

# Christianity, Missionaries and Plains Cree Politics, 1850s–1870s

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Beginning in the 1990s, much of the historiography of missionary-Indigenous interaction in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Canada and the British Empire has explored how Indigenous leaders made very active and conscious use of the missionaries and Christianity in the framing and shaping of their politics, particularly in their political interactions with the colonial state.<sup>1</sup> This interpretive shift represented a revision of older histories that had tended to ignore Indigenous agency in the history of encounters with missionaries, and instead either uncritically celebrated, or categorically condemned, missionaries for their ability to shape and assimilate Indigenous societies into Christian-European cultural frameworks.<sup>2</sup> While there is no consensus in this revisionist approach about how Indigenous communities used Christianity on their own terms, most scholars would now agree with what Elizabeth Elbourne, in her study of the Six Nations, argues: that Indigenous communities and leaders were able to “manage” missionaries and Christianity in ways that mitigated the pressures of colonialism and assimilationist policies, and were even sometimes beneficial to leaders and communities.<sup>3</sup>

Informed by this revisionist scholarship, this article explores the uses of Christianity and missionaries by Plains Cree leaders in the area of the North Saskatchewan River valley between the late 1850s and the early 1870s. It argues that in the years immediately preceding Treaty Six (1876)—years marked by the collapse of the buffalo herds on the plains and conflict between the Cree and the bands of the Blackfoot Confederacy—there was significant division amongst Cree leaders about the value of missionaries. On the one hand, leaders around the areas of Edmonton and Fort Carlton sought to develop strong alliances with missionaries, seeing missionaries as useful allies in their bids to maintain leadership within their bands during an era of change. On the other hand, a different group of Cree, principally younger aspiring leaders from the Fort Pitt area, saw missionaries as threats to both the Cree buffalo hunting

life and their own political aspirations. In outlining these patterns of responses, I emphasize that this divisiveness was not rooted in differing religious views per se, but rather in different beliefs about whether the missionary was an asset or a threat to a leader’s ability to provide for, and maintain their own authority within, their band. In making

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this argument I highlight something generally overlooked in scholarship about the prairie west: that even before treaties, reserves, and residential schooling, Christianity and missionaries were shaping the contours of Cree politics.

## New Pressures, New Missionary Strategies

The arrival of missionaries in the North Saskatchewan River valley coincided with a series of economic and diplomatic crises for the Plains Cree that directly influenced how missionaries organized their work and how Cree responded to them. The first crisis was the decline of the buffalo herds and the resulting conflict between the Cree and the bands of the Blackfoot Confederacy over access to the remaining animals. As William Dobak has argued, in the Canadian plains it was not the arrival of the railway (as it was the case in the United States) but a series of other factors, particularly the HBC’s persistent demand for pemmican and, by the 1830s, buffalo robes, that drove-up the trade, and thus the killing, of the buffalo on the northern plains.<sup>4</sup> While the effects of this increased trade and killing of buffalo were noticeable as early as the 1840s, the buffalo only disappeared from the northern plains completely by the early 1880s; in the interim, Cree hunters, eager to harvest the buffalo for both trade and sustenance, were forced to travel farther and farther south, eventually coming into contact with Blackfoot parties who were themselves eager to control access to both their territory and the declining number of buffalo.<sup>5</sup> The resulting meetings of Cree and Blackfoot hunting parties were often violent, leading one historian to characterize the period 1830–1870 as the era of the “Buffalo Wars” in Cree political history.<sup>6</sup> In this context, Cree leaders pursued a diplomatic strategy of using a combination of warmaking and peacemaking in order to try to retain sustainable and secure access to the southern



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buffalo herds. This strategy, lasting from about 1830 to the early 1870s, resulted in a series of raids, ambushes, battles, and truces between Cree bands travelling south in search of buffalo and the Blackfoot, and also the movement of Blackfoot war parties northward pursuing retaliatory attacks against the Cree.<sup>7</sup>

While coping with the loss of buffalo and the ensuing violent attacks from Blackfoot bands, many Cree leaders, especially leaders on the eastern fringes of the plains near places like Fort Carlton, recognized they also faced another, possibly more significant challenge: the increasing settlement of the North Saskatchewan River valley by Métis settlers, many of whom had moved west and north from Red River to participate in the buffalo robe trade.<sup>8</sup> The arrival of this new settler frontier was made even more evident in 1857 with the arrival of two scientific expeditions in the region, Henry Youle Hind's expedition from Upper Canada and John Palliser's British-based expedition.<sup>9</sup> These events, along with information about violence in the American West, made at least some Cree and Blackfoot leaders aware of the changes set to occur

in their own region.<sup>10</sup> As Methodist missionary Thomas Woolsey observed in 1858, the combination of the Canadian and British expeditions and the collapse of treaties in the American West had created considerable anxiety in the region of the North Saskatchewan River valley: "The different tribes," wrote Woolsey in his journal, "have... learnt that troops [of the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment sent in response to the potential annexation of the Red River valley by Americans] have arrived in Red River, and that exploring parties [Hind's and Palliser's] are in Territory, and do not know what the end will be."<sup>11</sup> The Columbia gold rush in 1859, bringing hundreds of gold seekers overland via Edmonton to the Columbia River, compounded the lack of certainty felt by Cree leaders in the 1850s and 1860s.<sup>12</sup>

Missionaries saw an opportunity in these crises: they believed their teachings and their mission stations, and their emphasis on agriculture, offered ways for the Cree to cope with both the decline of the buffalo hunt and the threat of settlement. Between 1855 and 1866, missionaries built no fewer than ten semi-permanent mission stations on the North Saskatchewan between Edmonton in the west and beyond Prince Albert in the east.<sup>13</sup> These locations were chosen for strategic reasons. Not only would the posts be easily supplied from the river-based transportation system, but they were also well positioned to allow Cree bands to visit the stations and learn about agriculture, and possibly integrate farming into their seasonal round of movement between the wooded areas of the river and ravines and buffalo hunt towards the south and west.<sup>14</sup>

The Methodists were perhaps the most ambitious in this initiative to build missions in the North Saskatchewan River valley. Their activity began when the British Methodist missionary Robert Rundle started a small mission at Pigeon Lake south of Edmonton in the 1840s; by the 1850s and 1860s the Canadian Methodists established a series of mission stations in the region around North Saskatchewan River valley: Henry Steinhauer, the Ojibwa missionary from Canada West/Ontario, began Whitefish Lake mission in 1855; Thomas Woolsey, after a brief residency at Pigeon Lake (1857–1860), created a new mission north of the river at Smoky Lake in 1860; and in 1863, George McDougall, newly appointed superintendent of the Methodist mission in the Saskatchewan district, moved the Smoky Lake mission south, creating the Victoria mission.<sup>15</sup> Further east, the Anglican-supported Church Missionary Society (hereafter, CMS) established a permanent mission on the plains at Nipowewin in 1858, while the Canadian-based Presbyterian missionary, James Nisbet, established a settlement and mission at Prince Albert in 1866, and just east of Nisbet's settlement.<sup>16</sup>

