

ABSTRACT

M'kmaq and French/Jesuit Understandings

of the Spiritual and Spirituality:

Implications for Faith

There appears to be a conflict within the *Mi'kmaw* community over how one experiences the world, and as a consequence, how one embraces the Christian faith. On the one hand, European missionaries have introduced the idea that becoming a Christian primarily involves a cognitive change in how one perceives the world, translating into a “spiritual” but not physical journey toward “heaven.” On the other, *Mi'kmaq* who are also connected to their traditional way of knowing and being see this as inadequate, a pale reflection of the full-bodied experience with reality and within reality that fosters a robust non-dualistic spirituality for this part of life’s journey and the next.

Given this apparent conflict, I sought to investigate the nature of the relationship precisely between these different understandings. To focus the research to a manageable size, I carried out a literature review of the writings of the Jesuits between 1600 and 1750 to determine their perception of the nature of the spiritual and of spirituality – both for themselves and, through their writings, for the *Mi'kmaq*. I sought to do so by asking four principal sets of questions:

1. What understanding of the spiritual emerges from the descriptions available in the literature concerning the behavior and beliefs of the *Mi'kmaq* and those of the French/Jesuits as represented in the French encounter between 1600 and 1750 CE?

2. Where does the understanding of the spiritual lie for both peoples during this period? For example, in reading the archives, can one distinguish an understanding in the ideological realm as opposed to the ontological realm of life? Further, is spirituality rooted in the behavioral realm or is it rooted outside the person in creation itself? Finally, recognizing the difficulties inherent in accessing an oral culture through literature, is there evidence of holistic/monistic or dualistic understandings of spirituality in either or both cultures in the literature?
3. In an analysis of texts written between 1900 and 2000, does evidence emerge that shows continuity or change in the understanding and practice on the ground between 1600 and 1750, for both groups – either as missionary or the subject of mission? How has the understanding of the two groups changed over time? How do their understandings now affect the ministry situation?
4. What can be learned through this comparison between the worldviews of the two groups over time, particularly in relation to the theology of mission that directs the task of spreading the good news of God's love for us in Jesus Christ? That is, are there differences in the understanding of the spiritual that might account for the embrace of or failure to embrace Christian faith by Native North American people?

The work began with a description of the context of each of the two groups of people – the Jesuits and the *Mi'kmaq*. I examined the contexts in which their understanding of the nature of the spiritual and of spirituality had been established and considered any influences that were identifiably a part of that understanding. I then looked at the changes over time in the encounter of the two groups. What kinds of

changes might have occurred during the 150 years of the encounter between the Jesuits and the *Mi'kmaq*? Finally, I used a comparative analysis to determine what, if anything, that had changed for them had been carried over into the twentieth-century experience of each. To access a better comparative context, I included a brief description and investigation of the Acadians – a people who were both influenced by and influencers of the *Mi'kmaq* and whom the Jesuits established significantly in their Catholic faith.

I examined both culture and context in addition to investigating the concept and application of worldview as a means of accessing and assessing the nature of the spiritual. Finally, I subjected the entire body of the investigation to a meta-analysis so as to determine what, if any, conclusions could be drawn from the investigation. In the analysis we focused on questions of ontology, epistemology, and worldview as a part of assessing the data.

The research raised questions concerning the nature of spirituality as conceived of by the Jesuits and as experienced by the *Mi'kmaq*. In the former case it was obvious that cognition played the most significant role in their understanding of spirituality; in the latter, intuition and engagement were of primary focus. Application of the findings has implications not only for how we engage mission but also for how we understand the wider focus of the Creator's work in that creation.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET

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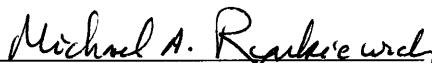
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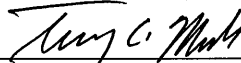
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Implications for Faith**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work first and foremost to my immediate family. To Bev, my wife of forty-one years, who devoted herself to this project as much as I did – albeit in very different ways. The fact that I have finished is in large part due to her patient ways of encouraging me. To our three wonderful kids, Jennifer, Jeanine, and Matt. You have been behind me in many ways that a parent should be behind their kids. Thanks for the pride in my accomplishments that spurred me on. To the Jesus of my journey – the one who has made and remade me more than once in my life, and kept beside me in spite of myself. May you be honored in what I have done and will yet do because of this project!

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Thanks to *Kji-Nisgam* – the one who really made everything, the one in whom we live, and the one who made it all possible. *Welalin!*

Chapter 1

Spirituality: Contrasts in *Mi'kmaq* and Jesuit Understanding

Dr. Wati Longchar, a pioneer in Asian Indigenous theology and a facilitator at a recent World Council of Churches meeting, highlighted the importance of dialogue in Indigenous theology – not just for the sake of the Indigenous community, but for the whole of the Church. He observed, “With both its own varied and variant expressions, and the whole variety of global and theological issues, Indigenous people’s reflections are of particular significance” (2011).

This chapter will, in addition to providing a description of the nature and context of the problem I perceive to be present in the contemporary *Mi'kmaw*¹ context, establish criteria for accessing *Mi'kmaq* and Jesuit understandings of the nature of the spiritual and spirituality. What’s more, I will seek to determine what criteria we will need in order to ascertain whether spirituality for each is most appropriately subsumed under worldview,² as is frequently deemed to be the case, or whether spirituality, in particular, is better

¹ The *Mi'kmaw* language exists contemporarily in three dialects, with several orthographies still in use, though in Nova Scotia the Grand Council of the *Mi'kmaw* Nation adopted the Smith-Francis orthography as the standard orthography in 1980. Given that the Smith-Francis orthography has had a wider use in scholarly writing I have chosen to use that orthography as much as possible – except in instances where another orthography renders a particular meaning that is desired in a more readable way. Accordingly, in the Smith-Francis orthography *Mi'kmaq* is used as the plural and *Mi'kmaw* is used as the singular – in addition to being used in adjectival and adverbial fashion such as in “the *Mi'kmaw* flag” or “the *Mi'kmaw* language.” The apostrophe ’ in use after the “i” extends the sound of the vowel in pronunciation as does a double vowel.

² Since contemporary anthropology no longer uses the term worldview, or at least employs it with a meaning much more muted than previous usage, and since the concepts that have previously defined it no longer carry weight in other social science fields, we will provide an operative definition for this paper in the section “Defining Terms.”

understood as an ontological category, itself the essence of human reality, whether acknowledged or not. Furthermore, we will seek to do so from an Indigenous perspective and thus shift the angle of investigation in order to expose any Eurocentric assumptions and understandings of spirituality.

Introduction

It is one of their customs to write in books what they have done and seen, instead of telling them in their villages where the lie can be given to the face of a cowardly boaster, and the brave soldier can call on his comrades to witness for the truth of his words. (Cooper 1826, 30)

It was the spring of 1960. Crossing the *Baie de Chaleur* by ferry from Quebec, where Cross Point and the *Listuguj*³ reserve are juxtaposed, we traveled some distance in my grandfather's old car to fish a spot on a brook known only to him. Arriving at this well-hidden, favorite spot, we set out, gear and lunch in hand, down a narrow trail, the man whom I had grown up with as my grandfather in the lead, me in the middle, and my father bringing up the rear.

We had not gone far before I was tugging anxiously at my grandfather's arm. The trail appeared to me to be contracting perceptibly, the overhanging branches dropping down to brush my grandfather's head. It was as if he were walking down a tunnel, one that narrowed more and more with each step. It was quite disconcerting. I remember being very anxious about getting lost. Pulling on my grandfather's hand until he looked down at me, I asked, "Won't we get lost, Grandfather?" He put me at ease, saying the

³ On any map – with limited exceptions – you will find it spelled *Restigouche*. Since there is no 'R' sound in the *Mi'kmaw* language and the French had difficulty with the 'li' sound in *Mi'kmaw*, it is obvious which spelling and pronunciation in the general population won out – at least on maps and in books!

trail was fine; we were fine. Reassured, we traveled on. Soon the encroaching brush made the trail seem to close in on us altogether, at times the track disappearing in front of my eyes. Now I was completely alarmed. I tugged with all my strength at Grandfather's arm. He could probably see the worry in my face. As I asked once again about getting lost, he set down his pack and gear and told me this short teaching I have not forgotten, and which continues to guide my thinking about much of life's journey.

“When you are setting out on a new trail – one you have never been on before – spend twice as much time looking over your shoulder at where you have come from as you do looking ahead to where you think you are going. You see,” he said, “the trail looks different when you travel it from the other direction. When you do this, you will be able to fix the landmarks in your mind the way they will appear as you turn to head home. If you record the trail markers, as they will appear to you when you turn to go the other way, you will never get lost. You will always be able to find your way.”

This story offered me a traditional teaching handed down in a good way. It has become a deeply entrenched metaphor for my life, providing me with a clear rationale for exploring the landmarks of the Native and Christian journey from the past to the present from a *Mi'kmaw* perspective. In truth, many Native North American peoples, including many in my own extended family, have all but lost their way in the journey, struggling to make ends meet not only in the physical and material requirements of life but also in the psychological, emotional, and, sadly I must say, spiritual. *Sharing the Harvest*, one of numerous volumes of the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP), noted, for example, that

Canada's reserve communities are in ruin. In general, these communities

suffer from excessive levels of poverty and unemployment, their well-being dependent on welfare, unemployment payments and other transfers from government. Education and skill levels are low and social problems are abundant. (Erasmus et al. 1993, 62)⁴

To make matters worse, the road to healing that runs through a recovery of identity and through restoration of traditionally rooted ways of thinking and being, of a spiritual understanding that recovers the holistic nature of life, has been hampered by the loss of capacity. The RCAP's National Roundtable on Aboriginal Health and Social Issues reports,

The genocidal effects of the Indian Act and other colonial monsters such as residential schools have thinned the ranks of elders and other healers within Aboriginal communities who are willing to make their knowledge and abilities available in even a public context. (Erasmus et al. 1993, 22)

Habits and patterns that ensured Native peoples' survival in the past were premised on an ontological understanding of the nature of the spiritual – a quality of being resident within all of creation – that compelled them to live with an externalized⁵ respect for the environment in which they found themselves. Contact began to change that and, within a relatively short space of time, supplant it with a more circumscribed set of beliefs about the Creator, creation, and the nature of the spiritual – one that continues to impact Indigenous peoples to the present day.⁶ With traditional knowledge and its continuous intergenerational

⁴ It is important to note this is not old news because it is 1993. In a study in Canada, published in October of 2010, in which Aboriginal youth are contrasted with youth in the general population, the authors report, "Aboriginal teens are not lined up evenly with other Canadian young people when they come out of life's starting gates. They frequently have different home settings and financial and educational limitations that make life difficult from the outset" (Bibby, Penner et al. 2010, 7).

⁵ By this I mean to say that their belief that all creation was of a spiritual nature *and*, therefore, sacred necessitated specific behaviors extending outward from themselves that emerged in such things as ritual and ceremony but also in the way they lived with the land and all was given life on the land.

⁶ In a recent and very compelling article about creation stewardship and missions, carried in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Craig Sorley observes that

transmission under stress, the impact of the colonial advance was magnified, not simply in geographic displacement but also in the way that Native beliefs were understood and dealt with. As Philip Jenkins (2004, 22, 148–53) points out, Native spirituality, historically anathema to the Christian, became, over time, gnosis to the New Ager!

As a means of dealing with the multi-layered, multi-decade loss of traditional connectivity to the spiritual in all of life, many Indigenous people came to embrace an ABW (anything but white) approach to life – some even resorted to what has been referred to as “the plastic shamanistic offerings of the New Age.”⁷ They imagined what the trail in the past had been like – an idealized memory in some instances – and they took eagerly to the work of bringing about its renaissance. Plastic shamans flourished in this environment and in a curious synergy, New Age gurus and wannabes gobbled up their teachings.

Many First Nations people became disconnected from a past, which, until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, had provided an unbroken series of markers on the trail of life through the teachings of their elders.⁸ Cut off from this chain of

the laissez faire attitude of missions toward the rest of creation has inevitably meant that Indigenous peoples have been introduced to a truncated understanding of God’s concern for the whole of creation. As a consequence, many, if not most, have become unwitting participants in the demise of their own, more holistic, understandings and practices within creation. (Sorley 2011, 137–43)

⁷ See, for example, McGaa (1990) for a discussion of contemporary shamanism that is rife with New Age concepts and constructs yet is presented as authentic Oglala Sioux teaching.

⁸ According to their elders and teachers the orientation in time, which characterized the *Mi’kmaw* peoples, was traditionally toward the past with the future behind. Though this is most likely not the case for most *Mi’kmaq* today, there are still holdovers in the way the events of the past are understood as having impact on the present; also how they are recounted as the means by which the present is to be understood. It is noteworthy that the Aymara of South America retain the fullest expression of this historically common Indigenous understanding of time. See for example, the UCSD study on Aymara perceptions of time: <http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/newsrel/soc/backsfuture06.asp> (accessed

transmission, the way ahead had become unclear to them, the challenges uncertain, the openness of the wider society to accept them without swallowing them up, not at all guaranteed. Some capitulated, taking to the mainstream culture, albeit with reluctance and with only partial acceptance by the majority society. To most of that mainstream society, Indians were still largely part of a mythologized history, such as that exposed in Jenkins's *Dream Catchers*,⁹ and were to be dealt with accordingly.

There were those, however, who examined the trail behind them more carefully, were able to see it with greater clarity, and continued to incorporate traditional teachings and understandings in their life-ways. And, though the context of life had changed from that of their ancestors, some of them also embraced Christian faith. Of those, individuals such as Black Elk and *Ohiyesa* had a profound impact on the way others engaged this new religious and worldview reality in the days following their own. Unfortunately, as with the famous, if still controversial, story of Black Elk¹⁰ the argument about whether there was an authentic "conversion" followed hard on the heels of the discussion about individual and collective agency in the mission experience. Compounding the problem, many Native people who continued their affiliation with Christianity while keeping to old ways were isolated both from the rest of the Christian body, which accused them of resurrecting pagan practices, and from the Native community, which thought they were sell-outs.

The majority of the Native world, however, whether in Canada or the USA,

August 2011).

⁹ See Jenkins's introductory chapter, titled "Haunting America" (2004, 1–19) for an excellent treatment of the naive love affair of the American populace with all things Indian – except of course, Indians.

¹⁰ *Black Elk Speaks*, (Black and Neihardt 1932) in tandem with Costello's great interpretive work, *Black Elk: Colonialism and Lakota Catholicism* (Costello 2005), offers a good description of this synergy.

simply became locked into a “marking time” survival mode – constrained by the necessary rhythms of reservation and reserve life. For them, further loss of identity loomed large; their “non-response” to the changing times served only to maintain the dysfunctional patterns they had now grown into. But at least these patterns were theirs, and they had learned to accommodate them to the restrictive environs of the “rez.”¹¹

According to a 1989 study conducted by Michael McIntyre et al. for the National Association of Treatment Directors, (McIntyre et al. 1989)¹² five socio-cultural types with very distinctive patterns of societal engagement have appeared since the mid-twentieth century in the Native community in Canada. Four out of the five types of Native person described in the study catalogue nearly 30 percent of the Native population. However, most of what has been described in the literature as “social dysfunction,” the study notes, is accounted for in the last remaining grouping, approaching 70 percent of Native Canadians.

The first four were described by the terms “traditional,” “neo-traditional,” “assimilated,” and “bi-cultural” (30–33 percent). The final category of the study was not only most significant in terms of numbers (67–70 percent) but also captured precisely the challenge then resident among the Native North Americans surveyed. The study referred to this group as “confused identities.” Making sense of life was the day-to-day task for this, the largest and most geographically diverse group of Native people. Much of the

¹¹The “rez” is the commonly used appellation referring to the “reserve” in Canadian usage and to the “reservation” if on the south side of the 49th parallel.

¹²This landmark study by the National Association, published in 1989, was undertaken to identify specific factors contributing to changes in lifestyles and the development of socially aberrant behavior due to substance abuse experienced by Native North American people since contact. Five broad categorizations of contemporary Native people emerged, with concomitant behavioral descriptors attached to each.

fault, according to the study, could be laid at the root of the spiritual and social degradation caused by years of effort trying to fit Native people into non-Native worldviews, beliefs and social structures – not to mention the constantly changing programs of national governments, on and off reserve, aimed at assimilation.

Though the purpose of the McIntyre study was not to identify mission impact or the authenticity or consequence of religious conversion, the study's outcomes demonstrate that something was amiss in the identity formation of Native peoples. Can this be explained strictly in terms of social or religious phenomena or by colonial trauma and adjustment? Or is there something more deeply rooted than that? Was (is?) it simply an issue of aggressive encounter – where loss of control over land and place as well as forced adaptation to cultural and social modifications created change at a pace that was too rapid and therefore difficult to manage?¹³ In the study's analysis, it was clear this was not the case. What the study recorded could be directly attributed to the compounding effects of colonial policy and practice, including (perhaps especially, in the case of the residential schools) efforts at Christianization that assaulted Native people's sense of the integrated wholeness of their world and replaced it with a patchwork quilt. There was a strong suggestion, embedded in the study, that the problem might well be rooted in a process of progressive spiritual/physical dissociation set in motion as far back as the earliest days of mission of the Christian Church.

