

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

“Wise Women From the East:” Representations and Self-Representations
of Women in the Methodist Mission Field in Western Canada, 1880-1925

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIRMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER'S OF ARTS

Department of History

Calgary, Alberta

September, 1999

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0-612-47932-3

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the representations of women, specifically single female missionaries, missionary wives, and Native women in two popular religious journals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and in the publications of three well known western Canadian male missionaries. Women missionaries and missionary wives were depicted as purveyors and examples of female domesticity. Their roles within the mission field were determined by a gender ideology that relegated women to duties associated with the domestic sphere. Their primary purpose was to serve as "helpmeets" for their male counterparts. These "enlightened" women were seen as critical to the instruction of Native women in domestic skills. An examination of the writings of some of these women suggests that they did not challenge prevailing gender ideology or stereotypes of Native people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people whose kind and thoughtful assistance and patience was instrumental to the completion of this work. First of all, I want to thank my advisor, Sarah Carter, without whose guidance, insight, and careful editing I would not have finished my thesis. Secondly, I would like to thank the members of the history department who helped me in my studies, those who chaired my defense committee, the department of history and the Faculty of Graduate Studies for offering me financial assistance, and the Graduate Secretary, Olga Leskiw, who constantly reminded me of deadlines ensuring that I met them. Thirdly, I want to offer my deep gratitude to my fellow grad students who distracted me from my studies and kept me sane. Particularly Linda English whose support and humour gave me perspective. Lastly, but not least, I want to thank Christine Burnett who had the terrible misfortune of proofreading my thesis numerous times, for this she has my eternal gratitude and sympathy.

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INTRODUCTION

I Love The West

I Love the West, the wild, wild West;
I love its snow-capped mountains;
Its canyons, valleys, sunny glens
Its forests deep and grassy fens
Its streams and dashing fountains

I love the West, the new, new West;
Her veins new blood is flushing
New homes, new towns, new cities rise;
From every land beneath the skies
New life to her is rushing.

I love the West, the Christless West;
My heart goes out in sorrow
To the miners, loggers, ranchers' camp
Oh, dark must be their morrow!

I love the West, the Christian West;
God bless the sons and daughters
Who hasten there, God's Word to take;
Who spend their lives for His dear sake;
Who sow beside all waters.

I love the West, the coming West,
When, all our land adorning,
The Sun of Righteousness shall rise,
Illuminate the western skies,
And usher in that morning!

Emma L. Miller, The Missionary Outlook¹

This thesis examines representations of Methodist women, particularly those in western Canadian mission fields from 1880-1925, in popular religious publications as well as those sources generated by some of the women themselves. The central argument is that women were depicted as "helpmeets" who were to assist male missionaries. They were to perform roles strictly relegated to the domestic sphere. The writing of some of the women themselves suggests that they did not contest or challenge the expected norms of behaviour. The thesis begins with an analysis of the ways in which wives, mothers, female missionaries, and Native women were

¹Emma L. Miller, "I Love the West," Missionary Outlook, January 1910, 1.

represented in Methodist publications beginning with the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook from 1880-1925. The same categories of women will then be analyzed within the publications of three well known extensively published western Canadian Methodist missionaries; John McDougall, Egerton Ryerson Young, and John Maclean. Finally, the thesis will draw upon those limited sources that were generated by the single female missionaries and missionary's wives to explore the manner in which they portrayed their own roles in the field.¹

Through an examination of these sources it becomes clear that women were defined and confined by a gender ideology that relegated them to roles that were considered uniquely feminine. In the Guardian and the Outlook women's roles were portrayed within a domestic ideology. Women were characterized as wives and mothers, regardless of whether or not marriage or motherhood was imminent. As missionaries, they were portrayed as exemplifying all the maternal qualities considered inherent to women's natures. The roles of teacher, nurse, and missionary all became associated with and were seen as extensions of the categories of wife and mother. Women were depicted as "helpmeets;" they were in the field to support the evangelical work of their male counterparts and serve as

¹Ruth Compton Brouwer, "Opening Doors Through Social Service: Aspects of Women's Work in the Canadian Presbyterian Mission in Central India, 1877-1914," in Prophets, Priests, and Prodigals: Readings in Canadian Religious History, 1608 to the Present, eds., Mark G. McGowan and David B. Marshall, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1992), 241-242. The term missionary women is used to refer to white predominantly middle class Protestant women who chose to serve as missionaries. A female missionary differed from her male counterpart in several ways; she was not ordained, men tended to hold doctorates of divinity, women could not perform the final right of conversion i.e. baptism, and women were not involved in direct evangelism. Women missionaries tended to concentrate on the "civilizing" aspect of mission work. When I use the term missionary women I am referring to both single female missionaries and missionary's wives. I am aware, however, that there are distinctions between the two roles.

"civilizing" agents for Indigenous peoples. Native women, perceived as falling short of the ideals considered to uniquely feminine, were still expected to aspire to these ideals.

The published works of John McDougall, Egerton Ryerson Young, and John Maclean presented similar images of missionary women. Each of them represented Euro-Canadian women who served in the field, especially wives, as the embodiment of femininity. Missionary women and wives sacrificed lives of comfort, ease, and female companionship to serve as role models for Native people. They too characterized missionary women and wives, as in the Guardian and the Outlook, as "helpmeets" in the field. The piety and purity of missionary women and wives was often depicted in contrast to the supposed immoral and degraded state of Native society, especially Native women.

Even those sources written by women missionaries and wives did not challenge the conventions and images that were created within the Christian Guardian, the Missionary Outlook, or the published works of McDougall, Maclean, and Young. Missionary women and wives characterized their own roles within the "helpmeet" image. Their duties and activities remained very much a part of the domestic sphere and revolved primarily around those functions that were considered supportive rather than evangelical.

Those roles, duties, and characteristics that were assigned to women, or specifically Anglo-Saxon women and Native women, within these publications were less a reflection of biological and environmental realities and more an indication of societal expectations regarding gender roles. Historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has defined gender as;

...man-made, the product of cultural definitions, not of biological forces. No universal femaleness or maleness exists. Rather, economic, demographic, and ideational factors came together within specific societies to determine which rights, powers, privileges, and personalities women and men would possess.

Ideas and beliefs regarding "race" further influenced the way in which women were portrayed, creating separate and often conflicting categories of femininity.⁴ In her book Beyond the Pale Vron Ware argued that "...blackness and whiteness are both gendered categories whose meanings are historically derived, always in relation to each other, but rarely in a simple binary pattern of opposites."⁵ These publications provide a unique opportunity to observe how women of different "races" were portrayed in different ways and were continually being compared and contrasted. While white women were cast as pure and pious Native women were seen as the opposite, as in need of guidance toward these ideals.

Most Christian denominations during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were becoming increasingly involved in establishing missions among Indigenous populations throughout the globe. As one of the leading Protestant denominations in Ontario, Methodists were extremely active in trying to guide the transformation of the nation and the world,

³Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Hearing Women's Words: A Feminist Reconstruction of History," in Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America, ed., Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 12.

⁴The term "race" is a socially constructed category with no basis in biology, its meaning and importance has changed according to cultural interactions formed in contrast to what is considered normal at that particular time and place. Joseph Childers and Gary Hentzi eds., The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995,) 250.

⁵Vron Ware, Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History, (London: Verso, 1992), xvii.

according to Christian principles.⁶ In fact the Methodists formed the first local missionary society in Ontario in 1827.⁷ Many Methodists believed that their duty as Christian citizens, was to improve the temporal and spiritual well-being of not only their neighbours, but the world as well.⁸ Methodism was founded by John Wesley in England during the eighteenth century in response to his disillusionment with the Anglican church. The growing institutionalism and elitism of the Anglican church had precipitated this evolvement and his dissatisfaction had led him to return to more of a grassroots socially conscious Christianity.⁹ From its inception Methodism had subscribed to an ideal of Christian perfection, placing strict moral guidelines on the personal and social behaviour of its members.¹⁰ Methodists expected conversion to be accompanied by a profound life change which involved an active piety. In other words Methodists were expected to become "useful Christians."¹¹

The concept of Christian perfection was combined with an increasing

⁶John Webster Grant, A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth Century Ontario, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 34.

⁷Ibid., 107.

⁸Goldwin French, "The People Called Methodists in Canada," in The Churches and the Canadian Experience: A Faith and Order Study of the Christian Tradition, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1963), 81.

⁹Earl Kent Brown, Women of Mr. Wesley's Methodism, (Toronto: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 2-3.

¹⁰Phyllis D. Airhart, Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 22. See also Muir, Petticoats and the Pulpit: The Story of Early Nineteenth Century Methodist Women Preachers in Upper Canada, (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1991) 12. Wesley expelled members of his society for violations of his strict moral code, including idleness and wife beating.

¹¹Ibid., 26.

identification with a social Christianity and a strong evangelical tradition.¹² The growing influence of the concept of "social Christianity" led Protestants to become more concerned with the physical amelioration of society. The evangelical influence within Methodism gave them the power of faith to effect that transformation.¹³ All of which affected the way Methodists perceived their purpose in the world and their desire to Christianize it within the nineteenth century. Women were seen as playing a pivotal role in this process as mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, missionaries, or as the Indigenous "drudges" in need of salvation.

The perception was that Indigenous people waited "...in loneliness and with depressed hearts..." to be saved from their oppressive cultures through the introduction of Christianity.¹⁴ To accomplish their goal of transforming the world Methodists hurried to send missionaries both abroad and across Canada. They intended to use themselves as role models for non-Christian peoples, combining a religious and spiritual conversion with the knowledge required to live a proper Christian life.¹⁵

Methodist missionary efforts in western Canada began in 1839 with the arrival of Robert T. Rundle, James Evans, William Mason, and George

¹²Ibid., 9. Social Christianity was a growing belief in the improvement of not only the spiritual plane of existence, but the physical as well.

¹³Grant, A Profusion of Spires, vii or 30.

¹⁴John Maclean, Canadian Savage Folk: The Native Tribes of Canada, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1896), 348.

¹⁵Carol Devens, Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 55.

Barnley.¹⁶ The work was exceptionally challenging. Native peoples' mobility, the harsh environment of the West, and sparse Euro-Canadian settlement presented serious problems for missionaries. Much of these earlier efforts were undertaken by male missionaries; the West was perceived as an unsuitable environment for non-Native women. Men like Robert Rundle, a missionary at Fort Edmonton and the surrounding area, and James Evans, the Superintendent of missions in Rupert's Land, exemplified this trend. John Webster Grant characterized both men in Moon of Wintertime, as possessing "pioneering skills and a spirit of reckless adventure."¹⁷ The nature of missionary work, prior to the reserve period, required missionaries to travel with the First Nations people, learn their languages, live in isolated areas, and forgo the trappings of "civilization."¹⁸ In a climate of "muscular Christianity" there was believed to be no room for non-Native women.¹⁹ This image of the heroic

¹⁶Frits Pannekoek, "The Rev. James Evans and the Social Antagonisms of the Fur Trade Society, 1840-1846," in Canadian Plains Studies 3: Religion and Society in the Prairie West, (Saskatchewan: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1974), 1.

¹⁷John Webster Grant, Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 162. See also; William H. Brooks, "Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century," unpublished Phd thesis, University of Manitoba, History, May 1972, 112.

¹⁸Ibid., 162. "As work among the Native people assumed a new character it began to attract a new type of missionary. The demand was for steady pastors and diplomatic administrators capable of working closely with government agents and farm instructors."

¹⁹Donald E. Hall, "Muscular Christianity": Reading and Writing the Male Social Body," in Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age, ed., Donald E. Hall, (United States: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7. Muscular Christianity was defined as "an association between physical strength, religious certainty, and the ability to shape and control the world around oneself." See also; David Rosen, "The Volcano and the Cathedral: Muscular Christianity and the Origins of Primal Manliness," in Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age, ed., Donald E. Hall, (United States: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 19.

male missionary persisted long after women became active in missionary work.

Prior to 1850 very few non-Native women lived in western Canada and those that did lived in the more densely settled areas such as Red River and Norway House. Wives of missionaries, however, began working with their husbands in Manitoba and the Red River mission fields as early as the late 1830s. Yet it was not until the organization of women's missionary societies, the establishment of reserves, and a growing need for social service activities that the presence of single female missionaries began to grow in the West.

Initially the role of missionaries wives was envisaged as revolving primarily around their families and households, however, their usefulness in other areas like teaching and childcare precipitated an expansion of their duties. During the latter half of the nineteenth century the growing number of single female missionaries served to slightly alter women's work at the mission station. Missionary women assisted male missionaries by performing educational, medical, and childcare duties, freeing men to focus on their evangelical work. Women's "new roles," however, did not stray far from the same expectations that determined their activities in eastern Canada.

As a result women's roles in the western Canadian mission field remained very much a part of contemporary gender ideology. Their presence in the field was acceptable as long as it conformed to popular perceptions regarding the nature of women. The categories defined for missionaries

Rosen listed the characteristics assigned to masculinity as boldness, honesty, modesty, defiance of authority, stoic patience, and violent energy.

wives and single female missionaries were similar to those established for wives, mothers, and daughters in general. Despite their environment or work, women were expected to remain tied to the private sphere.

Women were defined in relation to the "Cult of True Womanhood" which, according to historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "assigned women to a role bounded by kitchen and nursery, overlaid with piety and purity, and crowned by subservience."²⁰ If this was true how did nineteenth century Euro-Canadian society come to terms with women adopting roles and jobs that allowed them access to the public sphere and to perform functions that were traditionally considered part of the male domain? The answer lies in the way in which missionary literature and religious publications represented the work of women in the field. Women's work at the mission station never really deviated far from those characteristics assigned to the private sphere and when it did, that work was incorporated as part of the private sphere as well. A study of these representations allows a glimpse of the way in which these women were defined and what was expected of them, although it is less clear whether these reflected their actual lives.

Histories that have examined the Methodist missionary experience in western Canada ignore the role that women played. "Methodism on the Canadian Prairies, 1896-1914: The Dynamic of An Institution in a New Environment," a PhD thesis by George Neil Emery looks at the nature of Methodist missions in the West, their evolution, and the reasons for their

²⁰Smith-Rosenberg, "Hearing Women's Words," 13.

failures.²¹ Emery is concerned with examining the institutional change that takes place within Methodism as a result of its contact with the harsh environment of western Canada. He argues that the Methodists' initial success' in the Western mission field could only be attributed to the work of a few "heroic" men, like George McDougall.²² In fact the failure of Methodism, Emery asserts, was its increasing bureaucratic nature and declining reliance on "heroic" men looking for a challenging mission field.

A second examination of Methodist mission work in the West is "Methodism in the Canadian West," a PhD thesis by William Howard Brooks. This thesis is an historical overview of Methodist work in the Western mission field. Brooks believes that the isolated nature of western missions enabled these "heroic men" to find a challenge in their work.²³ Of George Millward McDougall Brooks writes; "...[he was the] the last great heroic figure of western Methodism...and a martyr to the work."²⁴ These theses serve as examples of the early exclusion of women from the pages of serious religious histories due to an emphasis on the heroic and masculine nature of western mission work.

Recently, however, the topic of women in the mission field has been reexamined, often within a feminist framework, although there is no

²¹George Neil Emery, "Methodism on the Canadian Prairies, 1896-1914: The Dynamic of An Institution in a New Environment," unpublished Phd thesis, University of British Columbia, History, May 1970.

²²Ibid., 116.

²³William Howard Brooks, "Methodism in the Canadian West in the Nineteenth Century," unpublished Phd thesis, University of Manitoba, History, 1972, 109.

²⁴Ibid., 109.

sustained published study on the topic in the western Canadian setting. Since missionary work was considered a socially acceptable activity for women it has been argued by some historians that it allowed many white middle class women to exercise knowledge and skills learned at post secondary institutions. Serving as missionaries presented women with an alternative to marriage and an opportunity to work in spheres heretofore prohibited to them.

The ways in which women used religion and religious institutions to enlarge their own roles in society has been the concern of many academics. Historian Rosemary Gagan in A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925 attempts to reassert the role of missionary women into missionary history and demythologize the stereotype of the female missionary as the "selfless spinster" forced to choose missionary work as a somewhat unsatisfactory substitute for marriage.²⁵ Rather she maintains that women chose mission work for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was a deep religious conviction and a desire for a meaningful career. Gagan argues that those women who chose to become missionaries were rejecting the "...thrall of conventional attitudes towards woman's place in the ordering of society and households."²⁶ Gagan believes that work in the mission field allowed women to escape the constraints of nineteenth century Canadian society, have meaningful careers, and develop longlasting friendships with other women.

²⁵Rosemary R. Gagan, A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 4.

²⁶Ibid., 4.

Those women that attended post-secondary institutions failed to find a corresponding niche for themselves within the public domain and were, according to Gagan, subsequently forced to leave the confines of North American society. Within the mission station women would be able to find relative freedom from the patriarchal structures of western society. Gagan does not deny that the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) and its representatives faced power struggles and chauvinism in the field. Yet many women were able to overcome these obstacles and establish hospitals and educational institutions that remained under the auspices of the WMS.

Women missionaries, Gagan noted, accrued more benefits from their work than the people that they were sent to "help."²⁷ Mission work allowed women to develop administrative and clerical skills, create a sisterhood, an opportunity to work in areas unknown to them in North America, and a deep sense of fulfilment and self-worth. Gagan, however, admitted that gender still limited women's duties, preventing them from performing the actual conversions of Indigenous peoples. Yet, while the nature of mission work differed between women and men, it continued to be a career within which women were able to find fulfilment.

Elements of Gagan's argument are persuasive. It is undeniable that many Euro-Canadian women found a great deal of fulfilment and satisfaction in the work that they performed in the mission field. Her argument, however, tends to ignore the nature of women's work in the field. The work they performed in the field did not stray far from those roles considered acceptable for women. Teaching, childcare, and nursing were roles that were characterized as suitable for women. Women were to be

²⁷Ibid., 212.

supportive and provide social services rather than evangelical work. While women's duties proved integral to the success of the mission station they were supplementary to the evangelical work of their male counterparts.

Gagan failed to examine the manner in which gender limited white middle class Protestant women's experiences in the field. Perhaps for some women work in the mission field opened up new avenues of opportunities unavailable to them in eastern Canada. The vast majority, however, continued to be confined by gender. Gender roles determined the activities that women did and the expectations of male and female missionaries served to reinforce those roles. Gagan also fails to address the impact of mission work on Indigenous peoples, more specifically women. While Gagan notes that missionary women received more benefits from their work than Indigenous peoples, she ignores the imperial and racist nature of missionary work, leaving her examination of the missionary experience somewhat incomplete.

In New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914 Ruth Compton Brouwer emphasized the importance that religion played in women's lives during the nineteenth century. Brouwer argues that the evangelical impact of the Christian mission would have been negligible without the medical and educational contributions of missionary women, therefore, missionary women performed integral roles in the Christian world mission.²⁸

Brouwer, like Gagan, recognized that missionary women derived more

²⁸Ibid., 194-195. The author found that the social service aspect of the mission was used as a tool to secure converts, however, over time this work also began to be perceived as valuable beyond its potential to motivate conversions.

benefits from their mission work than Indigenous peoples. She too argued that Protestant women were able to exercise and learn new skills and abilities in the field in a manner unavailable to them at home. Unlike Gagan, however, Brouwer maintained that gender played a pivotal role in determining the missionary experience for women, serving to either limit or challenge them.

According to Brouwer there were two features that characterized women missionaries' experiences; an emphasis on institutional and social service work rather than direct evangelism and the "emergence of a pattern of acrimonious mission politics in which gender was the central issue."²⁹ Gender politics, according to Brouwer, were pivotal in determining who controlled the mission stations and directed the focus of its activities. Brouwer recognized that women tended to adopt the social service roles due to restrictive practices within the Presbyterian church regarding direct evangelical work, but she failed to comment on the connections that could be made between their social service activities and those types of duties commonly associated with women's work.

