for him as he crossed Lake Superior. Sunday observed "there is danger in crossing the Lake, not only peril of water, but there is plenty of wickedness in the world."<sup>74</sup> Sunday's reference might sound like unfocussed fear except that the Anishinabeg believed that the most powerful of the water *Manitous* lived in Lake Superior. The Water Lynx *Manitou* was responsible for

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<sup>72</sup> Jones, *History*, 83 ; Jones, "Sermon and Speeches," 19.

<sup>73</sup> Jones, *History*, 166.

<sup>74</sup> John Sunday "John Sunday's Journal of a Missionary Tour," 29 October, 1831, *The Christian Guardian*, 1.

controlling game animals and controlling who would enjoy safe passage across the Lakes. The Water Lynx demanded proper signs of respect from each person who traveled by water. Should someone omit such observances the Anishinabeg expected the *Matche Manitou* to dole out punishment as a matter of course, killing humans, even children, for sport.<sup>75</sup> John Sunday asked Chief Assance to pray for him because he believed that the *Manitou* might wish to do him harm.

Though logical from a Methodist perspective, Sunday's request for Assance's prayer to protect him from the Water Lynx demonstrates a new model for Anishinabe relations with powerful *Manitous*. Rather than respectfully offering gifts to the Water Lynx in return for mercy, Sunday turned to the more powerful *Gitche Manitou* and asked him to overwhelm the power of the Water Lynx. In doing so, Sunday deviated from the established Anishinabe way of dealing with potentially dangerous spirits. Rather than negotiating relationships with a pantheon of *Manitous*, the Anishinabe Methodists narrowed their focus to a relationship with one *Manitou* who they hoped could protect them from harm. Setting the *Manitous* against one another laid the groundwork for dividing the *Manitous* between good and evil, helpful and harmful.

#### *Anishinabe Leadership*

Although the content of their message was in many ways new, the way that the Anishinabe Methodist leaders positioned themselves in their communities and the ways that they led, followed patterns from the *oten* era. Anishinabe Methodist leaders like Jones, Jacobs, and Sunday gained standing with communities across the territory of Upper Canada by fulfilling community expectations of leadership. Just as the existence of the *Mide* story and the Nativist movements created the conditions in which cultural

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<sup>75</sup> Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 64; Vecsey, *Traditional Ojibwa Religion*, 74.

change through spiritual revelation was anticipated and familiar, Anishinabe leadership credentials marked the leaders of the Methodist movement as people who could be uniquely trusted to guide their people on untested roads. By adhering to Anishinabe leadership roles, Jones and his colleagues marked their reform movement as culturally moderate, unlike Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa's. Although they proposed many changes, they were not opposed to Anishinabe culture itself in the way that many non-Native missionaries were. Rather, they largely respected their community's ethical standards. The leadership qualities that the Anishinabe leaders demonstrated were the ability to persuade others through oratory, the ability to secure resources for the community, and an unflinching eagerness to share those resources. One of the primary roles that the Anishinabe Methodist leaders adopted was as a liaison between their communities and non-Natives, both in Upper Canada and in England. Fierce defenders of Anishinabe land and treaty rights, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders employed their oratory to argue for specific causes as well as to create an image of the Anishinabe people that would engender respect, admiration and obligation in Europeans and Euroamericans. Finally, unlike many Nativist leaders in the south, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders did not attempt to undermine traditional social structures. They deferred to the authority of the head chiefs of their communities.

Before the era of large villages, when Anishinabe communities organized themselves as small, isolated kin groups, family chiefs, or *ogimas*, provided leadership in the sense that their suggestions generally gained agreement among the community.<sup>76</sup>

Unlike the European system of using a combination of courts and specially designated

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<sup>76</sup> For a concise but substantial assessment of Anishinabe leadership practices see Theresa Schenck, "The Voice of the Crane Echoes Afar" *The Sociopolitical Organization of the Lake Superior Ojibwa, 1640 – 1855* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1997), 71 – 85.

law enforcement people to maintain each community's preferred social arrangement, the Anishinabeg relied on diffuse social pressure to maintain peace, and on consensus to organize group actions. Leaders in the villages had particular responsibilities which related directly to their own abilities. Historian Theresa Schenck says that local chiefs needed to demonstrate great "personal strength" and success in hunting.<sup>77</sup> More than any other person in the community, the chief was expected to demonstrate the qualities that resulted from having a deep relationship with a powerful *Manitou*. People who showed their spiritual power by demonstrating hunting prowess or by military courage and success in battles could displace individuals whose family connections would make them the most obvious choice for chief.<sup>78</sup> Traveling also brought status. Having accomplished a long journey was as admirable as were courageous feats of war.<sup>79</sup> However, such attributes garnered no respect unless combined with profound material generosity. Acquiring wealth and power through hunting and relations with the *Manitous* created the conditions of Anishinabe leadership only to the extent that the prosperous individual shared their wealth with their community.

The Anishinabe Methodists leaders' relations with the Europeans and the *Gitché Manitou*, travel experience, and access to wealth, combined with their ethical commitment to *Bimadziwin*, recommended them for the positions. Many of the Anishinabe Methodist leaders were chiefs in their communities, although not usually the head chief. The community council, composed of the elder men and young warriors,

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<sup>77</sup> Historian Theresa Schenck relates an occasion in 1832 in which a northern Michigan Anishinabe community followed the youngest son of a chief because he was brave, strong and a good hunter. Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 75; see also: Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 73, 74.

<sup>78</sup> Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 81; also Slight, *Indian Researches*, 71.

<sup>79</sup> Johann Georg Kohl, *Kitchi Gami: Life Among the Lake Superior Ojibway* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985), 121.



presided over the decision of who would become chief, and who could represent the community to outside groups. French fur traders preferred to arrange set prices with one member of a community rather than dealing with each hunter individually. This led to the creation of a new kind of chief.<sup>80</sup> In a similar way, leaders rose up in Anishinabe communities who were not designated the civil, or head chief (*ogima*), yet still represented the rest in treaty negotiations and, later, in ensuring that the colonial government lived up to the terms of treaties. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders achieved apparently spontaneous authority because they had knowledge about how to negotiate with the European settlers.

During his adult life, the first Anishinabe Methodist preacher, Peter Jones, worked under the direction and authority of the River Credit's civil chiefs or *ogimaa*. First, John Cameron and then James Ajetance, who had gained the community's respect as warriors during the War of 1812, and, later, Joseph Sawyer presided over the Anishinabe Methodist leader's campaign to increase cultural ties with the settlers.<sup>81</sup> Chief Sawyer, not Jones, hosted council meetings when both he and Jones were in attendance.<sup>82</sup> In 1825, Jones wrote a letter to James Givens, the British government's Indian Agent, to the River Credit community. Jones began the letter, "By the request of Capt. John [Cameron] and others of the Missesssagues in those parts, I take the liberty to write a few

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<sup>80</sup> Lise C. Hansen, "Chiefs and Principal Men: A Question of Leadership in Treaty Negotiations," *Anthropologica* 29: 1 (1987), 39 – 60.

<sup>81</sup> At an 1834 council meeting between the River Credit community and the Chief Shingwaukonse, Shingwaukonse gave his closing wampum to Chief Joseph Sawyer, despite the fact that the meeting was on the topic of Methodism and many preachers were present, "From the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for Jan. 1834" April 2, 1834, 82; Chief Joseph Sawyer of the River Credit, rather than any of the Anishinabe Methodist preachers, chaired the important 1845 Grand Council to discuss removal to Georgian Bay, "The Indians of Canada West," August 27, 1845, *The Christian Guardian*, 179.

<sup>82</sup> In 1828 both Peter Jones and Joseph Sawyer were made chiefs at Credit River, however Sawyer was made the head chief, Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 104; Sawyer chairs a major grand council, Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 173.

lines to you...”<sup>83</sup> Here, Jones was the *ogima*’s subordinate. In 1831, when Jones traveled to England, Sawyer and his council conveyed to him the authority to speak on behalf of the community by giving him a letter to present to the Queen.<sup>84</sup>

On one occasion in 1836, Peter Jones did attempt to subvert community ethics. Jones proposed that the River Credit council award itself the right to beat children who misbehaved. His motion was rejected by half of the council for two reasons: first, because Jones had overstepped the purview of his expertise based authority; and second, because corporal punishment was anathema to Anishinabe parents. Jones was forced to recant.<sup>85</sup> Jones maintained his position of leadership, not because no one could or would question his authority, but because he kept his behaviour within the accepted mores of his community.

The Anishinabe Methodist leaders also gained stature because the Anishinabeg equated travelers’ experiences with wisdom, bravery, and honour. In the early years of the Anishinabe Methodist movement, Peter Jones traveled between communities along the northern shore of Lake Ontario, through the Trent/Severn waterway to Georgian Bay, and down to the northeastern portion of the Thames River. In the 1830s, Jones and the other preachers extended the range of their travels. The new circuit included Sault St. Marie and fur trading centres in the northwest. The traveling preachers took detailed notes about the communities they visited, recording both local leaders’ policies regarding the new settlers and the potential of each community to support future immigration.<sup>86</sup> On

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<sup>83</sup> As quoted in Donald Smith *Sacred Feathers*, 66.

<sup>84</sup> Joseph Sawyer, Thomas Smith, Sam Wahbahneeb, Peter Olds, Moses Pahdequong, George Kezhegoo “We the Chiefs at River Credit” February 3, 1831, Box 3, file 10, “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

<sup>85</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 156, 157.

<sup>86</sup> Peter Jacobs provided the most detailed environmental information in his journals which read at times like a surveyor’s report, *Journal of the Reverend Peter Jacobs*.

a trip to northern Ontario, for example, Jacobs noted that the land between Fort William and Lac La Pluie exhibited poor soils and condemned the “dismal... howling desert” of a place for lacking hardwood as well as fertile soil.<sup>87</sup> Such surveillance established Jacobs as a man who had achieved powerful knowledge from a dangerous journey. This was information that could be deployed directly against the claims of government land surveyors attempting to justify land theft.

Anishinabe community members between Lakes Ontario and Erie accessed reports about the Anishinabe Methodist preachers’ travels through sermons when the preachers visited them but also in *The Christian Guardian*, the weekly newspaper of the Methodist church in Upper Canada.<sup>88</sup> The Methodist weekly also reprinted entire transcripts of their sermons.<sup>89</sup> As Anishinabe historian, Theresa Schenck, noted, a reputation for wisdom helped to establish people in positions of leadership in Anishinabe society.<sup>90</sup> Sermons provided the Anishinabe preachers with a vehicle to demonstrate spiritual and political wisdom while their visits with far flung Anishinabe councils gave them a pool of knowledge that was very valuable to their communities in the post 1820 settler period.

On a material level the Anishinabe Methodist leaders were able to bring valuable resources into their communities both through their accomplishments as hunters and

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<sup>87</sup> Jacobs, *Journal*, 26.

<sup>88</sup> A creation of the Methodist Episcopal, *The Christian Guardian*, appeared weekly starting in 1829 and reported both politics and religious news, offering extensive coverage of both the reform movement in Upper Canada and the missionization project, see, Neil Semple *The Lord’s Dominion*, 76; we know that Anishinabe people read the newspaper because the editor of the *Christian Guardian* reported receiving a request for newspaper for the River Credit school from an Anishinabe subscriber named George Henry, Editor, December 18, 1830, *The Christian Guardian*, 19; one month later Peter Jones, also noted that he used the *Christian Guardian* to hear news about other communities, Editor, 22 January, 1831 *Christian Guardian*, 1.

<sup>89</sup> J. Scott “To the Editor of the Christian Guardian” August 19, 1835, *The Christian Guardian*, 162.

<sup>90</sup> Schenck, *Voice of the Crane*, 75.

fishers, and also through relationships with European settlers. Two of the Anishinabe Methodist leaders kept journals in which they recorded their hunting successes. Peter Jones's diaries record that he committed whole days while he was home to fishing for his community or "for my people" as he put it. Jones reported that on one expedition the entire group caught forty salmon in one day.<sup>91</sup> Jones assiduously recorded his own hunting successes in his journal, taking evident pride in his ability to bring home a deer, when none of the others in his party could do the same.<sup>92</sup> The Anishinabe preacher Peter Jacobs also noted his hunting adventures in his diaries, preferring hunting stories above all else. Tales of wild goose chases, bears killed with unlikely tools, and places where rabbits abounded in mythical numbers punctuate Jacobs' narrative.<sup>93</sup> Although many of his stories focus on courage, Jacobs also evaluated his own abilities in comparison to that of his colleagues noting that he is correctly renowned for his marksmanship.<sup>94</sup> A further distinction Jacobs identified would suggest to his Anishinabe audiences that his abilities derived from the blessing of one of the underwater *Manitous*: "I always had ten or fifteen fish but the others never had more than five," he once noted. Jacobs followed this observation with a disavowal of his bird hunting and rabbit snaring abilities.<sup>95</sup> Given the Anishinabe taboo on identifying guardians directly, evidence of blessing in one area of life, or even one kind of hunting, could suggest to the community the identity and therefore the power of a person's *Manitou* helper. If Jacobs were trying to identify himself with the dangerous and powerful underwater *Manitou*, his assessment of his hunting past would do just that for an Anishinabe audience.

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<sup>91</sup> Jones, *Journal*, 37.

<sup>92</sup> Jones, *Journal*, 34.

<sup>93</sup> Jacobs *Journal*, 56; 61; 65.

<sup>94</sup> Jacobs, *Journal*, 67.

<sup>95</sup> Jacobs, *Journal*, 81.

The earliest Anishinabe Methodist preachers came from relatively wealthy and prominent families which prepared them to handle one of the distinguishing responsibilities of their new social positions, access to hard currency. In a province where much business was done in the barter system, cash gave people a tremendous level of social and economic flexibility.<sup>96</sup> The original source of the wealth of the Anishinabe preacher Peter Jacobs is unknown, but before he became a traveling preacher he (like Jones) owned and operated a store.<sup>97</sup> All of the Anishinabe Methodist leaders, once they became traveling preachers, took part in fundraising duties for the Missionary Society. While the money they were given went to the Missionary Society, they themselves received salaries from the Missionary Society and could apply to it for funds for specific projects.

The Anishinabe Methodist leaders and their followers began to create new communities by combining the traveling *otens* and establishing them on agricultural land. Because the new Anishinabe communities were farming communities they required cash to meet their substantial startup needs. In 1828, Peter Jones traveled to the city to buy and collect the yokes of oxen that would break the earth at the River Credit village.<sup>98</sup> He likely got the money from the office of Indian Affairs who used the First Nation's annuity money to subsidize the construction of the villages. By bringing the oxen to the village, Jones established himself as a leader who could provide the esoteric fundamentals required in the new Anishinabe villages. Before the River Credit community moved to the site of their future village on the Credit Flats, Jones organized

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<sup>96</sup> Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: the Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784 – 1870*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 30 - 42; see also A. B. McCullough, *Money and Exchange in Canada to 1900* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1984).

<sup>97</sup> Jacobs, *Journal*, 5.

<sup>98</sup> Jones, *Life and Journals*, 23.

the community work group that went to clear the brush.<sup>99</sup> Jones's experience as a farm worker at the Grand River equipped him to take the lead in the Credit community's farming efforts. Later, when the community turned their minds to building houses, Jones met the Indian Office official to discuss the government's role in the building project thereby demonstrating his willingness to use his current relationships with outsiders to strengthen his community.<sup>100</sup>

Once Peter Jones, his brother John Jones, Peter Jacobs, and others attended Methodist schools they joined the chiefs and councils in writing letters to remind the colonial officials of their obligations. In the treaties, the British government had promised to provide the services of blacksmiths, doctors, school teachers, and farming instructors. As was shown in the previous chapter, before the advent of Anishinabe Methodism, civil chiefs like River Credit's Quinepeno, or local fur traders like David Ramsey, wrote letters to inform the British government of shortfalls in their duties.<sup>101</sup> The Anishinabe Methodist leaders also took up this task. In 1829, for example, Peter Jones wrote to Sir John Colborne to request that money be taken out of the Credit River's annuity to pay a doctor who had visited the community.<sup>102</sup>

Not only did the Anishinabe Methodist leaders convey messages between the Anishinabe and the British, they also brought British gifts into their home communities. For example, when the Methodist minister Peter Jacobs moved to Fort Frances, near

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<sup>99</sup> Jones, *Life and Journals*, 62.

<sup>100</sup> Jones, *Life and Journals*, 62.

<sup>101</sup> Quinipeno's Address at River Credit September 6, 1806, RG 10: A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor a) Upper Canada, Civil Control, 1796-1816, 1841-1843 reel C-10 996, N.A.C. ; Donald Smith "The Dispossession of the Mississauga Indians: A Missing Chapter in the Early History of Upper Canada" *Ontario History* 73:2 (1981) 35.

<sup>102</sup> Jones to Colborne, November 18, 1829, RG 10A1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor vol 5 pp 2312 , 2313, N.A.C.

present day Thunder Bay, he wrote to George Simpson, the Hudson Bay Company governor, requesting that as soon as he arrived at his final destination of the Munidoo Rapids that three buildings be put up. Jacobs wanted a mission house for his own use, a school house, and a store. Jacobs elaborated on his petition by including the exact measurements and furnishings of the house he wanted for himself – 32 feet long, 22 feet wide with a 12 foot roof. The rooms, Jacobs suggested, should be filled with six chairs, three tables, two beds and an assortment of tools.<sup>103</sup> Because both the Methodist Church and the British colonial office wanted the Anishinabe to stop hunting and start farming, and because both groups believed that such a vast cultural change could only be effected through the education of children as well as adults, whenever an Anishinabe community expressed a willingness to accept Methodism they received a school house, church, and blacksmith in short order. As the harbingers of those facilities, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders likely accrued social status in their local communities which extended to neighbouring communities when word of the buildings reached them.

Had the Anishinabe Methodist preachers only succeeded in capturing animals and securing currency and supplies without sharing the benefits of that success with their communities their achievements would have garnered them little respect among the Anishinabeg. They only mentioned their hunting successes in the context of community events like religious festivals or organized village work parties. Despite their growing renown, the Anishinabe preachers followed the received obligation of male hunters of providing food for their local community. However, because of their relations with European settlers, men like Peter Jones and Peter Jacobs had access to new forms of

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<sup>103</sup> Peter Jacobs at Fort Frances, to Sir George Simpson, dated July 2, 1849, “Letters and Reports” box 16, MG 17 C 1 Methodist Missionary Society, N.A.C.

potential community wealth. Historians have been quick to accuse colonial era chiefs of misusing their relationships with settlers for personal gain.<sup>104</sup> Often, chiefs who established alliances with European settlers became the first in their communities to live in European style houses and to own livestock which can encourage accusations of self interest. However, most chiefs and leaders who forged relations with Europeans did so precisely because they hoped to achieve material wealth. Their Anishinabe community members also wanted to ensure their own wealth, an essential element of *Bimadziwin*. As advocates for incorporating European teachings and technology into Anishinabe culture, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders wanted to show their communities that cooperation with the Europeans had not cost them the blessings of the *Manitous* but rather had secured them more. Far from hiding their wealth, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders publicized it, always crediting their change in fortunes to following Christianity. When asked in 1834 if his own community was truly happier after becoming Christian, Yellowhead, a Methodist chief at Lake Simcoe, replied that he was happy because his community now had houses, a school building, a workshop, a mill, a chapel, and its members had achieved sobriety.<sup>105</sup> Although he mentioned one behavioural difference, abstinence, clearly Yellowhead believed that the way to convince other chiefs of his own “happiness,” and thereby to persuade them to imitate him, was to identify the extent of the wealth his community now possessed.