The Oblates, having strongholds north and west of Fort Edmonton at Lac Ste. Anne and St. Albert, were not as interested as the Protestants in building these permanent mission stations to serve the Plains Cree. While Lac Ste. Anne, founded in 1842, had served freemen/Métis families for several years, the establishment of St. Albert in 1861

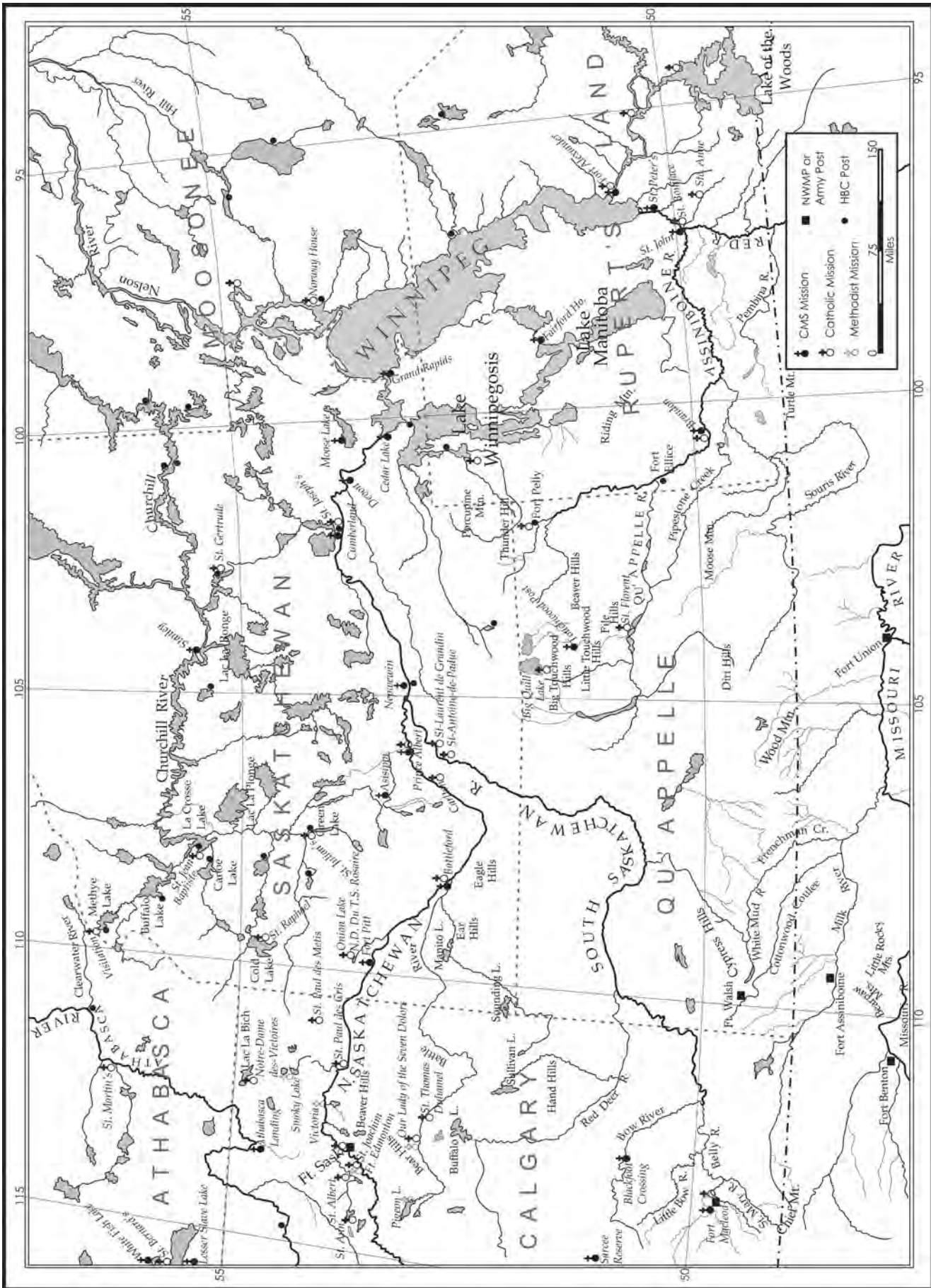


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**George Millward McDougall (c1820–1876)** came to Rossville, two miles from Norway House, in 1860. He established church missions at Pakan, near Edmonton, and Morley. In 1875, he was commissioned by Manitoba Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris to undertake negotiations leading to Treaty No. 6. In early 1876, he perished in a snowstorm near Calgary while searching for food for his mission.



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Missions of the North-West, circa 1895, created by historian Gerhard Ens based on a map from the Church Missionary Society, *The Church Missionary Atlas. Part III: Ceylon, Mauritius, China, Japan, N.-W. America, and North Pacific*, London: Church Missionary House, 1895.

signalled a renewed effort on the part of the Oblates to shift the centre of their operations outside the fort. Home to a Grey Nuns hospital by 1863, St. Albert quickly became a Métis and Catholic stronghold in the North-West.<sup>17</sup> Although Albert Lacombe opened one mission on the Saskatchewan River at St. Paul des Cris in 1865 (undoubtedly as a direct response to the Victoria mission), by the late 1860s, Lacombe and other Oblates increasingly turned their attention to a strategy of *mission ambulante* in which they travelled across the plains, following the buffalo hunting camps of the Plains Cree and Plains Métis, and increasingly pursuing connections with the bands of the Blackfoot Confederacy.<sup>18</sup>

### Missionary as Political Ally: Maskepetoon and the Methodists

In this context of crisis and mission-extension, several Edmonton-area Cree bands sought to deploy missionaries as diplomatic emissaries to the Blackfoot. Their hope was that missionaries would help them establish peace with the Blackfoot and thus help the Cree retain access to the buffalo and to the buffalo hunting lifestyle. Maskepetoon (Broken Arm), the most prominent Cree leader from the Fort Edmonton area, was one leader who saw missionaries in this way. While he had enjoyed good relations with Robert Rundle during the 1840s, even sending his son to live with Rundle for a winter, during the 1860s, Maskepetoon began using missionaries as political allies in his dealings with the Blackfoot.<sup>19</sup> He seemed to believe that missionaries were neutral in Blackfoot-Cree conflicts and would thus be useful allies in his own diplomatic strategy of peacemaking with the Blackfoot.<sup>20</sup> Speaking with Methodist missionaries Thomas Woolsey and George McDougall in 1862, Maskepetoon laid out both the problem faced by the Cree, and how the missionaries were well-placed to help him and his band overcome them. The violence of the plains, he explained, was the result of Cree having to venture into Blackfoot territory to access buffalo:

This tract of country [the northern plains] may be divided into three sections, the Indians occupying the outer [two] portions and the buffalo the center of it. In order to subsist, we must meet our enemies [the Blackfoot] on one common hunting ground, subject frequently to loss of life and property. Now as you perceive, we are always in danger of the Blackfeet who already murdered many of our people.<sup>21</sup>