Both of these studies tend to represent the missionary experience as more of a feminist endeavour than one which reflected the limited spheres that women were considered aptly suited for. The missionary experience was just as confining for women as it was liberating. In "Women of Prayer Are Women of Power: Woman's Missionary Societies in Alberta, 1918-1939," Gail Thrift examines the way in which women, while relegated to a lower status within Protestant Churches, used their special feminine qualities

²⁹Ruth Compton Brouwer, New Women For God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and Indian Missions, 1876-1914, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 6.

to "foster a unique spiritual relationship with God through prayer."¹⁰ Thrift recognizes the influence of societal expectations upon the activities that women did and the way in which they performed them. Women worked within the restrictions placed upon them, using their unique moral authority as women to gain access to greater functions and activities within Protestant churches.

This concentration of religious history on the secular aspects of missionary work has been criticized by historian Ruth Compton Brouwer in her article "Transcending the Unacknowledged Quarantine: Putting Religion into English Canadian Women's History," because she believes that it fails to take into account denominational differences, the power of personal religious beliefs, and the unquestioning centrality of religious convictions within peoples' lives.¹¹

By characterizing the missionary experience for Euro-Canadian women of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a feminist awakening, these historians have ignored the nature of the work women did and the manner in which it was represented in popular publications. Since missionary work did not take place within the typical home environment there has been a tendency to overlook the connection made, within religious publications, to the domestic sphere. We may want to perceive it as a feminist endeavour, but did Euro-Canadian women regard it as liberation from patriarchal power structures or was mission work perceived

¹⁰Gail Thrift, "Women of Prayer Are Women Of Power: Woman's Missionary Societies in Alberta, 1918-1939," Alberta History vol. 47 no. 2 (Spring 1999), 12.

¹¹Ruth Compton Brouwer, "Transcending the Unacknowledged Quarantine: Putting Religion into English-Canadian Women's History," Journal of Canadian Studies vol. 27 no. 3 (Autumn 1992), 47-61.

as another facet of women's work?

In contrast to Brouwer and Gagan, Johanna Selles argued in her book Methodists and Women's Education in Ontario, 1836-1925 that "Methodist schooling upheld the middle class ideal of a girl who was fragile, virginal, and in need of training for her role as a woman, which was defined in relation to motherhood."³² Selles found that a Methodist education reinforced prevalent gender ideology which encouraged women to get married, become wives, and eventually mothers. Furthermore, of those women who were appointed to the home mission field, specifically western Canada, only eight percent of them had been exposed to a college atmosphere.³³

While educational institutions and the church stressed women's role as mothers they also extended this maternal role into society as well.³⁴ Selles discovered that as educational opportunities for women expanded so too did the notion of "God's kingdom."³⁵ A woman was not only a mother to her own family, but to the "family of God" as well, thereby extending the definition of her service in limited ways into the public sphere. In order to accomplish such important tasks women needed to be educated, but only to the extent that it helped her perform her duties to the church and family. Women's education was not intended to help them develop a

³²Johanna M. Selles, Methodists and Women's Education in Ontario, 1836-1925, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 28.

³³Gagan, A Sensitive Independence, 38.

³⁴Selles, Methodists and Women's Education in Ontario, 36.

³⁵Ibid., 57.

critical intellect or increase their control over their lives.³⁶

The missionary experience in western Canada also assisted in the manufacturing and legitimization of negative myths regarding Native people and their culture. The average Euro-Canadian received their information concerning Native people from those who were considered to be experts on the subject, and often these were missionaries. The published works and lecture tours of various missionaries helped to spread stereotypes about Native culture, ensuring their pervasiveness throughout North American society. One of the most ubiquitous stereotypes generated during the nineteenth century regarding Native society was its poor treatment of women. The supposed lowly position of women in Native society was one of the primary reasons used to justify mission work. The introduction of Christianity and its cultural baggage was believed to have the ability to liberate Native women from their "cultural slavery."

Native women's supposedly lowly status was used to validate the introduction of Euro-Canadian social and cultural norms at the same time they were blamed for the reticence of Native people to acculturate.³⁷ The negative "squaw" stereotype was central to the segregationalist policies implemented by the government.³⁸ The failure of the government and missionary programs to effect what they perceived to be substantial change

³⁶Ibid., 92.

³⁷Sarah Carter "Categories and Terrains of Exclusion: Constructing the Indian Woman in the Early Settlement Era in Western Canada," Great Plains Quarterly, vol. 13, (Summer 1993). See also Sarah Carter, "First Nations Women of Prairie Canada in the Early Reserve Years, the 1870s to the 1920s: A Preliminary Inquiry," in Women of the First Nations, eds., Christine Miller and Patricia Chuchryk, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996).

³⁸Ibid., 148.

in Native society was blamed on Native women. In essence officials used Native women as scapegoats when faced with the obvious shortcomings of their programs.

A great deal of missionary literature was devoted to the representation of Anglo-Saxon womanhood in comparison to its Native counterpart. Myra Rutherdale's article "Revisiting Colonization Through Gender," is an examination of the role of Anglican missionary women in the creation of the Native person as the "other."³⁹ The creation of an "other" in colonial literature was central to their Christianizing mission. Native peoples and cultures were depicted as dark, sinister, and murderous. Without such representations mission work would not have been perceived as necessary. As a result of the derogatory imagery that was pervasive throughout North American society missionaries travelled West with preconceived notions regarding Native culture and their work that they would perform among them.⁴⁰ The women examined here reflect this. Their letters and personal papers reflect contemporary notions concerning both gender and racial ideology. There is little if any indication within these mediated sources that an attempt was made to achieve some sort of cultural understanding. Instead the missionary women recreated the same stereotypes seen throughout religious publications and missionary literature. These women portrayed Native culture in very derogatory terms

³⁹Myra Rutherdale, "Revisiting Colonization Through Gender: Anglican Missionary Women in the Pacific Northwest and the Arctic, 1860-1945," BC Studies, no. 104, (Winter 1994). See also; Jeremy Hawthorn, A Concise Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory, (London: Edward Arnold, 1992). To define a person or group of people as the "other" is to place them outside the system of normality or convention to which one belongs oneself. Within western philosophy the "other" is something that is often feared and needs to be conquered.

⁴⁰Ibid., 4.

and Native women in particular as one dimensional characters. There seemed to have been no attempt by these particular missionary women to challenge the boundaries which had been erected by societal beliefs and values.

The missionary endeavour of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was both a gendered and racialized experience for non-Native and Native women. Representations of women were developed not only around their biological sex, but their ethnicity as well. As a result this thesis attempts to incorporate ideas of both race and gender into an examination of missionary sources. Other historians of the missionary experience have tended to use either race or gender as their organizing framework which has left a somewhat incomplete picture of the mission experience. The inclusion of women in missionary history has tended to focus on the concept of women's agency, ignoring their purpose in the field and the impact that their work had upon Indigenous populations. To focus on gender ignores the fact that women can be both oppressed and oppressive at the same time; images of women can serve to not only elevate, but limit and define them. This study diverges from some of the others because it does not assume that women who chose to work in non-traditional environments were liberated from societies'mores.

Chapter one will examine the roles that were created for women within the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook. Women were defined within these two publications as wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, single female missionaries, missionary's wives, and as the Indigenous "drudge." As missionaries and wives Anglo-Saxon women served as "helpmeets" in the field, attached to the domestic sphere and confined

and defined by a maternal image of womanhood. In chapter two the thesis will focus on the publications of three well known western Canadian missionaries John McDougall, Egerton Young, and John Maclean. These three missionaries focused more on the work of missionary's wives than single female missionaries. Each author depicted missionary women and wives as representatives of Euro-Canadian "civilization," serving as domestic and maternal role models for Native peoples, particularly Native women, and as their "helpmeets" in the field.

The third chapter draws upon the limited sources that were generated by the missionary women and wives themselves. Missionary women and wives depicted themselves within a domestic ideology. They represented themselves as essential purveyors of western female domesticity and depicted Native women in a negative light. These representations differed very little from those that were generated about them.

CHAPTER ONE

"She Hath Done What She Could:" Images of Canadian Methodist Women in the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook, 1880-1925

The Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook were popular Methodist journals during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and an examination of them reveals a great deal about the expectations of Methodist women and the conventions and restraints within which they functioned.¹ Articles and letters in the Guardian and Outlook reflected contemporary beliefs regarding the role of women within society. Espousing a domestic ideology the two publications defined women's natural place as primarily in the home as wives and mothers. At the same time women were also encouraged to extend their maternal roles in limited ways towards improving the public realm. Methodist women, whether wives, mothers, daughters, missionaries wives, and single female missionaries were all connected in some way to the private sphere.

The promotion of socially active Christian women within the Guardian and the Outlook, coincided with the rise of voluntary organizations that were run predominantly by middle class Anglo-Saxon women.² Women of the nineteenth century, although bound to the domestic sphere, were expected to live a life of "usefulness." As a result the expected role of women within Euro-Canadian society became increasingly contradictory.³ Though

¹Grant, A Profusion of Spires, 103.

²Ibid., 170.

³Selles, Methodists and Women's Education in Ontario, 1836-1925, 9. Education for women meant preparation for marriage and motherhood. Gradually the concept of "mothering" was expanded to include society as a whole. As a result women were educated and raised for their roles as mothers, wives, and philanthropists.

the belief was that a woman's proper place lay within the private sphere, the boundaries of this role expanded throughout the nineteenth century to include certain types of work in the public sphere. Growing concern with social ills led women, especially middle class women, to become more involved with charitable organizations.⁴ The justification for this phenomenon was that as guardians of the home and its moral values women were ideally suited to perform this supervisory role within society.⁵

As a result women's social activism, especially service to the church and Canadian society, became not only acceptable, but expected. Philanthropic work in the public sphere was encouraged as long as it remained untainted by fiscal remuneration.⁶ Both the Guardian and the Outlook encouraged women to become involved and firmly supported the establishment of the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) in 1881.⁷ Anglo-Saxon women throughout the nineteenth century became more and more involved in missionary work, both at home and in the field.⁸ Before the Church union in 1925, between the Methodists and the Presbyterians, the WMS had sent over three hundred single women to work in the field in Japan, West China, and Canada.⁹

The perception of Euro-Canadian women as morally superior opened up

⁴Alison Prentice, et al., Canadian Women: A History, (Toronto: Harcourt and Brace, 1996), 189.

⁵Ibid., 189.

⁶Selles, Methodists and Women's Education in Ontario, 1836-1925, 48.

⁷Brouwer, New Women For God, 18-21.

⁸Gagan, A Sensitive Independence, 4-5.

⁹Ibid., 5.

new avenues of opportunity for them, or according to historian Ruth Compton Brouwer, "a paradoxical pattern of opportunities and restraints."¹⁰ In their childrearing capacity, women alone were responsible for raising the next generation of statesmen.¹¹ As wives they were expected to provide a haven for their husbands from the fast paced industrial world and monitor his spiritual well-being.¹² As a result the roles of wife and mother developed new meaning and status, since the perpetuation of Christian civilization was believed to be dependent upon their child rearing abilities and edifying influence.¹³

Women were assumed to be and were told that their biology made them responsible for the progress of Euro-Canadian society and in turn this perception helped them gain limited access to the public sphere.¹⁴ Such ideas reinforced the belief that women's lives were controlled by their biology. While women could aspire to a higher education or a career outside of the home, it was believed that ultimately she would choose either to return to the "hearth" or another field related to the domestic sphere.

Canada in the nineteenth century witnessed a proliferation of popular reading material that depicted the role of women within society.

¹⁰Brouwer, New Women for God, 9.

¹¹ Alice Woodley, "A Word To Mothers," The Missionary Outlook, January 1906, 97.

¹²Marguerite Van Die, "A Woman's Awakening: Evangelical Belief and Female Spirituality in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada," in Canadian Women: A Reader, eds., Wendy Mitchinson, et al., (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996), 50-51.

¹³Mariana Valverde, "When the Mother of the Race Is Free," in Gender Conflicts, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 4.

¹⁴Ibid., 12.

Magazines, women's journals, books, and religious publications all prescribed specific characteristics and attributes to women. Many religious publications shared a consensus that a woman's natural vocation lay within the private sphere. Nineteenth century publications tended to depict white Anglo-Saxon women as genteel civilizers, who exhibited such qualities as; piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness to male authority.¹⁵ They described a woman's proper place as in the home, as wives and mothers. The ideal woman of the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook was middle class, financially dependent on a father or husband, a household manager, a provisioner of emotional support for her husband and children, and an unpaid labourer in philanthropic works.¹⁶

In order to ensure that its members received the right kind of information regarding religious doctrine, proper Christian behaviour, and church activities, the Canadian Methodist Church found it necessary to publish and promote its own material. During the nineteenth century the Methodist Church was extremely active in the publishing industry, establishing its own "book room," William Briggs, from which were produced numerous religious tracts, journals, and books.¹⁷ The Methodist Church had dedicated itself to the intellectual and spiritual development of its members, believing that it would make them better able to perform God's

¹⁵Elizabeth Jameson, "Women as Workers, Women as Civilizers: True Womanhood in the American West," in The Woman's West, eds., Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 146. see also Prentice, Canadian Women: A History, 115-116.

¹⁶Selles, Methodists and Women's Education in Ontario, 1836-1925, 8.

¹⁷Grant, A Profusion of Spires, 103.

work.¹⁸

The publication of the Christian Guardian in 1829 was one of the first major undertakings of the newly independent Canadian Methodist Church.¹⁹ Almost every religious denomination attempted during the 1830s to publish its own religious journal, but few would flourish and become as influential as the Guardian.²⁰ The Christian Guardian eventually became one of the most widely read religious journals of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Guardian provided international and local church news, presented theological concerns, and offered social and moral advice to its members. Much of the Guardian's advice was directed towards its female members. The publishers of the Guardian were concerned that future wives and mothers, and women who presently occupied those roles, were in need of guidance. The Guardian offered its female members direction regarding issues that affected the family and society. The Guardian and its writers provided this advice for women because it was believed that they were responsible for not only the moral tenor of society, but the education and socialization of the next generation as well. In order to perform these roles properly women needed to be carefully instructed.

The Christian Guardian supplied mothers with advice on how to properly rear their children, what kinds of principles to teach them, and how women could make themselves better mothers. Such articles were often

¹⁸Ibid., 104.

¹⁹Ibid., 103.

²⁰Ibid., 103.

entitled "Women Need a Simple Life" or "A Cheerful Kitchen."²¹ Young women were admonished to avoid the pitfalls of modern life, to abstain from vanity, and to volunteer in charitable organizations. Children were counselled to mind their parents, appreciate their hard working mothers, and learn the right Christian values. At the same time that the writers of the publications dispensed this advice they paid tribute to wives and mothers, portraying them as the pinnacle of Christian womanhood.

From 1880 to 1920 the editors of the Christian Guardian continuously published some sort of page devoted to women's concerns. This section was at various times called "Women's Work for Women," "the Home and Its Outlook," or "A Page for Women." Featured in these pages were issues that concerned women like suffrage, temperance, and mission work. The Guardian hired a number of women to write for and about women. If the bylines were any indication, the majority of women who wrote for the Guardian were married, often using the title Mrs.

The Missionary Outlook was not published until January of 1881 in Hamilton in response to a desire to promote Methodists' activity in missionary work around the world and garner financial and spiritual support for their activities.²² This publication consisted primarily of articles concerning the work of the Methodist Church in its missions, testimonials of missionaries and their subjects about the success of their work, and ideological discussions regarding the necessity of missionary work among non-Christian populations.

Almost from its inception the Missionary Outlook published a section

²¹The Christian Guardian, August 7, 1901, 176.

²²Gagan, A Sensitive Independence, 18.

that was devoted solely to the WMS and their endeavours around the world. Initially, the WMS was allotted only a column, but over time their section grew to occupy at least a third of the publication. This was indicative of the expanding role that women were taking in missionary work, both on the home front and in the field. By 1880 the number of single women missionaries and the wives of missionaries had begun to outnumber their male counterparts on the staffs of most North American foreign mission societies.¹³

Each of the publications reflected specific beliefs about the role and place of Anglo-Saxon Protestant women. Both journals heralded motherhood as the foundation of Canadian society. Motherhood was depicted as the "bulwark" of the nation with the potential to either regenerate or aid in the disintegration of Canada's institutions.¹⁴

The evangelical tradition within Methodism encouraged women to adopt an active role in the community which allowed them greater opportunities than just motherhood.¹⁵ Women were able to volunteer and work for organizations that enabled them to use talents not required in the domestic sphere. Euro-Canadian women, however, were able to work outside of the home only in ways that were believed to be suitable for them. Therefore, the roles that women adopted in the public sphere were seen as extensions of their duties as wives and mothers. A good wife and mother was expected to not only maintain an immaculate household, but to pursue

¹³Brouwer, New Women for God, 92.

¹⁴"Father and Mother and Home," The Christian Guardian, February 3, 1904, 11.

¹⁵Leonard I. Sweet, The Minister's Wife: Her Role in Nineteenth Century American Evangelism, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 31-32.

God's work in the community as well. A poem written by Mrs. Margaret Preston, published in the Missionary Outlook, expressed these expectations of women:

...And yet unto each as she suffers,
 In patience, and prayer, and trust,
 And she ministers, lavishing life and love,
 Or toils for her daily crust,
 Or lays her soul on the altar,
 Alike will the Saviour say:
 "She hath done what she could,"²⁶

A woman was supposed to do what she could, fulfilling the expectations of a wife and mother, while at the same time improving society.

Wives and mothers were represented as the epitome of self-sacrifice. The word "mother" was synonymous with all that was pure, sweet, and beautiful".²⁷ She was the consummate lady, "whose culture, breadth, and sympathy have made and left them entirely womanly, true queens of home!".²⁸ As nurturers, mothers passed on Euro-Canadian culture and values from one generation to the next. Women were the "cultural gatekeepers" because;

...the home was the matrix of character...The child's outlook on life was formed in the home, by the conversation, habits, moral and spiritual tone of the home, and in that formation the mother had the most to do."²⁹

²⁶Mrs. Margaret J. Preston, "What She Could." The Missionary Outlook, March 1881, 31.

²⁷"What a Woman Can Do," The Christian Guardian, November 26, 1879, 273.

²⁸"The Woman Who Makes the Home," The Christian Guardian, January 2, 1902, 9.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 9.

Mothers were responsible for shaping the next generation, everything that a child learned came initially from its mother.

A woman's biology was considered her source of power because it allowed her to fulfil the role God had intended for her, to reproduce and raise good Christian children, thereby perpetuating Christian civilization.³⁰ Qualities like kindness, grace, love, self-sacrifice, and an instinctive knowledge of right and wrong were considered inherently feminine.³¹ Women who recognized and used their femininity contributed not only to the spiritual and moral growth of her family, but to the nation as well. This translated into a maternal evangelism which required that women use their "femaleness" to improve the world around them.³² According to Mrs J.W. Humphrey of the Missionary Outlook, "mothers were the missionaries of the home," improving the lives of their families and others around them through their calm graceful example.³³

The Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook sanctified motherhood as a partnership with God.³⁴ Women worked with God to develop their maternal natures. "We need not expect perfection in our children until we ourselves possess [those] many virtues that go to form the well

³⁰Alice Woodley, "A Word to Mothers," The Missionary Outlook, January 1906, 97.

³¹"Woman's True Source of Strength," The Christian Guardian, July 14, 1880, 171.

³²Sweet, The Minister's Wife, 31-32.

³³Mrs. J.W. Humphrey, "The Mother the Missionary in the Home," The Missionary Outlook, January, 1908, 215.