The Anishinabe Methodist leaders also acted to protect their communities from the settlers’ land-hunger. In order to protect their independent land base, the Anishinabe

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<sup>104</sup> Lise C. Hansen, “Chiefs and Principal Men: A Question of Leadership in Treaty Negotiations,” *Anthropologica* 29 (1987) 44 – 46.

<sup>105</sup> Benjamin Slight, *Indian Researches; or, facts concerning the North American Indians; including Notices of their present state of Improvement, in their Social, Civil and Religious Condition; with Hints for their future Advancement* (Montreal: printed for the author, J.E.L. Miller 1844) 78.



Methodist leaders took on the role of treaty negotiators. At a council meeting in 1828, John Sunday, who was then the Methodist minister and chief of the Belleville Anishinabeg, told the colonial government's Indian agent, James Givens, that his community had not ceded a particular island in the Bay of Quinte which Europeans had settled on in the meantime.<sup>106</sup> Sunday noted that his community wanted "the land allotted to us" because they had "disposed of what we formerly owned to the government." Further, Sunday pointed out that his community wanted another piece of land called Mississauga Point which had been ceded to another Non-Anishinabe person named Smith.<sup>107</sup> To show that he spoke not only for himself, but for his community as well, Sunday produced a tool which, he explained, had been given to him to show that he had been chosen to speak for his community on that matter.<sup>108</sup> The government official and the other Anishinabe people present at the meeting, including the chief of Rice Lake George Paudash, recognized Sunday's right to speak for the community on that matter.<sup>109</sup>

While attempting to hold the government to their treaty promises, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders ran a simultaneous campaign to ensure that the British continue providing annual presents. In 1825, when Peter Jones had only just started his career as a Methodist Anishinabe leader, he wrote to the Indian Agent James Givens, politely but firmly requesting the precise date on which the Indian Department intended to distribute the presents that year.<sup>110</sup> During the War of 1812, the size and value of the gifts that the British had given to the Anishinabeg had increased dramatically, reflecting the debt that

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<sup>106</sup>Council of Rice Lake, River la Credit and others, 18 February 1828, RG 10 A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor. d) General Administration Records, 1787-1836, Vol 791, reel C 13 499, N.A.C.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* Council of Rice Lake

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.* Council of Rice Lake

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.* Council of Rice Lake

<sup>110</sup> Jones to Givins June 17, 1825 quoted in Donald Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 66.

the British owed to the Anishinabeg for supporting them in the war. However, after the war, the British government had objected to continuing the presents and reduced them by four fifths of their monetary value.<sup>111</sup> The British government also employed the strategy of setting up logistical obstacles to the Anishinabe people who wished to collect their presents in order to minimize the number of people who would be able to attend the present distribution. As demonstrated in the letter from Peter Jones, the Indian Department failed to identify the precise date of the present distribution, leaving groups of Natives waiting for days or weeks.<sup>112</sup> Sometimes, the Indian agents planned to have the distribution at an awkward location, like Manitoulin Island, in order to reduce the number of people who could attend.<sup>113</sup>

The Anishinabe Methodist leaders realized that a cultural change was needed to address the underlying problems in the Anishinabe/British relationship. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders attempted to attune British citizens in Upper Canada and England to the meaning and significance of their obligations to the Anishinabeg.<sup>114</sup> They also attempted to replace an image of First Nations people as noble savages doomed to extinction because of their incompatibility with modernity with an image of First Nations people as industrious, intelligent, and culturally adaptable.

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<sup>111</sup> Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 148.

<sup>112</sup> In 1827 Chief Joseph Garneau complained that he arrived at Drummond Island to collect presents and the British representatives were not there to meet him. September 17, 1827, RG 10 A 3 Records of the Military, 1677-1857, b) Military Secretary's Office, Montreal, 1816-1827, vol 497, N.A.C.; in 1832 Peter Jones observed that a group of Anishinabeg from Green Bay north of Lake Superior were living at Penetanguishene because they were waiting for their presents, Peter Jones, "For the Christian Guardian, River Credit Mission" August 1, 1832, *The Christian Guardian*, 150.

<sup>113</sup> Moogkokesku, "The Canadian Red Men" May 30, 1838, *The Christian Guardian*, 117; "Minutes of a Council held at the Port of York" in Carey to Givins, January 25, 1828, RG 10 A1 D Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor vol. 791, p 7174, NAC.

<sup>114</sup> On the Romantic ideas about the Anishinabeg held by Upper Canada's leaders see L.F.S. Upton, "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8:4 (1973), 51 -54.

Just as the Anishinabe preachers traveled throughout their homeland preaching to the First Nations communities, Peter Jones traveled a parallel circuit across the ocean. Jones traveled to England where he itinerated around a circuit of Christian charity groups teaching eager audiences about the character of Anishinabe people and admonishing them to improve their relationship with their “Indian Brothers” in Canada. The Anishinabe preachers also targeted Euroamerican settlers in Upper Canada for re-education and moral reform. Anishinabe messages directed toward non-Native audiences emphasized both the adaptability of the Anishinabeg and called for British justice and aid. The frequent pairing of these topics was a strategy on the part of the Anishinabe leaders to convince the British that the Anishinabe were part of the modern world, and therefore capable of benefiting from European forms of knowledge and deserving of modern day justice.

The Anishinabe leaders promoted an image of the “adaptable Anishinabe” in order to combat the stereotype of the static, doomed Anishinabe. The Romantic idea of First Nations people as members of a dwindling past, and of the Anishinabeg in particular as noble but doomed, was well-known in Upper Canada.<sup>115</sup> In the 1830s that notion took on a more sinister and political function when revived by conservative settlers headed by Sir Francis Bond Head. Bond Head argued that, because the Anishinabeg could not survive in the new community of Upper Canada, efforts at educating them were both useless and disrespectful. Likely taking his ideas from Andrew Jackson’s removal policy in the United States, Bond Head asserted that all of the Anishinabe communities in Upper Canada should be relocated to Manitoulin Island in order to preserve the dignity of the

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<sup>115</sup> Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 75; Theodore Binnema and Kevin Hutchings, “The Emigrant and the Noble Savage”.

last generation of their people.<sup>116</sup> When speaking to non-Native audiences, the Anishinabe leaders left no room for believing that Anishinabe people lived in a romantic world distant from the political and ethical realities of modern European life. Instead, they presented them as cosmopolitan, interested people, capable of learning and using European knowledge systems, technology and philosophy.

In his *The History of the Ojibwe Indians* published in 1861, Jones included a chapter titled “Potential of the Indian for Education.” Following on a series of chapters that condemned the British for harming the character and wealth of the Anishinabe people, Jones’s chapter on how First Nations people could benefit from British education offered absolution to his reformist European audience. Beyond dropping a spark on the tinder pile of British guilt, Jones’s chapter offered primary evidence to support the utility of First Nations’ education programmes. Jones gave examples of First Nations people so eager for education that they taught themselves to read or write without actual English teachers and with the most rudimentary equipment.

Anishinabe communities and their chiefs also worked to convince the British that Native people lived in the modern age. In 1831, when Peter Jones traveled in England he presented a letter of introduction to the Queen which announced that:

We chiefs and principle men, of the Messissaga Indians residing at the River Credit... appoint our brother and Chief Kahkewaquonaby, alias Peter Jones... to go to our Fathers and Brothers, across the Great Waters in England, for the purpose of soliciting aid for our Civil and Religious improvement.<sup>117</sup>

The introduction’s focus on a desire for change in Anishinabe life conveyed a very different image of the Anishinabeg’s role in the life of Upper Canada than romantic

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<sup>116</sup> For a full treatment of this cynical argument and scheme see Binnema and Hutchings “The Emigrant and the Noble Savage,” 115 – 138.

<sup>117</sup> Joseph Sawyer, Thomas Smith, Sam Wahbahneeb, Peter Olds, Moses Pahdequong, George Kezhegoo “We the Chiefs at River Credit” February 3, 1831, Box 3, file 10, “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

clichés suggested. Far from defensively avoiding contact with perceived hostile interlopers, the Anishinabeg were a modern people of action, eager to become participants in the new world of Upper Canada. How much the message was actually inspired by eagerness or canny pragmatism is impossible to tell, but its aim at its intended audience was sure and true.

During his 1831 trip, the Reverend Peter Jones conveyed his two part message consistently and widely. Every church, missionary society, and women's auxiliary he visited were taught that Anishinabe people were different from the British, not because of their inherent traits in the culture or biology, but because of differing historical circumstances. Further, Jones informed each community he visited about how they personally could level the historical playing field by contributing money to help the Anishinabeg build the physical and intellectual infrastructure of modern life.

Jones expressed the thesis of his English tour most bluntly to the London Religious Tract Society. Jones opened his address in his own language, pointedly asserting both the significance and the contemporary functionality of the language. The chance that his demonstration of his own language might have motivated the audience to see him as exotic was cut short when he announced that the meeting of the London Tract Society was like an Anishinabe council: "You are all going in one path, all in so good order, and all so very attentive."<sup>118</sup> Jones's polite introduction left no room for the audience to indulge in fantasies that Anishinabe politics were a matter of force or violence. Rather, Jones suggested, they were quiet and reasoned. The real difference between the communities that caused the difference in prosperity between them was

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<sup>118</sup> Peter Jones, "London Religious Tract Society – Peter Jones's Speech" July 9, 1831 *Christian Guardian*, 138.

religion and education. “Your religion has benefited you,” Jones told his English listeners.<sup>119</sup> That same education which the Anishinabeg were receiving, in part through the pamphlets of the London Tract Society, had resulted in the building of fifteen schools at which 450 children were getting lessons and learning English. “Religion,” as Jones spoke of it here, conflated the western traditions of Christian teaching and secular education.<sup>120</sup> Jones later told a British Dorcas Society meeting that 1200 Anishinabe had become Christians and that missions stations and school buildings had been built across the territory.<sup>121</sup>

To further emphasize the eagerness of the Anishinabe people for European learning Jones twice recounted an anecdote about literacy in a remote community. The details of the story vary in the two tellings, but the essence remains similar. Jones and a group of Methodist promoters had visited a community to talk to them about the Methodist movement. After the visit, one member of their company, identified in one account as Chichinaw or Big-Canoe, remained. The community was so excited by what they had heard that they wanted Big Canoe to teach them how to write and read in English. Unfortunately, Big Canoe had very limited learning himself, and no supplies with which to teach. When Jones was told the story later, Big Canoe reported that he had collected birch bark from trees and used charcoal to teach the community members how to write the English alphabet.<sup>122</sup> Both the Wesleyan Missionary Society and the London

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<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, 138.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, 138.

<sup>121</sup> Reprinted from *Christian Advocate and Journal*, 1 April, 1831, author unknown, “John Street Dorcas Society” April 16, 1831, *The Christian Guardian*, 89.

<sup>122</sup> Peter Jones, “London Religious Tract Society – Peter Jones’s Speech” July 9, 1838, *The Christian Guardian*, 138; “Speech Delivered in Albion Street Chapel, Sept. the 26<sup>th</sup>” from, “The sermon and speeches of the Rev. Peter Jones, alias Kah-ke-wa- quon-a-by, the converted Indian chief : delivered on the occasion of the eighteenth anniversary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, for the Leeds

Tract Society were reassured that the money that they sent to Canada to support schools and churches would be used well.

Although Jones kept his addresses to the church societies clear of overt political criticism, he did not spare the Queen of England's feelings on the matter of First Nations' land rights. On a trip in 1838, he presented Queen Victoria with a wampum beaded with white and black. He explained to her that the white symbolized the Anishinabeg's love for her while the black denoted sorrow because their lands in Upper Canada were "insecure."<sup>123</sup> He also gave the Queen a petition asking for a meaningful assurance that the land that the Anishinabe had reserved for themselves in treaties, and that they lived on, would not be taken away from them or from their descendants. Jones believed that his duties in England involved both influencing British culture and direct political advocacy for the Anishinabe.

The eager anticipation with which many Anishinabe communities awaited Jones's travel reports suggests deep concern over how much Jones had been able to inspire his English audiences to proper behaviour. Jones's report of his reception in 1832 at River Credit, as well as at the communities of Lake Simcoe, Coldwater, and Penetanguishene to the west, noted that the communities were particularly pleased to hear that he had spoken with the King.<sup>124</sup> The Anishinabe Methodist leaders' attempts to influence British policy were common knowledge and were supported by several Anishinabe communities in Upper Canada.

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District : held in Brunswick and Albion Street Chapels, Leeds, September the 25th, 26th, and 27th, 1831" CIHM, 23.

<sup>123</sup> Peter Jones, "Rev. Peter Jones – Audience with the Queen – Departure from England" November 14, 1838, *Christian Guardian*, 5.

<sup>124</sup> Peter Jones, "Letter from P. Jones at the River Credit Mission" July 24, 1832 *Christian Guardian*, 150.

At home in Upper Canada, the Anishinabe Methodist preacher John Sunday also attempted to influence non-Native residents through personal correspondence and newspaper publications. In the late 1830s, the Anishinabe community at Coldwater near Lake Simcoe was pressured by the colonial government to give up established houses and farms in order to let non-Native people live on the land. At the behest of the Coldwater Chiefs, Sunday wrote to a British acquaintance in England who had influence with the government. Sunday assured the chiefs that the English did not know about the problems. He then took the precautionary measure of writing to an English associate to explain the situation and allowed his letter to be reprinted for local circulation.<sup>125</sup> In 1831, Peter Jones went so far as to express his condemnation of the American removal policy in a personal letter to the *New England Christian Herald*.<sup>126</sup> Jones encouraged the readers of the *Herald* to continue to support First Nations people in their fight for rights by again offering a story about the adaptability of the Anishinabeg. Seven years ago, Jones related, the Anishinabe had been “drunk and destitute.” Now 1000 of their number had become Methodist, stopped drinking alcohol, built farms, owned cattle, and were happy. By telling the non-Native New Englanders that their fight for Native rights could be rewarded by cultural, spiritual, and economic improvements among First Nations communities, Jones revealed his understanding both of what might prevent non-Natives from adopting Native causes and of what success looked like for him under the conditions of colonialism.

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<sup>125</sup> John Sunday, “Extract of a Letter From the Rev John Sunday to Sir Augustus D’Este” August 19, 1840, *The Christian Guardian*, 167.

<sup>126</sup> Peter Jones, “Letter from P. Jones” January 1, 1831, reprinted in *The Christian Guardian* from the *New England Christian Herald*, 26.



Jones, Sunday, and Jacobs spread a message that sounded to a European audience, like unremarkable Methodism. They emphasized the importance of repentance, of serving God, and of following the Ten Commandments. When speaking to non-Natives, their words sounded familiar to anyone who had heard a reformer calling for people to repent of their indifference to the indigenous people victimized by Britain's colonial empire. To the Anishinabeg, the preachers sounded like prophets and acted like virtuous community leaders. Like prophets, they offered a revitalization of old, valued beliefs through new forms of worship and protocols of behaviour. Like proper Anishinabe leaders, they showed evidence of *Manitou's* blessings and deferred to the will of the community and *ogimaa*. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders taught that the revitalization would bring about prosperity through social reforms and farming which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Evangelism, Alliances and Prosperity: The Anishinabe Methodist Movement on the Ground**

The Anishinabe Methodist movement was undeniably a reformist movement, working to change Anishinabe society in the 1820s in Upper Canada. In the words of historian of the Seneca, Anthony Wallace, it was “a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture.”<sup>1</sup> However, the change that the Anishinabe Methodist leaders pursued was not quite analogous to the change that their European colleagues believed to be in process. Further, the attitude that both the Anishinabe Methodist leaders and their followers had toward the changes they were making, mixed genuine excitement with reluctant pragmatism. Where European reformers saw all aspects of the Anishinabe Methodist movement as steps in an evolution from a lower state of social development to a more organized, better state, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders saw the change as a mixture of welcome spiritual blessings and unwelcome, but necessary, compromises.

The parts of the Anishinabe Methodist movement that leaders celebrated in their sermons were the hope of renewed prosperity offered to followers of *Gitche Manitou*, and a focus on deepening peace and communication between First Nations communities. The Anishinabe leaders told their audiences that people who adopted Methodism and took up a relationship with the *Gitche Manitou* could experience both of these blessings. In the next chapter it will be shown that community members highly valued the affective benefits of comfort, hope, renewed strength, and forgiveness for sins that they experienced through Methodism. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders’ evangelistic

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony F.C. Wallace, “Revitalization Movements” *American Anthropologist* 58:2 (Apr., 1956), 265.

message was, however, combined with a social reform campaign. The social change promoted by the preachers, and the government agents who cooperated with them, was a shift from communities organized by traveling kinship-based *otens* to multiple kinship groups living in permanent farming villages. Once in those villages, the Anishinabe Methodist preachers and their European supporters encouraged residents to adopt practices that they believed were necessary to achieve prosperity through the villages such as male-led farming, European-style education, European-style domesticity for women, and cleanliness as disease prevention. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders did not describe these new practices in the laudatory language which they used to announce their spiritual message about the new blessings of *Gitche Manitou*. They were not inherently good cultural advancements but, rather, necessary adjustments to a new era. They did not suggest that the new techniques were superior to, or more advanced than, older Anishinabe social forms. They did, however, see them as necessary steps toward achieving *Bimadziwin* under the condition of colonial rule.

By presenting their movement as a revitalization necessitated by non-Native contamination of their culture, Peter Jones, John Sunday, and their colleagues stripped the social changes that they promoted of cultural triumphalism. They also drew on the sense of injustice and anger that community members felt on behalf of their First Nations allies in the south, because of their own history with fur traders, and, more recently, settlers. Angry and dispirited by forty years of abuse from the non-Native settlers, the Upper Canada Anishinabeg were ready to hear a message that laid responsibility at the doorstep of their neighbours. However, by emphasizing the benefits of individuals' choice to adopt the *Gitche Manitou* and his rules, the movement offered hope because it

gave individual Anishinabe people the ability to do something on their own to change their fortunes. Further, in the personal universe of the Anishinabeg in which suffering always resulted from the actions of a person, the Methodist's explanation of their current condition as being the result of both systemic causes and personal vice, rang true.<sup>2</sup> Finally, by incorporating Christian spirit power and non-Native allies into their movement, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders employed a strategy that they had not yet seen defeated as they seen had the more racially polarized militaristic movements in the south.

