

HOME MISSION



The Residential School Controversy: A Special Report

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Let's face it. Only with your financial help can the Catholic missions scattered throughout our vast land bring God's lifegiving word to the men, women, and children in need of the Good News.

In our 83rd year of raising funds for the home missions, The Catholic Church Extension Society of Canada continues to depend on your generos-

ity. Please, look into your heart, and answer our call today.

Join us in our unique work by contributing \$10, \$15, \$20 or more to help the priests, brothers, sisters and lay people toiling in the home missions. This year the Extension Society has promised the missions more than \$2 million in assistance. This promise can only be met with your help. Please give.

Dear Father McGrory,

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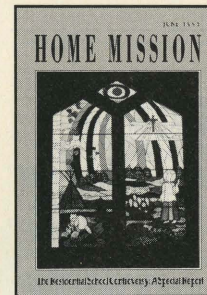
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**THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
EXTENSION SOCIETY OF CANADA**

67 Bond St., Suite 101, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1X5
(416) 863-9550



Front cover:

One of the stained glass windows of Christ the King Cathedral, Moosonee, Ontario. These windows were made by Detlef Gotzens who received his degree in stained glass at Cologne Cathedral, Germany. Mr. Gotzens has lived in Montreal for the past six years.

The sketches for these windows were designed by Keena, a Mohawk Indian of the Turtle Clan who also lives in Montreal.

Specializing in ceramic sculpture, Keena undertook these sketches under the direction of Desmarais-Robitaille of Montreal.

The windows were installed in Christ the King Cathedral in July 1987.

The window featured on our front cover depicts an evangelization scene and is dedicated to the Canadian Martyrs (1625-1649). It illustrates the apostolate of the first Jesuit missionaries in North America. Note the Indian village and the anonymous missionary, who represents all Jesuits, preaching to the whole of creation including the animal kingdom.

There are 17 windows in all. We have presented others elsewhere in this issue of Home Mission magazine.

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"Renewed Relationship"

The question of "native residential schools" for decades has racked any discussion of the Catholic Church's ministry with the aboriginal peoples. Many speak of the pain of those years in school, a pain that is even passed down to grandchildren, a profound wound that simply will not go away. No one active in pastoral work among them has been able to avoid hearing accusations of cultural insensitivity, to put it mildly; of physical, psychological, and even sexual abuse. Now the question has come into even mainstream discussion, and some of you have asked us to comment.

Church-run schools go as far back as the 1830's in Ontario, and much earlier in Quebec, where the Jesuit, St. Anthony Daniel, tried to start a seminary for First Nation aspirants to the priesthood in the 1640's and St Marguerite Bourgeois founded a school in Montreal in the 1650's. But they only became official government policy in Canada in 1842 after the Bagot Commission

reported. At that time they were welcomed, and even partially funded by the First Nations, who really wanted further education. But as the schools began to be seen as assimilationist tools, as means to destroy their culture and impose that of the dominant peoples, they were rejected by the First Nations. When day schools did not "work", because the children on going home assumed again their own culture, the government then encouraged residential schools, even though they were much more expensive to run. They were funded by the government but controlled by the churches. All the churches responded positively to the government policy . . . all except some Baptist groups with their traditional hostility to cooperating with the state. The Churches saw in them an opportunity to both evangelize and "civilize" the aboriginal people. Soon they were competing with each other for students. By 1902, of 283 schools funded by Ottawa, 100 were under Catholic auspices.

They accomplished enormous good. Some of the First Nations people are the first to say that.

Chief among these was the passing on of the Gospel, received with faith and generosity. And who of us would dare to judge those missionaries, men and women, proceeding so generously according to their own lights? In fact, there are nine still in existence, seven in Saskatchewan, now run by First Nations personnel, many of whom were educated at native residential schools. They have blossomed into marvelous centres of learning for whole communities. One religious order has even received more than one request to restore some form of the residential school! What replaced them has not had universal success either.

But the schools suffered enormous defects. For one thing, they were never adequately funded. The religious orders especially, with their own sweat and blood, tried to make up for that. In fact the Oblates and Grey Nuns set up schools out of their own meagre resources in the North West before it came under Canadian jurisdiction. The sisters, brothers and fathers didn't really live that much better than the

young people. The schools were products of their time, when to "spare the rod was to spoil the child", and it was thought best to prepare their students for the "inevitability" of assimilation by enabling them to speak English and French, and providing job skills. All schools of the day were really ordered to making "good citizens".

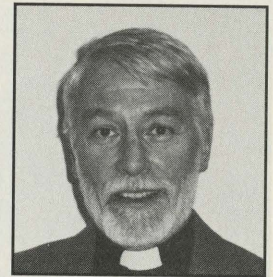
Nevertheless the criticism is valid enough for the Catholic bishops and religious leaders involved to have apologized recently for the harm done. They promised to set up diocesan commissions whereby those harmed can give testimony in the hope of encouraging a healing process and so hopefully move into what those leaders called "a new relationship".

What happened in the schools, in all its complexity, was an effect, a symptom of the control exercised by the dominant society over the host nations. They will forgive us. They have already forgiven us so much. But we in the dominant culture have much to do by way of restitution.

Were there any prophetic voices from

within the Church, apart from the parents and children and their leadership, which cried out at the cruelty of forced separation of parents and children for lengthy periods (for it became a criminal offence for them to refuse custody of their children), a separation that contributed to, among other things, the lessening of parenting skills, a profound disservice to the family? We have not been able to find any.

And most important of all, how can such a mistake be avoided in the present? We have no right to presume that our generation is any more free from error than our predecessors. For instance, how seriously do Canadian Catholics take Pope John Paul's repeated calls for self-government for the original peoples, with a land base able to provide a viable economy? But what will probably be learned after all the listening and discerning is that the root of the cultural insensitivity . . . some prefer to call it genocide . . . the physical cruelty, and other horrors, was the power which church and state held over the aboriginal peoples. What we really have to do is to find ways to share that power. The aboriginal



Fr. Barry McGrory

peoples will make their own mistakes to be sure, but knowing themselves and their needs better than any one else, surely they will be far fewer. As one of them said, we wouldn't be able to use an airplane today if someone had not trusted some student pilots to fly solo.

FR. BARRY MCGRORY
PRESIDENT



A number of parishioners gather as Lisieux's old church is destroyed by fire

I enclose photos of Lisieux's old church (destroyed by fire).

I will remember you later too as the church is completed—also the Church Extension Society. The church is coming along good—painting and flooring going in. We hope to be in by Easter—less than five months after the destruction.

Of course we will be in before it is completely finished (kitchen and sacristy to be completed).

I wish to thank you sincerely and the Church Extension Society.

Prayers certainly for you as we celebrate in the new place.

Father Murton Miller
Rockglen, Saskatchewan

(Note: the Society made a \$10,000.00 grant toward the new church in March 1991.)

I want to thank you most kindly for approving a grant of \$12,000 for my missions; it is greatly appreciated.

This year for the three Christmas Eve Masses Fr. Ghislain Gaudet has kindly accepted to come and say them. It is becoming more and more difficult to find a priest. For one of my missions it will be the only Mass that they will have had all year round!

Sister Raymonde Arcand

Sister Dorothy Bob, SSA, of our Native Ministry Team in the Okanagan, requested that I send you a copy of their Annual Report which I am enclosing.

Sister has already expressed her gratitude for the allocation of \$10,000.00 to the Native Ministry Team and for \$5,000.00 to the B.C. Western

Amerindian Conference, but I would like to add my own appreciation. With limited funds it would be almost impossible for us to consider keeping such a team in the field. But with such generous support we are encouraged to go forward with this ministry, even if at times the visible results seem minimal.

Still there are signs of encouragement. With heightened interest in and commitment toward determining their own political, cultural and social destiny, some of the people on the Reserves see the need well. It is a hopeful sign and we must encourage and even challenge greater initiative in this regard.

Peter J. Mallon
Bishop of Nelson, B.C.

I wish to congratulate you for publishing the article by Fr. M. Stogre, S.J., "John Paul's Compass for the Road Ahead." It is a powerful presentation of the Holy Father's clear statements pointing out to Canadians the right of our Native people. And the article comes at the right time. I trust that these papal statements have already been or will be presented to the Commission presently searching for ideas for our new constitution.

J.S. Loftus
St. Joseph's Church
Grimsby, Ontario

It is with great joy and gratitude that I accept your donations of \$1,000.00 for the needs of our Catechetical Centre and of another \$1,000.00 for the project on adult faith sessions in the local Christian communities of the Lower North Shore. This last project has been received in our parishes with great interest, and the enthusiastic participation of parish members is proof of this.

Please convey my thanks and those of all who share in the goodness of these activities made possible by the donations of your benefactors. Our prayers accompany you and the people who participate in your wonderful Society for a renewal and an increase of God's love in their personal lives. All is gift from our Creator and from people who continue the Creator's work among us.

Henriette Essiambre, RSR
Conseillère en éducation
chrétienne
Lourdes de Blanc Sablon
centre catéchétique
Duplessis, Québec



Lay missionaries group at Nelson House, Manitoba

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to our benefactors for the grant of \$3000.00 we received.

This will be used primarily to help our youth explore and discover their faith. We hope to provide for them opportunities such as retreats and special gatherings that will teach, affirm and support their participation within our local church community.

Also, this grant will be used to continue our adult leadership catechesis.

We want to assure our benefactors and the Canadian Church Extension Society of our prayers.

Patricia Ricciotti and Shirley Fowler
Lay Missionaries
St. Patrick's Church
R.C. Mission
Nelson House, Manitoba

I am sorry I was unable to answer your letter sooner. I thank you sincerely for accepting and giving me the amount I had requested, of \$10,000. I accept your offer to pay this in small amounts at different times during the year. Your generosity will allow me to continue my work here in Ebb & Flow. Your concern has touched me deeply!