³⁴Alice Woodley, "A Word to Mothers," The Missionary Outlook, January 1906, 97.

rounded character."³⁵ Women were expected to read the Bible, expand their minds, and become socially active. In turn through such activities they could be better mothers, earning the respect, gratitude, and love of their children. This respect would enable mothers to properly guide their children toward making the right choices. Children were the future of the nation. Women who raised their children with the right Christian values were, according to the Missionary Outlook, "doing faithfully the work God gave to them when he said "take the child and train it for me."³⁶ It seemed that the most important work fell on the shoulders of Anglo-Saxon women, responsible for the moral development of society through both childrearing and philanthropic labours.

It was expected at the same time that a woman should be more than the sum of her household. As an anonymous writer stated in the Christian Guardian "...the quiet fidelity with which a woman will dishwash her life away for her husband and children is a marvel of endurance."³⁷ Unless she performed God's work outside of the household as well she was only a servant.³⁸ A "well rounded" woman performed not only all of the roles that God had intended for her in terms of wife and mother, but more. The writers of the Guardian and the Outlook urged women to improve themselves, both intellectually and spiritually. They encouraged devotion towards Biblical study and various Christian publications, as well as membership in a local branch of the WMS.

³⁵Ibid., 97.

³⁶Ibid., 97.

³⁷"Women's Work," The Christian Guardian, November 21, 1883, 321.

³⁸Ibid., 321.

The role allocated to women in the Guardian and the Outlook was contradictory. On the one hand women were encouraged to be active in society, to be "missionaries" in the home and the community, to educate themselves, and not to be defined solely by their household duties. A woman who remained at home only taking care of her family was considered to be doing less than her share of the work that was expected of her. At the same time, the role that was advocated most for women was that of mother and wife. A woman's education and outside charitable works only helped her to become a better wife, mother, housekeeper, and economist.³⁹ Everything in a woman's life was preparation for one thing, motherhood, a role which was ultimately tied primarily to the domestic sphere. At the very foundation of the advice in the Guardian and the Outlook was the assumption that a woman's path would eventually lead to, or in fact never leave, the home.

Indicative of this contradiction in women's roles was their characterization of the "new woman." In 1910 an unknown author in the Christian Guardian wrote an article about the anxiously awaited "new woman" of the century.⁴⁰ "The coming new woman with a greater scope for usefulness...men would find in her a chum [and] a mate in the best sense of the [word]."⁴¹ This "new woman" was defined as educated, useful, calm, and less prone to hysteria, all qualities which would make her a better wife and mother.⁴² In her article "The Power of True Christian Women,"

³⁹"Educated Women," The Christian Guardian January 7, 1880, 123.

⁴⁰"The Coming Woman," The Christian Guardian, April 20, 1910, 10.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 10.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 10.

Diana Pedersen found that the promotion of this "new woman" was a conscious rejection of the "frivolous, gay, and useless life of the lady and an attempt to create an alternative ideal of womanhood that combined the traditional Protestant ideal of the virtuous woman with a new evangelical stress on action."⁴³ Women were to strive for an ideal of perfection that confined them to a domestic role, but at the same time offered them limited access to very specific public roles.

The "new woman" was a "doer" despite the restriction of her sphere of activities by societal expectations.⁴⁴ Everything a woman did in terms of an education or training was intended to provide her with the knowledge she needed to assume her role as wife and mother.⁴⁵ It is here that the contradiction inherent in the idealized representations of women were especially apparent. Expectations of women were such that they had to be educated and "useful," but never strive for a permanent role in the public sphere or give the appearance that the role was anything but transitory.

There were several roles besides wife and mother that were considered suitable for women such as teacher, childcare giver, nurse, and missionary. Both publications depicted these as extensions of the work of wives and mothers. As a result there was a distinct similarity between the representations of wives and mothers and female missionaries. Instead of being the "queen of the hearth" female missionaries were the "queens of

⁴³Diana Pedersen, "The Power of True Christian Women: The YWCA and Evangelical Womanhood in the Late Nineteenth Century," in Changing Roles of Women Within the Christian Church in Canada, ed., Elizabeth Gillan Muir and Marilyn Fardig Whiteley, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 322.

⁴⁴Selles, Methodists and Women's Education in Ontario, 1836-1925, 6.

⁴⁵Ibid., 9.

the mission house," serving as "white mothers" to non-Christian populations.

Although Methodists had established missions among Native people in Canada as early as 1824, interest in this particular field was not as strong as overseas work.⁴⁶ The home mission field was not seen to be as glamorous or exciting as places like China and Japan. As a result fewer women and men applied to serve in the home missions, especially western Canada. Often the candidates who were sent there lacked the same "superior" qualities, specifically university degrees, musical talent and proficiency at painting and needlepoint, as those sent overseas. Work in foreign mission fields was commonly believed to be much more demanding than work in Canada. Consequently, the journals printed far less about the work of female missionaries in Canada than those in Asia, yet many of the same images were used to represent all women missionaries regardless of their particular field.

Several factors contributed to a growing acceptance of women in the mission field. One factor was the inaccessibility of certain East Indian women to male missionaries as a result of cultural restrictions that limited their contact with male non-family members.⁴⁷ The result was a belief that certain types of mission work, specifically gaining access to Zenana women, the instruction of British modes of domesticity, and

⁴⁶Ibid., 10.

⁴⁷Kumari Jayawardena, The White Woman's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Colonial Rule, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 27-28. Zenana's were the women's quarters of the house in which women were secluded. Some men choose to allow missionary women into their homes in order to educate their wives, female children etc. This type of work in particular fell into the category of "women's work for women" because zenana women were completely inaccessible to any men other than family.

childcare could only be performed by other women.⁴⁸ A second factor was the growing number of women involved in volunteering and raising money for world missions. Their influence had increased substantially in the latter half of the nineteenth century, exemplified by the formation of the WMS in 1881. As a result missionary work became one of the few careers that was deemed suitable and that was even encouraged for women. Gender ideology had adapted to incorporate mission work as a role that women could perform because it eventually became associated with their other maternal roles.

One of the main justifications used by Anglo-Saxon women and more broadly all missionaries to become increasingly involved in mission work was the desire to change the supposedly low status of non-Christian women throughout the world. It was believed that a society's supposed level of civilization was relative to the status of its women because, as writers in the Missionary Outlook stated, "no race had ever risen above the condition of its mothers."⁴⁹ The honoured position that Anglo-Saxon women allegedly held within western society was, in the pages of these Methodist publications, credited to Christianity.⁵⁰ Christianity demanded equality and liberty for its adherents.⁵¹ The position of Anglo-Saxon women was seen as one of the indications that their society was much more advanced.

⁴⁸Margaret Whitehead, "Women Were Made For Such Things: Women Missionaries in British Columbia, 1850s-1940s, Atlantis vol. 14 no. 1 (Fall 1988), 143-145.

⁴⁹Mrs. Harvey Lavell, "Responsibility and Place in the Evangelization of the World," The Missionary Outlook, March 1905, 66.

⁵⁰Mrs. W. Fawcett, "The Master's Call to Woman," The Missionary Outlook, December 1882, 182.

⁵¹Jane Hunter, The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 231. Hunter argues that missionaries believed that Christianity offered Chinese women spiritual equality with men, more so than their traditional religion did.

Therefore, it was believed that women of non-Christian cultures would benefit from the introduction of Christianity and Anglo-Saxon culture. As a result there was a growing concern with "women's work for women" in the field.

"We are not responsible that the children of heathen lands were born into these conditions so revolting, so unspeakably loathsome to us, but we are responsible if they remain so," were the words of a woman contributor to the Missionary Outlook in 1905.⁵² One of the primary reasons women became active in mission work was the perceived condition of the family in non-Christian cultures. If women and children were poorly treated then this was a reflection on the status of the family in their society. Improving the condition of the family would encourage a wholesale change throughout society. Conversion was intended to be accompanied by a complete societal transformation; beyond religious conversion it also meant assimilation.

In Methodist publications Anglo-Saxon women were cast as the most privileged women, responsible for the amelioration of the status of non-Christian women throughout the world. The Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook represented the work of missionary women as a sacred duty. A poem published in the Guardian written by a converted Native Canadian woman who begged for help from her "white mothers" conveyed the idea that white women helped them see the light. "...oh give us light...oh send us help-ye are so strong and glad... to chase the shadows

⁵²Mrs. Harry Lavell, "Women's Responsibility and Place in the Evangelization of the World," The Missionary Outlook, April 1905, 66.

that have made us sad."⁵³ Anglo-Saxon women were represented as mothers to non-Christian people offering the "light" of civilization to Indigenous people. As a result the image of the female missionary was seen as an extension of the maternal nurturing image of Anglo-Saxon motherhood.⁵⁴

Motherhood in these publications was characterized as the embodiment of self-sacrifice.⁵⁵ Female missionaries and missionaries wives were portrayed in much the same way as other Methodist wives and mothers. The wives of missionaries and female missionaries were described as noble, unselfish, generous, domesticated, and cheerful.⁵⁶ Stories of missionary women depicted not only their stoic endurance of hardship and their perseverance to the call, but the exemplary domestic examples they presented for Indigenous women.⁵⁷

According to the Christian Guardian a white woman was uniquely endowed with grace and meekness, characteristics which eminently qualified her for work in Christian missions.⁵⁸ Submissive women in the mission field, while not necessarily the reality, were seen as the ideal. This was in direct contrast to the representation of male missionaries who were described in Methodist publications in very heroic terms. George

⁵³Ke-She-Go-Qua, "To Christian Mothers," The Christian Guardian, January 1882, 43.

⁵⁴Gagan, A Sensitive Independence, 9.

⁵⁵"Mother Should Keep Young," The Christian Guardian, July 20, 1904, 11.

⁵⁶ The Missionary Outlook January 1882, 8. An article written in the WMS section "from a special correspondent" regarding the work of Rev. Thos. Crosby and his wife.

⁵⁷Rutherford, "Revisiting Colonization Through Gender," 21-23.

⁵⁸ The Christian Guardian May 26, 1880, 12.

McDougall, a well-known missionary in western Canada from the 1860s until his death in 1876, was described in the Outlook as a patriot, a pioneer, and a prophet who left his mark on Alberta.⁵⁹ Such strong terms were used only with reference to masculine personas. In the publications descriptive words like courageous, brave, and heroic had masculine connotations and were rarely used in reference to women.

According to the Missionary Outlook the most important qualifications a female missionary could possess were housekeeping skills and a decent singing voice.⁶⁰ In her book, A Sensitive Independence, Rosemary Gagan noted that musical talent was regarded as the most valued asset of a female missionary.⁶¹ The presumption remained that no matter what they did, women were attached in some way to the private sphere. It was possible for a woman to work as a missionary, but expectations surrounding her qualifications and duties remained very much a part of contemporary beliefs regarding womanhood.

Missionary men were determined, business-like, and organized, while women were noble and unselfish.⁶² In constructing the image of the male missionary in western Canada the publications borrowed images similar to the saddle-bag preachers of Upper Canada who had travelled their circuits and endured hardship in order to spread the word.⁶³ These men were navigators of unknown lands, pioneers of undiscovered countries,

⁵⁹The Missionary Outlook July 1920, 221.

⁶⁰ The Missionary Outlook August 1885, 17.

⁶¹Gagan, A Sensitive Independence, 38.

⁶² The Missionary Outlook February 1917, 26.

⁶³Emery, "Methodism on the Canadian Prairies," 12.

phonologists, and linguists.⁶⁴ Men like Robert T. Rundle, James Evans, and George and John McDougall administered circuits over thousands of miles. In a tradition of muscular Christianity they braved the dangers of a wild land, sought out First Nations people, and attempted to share their hardships. Meanwhile women, either single or married, waited at the mission stations, "on the lonely prairies" without basic creature comforts and the companionship of other white females.

The deprivations, hardships, and loneliness that Methodist women experienced were emphasised in the periodicals. They were martyrs to the cause, while men were pioneers operating in the spirit of reckless adventure.⁶⁵ A clear dichotomy existed in the depiction of women and men in the field. One was an adventurous spirit that was hardened through adversity, while the other was a frail flower that suffered and inevitably had to return to civilization. Both women and men were pioneers, but women suffered, while men conquered.

The depiction of women in such a helpless and passive manner tied them to a role that was not only supportive, but connected to the domestic sphere. Men were pioneers, while women remained at the station caring for children, teaching, and providing medical aid. Theirs was a world of contradictions; offered expanding opportunities through mission work, but bound by a domestic ideology regarding the duties that they performed.

Both missionaries wives and female missionaries were hailed as "saints." However, the "helpmeet" image of the missionary's wife was more obviously linked with motherhood, and because of this she seemed to be

⁶⁴ The Missionary Outlook February 1901, 254.

⁶⁵ Grant, Moon of Wintertime, 162.

more acceptable than the independent educated female missionary who opted for a career instead of marriage. As a result the missionary's wife was a common theme, discussed much more frequently throughout the periodicals than the single female missionary. While the single female missionary was recognized as playing an integral role in the field, and while the depiction of her duties conformed to a domestic ideology she seemed somewhat at odds with the maternal image.

Other common themes in the depiction of missionary women were the hardships they had to contend with, the scarcity of white female companionship, the lack of proper "civilization", and a want of material goods. The minister, on the other hand, was involved with the day to day care of his "flock", the evangelization of non-Christians, hunting, diplomacy, and peacekeeping. There was a tendency to depict missionaries wives as passive, while men were characterized as challenging and defeating a harsh land.

The growing number of women, both single and married, and their success' in the field proved their usefulness and established their niche. Whereas in Rundle's time it was preferable to those in charge of missions to send single men, by the late nineteenth century this had changed. In 1903 a letter was published in the Outlook from Doctor Alexander Sutherland, General Secretary of the Missionary Society, denying the request of Reverend Langford, a potential missionary candidate for western Canada, because he was single. In his letter Dr. Sutherland referred to married missionaries as being "double-handed."⁶⁶ Only after Reverend

⁶⁶The Missionary Outlook, June 1881, 17.

Langford had celebrated his nuptials was his application accepted.⁶⁷

Within these publications it was recognized that a "helpmeet" or wife doubled her husbands usefulness, exemplified by Dr. Sutherland's reference to the "double-handed" missionary. Women freed men from trifling concerns, allowing men to devote more of their time and efforts to important matters, specifically evangelical work. It was also stressed that white women served as a role models for Native people, furthering the civilization process. The arrival of female missionaries, particularly wives, in the West was seen to herald the advent of Euro-Canadian culture and their presence provided a civilizing influence on an untamed land.

Between the 1880s and the 1920s, in both the Guardian and the Outlook, their representation of women in the field underwent a transition. As more single female missionaries travelled out West and to other foreign mission fields to be teachers, nurses, childcare providers, and matrons they proved their capabilities. Although they had not become involved in direct evangelical work, women created an important niche for themselves in social service areas. As a result they began to be recognized and even applauded for their efforts. Increasingly less emphasis was placed on the suffering and endurance of helpmeets, and more on their adherence to duties as Christian women.⁶⁸

Images of Anglo-Saxon womanhood altered over time in response to changing social values, belief systems, and necessity. In Petticoats and the Pulpit Elizabeth Muir examined how images of Methodist women preachers

⁶⁷Ibid., 17.

⁶⁸Myra Rutherford, "Models of Grace and Boundaries of Gender: Anglican Women Missionaries in Canada's North, 1860-1945," Canadian Women's Studies vol. 14, no. 4, (fall 1994), 46.

were modified in Canada from the early to mid-nineteenth century to coincide with contemporary gender roles. The representation of Barbara Heck, a woman credited with being the mother of Methodism in Canada, evolved over time from a person who was depicted as a "woman of a bold and independent spirit" in the late eighteenth century to a "retiring pious mother" by the nineteenth century.⁶⁹ The characterization of missionary women in the Christian Guardian and Missionary Outlook was consistent with contemporary beliefs regarding gender roles.

The representations in the Outlook and the Guardian reflected contemporary idealized images of white womanhood. These images do not necessarily reflect the reality of women's lives, rather they indicate roles and standards that women were expected to strive for. It would have been nearly impossible for female missionaries to work within the image of the "frail flower" that had been created within Methodist publications. The reality of their lives required they develop self-reliance and independence; they could not afford to be as passive and dependent as they were expected.

Both the Guardian and the Outlook portrayed several different categories of white women; mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and missionaries. Each category shared the assumption that all women possessed a nature that was inherently maternal. This lent itself towards certain characteristics like purity, piety, domesticity, and submissiveness. The belief was that ultimately the predisposition of women to act in accordance with their natures led them to choose certain roles for themselves, not because that was what society dictated, but

⁶⁹Muir, Petticoats and the Pulpit, 165-178.

because it was natural. Therefore, even if women were called by God to serve Him in the mission field, the assumption was that they would continue to perform many of the same functions there as they would have as wives and mothers. The roles of women missionaries, married or not, were defined by contemporary notions of proper gender roles.

Anglo-Saxon women were expected to live up to high standards of personal virtue; they were to function as guardians of both the home and society. In the field they were to serve as domestic and moral role models for Native women, who were characterized as falling far short of the feminine ideal. Indigenous peoples were represented as waiting in the dark savagery of their culture for the supposed light of Christianity and Euro-Canadian culture to touch their lives. And Euro-Canadian single female missionaries and missionaries wives represented the arrival of "civilization" as "cultural gatekeepers."

Those women who chose to work in the mission field were just as confined by societal expectations and constraints as those who remained at home. The domestic ideology that defined the roles of women within eastern Canadian society was portrayed within the Guardian and the Outlook, as determining the work performed by women missionaries in the field. The depiction of single female missionaries and missionaries wives within this maternal framework was also reflected within the publications of John McDougall, Egerton Ryerson Young, and John Maclean. Anglo-Saxon women were characterized as the "white mothers."

CHAPTER TWO**"Women of the Lodges and the Mission Houses:" Women in the Publications of John McDougall, Egerton Ryerson Young, and John Maclean**

Women in the Methodist mission field were represented not only in the pages of religious journals, like the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook, but in the publications of male missionaries. This chapter will examine women in the writings of three well known western Canadian male missionaries, John Chantler McDougall, Egerton Ryerson Young, and John Maclean. These three missionaries borrowed many of the images of womanhood found in the Guardian and the Outlook. They depicted white missionary women, particularly their wives, as pure pious women who sacrificed comfort to improve the lives of Native people. Missionary women became the embodiment of all idealized images of women, exemplifying the notion of the Christian women who "hath done what they could" as a result of their sacrifices. The writings of John McDougall, Egerton Young, and John Maclean all reflect the gender and racial ideologies of their time. All reflected a belief that women's place was within the home and that their primary duty was to care for their children and offer a haven for their husbands.

The authors characterized Native society, and Native women in particular, as the antithesis of Anglo-Saxon society. They emphasized the superiority and civility of Euro-Canadian culture and the savage brutality of Native culture. The most blatant comparison was made between Native women and white Christian middle class Anglo-Saxon women. Since Anglo-Saxon women were always portrayed as the embodiment of "civilized"

culture, Native women always fell short when measured against them. The creation of this "radical other" within missionary literature was essential to the development of the image of white women. The perfection of white women was only so apparent when contrasted to the supposed degradation of their Native "sisters."

Each author published several books during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries regarding their observations of Native culture and their work among Native people. John McDougall, Egerton Ryerson Young, and John Maclean all offered brief glimpses into the lives of missionary women. While these authors focused more on their wives and mothers, they also mentioned single female missionaries. Both John Maclean and Egerton Young noted the benefits to be derived from having Anglo-Saxon women in the field to serve both as teachers and role models for Native people.¹ Native women often appeared as foils for Anglo-Saxon women, particularly in Maclean and Young's works.

Male missionaries' beliefs concerning proper gender roles greatly affected the type of activities women did in the field, determining in many cases the roles that they performed.² The idealized notions of womanhood that confined women to very specific roles in eastern Canadian society were just as prevalent and confining in western Canada. Although the work of women in the field, during the latter half of the nineteenth

¹Egerton R. Young, Oowikapun: Or How the Gospel Reached the Nelson River Indians, (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1896), 236. The author comments on how "the coming of Christian young women would be very helpful in the rapid extension of Christianity."