According to the Anishinabe preachers, *Gitche Manitou* wanted to give the Anishinabeg prosperity and health. Farming and education programmes were the vehicles through which *Gitche Manitou* would improve their fortunes. The First Nations preachers shaped their movement to respond to a pressing question first raised by the southern Nativist prophets. Neolin and Tenskwatawa had offered cosmological explanations for disparities in experience and condition between First Nations people and non-Natives. According to Neolin, the two groups had been created by different *Manitous* and had been given different blessings of power and rituals to follow. One group could not usefully employ the rituals or wealth of another race. Tenskwatawa had gone further, suggesting that an evil *Manitou* had created the Europeans, who he called "the whites." The Anishinabe Methodists declared that the same *Manitou* created both Anishinabe people and the non-Natives and that he wished to bless them both equally. They frequently reiterated this central position with the declaration that the *Gitche*

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<sup>2</sup> A. I. Hallowell "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View" in *Contributions to Anthropology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 381, 182.

*Manitou* was “no respecter of persons.”<sup>3</sup> They explained that until now the Anishinabeg had been forced to make do with less powerful *Manitous* because the Europeans who had been told to bring the *Gitche Manitou*’s teachings and technology to them, had killed Jesus and hoarded their knowledge.<sup>4</sup> As they presented it, the farming skills and European education that the Anishinabe Methodist leaders provided were the long withheld birthright of the Anishinabeg.

Anishinabe Methodist leaders carried their new teaching throughout First Nations’ communities and to the traveling *otens* in Upper Canada. None of the communities seemed surprised by their visitor’s words or actions and most, including those in the Back communities, seemed excited and pleased to have been visited. Over the course of their travels, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders, who were themselves from the Lake communities, went progressively further into the territory of the Back Anishinabeg. The two groups had differed in the past over how to respond to settlers in the Ohio territory, with the Lake Anishinabeg being less willing to offer resistance to settlers. In the Back communities, Anishinabe Methodist leaders foregrounded the role of “peace” in their movement and emphasized how Methodism would result in the radicals’ cherished vision of pan-Native cooperation. This emphasis on peace, combined with the preachers’ news that many, if not most, of the Lake Anishinabeg were pursuing the new strategy, convinced many of the western *otens* to join, albeit with more pragmatic prose than their

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Jones to Eliza Jones, April 9, 1833 Box 3, File 5, “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.; McNally, *Ojibwa Singers*, 98.

<sup>4</sup> A popular story in Upper Canada in the early nineteenth century held that Jesus did not come to North America and give his power to the First Nations people personally because he was killed before he could, “The Indian Woman’s Regret” Box 1, File 5 “Anecdote Book” V.U.A.; Jones reproached non-Native audiences for being slow in bringing the Jesus teaching to his community, Peter Jones, *The Sermon and Speeches of the Reverend Peter Jones, Alias, Kah-Ke-Wa-Quon-A-By, the converted Indian Chief, Delivered on the occasion of the Eighteenth Anniversary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, for the Leeds District; Held in Brunswick and Albion Street Chapels, Leeds.* (Leeds: H. Spink, 1831.)

eastern allies. The new Methodist prophets' teachings were more than promises of a prosperity blessing to be dropped down from heaven. They offered detailed instructions about how to achieve the blessing through new forms of work, education, health and gender in the new villages. This chapter will conclude with an explanation of the prosperity programme.

### *The Evangelistic Campaign*

The Anishinabe Methodist movement really began in 1825 when members of the Credit River community who had left the Grand River set up a farming village on their traditional summer fishing lands. The land needed to be clear of European squatters before their own village could proceed. Although land was legally reserved for the River Credit community according to the terms of their treaty, non-Native fishers had taken over the area to catch salmon in the River Credit.<sup>5</sup> The village building project, and the evacuation of the non-Native settlers, was carried out by the colonial government.<sup>6</sup> Once this village was established, the movement's leaders took their message to communities between Lake Ontario and Lake Huron who also began practicing Methodist customs. Generally, an Anishinabe preacher would visit some members or leaders of a community and invite them to join the movement.

The events surrounding the River Crediters's visit to Grand River and return home became the stock narrative which Anishinabe leaders used to convince other Anishinabe communities to join the movement. As the story was later retold, Methodist spiritual teaching, farming instruction, education, government co-operation, and village

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<sup>5</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 15.

<sup>6</sup> George F. Playter, *The History of Methodism in Canada: With an Account of the rise and Progress of the Work of God Among the Canadian Indian Tribes, and Occasional Notices of the Civil Affairs of the Province* (Toronto: Anson Green at the Wesleyan Printing Establishment, 1862), 252.

construction all combined to promise community revival. When other communities discussed Methodism with missionaries they often referred to having heard the story of Grand River or of the River Credit.

The story of the creation of the River Credit community was reenacted in other parts of the colony. In early 1826, William Case, the General Superintendent of Methodist Indian Missions, told Peter Jones that he wanted him to take the message of Methodism to the Anishinabe communities at the Bay of Quinte on the north shore of Lake Ontario.<sup>7</sup> Jones's procedure with the Belleville community was typical of the Anishinabe Methodist leaders' approach to other communities. Because it was the hunting season Jones had to search to find individual camps of people from the community. In February of 1826, he first came upon a camp of two women and five children to whom he related the Grand River story.<sup>8</sup> On the following day, Jones encountered a camp with men and boys in it. Following Case's directions, Jones asked them if they would be willing to send a boy to Grand River to receive instruction.<sup>9</sup> A few days later twelve young men from the Belleville community attended a meeting with Jones at which they "sang and prayed together."<sup>10</sup> Next, the Belleville community members attended several meetings arranged by the Methodist church that included people from other communities and then sent two young men to go to school at Grand River. At the first public meeting, forty Belleville community members announced that they would stop drinking alcohol.<sup>11</sup> By April of 1826, 53 members of the Belleville

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Jones, *Life and Journals of Kah-Ke-Wa-Quo-Na-By (Rev. Peter Jones,) Wesleyan Missionary*. (Toronto: Anson Green, At the Wesleyans Printing Establishment, King Street East, 1860), 50.

<sup>8</sup> Jones, *Life and Journals*, 53.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, *Life and Journals*, 55.

<sup>10</sup> Jones, *Life and Journals*, 57.

<sup>11</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 15.

community had undergone the Methodist ritual of baptism and two members of the community were given official status within the Methodist church as “exhorters.”<sup>12</sup>

Within a year of Jones’s initial visit, the entire Belleville community of 150 people had adopted Methodism and established a farming village on Grape Island in the Bay of Quinte.<sup>13</sup> The land was leased with money that Peter Jones had raised working with William Case together with funds from the New England Company.<sup>14</sup> The willingness of the community members to attend meetings with Peter Jones, and then to travel to attend meetings with the Methodist congregations, suggests that the Methodist’s message was expected and welcome. The Bay of Quinte movement contained the elements of education, alliance building, spiritual revitalization, and ethical and social reform. Once some members of the community became baptized and aligned themselves officially with the Methodist church, the community’s character changed. It is not clear how many members of the original Belleville community did not move to Grape Island but the immigration of 40 new members, and fifteen families into the Grape Island community changed its composition and suggests a new form of social arrangement.<sup>15</sup> No longer organizing themselves by kinship relations, the Grape Island community reflected its members’ allegiance to some aspect of the Methodist movement.

People from Rice Lake, the next community whose members adopted Methodism, actively pursued the movement’s teachings. When news of the Bay of Quinte group’s

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<sup>12</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 15; Jones *Life and Journals*, p 59.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Ripmeester, and Brian Osborne, “It Is Scarcely to Be Believed . . .”: The Mississauga Indians and the Grape Island Mission, 1826–1836,” *Canadian Geographer* 39:2 (1995), 157 – 168; Brian Osborne and Michael Ripmeester, “Kingston, Bedford, Grape Island, Alnwick: The Odyssey of the Kingston Mississauga.” *Historic Kingston*, 1995, 43, 84 – 112.

<sup>14</sup> Neil Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996) 163.

<sup>15</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 16; see also William Case “Conversion and Improvement of the Missisauagah Indians Around Kingston and Bay Quinty” September 19, 1838, *Christian Guardian*, 182.



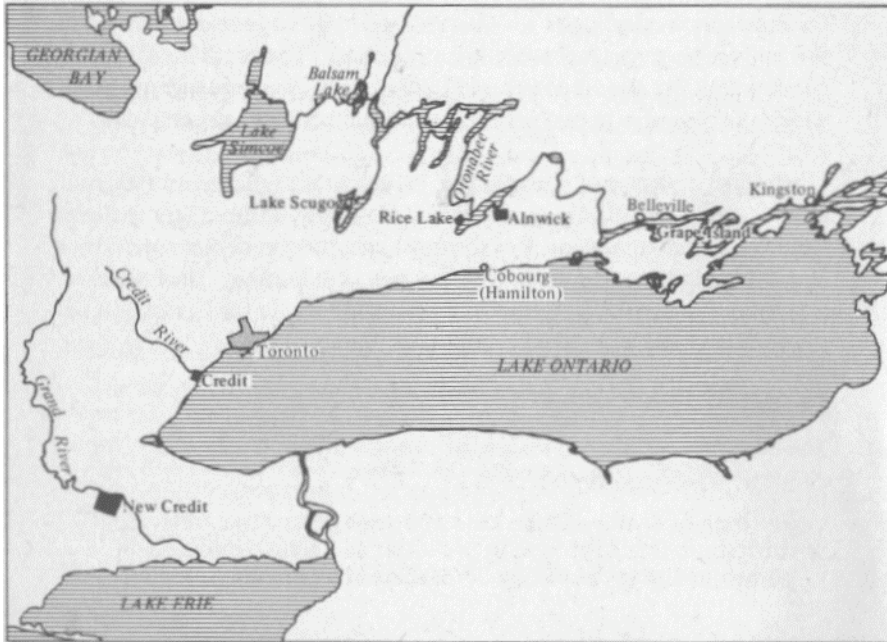
experience reached the Anishinabe community at Rice Lake in 1826, they sent twenty community members to attend an annual meeting of the Methodist conference in Hamilton. At that meeting, all twenty representatives from Rice Lake experienced emotional responses to the sermons that they heard. When leaving the meeting, the Rice Lake representatives performed a ceremony of their own invention at which they threw away their medicine bags and condemned alcohol.<sup>16</sup> Reminiscent of Tecumseh's condemnation of medicine bags, this spontaneous action may indicate that they already associated the Methodist reforms with Nativist revitalization.<sup>17</sup> Within the year, one hundred members of the Rice Lake community had been baptized including the chief, George Paudash. The speed and scale of the Rice Lake engagement with Methodism could suggest a top down strategic political decision. However, such an interpretation would require dismissing the Rice Lake community members' public declarations of commitment to Methodist teachings as theatre. Further, members of the Rice Lake community continued to attend religious services after their village was established and the government had provided support. Chief Paudash later gave public lectures or "exhortations" on the virtue and truth of Methodism.<sup>18</sup> It is likely that, given the variety of tenets within the Anishinabe Methodist movement, members of the Rice Lake community were attracted to Methodism for its coherence with their own practices, its moderate promotion of revitalization, and its promise of material growth. For a sense of the geography of the movement at this point see Map 2.

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<sup>16</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 16.

<sup>17</sup> R. David Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership*, (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), 80.

<sup>18</sup> Jones, *Life and Journals*, 87.



Map 2: Early Anishinabe Methodist Villages

Map taken from Elizabeth Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary: Missionaries as Agents of Change Among the Indians of Southern Ontario, 1784 – 1867* (Toronto: P. Marin Associates, 1975), 30.

At nearly the same time that members of the Bay of Quinte community were starting their association with Methodism, Anishinabe people living in the three communities near Lake Simcoe were also exposed to the new teachings. On this occasion, a connection between the Methodist's message and the colonial government's agenda was presented explicitly. In August of 1826, the Lake Simcoe communities gathered at Holland Landing, between Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay, along with other nations from the north west, to receive their presents. The Reverend Peter Jones took the opportunity to address the gathered six hundred people on the topic of the Methodist movement.<sup>19</sup> Colonel James Givens, an Indian Agent present at the distribution, spoke after Jones attesting to the truth of Jones's words and encouraging the audience to think about them.<sup>20</sup> One chief promised to leave some boys behind to be educated. Another Chief, Chief Yellowhead, stated that his community wanted to form an agricultural settlement and become Christians.<sup>21</sup>

It is tempting to say that the explicit approval from a government agent for the Methodist scheme motivated the assembled communities to consider Methodism part of the price of peace with, and support from, the non-Native settlers. However, in 1826, the year of Jones's address at the present distribution at Holland Landing, the Lieutenant Governor of the province, Peregrine Maitland, announced that First Nations people who attended Methodist camp meetings would lose their presents.<sup>22</sup> Concerned that the First Nations communities were aligning themselves with a group sympathetic to American

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<sup>19</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 17.

<sup>20</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 17.

<sup>21</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 17.

<sup>22</sup> Jones, *Life and Journals*, 75; Jane Errington has described a rise of anti-American sentiment in Upper Canada at this time, Elizabeth Jane Errington *The Lion, The Eagle and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology*. (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1987), 173 - 181 .

interests, Maitland attempted to discourage them from participating in the camp meetings. Peter Jones and many present at the Holland Landing meeting would have been very aware that the colonial government would punish Natives for participating in common Methodist practices.

In 1828, two years after the present distribution speech, Peter Jones traveled further west to the Saugeen territory on the southern shore of Georgian Bay. Here, the community offered another response to Jones's message. At first, the visit progressed like many others. Preceded by two Native Methodist preachers, Jones was able to arrange two meetings with the community's members. After spending only one day "explaining religion to them," the community members responded with visible emotion and loud exclamations of their need of the Methodist god.<sup>23</sup> So far these responses echoed other emotional responses in other communities. The new concept was articulated by a chief named Keketoonce, who expressed his desire to join the movement by saying first, "I have heard from afar that all my brethren around me are turning to the service of the Great Spirit, and forsaking their old religion. I do not wish to stand alone. Brothers! I will arise and follow them." Keketoonce continued, "I will be a Christian. It may be while I stretch out my hands to the Great Spirit for the blessings which my Christian brethren enjoy, I may receive a handful of the same before I die."<sup>24</sup> According to Keketoonce, the cumulative effect of other Anishinabe communities taking on the Methodist cause isolated those who refused that path. Clearly, Keketoonce believed that more Anishinabeg were adopting Methodism than were rejecting it. Keketoonce undoubtedly hoped to receive the blessings of agricultural support and village

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<sup>23</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 19.

<sup>24</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man t Missionary*, 19.

developments enjoyed by the other Anishinabe Methodist communities. Further, his words suggest that he wanted to act in concert with other Anishinabe communities, possibly drawing on the Nativist strategy of inter-village alliances. However, one must not forget the ecstatic response of Keketoonce's fellow community members which shows at the least a shared public experience of religious performance.

Despite their support for the villages at River Credit and Grape Island, beginning in 1826, the colonial government began to question the potential of Anishinabe people to be incorporated into British society.<sup>25</sup> The matter had immediate material significance for the Anishinabeg because those who argued that the Anishinabeg could not be made farmers went on to suggest that people who could not be farmers should not own good farm land regardless of treaty rights. Non-Native Methodist preachers and Anishinabe leaders who allied themselves with the Methodists vigorously defended the Anishinabeg's ability to adopt European cultural practices *in order to* defend the Anishinabeg's claims to land, annuities, teachers, houses, and schools.<sup>26</sup>

This debate did not, in the end, stop the government from supporting the farming villages. After five years of Methodist preachers and their followers establishing First Nations villages largely on their own terms, the new Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, Sir John Colborne, decided to expand his government's assimilationist activities toward First Nations communities.<sup>27</sup> For the most part the behaviours that the colonial government encouraged, coincided with those preferred by the Methodist Anishinabeg

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<sup>25</sup> John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984,) 82; Theodore Binnema, "The Emigrant and the Noble Savage: Sir Francis Bond Head's Romantic Approach to Aboriginal Policy in Upper Canada, 1836 – 1838," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39:1 (2005) 115 – 138.

<sup>26</sup> Binnema, "The Emigrant and the Noble Savage."

<sup>27</sup> Alan Wilson, "Colborne, John," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, University of Toronto, Universite Laval, 2000.

and Euroamericans, with the exception of which branch of Christianity the First Nations people should follow. Colborne assigned his Indian agents the tasks of persuading traveling hunting groups to gather together into permanent villages, arranging missionaries and teachers for the new villages, supplying building materials for houses, organizing construction, and providing farm start up supplies.<sup>28</sup> Although Colborne's government was closely associated with the Church of England, he invited British Wesleyan missionaries, the British version of the American Methodists, to come to Upper Canada to act as missionaries in the new communities.<sup>29</sup> Colborne likely did this because he hoped that British Methodists would be more politically sympathetic to his government than Americans.<sup>30</sup>

The colonial government created a number of new settlements in the early 1830s. The Lake Simcoe communities who had already encountered the Anishinabe Methodists and their message gathered into the government run agricultural village at Coldwater, just south east of Georgian Bay, in 1830. Other government villages were established at Munceytown on the Thames River, and at Sarnia for the communities between Lake St. Clair and Lake Huron.<sup>31</sup>

Between 1826 and 1836, the new First Nations villages, both government and Methodist, achieved remarkable success and popularity. Some communities requested a missionary of their own.<sup>32</sup> Having a Christian preacher in the community provided a

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<sup>28</sup> R. J. Surtees, "The Development of an Indian Reserve Policy in Canada" *Ontario History* 61:2 (1969), 92.

<sup>29</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 23.

<sup>30</sup> The British Wesleyans took Colborne up on his invitation and grant of money, Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, 167.

<sup>31</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 32 – 38.

<sup>32</sup> Five Chiefs at Sault St. Marie told John Sunday that they would be Christians if John Sunday would send them some good teachers, John Sunday, "John Sunday's Journal of a Missionary Tour Among the North Western Tribes of Indians" October 29, 1831, *Christian Guardian*, 201, 202.

direct link to sources of supplies and information and even stores of political influence in England. When the General Superintendent of Methodist Indian Missions (American) William Case visited the Saugeen for the quarterly meeting in 1833 he came bearing gifts which he distributed ritualistically. At the sound of a horn, Case distributed seeds for pumpkins, squash, and parsnips. In the same visit, he left medicine and written scriptures and books of rituals for missionary Reverend John Benham to distribute later.<sup>33</sup>

Missionaries advocated for their communities by sending letters to both the colonial governments and to England asking for funds to buy farm tools and oxen when execution of the farming program lagged behind the policy.<sup>34</sup> For a community trying to take on farming for the first time, missionary connections were essential.

Most of the new farming villages were not exclusively populated by Methodist church members. Not all Anishinabe people approved of the new movement. Rejection of the Anishinabe Methodist movement likely appeared in every community in which some members adopted it. The comments of two chiefs, Tumeko and Bauzhigezhigwaeshikum, who rejected Methodism are significant both because they explain why certain communities did not build alliances with the Methodists, but also because they give clues to what might have motivated unrecorded dissenting opinions of individuals within the Methodist communities.<sup>35</sup>

In 1825, John Carey, a Methodist schoolteacher volunteered his services to a community called Munceytown on the Thames River. The community was composed of multiple camps of Ojibway from the United States (called Chippeways at the time),

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<sup>33</sup> William Case, "Case's visit and quarterly meeting at Saugeen," July 24, 1833, *Christian Guardian*, 146.