We Grey Nuns celebrated with joy and gratitude our long-awaited moment, the canonization of our foundress St. Marguerite d'Youville! Marguerite understood so well and saw the suffering Christ through the sick, the elderly, the hurting; more and more she is challenging me. Yes, Christ is still among us in the suffering,

Embarking upon a "Sensitive, Troubling and Painful Task"

*Address by Alberta
Native leader Harold
Cardinal at the
opening session of the
Canadian Conference
of Catholic Bishops
meeting on
residential schools
(Queen's House
Renewal Centre,
Saskatoon,
March 13, 1991)*

You have asked me to join you this evening as you commence a conference which has the task of assessing the impact of your past relationships with the Indian peoples of this country.

You embark upon a task which is sensitive, troubling and painful.

You have set for yourselves three objectives:

1. You want to examine past relationships between Native and non-Native recognizing both the positive and negative aspects of this relationship. You have indicated that "you want to take ownership of the relationship."
2. You want to analyze the present situation resulting from the allegations of abuse.
3. You want to vision possibilities for a new relationship with Native people.

I agreed to be here, in part, because the request came from my good friend, Father Jacques Johnson from the Oblate order located in the province of Alberta. I remembered the love and brotherly support that Jacques and his colleagues provided to us at a time when my family was experiencing great pain, as we struggled to cope with the long and painful suffering of my late mother.

I remembered as well the many hours we spent discussing the opportunities which exist for the emergence of a new relationship between organized Christian churches and the Native peoples in Canada.

I am sure that you are aware of the fact that I did not come tonight as a political representative of the Indian people of Canada. Indian People in Canada are well and ably represented by their elected political representatives. It is with these representatives with whom you must dialogue.

It is my hope that my participation tonight will assist in facilitating meaningful and productive dialogue between yourselves and the official representatives of the Native community in Canada.

*The historic relationship between
European natives and the Indian
people*

No review of relationships between European churches and the Indian peoples of Canada can be conducted in a vacuum or conducted solely in the context of Church/Indian relations. While specific aspects of Church/Indian relations must be scrutinized and evaluated, an evaluation to be meaningful must be done within a larger context.

Keeping that in mind, I wish to review in a general way the historic relationship between European nations and Indian peoples and concurrently review the relationship in that time frame between our peoples and organized Christianity.

It is now almost 500 years since the first European set foot on the shores of the Americas. His arrival brought to the lands and peoples of the Americas the introduction and implementation of what is known as the doctrine of discovery.

Through the doctrine of discovery, European nations believed that they had the God-given right to assert sovereign claim and jurisdiction over all lands and territories



Siksika Chief

Because European nations did not recognize Indians as human beings, killing Indians, wiping out Indian communities, taking Indians as slaves, or capturing Indians for examination and experimentation in Europe presented no more moral dilemma than the killing, capture and experimentation of any animal found indigenous to the Americas.

outside Europe by nothing more than the mere acts of discovering a territory and planting the flag of their respective sovereign monarchs.

At point of first contact, in 1492, European nations were of the firm conviction and belief that the Americas contained no human beings.

The Indians whom the explorers met were looked upon as being no more and no different than the wild animals sighted on these new lands.

It was at that time beyond the realm of European comprehension that there could exist, in the Americas, human beings capable of possessing any kind of individual human rights, much less capable of possessing any kind of sovereign rights.

Because European nations did not recognize Indians as human beings, killing Indians, wiping out Indian communities, taking Indians as slaves, or capturing Indians for examination and experimentation in Europe presented no more moral dilemma than the killing, capture and experimentation of any animal found indigenous to the Americas.

Even within the church there arose a long and bitter debate as to whether Indians were human beings and whether they possessed souls similar to that which Europeans were believed to possess.

It was not until 1537 that the pontiff of Rome issued a Papal Bull to the nations of Europe declaring that Indians were indeed human beings possessing human souls and that, as human beings, they were entitled to treatment better than that accorded to animals.

The Papal Bull identified some of the human rights which Indians possessed and which European nations were expected to respect. It became the basis upon which initial European recognition emerged for the concept now known as "aboriginal rights."

The Papal Bull of 1537, however, contained some important qualifications or limitations on the level of recognition which was to be accorded to the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

It declared that, while Indians possessed human souls, those souls did not possess the salvation inherent in the knowledge of God or, more importantly, in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In so declaring, the Papal Bull relegated Indian peoples to a position of racial and spiritual inferiority relative to the peoples of Europe.

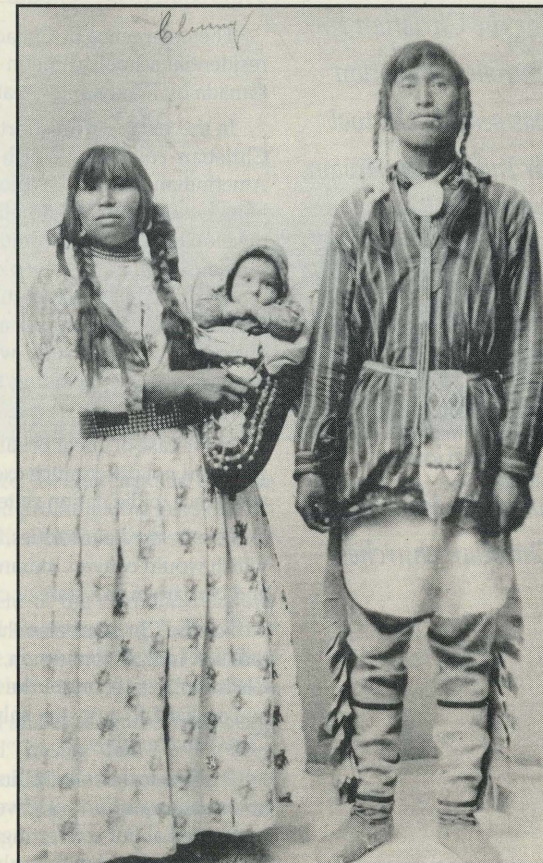
This definition resulted in the categorization of Indians as people who were pagan, heathen savages or, if they showed any evidence of spiritual knowledge, as people who practised devil worship.

For the secular European authorities, Indians were cast as uncivilized savages or barbarians.

The secular and religious depictions of who Indians were or were not served as the basis for the rationale which defined the state of Indians as being in continual need of spiritual salvation by the religious authorities of Europe and/or the civilizing effects of European societies.

It was these assumptions which guided the evolution and development of any European undertaking involving Indians. As long as the assumptions existed, any manner of treatment involving Indians could be rationalized, justified and legitimized.

To this day, it is these assumptions which still unfortunately continue to provide the primary prism through which Indians are viewed by the rest of Canadian society.



Young Siksika couple and child
(Cluny, Alberta)

In earlier times, these assumptions provided the convergence of state and church interests. It found expression in the initial colonization of Canada by France and Great Britain.

The residential schools

The emergence in Canada of schools now known as residential schools came in tandem with colonization of Canada by France and Great Britain.

In the 1600's, in an effort to build a viable French and Christian colony in North America, the education of Amerindian children was promoted with a view of "France-izing" them and eventually assimilating them to the developing French community. The missionaries, and religious women, and few pious lay persons were assigned the task of converting, acculturating, Christianizing and France-izing Algonquian and Iroquoian children. The objectives were pursued with the founding of various kinds of schools including the introduction of boarding schools.

In the case of Great Britain and ultimately Canada, the goals did not differ much except perhaps for the expected allegiance to the nation state in question.

For the civil authorities, education was seen as a tool which would convert Indians from their state of savagery and barbarism to a state of civilization.

For the Christian churches education was seen as the tool for Indian conversion, a tool which would enable Christianity to exorcize the savage barbarism of Indians and replace it with the salvation as conceptualized by Christian churches.

Early on in the colonization process, European religious and secular authorities gave up any hope that they had harboured about converting and civilizing adult Indians. They concluded that the only way they could accomplish their goal was through the young children.

And so, from the 1600's down through the 1900's, the goal became that of taking Indian children from their communities and families and maintaining them in isolation so that the "corrupting influence of being Indian" would not interfere with the process initiated by the authorities.

For the Christian churches education was seen as the tool for Indian conversion, a tool which would enable Christianity to exorcize the savage barbarism of Indians and replace it with the salvation as conceptualized by Christian churches.

However, secular and religious authorities were not satisfied with the pace of conversion and civilization because of the resistance they were encountering from the families of the children.



To overcome the resistance, the churches and the state collaborated in designing and promulgating laws (Indian Act) which would force Indian parents to give up their children.

Feast of the Sun (Siksika, Cluny, Alberta)

Such was the commitment of the civil and religious authorities to civilizing and Christianizing Indians that through their laws it became a criminal offence for Indian parents to deny custody of their children to these authorities.

For many of us who lived and experienced what being "civilized and Christianized" meant, time has not been able to diminish the pain, humiliation and sense of loss that the laws of Canada, together with the religious and secular authorities, imposed upon us.

From the day we entered the residential schools at age 7, or in some cases earlier, to the day we left those schools at age 16, we were subjected to a continuous and constant process of brainwashing which taught us to be ashamed of ourselves as Indians, of our language, our Indian beliefs, our culture, our families, our relatives and our people.

More often than not we were called dirty little Indians, *maudits sauvages*, ungrateful savages, etc.

It is time, in Canada, that we lay to rest centuries-old theories of racial superiority which give to non-aboriginal peoples the unfettered right to dispossess the land, the personal and collective identity of Indian peoples in Canada.

Many did not survive the experience of the residential schools. They died before they were old enough to leave. For those that did survive, many who have since died have taken with them to their graves the scars and the hurts with which they emerged. For those who lived, it has become increasingly evident that the social dysfunctions created by the residential schools continue to be felt years after the closure of the last one.

The enormity of the damage that has been done by the state and Christian churches to Indian peoples collectively and individually is yet to be measured and fully comprehended.

Coming to terms with the legacy

You are now being asked to come to terms which this legacy has wrought.

Some may wonder why this is now necessary, in light of the fact that the residential school system has ceased to operate, and what relevance that legacy has with the present and future interests of the Indian people, the state and the churches.

The answer is simple. Where you left off, others have taken over. Instead of residential schools we now have governmental welfare agencies apprehending our children, taking our children away from our communities and in some instances removing them from Canada altogether.