²Brouwer, New Women For God, 130-161. In the fifth chapter Brouwer looking at the impact of gender politics at a mission station, stated that the role of women workers was often determined by the missions "most powerful ordained worker."

century, had become an increasingly integral facet of station life the characterization of their roles remained largely a supportive one because it was associated with women's work, specifically teaching, childcare, and nursing.

The references that McDougall, Young, and Maclean made to their wives in their accounts do not tell us a great deal about the lives of these women, but they do provide insight into the belief systems of the authors. These male missionaries depiction of the "quiet heroism" of their wives, mothers, and female counterparts created standards and ideals that these women were measured against.

These standards and ideals manifested themselves as sets of expectations within which missionary women had to operate or represent themselves as operating within, as will be indicated in a later chapter. Since women were viewed as inherently maternal creatures, a quality which attached them to the private sphere, their roles had to reflect this. As a result the activities that missionary women performed were represented by male missionaries within the "helpmeet" mould. Missionary women, specifically their wives, were portrayed by McDougall, Young, and Maclean as faithful helpers who followed them to the field and provided them with both physical and emotional support.

Much of the knowledge about Indigenous cultures that the average middle class Protestant Euro-Canadian received, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was provided through the publications of missionaries. Not only were eastern Canadian perceptions of the missionary experience and what it meant for women influenced by the published works of people in the field, but their understanding of Native

life was also shaped by them as well. Both Egerton Young and John Maclean, following brief careers as missionaries in the West, spent a great deal of time writing books and promoting them on lecture tours throughout North America and Britain. John McDougall also lectured about his missionary experiences. All three of them were hailed as authorities on Native culture and were often cited in newspapers.

McDougall, Young, and Maclean were influential in creating myths about Native people. In turn these myths, concerning Native culture and its treatment of women, helped to legitimize the presence of missionaries in western Canada and the appropriation of Native Land.³ In 1889 the Macleod Gazette published an anonymous editorial regarding John Maclean's promotional tour in eastern Canada.⁴ The article commended Maclean for his work promoting the settlement of the West. John Maclean's contemporary, John McDougall, was also extremely enthusiastic about the settlement and development of western Canada. John McDougall perceived the treaty system as not only a means of expediting the "civilizing" process, but liberating Native peoples land for settlement and agricultural development.⁵ The work of missionaries, settlement, and assimilation, John McDougall believed, would be the salvation of Native people.

All of the authors used a different writing style in order to

³Sarah Carter, "Man's Mission of Subjugation: The Publications of John Maclean, John McDougall, and Egerton R. Young, Nineteenth-Century Methodist Missionaries in Western Canada," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, History, April 15, 1981, 6.

⁴"Mr. Maclean's Work," The Macleod Gazette, March 21, 1889.

⁵Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council, et al. The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 168.

accomplish their objectives. Each author focused on different aspects of Western life, Native culture, and missionary practices. John McDougall's works were autobiographical and information regarding missionary women and Native people occurred only as they coincided with his narrative. John Maclean's books on the other hand were an attempt to make objective observations regarding Native culture. His intention was to record what he believed to be the last vestiges of a soon to be vanished race. The purpose of Egerton Young's books was to try and teach lessons to Euro-Canadians using parables. Young contrasted the immorality of Native people to the "superiority" of Anglo-Saxon civilization, showing the benefits that he believed would result from the assimilation of the former to the latter.

Both Egerton Young and John Maclean spent no more than ten years in the western Canadian mission field before they wrote their books. John McDougall spent over thirty years in the field as a missionary yet did not publish any sustained account until 1895. This was in response to what McDougall felt was the misrepresentation of Native people by Egerton Young in his book Stories From Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires. John McDougall's criticism of Young's books indicated that missionaries beliefs regarding Native people differed from one another.⁵ These men's books like most missionary literature, however, were intended to promote mission work and garner financial, physical, and spiritual aid.

Each of the authors worked and lived in western Canada with their

⁵In 1895 John McDougall published a pamphlet entitled "A Criticism: Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires," in response to Egerton Ryerson Young's book, Stories From Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires, when the Christian Guardian stopped printing their letters. John McDougall published his first book soon afterwards.

wives' and children. Throughout their books they offered glimpses of their wives lives, commenting briefly on the work they performed and the hardships they endured. Missionaries wives were typically portrayed as selfless women who faced adversity with quiet acceptance and McDougall, Young, and Maclean all reflect this to varying degrees. They depicted their wives in the ideal "helpmeet" image.⁷ Though important, women were support systems, quietly helping and assuring their husbands. When John McDougall married his first wife, Abigail, his father gave them his blessing, to which his mother, Elizabeth, gave her support by saying "amen."⁸ Elizabeth McDougall was portrayed by her son, John, as the perfect "helpmeet." She was represented as an obedient companion whose realm of usefulness did not extend past the domestic sphere.⁹ This characterization of Elizabeth McDougall was typical, as wives and mothers, their role remained tied to the private sphere.

McDougall, Young, and Maclean hailed their own wives and the wives of other missionaries as icons of womanhood, unequalled in their purity and piety. Anglo-Saxon women served as role models for Native women, showing them how to be good Christian mothers, wives and housekeepers.¹⁰ The noble sacrifice of the "helpmeet" was a constant theme throughout

⁷Sweet, The Minister's Wife, 5. Sweet defined the "helpmeet" as obedient subservient companions with no public involvement or visibility, who assisted their husbands and seldom went beyond the domestic horizon.

⁸John McDougall, Parsons on the Plains, ed., Thomas Bredin, (Don Mills: Longman Canada Ltd., 1971), 192.

⁹Sweet, The Minister's Wife, 5.

¹⁰Rutherdale, "Revisiting Colonization Through Gender," 21.

their books.¹¹ Each author asserted that women, particularly their wives, contributed greatly towards the advancement of Christianity among Native people. Missionary women were instrumental in showing Native people how to live according to Euro-Canadian standards.

Reverend Egerton Ryerson Young was born in Crosby, Ontario on April 7, 1840.¹² His father was Reverend William Young, a circuit rider and a camp meeting evangelist.¹³ Following in his father's footsteps Egerton Young was ordained in 1867. At Christmas of that same year he married Elizabeth Bingham of Bradford, Ontario. The next year, while working as a preacher in Hamilton, Egerton Young was offered the opportunity to serve as a missionary in the North West.¹⁴ He was first stationed among the Swampy Cree at Norway House on the north end of Lake Winnipeg from 1868-1873.¹⁵

The Swampy Cree were an Algonquian linguistic group. Like all people of the boreal forest the Swampy Cree were small scale hunters and gatherers, a lifestyle that required a high degree of mobility. Many of the Swampy Cree became attached to Norway House, a major Hudson's Bay

¹¹Maclean, Canadian Savage Folk, 344. Maclean laments over the dearth of biographies commemorating the sacrifice of the wives of missionaries.

¹²"Egerton Ryerson Young," Minutes of the Toronto Methodist Conference, 1910, 14.

¹³Ibid., 14.

¹⁴Ibid., 14.

¹⁵United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Egerton Ryerson Young fonds, Letters to Elizabeth Bingham Young from her husband 1873-1874, 1894-1895, "Letters of Egerton Ryerson Young," Preface by Harcourt Brown, 2.

Company (HBC) trading post.¹⁶ This relationship with Norway House served to alter some of the Swampy Cree's traditional modes of living. Those Swampy Cree that settled around Norway House, became known as the Home Guard Cree.¹⁷ The Home Guard Cree provisioned the fort, become increasingly reliant on European goods, and intermarried with British fur traders, encouraging a more sedentary lifestyle and strong economic tie with the HBC.

Rossville was the Methodist mission station established near Norway House by James Evans in 1843 as a result of his differences with the HBC.¹⁸ James Evans was also responsible for developing a syllabic system of writing Cree, helping to precipitate a major cultural change among the Cree, enabling them to have one of the highest literacy rates in the world.¹⁹

Young's second posting in the North West was at Beren's River from 1874-1876 among the Saulteaux (or Northern Ojibwa.)²⁰ The Saulteaux, like the Cree, were a boreal forest people originally from the Sault St. Marie region in Ontario, who had migrated west during the eighteenth century.²¹

¹⁶John S. Milloy, The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy and War, 1790 to 1870, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), 21.

¹⁷Raymond M. Beaumont, "Norway House: A Brief History," unpublished paper, Frontier School Division No. 48, 1989, 5.

¹⁸Pannekoek, "The Rev. James Evans and the Social Antagonisms of the Fur Trade Society, 1840-1846," 2.

¹⁹Olive Patricia Dickason, Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), 241.

²⁰Young Family Fonds, Letters to Elizabeth Bingham Young from her husband 1873-8174, 1894-1895, "letters of Egerton Ryerson Young," 2.

²¹June Helm ed., The Indians of the Subarctic: A Critical Bibliography, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 8-10.

Berens River was located on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg, it was situated near a minor HBC trading post. Unlike the Swampy Cree, the Saulteaux at Berens River did not possess the same strong economic ties with the HBC.²² The Youngs experience among the Saulteaux would prove to be different from that of the Swampy Cree. As a predominantly non-Christian group, the Saulteaux retained much of their traditional culture, but with a weaker HBC presence and better land the Young's saw greater agricultural possibilities.²³

The official reason offered for the Young's early departure from the field in 1876 was Elizabeth Bingham Young's deteriorating health.²⁴ Historian Jennifer Brown, however, has instead suggested, that Elizabeth's ill health was only an excuse.²⁵ It was the "Indianisation" of the Young's son, Egerton Jr., by Little Mary, his nanny, and the Cree and Saulteaux among whom his parents worked that Brown has argued was the real reason.²⁶

²²Jennifer Brown, "A Cree Nurse in a Cradle of Methodism: Little Mary and the Egerton R. Young Family at Norway House and Berens River," in Canadian Family History: Selected Readings, ed., Bettina Bradbury, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1992), 99.

²³Brown, "A Cree Nurse in the Cradle of Methodism," 99.

²⁴Egerton R. Young, "Life Among the Red Men of America," The Missionary Review of the World, vol. 18 no. 7, (July 1895), 490.

²⁵Jennifer Brown, "Cree Nurse in Cradle of Methodism: Little Mary and Egerton R. Young Family at Norway House and Berens River," in Canadian Family History: Selected Readings, ed., Bettina Bradbury, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1992), 102-103.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 103. Following the birth of the Young's first child, Eddie Jr., the Young's hired a Cree woman named Little Mary to be his nanny. Over the course of ten years Eddie learned Cree and Northern Algonquian storytelling traditions from Little Mary. Jennifer Brown has argued that Little Mary had a great deal of influence on the development of Eddie. And that the depiction of Little Mary was "far more substantial than the shadowy, two-dimensional women who

In his books Young stressed the tremendous impact he had as a missionary. According to Young he was able to convert thousands by himself.²⁷ The eight years Young spent in the mission field appear to have been the pinnacle of his life.²⁸ Very little detail was given by Young regarding his life prior to his work among Native people and even less afterwards. His personal papers focus on his experiences as a missionary and provide little insight into his ministerial work in Ontario following his retirement from the field. Obviously, Young's publications were intended to garner popular support for the missionary endeavour, but perhaps they are also an attempt to give meaning and importance to his life and his work.

Of all three authors Young was the least objective concerning his representation of Native culture. Young's goal was not to record traditional Native culture for posterity, but highlight what he perceived to be its inadequacies. Young emphasised the differences between converted and unconverted Native people, a dark savagery versus a goodness and light. Young believed that conversion was accompanied by a transformation that completely altered Native people's perceptions, beliefs, and values. Through this comparison he showed what he saw as the necessity of missionary work.

Egerton Young, like many of his contemporaries, believed that Native people were a dying race "...of a Vanished Race I write...the mantle of

populated most mission literature."

²⁷John McDougall, "A Criticism of Indian Wigwams and Northern Camp-fires," (Toronto: William Briggs, 1895), 38.

²⁸Carter, "Man's Mission of Subjugation," 29.

oblivion has already fallen over much that ought to be preserved to profit and entertain."²⁹ The objective of missionaries was to assimilate Native people; their only opportunity for salvation lay through conversion and adoption of Euro-Canadian culture. Young felt that any aspect of Native culture that had once been valuable had ceased to exist. In its place remained a culture based upon superstition and ignorance.³⁰ This perceived degradation that had befallen Native society vindicated for Young the necessity of missionaries. Christianity, according to Young, would not only revitalize Native society, but free Native women from the yoke of traditional Native culture.

Young saw little value in traditional Native society, steeped as he believed it to be in superstition and ignorance. There were two types of Native people in his books; those people that had converted or would convert and those people that were unconvertable. The dichotomy that existed in Young's books was developed around his personal perception of good and evil and the potential convertibility of various Native peoples. Traditional Native culture was embodied by Young's depiction of "Shamans." Shamans were portrayed as inherently evil and the obstacle to Native peoples complete acceptance of Christianity.³¹

They had in measure become convinced that their religious teachers, their medicine men, and conjurers, were imposters liars, and so, while submitting somewhat to their sway, were

²⁹Egerton R. Young, Children of the Forest: A Story of Indian Love, (Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1904), 11.

³⁰Young, Oowikapun, 23.

³¹Egerton R. Young, Indian Life in the Great North-West, (Toronto: Musson Book Co., Ltd., 1902), 12.

yet chafing under it.³²

The malevolent nature of Native society was attributed to its paganism.³³ Young believed that Indians continued to follow their "depraved" customs because of their fear of a few conjurers, who were capitalising on their superstitions and fears.³⁴ Given the knowledge Native people would inevitably choose the moral path. In other words Native people had the ability to change and only needed to be shown the right way.

Once dwelling in vice and ignorance, the slaves of superstition they are now well clothed educated and not only theoretically instructed in the plan of salvation but most of them enjoying the knowledge of sins forgiven.³⁵

Non-Christians were portrayed as immoral men who beat their wives and daughters and showed no familial or brotherly love. Children were raised to be "...cruel, tyrannical, and imperious...traits which were valued [in Native society.]"³⁶ Such contemptible traits were exemplified by Black Snake and Hard Hand, two characters in Young's book When the Blackfoot Went South. Good, on the other hand, was represented by either the converted Native person or the potential Christian convert. The nature of the potential Christian was such that she or he sensed the evil inherent within traditional Native religion and practices and was repulsed

³²Young, Oowikapun, 183.

³³Young, Life in the North-West, 26.

³⁴Ibid., 12.

³⁵Young Family Fonds, "First Trip to Oxford Mission," September 1868 and Transcript, box 9/12, file D-6. (p.13 of transcript)

³⁶Egerton R. Young, When the Blackfeet Went South: And Other Stories, (London: Wyman and Sons, Ltd., n.d.), 8.

by it.³⁷ Shining Arrow was the potential Christian convert and served as the foil for Hard Hand. Everything that Hard Hand was, Shining Arrow was not.³⁸ Ultimately, these potential converts wound up feeling dissatisfied and restless until they were shown the "true path" which inevitably happened because they were morally superior to their non-Christian counterparts.³⁹

The ethnocentricity with which Young viewed Aboriginal culture was intertwined with the way in which he represented women, both Anglo-Saxon and Native. Young believed that Native culture was uncivilized and in dire need of change. He used Native peoples' supposed poor treatment of women to exemplify the necessity of conversion and assimilation. The alleged superiority of Anglo-Saxon culture was evident through its treatment of women.

The men in their pagan states were naturally tyrants. They had such false ideas. They thought if a man was kind to his mother, or his wife, or his sister, or his daughter, there was something weak about him, that he was not a big Indian, a strong, great warrior, so they crushed out all kindly feeling.⁴⁰

Young depicted the treatment of women in Native society as deplorable. Aboriginal men starved their women, beat them for the smallest infraction, and killed their female children.⁴¹ However, as soon as these same men, who had apparently been abusing their female relatives

³⁷Young, Children of the Forest, 15.

³⁸Young, When the Blackfeet Went South: And Other Stories, 9.

³⁹Young, When the Blackfeet Went South, 50.

⁴⁰Young, "Life Among the Red Men of America," 488.

⁴¹Ibid., 490.

since time immemorial, converted to Christianity they ceased their wicked ways. Young provided evidence that his work among Native people was successful and there was no better measure of this success than the elevated status of Native women.

In her article "Revisiting Colonization Through Gender" Myra Rutherdale identified the supposed decrease of such heinous crimes, as recorded in the writings of missionaries, as the measure by which they used to identify their success'.⁴² Rutherdale also noted that no such crimes had ever actually been witnessed by missionaries.⁴³ In fact it was the low status of women that was used to justify the missionaries attempts to effect a wholesale change of Aboriginal culture.

Egerton Young characterized Native women as modest, timid, and retiring, all of which was a direct result of their ill treatment.⁴⁴ The introduction of Christianity would free Native women from their abject positions. Young firmly believed that Christianity was the great equalizer; through its message women would be liberated from their bondage and inequality. Women received their deliverance because Native men were reformed by the word of God and shown the error of their ways.

Young constructed two opposing images of Native women, depicting them as either the "squaw drudge" or the beautiful Indian maiden.⁴⁵ Upon their conversion women evidently underwent a deep spiritual transformation. The women were no longer timid and submissive,

⁴²Rutherdale, "Revisiting Colonization Through Gender," 9.

⁴³Ibid., 10.

⁴⁴Young, "Life Among the Red Men of America," 485.

⁴⁵Young, Children of the Forest, 15-34.

immediately discovering the "liberation" that was possible under Christianity. At the same time Young also indicated that he did not approve of the freedom which women were allowed to exercise in Native society. Those women that needed his help were the "shy and timid creatures" abused by their husbands. As a result within his works there emerged a third type of Native woman, one who was rarely mentioned. This woman was the bold "Saulteaux Chieftainess," Ookemasis, who was portrayed as unwomanly.⁴⁶ Ookemasis had heard about the Young's mission and had travelled to the mission station on her own to learn about Christianity. She even persuaded Young to return with her and preach to her people. Young disapproved of this figure, despite her decision to seek out Young for religious instruction on her own. His idealized images of women revealed a person who was bound by a domestic ideology and did not include not one who took initiative on her own. Any woman who strayed from this ideal earned his enmity.

Given what Young believed to be the brutality of Native culture, he was unable to fathom why anyone would prefer Native society to Anglo-Saxon. He did not understand why women would not automatically choose what he considered to be the superior civilization, one which offered not only salvation, but equality as well. Egerton Young was convinced that Christianity offered women so much more. Christianity had the potential to transform women's status and roles, thereby, changing the very foundation of society, the home.

While not as flowery in his depiction of missionaries wives and

⁴⁶Egerton R. Young, By Canoe and Dog Train Among the Cree and Saulteaux Indians, (London: Hazell, Watson, and Viney Ltd., 1890), 262-264.

single missionary women as John Maclean, Egerton Young still portrayed them in an extremely flattering light. In his books Young admired the way Anglo-Saxon women taught Native women Euro-Canadian norms. He wrote "...the coming of some genuine Christian young women would be very helpful in the more rapid extension of Christianity..."⁴⁷ He recognized the utility of women in the mission field as long as their role remained in some way attached to the private sphere. Missionary women were there to show Native women how to be good Christian wives and mothers. The home would be the vehicle through which Native society would ultimately be transformed.⁴⁸

While Elizabeth Bingham Young's primary role was to serve as a homemaker and provide her husband with the emotional support he required to perform his mission, she was also expected to teach Indian women how to be proper Christian wives.⁴⁹ Her role was to serve as an example. In the words of her son, Egerton Young Jr.;

There are four ways in which the missionary woman impresses the heathen. Firstly, in what she is in herself. Secondly, as a social leader or reformer. Thirdly, as a nurse, physician, surgeon. Fourthly, and lastly as a teacher. The missionary woman as she stands before the heathen especially heathen women, is generally a wonder. And in her relationship with the domestic circle as sister or wife, mother and homemaker, she is one of the greatest of wonders.⁵⁰

This statement exemplified the perception of Elizabeth Bingham Young's

⁴⁷Young, Oowikapun, 236.