He continued by explaining that the missionary was specially positioned to help mitigate this violence and play the role of peacemaker. Obviously trying to flatter the missionaries, he suggested that they were highly respected throughout Blackfoot territory (“I have told the Sarcees of the good words that the Missionaries [sic] have spoken to us and of their good will towards all Indians; and now for three years, they have not killed any of us.”<sup>22</sup>) and that their “good words” and “good will” on the plains would

actively help to facilitate peace in the region. His concluding words, rewritten through Woolsey’s account to the *Christian Guardian*, were clearly designed to appeal to missionaries’ sense of duty and self-importance, and leave them little option but to become involved in Cree diplomacy: “I trust that you Missionaries will endeavour to make peace amongst us,” he told Woolsey and McDougall.<sup>23</sup>

For missionaries like Woolsey and McDougall this offer to play peacemaker was hard to resist. Isolated and always in need of success stories to report in the pages of *The Christian Guardian*, the *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, and other publications, this kind of flattery, and the potential of reporting the success of these missions in future publications, gave the Methodists plenty of motivation to join the peacemaking missions. Moreover, for Christians like McDougall and Woolsey, playing the role of peacemaker must have felt providential for a cohort of missionaries who saw their role of bringing not just Christianity but also civil society to the “uncivilized” societies like the Cree.

What neither missionary seemed to recognize was the ambiguity of their role; namely, that in their work in promoting peace on behalf of the Cree in the 1860s they were also meeting Maskepetoon’s goals of extending Cree access to the buffalo hunt and thus the mobile buffalo hunting life that was antithetical to the Protestant missionary’s goals to transform the Cree into settled, agrarian people. This focus on settlement, evident in the operation of agrarian missions at Whitefish Lake, Pigeon Lake, and Victoria, was a prominent feature of the mission strategy on the northern plains by the 1850s and 1860s when McDougall and Woolsey were interacting with Maskepetoon.<sup>24</sup>

For Maskepetoon, his alliance with the Methodists had a clear, coherent purpose: the missionaries would allow his band to retain access to the buffalo.<sup>25</sup>

While using missionaries to secure this access was partly driven by the goal of feeding himself and his band, the strategy was also shaped by Maskepetoon’s desire to secure his own leadership and position of authority within his band, and amongst other Cree bands. In a band-based society where leadership was prone to change and was ensured only by cultivating a reputation as someone able to provide security for the band, Maskepetoon’s use of missionaries to help him make peace and to access buffalo, was at least partly about securing his own political position.<sup>26</sup> Unlike other leaders who would resist missionaries, Maskepetoon felt missionaries were not a threat to him or his band, but rather an element that he could incorporate to help his band and thus shore-up his own position as leader.

In 1865, Maskepetoon made good on his intention to use the missionary to bring about peace on the plains. In early January, the chief sent a message to McDougall, asking him to travel with the Cree leader to a Blackfoot camp near present-day Red Deer, Alberta.<sup>27</sup> McDougall eagerly set out from the Victoria mission accompanied by his son, John, and interpreter, Peter Erasmus.<sup>28</sup> The



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Methodist party joined Maskepetoon at his Camp in the Beaver Hills area about two days later. After a night of prayers and discussion in the Cree camp, the McDougalls, Erasmus and Maskepetoon's group, including forty headmen and "warriors" (all men apparently<sup>29</sup>) set out on a three-day journey to Battle River.<sup>30</sup>

Hoping to impress the Blackfoot with his power and alliances, Maskepetoon organized his arrival at the Blackfoot camp in such a way as to highlight his own access

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to both established Cree traditions and to the symbolic power of the missionary, the HBC, and the British crown. After leaving their own encampment on the Battle River, Maskepetoon and his men stopped a few hours from the camp, to apply what John McDougall described as "visiting paint and dress," including ochre markings on their face and colourful dress and moccasins.<sup>31</sup> The party then continued, before halting again just a few hundred yards from the camp. At this point, the whole Cree contingent was reorganized by the chief. Crucially, he placed himself and George McDougall at the front of the procession. He then ordered "the standard bearers, and the Union Jack and the Hudson's Bay Company flag ... unfurled to the breeze" immediately behind him. Following these flags came the rest of the Cree ordered by seniority: headmen, followed by warriors, followed by the young male scouts.<sup>32</sup> At the back of the procession were John McDougall, who carefully recorded the whole event, and Peter Erasmus.<sup>33</sup>

The organization of the colourful and diverse procession seemed to have the desired effect. On seeing the approaching party, the Blackfoot children playing nearby scrambled down the valley to their camp. Soon, a group of men, armed and ready to fight, emerged. On seeing Maskepetoon at the head of the party, however, they stopped. Calling the chief "Mon-e-guh-ba-now" – the Great Chief – the Blackfoot welcomed Maskepetoon and his party into the camp. For the next three days Maskepetoon and his men, John and George McDougall, and Peter Erasmus were guests in the tent of Three Bulls, the leading man of the camp.<sup>34</sup>

At Three Bulls' camp a series of different dialogues unfolded, all of them controlled by the indigenous (Cree and/or Blackfoot) people. Inside the chief's tent, Maskepetoon and Three Bulls discussed peace.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, John McDougall was a reluctant guest of another Blackfoot tent. His discomfort and feelings as an outsider are palpable in his report of this visit: "It seemed to me I was on exhibition," remembered John (an interesting comment given McDougall's own role in sending Indigenous people to eastern cities like Winnipeg in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup>

century).<sup>36</sup> At the conclusion of the indigenous negotiations, George McDougall had the opportunity to proselytize to Three Bulls, not just with regard to Christianity but also on the benevolence of British and Canadian colonialism. Contrasting the violent American frontier with the relative peace of Native-newcomer relations in Canada, McDougall "told them [the Blackfoot] of the many villages and tribes of Indians [in the Canadas] who were living in harmony and peace right in the midst of the white people...."<sup>37</sup> McDougall promised Christianity and the coming of good government to the northern plains. In the end, the McDougalls, Erasmus, and Maskepetoon and his party left the camp with what Maskepetoon had wanted: the promise of three more months of peace, and thus access to the buffalo.<sup>38</sup> As this embassy reveals, and as the most recent biography of Maskepetoon correctly states, the Plains Cree leader allied himself with missionaries not because he wanted to fully convert to Christianity, but for political reasons: Missionaries, for Maskepetoon, were key allies he could use to establish peace for Cree travelling onto the plains, and thus ensure his own leadership and authority amongst the Cree.<sup>39</sup>



Glenbow Archives, NA-3148-1

**Peter Erasmus (1833–1931)** was fluent in English and several Cree dialects. Hired in 1876 to serve as an interpreter for the Plains Cree during the Treaty Six negotiations, he took on a larger role because of his prowess as a linguist. His memoirs provide rare insight into the treaty process from the Aboriginal perspective.