We have been witness to public inquiries in different regions of the country, seeking to find out why young persons in custody commit suicide.

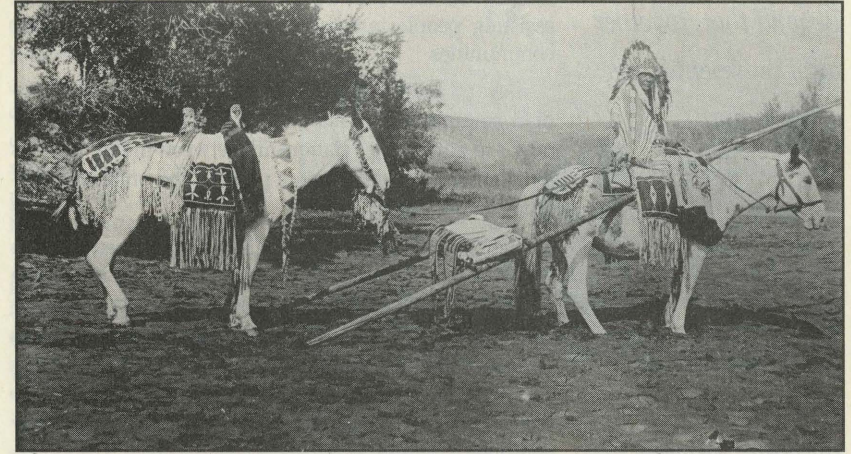
We find ourselves in the same situation. The state insists that through its laws it has prior claim to our children.

It is time that once and for all we bring this cycle to an end.

The call for inquiries by Indian leadership must be heeded. The proposal put forth by The Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs and The Assembly of First Nations must form the basis for a broad and comprehensive review.

I urge that you respond positively to those initiatives.

It is time, in Canada, that we lay to rest centuries-old theories of racial superiority which give to non-aboriginal peoples the unfettered right to dispossess the land, the personal and collective identity of Indian peoples in Canada.



Siksika life (Cluny, Alberta)

It is time that Canada be held accountable for the manner in which it has discharged its legal, moral, and trust responsibilities for the custody of Indian children which it appropriated onto itself.

It is time that religious institutions own up to and account for the responsibility which they carry for the way in which they exercised their custodial responsibilities for the Indian children entrusted to their care by the state.

It is time that Canada and the Christian churches formally renounce the racist principles which deny to Indians full recognition due to them as full and complete members of the human race and of the family of man.

Let the process start with a thorough, careful, objective and measured assessment of the damage and injury which has visited the Indian peoples of this country as a result of actions undertaken by state and religious institutions.

Let the assessment proceed, fully cognisant and respectful of the rights of victims and accused.

Beyond that, together with representatives of the Indian community, identify the principles which will or ought to govern the relationship between Indian peoples and the state; between Indian peoples and organized religious institutions.

Let the assessment begin so that we can begin to identify the human and fiscal resources which will be necessary to begin the process of healing the damage sustained by the Indian people and their communities.

Let that assessment begin so that we can begin to identify the time that will be required for the process of assisting people in reconstructing their lives and their communities.

Beyond that, together with representatives of the Indian community, identify the principles which will or ought to govern the relationship between Indian peoples and the state; between Indian peoples and organized religious institutions.

In 1537, the Roman Catholic Church established a dogma which sought to limit the excesses practised under the auspices of the European doctrine of discovery.

In the 1990's, let the heads and spiritual leaders of the various Christian churches lead the way to removing surviving legal dogmas from the doctrine of discovery which dispossess our people of their lands, their sovereignty and their identity.

Let the spiritual leaders of the Christian churches, through the international community and within Canada, help lead the way to enabling the government of Canada, the government of Quebec and the provincial governments of Canada in recognizing the unique sovereign rights possessed by the Indian nations within the country.

Let the Christian churches and their leadership aggressively and purposefully support the endeavours of Indian leadership in securing the constitutional recognition of the inherent paramount jurisdiction of Indian governments over all matters affecting their First Nations. As part of that process, let the Christian churches and their leadership lend their weight to securing inviolable rights for Indian families, parents and children so that never again will Indian communities and Indian parents be forced to see their children forcibly removed from them by other authorities.

In the international arena, let the Christian churches and their leadership join forces with Indian leadership in formulating international conventions which will recognize the full and complete religious freedoms of the Indian peoples.

Within Canada, let the Christian churches and their leaders work with the aboriginal leadership in developing and designing constitutional changes which will guarantee, protect and recognize the fundamental religious freedoms of aboriginal peoples, so that those freedoms are no longer considered as existing only at the pleasure and convenience of the state.

Within your religious communities, promote the recognition of Indian spirituality on the same basis as your churches recognize the existence of other faiths throughout the world, and based on that recognition begin the dialogue with our spiritual leaders, so long neglected.

Let the dialogue begin so that your membership and their people might begin the process of sharing the knowledge, the teachings, the values inherent in each of our religious traditions.

And finally, let us all take the opportunity, though painfully presented, to recommit ourselves to building renewed relationships based on the gentlest, the kindest and most caring of our religious traditions so that in each of our own ways we can fulfil to the utmost the obligations we carry to our Father and to each other as members of the family of man.

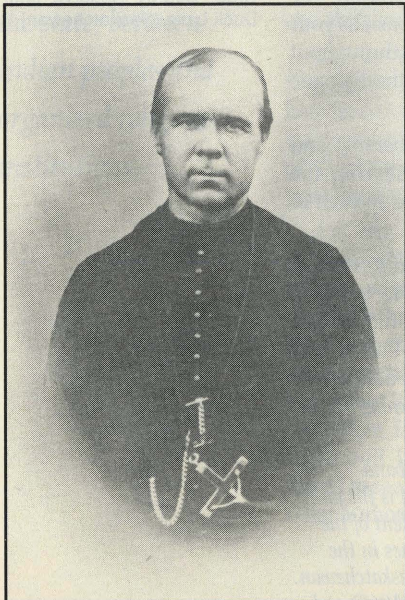
Harold Cardinal is a member of the Sucker Creek band (Alberta) which he served as chief in 1982-83, and is the father of six children. He has served nine terms as president of the Indian Association of Alberta. Currently, he teaches in the Native Affairs Department of the University of Saskatchewan. He has authored two books: The Unjust Society (1969) and The Rebirth of Canada's Indians (1977).



Cree, Beardy Reserve near Duck Lake (Saskatchewan)

Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School Lebret, Saskatchewan

Nearly every week someone calls me to ask for help in researching the history of Indian residential schools. After getting references, callers ask, "How did you as a college history teacher in B.C. come to research the history of Indian Schools in Western Canada?" I answer, "Because it is my history too."



Father Joseph Huggonard, O.M.I.

St. Ann's Academy, New Westminster, B.C., which I attended during its centennial year of 1965, originally took Indian and White girls as pupils. When White parents objected in 1868, the Sisters of St. Ann took the Indian girls up the Fraser River to St. Mary's Mission to establish a boarding school there parallel to the Oblate boys school.

At university I decided to research what happened to the Indian pupils afterward and found that the Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School, later known as Lebret Indian Residential School, was the model Roman Catholic Indian school for Western Canada. The story of this school during the lifetime of its founding principal, Oblate Father Joseph Huggonard, shows how it became renowned among Indians and non-Indians alike.

Father Joseph Huggonard, O.M.I.: Mission Boarding School to Indian Industrial School

By the mid-1870s, Joseph Huggonard, O.M.I., a young missionary from France, had begun a mission boarding school for boys at the mission of St. Florent near Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. Father Huggonard had lived and travelled with the Cree, Saulteaux, Assiniboine and Sioux before

starting the school. He had learned their languages and seen their buffalo hunting lifestyle in the time before they signed Treaty Number Four or moved to reserves. Up to that time no formal schools for Native children existed. Rather they followed parents and especially grandparents in their daily and seasonal rounds to learn survival skills and heritage.

However, Father Huggonard and Oblate missionary bishop superiors knew that Canada's acquisition of the Hudson's Bay Company lands in the West and the coming of railways and settlement would change Native lives. They knew, as did the Native leaders, that the buffalo were declining in numbers and would soon no longer be a source of food and clothing. The Treaties made with Canada included provision for government funded schools. Government and missionary planners agreed that boarding schools on the American and Eastern Canadian pattern were needed to "immerse" the Indian youth in White "Christian Civilization."

School Curriculums and Attitudes

By 1884 Father Huggonard's mission boarding school became the federally-funded and Oblate-managed Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School. There the Oblate fathers and brothers would teach boys, and the Grey Nuns of Montreal would instruct girls. They would follow the federal government industrial school program: English and the three R's for half the day; then trades, farming and housework for the other half. The three brick school buildings housed residences, classrooms, shops, hospital and chapel. The school had its own farm.

Reports to the government show photographs of Indian pupils in the classrooms, sewing room or shops; or with the brass band or cricket team. Other pictures con-

trast model Victorian pupils in starched uniforms with aged parents in traditional Native costumes.

Father Huggonard, O.M.I., and the Grey Nuns made their own interpretation of the government regulation to limit Native visits to the school to the childrens' "parents." The French priest and the French-Canadian sisters took "parents" to mean the whole group of relatives, not just the mother and father of a particular pupil. Thus the missionaries encouraged family ties and Native cultural continuity as well as evangelization of the whole community. When the tribes arrived at Qu'Appelle Indian School the Oblates and Grey Nuns proudly displayed the students reciting catechism and prayers in Cree and Sioux.

Besides teaching religion in Native languages and encouraging links with traditional family groups, Huggonard was notable for asking the Grey Nuns to teach new pupils first in Cree then in English—a pioneer effort in ESL or English as a Second Language programs. Furthermore he himself attempted the development of Cree-English dual language readers and geography texts.

Father Huggonard's concern for pupils leaving the school and going back to reserve life led him to work with government agents and principals of Protestant mission schools at File Hills and Regina to develop an expupil colony at File Hills.