¹³ Whether slow change or rapid change is best for people is still a hotly debated issue. The point of Margaret Mead's restudy of Peri Village, Manus province, PNG, in *New Lives for Old*, 1956, was that the people of the village fared well during the extremely rapid change caused by the movement of first the Japanese then the Americans during World War II.

Statement of the Problem

In my experience of thirty-five years of ministry, if I were to ask a person of a “Western influenced worldview”¹⁴ about spirituality, he or she would talk about specific behaviors and practices, such as prayer, devotional time, scripture reading, fasting etc. If, instead, I were to ask about the person’s religion, the person would say Buddhist or Mormon or, if Christian, name the denomination or tradition of the church. On the other hand, if you were to inquire about the religion of a traditional Native person,¹⁵ she or he would deny having a religion and instead talk about spirituality – without a specific reference to behavior. Is this simply a matter of word definition – of semantics?

Two short, but very connected, old stories from Native lore may help us understand that this is more than a semantics difficulty – that it actually describes a problem that has had a significant impact on the way in which Native people have heard the gospel message and has influenced their experience of Western Christianity.

Story number one.

Two people met on the path of life one day, one going east and the other west. As they talked at this crossway of life, they decided they might journey awhile together, seeking the truths of the world. They were brave folk and hardy, surely this would be a worthy task for them.

The one was soft-spoken and, if you were to ask those from her village, she spent much of her time alone. When asked why, she simply said she was listening. The other spent much of his time probing the people of his village, young and old, asking their ideas, their thoughts of the world, and their experience of its profound mysteries.

¹⁴ When I refer to Western-influenced, I mean a person or culture whose worldview perspectives have been predominantly shaped by or significantly influenced in their formation by Occidentalism – both historic *and*, more contemporarily, through economics, trade, and education.

¹⁵ By traditional I mean those people of Native North American ancestry who hold to a form of religious and cultural teaching that they identify as having continuity with the ways of their ancestors and that would be acknowledged as such by a significant number of their peers.

As they set out on their journey together, each followed the behavior that had come to characterize her or his life – the one mostly silent, observant of all that went on around her, listening and watching, absorbing the sights; the other a constant flow of questions, calling out to the wind, the rain, the sun, and the stars, speaking to the earth and badgering the animals and birds almost without end, seeking answers to his questions. Many days they journeyed together, following their respective ways.

One traveler climbed to the top of the mountains – surely here he would find the truth, from the highest vantage point of life. He shouted to the wind and called upon the thunder. “What can you tell me?” The other traveler lay down on the ground at the base of the mountain, fascinated by the myriad sounds that emanated from its very roots, carefully watching all the creatures that inhabited its slopes and taking note of their comings and goings. One traveler dove into the depths of the sea, uprooting the creatures in his path; the other lay upon its shores, admiring the pattern of the waves, taking note of the life moving along its edges, entering and leaving its depths.

As they persisted on their journey, day upon day and week upon week, the one grew more and more agitated, increasingly dissatisfied; the other experienced a deepening sense of awe. Finally, as their journey came to an end, at the very crossway at which it had begun, they parted company making their way to their homes.

Coming to his village, the now very frustrated and extremely moody one, when asked about the truths he had discovered, replied dejectedly, “Nothing can be truly known!” The quiescent traveler, upon arriving home, began to speak of all that she had seen and heard, sharing all the mysteries she had witnessed. She told story upon story; day and night people came from far and near to hear what she had learned. In fact, so much had she learned that she is still sharing the story of it to this day!¹⁶

Story number two.

When asked by some young ones about the meaning of the words in their language for the Creator, Kitche Nisgam, an elder, said, “Well, it is like the word in the Bible that the Hebrew people had for their God – Yahweh. No one really knows entirely what it means.” The Creator of all things is so much a mystery His name does not describe who He is but only helps us speak of Him. Then he told this story:

Many years ago, two people went walking. It was on the flat land. As they walked, they noticed a hill far in the west and said to each other, “Let’s go up that hill over to the west; let’s see what is on the other side!” And so the two of them walked and then climbed until they had reached the top of the hill. On the other side the two noticed yet another, larger, hill, so they decided to climb it as well.

¹⁶ The source of this story is unknown and has not been traced to an original telling, but it has been told in many places where Native North American people gather.

They had not even finished climbing this hill when they saw a third, even larger hill, behind the one they were climbing.

One after another, hill after hill, this kept on all day. An even larger one followed each hill they climbed. Now, in those days, people could walk great distances in a single day; so you can see, they would have covered a lot of ground by the end of the day.

Finally, at the top of the biggest hill yet, with another looming high above them in the distance, they said to one another, "This must be what Nisgam is like!"¹⁷

Elaine Jahner (1989, 193–94) notes several important dimensions to the second story, which, together with the first, give us hints about worldview and spiritual understanding from a Native perspective.¹⁸ First, she notes, the searchers think they are exploring the physical universe, when all of a sudden they sense or realize the mysterious depth and interconnectedness of the physical and spiritual one. Second, Jahner observes, the search is not an individual one – two people journey toward the west. The search is a human search within the rest of the community of creation, not a person-centered one explored in the inner sanctum of each human being. And third, she emphasizes, the searchers' response to their new insight is an awed response to mystery, not an effort to fully comprehend it. To a large extent these stories identify the focal challenges encountered in understanding an aspect of life that is dramatically different between Native and non-Native peoples, whether past or present: the way(s) in which the physical/material aspects of creation are related to the spiritual.

When engaged in conversation about such things, Native people might be more likely to describe the world as an interconnected reality that is possessed of spirituality in

¹⁷ This archetypal story, Jahner notes, is told in various ways among different peoples about their name for the Creator of all things.

¹⁸ These have been amplified here for the purposes of this paper.

its entirety.¹⁹ They might use terms like “mystery,” “harmony,” and “balance” to describe the world in which they find themselves. They would also be more likely, even today, to be inclined toward a communal, interrelated expression of life – seeking to describe it more in terms of relationship and collective success, less in terms of individualism or individual accomplishment. The Lakota expression, *Mitakuye Oyasin!* (We are all related) captures it simply. What’s more, we might be more likely to find in such people a willingness to allow that some things will always, indeed more often than not *must*, remain a mystery, unexplored beyond a simple point of awareness obvious to the people involved.

The forgoing appears to contrast sharply with the experience and understanding of many in the Western world in both historic and present-day expression. To the Native people described above this would seem to be easily discernible in the writings and behaviors – past and present – of people of or influenced by a Western worldview.²⁰ What is the upshot? After four hundred plus years of colonial encounter, there continues to exist a discernible attitude in many *Mi'kmaw* people that living in the white man’s world, following the white man’s religion, is a denial of all that is internally true and right about

¹⁹ This is not to suggest that Western people are not “other-oriented” or disposed to cultivate relationships of importance. It is clear, however, as Paul Hiebert (1999, xiii–xv) makes us aware, that significantly higher/lower value is assigned by different people and people groups to specific, identifiable characteristics of life – worldview particulars that differentiate them from other people/groups.

²⁰ Jenkins (2004) describes the growing trend in the twentieth century toward an embracing of some of the behaviors of Native peoples by Euro-Americans so that this is less clear today; however, I would assert it is still more likely a matter of appropriating these behaviors out of personal interest and benefit than a transformation of worldview. See also Berkhofer (1978, 3–22).

being *L'nug* (a person).²¹ It's as if following this way requires them to believe that God made them who they are only to stand back and laugh at them while they stumble about trying hard to be – or become – someone else. This attitude is no more poignantly expressed than in the words of one of Robinson's interviewees, Jonal:

The God we knew before colonization is as valid as the Christian God. What about all the other nations and the gods they had before Christianity? How old is Christianity? Two thousand years old. What happened before that? What about the other nations of the world and their beliefs, didn't they exist? ... Another thing, God is genderless. There's no gender in the Mi'kmaw language, there's equality for all.... We have lost our place in the cosmos, but how do we get it back? I would say, not in the Church. (Robinson 2005, 42)

Is it possible that, in significant measure, this attitude has to do with the challenge of being asked to jettison a worldview that makes more sense than the one being offered as a replacement? One of these worldviews, the one that has come as part of the packaging in which Christianity has been wrapped, holds the spiritual in tension with the physical/material, whereby spirituality is not experienced as part of a whole. Spirituality, described this way, in behavioral terms, seems, to the Native person, at odds with a reality in which spirituality is ontological in nature.

History is an important guide for us as we back our way into the future. It directs us (if we will allow it) along pathways that, while they may be partially observable via peripheral vision, still provide a challenge to total recognition and require, therefore, our utmost attention.²² Thus, to further the point made above, it is important not simply to

²¹ There are variants in the spelling in the literature including *L'nu*, *L'nuk*, *Elnoo*, *Elnu*. A brief treatment of *Mi'kmaw* personhood will be done in Chapter 2 under *Mi'kmaw* Life and Lifestyle.

²² In a personal note, Michael Rynkiewich emphasized that this is not the standard Euro-North-American value; which is to forget the past, image the future, and then try to

learn from the past but to understand that we exist in the present moment because of all that has gone before us; to know the past in order to understand the present – in the hope there might be a good future. J. Philip Newell (1999, 4), quoting John Scotus Eriugena, Celtic teacher of the ninth century, put it this way: “All life is interwoven, past and present, seen and unseen.” And that is precisely why there is a need for this study: building on that point of Eriugena to guide the future of ministry in Native North America, as well as in other Indigenous contexts, from the point of view that history, not the future, is responsible for our present. Hopefully, it will also provide groundwork for a different understanding of the nature of the spiritual, one that is rooted in the past, an understanding that, if embraced, might provide a resolution to other historic challenges to the Church’s presence in Indigenous context.

Is it possible that efforts at evangelism and discipleship directed toward Native peoples have suffered loss because the core understandings of the nature of the spiritual, while employing similar language, conveyed very different meanings? Is spirituality, as Native people’s lifestyle and teaching would seem to understand, an ontological quality of “being in creation” or, as seems to be more common in the Western world, a matter of human behavior and practice? Because this dichotomy appears to be conveyed in the historical recordings of the two peoples in the 1600s period of Western mission, I propose to study the concepts and understandings of the nature of the spiritual and of worldview among and between *Mi'kmaw* peoples and those of French/Jesuit heritage. Specifically, *this research is to discover, in more depth than has previously been undertaken, the*

live into it. In some respects, this is a “type” for other worldview perspective clashes that frequently crop up *and* the reason for which this study was initiated. See, for example, Stewart and Bennett (1991).

differences between Mi'kmaq and corresponding French/Jesuit understandings of the nature of the spiritual, in particular, spirituality as an ontological category – including any values at the ideological and affective levels that proceed from these understandings – in order to assess the praxis of historical and contemporary ministry.

Research Questions

Although there is a commonly held perception that the various peoples of Native North America have strikingly similar worldviews and understandings of the nature of the spiritual, the vast numbers of cultures and contexts make a comparative analysis across all of them impossible for a short work. This study will therefore focus on the *Mi'kmaw* peoples of the *Wa'bana'ki* Confederacy, a tribal alliance in existence at the time of contact and still present today, though in a much-reduced form. It is hoped this might help to explain what we find in the contemporary *Mi'kmaw* community in terms of the results of mission and the embrace of Christianity. Several specific questions will guide the research:

1. What understanding of the spiritual emerges from the descriptions available in the literature concerning the behavior and beliefs of the *Mi'kmaq* and those of the French/Jesuits as represented in the French encounter between 1600 and 1750 CE?
2. Where does the understanding of the spiritual lie for both peoples during this period? For example, in reading the archives, can one distinguish an understanding in the ideological realm as opposed to the ontological realm of life?

Further, is spirituality rooted in the behavioral realm or is it rooted outside the person in creation itself? Finally, recognizing the difficulties inherent in accessing an oral culture through literature, is there evidence of holistic/monistic or dualistic understandings of spirituality in either or both cultures in the literature?

3. In an analysis of texts written between 1900 and 2000, does evidence emerge that shows continuity or change in the understanding and practice on the ground between 1600 and 1750, for both groups – either as missionary or the subject of mission? How has the understanding of the two groups changed over time? How do their understandings now affect the ministry situation?
4. What can be learned through this comparison between the worldviews of two groups over time, particularly in relation to the theology of mission that directs the task of spreading the good news of God's love for us in Jesus Christ? That is, are there differences in the understanding of the spiritual that might account for the embrace of or failure to embrace Christian faith by Native North American people?

These questions will be explored using six specific lenses that will attempt to ascertain the viewpoint of the spiritual and spirituality through the cosmological understanding that is evident; the perspective that is in evidence concerning the land and the rest of creation; the philosophy of life and death that is communicated; the way that words, deeds, and values intersect; the nature and understanding of relationships; and what is presented or understood concerning religion.

Assumptions

There are some clear – at least to me – assumptions operating in my thinking in setting up and undertaking this study.²³ First, I am assuming that one can assess the nature of *Mi'kmaw* understanding in the earlier period in question through the extant literature and the oral traditions that survive; that there is an understanding of the spiritual that can be apprehended through the literature and those traditions that will be sufficiently accurate to provide an adequate foundation for this research and any conclusions.

Second, while it is likely there was significant difference between the French layperson and the clergy in many areas of perception and basic belief, the same was less likely to be true of the smaller, more compact societies of the *Mi'kmaw* peoples. Therefore, it is assumed that most, if not all, of the members would hold similar basic views about the issues in question.

Third, it is assumed that the worldview of the French/Jesuit missionaries studied, including their perceptions of the spiritual, is sufficiently broadly dispersed to make it possible to draw conclusions about the rootedness of the ideas and behaviors of missionaries in general during this period. In other words, there was a sufficiently pan-missionary embrace of the core understandings of the spiritual among the French mission communities in question during the period that generalizations can be made from the writings of those surveyed.

Furthermore, it is assumed that while there would be nuanced differences between

²³ The question as to whether a Native North American person is better situated than a Euro-Canadian or Euro-American to undertake this study is not in issue here. I do, however, imagine that a Native North American person familiar with her or his own culture and history is in a better position to access and evaluate the beliefs and behaviors described in the literature.

Catholic peoples and the emerging Protestant populations, the foundations of Protestant theology and its emerging mission praxis (limited as it was in this period) will ostensibly be those of the Catholic Church at this point. It is also believed that the events of separation of the Catholic Church will have been proximal enough in time to significantly mitigate any differences within the clergy.²⁴

Delimitations

For the purposes of the study and to make it manageable, this research will be limited to the *Mi'kmaw* peoples and the French/Jesuits missionaries who came to *Mi'kmaw* lands during the 1600–1750 period in question.

The study will make no attempt to evaluate the degree to which the Christian spirituality noted in the study was fully embedded in or embraced in mainstream society. Instead the focus will be on the self-described and inferred spirituality of the missionaries (and, where germane to the discussion due to the focus of missionary writing, lay people and political leaders) as portrayed in their own writings or in the behaviors clearly evident and depicted in the writings.

There is a concern that the inability to trace a specific people group within the French/Jesuit community for the second part of the research will make the results of the study invalid. Therefore, I will limit my study to the writings of those of Acadian ancestry whose Christian history can be traced to the earlier period of French/Jesuit

²⁴ I note for, example, the cooperation between the Calvinist Huguenot De Monts and the Jesuits in the first voyage and attempt at mission with some hints that they were not all that far apart in their understanding of mission.

ministry and who have written on this or a closely tied parallel subject in the period from 1900 to 2000.

While there is concern that the understanding of the spiritual within the French/Jesuit community will be vastly different among the professional religionists, the educated political leaders, and the largely uneducated lay people, a similar concern is not present with respect to the earlier *Mi'kmaq* but may be present in the more contemporary population. In the case of the *Mi'kmaq*, therefore, the wider community will be used for the earlier period, and I will limit my extension of the study in the second part to those from within the communities who have written on the subject and, who have had a consistent tenure within the region. The research will focus mainly on qualitative data.

Definition of Terms and their Usage

Terms I will employ, some perhaps in ways not entirely consistent with common use, will require definition. The following will be the working definitions for the purposes of this project.

Dualism

Dualism describes a binary way of thinking where two forces act in constant opposition to one another. There are various forms of dualism – or, better stated, there are a variety of ways in which the ideas contained within the notion of dualism are employed.

Classical dualism suggests that there is a perfect image or likeness of the physical/material world in some ethereal, non-material reality that we will call “the Heavens,” which in the temporal realm exist only as dim shadows of the real.