⁴⁸Ibid., 236-237.

⁴⁹Ibid., 237.

⁵⁰Young Family Fonds, box 11 file H-14, Egerton Young Jr. "Woman's Work On the Mission Field," 8-9.

purpose in the mission field, as seen by her family.

There is not doubt that there was suffering experienced at the mission stations, particularly by the missionaries wives and their families; creature comforts were often nonexistent and the lives of loved ones were lost. Young felt a great deal of sympathy and heartache for the suffering that his wife experienced as a result of their work. Several years after he had left the field Young wrote about his feelings regarding his wife and her sacrifices;

The brave wife, who had so incessantly worked and toiled for the uplifting of the poor women, whom she had so dearly loved, that her health so completely failed that she had to be removed from that isolated mission.⁵¹

One of the saddest and most painful incidents was described by Young in his book By Canoe and Dog-Train Among the Cree and Salteaux Indians. In the book Young described how in 1873 they had lost their youngest child Nellie to an illness on a boat trip to Fort Garry. Mrs. Young found herself with her dying child on the banks of the Red River "...in a strange land, no home to go to, and no friends to comfort her."⁵²

Young emphasized his wife's suffering for a "higher purpose." At times Young seemed almost bitter at what he felt to be a lack of recognition and praise for the work that he and his wife performed. In a letter to "The Missionary Review of the World" Young complained that the average criminal was treated better than the families of missionaries.⁵³

⁵¹Ibid., 19.

⁵²Young, By Canoe and Dog-Train Among the Cree and Salteaux Indians, 46.

⁵³Young, "Life Among the Red Men of America," 482.

Prisoners ate better than his family, who had at times existed on a diet of fish twenty-one times a week.⁵⁴ It almost seemed as if he was chastising Eastern society for its lack of sympathy for and support of domestic missionaries.

Egerton Young obviously felt a great deal of affection for his wife and was grateful for her support and fortitude in following him to western Canada. He dedicated one of his books to her;

To the Faithful and loving wife who so cheerfully and uncomplainingly for years shared the hardships and toils of some of the most trying mission fields. Whose courage never faltered and whose zeal abated not even when in perils oft, from hunger, bitter cold, and savage men.⁵⁵

Upon their arrival at Norway House the Young's discovered that the schoolmaster had deserted his post.⁵⁶ Mrs. Young quickly took charge, teaching the children until the services of another teacher could be procured.⁵⁷ Elizabeth Bingham Young was always portrayed as an extremely capable woman, who faced all problems with calm quiet grace.

Despite all of Egerton Young's complaints over the terrible hardships that his family faced he stressed in his books that with God's support they were able to triumph in their mission. Young detailed his families privation as if to prove his mission truly was God's calling, demonstrating both his own and his wife's courage and dedication. Throughout Young's books a theme of martyrdom prevailed regarding the

⁵⁴Ibid., 482.

⁵⁵Young, By Canoe and Dog-Train Among the Cree and Salteaux Indians.

⁵⁶Young Family Fonds, transcript "Norway House," Box 1, file 1. p.4.

⁵⁷Ibid.,4.

trials and tribulations of his family. Despite Elizabeth Bingham Young's dedication to the cause, she suffered as a result of the harsh climate in the West, a lack of white female companionship, and basic material comforts.

John Maclean's published works were different than Egerton Young's and John McDougall's because he did not appear as the central character in any of them and they were intended to serve as critical objective observations. They were written, especially Canadian Savage Folk, with the goal of providing readers with information regarding Native culture. As a result Maclean's books were very descriptive and appear somewhat more academic than the others.

Of all three missionaries the least is known about John Maclean's personal life. This oversight is largely due to the fact that it was John Maclean who adopted the role of biographer of the missionaries of western Canada. Born in Scotland on October 30, 1851 John Maclean was ordained in Canada in 1880. Later that same year he married Sara Anne Barker of Guelph, Ontario. Soon afterwards he was approached by George McDougall to serve as a missionary on the Blood reserve near Fort Macleod.⁵⁸

The Blood, members of the Blackfoot Confederacy, were a Plains people dependent largely upon the buffalo for subsistence. The Blackfoot confederacy occupied a vast area, bounded on the west by Rocky Mountains, on the north by the North Saskatchewan River, on the east by the present

⁵⁸Mrs. Frederick Stephenson, One Hundred Years of Canadian Methodist Missions, 1824-1924, vol. 1. (Toronto: The Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1925), 105. Mrs. Frederick Stephenson described John Maclean as an "author of many biographies of Indian missionaries and of several standard work dealing with Indian life and customs, and as an acknowledged authority regarding the Indian of North America."

day Alberta-Saskatchewan border, and extending as far south as the Missouri River.⁵⁹ The disappearance of the buffalo and encroaching white settlers, however, forced the Blood to make a treaty with the Canadian government in 1877.

They were one of the largest tribes in southern Alberta.⁶⁰ The first reserve the Bloods were given was located on extremely poor land, but they were able to renegotiate in 1883 and took land southwest of Lethbridge, occupying the largest reserve in Canada.⁶¹ In 1880 both the Anglican missionary Reverend Samuel Trivett and Maclean arrived at the Blood reserve to establish missions.

Unlike Egerton Young, when John Maclean retired from the mission field in 1889 he choose to remain in western Canada. Although the specifics of John Maclean's premature departure from the field are unknown, the evidence indicates that he left because he felt that the life of a missionary's wife was too harsh for Sara Maclean.⁶²

John Maclean was the most lavish of the three authors in his tributes to missionary women. He heaped accolades upon the Anglo-Saxon women who travelled out West, referring to them as the "saintly heroines of the lodges," who came to impart civilization upon the poor "red

⁵⁹Hugh A. Dempsey, Indian Tribes of Alberta, (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1988), 11.

⁶⁰Ibid., 21.

⁶¹Ibid., 22.

⁶²United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) John Maclean fonds, box 1 file 7, Correspondence, 1889 (January - March), letter to Annie Maclean dated March 18, 1889.

men."⁶³ Maclean idealized the role of white women in the development of the West. He portrayed white women as representatives of Anglo-Saxon culture, characterizing them as the "cultural gatekeepers."⁶⁴ Their arrival was identified as the beginning of "civilization" in the West.⁶⁵ In Maclean's words they were;

The wise women from the east, the magi of modern times, have travelled westward with their gifts of culture, grace, and love and laid them at the feet of men and women who sit in loneliness and with depressed hearts, in the lodges widely scattered on prairie and mountain, and in the cold and bleak regions of the northland.⁶⁶

Maclean portrayed the wives of missionaries as martyrs to the cause. "These queens of the mission houses" taught Native women, nursed the sick, and looked after the children without complaint.⁶⁷ "The wives give their best years in isolation to elevate the Indian race."⁶⁸ They were left alone by their husbands to run the mission station and look after their children. Maclean felt that missionaries wives were worse off than the missionaries themselves.

⁶³Maclean, Canadian Savage Folk, 344.

⁶⁴Maclean, Canadian Savage Folk, 348.

⁶⁵Sylvia Van Kirk, "The Impact of White Women on Fur Trade Society," in Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada, ed. J.R. Miller, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 198. Van Kirk noted that "the arrival of white women underlined the perceived cultural shortcomings of mixed-blood wives." Missionary women were the embodiment of Anglo-Saxon womanhood. They were the antithesis of Native women.

⁶⁶Maclean, Canadian Savage Folk, 348.

⁶⁷Ibid., 348.

⁶⁸Ibid., 349.

The missionary enjoys relief through change of occupation, visiting the camps, undertaking long journeys, and meeting with mutual friends but for the lady in the mission house there is continued isolation, toiling for years...without a single friend to break the monotony.⁶⁹

He depicted the life of the missionary wife as extremely bleak and thankless. In the mission field women lost their children and went without medical care for years without protest.⁷⁰ Women endured these difficulties without their husbands or the support of other family members. Maclean complained that they coped with all of these deprivations and not one biography had been written about these "saintly heroines of the lodges."⁷¹

By following their husbands out West Anglo-Saxon women endured great hardship, apparently without complaint. In contrast Native women were portrayed as having suffered deprivation and difficulty as well. However, their suffering was believed to have occurred because it was a function of Native culture, not a facet of life in western Canada. Maclean, like his contemporaries, perceived the amount of work that Native women performed as an indication of their status, rather than a means of their families survival. In Canadian Savage Folk Maclean described in the following excerpt what he believed to be the lot of Native women;

...plodding her weary way with her babe strapped upon her shoulders as her hands were fully occupied, carrying two pails overflowing with water...Poor drudge! she was victim of premature old age.

⁶⁹Ibid., 349.

⁷⁰Ibid., 350.

⁷¹Ibid., 344.

An aged woman at less than thirty years.⁷²

Maclean attributed the "lowly" position of women in Native society to a degeneration of their culture.⁷³ Maclean believed that Native culture traditionally possessed a sort of "primitive" virtue.⁷⁴ That virtue, however, had long since faded away and had been replaced by immorality, particularly among the women. The women were sold into marriage like property and were treated like chattel. At one time, Maclean asserted, women's lives were happy and active when game was plentiful, but now their lives had become idle, filthy, and painful.⁷⁵

In 1888 John Maclean published an article in the Macleod Gazette entitled "Foot Prints of the Red Men."⁷⁶ In it he described his sense of loss and sadness over the "lingering traces of a civilization supplanted by a nobler system of morality and religion."⁷⁷ While admiring what he believed to be the disappearance of the "noble savage" Maclean maintained that it was an inevitable side effect of progress. Native culture, according to Maclean, was being supplanted by the "nobler civilization." There were problems with their adoption of British Canadian culture.

⁷²Ibid.,193.

⁷³John Maclean, The Indians: Their Manners and Customs, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1907), 128.

⁷⁴Ibid.,26.

⁷⁵Ibid.,26.

⁷⁶Reverend John McLean, "Foot Prints of the Red Men," The Macleod Gazette, January 4, 1888.

⁷⁷Ibid.

Indians had learned only the "lower" aspects of white civilization.⁷⁸ This was the explanation that Maclean offered for the present status of Aboriginal women. Maclean downplayed the cultural and economic stress that had resulted from increased pressure of encroaching settlers and declining game populations.

John Maclean retired from missionary work in 1889. Instead of returning to Ontario he looked for another position; he became a school inspector.⁷⁹ In a letter he wrote to his wife on March 18, 1889 he assured her of his intention to only accept a posting where she would not face such hard work again without help.⁸⁰ Obviously Maclean felt that the work at the mission station was too much for his wife to cope with. Perhaps he realized that his frequent and prolonged absences only added to her burdens. During one of his absences Maclean had returned to find his wife's finger infected and unattended to; she had ignored his advice to have it fixed by the Blood medicine man.⁸¹ Unfortunately, because Sara had left her finger for so long it had to be removed at the knuckle.

John McDougall was born in Owen Sound, Ontario on December 27, 1842.⁸² In 1860 he went west with his family because his father, Reverend

⁷⁸Ibid., 27.

⁷⁹Grant, Moon of Wintertime, 185.

⁸⁰United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Reverend John Maclean Fonds, Correspondence 1889 (January-March), box 1, file 7.

⁸¹Maclean Fonds, box 11 file 5, Diaries and Notebooks 1888 (February - August), entry dated February 29, 1888.

⁸²John Maclean, Vanguards of Canada, (Toronto: The Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1918), 198. "From birth John was a son of the wigwam, speaking the Ojibwa language in infancy, thinking as a Native, a lover of the outdoor life, and holding close fellowship with the redmen, until he became higher than the Chiefs."

George McDougall, had been appointed to Norway House, Manitoba.⁴³ In 1863 George McDougall established a mission station at Victoria, now Pakan, Alberta.⁴⁴ The following year George McDougall helped to build a school and mission at Whitefish Lake, Alberta.

In western Canadian missionary history John McDougall is one of the best known figures and one of the most controversial. John McDougall and his father were not only interested in converting Native people, but in encouraging the settlement and industrial development of western Canada. They believed the West contained unlimited resources, both in converts and agriculture. John has been criticized for pursuing his own self-interests as a trader and land owner, rather than safe guarding Native welfare during his career as a missionary.⁴⁵

John McDougall's books were different in almost every way from the other two authors. His were written as exciting adventure stories in which he featured himself as a larger than life character. John McDougall situated himself in one hair raising incident after another. In an article entitled "Tall Tales of the West" Hugh Dempsey stated that "...there was a common saying that there were three big liars in the

⁴³Ibid., 119. Maclean describes George McDougall as a "traveller and a hero." George McDougall was born in Kingston, Ontario in 1820. He married Elizabeth Chantler on January 10, 1842. Maclean offers this tribute to Elizabeth; "this saintly woman became one of the pioneers of the West, enduring hardship on lonely mission fields, and winning souls for Christ."

⁴⁴Mrs. L.D. McDougall "The McDougall Family," in Big Hill Country: Cochrane and Area, ed., Cochrane and Area Historical Society, (Cochrane: Cochrane and Area Historical Society, 1977), 77.

⁴⁵Treaty Seven Elders, Treaty Seven, 157-158.

country, David McDougall was one and his brother John was the other two."⁸⁶ Due to the style in which many of McDougall's stories have been written, this comment has made it somewhat difficult to interpret his publications. While John wrote his books to promote mission work they were different from other missionary literature in that they were self-promoting as well.

John McDougall is of particular importance because he represents different aspects of Western history in both the pre and post settlement era. His arrival in the early 1860s pre-dated any sort of intensive settlement and his early missionary experience was such that he travelled and lived with Native people, particularly following his marriage in 1864 to Abigail Steinhauer an Ojibwa/Cree woman.

Very few details are known about Abigail Steinhauer McDougall's life. Little reference was made to her within John's published works or personal papers and she left no written record of her own.⁸⁷ Abigail was born in June of 1848 at Norway House, Manitoba, the second child of Jessie Joyful and Reverend Henry Bird Steinhauer.⁸⁸ Reverend Henry B. Steinhauer was an Ojibwa from Ontario who had been converted at a Methodist camp meeting in 1824.⁸⁹ As a Native convert his education was paid for by a

⁸⁶Hugh Dempsey, "Tall Tales of the West," The Beaver, vol. 76 (December 1996/January 1997), 34.

⁸⁷It has also been suggested that John made little reference to his first wife to spare the feelings of his second wife, Eliza Boyd McDougall.

⁸⁸Sally Swenson, "Who Is Abigail? An Adopted Women's Late Discovery of Her Rich Heritage, Illuminated by the Life of Abigail Steinhauer McDougall, 1848-1871," (Ottawa: published by the author, November 1996), 5. Sally Swenson is the great-granddaughter of Ruth McDougall.

⁸⁹Ibid., 4.

Methodist family from Philadelphia.⁹⁰

While Steinhauer was stationed at Nelson House, Manitoba he met and married Jessie Joyful, a Swampy Cree living in the Rossville area around Lake Winnipeg.⁹¹ In 1857 Abigail's father was transferred to White Fish Lake, Alberta. In order to improve his daughters education Steinhauer sent her twice to study under Reverend Woolsey at Victoria, Alberta.⁹² At thirteen years of age Abigail began to help her father in the mission school, teaching seventy children.⁹³

It must have been during one of Abigail's trips to the Victoria mission to study with Reverend Woolsey that she developed a relationship with John McDougall.⁹⁴ In 1864 John was married to Abigail by his father and immediately they took up their first posting at Pigeon Lake, Alberta.⁹⁵ Abigail and John were married only a short time before they had their first child, Flora, born at Victoria in 1866.⁹⁶ Ruth, their second child, was born at Pigeon Lake in 1867 and Augusta was born in 1870.

In March of 1871 John left on a trip to Rocky Mountain House. While he was away he passed through Fort Edmonton. The Chief Factor there told

⁹⁰Ibid., 4.

⁹¹Ibid., 4.

⁹²Ibid., 8.

⁹³Ibid., 7.

⁹⁴John Maclean, H.B Steinhauer: His Work Among the Cree Indians of the Western Plains of Canada, Toronto: William Briggs, n.d.), 31.

⁹⁵Ibid., 10.

⁹⁶Ibid., 12.

him that his wife had died suddenly and had been buried at Victoria.⁹⁷ Abigail Steinhauer died on April 11, 1871 at twenty-three years of age.⁹⁸ The only official record made of her death was recorded by George McDougall;

We live in a world of trial. Whilst my son was at the mountains his wife died suddenly, and, to us, very unexpectedly. When we remember her want of early advantages she was a superior woman; and she was a direct fruit of missionary effort.⁹⁹

Regardless of how far Abigail had "progressed" she would always be seen as a product of missionary efforts. Abigail was a superior woman relative to her origins. It was her origins that would prevent her from being remembered as a pioneer in frontier history along with the other wives of the McDougall's.¹⁰⁰ Of his wife McDougall recorded this years later in In the Days of the Red River Rebellion;

Six years of companionship and mutual experiences in life had been ours; many hardships and mutual experiences in life had we shared, many pleasures as well, and now the faithful wife and mother had gone on. The Indians at White Fish and at Victoria and Pigeon Lake mourned her loss, for to them she had ever been kind and sympathizing, and many of the women loved her.¹⁰¹

A year after his wife's death McDougall made a trip to Winnipeg to

⁹⁷John Maclean, McDougall of Alberta, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1927), 59. This was the first mention that Maclean made in his biography of McDougall of Abigail and John's marriage to her.

⁹⁸Swenson, Who Is Abigail? 18.

⁹⁹George McDougall, Missionary Notices, August 1871.

¹⁰⁰Sarah Carter, Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 204.

¹⁰¹John McDougall, In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, ed., Susan Jackel, (Edmonton: The University of Alberta, 1983), 187.

attend a conference there.¹⁰² While he was there he was finally ordained after seven years of active missionary work. The number of years John McDougall was actively involved in mission work before he was ordained was unusual. Traditionally a person was ordained prior to commencing their evangelical work. Although McDougall had not attended a post-secondary institution for any length of time this was not a prerequisite for ordination.

Following his conference in Winnipeg John decided to visit relatives in Ontario. Prior to his departure John was advised by the President and General Secretary to find a companion for himself while in eastern Canada, the assumption being that white women were more abundant there.¹⁰³ It has been suggested by historian Susan Jackel that John was not ordained sooner because his wife was an Indian.¹⁰⁴ Increasing racial stratification in western Canada served to make mixed marriages detrimental to white male career aspirations. Another similar such example in which matrimony to a Native woman proved a hinderance was the marriage between Presbyterian missionary W.W. McLaren and Susette Blackbird, a Native graduate of the Birtle Residential School in Manitoba.¹⁰⁵ The end result of this alliance was the resignation of W.W. McLaren after continuous complaints regarding his wife's work at the Birtle School. The WMS felt that Mrs. McLaren, due to her previous attendance at the school and her status as an Indian,

¹⁰²Ibid., 230.

¹⁰³Ibid., 251.

¹⁰⁴Susan Jackel, "Images of the Canadian West, 1872-1911," unpublished Phd thesis, University of Alberta, English, 1977, 226.

¹⁰⁵J.R. Miller, Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 213.

hindered her husband's work among her old classmates.¹⁰⁶

John's second marriage to a woman of Anglo-Saxon descent, Elizabeth Boyd (hereafter Eliza), was an indication that he too realized that the establishment of a society in the West based on the belief that Euro-Canadian civilization was culturally and racially superior was inevitable.¹⁰⁷ Susan Jackel has also offered a second reason for McDougall's quick remarriage; his need for a wife and someone to care for his three children.¹⁰⁸ Marrying an Anglo-Saxon woman from eastern Canada allowed John to provide a living example of "civilization" for the Native people he worked among and such a woman could help his children learn to live in the new society that was developing. He knew that his children were going to grow up in a world in which they would be undervalued for their Native blood.¹⁰⁹ All three of McDougall's children were of mixed ancestry, a point that he did not directly mention in any of his books.