Limitations from "Outside" and from "Within"

Roman Catholic Indian school principals like Father Huggonard were limited in what they could do. Government policies shifted after the Liberals came to power federally in 1896. There were moves to cut budgets and centralize control. Protestant and



Qu'Appelle Indian School pupils and their "parents" (c.1915)

Catholic principals had always been short of staff and funds to run mission schools. Now more than ever they had to compete against each other for pupils in order to get per capita grants. Federal officials would not always give grants for orphaned children missionaries took in as these children might not be registered on the band list. Over time federal government stinginess turned the half day of practical instruction into half day of work the pupils had to do to help support the school. The government changed the name of the school from "Industrial" to "Residential" symbolizing the cutback in offerings and funding. Younger missionaries arriving from Eastern Canada did not know Indian languages and did not always learn them, especially as they were pressured by increasing federal regulations to use English only in school.

From the beginning of the Catholic mission school at Qu'Appelle, the Native response had limited what Father Hugonnard and his staff could do. The Indian parents did appreciate their use of Native languages, their organization of tribal gatherings, their teaching of basic literacy and farming skills. They did send orphaned and ill children to the missionaries' care. But Native parents did not like the missionary stress on religious conversion especially in combination with so-called "civilization" or training in the White Victorian way of life. Some parents objected to the teaching of "women's work" such as tailoring to young men. After the Riel Rebellion of 1885 others told Father Hugonnard that they feared school exercise drills were an attempt to turn their children into soldiers for the Whites. Parents concerned about health conditions on the re-

serve and at the school, particularly the problem of tuberculosis for which there was little treatment, were reluctant to send their children to Qu'Appelle Indian Industrial School or to reserve day schools.

Positive Responses from Southern Saskatchewan Native Peoples

It is interesting to reflect on how the Native peoples of southern Saskatchewan responded to the Oblate and Grey Nuns efforts at Qu'Appelle Indian School between 1884 and the death of Father Hugonnard in 1917. They accepted certain aspects, for example the use of the school as a religious and social gathering place, the teams and brass bands as community representatives at local fairs. The roots of the Native parents' organization of their own secondary school in the old Lebret Indian Residential School in 1973 and the Qu'Appelle Pow Wows lie in the history of the missionaries' work for the Native communities.

It is particularly ironic to note that the latter celebrations of Native culture grew out of the turn of the century revival of traditional Indian dancing which were aided by Qu'Appelle ex-pupils like Daniel Kennedy. He used knowledge of the Canadian legal system to help his elders petition for their right to freedom of religion—to attend "feasts, sports and thanksgiving promenades."

Daniel Kennedy's autobiography, *The Recollections of an Assiniboine Chief*, describes how he was "lassoed, roped and taken to the Government School at Lebret" in 1886 at age twelve. He found school routines and the cutting of his long braided hair

shocking. But Father Hugonnard's genial personality won Daniel Kennedy as a friend. Furthermore, Kennedy made a point of acknowledging that it was this priest and Father Lacombe who arranged for Indian boys to attend St. Boniface College free of charge. That helped him get Indian agency employment—at least until he got involved in his Native elders' struggles to hold traditional dances against government regulations.

Other Qu'Appelle ex-pupils' memories show appreciation for Catholic missionary efforts as well as Indian cultural continuity along with conversion to Catholicism. Anthropologist James H. Howard recorded Martha Tawiyaka, aged 88 in 1972, in his *The Canadian Sioux* as saying: "I went to school at Lebret when I was seven. I stayed there twelve years. I like it there with the sisters. One time they took me with them to Winnipeg to a religious retreat. No one was allowed to speak. I liked it. I decided that I wanted to be a Grey Nun, but my father came and took me out of school when he heard of this." Martha Tawiyaka also noted she could speak Cree and French as well as Sioux. She learned French from the Grey Nuns and Cree from the Cree girls at Lebret School.

These memories show how Catholic Indian residential schools like Qu'Appelle or Lebret became a part of Saskatchewan Native history. They helped preserve Native cultures and languages. They educated Indian children about one another and thus helped generate modern Indian movements and cultural activities.

*Jacqueline Gresko
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Andy Paull: "Champion of Indians Everywhere"

Andy Paull died on July 28, 1959. That very day, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker sent his condolences, the Honourable Ellen Fairclough telegraphed that Andy would be sorely missed — that he had been a great fighter for his people for all of his life — and Premier W.A.C. Bennett of British Columbia expressed his sorrow to the family. Also that same day the Vancouver Province paid him the following tribute somehow summarizing his life's achievements:

"Indian chiefs from B.C. and other parts of Canada will be here Saturday to pay final tribute to Andy Paull, the champion of Indians everywhere . . .

"Said W.S. Arneil, Indian Commissioner for B.C.:

"Andy Paull was a tremendous, capable fighter for what he considered were the rights of his people throughout all of Canada. He was tireless in his efforts to improve their living conditions and to gain for them equality in citizenship."

"He appeared on their behalf in courts across the land, before legislative bodies and before federal committees of the Senate and House of Commons. He spent his entire life to advance his people.

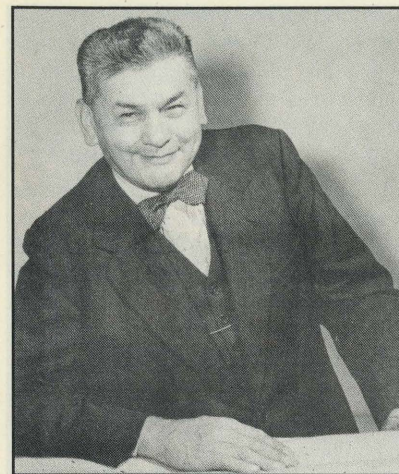
"He was extremely well-informed and had studied all legislation ever written which affected his people; also various land agreements and treaties entered into with various tribes." . . .

Educated in a Residential School

Andy went to school and his purpose in going was not to learn how to become a white man. He went there to learn how to use the tools of the white man, and with these tools to speak for and fight for the rights of his people. Chief Dan George reiterated this many times. Andy was selected by the chiefs to go to school, in order to become the spokesman and voice of the native people. Andy himself felt strongly within him a call, a call that he had a messianic role to play. This role in no way involved the surrender of his native rights, the assimilation of his people, the waiving of even one title of the law governing these rights. His role was simply to bring more benefits to his race lying stripped and naked by the roadside.

Reasons for Residential Schools

Much has been said in recent times about the residential school for Indians. Much of what has been said has been derogatory. Perhaps it would be well to see what kind of school Andy went to and the philosophy that brought the residential school system into being. The first reason for schooling was simply pragmatry. The Indian leaders realized that education was the basis of white society, and if one was to compete



Andy Paull

one was to have the same tools as the white man whose wisdom and know-how the Indians of that time stood in awe of.

A boarding type of institution was necessary because the native people were engaged in work that required them to move about. Logging and fishing and berry-picking and cannery work ... these were employments that took them away from home and forced them to be migratory during certain seasons. The only answer to this was a boarding situation for the children. Indeed boarding schools were looked upon as the ultimate experiment in education of the time by the white people. White men who could afford it sent their sons and daughters to boarding schools and to finishing schools.

The school at North Vancouver was designed from the beginning to be a school solely for Indian children, as it was so designed in some other areas as well. But the Mission residential school at Mission City, B.C., began as an integrated school in 1863. One cannot help but smile when one recalls

the fuss and publicity of the program of integration begun there in 1964. The latter was hailed in the local press as a new and bold experiment, whereas it was simply a return to what had been initiated over one hundred years before.

The Church Becomes Involved

It must be clearly understood that these schools were built by the joint efforts of the Indian people and the Oblate missionaries in the case of the Roman Catholic church. The Indian people cut timber for the construction of the building and sold timber as well to raise money. The Oblates begged for money in the east and in the old country and the brothers laboured to construct them with the help of the Indian people. The point is the Indians wanted schools badly enough to make considerable sacrifices for them. It must be understood that in the nineteenth century and in the preceding centuries education was largely in the hands of the church. The fact that Indian schools came under the church's influence was accepted without question. . . . It was rightly felt that the children would be more relaxed with their own people, and could proceed down the avenues of learning at a pace more adjusted to their capabilities. Everyone might say it is to the credit of the churches that they strode into the field of Indian education with vigour and faith and with next to no financial help from local or federal governments; that they undertook the construction and maintenance of boarding schools in a land that had hardly begun to climb the ladder of affluence — where most church supporters were still hewers of logs and drawers of water.

Many years passed before the Federal Government acknowledged its obligation toward Indian education and dipped a parsimonious hand into the public coffers

of Ottawa, and came up with a grant of thirty-five dollars per year per pupil. Can you believe it! Thirty-five dollars even in those days would have to be spread very thinly to cover clothing, food, shelter, and teachers' salaries for a whole academic year! Had not educators freely given of their time and talent or worked for less than subsistent pay, these schools could not have continued. No one should underestimate the contribution of the churches made to the cause of Indian education. It came at a time when the Indian people were being fleeced and left to wander about without covering like lambs in the springtime. At a time when the Indian nation was being compressed on little strips of land... "the vanishing Amerindian" ... at a time when nothing was done to lead him into the new society ... the people who represented the churches did try. And it is to their credit that they did. . . .

The Ryerson Curriculum

All Indian schools of the time followed the same general program. It was a program devised and implemented by Egerton Ryerson who was the Superintendent General for Education in Ontario in the years preceding Confederation. Industrial schools for Indians were established by him in Upper Canada. It should be noted that the word "industrial" would best describe the institution in today's vocabulary.