<sup>34</sup> "David Sawyer to TG Anderson" RG 10 C .I.2 Central (Toronto) Superintendency, 1836-1883, a) Correspondence, 1845-1879, vol 406, reel - C 9613.

<sup>35</sup> Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 18.

Iroquoians and Anishinabe people. Although Carey was allowed to stay, not all of the community appreciated his religious exhortations. In May of 1825, the Reverend Jones visited Munceytown to see how Carey's work was progressing. The chief, Tumeko, told Jones that he had two objections to the teachings.<sup>36</sup> First, he pointed out that his community was following their own religion given to them by their forefathers. Second, Tumeko pointed out that "the whites" had provided his community with alcohol in the first place.<sup>37</sup> Unlike many of the Anishinabeg to the north, Tumeko saw the decision to follow Methodism as an implicit rejection of his community's traditions and, like the southern prophets, he saw adherence to older traditions as a virtue. Second, his reference to alcohol suggests that the Anishinabeg perceived abstinence to be a central tenet of the Methodist movement.

In 1829, a second chief who rejected the movement expressed his position in an eloquent statement reminiscent of moderate Nativist teachings. The powerful and popular chief from Walpole Island in Lake St. Clair, Bauzhigeshigwaeshikum, responded to Peter Jones's standard speech about the prosperity and happiness of the Methodist villages with the words, "...the Great Spirit made us all... When the Great Spirit made the white man he gave him his worship, written in a book... when the Great Spirit made the Indian he gave him his mode of worship."<sup>38</sup> Although the Walpole Island community, like the Munceytown community, had immigrated to Upper Canada from the United States, it is likely that such ideas were current in debates about Methodism throughout the territory because of their long association with Nativism.

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<sup>36</sup> Tumeko is referred to elsewhere as "Ootemekoo", Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 18.

<sup>37</sup> Jones, *Life and Diaries*, 27.

<sup>38</sup> Bauzhigeshigwaeshikum is referred to elsewhere as "Pazhekezhikquashkum" as in the source of this quotation Graham, *Medicine Man to Missionary*, 18.



*The new Alliance system Unites Lake and Back Anishinabeg*

Despite such opposition, Jones and his colleagues continued to promote their new way of thinking and effecting social and religious reforms. In the process of spreading their teachings, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders promoted Christianity as a religion of alliances. They emphasized peace between human communities and cooperation between First Nations' communities in particular. Through their travels, the Methodist prophets deepened bonds between geographically distant communities of Anishinabeg, Chippewa, Six Nations, Ottawa, and Pottawattamie communities. These bonds reunited the Back communities of Lake Simcoe and the Saugeen with the Lake communities of River Credit, Bay of Quinte, and Rice Lake. This effectively created a network of villages with similar policies toward the new Euroamerican settlers. Working in the same evangelistic pattern, Neolin and Tenskwatawa had adopted south of the Great Lakes, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders built a pan-village, even pan-national, movement of communities who shared similar spiritual and political ideas.

In order to overcome animosities that had existed at least since the time of the fur trade wars between the Anishinabeg and the Iroquois, Jones and his colleagues needed to present a compelling argument to appeal to the politically disparate concerns of the various *otens*. They defined Christianity as a religion of peace, noting that when the prophecies in the Christian bible were all fulfilled humans would experience peace. The Reverend Peter Jones reiterated this theme over thirty times between 1833 and 1852 in “The Spirit Knocking at the Door,” one of his favourite sermons.<sup>39</sup> Unlike the Christian

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<sup>39</sup> Jones updated his sermon notes each time he delivered the sermon by noting the date and location of the event at the bottom of his sermon outlines. This particular sermon, delivered over thirty times was one of the most frequently repeated. See Peter Jones, sermon “the Spirit Knocking at the Door” Box 2, file 1 “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

deity that Jesuit priests had presented in the seventeenth century, whose power to aid warriors in the destruction of their enemies was valued by Anishinabe raiding parties, the Methodists' Great Spirit and Jesus promised peace to his followers souls but also peace between communities.

During his travels between 1834 and 1855, on many occasions, Peter Jones preached a sermon entitled "The Blessings of Christianity". The sermon contrasted life for the Anishinabeg before and after the arrival of Christianity. According to Jones, before finding Methodism the Anishinabeg's alliances had been limited by historical animosities because people had been unable or unwilling to recant their own past actions or to forget past harms. Jones offered the concept of *Kezhamunudoowan*, to explain how the Anishinabeg could overcome their history of fighting with the Mohawks. "A Godly sorrow for sin," *Kezhamunudoowan* revealed to those who possessed it the crimes that they had committed against God, other persons, and themselves.<sup>40</sup> Jones used the example of peace between the inhabitants of the Six Nations reserve at Grand River and the surrounding Anishinabe communities as proof that a new era of history, marked by peace between human communities, had begun.

More than a mere absence of conflict, the peace between communities promoted by the Anishinabe Methodist leaders grew into tangible social and political alliances during the 1825 – 1828 period. Like circuit riders, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders traveled to communities, delivered sermons, and administered rituals wherever their schedule and obligations took them. They also participated in the communities' council meetings and

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<sup>40</sup> Peter Jones, sermon "On the Blessings of Christianity" Box 2, File 1 "Peter Jones Collection" V.U.A.

often implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, promoted political as well as spiritual messages.

The political significance of this evangelical work was demonstrated when a colonial official reprimanded the Reverend John Sunday for speaking to the Lake Simcoe council during a visit in 1831. On just such a circuit riding tour of communities at Lake Simcoe, Mahjedusk and Penetanguishene (what the *Christian Guardian* called “The North Western Tribes”) John Sunday raised the ire of Captain Anderson of the Indian Department by advising the Lake Simcoe community on relations with the colonial government. Sunday arrived at “Yellowhead’s Island” in Lake Simcoe by canoe on June 22, 1831.<sup>41</sup> He noted that when he first saw “the Indian Brethren” the “people made a noise all over worshipping and praising God.” The next day, John Sunday preached to the community and in the evening they gathered for a prayer meeting.<sup>42</sup> As was common in such visits, Sunday was accompanied by another Methodist preacher, James Evans. Evans preached a regular sermon on the evening on June 24 and a funeral sermon the next day. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, the community gathered for a communion service, or a “love feast” conducted by Sunday. The preachers were not the only speakers at the large events. Chief Yellowhead addressed the assembly: “I used to think when will our ministers come and see us? I am glad to see the sacramental table now prepared. I am glad to see our ministers again.”<sup>43</sup> To this point, all that Sunday had done could be seen

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<sup>41</sup> This visit, along with the rest of John Sunday’s diary from his tour, was printed on the front page of the October 29, 1831 edition of the *Christian Guardian* as John Sunday, “John Sunday’s Journal of a Missionary Tour Among the North Western Tribes of Indians” 201, 202.

<sup>42</sup> James Evans, “To the *Christian Guardian*” July 9, 1831, *The Christian Guardian*, 138.

<sup>43</sup> John Sunday and John Jones, “John Sunday’s Journal of a Missionary Tour Among the North Western Tribes of Indians” (Translated by John Jones) October 29, 1831, *Christian Guardian*, 201, 202.

as purely “spiritual” in nature. However, such visits generally ended with a bit of business before the preacher left.

The following morning, before his departure, Sunday attended the Back community’s council meeting. Once he left the community and headed toward Mahjedusk, John Sunday met Captain Anderson. Anderson asked Sunday if the Methodist ministers had advised Chief Yellowhead and his council not to accept help from the colonial government. Sunday denied doing so but did not attempt to suggest that his participation at the council had been strictly religious in nature. Instead, he chastised Anderson and his government for not helping the people of Lake Simcoe even though the government knew that they were “poor, miserable and drunken.”<sup>44</sup> Just as he did not mind mixing politics with preaching when speaking to the community at Lake Simcoe, Sunday did not mind reminding Anderson that he had political, as well as spiritual ambitions for the Anishinabeg.

The preachers were not the only ones who traveled between communities. The meeting at Lake Simcoe was attended by representatives from the councils at Grape Island in the Bay of Quinte and Rice Lake to the east, as well as visitors from Mahjedusk to the west.<sup>45</sup> The Anishinabe Methodist leaders’ emphasis on peace between communities mixed with their social reforms and spread in their travels across the territory. This rhetoric found its way into general councils who then issued statements reminiscent of southern prophetic rhetoric about pan-Native identities. In 1840, a historic “Grand Council” was held at the River Credit. The meeting was attended by representatives from the Six Nations at Grand River, as well as “Chiefs and leading men”

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> James Evans, “To the *Christian Guardian*” July 9, 1831, *The Christian Guardian*, 138,

from Aldersville, Rice Lake, Mud Lake, Balsam Lake, the Narrows of Lake Simcoe, Snake Island, Coldwater, Saugeeng, St. Clair, and Munceytown.<sup>46</sup> Despite being led by Methodist Chiefs, the 1840 Credit meeting focused on politics and featured a renewal of the “Treaty of Friendship” between the Six Nations and the Anishinabeg and a general discussion about how to acquire legal title to the community’s various reserve lands. Though not explicitly pan-Native, the Anishinabe Methodist movement created a new pattern of visiting and cultural exchange that enabled cooperative action between geographically distant communities.

### *Bimadziwin, Prosperity and Independence*

According to the Anishinabe Methodist leaders, followers of the *Gitché Manitou* would become stronger through deeper alliances with other First Nations but also through the restoration of *bimadziwin* to individual communities. These promises rested on two propositions: that God offered equal blessings to all groups of people if they asked; and that God himself was the source of the Euroamericans’ prosperity. Particular ethical questions and conflicts that may have arisen from the Methodist message were hidden by the overwhelming congruence between the *oten* era Anishinabeg’s commitment to *Bimadziwin* and the Anishinabe Methodist leaders’ commitment to the same principle. Many recognized that the social reforms that the Methodist leaders proposed would promote community health and prosperity.

The Reverend Peter Jones credited the Euroamericans’ material success to their experience of the power of the Great Spirit, and the Anishinabeg’s deprivation with their failure to access that power. At a camp meeting at Twelve Mile Creek, he described the

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<sup>46</sup> Peter Jones, “Letter” Box 19, File 68, MG 17, C 1, Letters and Reports “Methodist Missionary Society” N.A.C.

Christian God as the “Great Being, who is no respecter of persons, but dispenses his heavenly blessings on all who call on his name.”<sup>47</sup> Starting from this presupposition, that the *Gitche Manitou* was able and inclined to make his followers wealthy, Jones attributed the disparity in wealth between the Anishinabeg and the British to the Anishinabeg’s late introduction to Christianity. In a speech delivered to the London missionary society in 1831, Jones opened with the assertion that he believed that he worshipped the same God as the Methodist Euroamericans. He followed this observation with a less neutral suggestion. “Long time we had been roving in darkness,” he said of the Anishinabeg “not seeing the good things that you see, not enjoying the good things that you enjoy, and that have done you so much good.”<sup>48</sup> While Jones left vague exactly what the good things that the Euroamericans had seen and enjoyed were, his talk entitled *The Gospel of the Power of God to the Salvation of Indians as Well as White Men* suggests it was Methodism.

In an “Anecdote Book” Jones kept to preserve sermon material, Jones recorded a story that he had heard from one of the women in the River Credit community when he was a child. Discussing the inequality between Natives and Euroamericans, a woman expressed her wish that “the son of the Great Spirit had not been killed, for it might have been if he had lived to this day, he would have had mercy upon us poor Indians as well as the white people. But now we are so poor.”<sup>49</sup> Whether or not Jones’s memory of the woman’s words was shaped by his new found faith, its appearance in his anecdote book suggests that he wove this story into his sermons. In a sermon on the blessings of

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<sup>47</sup> Jones, *Life and Journals*, 74

<sup>48</sup> July 30, 1831, *Christian Guardian*, 149.

<sup>49</sup>Peter Jones, Box 1, File 5, Anecdote Book, “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

Christianity, Jones explained to the audience that “true religion” saved people from poverty.<sup>50</sup>

According to Jones houses, farms, cattle, and trades all came to Natives who became Christians and promoted “worldly prosperity.” To Jones, prosperity connoted both a collection of possessions, cattle, houses, and the skills necessary to maintain those possessions or trades. Prosperity was important to the Anishinabeg not only for its own sake, but, also because it offered them independence from the settlers. In Anishinabe society, each person depended for their own life on the work of their immediate kinship group, especially those who went out together in the winter hunting parties. In the kin group, each member had particular obligations. If everyone did their part, then everyone would survive and none would be indebted toward another. Fulfilling one’s own obligations, with the help of *Manitou* guardians, provided the foundation of personal identity.

The Anishinabe Methodist leaders believed that Native dependence on settler society constituted the primary threat to a sustainable “good life” for the Anishinabeg. Anthropologist Mary Black-Rogers argued that in Anishinabe life “the ideal is *not to be controlled by one’s environment* – environment including other people as well as other natural beings or forces.”<sup>51</sup> The second era of Anishinabe history, as the preachers described it, was characterized by an unhealthy and corrupting dependence on French fur traders. However, while Anishinabe Methodist leaders believed avoiding inappropriate dependencies constituted an essential prerequisite for achieving the good life, they also believed that the highest form of the good life included a relationship with the Great

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<sup>50</sup> Peter Jones, “Blessing of True Religion” (sermon), Box 2, File 1b “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

<sup>51</sup> Mary Black-Rogers, “Ojibwa Power Belief System” in Fogelson and Adams ed. *The Anthropology of Power* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 145.

Spirit. Reflecting both the language of the Methodist Bible and the language of Anishinabe spiritual beliefs, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders spoke of the Great Spirit as a healer and a provider who could protect the Anishinabe from dependence on the non-Native settlers.

The theme of independence from Europeans, with its concomitant horror of indebtedness, wove its way into Peter Jones's interpretation of a Christian story about three men who were under the political control of a King whom they disliked. On March 21, 1841 Jones preached a sermon called "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego" to his community at the River Credit. In his notes Jones cited the Bible passage Daniel 3: 16, 17,18 in which three men earned a death sentence for defying their benevolent master, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. In his sermon notes, Jones laid out the salient points: "They were tried and might have not been obedient," Jones wrote, "by pleasing authority.. but in religious matters are to obey God rather than man, though it be at the risk of reputation, riches or even life itself."<sup>52</sup> Jones then proceeded to explore an idea which was as important to him personally as he believed it to be for his people: how the desire to please people in positions of power could interfere with each human's primary responsibility to obey God. This Christian teaching corresponded to the Anishinabe prohibition of inappropriate dependence. Within the Anishinabe kinship, system no individual needed to face the possibility of being forced to act against conscience out of deference to a powerful person. Certainly, they would not have had to rely on an enemy for food and shelter, as did the imprisoned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Now, in

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<sup>52</sup>Peter Jones, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego" (sermon) Box 2, File 1, "Peter Jones Collection" V.U.A.



the colonial era the Anishinabeg faced that very real possibility. Jones concluded, “Nothing tries like kindness.”

Achieving independence could foster another virtue valued by both European Methodists and the Anishinabeg. A warrior ethic of stoic forbearance marked both traditions and included rejection of the dictates of human society. In “The Christian Soldier”, Peter Jones used the passage, “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”<sup>53</sup> Jones explained that the “life of a Christian is a state of warfare” that required courage, confidence and steadfastness. When an Anishinabe Methodist chief from Lake Simcoe described his philosophy to an assembly of chiefs he explained that his obligations as an Anishinabe warrior required him to follow Jesus.<sup>54</sup> On another occasion, Jones asserted that one of the blessings of Jesus was courage and that without that blessing “our hearts are weak.”<sup>55</sup> Methodist preachers used the phrase “God fearing” as a compliment for people who followed the teachings of Christianity and rejected social obligations that contradicted those teachings. In Methodist parlance, the opposite of “God fearing” was “man fearing.” In his personal journals, Reverend Peter Jones commented that he was resisting his “manfearing” tendencies, by which he meant an impulse to please humans rather than God.<sup>56</sup> Keeping oneself from obligation was required by both traditions.

To Jones, as to earlier Nativist prophets, nothing threatened independence more than alcoholism. Like all Methodists at the time, Anishinabe Methodist leaders expressed

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<sup>53</sup> Peter Jones “The Christian Soldier” (sermon) Box 2, File 1, “The Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Jones, “Letter from P. Jones at the River Credit mission” August 1, 1832, *The Christian Guardian*, 150.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Jones, “Christian Hope and Courage” (sermon), Box 2, File 1, “The Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

<sup>56</sup> Jones, *Life and Journals*, 54; Peter Jones, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego” (sermon) Box 2, File 1, “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

tremendous concern over alcohol's corrosive effect on society. Anishinabe Methodist leaders frequently mentioned the problems that alcohol use caused in their communities and valorized Natives who defeated it. One of the most popular stories turned on an unscrupulous fur trader who tempted an Anishinabe man to drink. Peter Jones included a version of the story in his *History of the Ojebway*. Four Christian Natives went into a city to trade. The city folk pressured the Natives to drink whiskey but the Anishinabeg refused. One persistent man, undaunted by their refusals, placed a keg beside a path that he knew the Anishinabeg would follow later that day. When the Christian Natives saw the keg one observed, "the evil spirit is here." One of his companions rolled the keg down a hill and the four Anishinabeg walked on, as Jones described them, "like brave warriors, leaving the mortified *white* heathen to take up his keg and drink the evil himself."<sup>57</sup>

The drunken Native straightened out by Methodism was a well worn-image but when conjured by Jones it took on a different meaning. Having established that Europeans used whiskey to control the Anishinabeg, Jones deployed Methodism's critique of whiskey to show Anishinabeg warriors shaking off that control. Not only did the warriors in the story refuse to submit to the whiskey's influence, they also forced the malevolent settler to chase the barrel down the hill, bolstering their own independence by leaving him to his own self destruction. In the context of his perennial mission to convince as many Natives as possible to take up Methodist practices, the victory of the Anishinabeg in the story suggests that they were drawing on a power both greater than that of non Christian Natives, and stronger than that of the whiskey traders.

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<sup>57</sup> Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 175.

Behind both the promises of cosmic blessing, and the social and ethical rules promoted by the Anishinabe Methodist leaders was the assertion that the Anishinabeg now had the chance to change their condition and recapture independence. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders did not suggest that prosperity would arrive magically. They prescribed specific work that they believed would achieve wealth. Schooling and farming were the tools that Jones, Sunday, and others recommended to achieve prosperity because they suited new social conditions. As such, an element of deep seated cultural continuity ran through the reformer's farming project. Farming protected *Bimadziwin*, a cultural value even more deeply held than the cycles of the hunt. They did not suggest that the practical changes that communities made were in and of themselves virtuous.