After his second marriage McDougall was stationed at two reserves. His first posting in 1873 was at Pigeon Lake, Alberta working among both the Woodland Cree and a small group of Stoney. The Woodland Cree during the nineteenth century were the mainstay of the fur trade as hunters and trappers.¹¹⁰ Their territory was extensive, ranging from the Hudson Bay

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 214.

¹⁰⁷Van Kirk, "The Impact of White Women on Fur Trade Society," 196.

¹⁰⁸Jackel, "Images of the Canadian West," 226.

¹⁰⁹Sylvia Van Kirk, "What If Mama Is An Indian?: The Cultural Ambivalence of the Alexander Ross Family," in New People: Being and Becoming Metis in North America, eds., Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer Brown, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 208.

¹¹⁰Dempsey, Indian Tribes of Alberta, 57.

to the Rocky Mountains. The mainstay of the Woodland Cree's diet was moose, deer, elk, small animals, and fish.¹¹¹

McDougall was stationed at Pigeon Lake for only a short period of time before he and his father decided to establish a mission at Morley, Alberta in 1873. The Morley reserve belonged to the Stoney or Nakoda nation.¹¹² The Stoney were of Yankton Dakota origin, but they had separated from the Dakota sometime before 1640.¹¹³ The Nakoda lived in the mountains and foothills of the Rockies, hunting primarily elk, deer, and moose.¹¹⁴ During the spring and summer they hunted buffalo on the plains. The Nakoda first encountered Robert T. Rundle, a Methodist missionary in 1840, and as a result were well acquainted with Christianity by the time McDougall arrived.¹¹⁵

Reverend John Chantler McDougall was an enigma. His writings at times appeared to express an empathy for Native people that was unparalleled by his contemporaries, yet at times he made demeaning remarks about Native society;

Why, then, this degradation witnessed on every hand? This intense superstition and ignorance is all due to the faith and religion of this people. Their faith is a dead one; no wonder they are dead in trespasses and sins.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹Ibid., 57.

¹¹²Ibid., 42.

¹¹³Ibid., 42.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 44.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 43.

¹¹⁶John McDougall, Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie: Stirring Scenes of Life in the Canadian North-West, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), 71.

Unlike the other two missionary authors McDougall seemed to possess a certain respect for Native people and their lifestyle. He maintained that Indians were industrious, that they were not lazy.¹¹⁷ McDougall showed a great deal of appreciation for the work ethic of Native people, acknowledging that they must work hard in order to survive. In the context of their environment, McDougall believed that Native people had many admirable traits, particularly their physical prowess. He had little patience for what he referred to derisively as "tenderfeet" and complained constantly over the lack of "outdoorsmanship" of other missionaries.¹¹⁸ The harsh environment of western Canada was a challenge that only the hardiest of men could overcome.

McDougall seemed to have made a concerted effort to learn about the life and culture of the Cree and the Nakoda. In his own words;

I must learn their language and mode of life, I must become familiar with their history, their religion, and their idioms of thought; and here amongst these Crees and Stonies, living with them in their own way and in their own country.¹¹⁹

According to his mother, John spoke Cree before he spoke English.¹²⁰ During his first marriage to Abigail the language of the household was Cree and his daughter Flora did not learn to speak English until she was three years old.¹²¹ McDougall travelled, hunted, and lived with the

¹¹⁷Ibid., 16.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 270.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 168.

¹²⁰McDougall, Parsons on the Plains, 1.

¹²¹McDougall, In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, 38.

people he was attempting to convert.¹²² More so than his contemporaries, Young and Maclean, McDougall immersed himself in this western culture, although he never learned to speak Stoney or Nakoda.

The images of Native women depicted in McDougall's writings differed from that of Maclean and Young. McDougall did not portray Native women as "squaw drudges" in the same manner his contemporaries did. He acknowledged that the lives of Native women were difficult as a result of the environment in which they lived and did not consider their hard work a symptom of Native culture. He noted that they accomplished their tasks with efficiency, contentment, and happiness.¹²³ In fact he observed that Native women performed such hard work and still had time to "...practise all the mysterious arts which have charmed and magnetized the other sex..."¹²⁴ Given the beauty, strength, and industry of Native women, McDougall understood why a man was considered greater the more wives he possessed. As a result McDougall, although he did not condone it, could see the utility of polygamy.¹²⁵

McDougall still believed, however, in the potential of Christianity to uplift and improve Native people, particularly women. While he might not respect certain elements of Euro-Canadian civilization he believed that when Native people gave up "...communalism and adopted the precepts of Christianity they would be transformed..."¹²⁶ McDougall thought that

¹²²Ibid., 36.

¹²³McDougall, Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie, 12.

¹²⁴Ibid., 13.

¹²⁵Ibid., 13.

¹²⁶Carter, "Man's Mission of Subjugation," 116.

Christianity and the example set by missionaries and their wives would eventually improve the status of Native women. "Gradually by example more than precept perhaps, we brought about the lessening of the labour of women."¹²⁷

While the depiction of the status of women in Native society was typically negative in the writings of Maclean and Young, who both referred to Native women as "squaws," McDougall did not share their opinions and went so far as to criticize Egerton Young for having referred to Native women as squaws "...in the name of decency and civilization and Christianity, why call one person a women and another a squaw?"¹²⁸

Although McDougall differed from Maclean and Young in his portrayal of Native women, there continued to be a dichotomy in the way in which he represented Native and Anglo-Saxon women. After marrying Elizabeth Boyd McDougall he worried about "... [my] poor bride, poor girl, [she had given] little thought of the long difficult journey on which I was taking her, nor...did she realize the conditions."¹²⁹ Witnessing the privations of missionaries wives was not something new to McDougall. His mother had followed his father, George McDougall, from mission field to mission field and John could attest to her hardships. During the smallpox epidemic of 1870 John wrote about his mother's actions;

I often think of the true heroism of my mother at this time.
She worked on, perfectly conscious of all the danger, but making

¹²⁷ McDougall, Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie, 12.

¹²⁸ McDougall, "A Criticism if Indian Wigwams and Northern Campfires," 12-13.

¹²⁹ McDougall, In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, 252.

no fuss, no noise. To me her conduct was sublime.¹³⁰

McDougall's sisters, Georgina, Flora, and Anna died during this particular epidemic and George McDougall himself was sick.¹³¹ Through it all Mrs. George McDougall nursed her family and Native people at the mission station.

McDougall represented his mother as the ideal helpmeet, describing her as;

...a strong Christian woman, content, patient, plodding, full of quiet, restful assurance, pre-eminently qualified to be the companion and helper of one who had to hew his way from the start out of the wilderness of this new world.¹³²

Throughout his writing McDougall praised his mother and the work that she performed in order to help his father. Eliza Boyd was also characterized as a strong courageous woman who was "...willing to follow John to the ends of the earth if she had to..."¹³³ She too was represented by John as the "helpmeet," who waited alone at the mission station taking care of their children. John McDougall did not give the same sort of praises to his first wife, Abigail.

What was missing from John's writings, that was clearly evident in the other two authors, was the sanctification of women missionaries, especially their wives and mother's. McDougall may have referred to his

¹³⁰ Ibid., 128.

¹³¹ Ibid., 139.

¹³² John McDougall, Forest, Lake, and Prairie: Twenty Years of Frontier Life in Western Canada, 1842-1892, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1895), 12.

¹³³ McDougall, In the Days of the Red River Rebellion, 252.

wife as a "heroine of frontier life," but unlike the other two authors it was not because her example had furthered the Christianization of western Canadian Native people. John McDougall did not portray Eliza's primary function as serving as a role model for Native people, that was incidental. Eliza was a "heroine of frontier life" because she had faced and overcame adverse physical conditions.¹³⁴ Nor did McDougall try and justify the sacrifices his wife had made as a function of missionary work that was required by the cause.

While travelling back from Ontario in 1873 McDougall overheard some people make derogatory remarks about "half-breeds."¹³⁵ Outraged, McDougall criticized them and called himself a half-breed. McDougall it seemed did not want to condemn people upon the basis of their birth; in his eyes it was beyond their control and therefore did not determine the kind of person they were.¹³⁶ The images he portrayed regarding his wife and mother were complimentary, but not at the expense of Native women. Unlike Maclean and Young, McDougall did not contrast the purity and piety of white women to the supposed degraded condition of Native women. The saving grace of Euro-Canadian culture, according to McDougall, seemed to be the "...leaven of Christianity for without it we would be at war with all the rest of mankind..."¹³⁷ Maclean and Young on the other hand felt that all aspects of Native culture were inferior to Euro-Canadian. McDougall believed that Indians had a very natural physical kind of

¹³⁴Ibid., 302.

¹³⁵Ibid., 260-261.

¹³⁶Ibid., 261.

¹³⁷Ibid., 261.

strength which made them aptly suited for their "traditional" environment. However, since their environment was changing and progress was inevitable, to survive and prosper Native people had to assimilate.

Through their depiction of Anglo-Saxon womanhood Maclean and Young created a distinct "other." They depicted Native women as dark, dangerous, and sinister.¹³⁸ They used images of First Nations women as foils for the purity and goodness of white women. Perhaps McDougall did not do so because not only was his first wife a Native woman, but three of his children were of Aboriginal ancestry. While the barriers of race, for McDougall, were a little less rigidly defined, ultimately his goals remained the same; the disintegration of all patterns of traditional Native life.

Egerton R. Young's published works portrayed several things about Native life in western Canada and his work there, mainly the necessity of mission work. His examination of Native culture was done predominantly in parable form. In parables he portrayed the disappearance of traditional Native culture as a struggle between good and evil. Traditional Native culture was always characterized as savage and cruel; their supposed poor treatment of women was his evidence of this.¹³⁹ In contrast, Euro-Canadian culture and its faith represented progress and civilization.¹⁴⁰ In his observations of Native life Young was the least able of all the authors to remain objective. His books were steeped in ethnocentric

¹³⁸Carter, "Categories and Terrains of Exclusion," 148.

¹³⁹Young, When the Blackfeet Went South And Other Stories, 8.

¹⁴⁰Young, Children of the Forest, 15-40.

observations which reflected an inflexible religious and social ideology.¹⁴¹

Due to the scarcity of Anglo-Saxon women, missionaries wives were looked upon as the representatives of white womanhood in the mission fields of western Canada. Under Maclean's pen missionary wives became sanctified. They possessed all the traits of "true womanhood" that were considered ideal, according to such religious publications as the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook. White women were the genteel civilizers of an untamed land possessing such qualities as piousness, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness to male authority.¹⁴² All of these traits were reflected in Maclean's characterization of white womanhood in the West.

Unfortunately, this theme of quiet submission was difficult to reconcile with the realities of women living and surviving alone at mission stations for months at a time. The "saintly heroines" waited anxiously for their husbands, who were in some peril, while listening to the cries of her fatherless children.¹⁴³ Their only companionship was that of an "aged squaw" of the camp.¹⁴⁴ Maclean painted a conflicting picture of missionary wives. He honoured them for their efforts in teaching Indian women and children the precepts of Euro-Canadian culture, at the same time he commiserated with them over their privations which

¹⁴¹Carter, "Man's Mission of Subjugation," 30-31.

¹⁴²Jameson, "Women as Workers, Women as Civilizers: True Womanhood in the American West," 146.

¹⁴³Maclean, Canadian Savage Folk, 351.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 350.

they endured as a result of their passive domestic roles. Conflict arises upon consideration of the reality of missionary women and wives lives; by adopting passive roles women would have been hard pressed to continue their duties at the mission station in their husbands absence.

John McDougall is the most difficult of the three to place neatly in a category. He was the most "flattering" in his portrayal of Native women and did not characterize them as "unfeminine drudges," yet at the same time he represented his Anglo-Saxon wife and mother as the "true heroines" of frontier life and the embodiment of femininity. He also neglected to mention in any great detail his Native wife, Abigail, or his children. Yet he criticized his contemporaries for referring to Native women as "squaws," was more sympathetic in his writings than either Maclean or Young, and although he had failed to mention his first wife in any great detail his reminiscences of her death in In the Days of the Red River Rebellion shows a man who cared deeply for his wife. These complexities make it nearly impossible to come to a full understanding of the McDougall publications.

The published works of these three Methodist ministers helped to create images of the "savage qualities" of the Indigenous settlers, including their poor treatment of women. These myths in turn legitimized the appropriation of Native land and the subversion of their culture. After 1885 such negative images were used to legitimate increasingly segregationist policies towards Native people.¹⁴⁵

The images and myths created about missionary women confined and defined them according to impossible roles and standards. Missionary

¹⁴⁵Carter, "Categories and Terrains of Exclusion," 148.

women were supposed to adopt submissive roles while living in an environment that demanded anything but. A missionaries wife was supposed to be the "helpmeet" and companion performing roles that were associated with the private sphere such as childcare, teaching, and nursing.

To be a white woman meant to occupy a category that was both oppressed and oppressive. The images of Anglo-Saxon women as the purveyors of culture and the epitome of purity and piety were infinitely more flattering than those constructed about Native women. However, they were images that confined Anglo-Saxon women to a role that was bound to the domestic sphere with little scope for opportunities and use of their talents. Native women were even more confined by the roles characterized for them. Not only were they represented as unfeminine drudges, but they were expected to follow the example set by their white counterparts and shed this role. Missionary literature appeared to make the "civilizing" role of missionary women in the West a necessity, and also helped to further marginalize Native women.

CHAPTER THREE

"Queens of the Mission House:" Self-Portrayals of
Single Female Missionaries and Missionary's Wives

*"The story of brave women on the
lonely homesteads of the prairies,
and among the mountains, has never
been written, and can never be fully
told."*

-John Maclean, Vanquards of Canada¹

Missionary women did not generate the same volume of documentary sources as male missionaries, yet the personal papers of Elizabeth Bingham Young, the speeches of Eliza Boyd McDougall, and the letters of five single women missionaries that were published in the Missionary Outlook and the Christian Guardian all offer a brief, if somewhat mediated, glimpse into their lives and their work. As in the writings of John McDougall, John Maclean, and Egerton Ryerson Young, these women cast their own roles in the "helpmeet" image. Their sphere, despite their new environment, revolved around those activities ascribed as suitable for women, more specifically childcare, nursing, and teaching. Missionary work confined women to roles that were similar to those occupied by Euro-Canadian women in eastern Canada.

Those records generated by the wives of John McDougall and Egerton Young were chosen to see if they challenged the way in which their husbands depicted them. Next the focus was extended to include those single female missionaries who wrote letters about their experiences in

¹Maclean, Vanquards of Canada, 252.

the mission field to the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook.² Both groups of women show common themes throughout their personal papers and letters concerning their roles and objectives towards Native peoples regardless of time, space, or the medium used to record their experiences. Whether the woman in question worked in the West in 1880 or 1915 she recorded similar ideas concerning the place of women in the field. Women performed supportive functions, they served as role models and teachers for Native women, and they were concerned with altering the physical appearances of Native people. These women's depiction of their own duties coincided with the representations of Methodist women within both the Guardian, the Outlook, and the published works of John McDougall, Egerton Ryerson Young, and John Maclean. There is no evidence that these women challenged the conventions of behaviour and the roles expected of them, rather they projected the same servile "helpmeet" image.

Elizabeth Barrett, Margaret Laing, Alice H. Jackson, Anna Barker, and Hannah Buehler were all Methodist missionary women whose letters were published in either the Christian Guardian or the Missionary Outlook. It cannot be assumed that these letters are an unproblematic reflection of the reality of the lives of these women, or of their innermost thoughts. Both the Guardian and the Outlook printed propaganda that was intended to foster support, both fiscally and spiritually, for Christian missions. The letters of missionaries that were printed in the journals mimicked prevailing attitudes regarding missionary objectives among Indigenous people. The letters reproduced the typical negative stereotypes of Native

²The letters of the female missionaries that were published in the Guardian and the Outlook were those that were supported by the WMS. The majority of the WMS' fiscal support went towards Methodist institutions in British Columbia.

people and today they provided insight into the expectations of women in the field.

Although the letters span a period from the late 1870s to 1925, they reflect many of the same idealized images regarding missionary women, and they all focus on altering Native culture. There was a great deal of similarity between the physical location of the different mission stations. In the earlier period missions at Morley were isolated from other Euro-Canadians due to a lack of effective transport, while in the twentieth century missions at Nelson House, Manitoba remained isolated due to their location.

Elizabeth Bingham Young and Eliza Boyd McDougall were both young women who were born in eastern Canada and married Methodist ministers who served as missionaries in western Canada. Due to the public acclaim that John McDougall and Egerton Ryerson Young achieved as a result of their writing and lecture tours a substantial amount of material from both women was preserved along with the personal papers of their husbands.

Elizabeth Bingham's personal papers consist primarily of short excerpts from diaries, letters to family members, and reminiscences of her life as a missionary's wife that were written long after she had left the field. In her latter years, Elizabeth Young had been encouraged by family members to record her experiences in the North West in a series of journals that were intended for publication. The memoirs were recorded years after Elizabeth had left the field and therefore need to be read with caution. The accuracy of her memory after so many years and the influence of prevailing attitudes towards Native peoples would have determined which memories she recorded and influenced the way in which she

perceived them. Her attitudes towards Native people may have also changed over the years altering the way she depicted them in her journals.

Elizabeth Young's intentions in writing the journals have to be considered as well. The papers that today constitute the Young collection centred around the Youngs' work in western Canada.³ Following the Young family's retirement from the mission field Egerton Young published several books on the subject of mission work and Native people. Their son Eddie wrote various tracts on the subject himself, and while she never published, Elizabeth also made an effort to record her experiences. Both Egerton and Elizabeth's writing seemed to be an attempt to describe the importance of their work in western Canada and publicize the need for mission work among Native people. Many of the same images of Native people that Egerton Young had portrayed in his own publications were recreated in his wife's papers. She emphasised their "uncivilized" state, the barbarous and savage nature of their culture, the brutality of Native men, and the benefits that Native women will and have accrued from Christianity. At the same time she also referred fondly, albeit somewhat condescendingly, to "Little Mary," her son Eddie's nanny.⁴ Historian Jennifer Brown has argued that Little Mary emerged from the Young's papers as "...far more substantial than the shadowy, two-dimensional women who populate most mission literature."⁵

Much like the published letters of the single female missionaries

³The Young's family papers and Egerton Young's published works reflect a desire to publicize the work of missionary's in the mission field and the benefits that can be derived from Christianity.

⁴Young Family Fonds, box 9 file D-5.

⁵Brown, "A Cree Nurse in the Cradle of Methodism," 95.

the unpublished speeches of Eliza Boyd McDougall were written with the intention of garnering support for and publicizing mission work among Native people. Eliza gave her speeches to organizations like the Daughters of the Empire, the United Church, and the Pioneer Mothers of Southern Alberta. In the speeches Eliza gave she recounted her experiences as one of "the first white women in Alberta," the satisfaction she derived from her work, and she tried to encourage Euro-Canadians to show more patience and understanding towards Native people. Many of the same images that were created in the Guardian and the Outlook were represented in Eliza's speeches. She placed herself in the supportive role of the "helpmeet," serving as a role model for Native women to learn Euro-Canadian modes of domesticity.

John McDougall's writing, in contrast to much of the missionary literature, portrayed Native culture in a much more flattering light. Eliza, however, did not seem to share similar such feelings. While at times he expressed feelings of friendship and camaraderie with certain Christian Native people, Eliza did not.