Western thought looked on agriculture as the basis of all worthwhile cultures, and only agriculture could bring about a stable society. This had been true of Asia and Europe, and no one doubts that the lowly kernel of corn and other plants created the complex society of the Aztec and Mayan societies on this continent. Although a drift from this basis was begun during the industrial revolution, no one seemed to have

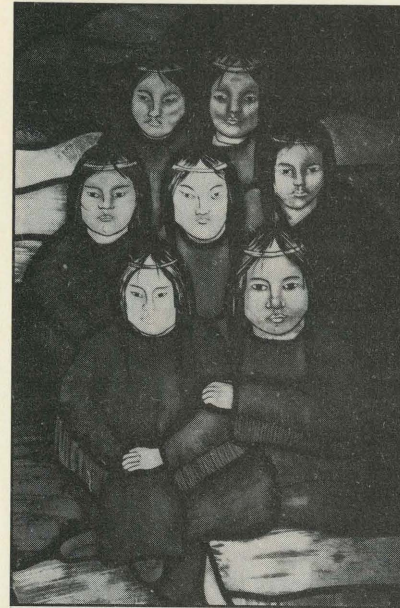
been aware of how profound it was or of its celerity. And it was taken for granted that agriculture had a civilizing influence on nations in the minds of the great colonisers of that day who needed the mantle of civilization more than the lowly Indian.

The type of school and curriculum designed by Ryerson was copied by B.C. and the prairie provinces. We can suppose it was based on the thinking and philosophy that had sparked western culture, which culture at that time was experiencing a glow of rampant triumphalism.

So the conclusion was to let all Indian people be exposed to agriculture's stabilizing influence. Another force that had contributed so much to western culture was Christianity. It was obvious, therefore, if you reinforced agriculture with large gobs of religion plus a few verses of "God Save the Queen" you were thereby compounding a force with a thrust-potential of unbelievable magnitude.

A Day in the Life of a Residential School

Mister Ryerson drew up an horarium for the Indian schools he established which would have put a strain on a trappist monastery. The children greeted the day at five in the morning at which time they were exposed to a half hour of morning prayer, after which the needs of the farm animals were looked to. Sometime after seven in the morning they broke fast with a large bowl of Scottish porridge, and surely in the whole wide world there is nothing that can so devastatingly fracture one's fast as can a bowl of porridge. After breakfast the house cleaning chores were done, and thence to class. Religion, reading and writing, arithmetic and singing were taught. In the afternoon the boys went to work on the farm,



Detail from stained glass window, Christ the King Cathedral, Moosonee, Ontario

there to drink in the civilizing and stabilizing influence of farm work, which in those days was simply back-breaking, mind-numbing manual labour. Supper was at six. Then, after a short recreation, night prayers were held in common in the chapel and so to bed. . . .

Emphasizing Agriculture and Academics

Canada as a whole had always held the city of Toronto in contempt and has expressed its feeling by dubbing it "Hogtown," but in the end English Canada has accepted Toronto's influence in both the industrial and cultural fields. People in both fields tend to gravitate to this centre which can offer them most in opportunity and can provide for

them a pad from which to launch their programs of expansion. And so from Mr. Ryerson's office came the plan and philosophy for the residential school. Mr. Ryerson's office was, of course, situated in Toronto, sometimes referred to as Yorktown.

On the basis mentioned, it was accepted, apparently without question, that a school program which gave equal time to academics and agriculture was best suited to the Indian needs. This may have had some validity in some areas of Canada but why this was accepted in B.C. is difficult to see. The Indians of B.C. never resorted to agriculture for their livelihood, and if they were expected to do so in the future where in the name of heaven were they going to pursue such an avocation?

In the 1870s the B.C. government was prepared to allot to each family only twenty measly acres of land, at most, and when one considers that the bulk of this land was situated on sandy or rocky beachheads, someone must have been thinking of crops in terms of cactus plants. . . .

It makes no sense to write one thing with one hand and erase it with the other. Yet in all fairness we must admit the system of schooling which was set up did provide an education equal perhaps to that being dispensed in little red school houses throughout the nation. The need for academics was not great. The need for manual labour and semi-skilled labour was most pressing. Parents were content to provide their children with the facility of reading and writing and doing sums. Little more was needed. Little more was required by the average man. He could rear children and populate the land with a minimum of "book larnin.'" The Indian school, under the circumstances, got off to a reasonably good start and was capable of sending out

graduates with a standard of education equal to that of most white communities. Its graduates were reasonably well equipped to take their place in the economy, which economy was, of course, horse drawn at that time.

Growing Dissatisfaction with the School System

But fifty years later the standard in the whiteschools had risen immeasurably. The needs of the people had changed, and education had moved out of the one-room school houses, and changed to meet the standards. But sad to say Indian education was still plodding away on a kind of treadmill to oblivion. Still using techniques that should have been laid to rest with the bow and arrow, the residential schools of the twenties and thirties lost contact with progress and perhaps even with reality.

In the forties dissatisfaction with the school system grew and with it a desire for change that would upgrade the standards. Closer co-operation between the churches and Indian Affairs contributed much. A willingness on the part of the federal government to bear a greater burden of the financing improved conditions. In the mid-fifties the churches were beginning to work closely together with the department. High schools had already been established and the teachers' salaries were being paid by Ottawa. Although somewhat below that of the standard of the provincial government, they nevertheless went far beyond any financial assistance given in the past. In 1957 Indian Affairs assumed complete responsibility for the cost of the residential school, and integration in the schools was being vigorously promoted by the federal government as well as by those in the field. By 1966 there were but a handful of residential

schools in the whole of Canada. Where public or separate school facilities were available the residential school became a hostel or dormitory. Classes were no longer taught there.

Figures released by the department of Indian Affairs in the early sixties show that the Indian population of Canada was 230,000. The total number of Indian pupils in school stood at 66,217 of which 31,582 were in federal schools (i.e. schools operated by the federal government on a day basis). 34,635 were in white schools, either public schools or separate schools, and only 9,071 were in residential schools (but even of this number only three schools in B.C. were strictly residential). Perhaps no more than 3,000 students in the whole of Canada attended a residential school.

Where is the Truth in the Residential School Controversy?

But the story of the residential school is a story in itself, and indeed a very controversial one. It is a story about which there is a great deal of misunderstanding, and the misunderstanding has the usual components of bias and bigotry, of excessive statements for and against, of memories recalled, coloured by the time and the passage of the years.

As a part of the Indian experiment the residential school can be laid to rest for it is no more. It makes no sense to beat a dead horse. The residential school was wedded to a period in Indian history. It was a very difficult period, perhaps one of the darkest. The schools lived through that period and they did so on very slim rations.

Today there are many who look back with gratitude to their years in residence and say, "without the residential school I would not be what I am today." There are



Andy Paull and friend

others whose lives have been failures who look back with anger and say, "because of the residential school I am what I am today."

The truth, where does it lie? "In medio stat virtus," the old Latin proverb says. The truth lies a little with both but mostly it will be found in the middle because so many good men and women who worked with so much sincerity and energy in the schools must by necessity have produced some good despite the clumsy instruments they had to hand. On the other hand so many men and women endowed with human

nature and its weaknesses could not have failed to have come up with a little bad, for of such stuff is man and woman made.

Andy would know the good and the bad of residential school life. It is significant that he would fight hard to prevent the closing of the one he went to. It is significant that he would respect the people who taught him throughout his life.

(*excerpts from Andy Paull: As I Knew Him and Understood His Times, by Herbert Francis Dunlop, OMI. Used by permission of Saint Paul's province of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.*)

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"The Gifted, Accomplished Brother Edmund O'Keefe"

Indian School Days is the autobiography of Basil H. Johnston, a native Ojibway who was taken from his family at age 10 and placed in a northern Ontario "residential school." The following are excerpts taken from his book.

There was one event that took place on Sunday evenings that made the week worthwhile in these early days, an event that we looked forward to.

In an institution where there was little amusement and entertainment other than the exhibition games and the infrequent silent movies of cowboys and Indians with Hoot Gibson, Tom Mix, Ken Maynard and Charlie Chaplin and "the Cheese-eaters," the hour-long stories recounted by Brother Edmund O'Keefe meant a great deal to the seniors.

As the senior boys followed Brother O'Keefe into the senior classrooms, the intermediates and juniors, who had to do homework in the study hall, cast envious glances at their elders. Despite all their efforts, they could never completely suppress the envy that flared up anew each time a burst of laughter exploded within the sanctuary of the senior classroom.

Of all the staff, priests included, Brother O'Keefe was probably the most gifted and accomplished. We had heard that, before

the First World War, Edmund O'Keefe had been a professor of English in a military academy in Munich; according to another story, Brother O'Keefe had been a private tutor to the Kaiser's family. Some time before the outbreak of the war he had made his way out of Germany to Britain, where he joined the British army. During the war he advanced to the rank of Major, serving on General Allenby's staff in Palestine. Following the war, Edmund O'Keefe (who spoke six languages) had worked for British Intelligence for some years, during which he travelled the world; eventually, however, he had realized that there was more to life than spying on one's fellow human beings. Rather than devote the rest of his life to the destruction of his fellow men, he had joined the Jesuits as a brother to serve his God and humanity. Brother O'Keefe had ended up in Spanish, far from his homeland and from the grave of his wife (she had died within months of their marriage).

The boys who studied under brother O'Keefe were twice fortunate; once, to have learned reading, writing and arithmetic from him, and again to have heard him narrate stories. There was not a boy who was not influenced or enriched by Brother O'Keefe's knowledge and love of and reverence for the word.



It was from him rather than from our own reading that we got to know *The White Company*, *The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *King Solomon's Mines*, *The Talisman*, *The Black Arrow*, *Kidnapped*, *Ivanhoe*, *Robin Hood*, *Treasure Island*, *The Knights of the Round Table*, *Great Expectations* and episodes from *The Pickwick Papers*.

For an hour the boys sat spellbound as Brother O'Keefe told stories of daring, adventure and intrigue or described in the most graphic terms a venomous snake coiled on top of a man's head ready to strike. He spoke English with the delivery of an actor and the polish of an orator. Had Edmund O'Keefe not become a Jesuit he might have been another Laurence Olivier or a renowned barrister, a Rufus Isaacs.

Besides entertaining us and at the same time teaching us something of the worth of the ideas and ideals embodied in literature, he sought to instil in us the same respect for the spoken and written word that inspired him. . . .