In March 1869, Maskepetoon was ambushed and killed during another set of negotiations at a Blackfoot camp. Although carrying on negotiations without the help of the McDougalls, Maskepetoon reportedly used many of the same strategies as in 1865 meeting with Three Bulls. Just short of the Blackfoot camp, Maskepetoon's party had established itself on a hilltop, waiting for the Siksika to join them. Here they flew a union jack to signal their location and sat waiting for the Blackfoot, with a pipe, tobacco, and a Bible in hand.<sup>40</sup> Shortly after the arrival of Many Swans, the Siksika leader, however, violence erupted. Many Swans first insisted the Cree surrender their weapons, then ordered his men to ambush the Cree, killing the entire Cree party.<sup>41</sup>

In the wake of this event, violence between the Cree and the Blackfoot escalated and, within this context of heightened violence, the missionaries, and particularly their mission stations, were designated by Cree leadership as safe havens that would allow them some protection from Blackfoot attacks, and also would give given them a base from which to launch their own retaliatory military expeditions. By September 1869, a few months after Maskepetoon's death, George McDougall, then at the Victoria mission, reported that many Cree had "fled to us for protection," and that the Blackfoot, although nearby, were too "superstitious" to pursue the Cree into grounds of the mission.<sup>42</sup> Missionaries, although not condoning the violence recognized that their influence as evangelists rested to at least some degree on their political utility to Cree leaders and their conflicts on the plains.

Like the early, selective use of the missionaries to launch missions to the Blackfoot, these interactions with the mission stations were conducted on Cree terms, and only ever pursued seasonally and in ways that would enable them to combine their goals of maintaining access to the buffalo with accessing the material and political security provided by the missionary and the mission station. As Albert Lacombe wrote in his description of St. Paul des Cris, his mission, like the other Saskatchewan River missions, was ideally situated to meet the seasonal round of the Cree that combined a summer on the plains, with fall and winter in the river valley.<sup>43</sup> In May 1865, when Lacombe arrived at the site of the new mission for the first time, he reported that an enthusiastic group of Cree were ready to welcome him. Under his instruction, the supplies were unloaded from his raft and immediately used to plough and seed an area of land along the north bank of the river.<sup>44</sup> Next, a few houses were framed. Linking the conversion of the physical landscape with his religious mission, Lacombe remarked that "With this [the houses] and our field we took possession of the countryside in the name of religion."<sup>45</sup> After this was complete, the majority of the summer was spent out on the prairies, with Lacombe travelling with the Beaver Hills band. In September, Lacombe and the Cree returned to the mission to harvest and consume the crops before returning to the plains for the fall and winter.<sup>46</sup>

This combined political and economic use of mission stations was again on full display by May 1869 when the Saskatchewan River Cree launched a large buffalo hunt aimed, in part, at avenging the killing of Maskepetoon and striking back against the Blackfoot attempts to control access to the buffalo.<sup>47</sup> In this hunt, we see Cree leaders pursuing a version of Maskepetoon's earlier strategy of mobilizing missionaries to secure access to buffalo in Blackfoot territory. As George Colpitts argues, this particularly large buffalo hunt was enabled precisely because Indigenous hunters successfully used the infrastructure of the Methodist and Catholic stations to organize the hunt.<sup>48</sup> The hunting party comprised more than a thousand people, and lasted about two months, collecting up to 120,000 pounds of buffalo meat.<sup>49</sup> While many leaders and participants in the hunt retained their belief in Cree spirituality, most of the hunt's participants were associated with mission stations on the Saskatchewan River such as Victoria, Whitefish Lake and St. Paul des Cris. The hunting party was organized in part around the model of the Methodist Revival meetings that had been so successful among Indigenous communities in eastern Canada with each day including morning prayers, afternoon teaching, and evening services.<sup>50</sup>

Reminiscent of Maskepetoon's earlier visit to Three Bulls' camp and linked to even earlier uses of missionaries as sources of spiritual empowerment, both the size of the hunt and the role of missionaries in it, were crucial in allowing these Cree to access the buffalo within Blackfoot territory. Also like Maskepetoon's 1865 embassy, Indigenous hunters and Euro-Canadian missionaries were operating this hunt with their own needs and interests in mind. While missionaries believed the hunt was a crucial tool in their drive to recruit Christian souls, the Cree leadership, although perhaps interested as they had always been in the spiritual power that came with Christianity, were principally interested in how the missionaries could allow them to continue what they had been doing for many years: leading their bands onto the plains, hunting buffalo, and returning to the North Saskatchewan River valley.

### **Missionary as Teacher: Ahtahkakoop, Mistawasis, and Missionaries**

While Maskepetoon and other Edmonton-area bands used missionaries as ways to mobilize access to the buffalo within Blackfoot territory, leaders near Fort Carlton pursued relations with missionaries for slightly different purposes. Here, documents suggest that the principal leaders in the region, Mistawasis (Big Child) and Ahtahkakoop (Starblanket), sought missionaries as teachers who could help them, and particularly the children in their bands, prepare for a world after the buffalo in which English literacy would be a key component.

During a visit to his camp in 1858, the Cree CMS missionary Henry Budd found Mistawasis uninterested in his messages of sin and salvation, but very keen to have Budd visit his tent and talk to him. In one of the most



optimistic passages in Henry Budd's twenty-five-year journal, the missionary remarked in glowing terms about his "long conversations" with Mistawasis, and that the chief was "quite favourable and willing that his children should be taught to read..."<sup>51</sup> He even asked Budd to return later in the year and to remain with him and his family for several months.<sup>52</sup> Like Maskepetoon's management of McDougall, Mistawasis seemed to be flattering Budd by agreeing to have the missionary teach him about Christianity, but also clearly wanted Budd to "do something toward teaching his children to read."<sup>53</sup> Mistawasis' desire for education for the children of the band is apparent ten years later, when Presbyterian missionary James Nisbet records a similar encounter with some unnamed "influential men from the plains" who visited him, enquiring about whether his mission could help these men and their band settle and educate their children.<sup>54</sup> Given their importance in the region it seems highly likely that these "influential men" asking for missionary schooling were Ahtahkakoop and Mistawasis.

The most compelling evidence of the leaders' interest in accessing English literacy and education for their children comes from an account of Ahtahkakoop's interaction with CMS missionary John Hines who would help Ahtahkakoop establish an agricultural settlement (later a reserve) at Sandy Lake in 1874.<sup>55</sup> According to Hines, when he first met Ahtahkakoop, the Cree chief complained that although he had met and worked as a guide for several Roman Catholic missionaries throughout the 1860s, he never found a Catholic missionary that gave him what he really wanted: literacy for his children. In Hines' account, Ahtahkakoop complained that he had "asked the Bishop [Grandin]... what was the use of the priest baptising my children and then teaching them nothing..." He told Hines that, "if the Bishop would send someone to teach them I would allow it to be done. The Bishop promised to send a priest as teacher in about a year from that time, but I waited eleven years and no teacher came."<sup>56</sup>

While Hines' telling of the story, particularly as it appears in his published memoir, places too much emphasis on Hines' own influence over the chief and on the chief's apparent sectarian tendencies, it does seem likely that it was the Protestant's emphasis on literacy that eventually swayed him to solidify his alliance with Hines in the 1870s.<sup>57</sup> A passage attributed to Ahtahkakoop and appearing in Hines' published autobiography paraphrases what the chief said in the 1880s when he later reflected on his relationship with Hines:

I invited him [Hines] to be our minister. In a short time he established his mission here. Some time after this I again saw the Roman Catholic Bishop. He told me I had done wrong in going to a Protestant minister. I replied that the Roman Catholic priests had done nothing but baptise my children—that they had let them grow up without giving them any instruction, and that he, the Bishop, had not

kept his promise to send a priest as teacher. After I invited Mr. Hines to stay with my band, I spoke to the Snake Plain Indians, and they all agreed to join in receiving instruction from him. I, myself, and wife and one of my children have been baptised by Mr. Hines. Four of my children, who were baptised by the Roman Catholic priest, were instructed by Mr. Hines and confirmed yesterday.<sup>58</sup>

Perhaps because the buffalo remained farther from their camps, or perhaps because of the arrival of Métis settlers from Red River in the area, Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop sought out missionaries as ways to manage change rather than, as Maskepetoon seemed to be doing, to try and continue the "old ways" of the hunt.<sup>59</sup> By 1876 at the Treaty Six negotiations, the perspective of Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop would come to dominate the way many leaders saw both missionaries and treaties. It prompted the leaders to make special requests, some of which fell outside the initial terms of the treaty, such as asking that the Crown also provide each reserve with a missionary, a school and a schoolteacher—all things they learnt about, and came to value, during their interactions with Budd, Nisbet, and Hines.<sup>60</sup>

### Missionary skeptics

Even as leaders from both the Edmonton and Fort Carlton area sought to engage with missionaries in ways that made sense for their local contexts, another cluster of Cree, principally younger aspiring leaders from the region around Fort Pitt, voiced skepticism about missionaries and their potential value to the Cree and to their own leadership aspirations. Assumptions about male prestige and leadership were partly responsible for the resistance to missionaries. Peyawis-awasis (Thunderchild) (b. 1845 near Fort Pitt), later a leading man in the camp of Mistahimaskwa (Big Bear), felt strongly that to attain prestige he must excel in riding, hunting, and battle. As an old man, he would remark that stealing his first horse from a Blackfoot camp marked a significant rite of passage in his life, and warmaking was one of the best ways to attain respect and influence as a male leader in his community.<sup>61</sup> For Peyawis-awasis and his cohort, peace treaties, negotiated by missionaries preaching messages about the need to "love your enemy," and especially the decision to live seasonally at a mission station, threatened to undermine this established order. Many young male Cree seemed to recognize this. As Peter Erasmus noted, the younger men of the Pigeon Lake Cree felt that their training as warriors and guardians of their camp "was at variance with the declared policy of peace at any price held by their elders..."<sup>62</sup> While the missionaries' emphasis on inter-ethnic peace, good relations with the HBC, and a move to settle on agricultural lands along the North Saskatchewan could be used to shore-up the influence of established leaders, it seemed to work against these leaders-in-waiting and their particular ideas of masculinity and leadership.



Glenbow Archives, NA-1315-19

A sketch of Treaty Six negotiations in Saskatchewan, 1876.

Equally as important, many of these leaders-in-waiting and their bands, possibly due to their limited contact with missions and missionaries, remained skeptical of the value of missions and missionary symbols. They did not seem to share the belief that missionary teachings were spiritually empowering, and many were vocal about how Christian symbols and missionaries could create spiritual upheaval for the Cree.

These spiritual differences came to the surface in 1866 when a metallic stone—sometimes called a Manitou stone—was removed from a hill near the Battle River to the mission at Victoria. A meteorite, the stone was said to have been placed in that spot after the great flood that figures in the creation story of the Cree and played an important role in protecting the buffalo herds and promoting peace amongst the people of the northern plains.<sup>63</sup> As long as offerings of tobacco, beads, arrows or buttons were left at the stone, the buffalo would continue to thrive and support the people. Missionaries had known about the stone since at least the 1850s when Thomas Woolsey was invited to see the stone by the Cree leader Lapotack. At that time, Lapotack seemed ready to combine his newly established Christian conversion with a visit to an object that was so central to a pre-Christian Cree vision of the world.<sup>64</sup> Sometime in the summer of 1866, this stone was taken from its original site and placed at the Victoria mission. It was later shipped to a Methodist College in Ontario.<sup>65</sup>

According to George McDougall, the removal of the stone raised the “ire of the conjurors.”<sup>66</sup> These “conjurors” included Mistahimaskwa (Big Bear) (born ca. 1825 near Fort Carlton), at that time the leader of a band of buffalo-hunting Cree based at Fort Pitt. For Mistahimaskwa and his followers (including, by the 1870s, Peyawis-awasis), the removal of the stone created disruption and extreme discontinuity in the spiritual landscape of the plains. With the stone gone, the protection it offered—to the buffalo and to the hunting parties—was gone as well. George McDougall, writing in 1869 reported that the “conjurors” declared that “sickness, war, and the decrease of buffalo

would follow this sacrifice [of the removal of the stone].”<sup>67</sup> For a person like Mistahimaskwa, noted for his ability to interpret visions, the removal of the stone, and the visions of disease, war, and destruction of the buffalo this removal precipitated, must have been real and traumatic.<sup>68</sup> Up until this point, although impressed by the influence of missionaries, he had remained skeptical of their potential benefits. He had not shown any interest in their messages of sin, agriculture, or literacy; as Hugh Dempsey suggests, Mistahimaskwa’s strategy for coping with missionaries was avoidance.<sup>69</sup> With the removal of the stone Mistahimaskwa and his followers had new reasons to fear and actively resist the missionary.

While most scholars have assumed the removal of the stone was a strategic act on the part of the McDougalls to undermine Cree, something quite different may have been occurring.<sup>70</sup> McDougall’s record of the removal is brief. Writing in 1869, he simply explains that “three years ago,

“By 1876 at the Treaty Six negotiations, the perspective of Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop would come to dominate the way many leaders saw both missionaries and treaties.

one of our people put the idol in his cart and brought it to Victoria.”<sup>71</sup> Given this description, it might well have been the case that a Christian Cree or Métis resident of Victoria was responsible for the removal, possibly placing it in their cart on the return from a summer’s buffalo hunt. Indeed, one untitled document suggests the Manitou stone may have been removed by John Whitford (O-mak-Chees) an English Métis with ties to McDougall’s Victoria mission.<sup>72</sup> If that is the case, and it does seem likely given that the McDougalls were not in a position that would allow them to “steal” an object from the plains, the removal of the Manitou stone might reflect not the missionary’s attempt to Christianize the space of the plains by removing the stone, but rather an attempt by a resident of Victoria to bring Cree



cosmology and spirituality into a Christian mission context. By having the stone at the mission, they could better integrate the spiritual power of the Cree and Christian symbols—in a way similar to the way Maskepetoon had integrated the Bible into his peace missions. Thus, while Mistahimaskwa and others saw this relocation as a moment of discontinuity, for some Christian Métis and Cree in the North Saskatchewan River valley, the stone's relocation to Victoria might have offered a way to create continuity between a pre-Christian past and a Christian future. Significantly, the removal of the stone may represent a growing division between two different political-spiritual outlooks of Cree: one voiced by Cree leaders who sought a new way to live on the plains by incorporating mission stations, agriculture, and literacy, and the other voiced by missionary-skeptics looking for ways to retain the “old ways” of the hunt and live in a spiritual space free of Christian influences.