Addressing a British official in 1828, the Anishinabe preacher and chief John Sunday stated, "Our desire is now to change our former habits and become cultivators of the soil in order that our children may have something substantial to rely on." Sunday went on to explain, "We have been obliged to adopt this change on account of the increasing difficulties of our hunting in consequence of the settling of inhabitants throughout all parts of the country."<sup>58</sup> Practical considerations rather than an idealization of British society led him to advocate farming. Similar sentiments motivated Chief George Paudash, of Rice Lake, to tell a British colonial official in 1828, "We are very poor and are desirous of settling and cultivating the soil like Our Brothers at the Credit and at Belleville"<sup>59</sup> Paudash did not extol the cultural or moral benefits of farming. Instead he explained its necessity. As with John Sunday's statement, Paudash's appeal rested on pragmatism.

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<sup>58</sup> Minutes of a council held at the Port of York, 30 January 1828, Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor, RG10 A1d) vol 791 p 7196, N.A.C.

<sup>59</sup> RG 10 A 1 d) General Administration Records Vol. 791, N.A.C.

Like others in the colony, the Anishinabe farmers used European farming implements which they purchased with their annuities. Starting communities likely used harrows, ploughs pulled by oxen, and chains to prepare the fields for sowing.<sup>60</sup> The farmers also bought European livestock such as oxen and horses to help with their farm work while cattle herds provided a source of income and meat.<sup>61</sup> The farms produced the same crops that nearby Iroquois had grown for centuries, along with European staples like wheat and oats. In 1833, when many of the farms were at least five years old, their production varied considerably. At the Narrows in Lake Simcoe, the community had planted 50 acres of potatoes, corn, beans and oats.<sup>62</sup> In 1833, the Coldwater community produced fifty tons of wild hay, one hundred bushels of potatoes, six hundred bushels of wheat, three hundred bushels of oats and one thousand bushels of flax.<sup>63</sup> In the same year, the Rice Lake community sowed twenty five acres of wheat.<sup>64</sup>

Although they did not celebrate the farms as cultural advancement, Peter Jones at least soon began to speak approvingly of the subsequent cultural changes that he perceived to be necessary to successful farming. If farming started as pragmatic for Jones, its concomitant social requirements eventually became social values to him. These new values, especially as they affected the role of women and the role of children in society were very different from social arrangements observed by the Anishinabeg in the

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<sup>60</sup> David Sawyer to T. G. Anderson, December 14, 1846, R.G. 10 C 1.2, Central (Toronto) Superintendency, 1836 – 1883, a) Correspondence, 1845 – 1879, reel C 9 613, N.A.C.

<sup>61</sup> Peter Jones to Rev. Townley, July 30, 183(1?)- final digit unclear, MG 17 C 1 Methodist Missionary Society, Letters and Reports, file #42, reel A 265, N.A.C.

<sup>62</sup> The quantities of produce are important mostly in that they demonstrate the relative success of the different communities because the actual totals are suspect. The reports of farm produce in the *Christian Guardian* were likely exaggerated to impress the audience with the viability of Native farms and to discredit an opinion growing in the Tory contingent that Native farms could never succeed because, they argued Natives were inherently lazy see Colborne's incendiary report, "Mr. Vaux's Tour, concluded" July 3, 1833, *The Christian Guardian*, 134.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas Vaux, "Mr. Vaux's Tour, concluded" July 3, 1833, *The Christian Guardian*, 134.

<sup>64</sup> D. McMullen, "Letter to the Editor," December 4, 1833, *The Christian Guardian*, 14.

*oten tradition*. Before the farming villages were created, men hunted and served the community as warriors and made political decisions. Most other work, including a small amount of farming, fell to women. Anishinabe men resisted taking up farming full time and combined hunting and farming. D. McMullen, a non-Native missionary at Rice Lake, expressed frustration at the men for continuing to hunt. Although the community had grown many potatoes and twenty five acres of wheat that year, the missionary believed that the men's hunting in fall and spring hurt their agricultural successes. Worse still, the missionary claimed that hunting “slows progress and exposes Natives to temptations” and observed that “almost all moral and religious instability occurs when hunting.”<sup>65</sup> Certainly, the continued hunting made good sense as insurance against hunger but it may also have been necessary for individual men to maintain their self-image as hunters. In 1832, Chief Yellowhead of Lake Simcoe promoted the idea that both farming and Methodism were masculine. In a war-dance speech he delivered at a gathering of many chiefs from far flung communities, Yellowhead declared “Brothers, I now look upon all men who refuse to take hold of the white man’s religion and become Christians and farmers, to be as cowardly as old women.”<sup>66</sup>

Women’s roles changed also. Believing that Anishinabe women worked too hard, Anishinabe Methodist Leaders encouraged a division of labour that reflected British gender ideas of women as delicate and also suited farm life better.<sup>67</sup> William Case, the head of the entire Methodist Missionary effort in Upper Canada, expressed dislike of the

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<sup>65</sup> D. McMullen, “Letter to the Editor,” December 4, 1833, *The Christian Guardian*, 14.

<sup>66</sup> Peter Jones, “For the Christian Guardian, River Credit Mission, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1832,” August 1, 1832, *The Christian Guardian* August 1, 150.

<sup>67</sup> Slight, *Indian Researches*, 155, 156.

idea of women farming.<sup>68</sup> In a sermon anecdote, Peter Jones remembered that as a young boy, in the first decade of the nineteenth century, he lived with his mother and a group of other Anishinabe women who supported themselves by making baskets and brooms to sell to Europeans.<sup>69</sup> In an even earlier period, before colonial incursions had disrupted the annual seasonal round, the women would likely have made crafts for sale or trade with other Nations. Missionaries encouraged sewing by organizing women into “Dorcas Societies”, groups of women who met together to make brooms and baskets, sew moccasins and gloves to support both the larger project of Native missions, and to buy school supplies for their own local schools.<sup>70</sup> Organized sewing in the farming villages resembled women’s craft work in the preceding generation but the shift from local sewing circles to sewing in Dorcas societies changed women’s sewing. By binding their sewing to one branch of the Dorcas society, the Anishinabe women bound themselves to the larger structure of the Methodist church both in Canada and the United States and England. The larger structure offered obvious benefits such as connections to active fund raising networks. The local missionary sometimes supplied the materials for the crafts which increased the number of products the women could produce.<sup>71</sup> More particularly, the Reverend Peter Jones favourably compared fine sewing, with small stitches, to the rougher form of sewing necessary for making moccasins.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> William Case, “Grand River Mission, Grand River, March 17, 1831,” May 28, 1831, *Christian Guardian*, 114.

<sup>69</sup> “The Indian Woman’s Regret” Box 1, File 5, “Peter Jones Papers” V.U.A.

<sup>70</sup> Elizabeth Gillian Muir, *Petticoats in the Pulpit: The Story of Early Nineteenth-Century Methodist Women Preachers in Upper Canada* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1991), 110.

<sup>71</sup> Muir, *Petticoats in the Pulpit*, 110.

<sup>72</sup> In a speech delivered on a European tour Peter Jones observed that before the mission stations Native women didn’t have time to sew “very nice” using long stitches, now they have time to make small stitches, see Jones, “Sermon and Speeches.”

Anishinabe Methodist leaders also addressed the growing concerns about how to keep the communities healthy. From the Anishinabe perspective, health problems resulted directly or indirectly from unethical actions on the part of the sufferer, or a member of their family.<sup>73</sup> Early nineteenth century epidemics of European diseases demanded an explanation and a cure.<sup>74</sup> The Anishinabe Methodist leaders believed that good health was related to cleanliness. In order to alter their communities' behaviour with respect to cleaning, they engaged in direct pressure, shaming and interference.

In the late 1820 and 1830s, Peter Jones set himself up as a one-man health inspector, going from house to house at Credit River to evaluate how well the houses were kept. Jones's concern with clean homes, like his insistence on abstinence from alcohol, arose from his personal experience.<sup>75</sup> In the 1832 missionary report on the River Credit, probably written by Jones, the author observed that the thirty houses at the Credit are kept "as clean as white's [homes]."<sup>76</sup> More than a benchmark of cultural assimilation, the Anishinabe Methodist leader's concern with the state of the houses evidenced their new ideas about health and their concern with ending the plagues that threatened the survival of the Anishinabe in Upper Canada. If homes "as clean as whites" led to Anishinabe people as healthy as British settlers, the reform would have justified itself by protecting the community.

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<sup>73</sup> A. I. Hallowell, "Ojibwa World View and Disease" in *Contributions to Anthropology*, 413, 414.

<sup>74</sup> One woman created her own ritual to defend her children against disease, Mrs. Splitlog, created a ritual to be performed at a child's funeral in which the spirit of the dead child was prevented from returning to harm their still living brothers and sisters, Slight, *Indian Researches; or, facts Concerning the North American Indians; including Notices of their present state of Improvement, in their Social, Civil and Religious Condition; with Hints for their future advancement* (Montreal: printed for the author, J.E.L. Miller, 1844) 90.

<sup>75</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 67, 68.

<sup>76</sup> "Report of the Missionary Society of The Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada" February 29, 1832, *Christian Guardian*, 61.

The Anishinabe Methodist Leaders also believed that the Christian God had particular power over disease. This idea was older than the Methodists' tenure in Upper Canada. During their first contact with Christians at Sault St. Marie, the Anishinabeg had witnessed Jesuit priests healing a sick person.<sup>77</sup> This connection between *Gitche Manitou* and healing was underscored by the Anishinabe Methodist leaders' habit of visiting the sick. The preacher Peter Jones taught people that the Great Spirit created humans, protected them and provided for them because he loved them. From this premise, Jones taught that humans should love God like a father and, like children, bring their requests to the Great Spirit who wanted to make them happy. In particular, he said that they should ask God to help people who were sick.<sup>78</sup> All of the Anishinabe Methodist Leaders followed this direction and their journals show evidence of their commitment to visiting and praying for sick people. For example, during his trip to the North in 1831 the Rev. John Sunday prayed for a sick Anishinabe woman. She thanked him saying, "That which you carry about with you is very good – I felt as if something was opened in my heart."<sup>79</sup> During the same mission trip, the entire community called on the Anishinabe Methodist leader to pray for all of the sick among them.<sup>80</sup> Like the *Mide* leaders, the shaking tent practitioners, and the visionaries, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders took on the social and spiritual task of helping people to endure and defeat illness.

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<sup>77</sup> Vecsey, *Paths of Kateri's Kin*, (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 209.

<sup>78</sup> Peter Jones, "Reasons for Loving the Lord" (sermon) Box 2, File 1, "Peter Jones Collection" V.U.A.

<sup>79</sup> John Sunday, "Mission of John Sunday and Two Other Converted Indians, from Grape Island, to the North Western Tribes," November 5, 1831, *Christian Guardian*, 205; in another instance Another Anishinabe Methodist leader, David Sawyer, the son of the head chief at Credit River, reported that a woman asked him to pray for her sick daughter, not because he was a Methodist but because he spoke Anishna'bowen. While the woman believed that the Catholic priest who lived in the area could pray for her son's healing she preferred a spiritual leader whose words she could evaluate, David Sawyer, "River Credit, May 15, 1832," February 13, 1833, *Christian Guardian*, 54.

<sup>80</sup> John Sunday, "Mission of John Sunday and Two Other Converted Indians, from Grape Island, to the North Western Tribes," November 5, 1831, *Christian Guardian*, 205.



Just as farming meant survival rather than a qualitatively better way of living to the Anishinabe Methodist leaders, they also believed that it was important to secure European forms of education in order to protect communities in the future, not to improve their overall virtue. Since the beginning of the fur trade, North American Natives had had to learn European forms of exchange valuing and reckoning did so effectively.<sup>81</sup> The Anishinabeg understood the importance of learning the settler's cultural forms. In 1833, an Anishinabe chief near Sault St. Marie told Peter Jones that while his community believed that becoming Christian was impious because it meant abandoning their fore-father's religion, they did want a school so that their children "may learn to read, put words on paper, and count, so that the white traders might not cheat them."<sup>82</sup> Although the chief identified fur traders as the primary criminals, he may also have been alluding to his desire that his community's children not endure problems like the preceding twenty years of disagreements between the Anishinabeg and the colonial government over the terms of the land treaties.

The two foci of the early Anishinabe school system correlated to the two philosophical imperatives of the Anishinabe Methodist movement: to use the spiritual power of European religion to benefit Anishinabe communities; and to develop tools with which the Anishinabeg could rebuild their community despite the presence and policies of the European settlers. So committed were the Anishinabe Methodist leaders to promoting education in their communities that some joined the non-Native teachers in the

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<sup>81</sup> Arthur Ray, *Give Us Good Measure: An Economic Analysis of Relationships Between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company Before 1763* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 227; Anishinabe Methodist leaders cited the need to understand the calculations of dishonest French fur traders when they requested teachers from the British colonial government in the early nineteenth century, Peter Jones, "Peter Jones to the *Christian Guardian*," January 22, 1831, *Christian Guardian*, 1.

<sup>82</sup> Peter Jones to Eliza Jones, June 10, 1833, Box 3, File 5, "Peter Jones Collection" V.U.A.

villages and took on the job themselves.<sup>83</sup> The very first children's school teacher at the very first of the farming community schools was none other than the Reverend Peter Jones. As a member of the River Credit community, and a spiritual leader there, Jones held the trust of the parents who were willing to let him convey the education he had received at Grand River to their children. Further, as a member of the community he understood Anishinabe modes of education. In the early years, Jones focused on the academic disciplines rather than technical training. At the River Credit school, the children studied reading, writing, arithmetic, the alphabet, geography and geometry.<sup>84</sup> At nearby Rice Lake, in the early 1830s, a school was administered by the New England Company, and the curriculum included English Grammar, arithmetic, and natural history. A visitor noted that many of the children at Rice Lake could read the scriptures well.<sup>85</sup> An 1834 visitor to Grape Island observed that of the fifty-one students in school, nine could read from *Murray's Reader* and Goldsmith's *Rome*, while a total of twenty-nine could read the Bible.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Education was important to Methodists both for spiritual and humanitarian reasons: they wanted their members to be able to read the Bible for themselves to free them from reliance on a religious expert, and they wanted indigenous people to have tools for living in colonial societies on the Methodist Anishinabe day schools see: Hope MacLean, "Ojibwa Participation in Methodist Residential Schools in Upper Canada, 1828 – 1860" *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 25:1 (2005) 93 – 137; Hope MacLean, "A Positive Experiment in Aboriginal Education: The Methodist Ojibwa Day Schools in Upper Canada, 1824 – 1833" *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 22:1 (2002) 25 – 63; Hope MacLean, *The Hidden Agenda: Methodist Attitudes to the Ojibwa and the Development of Indian Schooling in Upper Canada 1821-1860* M.A. Thesis University of Toronto Department of Educational Theory, 1978.

<sup>84</sup> Teacher of the Credit Mission school, "Credit Mission, 4<sup>th</sup> Jan., 1831" January 29, 1831, *Christian Guardian* January 29, 46.

<sup>85</sup> "Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist E. Church in Canada" February 29, 1832, *Christian Guardian*, 61.

<sup>86</sup> The source refers only to "Murray's Reader", although it could refer to Allen Fisk, *Murray's English Grammar Simplified; Designed to Facilitate the Study of the English Language; Comprehending the Principles and Rules of English Grammar* (Hallowell, Me.: Glazier & Co. 1824) but the source's phrasing suggest that it more likely it refers to Jeremiah Goodrich, *Murray's English Reader: or, Pieces in Prose and Poetry, Selected from the Best Writers...with a few Preliminary Observations on the Principles of Good Reading* (Claremont, N.H.: Claremont Manufacturing company, 1846) date of this edition notwithstanding, see, Author unknown, "Travels in Upper Canada: Grape Island – Mississauga Indians," October 15, 1834, *The Christian Guardian*, 194.

The teacher who succeeded Jones at the River Credit in 1831 observed that the children “had made considerable improvement under the instructions of Mr. Jones” and continued with excitement, “I found the children particularly tractable, and uncommonly anxious to receive instruction...”<sup>87</sup> Although the second teacher came from a non-Anishinabe background, the curriculum he followed employed a philosophy which itself shared many values with Anishinabe culture. In 1831, the Methodist schools throughout Upper Canada used the Pestalozzian method which was developed in the early nineteenth century in response to the treatment of working class children in British society.<sup>88</sup> Heinrich Pestalozzi developed the tripartite method that took his name by drawing on Rousseau’s model of holistic education. Pestalozzi’s method took as a first principle that each child contained the “seed” of a unique personality. The educator had to protect the seed from harm, rather than force the seed to grow into any particular formation.<sup>89</sup> This approach mimicked the philosophy of Anishinabe elders who used *adisokanag* to influence children rather than to directly instruct them. Strongly influenced by Christian teachings, Pestalozzi also believed that students could only learn from an educator who loved them. Corporal punishment, which Pestalozzi believed indicated a failure of love, had no place in the classroom. The Anishinabeg also rejected any form of physical discipline of children.<sup>90</sup> The popularity of the Pestalozzian system is evidenced by the

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<sup>87</sup> Teacher of the Credit Mission school, “Credit Mission, 4<sup>th</sup> Jan., 1831” January 29, 1831, *Christian Guardian* January 29, 46.

<sup>88</sup> MacLean, *The Hidden Agenda*, 37 – 40; Susan Neylan has written about the confluence of British reform ideology, class, and missionization in nineteenth century British Columbia among the Tsimshian, see “Longhouses, Schoolrooms, and Worker’s Cottages: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions to the Tsimshian and the Transformation of Class through Religion” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 11 (2000): 51 – 86.

<sup>89</sup> This summary of Pestalozzi’s thought is based on William Kilpatrick’s introduction see: William H. Kilpatrick, *The Education of Man – Aphorisms* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951.)

<sup>90</sup> A.I. Hallowell, “Aggression in Saulteaux Society” in *Culture and Experience*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955), 156.

rapid spread of day schools. Between 1831 and 1841, Chiefs at the Saugeen, Lake Nipissing, Sault St. Marie, Grand Traverse, and Balsam Lake, among others, responded to the visiting missionaries by asking for teachers.<sup>91</sup> The desire for teachers was not a mere passing interest. At Sault St. Marie five chiefs actually agreed to become Christians on the condition that the Methodists would send them teachers.<sup>92</sup>

Despite the early successes, the school system did not remain unchanged for long. During the 1830s two subtle challenges arose. The Rev. Peter Jones articulated the first challenge as early as 1838 when he declared in his autobiography, “I am fully persuaded that our children will never be what they ought to be until they are taught to work and learn useful trades, as well as to learn to read and write.” What he proposed were large schools dedicated to teaching trades. This was the beginning of the road to a residential school system in Upper Canada. Jones argued that the Anishinabe community supported him in switching the focus of the schools to practical education saying, “all the Indians with whom I have conversed highly approve of the project [manual labour schools].”<sup>93</sup> Although Jones did not oppose the academic subjects he, like others in his community, had become convinced that classical learning alone could not help the Anishinabeg to use the technical knowledge of European settlers to their own advantage. The second change arose from Jones’s concern that the social reform he hoped would save the Anishinabeg could not be achieved if children lived with their parents. In the 1840s, he

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<sup>91</sup> Saugeen Chief, “Sahgeen Mission,” May 28, 1831 *Christian Guardian*, 114; Lake Nipissing Chief, “Letter from Stinson,” Box 18, File 119, item 17, “Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Papers” V.U.A.; Sault St. Marie Chief, “Extracts from Journal of Native Missionaries” February 20, 1833 *Christian Guardian*, 58; Grand Traverse Chief, “John Cah Beach and John Taunchee from Rice Lake at St. Marie, Lake Superior, Mackinaw and Lake Michigan” October 9, 1833, *Christian Guardian*, 190; Balsom Lake “Button’s Chapel” Box 2, File 1 “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

<sup>92</sup> Charles J. Rowe, “Absurd Advice to the Indians” March 14, 1832 *The Christian Guardian*, 70, 71.