Although there were differences in the kinds of documents left behind by these women, certain themes prevailed. One common theme that seems to be frequent within missionary literature was the expression of difference or the construction of a "radical other" through the emphasis on Native peoples' "uncivilized" appearance.⁶ Negative depictions of the appearance of Native people and their modes of living were common themes throughout missionary literature. These women focused on the appearance

⁶Myra Rutherford, "Models of Grace and Boundaries of Culture: Women Missionaries on a Northern Frontier, 1860-1940," unpublished PhD thesis, York University, History, April 1996, 186-188.

of Native people, emphasising the necessity of mission work and highlighting the transformation that occurred as a result of exposure to Christianity and Euro-Canadian culture. An example of this would be descriptions of Native men's attitudes towards women prior to conversion, which were perceived as uncaring and brutal. However, conversion brought with it a change in Native men's treatment of women encouraging them to be gentle and respectful to their wives, mothers, and daughters.

Each woman performed similar kinds of work which can be grouped into three basic categories; medical work, teaching, and childcare. While each category allowed for variations, the overriding objective of their work was to teach Native women and children Euro-Canadian norms. They focused on acculturating Native women through the adoption of Euro-Canadian modes of dress, housekeeping, childcare, and cooking. This goal was pursued through the temporary adoption of Native children, Mother's Meetings, home medical visits, Sunday Schools, and cooking classes.

Mother's Meetings became common features on reserves towards the beginning of the twentieth century. A Mother's Meeting was a weekly session during which Native women spent time learning to sew, received lectures on personal hygiene, and participated in devotional exercises. The assumption was that Native women had no concept of such skills prior to these classes. It was understood that such sessions would eventually alter the home, which was believed to be the foundation of society; transform the home, transform the society.

The historical obscurity of single female missionaries is in stark contrast to the attention that missionaries wives have received for their work in the field. Missionaries wives were constantly applauded for their

roles as pioneering mothers. An example of this would be Anna and the Indians by Nan Shipley, a somewhat fictional account of Anna Young's marriage and life with Samuel Gaudin, a missionary at Norway House, Manitoba and later at Nelson House, Manitoba.⁷ It has only been very recently that any single female Methodist missionary in western Canada has received any such attention.⁸

Elizabeth Barrett, the daughter of English immigrants, was born on her parents farm at Orono, Ontario around 1841.⁹ Prior to her commission as a missionary Elizabeth worked as a teacher. She left her home in 1874 to teach at White Fish Lake, Alberta, an all Cree settlement, with Reverend Henry Bird Steinhauer.¹⁰ While at White Fish Lake she taught a class of almost fifty students.¹¹

The only other people who spoke English at White Fish Lake were Reverend Steinhauer and his family.¹² Elizabeth Barrett learned Cree in order to communicate with her students. Of her work she wrote;

For a month past I have been teaching them in Cree, and some are making rapid progress. Instead of a hindrance

⁷Nan Shipley, Anna and the Indians, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1955), 3.

⁸Grant, Moon of Wintertime, 163. Brian Brennan, "Pioneering Missionary Deserves Recognition," The Calgary Herald, Wednesday October 7, 1997. See also; Donald B. Smith, "Elizabeth Barrett: A Forgotten Indian Teacher," Journal of the Alberta and Northwest Conference Historical Society, May 1997. Such accolades regarding the role of women in the mission field was very unusual, without famous husbands, these single women tended to remain nameless.

⁹Donald B. Smith, "Elizabeth Barrett: A Forgotten Indian Teacher," 5.

¹⁰Gayle Simonson, "Foremother of the Faith: Elizabeth Anne Barrett," Mandate, vol. 24 no.2 (March 1993), 22.

¹¹Smith, "Elizabeth Barrett," 6.

¹²Gayle Simonson, "Foremother of the Faith," 23.

I find it a great help in their acquiring English. I am gaining ground faster myself since being able to read it.¹³

It was not unusual for missionaries to learn Native languages. Barrett noted the friendliness of the Steinhauer family yet she still felt lonely, commenting on the infrequency of both letters and outside visitors.

Barrett was not concerned solely with the scholastic development of her Native students. She regarded what she perceived to be improvements in their appearance as proof of their social and cultural progress.¹⁴ In a letter to the Christian Guardian dated June 27, 1877, she expressed her relief at the "grand improvement" that Native children had made, under her tutelage, in their manner of dress.¹⁵ According to Barrett "...the children look cleaner and whiter and better dressed, than they ever had before."¹⁶ The improvements in the appearance of Native people after having been exposed to the influence of missionary women for only a short period of time was a common theme throughout their letters. All noted the "grand improvement" made under their careful guidance.

During the spring of 1877 Barret left White Fish Lake to teach at

¹³Elizabeth Barrett, Annual Report, Missionary Society of The Methodist Church of Canada, 1875-76, xix-xv.

¹⁴Myra Rutherford, "Models of Grace and Boundaries of Culture: Women Missionaries on a Northern Frontier," 196-197. Rutherford discovered that since it was the missionary's responsibility to introduce a "new order" Native people had to be seen as uncivilized.

¹⁵Elizabeth Barrett, "A Letter From the Saskatchewan," The Christian Guardian, June 27, 1877, 117.

¹⁶Ibid., 117.

Morley, Alberta with Reverend John McDougall.¹⁷ While at Morley, Elizabeth Barrett was one of several white women to witness the signing of Treaty Seven. She remained at Morley for only a short period of time before she was sent to Fort Macleod to establish the first school in that area.¹⁸ At Fort Macleod she taught an average of twenty-two students from a variety of different ethnic and social backgrounds.¹⁹ In the summer of 1879 Elizabeth Barrett returned to Ontario to be with her sister Lottie, who died in August.²⁰ Elizabeth remained in Ontario, nursing ill family members, until 1885 when she returned to Morleyville to teach. Unfortunately, Elizabeth was at Morley for only a few short years before she became ill and died there on February 8, 1888.²¹

Barrett's letters mirror many of the same themes that were emphasized in the Guardian and the Outlook. Elizabeth Barrett defined her own role as that of teacher and role model and she expressed happiness when her students started to dress better, "...looking cleaner and whiter..." than they had prior to her arrival. Barrett's work as a teacher encompassed more than just reading and writing; she was there to teach them Euro-Canadian modes of dress and behaviour. Her purpose there was more of a "civilizing" agent than an evangelist.

¹⁷Glenbow-Alberta Institute, George H. Gooderham fonds, General Biographies, box 3-file 20, "Elizabeth Barrett: First Woman Teacher in Alberta," 1.

¹⁸The History of the Woman's Missionary Society in Alberta, (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, n.d.(ca.1951),) 3.

¹⁹The Christian Guardian, April 2, 1879, 110.

²⁰Smith, "Elizabeth Barrett," 6.

²¹John McDougall, "Death of Mrs. Barrett, " The Christian Guardian, February 22, 1888, 115.

Margaret Laing, another single female missionary, was born at Nassagawaya, Ontario in 1867.²² She received training as a nurse at the General Hospital in Guelph, Ontario and graduated from the Methodist National Training School in 1900.²³ Margaret Laing worked in both the foreign and home mission fields. Her first posting was in Kanazawa, Japan and her second appointment was to Morley, Alberta from 1906 to 1910. Finally, Margaret Laing served at Port Simpson, British Columbia, until 1916, retiring to Winnipeg where she died on March 20, 1947.

While at Morley, Laing was occupied by her nursing duties at the Morley hospital and the house calls that she made throughout the Morley reserve. Laing was kept very busy because she was the only medical worker living on the reserve.²⁴ According to Laing her presence was initially greeted with reluctance and trepidation on the part of the Nakoda living on the reserve.²⁵ In her letters published in both the Guardian and the Outlook, she related incidents in which she initially had to overcome resistance and opposition. One such incident occurred during a house call to a sick Nakoda woman. At the house there were several other Native women present helping their ill friend. The following quote from the Missionary Outlook relates Margaret's perception of her encounter with them;

²²United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Biographical file, K. Margaret Laing. The only biographical information that is available regarding K. Margaret Laing is a brief biographical sketch and several letters that were published in The Missionary Outlook.

²³Ibid., 1.

²⁴The Missionary Outlook, July 1908, 147.

²⁵Miss Laing, "Morley Hospital," The Christian Guardian, August 7, 1907, 16.

I succeeded in getting permission to examine the patient. This could not be done without considerable pain, and after trying for a time to give her some help they ordered me to stop. I knew if I continued and anything happened to the woman I should be blamed, so I felt the only thing to do was to give directions what they should do to help her. I had not finished when they asked me not to talk anymore.²⁶

Eventually, Margaret Laing felt that there was a growing acceptance of her presence among the Native population on the reserve. Her evidence for this phenomenon was the increasing number of patients that visited her daily at the dispensary. Margaret Laing believed that although her work was proceeding slowly, once she gained the confidence and trust of the Stoney they would understand the benefits derived from her work.²⁷

Margaret Laing's letters stress that she remained within the confines of the role defined for missionary women. Laing was not there to perform direct evangelical work and if she did, her letters do not indicate this. Her duties as a nurse for the Stoney fell within the limits of what was considered to be acceptable work for women. Laing fit into the characterization of missionary women as supportive and as performing primarily social service functions. She was there to attempt to alter the physical state of Native peoples lives, nothing more.

Another woman missionary whose letters were published in the Missionary Outlook was Alice H. Jackson born in Oshawa, Ontario in 1861.²⁸ In Ontario Jackson worked as a teacher. Her first appointment in the mission field was as a sewing teacher for the McDougall "Orphanage" at

²⁶Ibid., 16.

²⁷The Missionary Outlook, July 1908, 147.

²⁸United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Biographical file of Alice H. Jackson.

Morley, Alberta.²⁹ Jackson worked at the McDougall "Orphanage" for only two years before she returned to Ontario in order to train for her future work with the WMS. Alice Jackson enrolled in and completed a course at the Deaconess Home and Training School, where she likely received some medical training.³⁰ After her return from Ontario she seemed to have been involved in medical work and was referred to in the Missionary Outlook as "our missionary nurse."³¹

Kitamaat, British Columbia was Jackson's first appointment following her return from eastern Canada. She arrived at Kitamaat in 1900 and remained there for ten years. By the time she received her next appointment at Cross Lake, Manitoba she was an experienced missionary.³² Information regarding Alice's work at Cross Lake is limited to a few brief comments in her letters published in the Missionary Outlook.³³ Of the mission station itself she commented "it is a small island and the people's houses are scattered here and there...making it more difficult to get in touch with them," emphasising the isolation of the mission.³⁴ Alice spent only a year at Cross Lake. She occupied much of her time

²⁹"A Brief Sketch of the Life of Our New Missionary," The Missionary Outlook, July 1900, 158. The McDougall Orphanage was established at Morley, by John McDougall, in 1885. Initially the Orphanage was supported and run primarily by John McDougall with small grants from the Methodist Missionary Society. Finally after twelve years the General Board of the Missionary Society relieved John of the responsibility.

³⁰Ibid., 158.

³¹"The Home Field," The Missionary Outlook, June 1925, 135.

³²Biographical file of Alice H. Jackson.

³³The Missionary Outlook, January and February 1913.

³⁴The Missionary Outlook, February 1913, 133.

visiting Native people in their homes, offering medical aid and advice.

In 1913 Jackson was transferred from Cross Lake to Nelson House, Manitoba where she provided medical aid to the Cree. Her days seemed to have revolved around either working at the dispensary or making house calls. Jackson was also involved in organizing a local Mission Band, Mother's Meetings, and a Sunday School.¹⁵

In 1917 Jackson began to take Cree girls, from outlying settlements, into her household.¹⁶ "I am happy with my family of four, but my heart aches for the other fifty girls on our reserve who have not a chance." Jackson perceived these temporary adoptions as opportunities to teach children Euro-Canadian concepts of domesticity and personal hygiene.¹⁷ The Missionary Outlook, published a letter in March of 1919 regarding the impact of Alice's influence on Betsy Spence;

She was a different girl. She keeps the house nice and tidy and takes pride in looking neat herself. She mends her clothes when worn, and does not wear them so long as they will hold together and then throw them away, the usual Indian way...When calling on their homes I was much pleased to see how nicely they are kept.¹⁸

Jackson regarded the Cree's acceptance of Euro-Canadian norms as a sign of positive progress. When several Native people on the reserve emulated the architectural style of her home she perceived this as a great improvement

¹⁵The Missionary Outlook, July 1918, 167.

¹⁶The Missionary Outlook, June 1917, 143.

¹⁷"News from the Indian Field," The Missionary Outlook, May 1922, 373.

¹⁸"The Latest News from Northern Manitoba," The Missionary Outlook, March 1919, 71.

"especially from a health standpoint."³⁹

Alice Jackson retired to Oshawa, Ontario in late 1925 where she died in 1939. Of her mission work she said in 1916 "it is wonderful to me that I do not feel my isolation, and that I am so restful, contented, and happy in my work."⁴⁰ Despite her apparent contentment with her work, however, Jackson at times expressed feelings of loneliness regarding her lack of white female companionship. On a trip to Norway House Alice encountered a group of non-Native women and commented "it was indeed a pleasure to converse with women of my own nationality again."⁴¹ Like many of her female counterparts, in spite of the fulfilment and satisfaction they apparently derived from their work, Jackson keenly felt the lack of "feminine companionship."

It was not unusual for Euro-Canadian women living in western Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to express feelings of isolation from female companionship, despite being surrounded by numerous Native women. Racial categories strengthened by the dissemination of negative stereotypes, assimilationist government policies, and the recreation of Euro-Canadian institutions in the West all served to create an ever widening gulf between Euro-Canadian women and Native women.⁴² As a result, within the literature, there is little mention of such friendships formed between Euro-Canadian and Native women that go beyond the "white mother" stereotype.

³⁹"Our Most Northern Mission," The Missionary Outlook, January 1916, 123.

⁴⁰Ibid., 123.

⁴¹The Missionary Outlook, May 1916, 110.

⁴²Carter, "Categories and Terrains of Exclusion," 147-148.

Even less is known about Anna E. Barker, a matron at the McDougall "Orphanage" in the late nineteenth century and Hannah Buehler, a missionary at Morley during the early twentieth century.⁴³ Their letters briefly outlined their activities at Morley, but unfortunately huge gaps regarding their lives remain. Little is known about their lives before and after their departure from Morley.

John McDougall met Anna Barker in Winnipeg and asked her to be the first matron of the McDougall "Orphanage." Barker worked at the "Orphanage" for two years.⁴⁴ During the first year Barker operated McDougall "Orphanage" by herself, with occasional assistance from Eliza McDougall.⁴⁵ In 1885 a letter published in the Missionary Outlook Barker indicated that the McDougall "Orphanage" contained eight girls and five boys between the ages of eight and fourteen.⁴⁶ Barker's duties at the "Orphanage" seemed to range from housekeeper, requisitioner of supplies, nurse, childcare worker, teacher, to undertaker.

In a letter to the Missionary Outlook in 1883 Barker said this about her charges;

⁴³The only information available regarding Anna E. Barker was two of her letters which were published in The Missionary Outlook, dated August 1885, p.124 and November 1885. Hannah Buehler published seven letters in The Missionary Outlook, dating from October 1904 to November 1906.

⁴⁴Glenbow-Alberta Institute, McDougall Family Fonds, box 1-file 21, an unpublished speech by Eliza Boyd McDougall entitled, "Founding of the McDougall Orphanage," 2. I use the term "Orphanage" when referring to the McDougall "Orphanage" because that is the term used in the primary literature. The term "Orphanage," however, is extremely controversial and in this case is used to refer to a residential school.

⁴⁵Ibid., 2.

⁴⁶"Extracts of a Letter From Miss Barker, Matron of the McDougall Orphanage, dated Sept. 19, 1885." The Missionary Outlook, November, 1883.

As I compare the present with the earlier days, I realize that a favourable change is visible in each child's countenance. Why should not soap, water, and increased regularity in mental and physical habits do their work?⁴⁷

This statement exemplifies one of the main objectives of the Christian mission; initiating change in Native peoples personal appearance. Again Barker served more as an agent of "civilization" than a "true missionary."

The last set of letters to be considered here were from Hannah Buehler of Kitchener, Ontario, who was appointed to the Morley mission in 1904 to "help" the Stoney women there.⁴⁸ In a letter published in the Missionary Outlook, Hannah Buehler commented on her new role, "I am thankful to be able to say that my work during the first three months has been pleasant and very satisfactory."⁴⁹

Hannah Buehler's work involved visiting homes on the Morley reserve. In her first three months she made over fifty visits.⁵⁰ One of Buehler's first visits was to an elderly and ill Stoney man. Upon her arrival Buehler "suggested" that the dwelling was in need of a cleaning. In her own words;

I proposed a clearing up time and began removing some of the rubbish which had evidently been accumulating for some time, thinking I would assist the mistress of the house. It did not take me long to see that my efforts were not much appreciated. But that did not discourage me and I had the satisfaction afterwards of seeing the place respectable and the

⁴⁷"Along the Line: Extracts from a Letter from Miss Anna E. Barker dated McDougall Orphanage, June 18, 1886," The Missionary Outlook, August 1885, 134.

⁴⁸Gagan, A Sensitive Independence, 193.

⁴⁹"Our New Work and Worker Among the Indians," The Missionary Outlook, October 1904, 240.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 240.

old man quite comfortable.⁵¹

Besides her "cleaning" duties Buehler was also instrumental in establishing a Sunday School and Mother's Meetings on the reserve.⁵² During Mother's Meetings Hannah Buehler lectured Stoney women regarding Euro-Canadian notions of proper modes of dress, housekeeping, and she held cooking classes.⁵³ In this letter published in the Missionary Outlook Buehler emphasized the great improvements her efforts were resulting in;

At first the women came out to Mother's Meetings dirty and ragged, but after a serious talk on the matter they began to improve. Cleanliness regarding their person and their homes has been our theme, and I am glad to say there is no cause for complaint; women and children are now quite presentable. There are some very neat little homes and it is a great help to have those examples.⁵⁴

Buehler was the first worker paid solely by the WMS to work at Morely. It seemed she did not have any specific skills beyond being acquainted with Euro-Canadian concepts of domesticity and the desire to impart this knowledge to Native women. In her early letters Buehler stressed what she perceived to be the dirty and "uncivilized" appearance of the Nakoda women on the Morley reserve. However, after she had

⁵¹Ibid., 240.

⁵²"Our New Worker Among the Indians at Morley, Alberta," The Missionary Outlook, November 1904, 263.

⁵³"Doing All For the Glory of God," The Missionary Outlook, June 1906. Regarding the cooking classes Hannah Buehler commented "the women are anxious to learn how to cook and set the table. They are collecting recipes to be used at home. I have every reason to believe that the lessons received will ere long be a part of their everyday life." Inherent here was the assumption that Native women, for some reason, had no prior knowledge of cooking.

⁵⁴The Missionary Outlook, November 1904, 263.

discussed and shown the women at the Mother's Meetings what she believed to be their failings Buehler expressed joy over the change that she perceived in their physical appearance and the state of their homes. This concern over the supposed "dirty and ragged" appearance of Native people was a common theme throughout the letters of these missionary women.

The first of the two missionaries wives that will be examined is Elizabeth Bingham Young who was born in Bradford, Ontario on April 10, 1843, the oldest daughter of Richard Vanderburgh, a tanner and shoemaker. On December 25, 1867 Elizabeth Bingham married Egerton Ryerson Young, who was at that time stationed in Hamilton. The following year Elizabeth Bingham Young travelled to the North West with her husband to aid him in his work among Native people. They were stationed first at Norway House, Manitoba from 1868-1873, then at Berens River, Manitoba from 1874-1876.⁵⁵

Elizabeth Bingham Young gave birth to four of her five children while living in Manitoba, E. Ryerson, Lillie, Nellie, and Florence. The Young's children were cared for by a Cree woman named Little Mary from 1869 to 1876. Their daughter Nellie, born in 1872, died on a trip to Fort Garry in August of 1873, just before the Youngs travelled to their new mission station at Berens River.⁵⁶

There was a contrast between the writings Elizabeth intended for publication and the private diary that she kept while she was living at

⁵⁵Young Family Fonds, Letters to Elizabeth Bingham Young from her husband, 1873-1875, 1894-1895, "Letters of Egerton Ryerson Young," preface by Harcourt Brown, 2.