### Missions and Cree Politics

The upshot of these different views of the political utility of missions was a hardening of factionalism within Cree politics. For instance, Peyawis-awasis argued that Maskepetoon's peacemaking missions would always fail because he represented only a small group of Cree wanting peace and was not able to speak for all the Cree leaders. Moreover, even if Maskepetoon did have the support of other leaders, it was only temporary support: the very nature of the Cree band society meant Maskepetoon's influence was limited.<sup>73</sup> Finally, Maskepetoon's influence was limited by the fact that many Cree, especially those from the Fort Pitt area who had escaped the direct influence of missionaries, did not trust the Blackfoot to keep their treaty. Peyawis-awasis again explains that even when tobacco was exchanged between Cree and Blackfoot, it was no guarantee of peace: “We could not trust them fully,” he noted.<sup>74</sup> Unlike the McDougalls' depiction of Maskepetoon as a kind of paramount Cree chief with influence over several leaders, Peyawis-awasis suggests that in reality his power seemed to be limited to what he, with the help of his band and his missionary allies, could achieve and the extent to which he could win support for these achievements.

This factionalism between bands and leaders would stretch into the future, and was especially apparent during the negotiations of Treaty Six (1876). On the one hand, several leaders, especially those who had already formed relationships with missionaries, clearly used aspects of their early missionary contact to craft their negotiations and to articulate their support for treaty. Although Maskepetoon was already dead by the time of treaty, his strategy of using missionaries in critical political negotiations is reflected to some degree in the way in which Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop take up missionary advice and the model of the mission station in their negotiations and support of Treaty Six. Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop were clearly convinced that treaties were the best way to secure a stable future for his band—or as Mistawasis said of the

treaty, it was the best way to provide for their “children's children.”<sup>75</sup> Distinct from Maskepetoon's interaction with missions, was the fact that Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop had already decided on using the missionary as an agent of change—as a figure that could help them prepare for life after the buffalo, rather than as an agent to help them continue the buffalo hunt.

Onchaminahos (Little Hunter, also known as John Hunter), a Woodland Cree from the region northeast of Fort Edmonton who had connections to the Whitefish Lake mission of Henry Steinhauer, exemplifies how some Edmonton-area Cree seem to have adjusted their strategies by the 1870s, looking more toward settlement as a viable way to maintain their communities after the end of the buffalo hunt. Onchaminahos had accompanied Peter Erasmus to Treaty Six negotiations at Fort Carlton and subsequently signed treaty at Fort Pitt along with Pekan (James Seenum), a leader who was himself deeply connected to Steinhauer's reserve.<sup>76</sup> Discussing how the farming support that came with treaties would bring economic stability to his community, he admitted, although reluctantly, to Erasmus that, “Steinhauer has often told us that we must learn to farm and raise animals to support ourselves for the day when buffalo will be no more. Now I have to believe him.”<sup>77</sup>

On the other hand, many younger chiefs, and particularly those from the region near Fort Pitt who remained outside direct contact with missions, remained skeptical of missionaries and treaty. Pitikwahanapiwiyin (Poundmaker; born ca. 1842), a nephew of Mistawasis, and someone with limited interactions with, or interest in, Christianity and missions, argued vigorously against the treaty. During a heated debate at a Cree council meeting with all the Fort Carlton Cree during the Treaty Six negotiations, Pitikwahanapiwiyin openly disagreed with Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop. He argued against the move to reserves and agriculture, saying it should be up to the Cree, not to the government, to decide how much land should be given out at treaty.<sup>78</sup> Although Pitikwahanapiwiyin eventually signed treaty in 1876, Mistahimaskwa did not. He refused partly because he said he did not have time to consult his band; however, he also seemed to fear the implications of treaties and the government-led distribution of land. He felt, quite accurately, these changes would inhibit his personal freedom, and the freedom of his band to continue living by the buffalo hunt. As he famously told Commissioner Alexander Morris, what he feared most was “the rope to be around my neck.”<sup>79</sup> While Morris understood this as a reference to a fear of hanging, Mistahimaskwa more likely was using the metaphor of the horse in a bridle, with himself as the horse, and the treaty like a bridle constricting his ability to move freely.<sup>80</sup> For someone who had chosen to live on the plains, rather than seeking connections and refuge with the mission stations of the Saskatchewan River, and given his strategies in the early 1880s, his position at treaty was reflective of his longer-term political vision and strategy of resisting the influence of colonialism,

and of missionaries and Christianity, as a way to achieve continuity of Cree lifeways.

### Conclusion

The divergent visions of treaty held by “Christian” and “non-Christian” chiefs have been noted by Jim Miller, and are clearly evident within other Indigenous communities in 19<sup>th</sup>-century British North America.<sup>81</sup> These divisions were not just about treaty, however. As this article shows, throughout the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Cree leaders adopted a variety of strategies and approaches to missionaries, each using a strategy that would best help their own goals of either retaining the unity of their band and leadership in that band, or, as in the case of Mistahimaskwa and Pitikwahanapiwiyin, establishing their own following of people who were skeptical about the utility of the missionary to the security of the Cree.

The longer-term ramifications of these divisions would stretch beyond Treaty Six negotiations. The pattern of divergent political strategies, and the place of Christianity in shaping this brand of politics, is perhaps particularly apparent during the Northwest Resistance of 1885. On the one hand, missionary-friendly leaders like Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop remained absolutely neutral during the conflict.<sup>82</sup> In May 1885, explaining his decision to remain neutral throughout the conflict, Mistawasis even drew a direct link between his politics and his association with Christianity. Speaking to a gathering of Anglican missionaries and settlers at Prince Albert he explained that, “long ago when they [his band] were heathens they would readily have joined the rebellion and would have made very light of it but now that they are Christians they think very differently.”<sup>83</sup> Whether this statement was to gain favour from the Anglican settler in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion, or whether it was an authentic explanation of his politics, it is clear that Mistawasis recognized a linkage between politics and religion in the Northwest.