Gnostic dualism posits that the physical and material world is evil and must be shunned, then ultimately escaped. The means of escape is the acquisition of esoteric or special knowledge (Gr. *Gnosis*) of the spiritual realm, which is all that is good.

Philosophical/theological dualism is the belief in a co-eternal binary of spiritual good and spiritual evil. Zoroastrianism is the oldest religious system strictly constructed on this understanding and posits that Spenta Mainyu (the bounteous spirit) and Angra Mainyu (the destructive spirit), both of whom proceed from the Creator, Ahura Mazda, co-exist in a cosmic battle in which human beings are enlisted.

Cartesian dualism, rooted in the now famous proposition of Rene Descartes, “*Je pense donc je suis!*” (I think, therefore I am), suggests a strict separation of the cognitive/emotive appraisal of one’s existence from the empirical and sensate reality of that existence. In other words, the only genuine way to “know” something is through reason alone because the propensity for the sensate to change frequently causes it to be an unreliable proof of existence.

Each of these forms of dualism will be referenced in this project, if not directly by name, by their concepts and the contribution they have made to historical and contemporary understandings of the nature of the spiritual or, in some cases, simply to their influence in contemporary thinking.

Mi'kmaq, First Nation(s) and other terms for Native North Americans

Apart from the manifold and varied issues related to treaty, no single issue has caused greater frustration in the Native North American context than the question, What are we to be called or in what way do we refer to ourselves? Are we Native Americans? If

we employ that terminology, how do we deal with those who are residents of Canada or Mexico? Are we Indians? Were that true, why be called by a name someone else uses for themselves – the ones Columbus was really in search of when, finding himself lost, we discovered him! Are we Aboriginals? Using a term applied most fully to Aborigines, the original inhabitants of Australia (whether appropriately or not is a different argument) may seem more accommodating but is it? How about American Indian or Native or...?’

As we can see, the potential complications, never mind offense with terminology, are enormous.

For the purposes of this study then, I will employ the following terms:

1. First Nations when referring to those peoples who identify themselves as independent sociopolitical entities in the contemporary context, and who have a traceable heritage in the land as socio-cultural units.
2. Métis as those people, not exclusively of the historic Red River or Batoche communities in Canada, who are of mixed heritage, French or Scottish European and First Nations, who self-identify as Métis.
3. Inuit when referring to those peoples of the Arctic and High Arctic who, historically mislabeled Eskimo, are politically represented by the *Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami*.
4. Native North American when referring to all of those people groups of varying cultures and languages that were, at the point of first contact (we will use the commonly agreed date of 1492) resident within the contiguous borders of what we now refer to as Canada, the United States, and Mexico.
5. Indigenous will be used frequently as it is the term applied to peoples from

various places in the world and captures the growing edge of usage. When used, it will be capitalized as a proper noun to reflect a status and concept of peoples equal to European, American, or Canadian.

6. *Mi'kmaq*.²⁵ Often also referred to in the historic literature as *Souriquois*, *Armouchiquois*, or *Tarrentines* by the English, they refer to themselves when speaking one of the three dialects of their language, as *L'nug* – the People.

There are several orthographies and therefore spellings that have been in usage by the *Mi'kmaw* people dependent on the time period and region of use within *Mi'kma'ki*. Historic orthographies include

1. the Rand, developed by Baptist linguist Silas Rand in 1875
2. the Pacifique, developed in 1894 by Fr. Pacifique, a priest attached to the Listuguj community
3. more recently, the Lexicon orthography (not to be confused with the Listuguj orthography) developed by Albert DeBlois and Alphonse Metallic
4. the Smith-Francis orthography, developed in 1974 by Bernard Francis and Douglas Smith, and adopted by the Grand Council of the *Mi'kmaw* Nation in 1980, it is now in most common usage. In the Smith-Francis orthography, *Mi'kmaw* is used for the singular, adjectival, and adverbial forms, whereas *Mi'kmaq* is used in the case of the plural.
5. the Listuguj orthography, in contemporary use in Quebec *Mi'kmaw*

²⁵ Anglophones have typically written and pronounced it 'Micmac' right through the latter years of the twentieth century, and many of those who were residentially schooled have continued with the practice. In any quotations, I will use the spelling that the original author or speaker has used, but we will use the Smith-Francis orthography for any original work.

communities and which differs with the Smith-Francis orthography essentially only in the marks used for pronunciation

Holism

Holism, not precisely the opposite of or in specific juxtaposition to dualism, as I will define and use it in this project, describes that state in which creation was first laid down in the narrative of Genesis – perfect, without blemish, interconnected, and interdependent, in perfect balance and harmony, the whole being of the cosmos. Holism is not about a singularity of substance or essence as would be expected in a monist view. Instead, it is about the interrelationship of the various different aspects of something or some system that make it a whole, and which, while dependent on all elements that contribute to the whole, is nonetheless, greater than the sum of the parts. Randy Woodley has noted that

Native American concepts of well-being seem to include a view of the land, the people, all animal and plant life, in fact, every part of God’s creation, to reflect a sense that all things are related to one another and should be held in balance or harmony with one another, not unlike the Hebrew worldview and concept that is referred to as *shalom*. (2010, 23)

It is this interrelatedness Woodley describes that captures the Native North American worldview that I define as holism.

Monism

Monism posits that all is one in essence or substance; that there is a merged reality where, in the case of human beings, individuality, as a temporary conscious state, is exchanged for the state of Nirvana when individuality is merged into oneness. This is not what is being described when a *Mi'kmaw* person of old would speak of the

interconnectedness of all things.²⁶ When *Mi'kmaw* elders and other *Mi'kmaw* people speak, it is not that they believe there was an origin in some proto-singularity or that there is a future time when such will be the state of things again. It is simply understood that we proceed from the essence – the energy, if you will – of the Creator and exist within and are enabled, indeed provided for, by that essence or energy. Marie Battiste notes that language is of the essence in this understanding.

Mi'kmaq language reflects a philosophy, a philosophy of how we shall live with one another, a philosophy that reflects how we treat each other, and help all things in the world fit together.... *Mi'kmaq* people believe that because all things are connected, all of us must depend on each other and help each other as a way of life, for that is what it means to be in balance and harmony with the earth.... *Mi'kmaq* language embodies the verb and relationships to each other; how we are kin to each other.... So within the philosophy of language is a notion of how we should relate to one another and how we should retain that relationship. The verb-based language provides the consciousness of what it is to be *Mi'kmaq* and the interdependence of all things. (1997b, 147–48)

Perhaps this is what the Apostle Paul referenced when he quoted the Stoics on Mars Hill, “For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’”²⁷ Paul is saying literally, “within” him (*Theos*) we live and move and have our being. This is closer to what the old *Mi'kmaq* believed. This is not, as some would have us believe, entelechy – the “Lucasian Force”²⁸ which, while responsible for the development of all, is itself non-personal.

Whitehead (1988, 10) describes this as if it were a “second law” of *Mi'kmaw*

²⁶ Though not precisely the way in which the Lakota describe it with “*Mitakuye Oyasin!*” (we are all related), in *Mi'kmaw, Nogumaach* has a similar thrust.

²⁷ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), Acts 17:28.

²⁸ Referencing “the Force” of *Star Wars* fame.

cosmology: “The part encapsulates the whole. And as long as a piece of it survives, the whole can be read out, reborn from it.” In that sense, it is not unlike Francis Collins’s (2006, 2) paraphrase of Bill Clinton describing the four-letter genetic code as “the language of God” – the requisite building materials continuously made available for new “stuff,” the origins of the new in the old.

Spiritual

In this ecstasy of mine God had neither form, color, odor, or taste; moreover, that the feeling of his presence was accompanied with no determinate localization. It was rather as if my personality had been transformed by the presence of a *spiritual spirit*. But the more I seek words to express this intimate intercourse, the more I feel the impossibility of describing the thing by any of our usual images. At bottom the expression most apt to render what I felt is this: God was present though invisible; he fell under no one of my senses, yet my consciousness perceived him. (James 2004, 51)

The term “spiritual” is one of those “difficult to quantify” realities of existence that was elevated to prominence by William James’s *Varieties of Religious Experience*. However, even the “all-knowing” Wikipedia²⁹ has but a few truncated and amorphous entries associated with the term. In general, within Christian contexts, the word “spiritual” references that which pertains to the spirit; it is typically employed to discuss

²⁹ For a term that has seen increasing usage and has gained in popularity even as religious participation has declined, it is an amazingly difficult term to adequately and firmly define. See, for example, the limited scope of the entry at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual> as well as the entry at Wiktionary, which is equally void of detail.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as follows: of, relating to, consisting of, or affecting the spirit: incorporeal <*spiritual* needs> 2a : of or relating to sacred matters <*spiritual* songs> b : ecclesiastical rather than lay or temporal <*spiritual* authority> <lords *spiritual*> 3: concerned with religious values 4: related or joined in spirit <our *spiritual* home> <his *spiritual* heir> 5a : of or relating to supernatural beings or phenomena b : of, relating to, or involving.

one aspect of human experience, behavior, or existence and relates, in Christian theology at least, to one aspect of the generally accepted tripartite character of humanness, which, together with the other parts, is understood to represent the whole of our nature: body, soul, and spirit. It has, as will be noted in the discussion below, an ethereal, non-tangible quality about it that renders it difficult, some would say impossible, to quantify.

Spirituality

The term spirituality can be even more tricky to define. It derives from the French *spiritualité*, which is itself birthed from the Latin *spiritus* “of breathing, of the spirit.” It appears in restricted use the early 1500s and comes into more common usage in the late 1800s, when it begins to be applied to the set of collected experiences of an individual with reference to the spiritual.³⁰ In ordinary usage within a Christian dominated world, spirituality has been used to describe the numerous sets of experiences that a person or group of people have or had of the spiritual/ethereal. Reference to different human “spiritualities” emerges somewhere in the twentieth century to describe various sets of experiences that differ from one another – sometimes markedly.³¹ This allows for the

³⁰ According to Michael Hogan “among other factors, declining membership of organized religions and the growth of secularism in the Western world have given rise to a broader view of spirituality” (2010). Gorsuch and Miller go further to say that “The term ‘spiritual’ is now frequently used in contexts in which the term ‘religious’ was formally employed” (1999). See also James (1902).

³¹ “Spiritualities” is a term, often used in the Middle Ages, that refers to the income sources of a diocese or other ecclesiastical establishment that came from tithes. It also referred to income that came from other religious sources, such as offerings from church services or ecclesiastical fines. Under canon law, spiritualities were allowed only to the clergy (Corèdon and Williams, 2004, 263). In the nineteenth century, the spiritualities or spirituals were revenues connected with the spiritual duties and the cure of souls, and consisted almost entirely of tithes, glebe lands, and houses (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 1989).

categorization and classification of these sets of experiences, sometimes in a comparative fashion, other times in relative terms, but always, it seems, as a means of describing human behavior toward or about the ethereal or transcendent.

At times it seemed “spiritual” was a stand-in word for anything that could not be quantified in some more empirical way. For example, the use of the notion of “higher power” in the “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous (2001, 45, 2), which clearly points the individual to “our Creator,” takes on whatever meaning the individual ascribes to it in the contemporary life of Alcoholics Anonymous, causing great angst for many traditionalist sponsors. To these traditional AA practitioners the nature of the “higher power,” intended to allow differences in understandings of God that were still by and large “orthodox,” has given way to a more ethereal notion no longer related to the idea of Creator so much as a projection of the addict’s need to avoid personal responsibility and place it on someone or something else.³² It is this difficult-to-grasp quality of the concept – perhaps better put, this almost indiscriminate use of the notion of the spiritual – that will have a significant impact on our discussions in the second half of this project.

Worldview

While the concept may be considerably older, the word “worldview” first appears in

In contemporary usage however, it is more common to use spiritualities in reference to the multitude of spiritual behavioral sets that describe what human beings think of and act on with respect to the ethereal.

³² The official website of AA offers an extensive discussion of a variety of myths about the way an addicted person engages the AA program, not least of which is the “God as a doorknob” argument concerning the spiritual core of the program. See their website, accessed August 13, 2011 for this discussion: <http://www.bigbooksponsorship.org/index.cfm?Fuseaction=ArticleDisplay&ArticleID=481>.

1858 in an English translation of the German *weltanschauung*.³³ The term as it is used at present relates to the way in which people makes sense of their world. Roughly speaking, it is the collection of experiences and cognitive and affective assumptions that, merged together, create a grid, or lens, through which people filter observations of and subsequently come to interpret the world around them. The *American Heritage Dictionary*,³⁴ translating directly from the German, describes worldview as “The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world; a collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or group.” According to Hiebert (1994, 47, 48) this assumptive framework “provide[s] people with a way of looking at the world that makes sense out of it, that gives them a feeling of being at home, and that reassures them that they are right. This worldview serves as the foundation on which they construct their explicit belief and value systems, and the social institutions within which they live their lives.”

Much is made today of the idea of embracing a Christian worldview – one that informs the believer’s behavior with respect to all manner of things in the world in which she or he is engaged or with which he or she might need to make decisions. Another effort in a similar direction, if not exactly the same, is to talk about embracing a biblical worldview – as if there were a singular frame of reference. The ideas of a Christian or biblical worldview³⁵ both fall significantly short of the likelihood of actually

³³ The word derives from *Welt* (world) and *Anschauung*, (perception or view). It has a central place in Freud’s theories. His definition is helpful. He says, “By *Weltanschauung*, then, I mean an intellectual construction which gives a unified solution of all the problems of our existence in virtue of a comprehensive hypothesis, a construction, therefore, in which no question is left open and in which everything in which we are interested finds a place.” (Freud 1933: 27).

³⁴ 2009 edition.

³⁵ Even as I use both the term and its historical referents in this dissertation, I am

accomplishing what each of them purports to be attempting to do – assisting people to live a more Christlike life and/or a life that is more rooted in the teachings of the Bible. Of course, we must ask, Why? It is because even the act of reading the Bible or describing oneself as a Christian takes place in the context of a specific set of circumstances and influences which therefore contribute to determining how one defines and also interprets the idea of “Christian” and “biblical.” Does worldview compose the lens of culture through which all else is observed, evaluated, and acted upon? If so, is there only one correct one through which biblical “truth” may be apprehended and comprehended? This will come into play in our analysis.

Paul Hiebert in his posthumously published book, *Transforming Worldviews*, sought to identify just how it is that people change with respect to their values, motivators, frames of reference, and ideals – aspects of human perception and behavior that many placed in the basket of worldview. In an effort to comprehend transformation in Christian conversion, Hiebert concludes, with Philips that stated belief with respect to religious faith does not necessarily always comport with behavior. In other words, worldview and religious behavior don’t always line up. He notes,

Many missionaries looked for evidence that people were truly converted, such as putting on clothes; giving up alcohol, tobacco, and gambling; refusing to bow to ancestors; taking baptism and communion; and attending church regularly. Such changes are important as evidence of conversion, but it became clear that these did not necessarily mean that underlying beliefs had changed. People could adapt their behavior to get jobs, wind status, and gain power without abandoning their old beliefs.

conscious that many within the anthropological community no longer use the term worldview in any particular technical or analytical sense. Instead, it is more likely to be used informally to sum up a variety of characteristics of an individual or group of individuals perspectives without, at the same time, seeking to pigeonhole it in any analytical or scientific sense.

They could give Christian names to their pagan gods and spirits and so “Christianize” their traditional religions. (Hiebert 2008, 10)

We will have more to say about this later in the study.

Methodology

The research will take place in two parts and use two methods of interpretation of the data. Part I will seek to describe the *Mi'kmaw* worldview and understanding of the spiritual from the time of first continuous mission contact (roughly 1600) through to 1750. These “traits” or themes will be contrasted with their French/Jesuit contemporaries as represented mainly in the missionaries of the day looking for similarities and differences with a view to explanations that might be forthcoming.

Part II will focus on the literature of the period from 1900 to 2000 (Part I having provided the historical context for a contemporary comparative), using a sampling of the literature produced by the *Mi'kmaq* and Euro-North American peoples in the period. I will seek to contrast the groups within and across the time periods in question as well as across the groups themselves.

Of necessity, the time frames are wider than one might like. In part this is due to the lack of primary source materials written within the *Mi'kmaw* community in the early period – materials that directly relate to the topic at hand. It is therefore necessary to use the written material available from the French (and other European where appropriate) perspective with some interpretation. A greater time frame provides some help with this. Though less than ideal, it is hoped the time span can serve to provide a deep enough slice of history so as to allow both interpolative and extrapolative interpretations of the

qualitative data to be used as well as cross-category comparatives. It is further hoped that the intersection of these two will provide some accuracy of assessment.