Brother O'Keefe taught reading, penmanship, Bible history, arithmetic, English and history. With only half a day set aside for academic instruction, Brother O'Keefe did not have the time to teach more than the basics. Still he managed to teach some geography, not formally but quite casually. Right after opening exercises he would unfurl wall maps of Europe and of the

world and review for us events in Europe and around the globe. Once in a while he distributed copies of the *Illustrated London News* as a reward for our diligence and good behaviour. Maybe, on the other hand, he wanted us to acquire a broader knowledge than we were getting. Of the policies, causes, strategies, tactics, logistics and wars and places that we discussed, we remembered little; but we did get to know the countries of the world, oceans, seas, bays, mountains, passes, marshes, plains, hills, rivers; von Bock, von Rundsdet, von Leeb, Keitel, Guderian, List, Kleist, von Manstein, Gestapo, Panzers, Brown Shirts. The boys probably learned more about geography than their contemporaries elsewhere, who were still memorizing the counties of Ontario. . . .

By comparison with courses of study in other schools, our curriculum would have been regarded as below standard. It's true that we did not have access to a well-stocked library, or attend classes from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. It's also true that we were taught to know what to do with what little we knew; we were taught to be resourceful. But unless one has a sense of worth and dignity, resourcefulness, intelligence and shrewdness are of little advantage. Brother O'Keefe, in the little time that he had to teach us, instilled in us intangibles that were far more important than mountains of facts.

In the dark after lights out we wondered how the man with the snake on his head was going to escape; in the days that followed we speculated wildly.

(Reprinted with permission from Indian School Days by Basil H. Johnston, published by Key Porter Books Ltd., Toronto. Copyright © 1988 Basil Johnston.)

Attending Residential School for Twelve Years

I have been asked time and time again, "What was it like attending residential school for twelve years?" Depending on the mood I am in at the time, my response may vary from that of an angry survivor to that of an accepting and educated Indian.

Herein lie my thoughts on how I felt then and how I feel today about residential schools and my experiences during my decade plus two years of "boarding away."

Had I been born anything other than "Native," the idea of having gone away to school might have received a kinder and more sophisticated response from Native and non-Native people alike. After all, the school I attended was well staffed with highly educated nuns and lay people whose principal objectives for their wards were that of obtaining for them a good education with a strong focus on personal achievement.

Learning to read music, play piano and perform in Shakespearean skits are precious memories on which I fondly reminisce. These experiences were challenging as well as fun, all the while building up a strong sense of self-esteem and personal growth. I am thoroughly convinced that my early and formative years of being taught by the nuns have given me positive traits today that I otherwise may not have acquired. But what of the price we Native children had to pay?

Misgivings

I have many misgivings on residential schools and their well-intended purposes. First off, they should never have existed if only for their sorry purpose to assimilate Native people and rid us of our "Neanderthal" ways. This hurts. Deep inside of me my Native spirit has been wounded. I weep



Marguerite Letourneau

for our Anishnawbe who have not healed from what a government thought was the solution to the plight of the Indian. Losing contact with one's family and community, however, is something that can never be given back. Being made to feel ashamed of one's heritage cannot be expressed in a lifetime of writing about it. Losing one's language, only to be further alienated from one's own people, is very painful indeed. How could such an atrocity have happened to such a gentle people?

I realize that other Peoples of the world have suffered at the hands of injustice. My hurt comes from the oblivious attitude my

fellow countrymen have, at the same time claiming that they haven't ever heard of residential schools. Chapters in this country's history and the pain inflicted upon Native people have been an embarrassment to some. Talking about these dark years and expressing some form of apology would help. Actually, mere acknowledgment that wrongs were done to us would be a beginning.

Today I bear no ill will toward the people who taught me for twelve years. I had never experienced, witnessed or heard of sexual abuse at my school. The nuns who taught us were a dedicated lot who were patient and kind and who perpetually emitted a loving approach toward their students and in their ways of teaching.

At this time of my life I am proudly working at re-establishing my Native roots and at attending as many of our traditional gatherings as often as time and circumstances allow me.

We are a proud group of First Nations.

Our leaders are some of the most articulate and determined people in this hemisphere.

We have positive role models to emulate.

Our children are speaking their Native languages.

We are growing stronger with every passing season.

I am proud to be Anishnawbe kwe.

Marguerite Letourneau
(A Mi'kmaq, Marguerite Letourneau is from New Brunswick and has worked in Native child protection, representing several bands nationally in the court system. She is president of Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto and sits on the environment committee for Earth Spirit Festival, 1991.)

Healing the Wounds: Controversy over Native Residential Schools

A storm brews over the prairies. Native groups and individuals cry their protests against government and church. From their midst a fiery orator of Métis descent arises. Church leaders urge calm. Aboriginals are torn between their faith and their culture.

It sounds like a page from the Riel Rebellion, but these events are happening in the West today. Long-buried resentment of the church-run Native residential schools, disbanded across the country by the late 1960's, has culminated in a public controversy which has splashed across the front pages of most Canadian newspapers.

"If it has become a national question, it is the Native leadership which has made it a national question," said Fr. Claude Blanchette, spokesman for the Manitoba Bishops.

Phil Fontaine, head of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC), activated the issue in the fall of 1990. He and other aboriginal leaders, raised to public prominence by the Meech Lake debate, demanded a public inquiry into church-run residential schools. Most of the resentment was directed toward the Roman Catholic church which ran 58 of the 80 Native residential schools in Canada. Fontaine and others declared the church-run schools promulgated sexual,

physical and emotional abuse of Native children. In late October, Fontaine fanned the flames further by declaring himself a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of a priest-teacher at one of the schools.

Both sides facing the issue

In response, the Manitoba Bishops formed an Advisory Committee on residential schools and offered to work with the aboriginal leaders to confirm the truth and work on healing the victims.

Both sides agree on those goals but each advocates violently different approaches to accomplish them. The Assembly demands public confessions by victims, contrition from church leaders and church money to operate an aboriginal-controlled counselling program. The church supports a carefully planned, coordinated process of community-based dialogue and healing with professional, church and aboriginal input.

At least two "cooperative" committees were formed to address the issue; each was disbanded abruptly by the Assembly. It is plain that both sides blatantly distrust the other.



Residential School, Fort Alexander, Manitoba (c. 1915)

The church, for example, refused to act quickly on a situation which they say is not new. A statement released in December 1990 states, "The church resists any attempt to use its role in the residential schools as a means of being part of a political process that may belong to the AMC's larger agenda."

The Assembly views the process with equal skepticism. "We see the Catholic church to be a powerful institution with a strong lobby," said Phil Fontaine to the media in February. "I'm absolutely certain that they're out there putting pressure so this particular matter will disappear."

The facts show that though the church is not responding with the speed the Assembly demands, they are definitely not ducking the issue. Besides forming the Advisory Committee, the Manitoba Bishops called for a conference to form a coordinated national response. Held in Saskatoon March

13-15, it involved bishops, priests and nuns from all dioceses and orders that had residential schools. In a concluding statement, the church publicly declared responsibility for some of the abuses professed by former residential students.

"We are sorry and deeply regret the pain, suffering and alienation that so many experienced. We have heard their cries of distress, feel their anguish and want to be a part of the healing process." The church went on to pledge solidarity with the aboriginal people in their pursuit of basic human rights but refused to change their original stance: (1) no public inquiry; (2) healing for individuals within their own communities.

Fr. Blanchette attended the March conference and says, "No one can state how much is needed or what. It is hard to say where the ills of these people lie. But we do

know that every human being has a right to be healed, a right to the fullness of life. We intend to commit to that healing."

Marjorie's story

Marjorie Star was one of six aboriginals invited to the Saskatoon conference. "I do not know why they asked us there. They said they wanted to hear our stories but they gave us no opportunity to tell them."

Marjorie's story is like many we are hearing today. A Native on the Fort Alexander reserve, she was sent to residential school at age six. Though her home was close and easily accessible by foot, she was only allowed home for the summer holidays. During the year she only saw her parents for one hour each Sunday.

"When my parents left me at the school, I felt abandoned, unwanted. I cried then and almost every night that first year." Her loneliness and loss led to bed-wetting and she was punished each time an accident occurred. "The Sisters would make me sit in the cold hallway in my wet nightgown. In the morning I would have to walk down three floors to the laundry in front of everyone. It was humiliating."

Marjorie recalls students were not allowed to speak their own language and that siblings were separated from each other. She witnessed several physical punishments and heard snickers about sexual abuse from other children. Her own sister claims she was abused by a priest. At age 14, Marjorie was sent to residential high school in Winnipeg but ran away one year later. "They told me I could no longer go home for the weekends so I packed my things and left."

The following years brought work, marriage and six children. However, Marjorie remained alienated from the church.

"A lot of us were like that; we had been hurt so bad. If they were not good people, why listen to them?"

It was only when she wanted first communion for her youngest son that she returned. "I wanted to find a church that would bring my son to the classes. All of them refused but one of them referred me to Kateri Mission. The people at Kateri were so different. They accepted us as we were."

Marjorie began attending church and a support group at Kateri. Soon she was volunteering her help and this year worked six months as religious education coordinator.

Now, she sees the church heading in the right direction with their announcement to start community-based healing sessions. "When I was in a group I discovered a lot about myself; I don't feel so much anger now. Most of the priests and sisters who were at the schools are gone now and I have learned to put it in the past. But I am grateful that my children will never meet those "angels with little horns."

For those "angels" the controversy has been painful, a negation of their life's work. Seen by the church and most of the non-Native community as well-meaning, these early missionaries are hurt and bewildered by the accusations now hurled at them by Natives.

Father Benoit's story

"We started the schools to help them," said Fr. Eucharist Benoit, O.M.I. "When the missionaries went to Indian land, they saw that the traditional way of life was dying. The Indian people had to change but they were being held back by their lack of language and business skills. If left in isolation, what chance would they have?"



Residential School, Cross Lake, Manitoba (c. 1918)

The Indians agreed and asked the church to educate their children. The Oblates began with day schools but attendance was sporadic. Children were pulled from school to follow the nomadic lifestyle of their parents, following the winter traplines or spring fishing seasons. Residential schools were seen as the only option.