On the other hand, the most prominent Cree leader to pursue violence, Kapapamahchakwew (Wandering Spirit), was from Mistahamaskwa’s Fort Pitt band, which, as shown above, had long been skeptical of missionaries and Christianity. While he seemed to share Mistawasis’ sense that Christianity and its representatives were part of the political transformation on the Northwestern Plains, Kapapamahchakwew seemed to see it as a dangerous force that was aiding the upheaval and political subjugation of the Cree; to him Christianity was a symbol and cause of change, not a tool to manage the change. It is significant that in the early moments of the so-called “Frog Lake Massacre,” Kapapamahchakwew and those following him into rebellion chose to focus their attack first on the HBC store and then on the community’s Catholic Church. Bursting into the church in the midst of the Maundy Thursday service on 2 April, Kapapamahchakwew was able to both easily surround most of the community’s white settlers in one location and make a political statement about



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**Three Treaty Six Chiefs** at the unveiling of the Brant Memorial in Ontario on 16 October 1886. Shown seated, left to right, are Ahtahkakoop (Starblanket), Kahkiwistahaw (Flying in a Circle), and Mistawasis (Big Child). Standing behind them are Louis O’Soup and NWMP interpreter and scout, Peter Hourie.

their contempt for Christianity. As one settler remarked in his memory of the events, on entering the church, Kapapamahchakwew ran to the front of the church and, “half-knelt, glaring up at the altar and the white-robed priests in sacrilegious mockery.”<sup>84</sup> Another account remarks how he then proceeded to walk up and down the aisles of the church, firing his rifle at the windows and the doors.<sup>85</sup> While taking the HBC store earlier the same day gave him food and supplies and control of an important economic institution of colonialism in the region, attacking the church was about both rounding up the settlers and trying to assert control over the main force of spiritual disruption in the Northwest.

That there was such a remarkably different interpretation of Christianity by Mistawasis and Kapapamahchakwew during 1885 shows us that the divergent responses noted in the 1860s had a significant influence on Cree politics. It also demonstrates that religion was not a side-show of the political upheavals of the west at this time; rather, it was embedded in both the action of the colonizers and in the various responses, and internal tensions, of the so-called “colonized.” Even before the era of settlement, religion was never far from politics in the Canadian west. ☞



# Christianity, Missionaries and Plains Cree Politics

## Notes

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1. A few examples of the political uses of Christianity by African/indigenous leaders in African scholarship include, Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853*, Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002; J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000; Paul Stuart Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995. Examples from Canadian scholarship include discussions of the Six Nations, Treaty Five, and the North-West Coast. See Sally M. Weaver, *Medicine and Politics Among the Grand River Iroquois: A Study of the Non-Conservatives*, Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1972; Sally Weaver, "The Iroquois: Consolidation of the Grand River Reserve, 1847–1875," in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, ed. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith, Toronto: Dundurn, 1994; Tolly Bradford, *Prophetic Identities: Indigenous Missionaries on British Colonial Frontiers, 1850–75*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012, chap. 6; Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: a Victorian Missionary in British Columbia*, Ottawa, National Museums of Canada, 1974, n.d., chap. 7; Susan Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity*, Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003, pp. 157–159.
2. For summaries of this historiographical shift, see David Maxwell, "Writing the History of African Christianity: Reflections of an Editor," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 36, no. 3–4 (2006): 379–399; Michelene E. Pesantubbee, "Forward," in *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape*, ed. Joel Martin and Mark A. Nicholas, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010; Tolly Bradford and Chelsea Horton, "Introduction: The Mixed Blessings of Encounter," in *Mixed Blessings: Indigenous Encounters with Christianity in Canada*, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016.
3. See Elizabeth Elbourne, "Managing Alliance, Negotiating Christianity: Haudenosaunee Uses of Anglicanism in Northeastern North America, 1760s–1830s," in *Mixed Blessings: Indigenous Encounters with Christianity in Canada*, ed. Tolly Bradford and Chelsea Horton, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016, pp. 38–60.
4. William A. Dobak, "Killing of the Canadian Buffalo, 1821–1881," *Western Historical Quarterly* 27(1): 33–52 (Spring 1996).
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 47.
6. John Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy, and War, 1790 to 1870*, Winnipeg, 1988, chap. 9.
7. *Ibid.*, Several of the stories told by Thunderchild to Edward Ahenakew feature Cree-Blackfoot raids and battles from the 1860s. See Edward Ahenakew, *Voices of the Plains Cree*, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973.
8. For discussion of the westward movement of the Red River Métis into this region, see Gerhard J. Ens, "Dispossession or Adaptation? Migration and Persistence of the Red River Metis, 1835–1890," *Historical Papers* 23(1): 120–144 (1988); and Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996, pp. 111–112.
9. Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History*, Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1984, pp. 107–109.
10. At treaty negotiations in 1876, Cree leader Mistawasis makes direct reference to the violence of the American west and the loss of the buffalo as reasons for his support of treaty in Canada. See Peter Erasmus, *Buffalo Days and Nights*, ed. Irene Spry, Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1976, p. 247.
11. Woolsey, journal, 13 January 1858, quoted in Hugh Aylmer Dempsey, ed., *Heaven Is Near the Rocky Mountains: The Journals and Letters of Thomas Woolsey, 1855–1869*, Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1989, p. 67.
12. Peter Erasmus discusses this history in Erasmus, *Buffalo Days and Nights*, chap. 7.
13. Basic information on this string of mission sites can be found in Leslie J. Hurt, "The Victoria Settlement 1862–1922," Occasional Paper no. 7, Historic Sites Service, Edmonton: Alberta Culture, 1979, pp. 5–7; John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984, p. 148; Raymond Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996, pp. 47–52.
14. As discussed below, Albert Lacombe's description of his mission at St. Paul des Cris reveals this strategic was chosen very clearly. See Albert Lacombe, "Memoirs of Father Lacombe," pp. 180–181. Typed manuscript, ACC 71-220, Box 57, File 6575, Provincial Archives of Alberta.
15. See Hurt, "The Victoria Settlement 1862–1922," pp. 5–7.
16. John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984, p. 148.
17. See Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, pp. 47–52.
18. See *ibid.*, pp. 50–52. Mario Giguère has traced the expansion of this mission ambulant strategy to the Métis, Cree and Blackfoot Buffalo hunting bands in the 1860s. See Mario Giguère, "Les Missionnaires Sauvages: Roman Catholic Missionaries and La Mission Ambulante with the Métis, Plains Cree and Blackfoot, 1840–1880," MA thesis, McGill University, 2009.
19. For evidence of the Rundle-Maskepetoon interactions, see entries from 1845, 1846, and 1847 in Hugh Dempsey, ed., *The Rundle Journals, 1840–1848*, Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1977.
20. From an indigenous perspective, it would seem that the missionaries were ideally placed to perform the role of diplomat and peacemaker because they were assumed to carry some kind of spiritual power that made them somewhat neutral in the eyes of both parties. For instance, in 1858, after Thomas Woolsey's horse was stolen during a raid on a Cree camp, the Blackfoot party immediately returned the animal, apparently not wanting to upset the missionary. Likewise, a Cree raid on a Blackfoot camp was supposedly halted when it was discovered that Albert Lacombe was in the camp. It was this mixture of fear and respect that gave the missionary a degree of neutrality; Cree leaders, eager to find new ways to broker peace with the Blackfoot in order to secure access to buffalo, sought to use this "neutrality" to their advantage by deploying missionaries as quasi-ambassadors and aids in their negotiations with the Blackfoot. See Thomas Woolsey, Journal, 29 March 1858, quoted in Woolsey, *Heaven Is Near the Rocky Mountains*, p. 69; and Lacombe, "Memoirs," pp. 180–181.
21. Woolsey to Editor of *The Christian Guardian*, 8 September 1862, quoted in Dempsey, *Heaven Is Near the Rocky Mountains*, pp. 137–138.
22. *Ibid.* Although Woolsey's text does not name Maskepetoon as this chief, it was almost certainly Maskepetoon. Speaking in 1862, the unnamed leader described here by Woolsey said he was fifty-four years old. According to Hugh Dempsey, Maskepetoon was born about 1807, making him about fifty-four or fifty-five in 1862. See Hugh Dempsey, "Maskepetoon," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, n.d.
23. Woolsey to Editor of *The Christian Guardian*, 8 September 1862, quoted in Dempsey, *Heaven Is Near the Rocky Mountains*, pp. 137–138.
24. For a brief history of these Methodist missions, see Hurt, "The Victoria Settlement 1862–1922," pp. 5–7.
25. As discussed later, George Colpitts has argued that by 1869 Cree leaders were often finding ways to use missionaries to adapt to the emerging environmental crisis on the plains. See George Colpitts, "The Methodists' Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley," *Great Plains Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2009): 3–27.