Six aspects of each people group's reality, circumstance, belief, and praxis will be examined:

- their cosmology and understanding of the created order and its means of creation
- the land and the rest of creation with respect to its relationship and purpose
- understandings of the nature of and consequences of life and death
- the relationship between words, deeds, and values
- the perception of the nature and purpose of relationships
- an overview of religious frameworks

Using both a historical and a biblical/theological analysis of the data, the overall objective will be to determine if there is, in fact, a difference between the two peoples' that is not only clear but so distinctly different as to provide a plausible explanation for the difference in Christian experience we observe in each people group and the accompanying low mission impact among the *Mi'kmaq* that is to be observed in the later period. It is important to place the point of origin of this study in its historical context so as to identify a point of origin; it is equally important in doing so, to recognize that for the *Mi'kmaw* people, history is still more likely to influence present behavior than not.

Biblical theology is crucial to providing an anchor point for analysis because an assumption of this study is that Jesus' person, work, life, teaching, death, and resurrection are as germane to *Mi'kmaq* and French people (and all other peoples for that matter) and the rest of creation today as in 1600. By that I mean that what we believe to be true is not reflected in our stated doctrines and creeds – though they are good places to hang points

of reference. Where we really find what we believe to be true is in our behavior – what we do – not simply, if at all many times, in what we say. Contrasting the doing with the saying will be critical to articulating a place of departure for change as well as the nature of the change that must be made, if not the specific trail that the change will take.

What Data will be needed?

To complete the study I will need to acquire data focused on the spiritual understandings of early Jesuit and other Catholic missionaries working among the *Mi'kmaw* peoples – specifically, their recorded perceptions and actions related to worldview and the spiritual as either ontological or behavioral. Because missionary involvement in the *Mi'kmaw* context included involvement in the political realm, political correspondence, which included or engaged missionaries, may also be of interest.

A secondary focus of the study will be to ascertain, if possible, whether the articulation of French/Jesuit Christian spirituality in the theology, mission practices, and subsequent formation of Christian identity, is consistent with a philosophical, theological and material holism (as defined in the study) or, is a reflection of a present and growing dualism – or, is it something altogether different. The same objective of analysis will characterize a part of the focus on *Mi'kmaw* perspective.

How will the data be collected?

In Part I, this study will explore the nature of French/Jesuit worldview and spirituality as represented in the literature in the period from 1600 CE to approximately 1750 CE, contrasting it with *Mi'kmaw* tribal conceptions as found in the same and any other literature during this period. Data in the 1600–1750 period will be obtained from,

among others, the following primary written sources: the *Jesuit Relations*,³⁶ the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola and writings of other missionaries not included in the *Relations*, such as Chrestien Le Clercq's, *New Relations of Gaspesia*. I will also review any secondary sources, including other missionary correspondence that is included in colonial reporting and/or materials from later missionary experiences that reflect on the analysis of the primary sources such as the work of Silas Tertius Rand. Data will be also collected from other literature of the period related to mission, political communications, and colonial life and any secondary sources that are subsequently indicated. The oral tradition of the *Mi'kmaq* and of other *Wa'bana'ki* Confederacy peoples will also be accessed where needed, for support of a point or, for clarification or rebuttal.

In Part II the focus will be on the writings of the Christian community anchored in the respective groups of people: contemporary French/Jesuit perspectives will be looked at to determine their impact on the life-ways and worldview of the Acadian community. They are the only group of French colonial peoples with a relatively unbroken continuous residency in the region from the earlier time. *Mi'kmaw* writings, including the poetry of Rita Joe, the writings of Daniel Paul and Murdena Marshall, and secondary observers

³⁶ The *Jesuit Relations* are an early ethnography composed of a complex series of "Missionary Letters Home." It contains contributions by many authors over a period of 200 years beginning in 1610 (the first dating; the first printed volume appeared in 1632). As such, the documents have formats unique in some respects to each contributor. Reuben Gold Thwaites' translation is the most commonly used by scholars writing in English. It is readily accessible online in the Creighton manuscripts and has been chosen for this research. A constant frustration with the volumes is the numbering of pages and sections. The translated works contain paragraph numbers, original page numbers, volume numbers etc. In order to streamline citations and make them more accessible, I have chosen the following method of citation: author, year of writing, volume number, page(s) as found in the Creighton pdf versions, e.g. (Biard 1611, Vol. 1, 26). Where Thwaites himself is being quoted, the date of his translation will be used.

such as the work of Ruth Whitehead Lewis, will also be examined. Once again, in addition to the written records, the oral history of the *Mi'kmaq* and other *Wa'bana'ki* peoples will be accessed as and where possible to bring further clarity to the discussion.³⁷

Theoretical Framework

In this section I will briefly outline the research models that I will be using as well as some of the assumptions concerning those models that may dictate how I utilize the data from the literature in my analysis.

Worldview

The unity of humans with nature is broken in urban and modern societies... Man comes out from the unity of the universe within which he is oriented now as something separate from nature and comes to confront nature as something with physical qualities upon which he may work his will. As this happens, the universe loses its moral character and becomes to him indifferent, a system uncaring of man. The existence today of ethical systems and of religions only qualifies this statement; ethics and religion struggle in one way or another to take account of a physical universe indifferent to man. (Redfield in Hiebert 2008, 62)

Hiebert's work in *Critical Contextualization* and in *Worldviews* will be used to provide an initial evaluation of the nature of any worldview change in Christian Native peoples with respect to their concept of the spiritual and spirituality as well as anything we might observe in the French/Jesuit influenced peoples. Hiebert's contention that worldview needed to be transformed in order to realize full or authentic conversion will

³⁷ It is significant that in 1997 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that oral tradition could be given the weight of juridical truth in a *Gitksan* land claims settlement as evidence for the history of a people on the land. The decision has come to be known as the Delgamuukw decision.

be evaluated as a means of interpreting Christian faith within the *Mi'kmaq* people.

Hiebert's work in worldview comparatives, undertaken between Indian (India) and Euro-Americans, may provide a good footing for understanding the French/Jesuit encounter with the *Mi'kmaq*. I will seek to use his worldview chart to determine its potential to describe possible points of conversion and conflict in the encounter of the two groups. In its use I will seek to add the dimension of spirituality, building the case that points of conflict were often perceived as spiritual issues. Conflict over land, for example, was considered a spiritual issue: for the French/Jesuit the material and physical reality of the land took precedence because there was no conception of its spirituality; for the *Mi'kmaq*, living a more holistic spirituality meant that they and the land were interconnected and therefore inseparable so, for example, all one could do was determine use not ownership.

At the same time, I will undertake an analysis and critique of Hiebert's understanding of the process of conversion; an approach that highlights cognition, diminishes the affective and experiential, and emphasizes the temporal at the expense of the spatial.

Belief and Behavior

I also expect to draw on the work of Philip Hughes to analyze the data with respect to difference in worldview and spirituality along a behavior/belief continuum of actual beliefs versus what Hughes describes as banked and religious systems of belief – in this case, Native North American and Euro-Christian. Philip Hughes (1984, 255) suggests that the actual beliefs of an individual or group are to be understood in what is done, not what is said. In other words, we believe what we do.

I will also use Elizabeth Waters and Brian Yazzie-Burkhart's work in Native

philosophy to discuss the encounter between the French/Jesuit and *Mi'kmaq* peoples from a phenomenological perspective. Yazzie-Burkhart observes,

Phenomenology begins with a distinction between two different attitudes: the natural one and the phenomenological attitude. The natural attitude is the way we are normally taken up with the various things in the world. We walk down the street and pass the trees. We have conversations with our friends and talk about our jobs. What we do not do in this attitude is step back and reflect on this natural way we carry on in this world.... However, the phenomenological attitude is just this kind of disengagement. (2004, 24)

Does Yazzie-Burkhart's reflection on the distinction between a phenomenological attitude and one that is "natural" capture a crucial distinction? Might it offer an interpretation of any data we obtain with respect to holistic, monistic, or even dualistic expressions of spirituality in the behavior of the *Mi'kmaq* and missionaries?

Grounded Theory

Should it be evident that the previous theoretical frameworks do not adequately deal with the data emerging, grounded theory will be used to attempt to explain what has been uncovered through the literature research.

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) first proposed grounded theory. In time, Strauss and Corbin (1998, 12) made further strides with the approach, describing it as "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process." In this process, "the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data" (1998, 12). Grounded theory involves a process of collection, coding, and analysis of data to identify the emerging themes and categories that form the basic building blocks of a theory.

H. Russell Bernard (2002, 462, 463) comments about the grounded theory

approach, that it “is a set of techniques for (1) identifying categories and concepts that emerge from text, and (2) linking the concepts into substantive and formal theories.” As a method of analysis, it has a much longer history in anthropology than in sociology and is, in fact, foundational to ethnography (Bernard 2002, 463).

Biblical Theology

Finally, a biblical/theological evaluation of how the *Mi'kmaq* understood the spiritual will be undertaken and an attempt made to ascertain how their “lived theology” compared to that of the missionaries of the day. Is there evidence that the spiritual understanding of the *Mi'kmaw* people is rooted in the ontological as against the ideological – and vice versa with the missionaries? What, if any, are the major points of similarity, departure, or difference observable in the early period? Does any observed similarity or difference carry forward to the later period? What, if it is possible to determine, might be the explanation for this difference or lack thereof?

Did the gospel message, transmitted within the French/Jesuit worldview framework, especially its understanding of the nature of the spiritual, have an impact on more than the outward religious identity of the *Mi'kmaw* people? Was there a transformation of worldview? If so, what were the implications for their understanding of the spiritual? Did this affect their perception of belonging within the Christian Church?

Literature Review

I am quite conscious this study is attempting to get at something that people have historically avoided, allocating it to the “empirically unverifiable.” If only for that reason

this study must be undertaken. After all, as Hiebert (1999, 1–4) makes us aware, empiricism is not the only means of accessing what we now describe as truth; nor is it necessarily a biblical way. In fact, it is arguable that the establishment of empiricism in the Christian theological expression of modernity has been, to a large extent, the root of the problem to begin with. What’s more, if the truth we seek as followers of the Jesus Way is to be primarily apprehended by faith – in intersection with our own and our communities’ experiences, informed by the teachings of the story of scripture – then we must accept, at face value, the description of humanity as essentially spiritual.

This is not simply an issue of semantics. It goes to the question of the structure of language and the worldview a given human language espouses – the images and understandings of the cosmos it both contains and conveys. The ideas any given language expresses, the way in which language within a culture is used to describe what is seen and experienced, as Hiebert (2008, 18) and others³⁸ have explained, is crucial to this discussion. Take, for example, Western languages, structured around the noun. Within these languages “God” is immediately circumscribed by concepts of personhood – God is a proper noun. God therefore possesses human-like personality traits and characteristics, and because we understand other human behavior, God is seen to engage in the cosmos in ways that humans grasp, albeit in a very limited way, because the language used to describe God is centered on the personal pronoun. I will have more to say about this in Chapters 2 and 4.

A closer inspection reveals that these traits of God espoused by European languages are themselves filtered by the multi-layered dualist philosophical discourses of

³⁸ See, for example, the work of Sapir and Mandelbaum (1949).

the cultures of the European community that have accreted to them over the centuries. Conversations about the transcendence and immanence of God, for example, are immediately impacted because of the binary nature of noun-based languages that must have God as personal, therefore part of the creation experience, while simultaneously transcendent, therefore outside and over the creation. For the *Mi'kmaq*, there is no religious dualism, or for that matter dualism of any other sort noted in either the language or philosophy. There is however, a clear understanding of duality. Eva Battiste in Robinson (2005, 40) notes, “For the *Mi'kmaq* there is a spiritual duality. The *Mi'kmaq* respect nature and in doing so have respect for the Creator. How can you respect nature if you do not respect the Creator? One follows from the other.” Transcendence and immanence in a verb-based language are not mutually exclusive binaries at two ends of a spectrum of options but rather an interwoven tapestry of experiences of the same reality. What’s more, personhood is not impacted negatively in such a tapestry if the person is non-human. Whereas dualism essentially deals in polar binaries that have a separated quality of existence, duality speaks of an ontological difference in the realms of existential nature, activity, and responsibility between the Creator and the creation. In other words, and germane to our discussion of the *Mi'kmaq*, the creation clearly acknowledges that it is not the Creator.

Robinson offers an informed outsider’s perspective in her brief phenomenological ethnography of the *Mi'kmaq* of *Eskasoni*.

In general *Mi'kmaw* understandings of the cosmic order have a direct bearing on the beliefs and values that underlie present day *Mi'kmaw* culture and social organizations. More specifically, *Mi'kmaw* perceptions of the cosmological order influence the diverse ways in which the sacred is understood and venerated by the *Mi'kmaq* on both personal and

collective levels. (2005, 20–24)

According to Western-rooted theological and social conceptions, on the other hand, only humans are persons within creation. One can communicate with them, touch them, and interact with them and their personalities; they are present, a part of daily discourse, able to be seen and understood in ways that are familiar; they are animate and immanent. Much of the contemporary writing of the West would suggest that the physical material aspects and other creatures of creation that are not human, and therefore, not persons, cannot be interacted with in the same way. They have no personality; nor are they able to be related to in familiar “personal” ways; they do not exhibit familiar patterns – the stuff of creation that is non-human is either inanimate, non-living or, when alive, “dumb creatures.” A number of assumptions flow from this position. First is the assumption that the rest of creation has no capacity to interact with the other beings in that environment in more than an instinctual way, typically seen as providing for species survival. Second is the perception that humans alone, possessed of a spiritual nature and the image and likeness of their Creator, will be held accountable before this Creator for what they have undertaken in this life and therefore they alone will be restored. All else is simply subject to destruction. Yet in both the first and second written testamentary records, we find a discomfiting presentation: animals and the rest of the creation are not simply responsive to the rest of creation around them, but animals, at the very least, will indeed be held accountable for their actions.³⁹ I will have more to say about this in Chapter 6.

While it is understandable, in light of the drive to continue to understand existence only in light of identifiable, repeatable experimentation and observation, it is curious

³⁹ Cf. Genesis 9, Job 12, Romans 8.

nonetheless that when, in the past, evolutionary thought was not an influence, Christians would not have embraced this notion of a responsible interconnected creation. Why, for example, in Revelation, when the lion and the lamb lie down together, is it so amazing a fact? Is it not because past behavior toward one another has made it so? Is it not because now, the character and temperament of each has been modified to be what it was intended to be at the outset in Genesis 1 and 2 by reason of the work of Jesus Christ in redeeming them? Only in a cosmology and attending eschatology that posits and requires its destruction and replacement *ex nihilo*, can such complex creation interdependencies be supplanted by a new start. What a pale work this makes of the passion of Jesus when His work is adequate only to redeem human souls and their reunited bodies!

For people inside the range of the developing panoramas of Western thought then, existence within creation – if and when, in post-Enlightenment society, it is acknowledged as creation – has been an increasingly empiricist experience, one wrapped around the notion of the human person as the focal point of the known world with humans alone, possessed of the innate quality of being “spiritual.” Most certainly, this is not the experience of the Indigenous communities of the world, indeed the majority of peoples of the world; nor is it specifically a biblically framed picture of God’s creation – except for those for whom the cards are already stacked toward this as the answer. But it is the common pattern of Western Christian development – whether that development be considered in terms of the economic or in terms strictly theological. The continuing influence is enormous.

If, on the other hand, the Apostle Paul’s assertion that it is the tent of our dwelling that will be put off in death awaiting the resurrection, it would be logical to assume that

the essence of our existence – our soul or spirit⁴⁰ – continues in an albeit changed state, awaiting that reunion. In the same way, because the rest of creation “groans awaiting its own redemption,” it too would seem to await the same reunification to its redeemed state, in harmony with all else as per the intent and plan of the one who created all. For the believer, that reunion is an expectation appropriated by faith in the person, work, life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus conveyed to us by the witness of all creation, the testimony of scripture, and the story of those whose lives receive His gift. For the rest of creation, it is also by the grace of the one who “subjected it to futility” for purpose that it serve as a witness of the plan and intent of the Creator.

If this is so – and it seems clear from the previously noted evidence that it is – then even if a behavioral definition of spirituality is the appropriate one, the behavior we “see” will provide compelling evidence of the core of our beliefs about God and ourselves beyond what can be accessed in a simple phenomenological study. In this regard, Phillip Hughes appears to be correct in noting that what we believe – our actual belief – is reflected in our behavior. Since the 1940s, anthropologists have termed these the “ideal” and the “real.” In the words of Michael Rynkiewich, “Show me what you do, and I’ll tell you what you actually believe.”⁴¹ For the *Mi’kmaq*, this may best be summed up in the words of Jonal, a *Mi’kmaq* man from *Unama’ki* (Cape Breton). In a reflection of the missionary encounter that is obviously focused in the post-Jesuit, post-Acadian period, he notes,

⁴⁰ An important distinction needs to be made here about the difference between soul and spirit – the discussion historically about tri- and bi-partite reality will be focused on in Chapter 6 as we discuss the nature of the Christian worldview and its biblical moorings.