<sup>93</sup> As quoted in Elizabeth Graham, *The Mush Hole: Life at Two Indian Residential Schools* (Waterloo Ontario: Heffle Publishing, 1997), 5.

began to establish residential schools that could effect a radical programme of social reconditioning within children by removing them from the influence of their parents.<sup>94</sup> Ultimately, this project would expose the difference between conceptions of ethics in Anishinabe society and Christian teaching and reveal differences between some of the Anishinabe Methodist leadership and the movement's followers. Jones's residential schools ended the communities' ability to set ethical standards.

Many of the deeply held values of the Anishinabe Methodist movement, during the first twenty years of its existence, were continuous with the first era of Anishinabe history as it was imagined by the Anishinabe Methodist Leaders. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders fought to preserve community health, prosperity and independence just as chiefs, spiritual leaders and community members had done in Anishinabe *otens* before the arrival of settlers. The means to achieve those values, though not at all traditional, were received well because they could help to achieve *Bimadziwin* without violating any deeply held beliefs. Farming promised to restore prosperity, condemning alcohol limited dependence, and the *Gitche Manitou's* powers over illness could restore the communities to their lost health. At the same time, the elements of Anishinabe Methodism drew on Neolin and Tenskwatawa's teachings in supporting pan-Native alliances and purification rituals to supply new spirit power. By mirroring some of the earlier prophets, the movement was able to include the Back communities whose loyalty to the southern prophets had been displayed on the battlefield. Despite such continuities, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders saw themselves as radical reformers because they wanted to tear their

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<sup>94</sup> The philosophy of the residential manual labour schools was first laid out by a non-Native preacher Robert Alder, in response to Sir Francis Bond Head's condemnation off the Methodist day schools, see Robert Alder "Defence of Indian Rights in Upper Canada by Methodists" Box 21, Reel 22, "Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society" V.U. A.

communities away from their current condition. That is, at least in the early years, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders directed their reforming impulses at recent developments in Anishinabe society, not deep structures of culture. It was this combination of continuities with valued Anishinabe characteristics, with a plausible explanation for current problems, and an effective programme for revitalization that allowed the movement to become deeply established in local communities in a very short period of time. How individual people experienced and interpreted the significance of the movement will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 6:

### Getting Happy: Popular Anishinabe Methodism as Hope and Power

While Anishinabe Methodist leaders spent most of their time discussing how the movement and its teachings affected the Anishinabe people as a whole, Anishinabe village members most often discussed the joy they felt when they received power from *Gitche Manitou*, the strength that they received from *Gitche Manitou* to behave ethically, and the comfort Methodist teachings gave them when they or their loved ones faced death. Methodist power, according to many villagers, restored *Bimadziwin* and Methodist afterlife teachings comforted people who had lost loved ones in the epidemics. Villagers referred to the changes Methodism brought as “Getting Happy.” They described the deaths of people who died fearlessly because of their faith in *Gitche Manitou* as “happy” deaths. Anishinabe Methodists identified the moment of “Getting Happy” as significant, remembering them fondly during rituals they called “Love Feasts.” They identified the event as a time when they gained a blessing in their hearts. They often talked about how they now acted more ethically, using images of leaving crooked paths and starting on straight ones. The crooked paths were not the *oten* era’s philosophy or rituals, but alcohol, anger and violence, the fur trade-era contagions described by the Anishinabe Methodist leaders. “Getting Happy” was about gaining a spiritual blessing that enabled them to return to the ethical life. As experienced and expressed by many Anishinabe Methodists, the movement was revitalization, not conversion.

The testimonies considered here were mostly offered as part of ritualized public statements. The people who made the statements were generally explaining why they

had faith in the *Gitche Manitou* of Methodist practice. They did so to offer praise and gratitude to the *Gitche Manitou* and encourage other people to do the same. Because the statements deal with how *Gitche Manitou* helped individual people, the testimonies emphasize personal benefits over the political consequences of the new practice.<sup>1</sup> What is evident from the testimonies is that many people welcomed the new teachings and took an active part in Methodist rituals. Methodist leaders considered their words so important that they recorded them in diaries and even published them in the *Christian Guardian*.

### *Willing Initiates*

That communities often responded to news of a traveling preacher in their area by quickly sending out a delegation to learn the preacher's teachings suggests the Anishinabe people in the far-flung traveling kin groups of Upper Canada knew about the Methodists before preachers ever visited them.<sup>2</sup> It is clear Anishinabe leaders and community members were aware that important social connections and access to wealth and resources followed strategic alliances with missionaries. However, widespread Anishinabe participation in explicitly religious Methodist rituals suggests involvement in the movement was not just pragmatic.

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<sup>1</sup> Criticisms of Methodism would not be made in such a context, so this chapter explains why people who did believe and practice Methodism did so, and cannot explain the motivations of those who rejected it. Further, it is not possible from these testimonies to ascertain to what extent the Anishinabe Methodist leaders' pragmatic concerns about prosperity and social status were shared by average people in the villages.

<sup>2</sup> This familiarity might also have arisen from an early nineteenth century contact between a Methodist preacher named Joseph Sawyer and the Anishinabeg. In 1801 Sawyer visited the River Credit community and baptized Peter Jones's mother and Joseph Sawyer who would become Jones' chief. See Hope MacLean *The Hidden Agenda: Methodist Attitudes to the Ojibwa and the Development of Indian Schooling in Upper Canada 1821-1860* M.A. Thesis U of T Department of Educational Theory, 1978, 19. In a study of Anishinabe people living at Berens River in Manitoba, Susan Elaine Gray noted a similar phenomenon at Berens River in 1907 when the community requested that a permanent Methodist missionary years before the Methodist church had the ability or inclination to do send one. See, Susan Elaine Gray, *I Will Fear No Evil: Ojibwa-Missionary Encounters Along the Berens River, 1875 – 1940* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 64.



The most obvious example of spontaneity in Anishinabe Methodist practice are ceremonies that the Anishinabeg themselves invented, such as destroying medicine bags and paying or charging for Christian knowledge. The Methodist preachers did not expect people who joined their group to surrender the bundles, though they noted such acts with satisfaction. For example, a Methodist missionary at St. Clair in southwestern Upper Canada told a story of a man who signaled his adoption of Methodism by “surrendering” his medicines in their bag at a Methodist meeting.<sup>3</sup> In an even more freewill offering of sacred objects, a *Mide* leader in 1834 sent his medicine bag and his conjuring tools to James Evans, a Methodist minister, and then became a member of a new Methodist connection in his community. The ex-*Mide* explained his actions to the missionary by saying, “I thank [*Gitche Manitou*] he has sent you, I rejoice you have told me the good words, I will keep my promise to serve the good Spirit, I am feeling about for the good road that leads to Ishpeming.”<sup>4</sup> He also observed many young men were showing an inclination to become Christians. This spontaneous local custom demonstrated that the *oten* era’s flexibility was still operational, allowing for the adoption of the Nativist practice of destroying medicine bundles.

Another spontaneous ritual of the Anishinabe Methodists had its roots in the *oten*-era practice of giving tobacco to elders for stories, and in the *Midewiwin* practice of paying *Mide* elders for medicine rituals. In the non-Native Methodist tradition, people believed that Christian teachings were universally useful and should be freely available to everyone. But when written texts of Methodism got into the hands of Anishinabe people, they became part of a different system of knowledge exchange. One of the earliest

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<sup>3</sup> Wesleyan Missionary, “Extract from a letter from the Wesleyan Missionary at St. Clair Rapids, dated 18<sup>th</sup> Augt. 1835,” September 9, 1835, *Christian Guardian*, 174.

<sup>4</sup> James Evan, “Letter from St. Clair,” October 1, 1834, *Christian Guardian*, 186.

Anishinabe translations of the New Testament was given in the 1830s to Yellowhead, a Methodist chief at Lake Simcoe. Yellowhead required payment from those in his community who wished to read it. Yellowhead flatly refused to place the book in the hands of the community at large.<sup>5</sup> The Reverend Peter Jones attempted to explain this behaviour on the part of a devout Methodist chief by telling a Methodist bible society that Yellowhead was “a pious man who doesn’t want the book harmed.”<sup>6</sup> More likely, Yellowhead viewed the Bible as a source of knowledge that could be used effectively only by persons who had upheld their half of the reciprocal relationship between humans and powerful spirits by offering a suitable payment.<sup>7</sup>

Not all of the rituals involved an official Methodist minister. The Anishinabe Methodist leaders visited the communities only a few times a year, and even less often in communities further west and north. Those who chose to accept the Methodist message usually organized themselves into a “class meeting” for prayer and mutual support. Prayer meetings were generally held once a week at the home of a lay leader, a non-professional spiritual authority. The purpose of the prayer meeting was to allow individuals to share with each other their experiences of the previous week, and their needs for the subsequent week, in order to ask God to help them act ethically.<sup>8</sup> Just as class meetings formed the core of Methodist practice in non-Native communities, they

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<sup>5</sup> Jones received a letter of complaint from a member of Yellowhead’s community asking for more translations, “Peter Jones to Rev. A. Brandran of the Bible Society,” 6 December, 1832, Box 3, File 10, “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Ruth Landes, *Ojibwa Religion and the Midewiwin* (Madison & London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968) 47, 85, 86; for a detailed explanation of how the fees are distributed in the ceremony see Howard Dorsey Paap, “The Ojibwe *Midewiwin*: A Structural Analysis,” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: University of Manitoba, 1986), 127-131.

<sup>8</sup> Sources on the individual class meetings are almost non-existent as the leaders could not generally write and the content of the meetings was private. However records refer to particular Anishinabe Methodists as “class leaders” for examples see W. Case “Lake Simcoe Indian Mission” August 14, 1833, *Christian Guardian*, 158; James Evans, “Letter from St. Clair,” October 1, 1834 *Christian Guardian*, 186.

also became the foundation of on-the-ground Methodist practice in Anishinabe communities. Although this sort of meeting was entirely unprecedented in Anishinabe society, people appear to have participated regularly. The class meetings may have had a moderating effect on the tendency of the preachers to remove ethics from the control of the community and place it under the control of *Gitché Manitou*. They provided a venue to preserve the community as moral arbiter.

The class meetings became so important in one community that when James KeuTahKeZhick of the Lake Simcoe Methodists was dying in 1833, he was surrounded by the 21 members of his class meeting group.<sup>9</sup> The group later reported to William Case that KeuTahKeZhik had seemed comforted and happy, and had handled his illness with strength, saying he would “soon get home to heaven.”<sup>10</sup> Another man in the same community who died the same year, told his wife not to worry that he was dying because they would soon be united. In his final moments, the second man, John Beckahnakahboo said he could “hear singing ... they sing from heaven... we shall soon know all... I see two little ones.”<sup>11</sup> The dying man conveyed knowledge about the afterlife to the class group even as they comforted him.

One of the ways Anishinabe Methodists maintained a relationship with God was through prayer and reflection. Another important method was through singing. At class meetings, baptisms, and camp meetings, Anishinabe Methodists would sing songs that they had learned from the non-Native Methodists. Songs to call on *Manitou* power were part of most Anishinabe ceremonies. Even songs that were not obviously religious or spiritual in nature were often messages to the *Manitous*. For example, a song about a

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<sup>9</sup> W. Case “Lake Simcoe Indian Mission” August 14, 1833, *Christian Guardian*, 158.

<sup>10</sup> W. Case “Lake Simcoe Indian Mission” August 14, 1833, *Christian Guardian*, 158.

<sup>11</sup> W. Case “Lake Simcoe Indian Mission” August 14, 1833, *Christian Guardian*, 158.

deer when sung while hunting could also be a request for a *Manitou* to deliver a deer to the hunter.<sup>12</sup>

The Reverend Peter Jones made translations of Methodist hymns when their popularity among the Anishinabeg became obvious. An Anishinabe missionary visiting a family near Mackinaw for the first time reported that the meeting went well particularly because the family liked their singing. Not only did the family like the singing, but they also had the missionaries read the songs to them.<sup>13</sup> So popular were the Methodist hymns at Rice Lake that the missionaries started a “singing school” for the children.<sup>14</sup> From the point of view of the Anishinabeg, learning the Methodist hymns was a key element in maintaining the relationship between themselves and the *Gitche Manitou*

Less frequent than the class meetings, but no less important, were the inter-village camp meetings. Large delegations from all the farming villages organized and attended these meetings regularly. From determining location to arranging accommodations, the camp meetings relied on broad participation by Anishinabe Methodists. In the summer of 1833, James Evans met with local chiefs to decide where a meeting for the southwestern communities should take place.<sup>15</sup> Having decided on Lake Simcoe, the members of the local communities cleared the area; “tree trunks, underbrush and small trees” were removed to create a large open space. The workers built a platform in the centre of the field by driving poles into the ground. Two more construction projects completed the building. The community members built enough log benches to seat 1000 people and

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<sup>12</sup> Christopher Vecsey, *Traditional Ojibway Religion and its Historical Changes* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1983), 107.

<sup>13</sup> John Cah Beach and John Taunchey, “Native Missionaries at St. Marie, Lake Superior, Mackinaw and Lake Michigan,” October 9, 1833, *Christian Guardian*, 190.

<sup>14</sup> D. McMullen, “Letter to Editor from D. McMullen at Rice Lake Mission,” December 4, 1833, *Christian Guardian* 14.

<sup>15</sup> James Evans, “An Indian Camp Meeting” December 2, 1835, *Christian Guardian*, 14.

constructed large tents where the preachers, as well as any attendees who didn't have their own tent, could sleep.<sup>16</sup> Community members also went on special hunting trips to collect food for the event. At one camp meeting, a hunting party of several Anishinabe men led by Peter Jones brought back two deer from a three-day hunting trip to feed the crowd.<sup>17</sup>

Such meetings generally lasted between three and five days. Unlike most religious celebrations at the time, they almost always included both Natives and Euro-Americans, reflecting the assumption that the two groups could work together. Although they arranged their tents separately, the Anishinabeg and non-Natives stood together in the clearing and traversed the same emotional landscape over the several days of their stationary journey together. The leaders and their audience initially approached the *Gitché Manitou* in an anxious, almost adversarial posture.<sup>18</sup> The preacher would describe the needs of the people to the *Gitché Manitou* and remind him of his responsibility to help them. He asked the *Gitché Manitou* to give the people more power to help them do well in their lives because they depended on his help. Then the direction of the speaker's address shifted: the leader turned back to the audience and, as if speaking the *Manitou's* reply, began to tell his listeners what they needed to do to receive power. The audience generally followed the course of the debate between the leader and the *Manitou*, but sometimes spontaneously began to explain their own feelings and actions to the people around them. Sometimes, they expressed sudden, powerful feelings of relief or,

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<sup>16</sup> James Evans, "An Indian Camp Meeting" December 2, 1835, *Christian Guardian*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> At one camp meeting a hunting party of several Anishinabe men led by Peter Jones brought back two deer from a three day hunting trip to feed the crowd Peter Jones, *Life and Journals of Kah-Ke-Wa-Quo-Na-By (Rev. Peter Jones.) Wesleyan Missionary*. (Toronto: Anson Green, At the Wesleyans Printing Establishment, King Street East, 1860), 34, 173.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Jones, "*The Christian Guardian*, Toronto, 25 June, 1831, 130; see also Jones *Life and Journals*, 34.

especially toward the end of a long meeting, new power. Throughout the celebrations, everyone sang songs. Although Natives and Euro-Americans used different words for the songs — the Natives both sang and prayed in Anishna'bowen — they shared the same tunes.<sup>19</sup> English-speaking preachers with Anishinabe translators alternated with Anishinabe speakers, who addressed the Natives in the crowd in their own language. At the end of the celebration, the dramatic voluntary ritual of baptism, reminiscent of the Anishinabe naming ceremony, set apart the people who had experienced especially powerful encounters with the *Gitche Manitou*.<sup>20</sup>

It is difficult to uncover what participants in these gatherings thought of the various Methodist ceremonies. However, community members paid little attention to what Methodism could explain, and were far more interested in what it could do — or, more correctly, what it enabled them to do. At the community level, Anishinabe Methodism was all about forming a relationship with Jesus, or the *Gitche Manitou*. The Anishinabe Methodists believed the purpose of this relationship was very similar to the relationship Anishinabeg people had always formed with guardian *Manitous*. Like the other *Manitous*, the *Gitche Manitou* gave people spiritual power to help them achieve *Bimadziwin* by returning to their own values, especially generosity and courage, and by helping them cope with the unprecedented numbers of deaths through disease that afflicted their communities in periodic epidemics.

In both the Anishinabe Methodist and the non-Native Methodist traditions, the ritual through which individuals formed their association with the *Gitche Manitou* was

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<sup>19</sup> Peter Jones produced a hymnal in which he presented the words and tunes of Methodist hymns in English alongside their translation into Anish'abowen *A Collection of Chippeway and English Hymns* (New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1847); for general information on Methodist revivalism in Upper Canada see G. A. Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire: Radical Evangelicalism in British North America 1775 – 1812*, 102 – 123.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Jones to Eliza Jones, 4 September 1840, Box 3, File 5, The Peter Jones Collection, V.U.A.

baptism. However, the two groups understood the nature of the relationship between humans and *Gitche Manitou* quite differently. For the non-Native Methodists, the baptism ceremony erased the imperfections of a person's character, enabling them to approach a deity who was repulsed by unethical behaviour. In the Anishinabe Methodist tradition, baptism created a guardian/dependant relationship by transferring spiritual power from the deity to the human and creating reciprocal obligations.

Before performing the baptism ceremony on Anishinabe people, preachers asked the would-be initiates a series of theological questions to ascertain whether they understood the basic tenets of Christianity. On one such occasion at Penetanguishene in 1832, the questioners noted that the responses revealed that the initiates believed that God had "saved them from their sins" and had helped them stop drinking alcohol.<sup>21</sup> Asking questions about theology reflected the Methodist leadership's belief that their religion was primarily an explanatory system, and as such could not be employed by people who didn't understand what it explained and how. Asking theological questions also highlighted the non-Native Methodists' belief that baptism marked a change from one set of beliefs to another. Experiencing the ceremony from the perspective of their own history and culture, however, the Anishinabe initiates saw both the form and function of their own naming ceremony in the baptisms.

In Anishinabe naming ceremonies, a community elder was asked to extend some of the power from his own *Manitou* guardian to a child by giving the child a name. The new name established the child's first relationship with a Manitou and added to the child's total resources of power and blessing.<sup>22</sup> The naming ceremony layered the

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<sup>21</sup> Peter Jones, "Peter Jones' Visit to Penetanguishene" August 8, 1832, *Christian Guardian*, 154.