26. For a good discussion of leadership within plains bands, see Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004, p. 11.
27. John McDougall, *Saddle, Sled and Snowshoe: Pioneering on the Saskatchewan in the Sixties*, Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1896, p. 254.
28. *Ibid.*
29. John McDougall's account of this event makes no mention of any women in this party.
30. McDougall, *Saddle, Sled and Showshoe*, p. 255.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 266. On McDougall's involvement in sending "Indians" to eastern cities, see Tolly Bradford, "A Useful Institution: William Twin, 'Indianess,' and Banff National Park, c. 1860–1940," *Native Studies Review* 16, no. 2 (2005): 86.
37. McDougall, *Saddle, Sled and Showshoe*, pp. 262–263.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 269.
39. Hugh A. Dempsey, *Maskepetoon: Leader, Warrior, Peacemaker*, Surrey, BC: Heritage House, 2010, p. 6.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 220–221.
41. *Ibid.*
42. George McDougall, Journal, 1 September 1869, printed in *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1 May 1870, p. 100.
43. Lacombe, "Memoirs," p. 177.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 177–178.
47. Colpitts suggests that "revenge" for the killing of Maskepetoon was one of the reasons for this large hunt. See Colpitts, *op. cit.*, "The Methodists' Great 1869 Camp Meeting and Aboriginal Conservation Strategies in the North Saskatchewan River Valley," p. 18.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 12.
51. Budd, *Journal*, 28 February 1858, quoted in, Bradford, *Prophetic Identities*, pp. 98–99.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
53. Henry Budd, Journal, 1 March 1858, CMSA CC1/O/12. Budd's relationship with Mistawsis is discussed further in Bradford, *Prophetic Identities*, pp. 97–100.
54. James Nisbet to Rev. Alexander Mclean, Prince Albert, 1 January 1868, Charles P. de Volpi collection, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, E.45/3/119, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
55. Christa Nicholat, "Biography—HINES, JOHN—Volume XVI (1931–1940)—Dictionary of Canadian Biography," [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hines\\_john\\_16E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hines_john_16E.html) (accessed 6 July 2016)
56. John Hines, *The Red Indians of the Plains: Thirty Years' Missionary Experience in the Saskatchewan*, Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart, 1916, p. 180.
57. A critical analysis of Hines' texts and writing suggests Hines did indeed distort facts and events in certain ways, especially in his published autobiography. Particularly striking is Hines' tendency to exaggerate his influence over Cree leaders. See Daniel Johns, "Merging the Private Past with Public Perception: John Hines' Missionary Journals and The Red Indians of the Plains," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 45, no. 3 (2011): 108–136.
58. See Hines, *The Red Indians of the Plains*, p. 180.
59. For a brief description of these Métis settlements, see Bradford, *Prophetic Identities*, p. 104.
60. Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories: Including the Negotiations on Which They Are Based and Other Information Relating Thereto*, 1880; reprint, Toronto: Prospero Books, 2000, p. 185.
61. Edward Ahenakew, *Voices of the Plains Cree*, p. 52.
62. Erasmus in Dempsey, *Maskepetoon*, p. 173.
63. Howard Plotkin, "The Iron Creek Meteorite: The Curious History of the Manitou Stone and the Claim for Its Repatriation," *Earth Sciences History* 33, no. 1, 1 January 2014: 153.
64. Woolsey, Journal, 25 August 1860, in Dempsey, ed., *Heaven Is Near the Rocky Mountains*, p. 94.
65. For an overview of this history, see Alison Perry, "Iron Creek Meteorite/Manitou Stone: First Nations Consultation Report," Royal Albert Museum, 2004; and Plotkin, "The Iron Creek Meteorite."
66. George McDougall, Journal, 22 August 1869, printed in *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1 May 1870, p. 99.
67. *Ibid.*
68. J. R. Miller, *Big Bear (Mistahimusqua)*, Toronto: ECW Press, 1996, p. 26; and Hugh Dempsey, *Big Bear: The End of Freedom*, Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 2006, pp. 37–38.
69. Dempsey, *Big Bear*, p. 38.
70. For a summary of the interpretation that the removal of the stone was a strategic act on the part of the missionaries to undermine plains spirituality and "idolatry," see Plotkin, "The Iron Creek Meteorite," p. 158.
71. George McDougall, Journal, 22 August 1869, printed in *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1 May 1870, p. 99.
72. Plotkin, "The Iron Creek Meteorite," pp. 157–158.
73. Ahenakew, *Voices of the Plains Cree*, p. 55.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
75. Erasmus, *Buffalo Days and Nights*, p. 249.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
79. Quoted in Miller, *Big Bear*, pp. 78–79.
80. Miller, *Big Bear*, pp. 78–79.
81. J. R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009, p. 185. A particularly clear instance of internal divisions in another region is the Six Nations of the Grand River; see Sally Weaver, "The Iroquois: Consolidation of the Grand River Reserve, 1847–1875," in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, ed. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith, Toronto: Dundurn, 1994; Sally M. Weaver, "The Iroquois: The Grand River Reserve in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries, 1875–1945," in Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith, eds., Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994, pp. 182–212.
82. While both leaders shared the grievances of many Cree, both also refused to join Riel or other Cree in pursuing a militant response to government inaction. See Deanna Christensen, *Ahtahkakoop: The Epic Account of a Plains Cree Head Chief, His People, and Their Vision for Survival, 1816–1896*, Shell Lake, SK: Ahtahkakoop Publishing, 2000, chaps. 25 and 26.
83. Minutes of the meeting of the Saskatchewan Finance Committee of the CMS held at (Goshen) Prince Albert on Monday May 18<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm (1885), Church Missionary Society, Microfilm Reel #A113 quoted in *ibid.*, p. 515.
84. W. B. Cameron, *Blood Red the Sun*, Edmonton: Hurtig, 1977, quoted in Bob Beal and R. C. Macleod, *Prairie Fire: The 1885 North-West Rebellion*, Edmonton: Hurtig, 1984, p. 196.
85. *Ibid.*, pp. 196–197.



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