⁴¹ Class lecture.

When the missionaries came they give us a White God who spoke English. What does a White God who speaks English have to do with us? For us, God is not a noun. God is a spirit—an active spirit. The White God is *inactive* in the spirit of the people. You white people pay allegiance to a noun and do not act on your own beliefs. (Robinson 2005, 42 emphasis added)

This contrast of behavior and belief will assist us in this study, at least in part, in the framing of an argument for a different perspective of the nature of the spiritual and of spirituality.

And what about the encounter of a culture whose language is noun based, whose people are disposed to understanding relationship in an “me and you” way, with a culture whose language is verb based, whose people appear to orient more as “us” in their relationships? Perhaps, if I may paraphrase a hypothesis attributed to Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf⁴² in the early twentieth century, “words create worlds,” there is more to the wrongly attributed hypothesis than imagined. The encounter, and its historic ramifications, is documented and retold in oral tradition. Social policy and policies of mission emerged and were implemented from within the encounter, but neither heard the other – at least not fully – so as to mitigate the negative impact of the encounter. We now turn our attention to a further exploration of worldview so as to better understand the situation.

⁴² The hypothesis of linguistic relativity attributed to Sapir and Whorf (1949), in its strong and weak versions essentially said that linguistic categories circumscribe how and what a particular people of a given culture and context can and do imagine to be true and right about their world. For a fuller discussion of this issue see Whorf, B. L. “The relation of habitual thought and behavior to language,” in Whorf et al. (2012). See also E.F.K. Koerner (2000, 17).

Worldview and Its Implications

Catherine Albanese dedicates *American Spiritualities: A Reader* to her sister with these words: “For my sister, Lucille, who is spiritual but not religious” (2001, frontispiece). Nothing could capture the focus of this study more completely. Native and Western people are not worlds apart – they are worldviews apart. On the one hand, Native people see Westerners as very religious – but not necessarily very spiritual; on the other hand, Westerners see Native people as very spiritual but not very religious. It seems clear that one party is basing observation on specific, identifiable behaviors, the other on a quality of existence, which, while not easily described or categorized, is nonetheless equally real. What common understanding, if any, might be developed to create a bridge between these two?

The challenge appears to be a difference in perspective and experience of the nature of the spiritual – one a more holistic experience of the sacred and spiritual, requiring an integration of all aspects of life, the other, exhibiting distinctive and compounded bifurcations of the physical and spiritual. In Eliade’s (1958, 8–18) descriptions of the sacred and profane there is the suggestion that while there is an ontological quality to the sacred, it is possible to create a situation where the sacred becomes profane. For example, Eliade (1959, 31) speaks of the necessity of human myths and their institutions to make (or, perhaps better put, to re-make) creation sacred. In historical *Mi’kmaq* understanding, there is never a sense of the loss of the sacredness of creation, simply a diminishment of the present awareness of something’s sacredness, or a refocusing of its power for a new purpose. Daniel Paul observes,

The Micmac [sic] had a well-developed religion based upon respect for nature or “Mother Earth,” rather than upon the “blind faith” that forms the foundation of many religious systems. “Mother Earth” was the giver of all the essentials of life. The people recognized that without Her providence life would cease to exist, thus she was revered and respected.” (1993, 8)

In an earlier work, Eliade (1958, 11) hints at what would, if it were to be expanded and rooted less in a purely phenomenological framework, be closer to the *Mi'kmaw* sense of the spiritual: everything in creation is clearly sacred – not assigned sacredness by human agency but as an ontological quality of its existence. Jennifer Reid notes this very difference in her work, *Myth, Symbol and Colonial Encounter*. Reid suggests that “Eliade’s ‘religious imagination of matter,’ though located in the realm of primordiality [sic], reminds us of the inseparable relationship between religious and historical being” (1995, 4). In his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James’s conclusions about the characteristics of the religious offer a similar perspective. He notes, for example, that “the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance” (James 1902, 418–450).⁴³

Significant residual negative effects of the lived dichotomy between worldview and historic understanding – holding neither to the old nor entirely to the new – are observable among the *Mi'kmaw* people in the lack of integration of Christian faith at the worldview level⁴⁴ for those claiming Christian affiliation. Little difference is evident for those who make no such claim. The work of the 1989 McIntyre study previously

⁴³ See particularly the discussion from which this quote is drawn on p. 418. See also the version with notes by Wayne Proudfoot (2004).

⁴⁴ Since the framing of the original dissertation proposal from which the present work proceeded, research has indicated that indeed there has been an integration of Catholic Christian faith with traditional *Mi'kmaw* understandings that have the appearance of having impacted their worldview. We will see later in the dissertation exactly what this has meant.

mentioned stands out as a beacon to this lack of incorporation. A consequence of this has been a Native Church socially and culturally anemic, dependent on financial support from the Church in the mainstream of society to maintain its basic forms and structures. Within the majority of the Native community, it has meant social and political dysfunction and underachievement in all positive social indicators.⁴⁵

Even if we are to assume that conversion in favor of the new, Western, worldview has been “successful,” there still does not appear to be a healthy expression of Christian faith as represented in the existence of a contextual model of church. Joe Jolly, Cree pastor and writer, remarks,

Francis, Lee and Sloan ascribe the marked absence of Indigenous churches to missionary paternalism. They also mention that another reason why there are relatively few ongoing churches is the lack of understanding of Indian culture by missionaries. The Indian people, in turn, have little or no concept of the local church, principally due to lack of teaching. (2000, 61)

As this comment makes apparent, there is continued uncertainty about what constitutes the end result of mission – a conformed Euro-Canadian or Euro-American styled and structured gathering of otherwise Indigenous people in regular services of worship bounded by liturgical and cultural practices that are imported?⁴⁶ Or something that bears little, if any, resemblance to other global forms of Christian expression and is strictly unique to the locale? Alternately, as some might suggest, is it to be traditional religious expressions baptized as Christian faith? Jolly captures the situation and the

⁴⁵ While Bibby (2010, 53), offers some hope for the days ahead, it nonetheless makes clear that there continue to be “some very real issues that are making life difficult for Aboriginals” in contrast to those of the mainstream

⁴⁶ Paul Hiebert makes clear that unless there is a clear change in worldview – that is to say, its conversion – there is unlikely to be any significant transformation beyond a “split-level” Christian faith or a faith expressed within dual religious systems. See also Schreiter (1985, 144–158).

means of addressing it in the title of his Doctor of Ministry dissertation *Give Christ the Freedom to Build His Native Church* (2000, v). Compounding the challenge is a related, observable dysfunction in the “coming to faith” and discipleship of Native Christians – the roller coaster of faith. This describes a phenomenon, which, while not unique to First Nations peoples, has become much more normative of their experience than it is of others: in faith’s gutter and then on its mountaintop alternately throughout their lives.⁴⁷

Jolly’s thesis highlights this phenomenon in current Indigenous responses to the gospel and Christianity – responses rooted in variations on the themes of anger, bitterness, and disillusionment. Native people are looking for something that makes sense of their whole experience of life. Were their worldview to have been impacted and changed as Hiebert suggests is essential for authentic Christianity to be present, then it would seem reasonable to assume that such dysfunction would not appear at a higher rate than for other constituencies of the Church.

What has this to say about the nature of the Church that has grown up in such an environment? An appropriate definition of Indigenous Church would perhaps be as Smalley offers:

[A] group of believers who live out their life, including their socialized Christian activity, in the patterns of the local society, and for whom any transformation of that society comes out of their felt needs under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures. (1992, 152, emphasis in the original)

For all intents and purposes, this is not what we observe among the *Mi'kmaw* peoples –

⁴⁷ Complicating this reality further is the fact that even the basic perception of Christianity as a positive presence has been sullied by the residential and boarding school initiatives of the past century and a half; people seem less open to the gospel as a consequence – for many it still seems altogether too foreign.

unless we are to now assume local patterns of a contemporary nature, in which case the Church's dysfunction is indeed locally Indigenous. If, on the other hand, we are to reflect on the local society during the *Mi'kmaw* Church's origin, then it resembles this pattern not at all. But, once again, are the factors preventing its existence simply methodological and structural in nature or, are there deeper underlying factors?

On one plane, what seems to make sense of the facts we actually do see before us is Jamie Bulatao's description of split-level Christianity⁴⁸ articulated first in 1962 and then elaborated on in his 1992 presentation in Manila.

Split-level Christianity may be described as the *coexistence within the same person of two or more thought-and-behavior systems, which are inconsistent with each other*. The image is of two apartments at different levels, each of which contains a family, one rarely talking to the other. (1992, 22 emphasis added)

Is this where the idea of spirituality as an ontological and not ideological reality enters the picture – providing the cohesion needed not simply for the incomplete transformation and indigenization of Western forms, but for an authentic, integral expression of what it means to be a *Mi'kmaw* Jesus follower?

The past is filled with markers, which, as we turn to make our way back along the trail of relationship and mission with First Nations people, can guide our footsteps if we

⁴⁸ Bulatao goes on to say, "So it is with the split-leveled person; *at one level* he professes allegiance to ideas, attitudes and ways of behaving which are mainly borrowed from the "Christian" West, *at another level* he holds convictions which are more properly his 'own' ways of living and believing which were handed down from his ancestors, which do not always find their way into an explicit philosophical system, but nevertheless now and then flow into action.

"Perhaps from another point of view, they may be described as *two value systems*, differing from each other in explicitation [sic], one more abstract than the other, one of them coming to the fore under certain circumstances and receding to the background at other times." (1992: introduction, emphasis in original)

know how to read them. They can point out the right – or, at least more likely to be right, course of action, a more appropriate theology, mission strategy, and methodology. In short, such an approach can change history – at least in as much as it will be the history, to quote the Moody Blues, of our “Children’s, Children’s, Children.”⁴⁹

This path is not without its potential problems – some of which we might foresee. This will, for example, likely create a stumbling block to some people – particularly those for whom the status quo has become an ensconced, “professing” aspect of their faith in Jesus Christ. Further to that, this trail has the potential for more than one pattern of mission behavior to occur. What’s more, syncretism is as likely to occur – at least as a stage in the transition from the present experience of the Native church to a desired outcome of “authentic Indigenous” Church – as has been true of the experience of the more traditional understanding of an inculturated gospel.⁵⁰

I turn, in the succeeding chapters, to a description of the people and context as we find it in the period between roughly 1600 through 1750 with a brief analysis of the factors that contributed to *Mi’kmaq* and French Jesuit people and cultures respectively. We begin with a description of the Mi’kmaq peoples in situ at about 1600 CE.

⁴⁹ Moody Blues, *To Our Children’s Children’s Children*. Threshold Records, 1969. LP.

⁵⁰ This type of path is, perhaps, an aspect of what Jesus referred to when he commented on stumbling blocks that were to come. John Wesley’s story makes clear that the Anglican establishment came down hard on him when he began to preach in the open (called “field preaching” at the time). His point was that he was preaching to people who were not welcome in church buildings, who never went to church, who often were not even near a church because they were in the workers’ sections of new industrial towns, and who were not being reached by the clergy. That is, he was reaching people who had been blocked out of hearing the message of salvation by the coalition of church and society in eighteenth-century England.

Chapter 2

Mi'kmaw Life and Lifestyle

This chapter will focus on the nature of *Mi'kmaw* spirituality and worldview as generalized from the literature, beginning with an interconnected survey of the historical and contemporary context then moving back to the point of French and *Mi'kmaw* contact, finally focusing on any specific behavioral markers of *Mi'kmaw* understandings of the nature of the spiritual determined to be in evidence. Native North American mission writings, Catholic and Protestant, will provide some indication of the nature of the worldview and understanding of the spiritual from the perspective of the *Mi'kmaw* peoples. In the event that insufficient materials are available for the *Mi'kmaw*, and if deemed necessary and appropriate for the purposes of this study, *Mi'kmaq* in the period from early in contact history (roughly 1600 through to 1750) will be contrasted with other selected Native North American woodland peoples – those in close proximity to the *Mi'kmaq* – to provide a fuller context.

As per the other chapters we will, as much as possible, examine *Mi'kmaw* life from six vantage points:

- cosmology – what was the understanding of the world and universe within which they lived?
- religious framework – what, if any, were their systematized religious behaviors?
- land and the creation – how did the *Mi'kmaw* people relate to and live within and on the land?
- life and death – how did the people understand the purpose and meaning of life,

and how was death was viewed?

- words, deeds, and values – what level of integrity between what was said and what was done do we see?
- relationships – how did relationships function and what was their impact in individual and community life?

Introduction

But a great success was never possible; here as elsewhere, the vices and superstitions of the tribesmen were deep-rooted, and they had not yet reached a stage of culture where the spiritual doctrines of Christianity appealed strongly, save to a few emotional natures (Thwaites 1896, Vol. 1, 15).

A Letter Missive in regard to the Conversion and Baptism of the Grand Sagamore of New France, who was, before the arrival of the French, its chief and sovereign (Bertrand, 1610, Vol. 1, 34).

Some years ago now I was on the street with another follower of the Jesus Way who happened to be the missionary pastor of a church. We were looking for a young man who had, over the course of a few years, lost his way and become deeply involved in a crack addiction. By this time the young man had alternately gone from being on then off the street for a few years, hiding his behavior from most of the people who knew him well, including his parents and siblings. Now, however, he could no longer hide the behavior; the addiction had taken control, and even his most rational abilities were degrading.

As we searched for the young man we inquired of person after person, addicts all, concerning his whereabouts. While we were not fortunate enough to immediately find him, we were more than successful in discovering a facet of homelessness, poverty, and

addiction that we had had no idea about. Without exception each of the people of whom we inquired said one or both of two things. First was a statement of longing and a yearning to once again belong with people from whom the addict was now alienated: “I wish someone would come and look for me.” The second was a statement of hope that things both could and should change: “You do whatever you need to [the language was a slight bit more colorful] in order to get that person off the street and off drugs.” We soon came to realize, of course, that if it had been those people we were looking for, the responses might have been different – much more defensive. That is the nature of addictive behavior – knowing the right thing to do for others irrespective of the circumstances, yet being unable to do it or embrace it for you. Finally, after several fruitless days of searching, we sat in a three-way conversation with the young man in question, trying to determine what to do next.

While the whole of the experience had been instructive, it was this Native young man’s response to a question posed by the pastor about his spiritual well-being (or lack thereof) that stunned me the most. The missionary was bent on the young man’s reclamation through a previously un-experienced salvation, and this was implicit in his question. The young man replied, “You don’t think I’m spiritual do you?” While this question of the young Native man may seem to be not overly profound, perhaps even banal to most observers of the circumstance, the way in which the question was posed made it very clear that in the view of this non-Native missionary pastor, the young man’s behavior precluded his being, or continuing to be, spiritual. Spirituality, as judged by this pastor’s question and subsequent comments, was predicated on right behavior and correct action. If there was a physical reality to the spiritual, it was strictly and only behavioral in nature.

Perhaps more than any other issue, this mostly unspoken question around the nature of the spiritual has prevailed as one of the most hotly contested of the Christian encounter, in most cases, defining acceptable Christian reality for Native peoples – one they were expected to live into – while simultaneously creating a schizophrenic aspect to their thinking about the experience of spiritual life. An understanding of *Mi'kmaw* ways and perceptions will help us to place this phenomenon in a proper and historic frame of reference.

Mi'kmaw Ways: Mi'kma'ki and L'nug

It is new [sic] France, this new land, first discovered in the last century, by our countrymen, a twin land with ours, subject to the same influences, lying in the same latitude, and having the same climate; a vast country, and so to speak, infinite; a country which we greet, facing our Sun at eventide: a land moreover, of which you may well say, if you consider Satan opposite and coming up from the West to smite us; *A Garden of delight lies before him, behind him a solitary wilderness*. For verily all this region, though capable of the same prosperity as ours, nevertheless through Satan's malevolence, which reigns there, is only a horrible wilderness, scarcely less miserable on account of the scarcity of bodily comforts than for that which renders man absolutely miserable, the complete lack of the ornaments and riches of the soul; and neither the sun, nor malice of the soil, neither the air nor the water, neither men nor their caprices, are to be blamed for this. We are all created by and dependent upon the same principles: We breathe under the same sky; the same constellations influence us; and I do not believe that the land, which produces trees as tall and beautiful as ours, will not produce as fine harvests, if it be cultivated. Whence, then, comes such great diversity? Whence such an unequal division of happiness and of misfortune? of garden and of wilderness? of Heaven and of Hell? Why do you ask me? Ask him, who from Heaven counsels his people, to consider the so opposite division between Esau and Jacob, twin brothers, the former cast out to dwell with dragons and wild beasts; the latter in the lap and bosom of the earth with the Angels. (Biard, 1616, Vol. 3, 11,12)

Old stories of the exploits and existence on the land of the *Mi'kmaw* people carry back a few thousands of years, so it is not difficult to imagine that late in the sixteenth

and early in the seventeenth centuries the *Mi'kmaw*⁵¹ peoples could still be found engaged in the lifestyle of their ancestors along the eastern seaboard of what would come to be known as North America. Once collectively called *Gaspesians* by the early European explorers, the *Mi'kmaq* and *Maliseet* peoples have occupied *Gaspesia*, the region of Quebec now referred to as *Gaspé* and the contemporary Atlantic provinces, from time immemorial. Or, at least, that is how the oral traditions would describe their relationship to the land and territory collectively referred to by the *Mi'kmaq* as *Mi'kma'ki*. It was an intertwined bond of mutuality that extends back to the most distant of recollections. Robinson, in her brief but well-written religious ethnography of the *Mi'kmaq* of *Eskasoni*, a reserve community of *Mi'kma'ki*, catches the essence of this relationship to the land and its provision:

Hunting and fishing practices of the *Mi'kmaq* were based on the principle of *netukulimk* (“we hunt in partnership”). This concept acknowledges the reciprocal environmental relationship exists among all creatures, and that ultimately supports the well-being of all. Humans are not placed at the center of this world order. Rather, they are seen as part of the web of life in which plants, animals, humans, and the four elements (earth, air, fire, water) are interdependent (Robinson 2005, 20, emphasis in original).