<sup>22</sup> See discussion of naming ceremony in Chapter 1, p 17.

identity of the child, adding the new *Manitou* blessing to the qualities that the child already possessed. It was not the last layer of identity that the child would gain. At the child's vision quest, when they developed their own direct relationship with a *Manitou*, another powerful layer would be added. To many Anishinabeg, the Methodist baptism ritual was another way to gain power.

The way Anishinabe people sought out baptism supports the idea that they saw it as an opportunity to gain power rather than as the sign that they had, through a process of study and reflection, decided to change their lives entirely. In 1831, the Reverend John Benham reported that members of the Anishinabe community at Saugeen on the southern shore of Lake Huron had traveled 150 miles to the River Credit to be baptized.<sup>23</sup>

Another woman traveled 250 miles in a canoe to reach the Methodist missionary at Sault Ste. Marie to get baptized.<sup>24</sup> Although such cases suggest that choosing to be baptized was an individual decision, sometimes whole communities would ask to receive the ritual at once. In 1828, when Yellowhead's community at Lake Simcoe became Methodist, 132 people were baptized at once.<sup>25</sup> Because the person delivering the blessing did not live near the communities of those seeking baptism, the Methodist preachers could not hope to reshape entirely the ethics or beliefs of the new initiates, nor, it would appear, did the initiates expect them to.

The Anishinabe belief that the baptism ceremony was similar to their own naming ceremony often led them to seek out the most spiritually powerful person to perform the

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<sup>23</sup> John Benham, "For the Christian Guardian" July 23, 1831, *Christian Guardian*, 146.

<sup>24</sup> William Herkimer, "Religion in the Wilds of Lake Superior" February 22, 1837, *Christian Guardian*, 61.

<sup>25</sup> John Carroll, *Case and His Cotemporaries or, The Canadian Itinerants' Memorial: Constituting a Biographical History of Methodism in Canada from its Introduction Into the Province Till the Death of the Rev. William Case, in 1855*, 5 vols, ( Toronto: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1869) vol 3, 180 – 183.



ritual. In the naming ceremony, the namer conveyed power relative to their own spiritual power. The Anishinabe people seemed to believe that the same was true of Methodist leaders. An Anishinabe minister named David Sawyer was baptizing people at the community of Munceytown on the Thames river in 1835 when several people decided to wait for Joseph Stinson, the general superintendent of Methodist missions at the time, to arrive to perform their baptisms.<sup>26</sup> Stinson, who held more authority in the Methodist church than Sawyer, may have been seen as capable of offering more spiritual power.

The power transference that the Anishinabe people expected to occur in the baptism ceremony sometimes took on visible manifestations, just as it did in their own rituals. In an Anishinabe *Midewiwin* initiation ceremony, elders lectured the young people who were entering the society on their moral obligations. The elder then transferred spiritual power from their own medicine bag into the body of the initiate, which caused the young person to fall down as if dead.<sup>27</sup> This pattern of receiving spiritual power and falling down as if dead was more likely to happen during the singing or praying portions of a camp meeting, but on at least one occasion, it happened during a baptism ceremony. In 1835, two sisters asked a Methodist missionary to baptize them at Sault Ste. Marie. According to the missionary, one of the women fell down “as dead.”<sup>28</sup> The would-be initiates followed the logic of their own tradition, both to understand and shape their own experience of baptism.

Being baptized was not the final step in becoming a servant of *Gitche Manitou*. Baptism represented an individual’s decision to enter *Gitche Manitou*’s service, and was marked by sadness and regret over past actions. The second step was what non-Native

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<sup>26</sup> David Sawyer, “Extract of a Letter” September 2, 1835, *Christian Guardian*, 71.

<sup>27</sup> James Evans, “An Indian Feast” January 28, 1835, *Christian Guardian*, 46.

<sup>28</sup> J. Scott “Pious Doings” April 22, 1835, *Christian Guardian*, 93.

Methodists called “sanctification” and Anishinabe Methodists called “Getting Happy.” When the Anishinabe Methodist leaders presented their movement to people, one of the sharp distinctions they made between earlier Anishinabe religious practice and their program was the experience of “getting happy.” In a sermon, Peter Jones explained there was “no true happiness in this world,” even though all people desire happiness and pursue it. He noted elsewhere that “religion is the one thing needful... to be happy.”<sup>29</sup>

One of the defining characteristics of Methodist doctrine was “sanctification.” According to the Methodists, humans could avoid sin. The Methodists taught that after people realized their lives and actions were not virtuous, a second spiritual event could occur in which one part of the God-trinity gave them the spiritual power to transcend their tendency to act wrongly.<sup>30</sup> For the Anishinabeg, this “sanctification” was “revitalization” through a *Manitou* blessing. However, Anishinabe Methodists believed that the *Gitché Manitou*’s blessing gave power to live ethically and thereby restore *Bimadziwin* in the post-fur trade world. Other *Manitou* blessings were specific to the work Anishinabe people needed to contribute to the *oten*, such as speed for hunters or heightened hearing for hunters.

When Anishinabe people described “getting happy,” they often said that they began to behave admirably as a result. At an 1833 Methodist prayer meeting in Munceytown, a man named “Captain John” related, “I got happy at the prayer meeting and have been happy ever since. I was once very savage, very quick angry, but now I am

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<sup>29</sup> Peter Jones sermon “This World is not Our Rest” Box 2, File 1, “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.; Peter Jones, “The One Thing Needful” (sermon) Box 2, File 1 “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

<sup>30</sup> For a dramatic account of the Canadian Methodist leader Henry Alline’s experience of sanctification see Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire*, 11, 12.

not, I will go to heaven.”<sup>31</sup> At a Rice Lake Love Feast in 1834, Sally Snake declared the “Great Spirit always sees my heart, knows how poor and weak I am. I feel very poor this day in my heart. I try to watch every day that sin may not get into my heart.” She identified her susceptibility to sin as the result of weakness, a weakness the Great Spirit’s protection could help her overcome.<sup>32</sup> More explicitly, William Snake of Lake Simcoe testified in 1841 “... when I trust the Lord he keeps me from sinning.”<sup>33</sup>

The image of following a good path that leads to heaven also recurred in the testimonies. Like the chart that was shown to Neolin of the way his ancestors had walked to happiness, the Anishinabe Methodists claimed they had been shown the directions to happiness. It is not clear from the path references whether the old, crooked path was original Anishinabe ceremonies or a misdirection from the fur trade era. However, occasional references to alcohol abuse and being alone in a “wilderness” suggest the crooked path may have been a recent, temporary diversion. In July 1833, “Alexander,” identified as a leader from the Saugeen, said he had been “converted” six years earlier at the River Credit, and since that time “I have not yet lost sight of the good way.”<sup>34</sup> At the same event, a man called Big Canoe said, “I find the ways of God good ways,” suggesting that he was not only following the Methodist path, but also judging that path against a standard external to Methodism.<sup>35</sup> Even more directly evoking Neolin’s path, John Isaacs from Rice Lake declared, “...before my path was crooked and I was fast walking down to the bad place, I am now trying to walk straight that I might get to

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<sup>31</sup> “Missionary,” “To the Editor of the Christian Guardian” March 23, 1836, *Christian Guardian*, 78.

<sup>32</sup> J. Stinson “Stinson’s Report of a Love Feast at Rice Lake” October 1, 1834, *The Christian Guardian*, 186.

<sup>33</sup> “Our Visit to the Missions of Lake Simcoe” January 27, 1841, *The Christian Guardian*, 54.

<sup>34</sup> William Case, “Report on visit to Saugeen,” July 31, 1833, *The Christian Guardian*, 146.

<sup>35</sup> William Case, “Report on visit to Saugeen,” July 31, 1833, *The Christian Guardian*, 146.

heaven.” A fellow community member Emma Ramahsega said “The Great Spirit brought me out of darkness to see the way to heaven.”<sup>36</sup>

The image of the path was important not only as a device to emphasize the importance of right behaviour, but also because it suggested the destination of heaven. In his Royal Ontario Museum report, *The Round Lake Ojibwa*, E. S. Rogers noted that “Christianity, as understood by the Round Lake Ojibwa, is concerned primarily with a person’s soul and life after death, while the aboriginal concepts deal with interpersonal relations and the behaviour of individuals while here on earth.”<sup>37</sup> The same was true of the nineteenth-century Anishinabeg in Upper Canada. The Anishinabeg’s earliest introduction to Christian teaching connected it with death. When Jesuits first told Jesus stories to Anishinabe people at Sault Ste. Marie, they emphasized Jesus’ power over the afterlife and his power over healing.<sup>38</sup> The Jesuits told their audiences that Jesus would punish people who did not please him with eternal suffering in the afterlife.<sup>39</sup> When Methodists arrived with Jesus stories a century and a half later, they reinforced the idea that Jesus, or the *Gitche Manitou*, controlled the afterlife and had healing powers. By adopting a *Manitou* who could conquer disease and protect people after death, the Anishinabe Methodists took action against despair and gave themselves a new way to think about the future.

In nineteenth-century Upper Canada, death, and what happened to people after it, was at the forefront of many people’s minds. Deaths from disease plagued the communities at the same time several new teachings about the afterlife were circulating

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<sup>36</sup> J. Stinson, “Stinson’s Report of a Love Feast at Rice Lake,” October 1, 1834, *The Christian Guardian*, 186.

<sup>37</sup> E. S. Rogers, *The Round Lake Ojibwa*, D 2.

<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 1, 37 – 39.

<sup>39</sup> Vescey, *Paths of Kateri’s Kin*, (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 208.

around Upper Canada.<sup>40</sup> Large numbers of death, combined with a culturally constructed panic about the afterlife, left Anishinabe people eager to hear about a *Manitou* who could protect people once they had died.

It was not only numbers of deaths that caused the Anishinabeg in Upper Canada to welcome a *Manitou* who could promise his followers a good afterlife. Anxiety about death also arose from teachings, old and new, that created uncertainty about where people would go when they died. Before the seventeenth century, the Anishinabe teaching was that after death all people, regardless of their ethnicity or actions in life, went to the sunset lands. In the eighteenth century, the prophets Neolin and Tenskwatawa told their followers that an eternity of punishment awaited people who behaved unjustly in their lifetime. Followers of the prophets also believed that ethnicity affected people's destination in the afterlife. Europeans went to a "white" heaven, while First Nations people went to a different place.

Sometime in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries, concerns about the afterlife were stoked by a prophet at Lake Simcoe in the Back Anishinabe community. Henry Bird Steinhauer, a Methodist Anishinabe preacher who lived from 1818 to 1884, reported to historian Benjamin Slight that his grandfather had had a vision of the end of the world. The actual date of the vision is unknown, though it must have happened before 1844 when it was printed in Benjamin Slight's *Indian Researches*, and likely was much earlier. Steinhauer's grandfather's vision showed the entire earth being destroyed in a fire. Steinhauer's grandfather reported the non-human persons who showed him the

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<sup>40</sup> On the Upper Canada epidemics see Chapter 2, 9; Schmalz, *The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario*, 104; On the effects of disease on First Nations generally see Bruce Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: a History of the Huron People to 1660*. (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 588 – 601; Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: the Biological Expansion of Europe 900 – 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) first published 1986, 195-217.

vision told him that after the fire, all of the good people would go to the “good hunting ground,” but lazy people and murderers would go to a bad place.<sup>41</sup>

When the Anishinabe Methodist leaders began preaching, they reinforced these messages about the possibility of eternal suffering by telling audiences they needed to become Methodist to avoid punishment after death. In an 1833 sermon, the Reverend John Sunday said, “are we sleep yet in sin, not to think about religion of Jesus Christ? Oh! if we are, we are danger to go into hell. We do not know when our death would come upon us. Death will not say to us, Now I come, be ready now. Death will not wait for us. My brothers and sisters, now is the time to be prepared to go into heaven.”<sup>42</sup>

The Methodists promised their followers a blissful afterlife in which people would be reunited with ancestors. Anishinabe Methodists began to refer to the deaths of Anishinabe Methodists as “happy deaths.” Many of the personal statements of Anishinabe Methodists referred to their feelings about their own deaths or the deaths of loved ones. At a Love Feast held in 1834 at Rice Lake, a woman named Emma Ramahsega said, “I am very happy in my heart this day. The Great Spirit has done much for me, in bringing me out of darkness to see the way to heaven.”<sup>43</sup> At the same event, Chief Yellowhead said his greatest desire was to get to heaven, where he could be happy with the people he knew who had already died.<sup>44</sup> These statements demonstrate how closely Anishinabe people identified the movement with their concerns about death.

Some people explained their concerns about the afterlife as their basic motivation for

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<sup>41</sup> Benjamin Slight, *Indian Researches; or, facts concerning the North American Indians; including Notices of their present state of Improvement, in their Social, Civil and Religious Condition; with Hints for their future advancement* (Montreal: printed for the author, J.E.L. Miller 1844), 89.

<sup>42</sup> Carroll, *Case and his Cotemporaries*, vol 4, 89.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Stinson, “Indian Love Feast,” October 1, 1834, *Christian Guardian*, 186.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Stinson, “Indian Love Feast,” October 1, 1834, *Christian Guardian*, 186; as mentioned earlier, people who used the path metaphor identified heaven as their goal, see also John Isaacs in Joseph Stinson, “Indian Love Feast,” October 1, 1834, *Christian Guardian*, 186.

becoming Methodists. The people at the Walpole Island community asked Methodist missionaries to visit them in order to show them “the road to Ishpeming” (the Christian heaven).<sup>45</sup>

The concept of the Christian heaven was as important to Anishinabe Methodists as the idea of sin was to non-Native Methodists. Peter Salt, an Anishinabe man, explained to a visiting Methodist that two non-Native Methodists told him the world would be destroyed in a fire. Salt believed that the sunset lands afterlife of Anishinabe tradition would also be destroyed. He became afraid that he would not have anywhere to go when he died and felt “sick in [his] heart” because of it.<sup>46</sup> Fear of what would happen to him after death prompted Salt’s interest in Methodism. Salt’s use of the word “sick” suggests a unique Anishinabe twist on Methodist doctrine. In non-Native Methodist language, “soul sickness” was a phrase used to describe sinfulness and the feelings associated with living unethically. However, Salt’s heart was sick, not because he felt guilty of misbehaviour, but because he was afraid of the afterlife. That said, Salt did alter his behaviour once he adopted Methodism and, in his words “Got Happy.” Salt said he “kicked away all my medicine bags, my images, my drum, my rattle and my bird skins, and my snake skins...”<sup>47</sup> In this way, Salt’s response resembled the practices of Tenskwatawa’s followers, who eschewed medicine because they believed they had found a stronger replacement.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> James Evans, “Evans to Stinson,” reprinted April 15, 1835 *Christian Guardian*, 90.

<sup>46</sup> John Douse, George Henry, “To the Editor of the Christian Guardian,” October 17, 1838, *Christian Guardian*, 198.

<sup>47</sup> John Douse, George Henry, “To the Editor of the Christian Guardian,” October 17, 1838, *Christian Guardian*, 198.

<sup>48</sup> David R. Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (Boston, Little Brown: 1984), 80.

From the perspective of a person who was dying, the benefit of Methodism was the power to die well. In celebratory accounts of people who died a “happy death,” the central figure consciously faced imminent death, yet expressed no sadness or fear, and in many instances transcended their own emotions to comfort their mourners.<sup>49</sup> The Reverend Peter Jones described the death of a River Credit woman named Tunewah. According to Jones, the woman said “ she was happy, and felt the presence of her Saviour to comfort her heart.”<sup>50</sup>

More than being personally happy, many of the stories included evidence the deceased had helped their loved ones because of their attitude toward dying. An Anishinabe woman from Saugeen at Georgian Bay related the story of her own daughter’s death and the effect it later had on her:

Ever since then whenever I think of her happy death my heart is made very glad for my thoughts are in heaven. Before she died I watch over her night and day. A little before she died as I was standing and weeping over her, and thinking that her spirit had already gone to heaven. She suddenly opened her eyes and spoke to me and said, “Mother, don’t weep for me. I am going the Great spirit before you. Mother in all your trials and temptations think of your daughter in glory. Mother, don’t weep for me. I must now go to Jesus. I bid you farewell.”<sup>51</sup>

This example was likely known in many communities in Upper Canada because Peter Jones recorded it in his sermon anecdote book and undoubtedly retold it in sermons. The idea that Methodism brought new power to face death indicated an innovation in Anishinabe tradition in that the power was new. At the same time, it tied it to the pattern of Anishinabe tradition by asserting that, just as Nanabozho gave the *Midewiwin* to

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<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of these “dying speeches” see Kristina Bross, “Dying Saint, Vanishing Savages “Dying Indian Speeches” in Colonial New England Literature” *Early American Literature* 36:3 (2001), 325 – 352; Craig White “The Praying Indians’ Speeches as Texts of Massachusetts Oral Culture” *Early American Literature* 38:3 (2003), 437 – 467.

<sup>50</sup> “Conversion and Happy Death of old Tunewah” Box 1, File 5, “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.

<sup>51</sup> “Happy Death of an Indian Girl” Sahgeeng Mission December 25, 1843, Box 1, File 5 “Peter Jones Collection” V.U.A.



humans to help them face death well, so too could this new teaching help with these new deaths.<sup>52</sup>

Describing the deaths of friends and family members allowed Anishinabe Methodist preachers to remind their audiences of the comfort a happy death could give to people still alive. Peter Jones addressed an exuberant crowd of friends when he returned to the River Credit community after his first trip to England in 1832. He observed that some of the people who had wished him goodbye had died while he was traveling. He said he missed them, but was glad they had “died happy” and gone to heaven.<sup>53</sup> When John Sunday mentioned his children’s deaths, he observed that they “were happy with Jesus in heaven” and that he would see them again when he died.<sup>54</sup> The emphatic quality of these repeated assertions about reunion in heaven suggests its importance to the promoters and followers of the new tradition.

For the Anishinabeg, one of the most important aspects of Methodist teaching about death was the assertion that people would be reunited with their loved ones after death. This promise was repeated at love feasts and prayer meetings throughout the 1830s.<sup>55</sup> In the early 1830s, the Anishinabe preacher John Sunday visited the Falls of St. Mary’s near Sault Ste. Marie to try to convince the community there to adopt Methodism. While he was there, the chief’s grandson died. Sunday took the opportunity to explain the Christian burial ritual and Christian views of the afterlife. Sunday reported, “I told

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<sup>52</sup> See discussion of *Midewiwin* in this thesis Chapter 1, 26; Michael Angel, *Preserving the Sacred: Historical Perspectives on the Ojibwa Midewiwin* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2002), 57.

<sup>53</sup> Author unknown, “Visit to the Credit Indians – Miscellaneous Remarks,” *Christian Guardian* 27 June, 1832, 130.

<sup>54</sup> Sunday to Alder, April 7, 1841, Correspondence, Box 25, Roll 23, file 169, item 21 “ Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society” V.U.A.