"We learned their language and their culture," said Fr. Benoit. "It wasn't easy to learn Algonquin (now Objiway) and since our language was French, we all had to learn English together. We never got paid to teach the children, we did it from love. If the church hadn't been there, they would have been so far behind."

Fr. Benoit spent 30 years in missionary work in the Berens River area of N.W. Ontario, building four churches and a combined residential school and church for the Indians. The students received free board, clothing and food; half day of classroom

instruction and half day of trades or lifeskills classes; religious instruction and sports programs.

"Many of our students took prizes at local fairs, especially in needlework," he says. "Most of the boys we trained in carpentry or farming got jobs after graduation."

As a mark of their affection, the Berens River community gave Fr. Benoit a present when he left — a Norval Morriveau painting of a wise old owl in clerical vestments.

Joyce's story

Joyce Courchene, an educator who was raised on the Fort Alexander reserve, agrees the schools were excellent training grounds for those who wanted to progress. Though she herself did not attend residential school, most of her family did. All are now successful professionals.

"We have positive feelings about the church and are actively involved as Catholics. At that time, it was a different genera-



Residential School, Camperville, Manitoba

tion, a different period of history. The church did everything with little participation from the people. Since Vatican II, the church has changed and they are enabling people to help themselves. Look at the way they are involving everyone in the residential school inquiry and healing process."

As an educator though, Joyce sees some negative effects from that period of history. "Living away from family, the students had no parenting models so they often have trouble parenting their own children. Some have a poor self-image because so much of their own culture and lifestyle was denied them."

She cited hair style as an example. "In traditional Native culture, the hair is symbolic of strength and courage. Even those without tradition see personal style as part of their own self-image. The Sisters cut all the girls hair short and all alike; they considered long hair a vanity."

Joyce also thinks that many former students are torn between the way of life taught them at the schools and traditional aboriginal values. "The Native way is to share and work as a team. At the residential schools, they were taught to be competitive and successful as individuals."

Joyce sees that as a dilemma for current Native leaders. They have risen to the top because of their education at the residential

schools, but they also have childhood memories of loss and fear. "When you are hurt, you want to hurt back."

As a result, Joyce does not see the Assembly as the best group to activate the healing. "The people at the bottom of the totem pole have had nothing explained to them. They are confused and their leaders are trying to keep them uninformed to make political gains. The only way to break through is education and counselling. We must demand a true account of Canadian history to bridge cross-cultural awareness and we must have local control after the healing process is complete."

The church and Native culture: building a new covenant

"The church must be a leader in this process of healing. The government won't do it and the victims can't do it for themselves. The church must take a mature role and be a spiritual guidepost for the people."

That, in essence, is what the National Conference on residential schools supports. As Fr. Blanchette concludes, "It is our conviction that this trial period will bring new life. Christianity is about struggle. We need to build a new covenant in our relationships with Natives. We need a true acknowledgment of what happened, both positive and negative, and healing in an environment of trust, love and reconciliation."

*Andrea Lang
(Involved in communications and public relations for over 20 years, Andrea Lang has contributed extensively to a variety of publications. Among these have been the Prairie Messenger, and Indian Record. She also has facilitated workshops for Native writers.)*

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*Father Claude Blanchette,
spokesman for the
Manitoba Bishops*

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Brother Gerald Riopel, OMI, receives the 1991 Saint Joseph Award

The Catholic Church Extension Society of Canada has chosen Brother Gerald Riopel, OMI, as recipient of the 1991 Saint Joseph Award. Brother Riopel spent thirty years of his life as a religious in ministry among the Native people of Quebec and Labrador. This year's presentation of the Saint Joseph Award coincides with the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Oblates in Canada and the start of their ministry here. The Saint Joseph Award was first inaugurated in 1989 and is given annually in recognition of the contribution made by a Canadian missionary. Brother Riopel will receive his award on May 16th at a reception given in his honour in Toronto. Archbishop Aloysius Ambrozic, of Toronto, Apostolic Chancellor of the Catholic Church Extension Society of Canada, will present Brother Riopel with a replica of a sculpture of Saint Joseph, created by David Ruben Piqtoukun, of Paulatuk, Northwest Territories.



Brother Gerald Riopel, OMI, in his workshop

A mighty figure

Brother Gerald Riopel considers that he has very little to offer by way of service to his sick confreres at the Oblate Provincial Hospital in Sainte-Foy, Quebec. He drives his brothers to their medical appointments and lends a hand with their errands. He helps out around the hospital and tends the grounds in the winter and summertime, and he does the odd bit of repair work here and there. Really, very little to offer!

Meanwhile, Brother Gerald is well into his 70's and copes with arthritis in his knees. . . . If you were to

meet this well-built individual, you would think that Brother Gerald is one of those mighty figures whom only death can subdue. Gerald continues to serve tirelessly and humbly. What he does these days is not much different from what he did in his missionary work in the Canadian north. As he himself says, he seeks ways to "make life more comfortable for people around him," the same as he always did for others during his life as a missionary.

A childhood dream: To help in the missions

Since his early childhood, Brother Riopel always dreamt of the missions. Anything related to the missions interested him from a very young age. He often imagined himself supporting the missionaries' efforts through his manual labour. When he entered the Oblates in 1939, he felt that the first stage of his childhood dream had come true. After all, weren't the Oblates a missionary community? But he had to wait eighteen years — serving the Oblate Community in Rougemont (Quebec) — before his Provincial agreed to send him to Tête-à-la-Baleine (Labrador) for his first taste of missionary work among the Native people.

This began the realization of his dream. Yet, life was not easy in the North. At that time, Native people still lived in tents. The mission itself consisted of a small house twenty-four feet square. Electricity — today a readily available commodity in this area rich in hydro-electric resources — was unknown to the Oblate missions. Noting the tasks required of him, Brother Gerald quickly set to work. He repaired cars and trucks, built new

rooms onto the mission house and installed an entire heating system which he made from bits and pieces found in the garbage dump of a U.S. army base stationed near Goose Bay.

One day, the motor on the boat that he and a confrere relied upon to get fresh supplies, broke down. Gerald did not want to "abandon ship." He stayed out in the open for three days, taking the boat's motor apart and putting it back together again —

successfully! He had asked crew members on a passing boat to tell the priest at the mission that he'd be back once the boat was repaired. This is but one example of Brother Gerald's determination!

Many daily tasks

Brother Gerald is a true jack-of-all-trades. His day in the missions would begin at 5 a.m. when he would start the generator which produced electricity for the mission and school.



St Joseph Award, 8" bronze replica by Jay McClennan, original soapstone sculpture by David Ruben Piqtoukun, resident of Toronto and born in Paulatuk, Northwest Territories

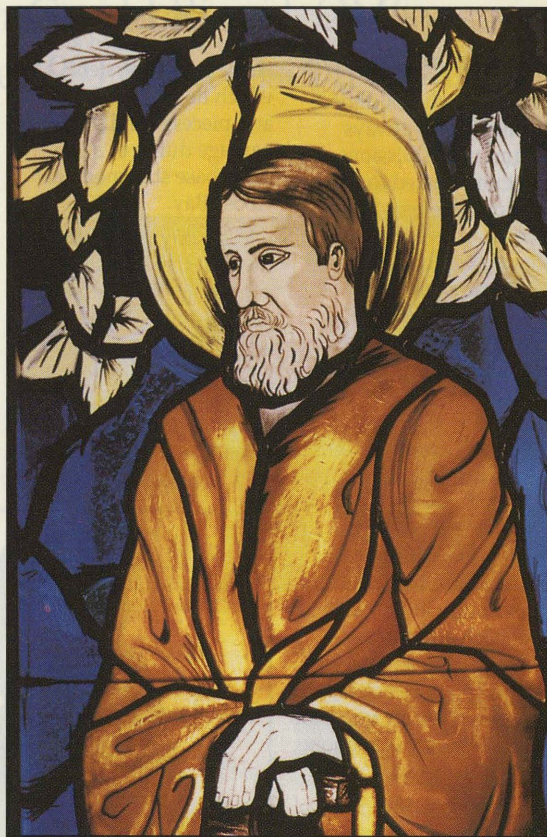
Photo: Steve Deme

His hardworking days, interrupted by moments of prayer, finished late at night after he had closed everything up. Of all his achievements during his life as a missionary, Brother Gerald is particularly proud of the church he built at Happy Valley where he worked for seven years. This church did not cost a penny in salaries; it was built entirely by volunteers under his direction.

Brother Gerald experienced an enormous loss when Schefferville, his final mission (of thirteen years) closed in 1986, due to the economic dependence on a single company. He describes how he closed the presbytery himself and helped most of his parishioners to move. After this closure, his missionary work over, he moved to the Oblate Hospital for good.

To be happy . . .

When asked his opinion on the situation today's religious communities find themselves in, Brother Gerald says very simply, "It's not like it was!" He believes there are many different ways to find happiness. And if he were asked to say something to today's youth, he wouldn't



Saint Joseph, detail from stained glass window in Christ the King Cathedral, Moosonee, Ontario

hesitate in saying, "Help one another and you will be happy!"

Brother Gerald is satisfied with life. He thinks it might have been entirely different if he'd not met such acceptance within his community. His own life is a powerful testimony to this. All who have known him say without

hesitation that even the most difficult of personalities could get along with him. At seventy years of age, Brother Gerald has truly realized his dream.

Jocelyn Girard
(*Jocelyn Girard formerly editor of Chicoutimi diocesan newspaper En Église and with production at Vie*

Liturgique, now works as a computer consultant in Quebec city.)

A Beautiful New Church in Botwood, Newfoundland

(September 20, 1990)
Bishop Faber and I went out to visit Botwood today. It's about a half hour from Grand Falls, twenty-four kilometers north of the TransCanada Highway on the Bay of Exploits. It is a town of 4000 and one of the two missions of Sacred Heart, in Bishop's Falls, formerly a railway town. The town is graced with a very beautiful large, matching brick church (with a magnificent tower), school and rectory.