Dependent on the ocean for most of their sustenance, *Mi'kmaw* people would move each spring from the more protected interior of the country to annually renewed encampments of as many as a few hundred people, at the tidal heads of major rivers throughout *Mi'kma'ki*. They revived regular campsites each year to engage in the summer

⁵¹ *Mi'kma'ki*, is a derivative of an Abenaki word which takes the meaning “the place we are from” or “the land of the *Mi'kmaq*.” The five members of the *Wa'bana'ki* Confederacy have been known to utilize the concept in their self-description. *Mi'kmaq* according to some oral teaching derives from the *Abenaki* word for “ally.” My upbringing with the story affirms this. Originally however, the *Mi'kmaw* people, as with many other people groups simply used their word for “people” to refer to themselves – in the *Mi'kmaq*'s case, *L'nug*. Also see the discussion in Wallis and Wallis (1955, 14).

activities of fishing, clamming, whaling, and eeling. In addition to the basics of survival, the larger summer camps would provide the setting for marriages, feasts, and, the annual celebration of the *Mawio'mi* – the annual “ingathering” of the people from across *Mi'kma'ki*.

A cursory survey of the literature makes clear that this perception of the land as “Mother Earth,” life-giver and sustainer, as eldest of creation, integral to *Mi'kmaw* understanding of life and well-being, is not central to the documentation of *Mi'kmaw* life – past or present – by most authors. While it is definitely part of the *Mi'kmaw* story as told by most writers – be they ethnographers, historians, or social scientists of any other ilk – more often than not it lacks the position of spiritual importance it has for the *Mi'kmaq* themselves. Prins, Wallis and Wallis, Leavitt, Rand and Webster, Reid, and other commonly consulted ethnographies of *Mi'kmaw* people, for example, still tend to treat land more as a commodity in the battle for territory, within the framework of European colonization, than the nurturer of *Mi'kmaw* being. Christian literature is even more barren of such references. Yet, for the *Mi'kmaq*, land and existence were, as Woodley (2010, 51) makes clear in his description of land as mother and nurturer, inextricably linked.

According to *Mi'kmaq* and *Maliseet* creation narratives, the relationship between humans and animals, birds, plants/trees and fish is one that is both physical and spiritual (Augustine 2005, 4). But it is not simply what walks upon or is rooted in the land or what swims in the rivers, lakes, and seas or what flies above the tallest of trees that is considered to be so. *Mi'kmaw* people understood that *Mi'kma'ki* is sacred in its entirety. Unlike the Jesuits and other Europeans, *Mi'kmaw* people did not divide creation into

sacred and secular, sacred and profane categories. It would have been a challenge to the *Mi'kmaw* mind, therefore, to consider that one portion of land would be considered “sacred” while another portion immediately beside it would be considered “profane.” Such was the case however, for the Jesuit. Some ground was consecrated and some not – God had looked with favor on some and with contempt on the other.⁵² In *Mi'kmaw* understanding, in *Mi'kmaw* cosmology, the categories by which such things were to be judged were not static but were, in fact, dynamically related. That is to say, the activity that is taking place between the two beings defined the nature of the relationship between them as either good or evil. Sacredness, or goodness, was not a function of existence but only of relationship. And so, Biard’s demand that *Membertou* be interred in consecrated ground was met with a great deal of resistance. Listen to the concerns he expresses.

So then, seeing that his life was drawing to at close, I confessed him as well as I could; and after that he delivered his oration (this is their sole testament). Now, among other things in this speech, he said that he wished to be buried with his wife and children, and among the ancient tombs of his family. I manifested great dissatisfaction with this, fearing that the French and Savages would suspect that he had not died a good Christian. But I was assured that this promise had been made before he was baptized, and that otherwise, if he were buried in our cemetery, his children and his friends would never again come to see us, since it is the custom of this nation to shun all reminders of death and of the dead. (Biard, 1612, Vol. 2, 10, 11)

⁵² This line of discussion is not to suggest that the Creator does not have ultimate power over the creation with respect to what is or is not done, or how something is or is not dealt with. Numerous passages of scripture, not least of which can be found in the book of Jeremiah, attest to the sovereignty of God over God’s creation. The discussion here is simply to demonstrate the difference in perspective that existed between the Jesuits and the *Mi'kmaq* with respect to their respective understandings of the land.

Political Organization and Geography

Mi'kmaw traditional territory begins with the *Gaspé* Peninsula in the north, is bounded to the east by the Atlantic Ocean and on the west by the contemporary border of Maine and Quebec – where the *Mi'kmaq* shared some common territory with the smaller nation of their cousins, the *Maliseet*. The southern boundary of *Mi'kma'ki*, a more fluid delineation because of trade and political alliances, lay somewhere into the upper regions of northern Maine, some would even say Massachusetts – a boundary they also shared with their cousins the *Maliseet*, the *Abenaki*, the *Penobscot* and the *Pasamaquoddy*,⁵³ collectively the members of the *Wa'bana'ki* Confederacy.

The *Wa'bana'ki* Confederacy, of which the *Mi'kmaw* nation was a part, is of an age that predates contact – or so the oral traditions assert. It consisted of five groups of related peoples, holding to similar cultural practices and of the same linguistic roots. Biard notes, “It is principally in Summer that they pay visits and hold their State Councils; I mean that several Sagamores come together and consult among themselves about peace and war, treaties of friendship and treaties for the common good. It is only these Sagamores who have a voice in the discussion” (1616, Vol. 3, 25). According to Paul (1991, 8), other *Mi'kmaw* historians, and those recognized as keepers of the stories of *L'nug*, the Confederacy owed its existence to both a defensive need and to the requirements of trade alliances and intermarriages within the Confederacy tribes. On the western boundaries of *Mi'kma'ki* resided the long-time enemies of *L'nug*, including the *Montagnais*, the *Algonquins*, and the most respected warriors of the *Haudenosaunee*, the *Mohawk*. The Confederacy existed to provide a means of alliance in time of conflict with enemies, such as these capable warriors.

⁵³ See for example Paul's discussion in *We Were not the Savages* (1993, 9, 10).

Wallis and Wallis (1955, 177) would have us believe the Confederacy came into existence in the mid-eighteenth century – ostensibly during the French and Indian war⁵⁴ waged from 1754 to 1763. If this were the case, however, its formational purpose would be unimaginable at that point in contact history, given that the tribes enlisted in the so-called French and Indian war were already allied to one another. Attempting to find a reason why this and other Indigenous notions of truth might be questioned by such scholarly pursuits as Wallis and Wallis’s ethnography, we can turn to Reid’s excellent historical analysis of the nature of alliances in the land and the way such relationships were viewed by both the Europeans – particularly the British – and the Indigenous peoples, specifically the *Mi’kmaq*. Reid (1995, 101–102) observes that for the British, sacred beliefs like “rootedness” in the land, were conveniently denied and ignored to serve British interests when it came to discussions of land use and territoriality.⁵⁵ It would appear then, that for many – including those of the previous generations of scholars – the simple fact that uncivilized peoples could not, in their minds, possess the savvy to create such complex systems made it so – and data were interpreted accordingly.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ This is the common US name for the conflict. In Canada it is more commonly known in English Canada as the Seven Years’ War and *La Guerre de la Conquête* (The War of Conquest) in French Canada.

⁵⁵ See the brief discussion of this in Prins (2002, 153–166).

⁵⁶ It is noteworthy that in the 1997 decision of the Supreme Court of Canada known as *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, the highest court in Canada admitted oral tradition into evidence as having the same force and effect in evidence as written documentation, thus ending the singular reign of written fabrications of First Nation’s and European contact history. What makes this even more significant is that the appeal to the High Court was due to a lower court ruling which stated that oral tradition was unreliable because it was not able to be preserved without error as in the case of written archives. The BC First Nation that brought the case was able to demonstrate not simply parallel accuracy but a superior capacity to recall details of historical events, thus satisfying the court as to their claim. As if to drive the point home, the appellant at one point in the

Robinson (2005, 21–30), following the sage wisdom of the *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* decision (see footnote) in her more recent ethnography of *Eskasoni*, uses a more *in situ* approach to suggest that because the *Mi'kmaq* have asserted something to be true and their oral history supports this understanding, it is therefore true. More likely then, the opposite of the widely held view represented in Wallis and Wallis is what took place: the already existing alliance rather than coming into existence in 1744, as a result of the war between the French and the British, was instead fractured in September of 1744, during the war, by the temporary defection of the *Abenaki*, *Passamaquoddy* and *Penobscot* in favor of the British.⁵⁷

The Confederacy was not a hierarchically oriented structure but rather a meeting of equals whose purpose was to ensure peace among themselves, support one another in war against their mutual enemies, and undertake the proper management of lands, trade, and marital alliances. Discourse on issues and concerns could take a long time, and accomplish little by the end of the discussions. But it needs to be remembered that this was a purer form of consensus building – as Daniel Paul (1991, 98) would note, the essence of democracy – as over against contemporary Western-style multi-layered democracies. Its only true power was the power of persuasion – a skill for which substantially more time was required.⁵⁸ For the *Mi'kmaq* peoples, politics, as all other

initial proceeding was said to have asked the lower court judge, “If this is your land, where are your stories of it?” For a full description of the case and its outcome, see <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/researchpublications/bp459-e.htm> (accessed January 2012).

⁵⁷ Daniel Paul (1993, 98) draws on documented accounts of the shifting ground of alliances and collusion within the British governor’s offices to make a strong case for this interpretation.

⁵⁸ Jack Weatherford argues that freedom, democracy, and the notion of balance of

aspects of their life, was about ongoing relationships – not necessarily, certainly not exclusively, about outcomes.

For the *Mi'kmaq*, the largest of the *Wa'bana'ki* Confederacy tribes, the political landscape was shaped by geography and time – quite literally. Drawing on the variations in the topography – variations connected, in the mythology of the *Mi'kmaq*, to the co-Creator and culture hero *Kluskap* – the *Mi'kmaw* people created seven political regions or districts.⁵⁹ As Daniel Paul describes them,

Each district had its own territory and a government made up of a “District Chief” and a “Council” comprised of “Elders,” band or village chiefs and other distinguished members of the community. A District government had all the powers that are vested in our modern governments. It had the conditional power to make war or peace, settle disputes, and apportion hunting and fishing areas to families, and so on. (1993, 66)

The seven districts were – and still are – from roughly south to north, *Kespukwik* (Land Ends), *Sipeken'katik* (Wild Potato Area), *Eskikewa'kikx* (Skin Dressers Territory), *Unama'kik* (Land of Fog), *Epekwiik App Piktuk* (The Explosive Place), *Sikniik* (Drainage Area), *Epxiwiik* (Lying in the Water), and *Kespek* (Last Land or, Rocks Meet the Water). These seven districts encompassed all of the contemporary maritime provinces of

powers were all developed or enhanced by the settlers experience with Native Americans. See especially chapters titled “Liberty, Anarchism, and the Noble Savage,” and “The Founding Indian Fathers” (1988, 117-149). See also John Ralston Saul (2008, 3–98). Saul argues that Canada is a Métis nation for similar reasons, though in the Canadian experience, this reality is more conscious and more deeply ingrained.

⁵⁹ There is some difference in perspective of the origins of the *Kluskap* legend and story(ies). Some, not wanting too great a time to be in evidence for the *Mi'kmaq* on the land, place the *Kluskap* story at about the mid 1700s, suggesting that *Kluskap* is manufactured as a way of dealing with the onslaught of European colonization, providing the *Mi'kmaq* with rootedness and sense of identity with the land needed for their survival. See Prins (2002, 98–137) for this discussion. Others, such as Whitehead, the foremost scholar in the field of *Mi'kmaw* studies, allow that while accretions may have taken place, the core elements of the stories of *Kluskap* are, themselves, as ancient as the people. That places and stories of the land could be offered, as they are, in such detail *and* with such consistency across the districts, without this being so, seems improbable to Whitehead. See also Appendixes C and D of this dissertation for the most commonly accepted stories of Creation in which *Kluskap* plays a central role.

Canada, a fair portion of eastern Quebec, and likely, though disputed, parts of northern Maine and Massachusetts at one time.

Each district consisted of extended family groupings led by a *sagamaw* – in contemporary terminology, a chief. Not strictly speaking a role of absolute authority, the position was more akin to the role of the judges in the Old Testament – settling disputes, allotting land and quotas for hunting and family use, presiding over various functions and meetings, and ensuring that relationships with the other *sagamaw* in the district were maintained. The incumbent also served as a sort of protector of the integrity of the community by ensuring that interlopers were dealt with and excluding those of suspicious behavior (Biard, 1616, Vol. 3, 24, 25).

The *sagamaw* served at the behest of the people, advising in times of peace and giving active leadership in times of war (Wallis and Wallis, 1955, 172). What's more, this leadership was accepted only if there was a clear perception that the people's interests were being put ahead of the *sagamaw*'s own. Father Chrestien Le Clercq, Récollet⁶⁰ missionary to the *Mi'kmaq* in the seventeenth century, reported,

The most prominent chief is followed by several young warriors and by several hunters, who act always as his escort, and to fall in underarms when this ruler wishes particular distinction upon some special occasion. But, in fact, all his power and authority are based only upon the goodwill of those of his nation, who execute his orders just in so far as it pleases them. (1691, 234)

Each *sagamaw* was of equal authority to another, and no community of people was of greater consequence than another. A *kitche sagamaw* (literally grand or large chief) in

⁶⁰ The Récollet order was a French branch of the Franciscans and served in early mission within the French colonies in what is now Canada as well as elsewhere in North America until they were replaced/displaced by the Jesuits.

turn oversaw the collected people within each district; he was appointed in similar fashion to the community *sagamaw* and functioned with the same types of duties and allegiances on behalf of those who resided within their district. Membertou, the first *Mi'kmaw* leader to be accounted as baptized by the Jesuits, was such a one – the district *sagamaw* in the district of *Kespukwitk*, he was appointed *kitche sagamaw* by his peers from the six other *Mi'kmaw* Districts of *Mi'kma'ki*.

***Mi'kmaw* Material Culture**

Although the *Mi'kmaq* grew what is commonly known as “the three sisters” – corn, beans, and squash – they were, for at least 50 percent of each year’s activity, also water people – ocean, lake, and river – and so their material culture related, at least in significant measure, to that lifestyle.⁶¹ Stephen Augustine, curator of ethnology of the eastern Maritimes in Canada observes, “Since the *Mi'kmaq* and *Maliseet* lived in land drained by a certain river and coastal areas of the Atlantic region, their cultural material is representative of activities related to travel and life on water and land.” Among the standouts of this water-going aspect of *Mi'kmaw* culture was the uniquely designed and built canoe. Coming in several sizes, the uniqueness came in the form of the raised arch of the gunwale from one-quarter to three-quarters of the length of the canoe. This allowed the vessel to be more stable in crossing wider expanses of water. Such craft were used to ply the waters of narrow rivers and streams as well as the wide stretches of the ocean that separated their districts.

⁶¹ For reasons of space, this section will reference only those points deemed of interest to the overall discussion of this dissertation. A short but reasonable depiction of *Mi'kmaw* material culture, however, is available in a brief work by Leavitt (1985). A more significant pictorial work is to be found in Augustine (2005).

From whaling to catching eel during the eel run, the canoe was a durable and flexible craft.

Organized around the extended family unit, dwellings (known as a *wi'kuom* or *wikuom*)⁶² at times needed to accommodate larger numbers of people for assemblies – especially during the summer months when celebrations of various sorts were held, usually near the water's edge. Biard makes two observations about the “crude” *wikuom* “dwelling” and its capacity to accommodate. First, he notes that at one such gathering in the summer of 1610, he counted fully 80 canoes and 300 people but only 18 wigwams. His second observation explains why the small number of dwellings: “The largest wigwam of all ... contained fully eighty people” (Biard 1612, Vol. 2, 17).