<sup>55</sup> In one meeting in 1838 three people expressed the belief that they would be going to the Christian heaven, and two of those were excited to be reunited with others there, John Douse, George Henry, “To the Editor of the *Christian Guardian*,” October 17, 1838 *Christian Guardian*, 198.

the chief [Shingwaukonse] if he would become a Christian, he would see the little child again, for the Lord had taken it.”<sup>56</sup> If it was indeed Sunday’s *Manitou* who took Shingwaukonse’s son, then the boy had not gone to the setting sun in the west and truly was out of the chief’s reach unless he did as Sunday suggested. Shingwaukonse demonstrated his belief in Sunday’s authority to interpret the spiritual significance of the boy’s death by allowing Sunday to bury the boy in a coffin and perform a Christian funeral service, despite his own wish to burn the body according to Anishinabe tradition. By allowing Sunday to control the funeral, Shingwaukonse also publicly identified Sunday as a person with a close relationship to a powerful *Manitou* because only powerful religious leaders took on the responsibility for performing funerals in Anishinabe society.<sup>57</sup> In this case, Sunday’s *Manitou* clearly had authority over death, a belief also held by a Lake Huron chief who brought sick children to a Methodist minister to be baptized before they died. The missionary explained that “as for himself [the chief] and his people they wished to hear more about the good word before they were baptized.”<sup>58</sup> The chief’s urgency to have the sick children baptized suggests he believed Methodism could provide a safe afterlife.

For many Methodist Anishinabeg, embracing the new faith did not mean a total rejection of traditional beliefs. In 1838, a man identified as an “old warrior” at the Nativist-influenced community of St. Clair observed:

I thought when the missionaries first came they were going to change all our manners and customs, and almost believed that our good practices would be changed to the bad ones, and our bad into good ones...But I am

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<sup>56</sup> John Sunday, “Mission of John Sunday and Two Other Converted Indians, From Grape Island, to the North Western Indians,” November 5, 1831, *Christian Guardian*, 205.

<sup>57</sup> Landes, *Ojibwa Sociology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), 3.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Jones to Eliza Jones, July 24, 1835, on board steam boat Peter Robinson, Box 3, File 5, “Peter Jones Collection,” V.U.A.

happy to discover, that in no case have we been instructed to give up one single good thought or notion ... to think or do one bad one.<sup>59</sup>

This man, perhaps influenced by Bauzhigezhiwaeshikum's supporters from Walpole Island, had expected the Methodist movement to propose ethical practices contrary to Anishinabe customs, and was surprised to find continuity between the two ways. Interestingly, European missionary James Evans included this quotation in an 1838 official Methodist report to the lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, suggesting he believed his Euroamerican supporters would not object to the idea that there were fundamental similarities between Anishinabe culture and Methodist practice. For most Anishinabe Methodists, the new teachings did not change established ethics. Instead, they offered new rituals to get power to meet their particular circumstances.

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<sup>59</sup> James Evans, "Remarks on the late surrender of the Saugeeng Territory,- and the general treatment of the Christian Indians, under the Administration of Sir F. B. Head, Bart. K.C.G., Lieut. Governor of Upper Canada" May 9, 1838, *Christian Guardian*, 105, 106.

## **Conclusion: A Forgotten Era**

Recent work by Canadian historian Susan Elaine Gray has shown that Anishinabe philosophy differed from Christian forms of belief precisely in that it is and was *more* complex. Percy Berens, who lives at the Anishinabe community of Berens River, Manitoba, today, described his own attitude toward the Manitous who inhabited the Anishinabe cosmos, saying, “I don’t *choose* to believe in them spirits... But they can exist for other people.” He added, “If you believe strong enough to believe that there’s spirits there, then they’re there.”<sup>1</sup> For Berens, the extent and intensity of people’s belief affects their access to spiritual power. The adaptability of Anishinabe spirituality arose from a broad perception of truth.

Not only did the Anishinabeg of early nineteenth-century Upper Canada share Berens’ expansive attitude toward cosmology and truth, they also lived at a time of sudden political reversals, which predisposed them to expect social change. They lost their land in the Great Lakes Basin in the early eighteenth century when their fur trade rivals pushed them north. From widely spread *oten* groups, they moved into closer quarters with increased cultural exchange at Sault St. Marie. In 1690, they retook their old territory and reformed their *oten* groups on large swaths of hunting grounds. During the eighteenth century, the Anishinabeg followed the course of First Nations’ relations with the British and participated in the colonial wars. At the same time, the Anishinabeg living closest to Lake Ontario resumed vigorous trading with Euroamericans. When settlers arrived in their own territory in the last decade of the eighteenth century, the Anishinabeg greeted them with varying degrees of warmth. All were wary, having

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Elaine Gray, “*I Will Fear No Evil*”: *Ojibwa-Missionary Encounters Along the Berens River, 1875 – 1940* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), xxvii.

observed how such colonial relations could play out, but the Lake Ontario Anishinabeg had higher expectations of things going well than did their compatriots in the Back communities.

After thirty years of living with the settlers, both the Lake and the Back Anishinabeg had lost hope that their relations with the settlers would achieve a sustained, mutually acceptable stasis. At the same time, Methodist missionaries from the United States began to visit First Nations people in Upper Canada, hoping to convert them. The Methodists offered spiritual teachings and technological assistance and financing for the development of farming villages at a time when settlers' interference with hunting territories and fish runs were threatening the Anishinabeg's subsistence. Believing the material worlds and the spirit worlds were not separate, the Anishinabeg welcomed the Methodists, both for their practical help in establishing a new subsistence base, and for their spiritual teachings, which offered an explanation for the gap in prosperity between them and the settlers. Several influential community leaders took up the cause of Methodism and became passionate proponents of its teachings.

Hoping to achieve a new equilibrium in Upper Canada, the leaders of the new Anishinabe Methodist movement did more than promise the blessings of the Methodist god, *Gitche Manitou*, to their people. They also reminded the colonial government of *Gitche Manitou's* expectations. Traveling to England and York and writing letters to bring the concerns of their people to the attention of the colony's leaders, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders took up the critique of colonialism in a way that echoed the Nativist prophets of the south. However, they rejected the Nativists' cultural radicalism,

preferring instead to promote reforms within the confines of established Anishinabe political and social practices.

Those who took up Anishinabe Methodism in the farming villages attended weekly prayer meetings and occasional large-group camp meetings with a regularity and fervor that suggests the movement had real spiritual meaning for them. When asked what Methodism meant to them, the Anishinabe followers mentioned gratitude for the *Gitche Manitou's* love, his help in overcoming poor behaviour and the comfort he gave to them and their family members in times of grief. The promise of an afterlife in heaven was the gift of *Gitche Manitou* for which they were most grateful.

The Anishinabe Methodist leaders, and the Methodist chiefs such as Joseph Sawyer of River Credit and Yellowhead of Lake Simcoe, created close political networks between the various Anishinabe villages in Upper Canada. Through meetings at general councils and Methodist camp meetings, or occasions that combined both, the leaders cooperated to devise strategies to deal with the settlers, help each other weather the periods of want during the transition to farming, and cope with land insecurity when the colonial government began taking reserve land in the late 1830s.

While respecting established forms of governance, the Anishinabe Methodists adopted many social changes related to establishing farms. Divisions of farm labour broke down along gender lines, creating new forms of work for both men and women that led to new cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity. Sickness came to be thought of in terms of germs and diseases, rather than punishments and vengeance. Most importantly, non-Native and Anishinabe Methodists started day schools in the Methodist

villages. At first, the day schools taught academic subjects, but their focus soon shifted to more practical instruction.

This brief period when Anishinabe people successfully participated in colonial economic systems has been overshadowed by the much longer era in which poverty was endemic on Native reserves and First Nations children were sent to residential schools. In the era described by this study, both Anishinabe political and ethical structures remained in place even while the communities incorporated technological and cultural practices from the settler society. It is important to reintroduce the earlier period of history back into the historical record to combat several perceptions that have resulted from its absence.

First, because the early era of Anishinabe-settler relations has been forgotten, the history of Anishinabe people in Upper Canada has been told as a steady decline that began at the time of settlement and continued unabated until the Red Power movements of the 1960s. This misconception unduly exonerates the conservative political and religious leaders who fought to wrest authority from the hands of the Anishinabe Methodist leaders in the 1840s because it ignores the fact that such leaders ever had wide power and influence. It also obscures the initial successes that Anishinabe Methodist leaders achieved, and recasts First Nations history in Canada as a narrative of tragic inevitability.<sup>2</sup> If current popular belief holds that nothing but decline has ever occurred since non-Natives first lived in this territory, there is no foundation to believe that the two communities could ever benefit each other and no motivation to try to do things differently. Such a conviction conforms to the eighteenth-century belief that First

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<sup>2</sup> Karl Hele, "Conflict and Cooperation at Garden River First Nation: Missionaries, Ojibwa, and Government Interactions, 1854 – 1871" *The Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, 47:1 (2005), 75 – 117.

Nations cultures cannot survive intensive contact with European cultures. However, as was shown in the discussion of the treaties and of the Anishinabe alliance with the Methodists, nineteenth-century Anishinabe people believed in the potential of mutually beneficial relations with the Euroamerican settlers to strengthen their communities.

Because the historical record has ignored the participation of Anishinabe people from north of the Great Lakes in the North West War, the Anishinabeg's acceptance of British settlers has been interpreted as a reflection of their inexperience with colonial strategies. However, as has been shown, the Anishinabeg knew a great deal about British ideas of land, warfare and alliance. They also had an understanding of American ideas on each of these matters. The Anishinabeg's decision to ally with the British in the early treaties arose from their belief, built through past alliances, that the two nations could and might help each other.

Second, the cultural predisposition to embrace new information, technology and rituals so evident in Anishinabe history, described in Chapter 1 of this thesis, has not been recognized by non-Native historians. Though Susan Neylan has treated this subject at length in her work on the Tsimshian, it remains an unpopular concept.<sup>3</sup> Horror at the Canadian state's unrelenting assault on First Nations cultures through the second half of the nineteenth century and all of the twentieth has left historians and political activists with little time to consider whether, under more equal economic conditions and not under attack by a wildly evangelistic culture, Anishinabe people might have welcomed new teachings. Indeed, such a suggestion could not be made for two reasons. First, doing so might serve to exonerate the Canadian state and churches from responsibility for their

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<sup>3</sup> Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 28 – 44.



project of cultural destruction even while that project was ongoing. Second, the influence of modernist philosophy made the possibility of a thought world that celebrated challenge and novelty while maintaining social coherence, in the way that Anishinabe philosophy did, almost inconceivable to many scholars.

The Anishinabe Methodist leaders have long been denied their place alongside the celebrated Nativist teachers like Neolin and Tenskwatawa because the early years of Anishinabe-settler co-operation have been ignored. The structural similarities between revivalist movements and the Anishinabe Methodist movement are striking. Both identified their own moment in history as a time of decline from which salvation was available through moral change and new spiritual rituals. Both movements also encouraged followers to take pride in their own cultural past and use that pride to help them create a more prosperous future.

The concept of *bimadziwin* as the ordering principle of Anishinabe decision-making has been hidden by the concepts of self-protection and profit-maximization woven into modern academic discourse. Because *bimadziwin* involved protection and promotion of community wealth, many of the behaviours of Anishinabe people pursuing it in the context of colonialism have appeared to indicate cultural change even while they were actually following ancient precedents. As a result, Anishinabe Methodists who took up farming and Christian rituals have been described as “converts,” as if they had abandoned their beliefs. Rather, as has been shown, they were traditionalists adhering to a tradition that is difficult for non-Native scholars to recognize.

Further, an overemphasis on the intentions, dreams and arrogance of missionaries has led to a historiographic conflation of the spiritual elements of Anishinabe Methodism

with the material elements of establishing Anishinabe farms. While missionaries often confused the joy they felt at sharing new spiritual teachings with non-Christians with the relief they experienced when First Nations people stopped some foreign social practice and took up a European one, Anishinabe people were not so confused. Rather, as shown in chapter 4, the Anishinabe Methodist leaders celebrated the spiritual power **they** received from their relationship with Gitchi Manitou and promoted the social reorganization and medical practices of the farming villages as the necessities of living under the condition of settler colonialism.

Canadian historians' attention to the decline of First Nations communities in Upper Canada is understandable given that the lifespan of the functioning farming communities was so short. But the possibility that such farms might be successful was very real to the Anishinabe people who lived on them. Historian Janet Chute has pointed out that in the early nineteenth century, other Anishinabe leaders also believed their communities would be able to join in the new Upper Canadian economy. Chute argues that Shigwaukonse of Garden River opposed radical resistance to colonialism and preferred to help his community acquire Euroamerican skills and profit from mining.<sup>4</sup>

The rise and fall of the farming communities affected Anishinabe communities on many levels. In terms of political relations with the new settlers, the abrupt change in colonial policy with respect to the farms followed by pressure for the First Nations people to leave their developed villages for other reserves resulted in a sharpened political discourse, marked by explicit, sustained conflict. Economically, the end of the village experiment ended the possibility that First Nations people could enter the non-Native

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<sup>4</sup> Janet Chute, "A Unifying Vision: Shigwaukonse's Plan for the Future of the Great Lakes Ojibwa." *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, new series 7 (1996), 59, 64, 68.

economy of Upper Canada on an equal footing by creating the belief in First Nations' people's minds that they could be removed from their land at any time. This belief made farming, reliant as it is on constancy and long-term planning, a high-risk proposition for First Nations people. At the end of the 1840s, many communities were redirecting their efforts to hunting and non-Native education.

Beginning as early as the late 1830s, the colonial government began to attack the very farming villages they had helped build. The treaties had offered farming assistance to Natives in exchange for land rights for non-Natives. But within a decade of the subsidized farms' creation, the government began to claw back the properties. In the 1840s, the developing Anishinabe economic crisis was exacerbated by the Anishinabe Methodist leaders' sudden loss of faith in Anishinabe political and social organization. Peter Jones began to promote residential schools to break down the connection between children and their parents. Ultimately, the turn to residential schools purged the Anishinabe Methodist movement of the revivalist influences of the Nativist movements, the cultural pride that those influences promoted and the community-centred ethical system.

The end of the Coldwater farming village set the pattern for later removals and announced to Anishinabeg far and wide that the land they had reserved for themselves was not secure. Having lived together at Coldwater only since 1830, three Anishinabe communities led by Captain Snake, John Assance and Yellowhead had achieved a great deal by 1833. The community had constructed 25 houses, a school and a saw mill, and a grist mill was being built.<sup>5</sup> Under orders from the colonial government, they had built a

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<sup>5</sup> William Case, "To the Editor of the Christian Guardian," June 26, 1833 *The Christian Guardian*, 130.

road connecting Lake Simcoe to Georgian Bay.<sup>6</sup> More important, the community had established productive farms.<sup>7</sup>

However, the new lieutenant governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, targeted Coldwater for immediate destruction. In 1836, the Coldwater residents signed a surrender of the land in Treaty #48.<sup>8</sup> In 1837, the Methodist missionary in the area reported that the community was discouraged “because of the government’s attempts to remove them to Manitoulin Island.” Drinking was up and school attendance was down.<sup>9</sup> The next year, the entire community disbanded. Yellowhead’s community of 184 people moved to Rama at Lake Simcoe, John Assance’s 232 people went to Beausoleil Island in Georgian Bay and Captain Snake took his group to an island in Lake Simcoe, which they named after him.<sup>10</sup>

The land that was cleared by the removal stood vacant for the next fourteen years. The empty houses became a symbol of the colonial government’s malevolence toward the First Nations. Riding along the house-lined road that led into the empty settlement in 1852, Peter Jones observed that the curse of the Great Spirit was on Francis Bond Head’s actions in that place.<sup>11</sup>

Anishinabe people were concerned about the status of their farms for reasons other than Bond Head’s policies. Benjamin Slight, an English Methodist missionary at the River Credit community, wrote in 1837 that members of that community were

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<sup>6</sup> William Case, “To the Editor of the Christian Guardian,” June 26, 1833 *The Christian Guardian*, 130.

<sup>7</sup> William Case, “To the Editor of the Christian Guardian,” June 26, 1833 *The Christian Guardian*, 130.

<sup>8</sup> “History of Christian, Rama and Georgina Islands, compiled 1925,” RG 10 A 1 Records of the Governor General and Lieutenant Governor, d) General Administration Records, 1787-1836, vol 789 NAC.

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Scott, “Lake Simcoe Mission” May 17, 1837, *The Christian Guardian*, p 110.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Scott, “Lake Simcoe Mission” May 17, 1837, *The Christian Guardian*, p 110.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Jones, “Rev P. Jones Missions Tour to Lakes Huron and Superior”, August 25, 1852, *The Christian Guardian*, 181.

convinced that their lands would be taken because this had been happening in the United States.<sup>12</sup> Slight wrote that the government should give the title deed to the village's land to the community to end their feeling of insecurity.

The following year, James Evans, a non-Native Methodist missionary, wrote a lengthy report on the process in which the Saugeen chiefs surrendered the Saugeen peninsula to the colonial government. Evans had attended the 1836 presents ceremony on Manitoulin Island at which the surrender was negotiated. Bond Head was at the ceremony in person and summoned all the Saugeen chiefs to a meeting, at which he informed the chiefs he wanted them to surrender their land and move to Manitoulin Island. He backed up his suggestion with a threat. If they would not surrender the land, he told the chiefs, his government would be unable to stop non-Native settlers from taking it from them. Upon the advice of the missionaries, the chiefs responded that "they were ruined, but it was no use to say anything more, as their Great Father was determined to have their land, - that they were poor and weak and must submit, and that if they did not let him have it his own way, they would lose it altogether."<sup>13</sup>

Deprived of their farming lands, the Anishinabeg had to expand their hunting and fishing despite the uncertainty of those practices on insufficient territory. Poverty was exacerbated by social disintegration caused by the new school system. Residential schools created at the tail end of the first generation of Anishinabe Methodism broke down the fundamental structures of relationships within Anishinabe communities and left children disconnected from their homes. As a result, they were unable to understand or

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<sup>12</sup> "Alder to Glenelg" independent report in V.U.A.

<sup>13</sup> James Evans, "Remarks on the late surrender of the Saugeeng Territory, -and the general treatment of the Christian Indians, under the Administration of Sir F.B. Head, Lieutenant Governor of U. Canada, K.C.H. &c, &c," April 11, 1838, *The Christian Guardian*, 90.

participate in the complex social structures that had once afforded Anishinabe communities such strength and flexibility.

As historians reorient their writing about the Anishinabeg in Upper Canada to include how Anishinabe people used their own philosophy to work with settler colonialism, and to interpret totalizing forms of Christian teaching into useful and meaningful forms, the cultural history of the Anishinabeg will emerge. When conflicts developed between Anishinabe people who appeared to co-operate with settlers' goals and those who wished to resist, what indigenous social imperatives shaped the back story of those multiple choices? When considering cultural continuity during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we must consider which practices were more or less central to Anishinabe people. Such questions will remove First Nations stories from the simple narrative of reaction and decline and re-present them as both more complex and more human.

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