Botwood, a working class community, felt somewhat inferior to its big mother parish. Like so many Newfoundland communities its economic base was precariously founded on forestry and fishing. The congregation had met in an old school and it seemed that the community, set in a mostly non-Catholic area, would never get a decent place to worship. But they had ten acres of good land—enough for a school and rectory someday—some

savings, and a large gift from the mother church. Still, nowhere near enough to think of building.

Along came Bishop MacDonald who encouraged the community to seek help from the Society to pay for a new church. The grants were made, and last year this beautiful new structure was consecrated.

The entrance leads into a spacious atrium for people to gather and greet each other. This leads into the hall that can hold 250, and in the other direction into the church which also seats 250. Both areas are neat as a pin, simple, tastefully decorated, warm and appealing.

On peak attendance occasions, the divider separating the church and atrium can be moved, making more space available, and even the hall can be used.

The Bishop proudly showed me around with the parish financial man, Maurice Moore, a radiology technician in the local hospital. "This is one of the finest initiatives ever in the diocese. Botwood has great potential with the Hibernia project. It has a great harbour," he went on.

In the hall, three parish women, Theresa Snow, Geraldine Gilbert and Mary

Warford, were just finishing their turn doing the weekly cleaning. It looked like you could eat off the tile floor.

One of them wore a T-shirt with these words written on it: "Somebody loves you in the City of Toronto." We all laughed, but how appropriate it was. For someone, or more accurately, several someones in another part of Canada really did love the people of Botwood and had made a gift that made this beautiful church a reality for them.

A local artist had painted a mural of the community's history, marking its milestones: the founding in 1943, the start of the Sunday School, the coming of the Sisters, the founding of the Association of Catholic Women, the development of the I.C.L.I. (a youth movement), the stewardship program, and finally the R.C.I.A. It was a long story of perseverance and struggle that finally bore fruit in a proud, living community, of which the church building was a prominent sign.

"Having this building, and debt free, really gave this community 'fresh heart' as it says in Acts," said Bishop MacDonald.

Maurice kept repeating over and over how grateful the people were for Extension. It was as though he couldn't say it enough.

And I wanted to pass that on.

Father Barry McGrory,
President

Paul Miki and the Vancouver Sisters of the Atonement

One day in December, Paul Miki came into the office at 67 Bond Street with a fine donation for our home missions. He told a beautiful story.

His father, Yoshitaro Miki, had six children, and Paul had been the baby of the family. He was born in 1913 in Nass Harbour, B.C. In 1920 he went to school in Japan. He returned to Canada in 1928. They joined the church in 1929, and he remembers well the work of the Sisters of the Atonement in their Cordova Street Mission in Vancouver. "If it hadn't been for the Sisters of the Atonement, we might never have become Catholics and experienced the happiness religion has brought to our lives." The Sisters were supported partly by Extension.

The family was interned during the war. Afterward, Paul studied at Graymoor, N.Y., and moved to Toronto in 1943. He was married here and has three children. His daughter, Joy Lehmann, taught at St. Michael's choir school. Paul Miki, Jr., teaches at Holy Cross High School; he was ordained in the Ukraine on November 1990 as a Ukrainian Catholic priest. He is married and will be posted to St. Demetrius Parish in Toronto.

Paul and his wife Dorothy are members of Toronto's Holy Name Parish.

Paul came to Extension, he said, to give something back to the missions.

Father Barry McGrory,
President

An Educational Legacy

Kate Assiniwe is the matriarch of a Wikwemikong family that has become something of an educational dynasty at Laurentian University. Three generations of her lineage have received bachelor's degrees from this institution, often by taking courses through the Centre for Continuing Education. It's a good bet that the fourth generation will one day be represented

as well; eight-year-old Carol Fox Corbiere has her sights on an eventual Laurentian University degree.

Kate Assiniwe sums up her philosophy by stating: "I encouraged them to go as far in school as they could go." Her daughter, Melvina Corbiere, concurs: "She pushed us, and then she followed us!"

Kate's stepdaughter, Grace Fox Wagoosh, was the first, receiving her Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy in 1976 and a bachelor of Education in 1977. She then went on to obtain a Master's degree in Education Administration from Central Michigan University. Grace now works as a guidance counsellor at Manitoulin Secondary School.

Melvina earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1979 and a Bachelor of Education in 1982. She currently teaches grade 6 at Lakeview School in West Bay.

Melvina and Grace both found that the opportunity to take distance education courses through the Envision program enabled them to achieve their goals of a higher education. "Some professors came out to Manitoulin," notes Grace, "and we took some courses by correspondence or video."



Kate Assiniwe and her descendants, in full regalia, rehearse the celebration they plan for Debbie Corbiere's upcoming graduation. Seated: Debbie Corbiere and Kate Assiniwe. Standing, from left to right: Melvina Corbiere (Debbie's mother), Carol Corbiere (Kate's eldest great-grandchild), Patty Fox Debassige (Kate's granddaughter), and Grace Fox Wagoosh (Patty's mother).

Kate and her granddaughter Patty Fox Debassige both received their bachelor's degrees in 1988: Kate's was a B.A. in Native Studies and Patty's an honours B.A. in Sociology. Patty hopes to attend teacher's college at Nipissing in the near future.

Kate Assiniwe has served as an important resource person for the Department of Native Studies at Laurentian. In return, she has found the education she received through the Centre for

Continuing Education very enriching. "I had never learned about our Ojibway ancestors in school before," she comments. "I found Native Studies very interesting and useful."

The entire family looks forward to Debbie Corbiere's graduation with a B.A. in Native Studies anticipated for 1991. "Knowing about my own culture has really inspired me," Debbie says. She is pleased to be part of the educational tradition established by her grandmother."

(reprinted with permission from "Envision," Continuing Education Department, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario)

"He has not left us, he's only sleeping"

On January 30, the people of Fort Chipweyan and the northern areas heard of the passing away of Brother Louison Veillette who spent a total of 45 years in Fort Chipweyan, Alberta. (I would like to borrow an article written by George Tuccaro, which was also a eulogy expressing the feelings of the people of Fort Chipweyan, in the February 6 issue of the *Slave River Journal*, under "Fort Chipweyan News.")

The last in a long series of respected brothers who have devoted their lives to this northern community has left us.

Brother Louison Veillette passed away on Wednesday afternoon in Edmonton. He was born in Grandmere, P.Q., almost sixty-five years ago. But his real home was here in Fort Chipweyan. Brother Veillette, at the tender age of nineteen years, chose Fort Chipweyan as the place where he would carry out his mission work. It's hard to think that forty-five

“It is hard to see the last of our lay people leave us when we don't know who will replace them, if anyone.”

years have quickly come and gone and the brother, with his helpful ways and hearty laugh, has also left us like a dream we thought would never end. His friendship, his eagerness to help, his love for the people, his desire to remain here make him truly a brother to us all and indeed a servant of God.

His early years here were spent hunting and fishing, woodcutting and providing early work in mechanics and welding. Those of us who've been here for a while will remember some of the things he's done to ensure he played his part in the smooth operation of the Catholic Mission.

He was the last captain on the St. Eugene mission boat that used to haul over 400 cords of wood needed to heat the residential school for ten months a year. For the longest time, he was the only welder and mechanic in the community and could have quite easily started his own business. Nonetheless, his willingness to offer his help free of charge is something he did for his love of the people here.

Brother Veillette's last year here in Fort Chipweyan was a tough one. He was diagnosed as having lung cancer.

His last trip to Edmonton was a sad time. According to Father Cueff, who drove Brother Veillette to the airport, “Brother, in his weakened state, wouldn't look back at the mission he called home for these many years. He had quietly looked over the community, in his own way, saying his last goodbye, late last July.”

Up until last Sunday, his will was to come back home to Fort Chipweyan and do what he loved best, work and visit with the people.

It is hard to see the last of our lay people leave us when we don't know who will replace them, if anyone. We take comfort in knowing that Brother Veillette has not left us, he's only sleeping and we can visit him at this new resting place in town.

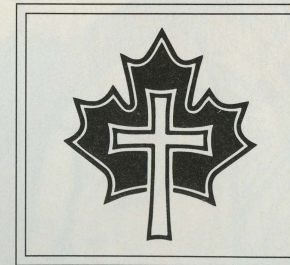
George Tuccaro (quoted from the MacKenzie-Fort Smith Diocesan Newsletter, Spring 1991)

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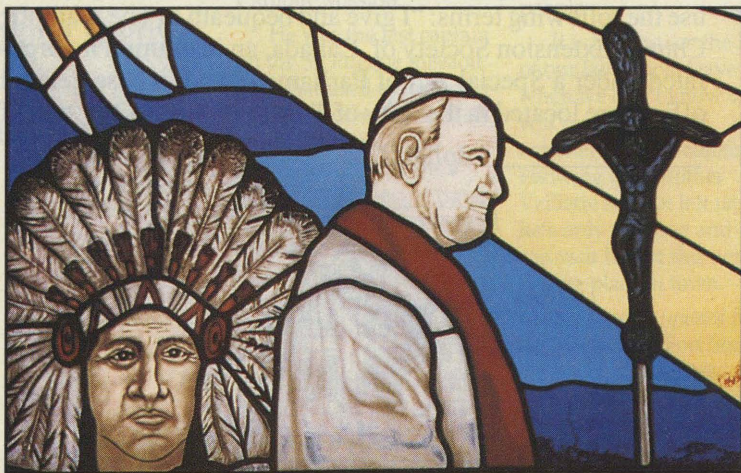
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“Co-operating in missionary activity means not just giving, but also receiving. All the particular churches, both young and old, are called to give and to receive in the context of the universal mission, and none should be closed to the needs of others. Vatican Council II states (*Lumen Gentium*, 13): ‘By virtue of . . . catholicity, the individual parts bring their own gifts to the other parts and to the whole church in such a way that the whole and individual parts grow greater through the mutual communication of all and their united efforts toward fullness in unity. . . .’”

*John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio (Encyclical on Missionary Activity),
January 22, 1991, paragraph 85.*



“The Pope’s Visit 1984” detail from stained glass window,
Christ the King Cathedral, Moosonee, Ontario