Although much of the early literature focused on the *sagamaw*, the *puoins* “spirit or medicine person,” and the *kinaps* “power persons,” likely because they were perceived to be people of a particular kind of power, it was, in reality, the elders who led the community and ensured its skills and tools for hunting and fishing were properly crafted and employed. Women occupied these positions more than men. To them fell the duties of the camp and its regular maintenance, including making the tools and canoes. Men were employed in fishing, hunting, and war as needed.⁶³ Commenting on the role of

⁶² While the wigwam can look similar to a plains-style tipi, the construction, structure, and usage of the wigwam is very different and tends to be of a more semi-permanent nature.

⁶³ War was sometimes seen as a means of competition for *Mi'kmaw* men, though not possessing as sophisticated a structure for gaining honor as “counting coup,” in evidence in the plains cultures. Other forms of competition were not, as some contemporary Native people imagine, absent from *Mi'kmaq* and other Native societies. The simple difference Daniel Paul (1993, 7) notes is that contests were engaged in vigorously for community benefit versus individual achievement. Since communities were essentially one extended family, if not by blood then by common commitments and interpersonal alliances, this allowed for a greater number of people to both share the glory *and* benefit from any outcomes.

elders in the material realities of life, Augustine notes, “Elders knew the right time to prepare food, medicine and clothing; build shelter, and make tools for building canoes, snowshoes, and toboggans” (2005, 4). Responsibility for development and maintenance of *Mi'kmaw* material culture that was not tied directly to hunting and war was placed, in large part, into the hands of elders who were women, who in turn taught younger women. Sophisticated, definitely; materially effective, certainly; technologically advanced, yes and no, just differently so.

Contrast the following two descriptions of *Mi'kmaw* material culture:

These savages were rude in life and manners, were intensely warlike, depended for subsistence chiefly on hunting and fishing, lived in rude wigwams covered with bark, skins, or matted reeds, practiced agriculture in a crude fashion, and were less stable in their habitations than the Southern Indians. (Denys 1672, 136)

And,

Prior to European contact, the *Mi'kmaq* and *Maliseet* relied primarily on [other] living entities for their survival: birds, plants/trees, animals and fish... The skins, bark, roots and sinew of these also provided material for clothing. Shelters could be made from wood, bark, whalebone, skin, poles and branches. Tools were made from stone, bone, wood, sinew and skins. Snowshoes, toboggans, sleds and canoes were constructed from birch bark, wood, roots, cedar, pine, skin and sinew. These elements were carved, heated, boiled and worked with skilled hands to create all of the people's basic needs. Tools and other objects were often artistically decorated with dyed roots, moose hair, feathers and porcupine quills. (Augustine 2005, 5)

Since the material culture of the *Mi'kmaw* people was not technologically advanced in the way in which European cultures were, it was therefore not considered “sophisticated.” This, inevitably led to categorizing the culture, as I have noted elsewhere, as being crude and primitive; and, according to the definitions in play during the period – definitions continuously since then controlled by the majority European – it was. Yet, among all of the

peoples of North America with whom the Jesuits engaged, only the *Mi'kmaq* were “sophisticated” enough to have used any form of pre-contact written communication. Although the exact period of their origin is not known, *Mi'kmaw* hieroglyphics, as they are frequently described – a form of “diagrammatic writing” – was in widespread use in *Mi'kma'ki* prior to regular contact.⁶⁴ In fact, among the elders of the seven districts today there are still those who have full fluency in their use. So important have they been in the communication of spiritual truth and the provision of cultural affirmation that Rita Joe captured their significance in her poem titled “Micmac Hieroglyphs.” Both their value and the ease with which they have been dismissed can be heard in her words.

“I noticed children
 Making marks with charcoal on ground,”
 Said Le Clercq.
 “This made me see that in form would create a memory
 Of learning more quickly
 The prayers I teach.

“I was not mistaken,
 The characters produced
 The effect I needed.
 For on birchbark they saw
 These familiar figures
 Signifying the word,
 Sometimes two together.
 The understanding came quickly
 On leaflets
 They called *kekin a'matin kewe'l*
 Tools for learning.

⁶⁴ As of 1995, most people of scholarly interest in the hieroglyphics had not arrived at a firm decision about dating (Schmidt and Marshall, 1995). What is clear is that they predate by at least 144 years the oft-accorded distinction to the Cherokee syllabary as being the earliest Indigenous writing system. Some suggest that the petroglyphs at Nova Scotia's *Keimkujik* National Park represent the earliest extant record of the rudimentary form of the hieroglyphs. Others are not as certain. What is clear is that they did predate contact, according to both the oral tradition and seventeenth-century reports by French missionaries – as for example, the 1651 to 1652 Relation of father Gabriele Druillettes indicates, noting “the use of an incipient literacy among the Eastern Abenaki's of Maine.”

The presentation of written word
 Was in so much care.
 They kept them neatly in little cases
 Of birchbark
 Beautified with wampum
 Of beadwork and quills.
 These were Micmac hieroglyphics
 The written word of the Indian
 That the world chooses to deny.” (Joe 1996, 37)

Joe’s work is deeply reflective of the rest of the *Mi’kmaw* material culture, as it both emerged from and shaped newly emerging aspects of what it meant to “be in the world,” which created a way of life the French would decry and simultaneously envy in many respects, as noted elsewhere and expressed by Biard and Ennemond Masse in the following reflection.

But now if we come to sum up the whole and compare their good and ill with ours, I do not know but that they, in truth, have some reason to prefer (as they do) their own kind of happiness to ours, at least if we speak of the temporal happiness, which the rich and worldly seek in this life. For, if indeed they have not all those pleasures which the children of this age are seeking after, they are free from the evils which follow them, and have the contentment which does not accompany them. (Massé 1612, Vol. 3, 35)

Social Organization and Relationship

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”⁶⁵

If, as Jesus says, love for one another is the sign of true relationship and true discipleship, then we must account the relationships described among the *Mi’kmaw* people to be of higher quality in this regard than those the French describe as existing among themselves. Note for example the following three exchanges recorded by Le Jeune. Even as late as 1633, he describes the character of the relationships among the people as noteworthy:

⁶⁵ *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), John 13:35.

Whoever professes not to get angry, but also to make a profession of patience; the savages surpasses to such an extent, in this respect, that we ought to be ashamed. I saw them, in their hardships and in their labors, suffer with cheerfulness. My host, wondering at the great number of people who I told him were in France, asked me if men were good, if they did – not become angry, if they were patient. I have never seen such patients as is shown by a sick savage.

They are very much attached to each other, and agree admirably. You do not see any disputes, corals, enmities, or reproaches among them. Men leave the arrangement of the household to the women, without interfering with them; they cut, and decide, and give away as they please, without making the husband angry.

I will give herein example that ought to confound many Christians. In the stress of our famine, a young savage from another quarter came to see us, who is as hungry as we were... Our hunters having taken a few beavers, a feast was made, that which he was well treated he was told besides the trail of a moose had been seen, and that they were going to hunt for the next day; he was invited to remain in to have his share of it... They're very generous among themselves and even make a show of not loving anything, of not being attached to the riches of the earth, so as so that they may not grieve if they lose them. (1633, Vol. 6, 67, 68)

Though there is some disagreement as to the original marriage customs of *Mi'kmaw* people, most traditional teachings allege that while polygyny was allowable in the case of a *sagamaw*, the people were essentially monogamous. Daniel Paul notes, for example, “Monogamous marriages were part of Micmac [sic] culture, and although polygamy was permitted it was rarely practiced” (1993, 9). It is an oft-trumpeted support for the historicity of the more common practice of monogamy that *Membertou*, arguably the best known *Mi'kmaw bouin* (spirit or medicine person) and *sagamaw*, was monogamous (Wallis and Wallis 1955, 239, 40). It was also clear that marriage, or at least some of the contributors to the construction of a marriage, were directly in the hands of the Creator, *Nisgam*. “The manitoo [sic] has had his design in this mistake” observed Le Clercq (1691, 261), in his description of what might construed as a call of the bridal party

to the assembled guests, confirming that the union of a man⁶⁶ and a woman has been approved by their Creator. Marriage was therefore understood, if not as a spiritual union in the biblical sense, nonetheless as a spiritually governed estate of relationship.

Family integrity was of great importance to the *Mi'kmaw* people, as was sexual fidelity even during the betrothal year. As Lescarbot (1612, Vol. 2, 47) noted, “Sex relations were strictly prohibited during the betrothal year and the prohibition, it seems, was generally observed.” But clearly, when something was going amiss in a relationship – such as the lack of children after a few years in a marriage – it was possible to acknowledge that this was so and to dissolve the relationship so that, as one *Mi'kmaw* quipped to Le Clercq, happiness could be restored.

Dost thou not see, they will say to you, that thou hast no sense? My wife does not get on with me, and I do not get on with her. She will agree well with such a one, who does not agree with his own wife. Why dost thou wish that we four be unhappy for the rest of our days? (Le Clercq 1691, 259–60)

As a means of ensuring appropriate family intermarriages across the generations, many First Nations and other Indigenous peoples use a clan structure that provides, at least as one of its purposes, a formal way of recognizing who an individual is, who the person's family is, and how others in the community or surrounding communities should relate to the person. In most First Nations contexts where clan use is noted, an individual's clan usually refers to what ethnologists have sometimes randomly described as “totems”⁶⁷ –

⁶⁶ *Manitoo*, *mento* (pr. *menndou*), *manitou* or similar derivatives are variously used in *Algonkian* languages to refer to a spirit, generally as a guide or guardian. Or, in the case of the equivalent concept of God, *kiche'mendou*, the term refers to the well-worn reference to the “Great Spirit.”

⁶⁷ Though the term is still in use, anthropologist Alexander Goldenweiser (1915) deconstructed the concept to show that a wide range of cultural traits were

usually an animal or other non-human aspect of creation toward which an individual or group of people look for guidance in the world. Roderick Gould, traditional story teller, good friend and community elder, has indicated that in *Mi'kma'ki* today, while talk of clan is prevalent among younger *Mi'kmaq*, this is more an assignation of the regional or band “totem” of the person’s family than the use of phratry or an actual clan structure or as one would find in the case of the *Iroquois* or the *Ojibwe*. Roddy Gould, for example, is called *Keookusooe* – Muskrat – in recognition of the region of his family’s origin, and of course, that his extended family has been known by that appellation since time immemorial. For my family, we are *Plamu* – Salmon – because the region and community from which we come is so known. So, to conclude, while clan was not a formal organizing aspect of *Mi'kmaw* life, the district structure of the *Mi'kmaw* people appeared to function somewhat similarly to the clan system of other peoples – as a place for intermarriage without incest and a means for the establishment and continuation of allegiances.

Contrast this contemporarily expressed *Mi'kmaw* understanding of their own history with Le Clercq’s 1641 report wherein he stated that, in his experience of the *Souriquois*, “Each band had its own protective spirit” (1691, 172–199).⁶⁸ Although, as we have noted above, there is no solid evidence suggesting a formal organizational structure

inappropriately lumped together as “totemism,” thus undermining Sigmund Freud’s argument in *Totem and Taboo*.

⁶⁸ There is a tradition, rooted in Le Clercq’s description of this phenomenon, that some *Mi'kmaq* from the *Miramichi* region “had, from time immemorial, utilized the Cross as the distinctive ‘emblem’ of this particular group.” It is a quote used often to suggest that either a) the gospel had been preached before the French came (Scandinavians?) or, b) that Jesus had come physically among the peoples of North America post-resurrection not unlike – or perhaps precisely as – the Mormons suggest. See, for example, the discussion of Native North America in Simon G. Southerton’s *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church* (Signature Books, 2004).

in which clans are attached to a particular spirit animal, Campeau (2000, 124) founds his assessment of said practice on the work of Le Clercq, supporting the notion of individual and community affinity to a *manitou*. Alliance with a personal *manitou* was said to have occurred through a process of initiation, whereas community aid of a *manitou* was secured through relational affirmation at an annually repeated ceremony. The literature further offers us the idea that a *manitou* acted for the benefit of the individual or, in the case of a community, for the whole community, ensuring protection from enemies and providing strategy in time of war. Campeau further notes that “the *manitou* of a social group was certainly a permanent feature.”⁶⁹ In all likelihood some form of this kind of alliance and its attendant guidance is precisely what Le Clercq was referring to in the case of the marriage as noted above when he suggested the *manitou* had somehow intervened in what might otherwise have been deemed a mistake.

What is troubling here is that Le Clercq bases his assessment, in part, on the perceptions of Biard and Massé. They, in turn, had arrived at a conclusion about said practices, having little familiarity with the culture and a self-admitted lack of facility with the language. Their assessments are, therefore, suspect at best, most likely filled with both interpolations and extrapolations, and inevitably need to be discarded as being not sufficiently sound to be authoritative, providing for the reader a guide to the conversation only. Did the *Mi'kmaq* of the early contact era believe in various *manitou*? Yes, they likely did. Were they understood to have originated in the realm of the spirit? Assuredly.

⁶⁹ This did not mean, however, that an individual or a community would have the same *manitou* for their entire life, their entire existence, respectively. If a *manitou* were to lose power, to have no effectiveness in the life of the individual or community any longer, the *manitou* would be set aside in favor of finding an alternate.

Were they evil? Probably some were. But, as has been pointed out many times over the years, the ethereal spiritual realities that European and then Euro-North American Christianity has, in its spiritual ethnocentrism, fixated on⁷⁰ since contact, calling them evil – irrespective of their behavior and focus of activity – have done far less damage to the souls of humanity than have the forces of colonialism and commercialism in the guise of progress and development.⁷¹ We will have more to say about this in the analysis and discussion of the data in Chapters 6 and 7.

Cosmology and the Spiritual

Furthermore, rude and untutored as they are, all their conceptions are limited to sensible and material things; there is nothing abstract, internal, spiritual or distinct. *Good, strong, red, Black, large, hard*, they will repeat to you in their jargon; *goodness, strength, redness, blackness* – they do not know what they are. And as to all the virtues you may enumerate to them, *wisdom, fidelity, justice, mercy, gratitude, piety*, and others, these are not found among them at all except as expressed in the words *happy, tender love, good heart*. (Biard 1612, Vol. 2, 7)

Contrary to Biard's opinion as expressed above, the *Mi'kmaq* had a well developed, albeit different from European, cosmological understanding as well as a life-ways framework⁷² which emerged from that cosmology. The elements of this cosmology and its attendant religious practice are noticeable in conversations within the Jesuit

⁷⁰ The fictional ideas of Frank Peretti (2003) have formed or been adopted wholesale as Christian theology by many – but his is only a more contemporary example of adopted a historic issue when it comes to understanding the nature of the spiritual.

⁷¹ For a good and relatively fresh discussion of the way the colonial world has handled such things, see Mann (2005).

⁷² We need to take note of the challenges in Europe of that time concerning the geocentric or heliocentric nature of the then known universe – where many of the Europeans themselves were being described as heretical and/or untutored and ignorant.

Relations and/or the works of Le Clercq or Denys, which will be referenced here along with other works.

Campeau, interpreting from the Jesuit *Relations*, would observe that within the “bounded space” (of the *Souriquois*), comprised of the earth upon which they walked and the “vault of heaven which covered it,” the *Mi'kmaw* peoples engaged the objects of their sight (the sun, the moon, the stars, the birds of the air, and water, the trees, and animals) and the far less numerous – wind, thunder, and cold – which they apprehended through the other senses. This was the universe upon which they acted and which acted upon them. This did not mean that they had no idea or curiosity about what might lie beyond. They most certainly did. They conceived, for example, that superior beings of a greater intelligence than they existed in the world above the sky. But their contentment with mystery meant that rather than an experimental curiosity,⁷³ they placed that curiosity within story.⁷⁴ And so, the collective of the stories of *Kluskap*⁷⁵ and his battle with the cosmological spirits of the Serpent, the Cold, *Googoes*, and *Galoo* carry the *Mi'kmaw* concerns with and questions about the nature of the Creator, *Nisgam*, “his” creation and the *Mi'kmaw* role within it – all of which are embodied also in other human stories.

⁷³ It will be noted in each of the stories told herein of the two travelers, that in some way in the story they are considered an anomaly among their peoples.

⁷⁴ As Silas Rand observed in the nineteenth century, the propensity for myth, fable, and legend – for preserving the old and creating and embellishing the new – among the *Mi'kmaq* was enormous. Their cosmology, religion, relationships, and life-ways are open for the hearer to explore in the stories told by elders and other story tellers among them. Rand's collection therefore is a valuable and valued addition to the community for those for whom the original languages are no longer accessible. See, for example, the tale in Rand of the two weasels taken in marriage by celestial beings (1894, 160-68).