⁵⁶Young Family Fonds, box 10-file E1, Letters to Elizabeth Bingham Young from her husband 1873-1874, 1894-1895, "Letters of Egerton Ryerson Young," preface by Harcourt Brown, 2.

Norway House from 1867-1868.⁵⁷ In her personal diary she detailed her day to day routine such as teaching school, leading the female prayer meetings, cooking, and cleaning. The duties that Elizabeth listed in her private diary reflect the same roles that were defined for missionary women. The diary, however, did not make the same negative comments regarding Native culture that other missionary literature does. The most frequent comment made by Elizabeth in her diary was that she missed her husband dearly and prayed for his safe return.

This private diary was in stark contrast to the events that Elizabeth detailed in her memoirs that were intended for future publication. In her memoirs Elizabeth commented on the state of Native culture, relating unflattering incidents in which they came to her for help and advice. Within her memoirs Native people were portrayed as "wilful children" in need of constant supervision and guidance. One such incident recorded by Elizabeth told how a woman named Mary had used all of the Gregory mixture she had given her to help her husband's cold despite Elizabeth's warning to the contrary.⁵⁸ Afterwards Elizabeth admonished the woman for doing such a silly thing and told her to keep her husband warm and give him lots of fluids. This incident and the way it was described was typical of her husband's writing style. Native people were represented as ignorant and desperately in need of their guidance.

Despite her lack of medical training Elizabeth Young spent a great

⁵⁷Young Family Fonds, box 2 file B-6, Elizabeth Bingham Young, "Exerts from Lizzie's Diary," recorded in a memorandum book, 1867-68.

⁵⁸Young Family Fonds, box 9 file D-5, Elizabeth Bingham Young, "Daily Reminiscences of Norway House Living," n.d., 3.

deal of her time administering medical aid to local Native people.⁵⁹ In her memoirs she recounted several cases where she served as both nurse and surgeon. She prescribed castor oil for sick children and sweating powders for a man with the flu.⁶⁰ In regards to one of her surgical cases she wrote;

A big Indian, while chopping wood, had his axe caught a [tree] limb, whirled out of his hands and it came down upon his head, laying a portion of his scalp over his right ear...Taking a towel I laid back the skin and bound it temporarily. Then securing Mr. Young's shaving outfit, some disinfectant, silk thread, and with a needle with which we sewed deerskin, I went to work.⁶¹

In a diary that Elizabeth Young kept while stationed at Norway House, dated Wednesday 9th of 1868, she recorded that her day had been spent teaching school.⁶² Several times throughout her reminiscences Elizabeth recalled that when there was no other teacher available she taught classes herself, fulfilling the role of "helpmeet" in every sense of the word. Elizabeth Young helped her husband at the mission station in his work among Native people, yet her work remained defined by the limits established for women's roles. Her concerns within her private diary revolve around the type of food there was available, cleaning the house, and visits from local Hudson's Bay Factor, Mr. MacDonald and his wife.

As mentioned previously, concern over and the desire to change the

⁵⁹Young Family Fonds, Elizabeth Bingham Young Reminiscences, " 5-6.

⁶⁰Ibid., 5-6.

⁶¹Ibid., 6.

⁶²Young Family Fonds, Memorandum Book 1867-1868, box 2-file B6, "Excerpts from Lizzie's Diary,"3.

appearance of Native people was a common theme within missionary literature. In her memoirs Elizabeth Young frequently remarked on Native peoples' "uncivilized" natures. She was especially concerned with Native peoples' allegedly dirty physical appearances, commenting frequently on their lack of personal grooming and clean clothes. Elizabeth recalled how she pleaded with Native People to improve their personal hygiene.⁶³ In order to rectify the situation Elizabeth was occupied with obtaining soap, towels, and combs for Native people.

The mobility of the Cree caused Elizabeth no small amount of anxiety, as she felt that it made her job more difficult. This was a common complaint of missionaries in western Canada, including her husband. Every time they returned from hunting Elizabeth Young believed that they had forgotten everything they had been taught on their previous visit. As a result she felt that settling Native people in permanent locations was the only way to make a long lasting impact on them.

"When the missionary comes a blissful change takes place, of course it takes time, but the change comes. Imitation is strong in the Indian character."⁶⁴ Elizabeth Young perceived her and her husband's role as both a spiritual and temporal one. It was her husband's duty to introduce Native people to Christianity, while she served as a role model. Her papers that were intended for publication were littered with descriptions of the "uncivilized" state that Native people lived in. The most common example of this was her belief in the supposed low status of women within

⁶³Young Family Fonds, Elizabeth Bingham Young "Reminiscences of My Missionary Life," 2.

⁶⁴Ibid., 7. Third set of Elizabeth Bingham Young's memoirs.

Native society. She blamed "paganism" for the "despotic tyrannical" natures of Native men. Under the influence of Christianity these same men become "loving fathers and indulgent husbands."⁶⁵ In her journals Elizabeth Young recorded the "uplifting and increased happiness of our Indian sisters" as a result of Christianity.⁶⁶ Like the single female missionaries, the tasks of missionaries wives seemed to be centred around their ability to effect some sort of change through providing an example and knowledge of Euro-Canadian concepts of domesticity. Many of the ideas expressed here, by Eliza, are virtually the same ideas found in her husband's writings.

Similar such images were depicted within the unpublished speeches of Eliza Boyd McDougall, wife of John McDougall. Eliza Boyd McDougall, the daughter of Samuel Boyd, was born on a farm near Meaford, Ontario in May of 1853.⁶⁷ Her father was an English immigrant and her mother was born in Kingston, Ontario.⁶⁸ Eliza Boyd was nineteen years old, in July of 1872, when she met John Chantler McDougall. On September 21 of that year Eliza became John McDougall's second wife.⁶⁹ That same month the couple left Ontario and began their journey to Victoria, Alberta where Reverend George McDougall, John's father, worked. Upon arriving at Victoria, Eliza Boyd was introduced to her three new step daughters, Flora age seven, Ruth

⁶⁵Ibid., 7.

⁶⁶Ibid., 7.

⁶⁷City of Edmonton Archives, Edna Kells Fonds, Edna Kells Manuscripts, 1850-1940, Mrs. Elizabeth Boyd McDougall notes, box 2-file 65, "The Fabulous McDougall Women," 1.

⁶⁸Ibid., 1.

⁶⁹Ibid., 1.

age six, and Augusta age three.⁷⁰ Shortly after their arrival at Victoria, Eliza left with her new family to work among the Cree at Pigeon Lake, Alberta.⁷¹

In the fall of 1873 Eliza Boyd McDougall went to Morley with her husband to establish a mission among the Stoney.⁷² Initially Eliza McDougall was there, according to her own account, "without companionship of [her] own sex, except for squaws."⁷³ A few months later Annie McDougall, the wife of John McDougall's brother David, arrived at Morley and as Eliza stated in one of her speeches "she and I had a happy time."⁷⁴ Like many of her contemporaries, Eliza was concerned with her lack of what she perceived, to be "proper" female companionship. The relationships she formed with Native women, as represented within her speeches, were one dimensional and maternal. She taught them how to sew, cook, and clean, in other words Euro-Canadian modes of domesticity.

While at Morley Eliza was also involved with teaching and childcare duties, particularly after the McDougall "Orphanage" was established in

⁷⁰Sally Swenson, "Who Is Abigail?" 3.

⁷¹Calgary Library/Local History Room, Biography file of John McDougall, a clipping from an unknown newspaper entitled, "First White Woman: No Scarlet Riders Policed the Plains When Mrs. John McDougall Was Bride," April 30, 1938.

⁷²Glenbow-Alberta Institute/McDougall Family fonds, box 1 file 21, unpublished speech, Mrs. Elizabeth McDougall, "Pioneering in Alberta in 1873," 1. In her latter years Eliza Boyd McDougall was asked to give several speeches regarding her life as a missionary's wife in western Canada. The personal sources that are available from Eliza Boyd McDougall are speeches that she gave for various groups, like the United Church.

⁷³McDougall Family Fonds, "Address delivered by Elizabeth McDougall at the evening service of the Pincher Creek United Church Sunday June 16, 1935, 6.

⁷⁴McDougall Family Fonds, box 1-file 21, Address by Mrs. Elizabeth McDougall, "Pioneering in Alberta in 1873," 1.

1885. She was only able to help out, however, when her "home and family, and other duties" permitted it.⁷⁵ Eliza served as a nurse, midwife, and dentist at the mission station. She was a midwife at the delivery of many Nakoda babies and when a woman hurt her hip and it became infected Eliza cleaned the wound and fed the woman and her family until she was better.⁷⁵

In many of her speeches Eliza emphasized the change that had occurred among Native people as a result of their contact with missionaries, their adoption of Christianity, and Euro-Canadian concepts of "civilization." In an interview with an Edmonton newspaper journalist, Edna Kells, Eliza remarked that "the Indian women who worked for her had learned to be good housewives."⁷⁷ Through teaching at the McDougall Orphanage, serving as a role model for Native women, and her childcare duties, Eliza's role mirrored many of the same roles that were established as suitable for women in the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook. The activities and duties that she portrayed herself as having performed did not extend beyond what was considered suitable "work" for women, either married or single.

While Eliza was at Morley she gave birth to all of her children, five sons and one daughter without the aid of a doctor, with Annie

⁷⁵McDougall Family Fonds, box 1-file 21, Eliza Boyd McDougall, "Founding of the McDougall Orphanage and Training School," 2.

⁷⁶McDougall Family Fonds, box 1-file 21, an unpublished speech given by Eliza Boyd McDougall, "Early Days in Alberta," 5.

⁷⁷Edna Kells Fonds, Edna Kells Manuscripts 1850-1940, "Pioneering in Alberta in 1873," 22.

McDougall and Mary Cecil, a Cree woman, as her midwives.⁷⁸ Eliza Boyd McDougall lived and worked at Morley with her husband for twenty-five years, before moving to Calgary.⁷⁹ She lived in Calgary until her death on March 31, 1940, at the age of eighty-seven.⁸⁰ Grant MacEwan referred to her death as the "passing of one of the first ladies of the land, the passing of the lady who led men to say: 'love and duty laugh at storms.'"⁸¹

There was a great deal of similarity between the published letters of the single female missionaries, the memoirs of Elizabeth Bingham Young, and the unpublished speeches of Eliza Boyd McDougall regarding the kinds of work that they performed and the roles that they occupied at the mission station, regardless of their marital status. Without exception each woman described her daily routine as involving childcare, various types of teaching activities, domestic housework, and medical aid. Such work was not only considered aptly suited to women, mirroring contemporary domestic ideology, but it was reflective of the belief that they were to serve as "helpmeets" at the mission stations. Historian Ruth Compton Brouwer noted in her book New Women For God, that women served as

⁷⁸Elizabeth Bailey Price, "Pioneers of the Foothills: Cheerfully They Endured Almost Unbelievable Hardships, the First White Women to Invade the Newly Discovered West," MacLean's Magazine, July 1, 1927, 85. Mary Cecil was mentioned, by Annie McDougall, in an interview with Elizabeth Bailey Price. Annie referred to Mary Cecil as both a servant and friend for twenty-eight years.

⁷⁹McDougall Family fonds, box 1-file 21, an unpublished speech delivered by Mrs. John McDougall at the evening service of the Pincher Creek United Church on Sunday June 16, 1935, 3.

⁸⁰Biography file of John McDougall, a clipping from an unknown Calgary newspaper entitled, "First White Woman Settler Here Dies," March 31, 1940.

⁸¹Grant MacEwan, ...And Mighty Women Too: Stories of Notable Western Canadian Women. (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1975), 50.

"civilizing agents more than evangelists."⁸²

The Methodist Missionary Society expected women to fulfil different roles than their male counterparts. In a 1911 letter addressed to Reverend T. Ferrier, Principal at the Indian Industrial Institute in Brandon Manitoba, T.E.E. Shore, General Secretary of the Missionary Societies Foreign Department, indicated that it would be more practical to replace a female teacher with a male missionary.⁸³ Shore stated that the Society should acquire "a male missionary teacher who [would] combine the work of evangelistic missionary and that of teacher in the mission school."⁸⁴

Such a letter indicated that perhaps the representation of missionary women within the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook, the published works of John McDougall, John Maclean, and Egerton R. Young, and the papers of missionary women as "helpmeets" bound by the domestic sphere was a perception held by the Missionary Society also. Societal perceptions influenced the policy of the Methodist Missionary Society. While the work of female missionaries was considered important they did not serve in an evangelical capacity. As Ruth Compton Brouwer found, women tended to be involved primarily in social service activities.⁸⁵ Their particular sphere revolved around the temporal plane, rather than

⁸²Brouwer, New Women For God, 128.

⁸³United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society, Foreign Department fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Correspondence of T.E.E. Shore, fonds 14, box 5, file 89, November 5, 1911.

⁸⁴Ibid., November 5, 1911.

⁸⁵Brouwer, New Women For God, 129.

the spiritual one.

The expectations of missionaries wives as well as those of single female missionaries were embodied by the "helpmeet" image. Women served as teachers, nurses, and childcare providers, roles which all coincided with contemporary domestic ideology. The concerns of missionary women reflected their desire to serve as role models for Native people. Throughout their letters and papers these women expressed anxiety over what they thought to be the uncivilized nature of Native people. Their primary function within the Christian mission was to effect some sort of transformation which would coincide with the spiritual conversion their male counterparts were working for.

Single female missionaries and the missionaries wives portrayed themselves within their own writings in images that mirrored those depicted within the Christian Guardian, the Missionary Outlook, and the published works of male missionaries. Their papers and letters do not indicate that serving as missionaries allowed them to step beyond the boundaries of gender that were established in Euro-Canadian society. In fact their writings show that missionary women were just as much confined in the field by those same roles created for women at home. The letters published by these single female missionaries, the memoirs of Elizabeth Bingham Young, and the unpublished speeches of Eliza Boyd McDougall do not challenge the roles established for them in the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook or the published works of John McDougall, John Maclean, and Egerton R. Young. There is no doubt that for some and possibly many of these women mission work offered challenges and rewarding opportunities for work that permitted them to expand their roles well beyond those of

the great majority of women. The point emphasized here is that in their own representations of their work they were careful to stress that they remained within the confines set out for them within the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook and the published works of John McDougall, Egerton Young, and John Maclean.

CONCLUSION

It is important to examine the myths and stereotypes that have been created around and by the missionary movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Examining how gender and racial categories have been defined and constructed in a historical context adds to our understanding of how these categories continue to haunt us. Even today nineteenth century images of wives, mothers, daughters, single women, Anglo-Saxon women, and Native women are recreated and used in popular culture, reinforcing antiquated stereotypes.

Publications such as the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook reflected a certain set of expectations about the proper role of women within Euro-Canadian society. The categories of wife, mother, daughter, and missionary women were all developed around a domestic ideology. It was a woman's duty to be socially useful, maintain an immaculate household, and raise her children according to the right morals and values. In order to achieve these objectives a woman was encouraged to educate herself through reading religious publications like the Guardian and the Outlook which would provide her with the right advice and a plan of action.

Yet a woman who was just a housewife, according to the Guardian and the Outlook, was merely a slave and a drudge. Women were also urged to be active in philanthropic organizations. Her contributions to society made her both a better wife and mother, while at the same time improving the overall moral tenor of society. Yet while these women were prompted to enter the public sphere, albeit in a very limited manner, they were

constantly reminded that their natural place lay within the home as a wife and mother.

Single female missionaries and the missionary's wife were characterized as extensions of the categories of a wife and mother. Missionary women exemplified the notion of the Christian woman who "hath done what she could." These women were giving their lives to the furtherance of the Christian world mission, serving as mothers to their "devoted daughters."¹ Single female missionaries and missionaries wives would use their inherently maternal and nurturing qualities to alter the physical lives of non-Christian peoples around the world. Therefore, missionary women were the realization of all the idealized qualities of womanhood. They were mothers, metaphorically speaking, and they devoted their lives to God's work, personifying all notions of "True Womanhood."

Both married and single female missionaries were left alone at the mission stations for months at a time, while men were off performing direct evangelical work. During their absences women continued the day to day operation of the mission. It was highly likely that women's duties during their absence went beyond what was typically considered women's work. Their duties, however, continued to be characterized as supportive.

The characterization of missionary women within the published works of John Chantler McDougall, Egerton Ryerson Young, and John Maclean was similar to that of the Christian Guardian and the Missionary Outlook. Missionary women were cast in the "helpmeet" mould, providing support and encouragement for their husbands or male counterparts. They were depicted

¹Valverde, "When the Mother of the Race Is Free," 3-14. See also; Ware, Beyond the Pale, 117-166.

as the embodiment of piety, self-sacrifice, and quiet strength. As the pinnacle of womanhood they represented Anglo-Saxon social and cultural institutions wherever they served, be it in a foreign country or less populated areas of Canada. Women missionaries would serve both as role models and teachers to indigenous peoples, "with their gifts of culture, grace, and love."¹

Images of "true womanhood" within McDougall's, Young's, and Maclean's publications were typified by the Anglo-Saxon woman who had devoted her life to alleviating the supposed lowly position of Native people. Native women were depicted in contrast to Anglo-Saxon women. Native women were portrayed as everything that Anglo-Saxon women were not, as unfeminine drudges. Their lack of what was considered proper domestic skills was constantly denigrated in conjunction with Native women's supposedly inadequate mothering skills. Both of which, according to contemporary ideology as portrayed in the Guardian and the Outlook, defined real womanhood.

The seven individual women examined here all cast themselves within the "helpmeet" mould, characterizing their own roles as supportive. They also helped, through their writings, to reinforce many of the typical stereotypes concerning Native people and culture, portraying Native people in very derogatory terms and emphasizing the need to transform their society. The letters, and to a certain extent the speeches of Eliza McDougall, portrayed Native peoples and their own roles at the mission station in a very stereotypical manner, recreating popular beliefs and expectations regarding gender and race. From their records a very one

¹Maclean, Canadian Savage Folks, 348.

dimensional picture of Native people and mission work in general emerges.

Elizabeth Barrett mentioned trying to learn Cree, while Elizabeth Bingham Young described her nanny Little Mary as a strong woman who attempted to express her opinions and raise Elizabeth's children according to certain Native traditions.³ Yet these are minor examples considering the scope of the missionaries objectives. From the records left by these women it is difficult to determine if any degree of cultural understanding occurred.

The evidence here does not indicate, as other historians of the missionary experience have suggested, that mission work allowed women to serve in non-traditional roles. Rather the available information has shown that even the women themselves did not attempt to move beyond societal conventions and expectations. Missionary women may have worked in a different environment, but their duties did not stray far from the domestic sphere. In their own lives they may well have challenged prevailing stereotypes of women's roles, but if so, they did not leave this impression in their writings.

Missionary women and wives were depicted as "helpmeets," "cultural gatekeepers," and "quiet heroines," accolades that emphasised their civilizing abilities and supposed passivity of their role. None of these terms, however, captured the true nature of women's lives, particularly ignoring Native women and their role in western Canada. As John Maclean wrote in Canadian Savage Folk, the history of women in western mission fields consists of "...tales untold and biographies unwritten as great as

³Brown, "A Cree Nurse in a Cradle of Methodism," 100.

have been heard or read by mortals."⁴

⁴Maclean, Canadian Savage Folk, 353.

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