⁷⁵ *Kluskap* is variously the culture hero, co-creator, trickster, and if Campeau's assessment is to be believed, a cross between demon and angel. For a fuller discussion of this, see Whitehead (1983, 1988).

Within them also, as Don Richardson (1981) would note, are the redemptive analogies common to humanity.

As to the acts of creation, the *Mi'kmaq* have an extensive narrative⁷⁶ including, of course, the specific events and their sequence but also inclusive of motivations of the primary characters of the story. Creation, for the *Mi'kmaq*, not unlike for others, begins with water enveloping a primal, virgin world.⁷⁷ The Creator, the one(s) who controlled this transformation from primal state to the state presently observed, created the plant and animal life, including human beings, and then established the principles of its relationship to all visible and invisible entities, including those of the other created entities not of this world.

It has been acknowledged among the people and quoted by Whitehead that the “First Law” of *Mi'kmaw* cosmology says, “Everything is eternal, yet nothing is constant. Form is continually changing” (1988, 9,10). Nothing could be more salient in *Mi'kmaw* understandings of the nature of the cosmos than the sense of continuous change, the movement from one expression and experience of reality to another, all without the sense in which creation was therefore a place of chaos, lacking order. People and landscape were also in constant motion, transition and change, not fully predictable but very much able to be engaged with in meaningful ways and with patterns that could be counted on to repeat – unless there was an intervention of power.⁷⁸ This was most definitely true of

⁷⁶ The narrative, in its abbreviated form is appended.

⁷⁷ This is unlike other stories of creation in the North American context, where water is raised by a supernatural being to drown previously living creatures or where a turtle is raised from the depths of the water and upon whose back earth is placed and spread out such that the land comes into existence, upon which the people then begin to walk.

⁷⁸ The collected stories of the *Mi'kmaq* in several volumes, but specifically those gathered by Baptist missionary Silas Rand (1894) – some of which are admittedly more

Mi'kma'ki, the land of the people, and the structure and function of the communities of who lived within it. This trait of the *Mi'kmaq* was rooted, not surprisingly, in two specific phenomenon resident in the structure of the language – that it is verb based and that it divides everything into two categories: “animate” and “inanimate.”⁷⁹

Lucien Campeau, a member of the Society of Jesus, taking up this theme, notes about *Mi'kamooage*⁸⁰ and its relationship to the nature of the spiritual for the *Mi'kmaw* people,

The most significant and most general trait of this dialect is the division by which it separates words into two categories, which grammarians call the “animate type” and the “inanimate type”. We could also call them the “religious” type and the “secular” type. In fact, to the animate type belong men and animals, as well as “a large number of things for which the natives seem to have had a sort of superstitious respect”. Everything else belongs to the inanimate class.... The criterion seems to have been the power, present or absent, for an object to exercise a spiritual or magical function. This sort of distinction affects the entire Souriquois language, and its importance is far more comprehensive than the distinction of masculine and feminine in European languages. (2000, 114)

Campeau (2000, 115) goes on to observe how this distinction and its corollary – the centrality of the verb in the language – creates a very different cosmological framework. So for example, if we were to inquire as to the nature of the existence of God, we would ask, “*Tan Nisgam eiges?*” (“When, at what time, has God existed?”) The reply, “*Sag éta mètj eiges, nigetf eig ag mètj iteo.*” (“For a long time he has always existed; he exists now, and he will always exist.”) To give it perspective, the question, “*Gesgemenag*

contemporary than those told by some elders – offer a compelling vignette of the sense of constant change, the motion of the cosmos, its key characters, *and* of course, of the *Mi'kmaw* people themselves.

⁷⁹ As if to complicate things further, what a person from a European heritage might consider inanimate might just prove to be exactly opposite and vice versa.

⁸⁰ The *Mi'kmaw* language is variously referred to as either *Mi'kmaw*, as in “They are speaking *Mi'kmaw*,” or *Mi'kamooage*, as in “*Mi'kamooage* is the language of the *Mi'kmaq*.”

gôgoengoeg tami eiges?” (“Then where was he before anything else existed?”) is replied to by this statement of faith, “*Mogoetj éta tami eimogsep, oNisgaméotigtog éta sig eiges.*” (“He was not really in anything, it was only in himself that he existed.”) Ontology therefore, looked very different for the *Mi'kmaq*.

The perception contained in this set of questions and responses is similar to the idea that for a mother to be a mother, there needs to be a child. A mother does not stand alone in her identity. Reflexive meaning is contained in the language in order to ensure the action, not the actor(s), is central. In *Mi'kamooage*, nouns are constructed from verbs, and verbs must act on or with something/someone else – there must be activity between “things.” The Creator therefore required the creation to be the Creator. Existence, being, ontology are therefore not isolated in self-defined personhood for the *Mi'kmaq* but are rooted in the actions of being which of necessity include others.⁸¹

Mi'kmaq, and according to Cushner, Native North Americans in general, were more likely to have this experience of created reality – that there was and continues to be a spiritual fluidity not attached to the constructs of “material” and “immaterial” as it is in a European frame of reference. Nicholas Cushner restates this same understanding in the following way:

[They] saw the manifestation of the divine in the environment that surrounded them. Within every object dwelled a force that governed its existence. The animate and inanimate were virtually indistinguishable. Humans, animals, plants, stones, as well as dreams, emotions, and ideas were regarded as having indwelling spirits, forces pervading all objects, ultimately responsible for good and evil in the world. (Cushner 2006, 14)

⁸¹ This raises questions about the nature of the “I am” statement of Jesus concerning his pre-existence and how it could/should be interpreted for *Mi'kmaw* people to appropriately communicate what the authorial intent.

This manifestation was in the form of either the indwelling *mento*⁸² or in the ontological animate essence of the form's existence. Cushner (2006, 14) goes on to suggest that "God did not dwell in nature but ruled over it and he gave to man his creation, the power to do with it whatever man wished." He states further that in contrast, peoples coming to *Mi'kma'ki* from Europe had no conception of the spirituality that was the land.⁸³ For them, land, rocks, trees, and seas were simply a means to an end – commerce and riches. As Biard would observe of the people he had come to convert, "these good people are ... far removed from this cursed avarice which we see among us; who, to become possessed of the riches of the dead, desire and seek eagerly for the loss and departure of the living" (1616, Vol. 3, 34). As if needed, Cushner clarifies the trajectory of the relationship between the European and the land that Biard hinted at – albeit quite plainly.

Western man ... took this a step further declaring that key elements of the earth could be owned if acquired legitimately. Land, soil, water, forests, lakes, could be private property and disposed of according to the will of the owner. (Cushner 2006, 15)

The issue, of course, in all of this, is in the interpretation of the spiritual in nature – not whether land could be used at one point in time by one person or group of people and then at another point in time by someone else. This had been the common practice among the *Wa'bana'ki* peoples for hundreds of years before contact. But for the Jesuits, though they of all missionaries were most naturally and theologically disposed to the "immaterial" and "material" spiritual realities of the world around them as not specifically or strictly of an evil nature, *Mi'kmaw* conceptions were still problematic.

⁸² This is used as the plural of *manitou* "spirit."

⁸³ Michael Rynkiewich said something similar to me at one point in our discussions about this dissertation. See Point 25 in *Land and Churches in Melanesia: Issues and Contexts* (Rynkiewich 2001).

Cushner again suggests,

Native American belief in the absolute integration of the divine within the natural world was not interpreted by the Western invaders as a form of “God’s presence in all things,” as medieval and early modern theologians would hold, but as a form of pagan animism that endow the material world with supernatural powers it in no way possessed. (2006, 14)

For the *Mi'kmaq*, whether in dreaming or waking, all of life’s experiences and circumstances were instructive in both the physical and spiritual realities of life without a sense that they were in any way disconnected. This is understood as the six worlds framework of *Mi'kmaw* cosmology. This framework of the *Mi'kmaw* people – the world on which we walk, the world above, the world below, the world of the Spirit, the world beyond the sky, and the world under the water⁸⁴ – expressed the idea of separated continuity. That is to say, while the worlds were distinct and of a different quality, perhaps in the same way as Europe was different from North America, they were nevertheless so interconnected – as is obvious to us by the connective medium of the oceans – that the real-life experience of transit across the worlds and back was a deeply entrenched one. There was a clear interactivity between the six worlds – and a clear sense that there were experiences to be had in all of them that were interrelated because they were guided by a deep, albeit mysterious, spiritual reality.

In each of the six worlds a being might appear, having the same essence or substance as in any other of the worlds. They were free to act, and to be acted upon as if

⁸⁴ Somewhere in the last half of the twentieth century a seventh was added – the inner world of the person. Most writers, and most *Mi'kmaw* elders, would avow this as an accretion to accommodate the emerging “pan-Indian spirituality.” I will have more to say about this later. In the meantime, take note of the difference in the two Creation narratives appended – the one that is widely held to reflect the oldest telling of the story as an early or pre-contact, seven-day narrative and the shorter one, which reflects the addition of the seventh direction.

native to the world in which they had suddenly appeared.⁸⁵ This did not mean, as the Greek philosophy from which European thought borrowed would have suggested, that these were “ideal” and “sub-ideal” worlds – they were simply different. The forces that governed each were, if not precisely the same, at least of the same origins and under the same sets of obligations placed on them as a function of their creation. As Whitehead points out,

Modern science maintains that all matter is energy, shaping itself to particular patterns. The Old Ones of the People took this a step further: they maintained that patterns of Power could be conscious, manifesting within the worlds by acts of *will*. They thought of such entities as Persons, with whom one could have a relationship (1988, 3, emphasis in original).

Discussing the nature of the relationship between the various creatures of creation, and as if to make the same point, my grandfather, speaking as those of his generation often did, simply said, “Animals are persons too – they are just not people.”

This was not simply a concept in the mind of the *Mi'kmaw* people; it was an experienced reality. Hence, the conviction concerning the afterlife related more to a journey in a distant land – together with one’s relatives who had gone before – than it did a complete separation from the present reality, consigned to an entirely different construct, heaven and/or hell. Michael Gueno makes this point quite compellingly.

[They] generally understood death as a vague dream; life is palpable reality, the subject of all care and all hopes. In Indian religion there was little reason to fear the afterlife or one’s place in it. The spirit was believed to journey to a far away land in which it lived for the rest of eternity with all of the tribe’s ancestors. The idea of being spiritually cut off from one’s heritage and condemned to Hell for eternity understandably caused some

⁸⁵ We note here the manifold appearances of angels, demons, and other spiritual beings in the narrative of Jewish and Christian scripture. Often interpreted in metaphoric ways, these beings would be understood as those from another connected world – not from some ethereal disconnected reality.

distress and frustration. These individuals were anguished at the thought of eternal separation from their loved ones due to the activities of the Jesuits. (2004, 18)

A few centuries later the captured stories of *Mi'kmaw* leader John Newell would make clear that even to the then contemporary *Mi'kmaq*, the physical and spiritual worlds were not simply adjacent to one another or juxtaposed with one another but were in fact deeply interconnected. Wallis and Wallis record John Newell relating a story to a friend as if to make this very point. Newell observes,

I dreamed that I saw, in a rock, along the bank, a door, which opened and admitted five schooners. A woman came, but it was too late – the door had closed. A short time after this dream experience five people of my acquaintance died. I had seen the road to Heaven (Wallis and Wallis 1955, 139).

Hornborg also writes about this issue, albeit tangentially. She discredits an attempt to demonstrate the similarity of the critical use of visions by *Mi'kmaw buoin*⁸⁶ and the centrality of trances in the work of the shamanistic traditions of Siberia. In refuting the claim that *Mi'kmaq* and other First Nations peoples were shamanistic. She notes,

On the contrary, it seems that dreams were of greater importance than trances for gaining access to other worlds. In Biard's account of a *Mi'kmaq* healing ceremony, he describes the intensity of the *autmoin's* work, and states that only after the *autmoin* has gone to sleep and interpreted his dreams can he know whether or not his efforts have succeeded (Hornborg 2008, 33).

The cosmological and religious framework of the *Mi'kmaq* then, is possessed of a

⁸⁶ *Buoin* and *Ginap* are two forms of power that may be present in people at different times – the one, *Ginap* (also *Kinap*, *Ginip*), is always power manifest in a positive and constructive way; the other, *Buoin* (also *Puoin*, *Bohinne*), has had a more checkered history and may be either good or evil – though in the time since the seventeenth century it has been associated with evil more often than not. See Whitehead (1988) and Wallis and Wallis (1955) for two different treatments of this aspect of *Mi'kmaw* life.

deeply interconnected reality. There is no sense in which the spiritual encounter of an individual *Mi'kmaw* person and the physical reality within which that encounter takes place are separate from one another. Instead they are possessed with a mysterious but nonetheless obvious connectedness that, if the *Mi'kmaw* person has the capacity and willingness to engage it, can lead to the acquisition of a measure of power. What's more, the degree to which the *Mi'kmaw* person is oriented toward a positive or a negative outcome for engagement with that power will determine whether the individual acts for or against individual and community benefit. The world under their feet, the world of the heavenly bodies, the world below, the world under the water, the sky world, and the world of the Spirit are therefore clearly and compellingly influential of one another. Even as the Jesuits attempted to communicate the concepts of God and of Christianity as they understood both – eternity, heaven, hell, and all other manner of segregated, categorized aspects of their understanding of life and faith – there remained the challenge of the default position of the *Mi'kmaq* that integrated all aspects and qualities of creation – including themselves. This continued to trouble the Jesuit efforts at conversion to a lifestyle more consistent with that of European Christians.⁸⁷

But when there was a question of speaking about God and religious matters, there was the difficulty, there, the “not understand.” Therefore, they were obliged to learn the language by themselves, inquiring of the savages how they called each thing. And the task was not so very wearisome as long as what was asked about could be touched or seen: a stone, a river, a house; to strike, to jump, to laugh, to sit down. But when it came to internal and spiritual acts, which cannot be demonstrated to the

⁸⁷ Any degree of introspection should have, one would think, caused the Jesuits to question the contradictory nature of their work – on the one hand seeking to make the *Mi'kmaq* into good French citizens (else why send some to France for instruction) while bemoaning the reprobate nature of French Christians – in particular the peasantry. Christendom appears to have more flaws than the “savage” society of the *Mi'kmaq*.

senses, and in regard to words which are called abstract and universal, such as, to believe, to doubt, to hope, to discourse, to apprehend, an animal, a body, a substance, a spirit, virtue, vice, sin, reason, justice, etc. – for these things they had to labor and sweat; in these were the pains of travail. They did not know by what route to reach them, although they tried more than a hundred; there were no gestures which would sufficiently express their ideas, not if they would use ten thousand of them. (Biard 1616, Vol. 3, 49)

Thus, *Mi'kmaw* cosmology was itself understood as an interplay of the various and sundry aspects of the created order so as to ensure the harmonious existence of all things.⁸⁸ Action and interaction were key.⁸⁹ It is this understanding, expressed in “micro-cosmological” terms, for example, that led to the *Mi'kmaw* hunter and fisher’s understanding that the bones of the animals they hunted or the fish they caught were to be returned to the land or sea respectively, so as to ensure no insult was carried, no harm done, and no breach of harmony created. In doing so, an abundant continuing harvest of the creation’s necessary requirements for life would be ensured for all aspects of creation – not simply the *Mi'kmaq*. It is not surprising then, that for the Jesuits, for whom such an understanding was anathema, energies were to be focused on the delinking of the six worlds of the *Mi'kmaw* people. It was imperative to have them embrace a different cosmology and a different way of conceiving ontology. Not only was this their clear strategy in mission, but its singular motivation.

⁸⁸ Howard Snyder and Joel Scandrett (2011) have offered an excellent beginning to a changed evangelical viewpoint on this matter. In their discussion they broach what continues to be a difficult issue for Euro-American and Canadian Christians – that God is concerned of the salvation of the rest of creation too – not simply the human soul!

⁸⁹ Michael Rynkiewich, in a personal communication, suggests, “These things are not absent in Scripture, and may resonate with what, to Europeans, are obscure passages, such as Peter’s reference to ‘the restoration of all things’ in Acts 2 and Paul’s reference to ‘all creation standing on tiptoe to see the sons of God come into their glory’ (Romans 8, Phillips translation) because redemption for humans will mean rescue from decay for all creation.”

Religious Framework

Now those among them who practice medicine, are identical with those who are at the head of their Religion, i.e. *Autmoins*, whose office is the same as that of our Priests and our Physicians. (Biard 1616, Vol. 3, 31)

Given the forgoing discussion, it is not hard to imagine that the religious framework emerging out of *Mi'kmaw* cosmology would itself be of a highly interconnected nature, linking each aspect of their universe to each other aspect. Make no mistake, however, this was not the classical physics expression of action-reaction but rather action-interaction-action. While not an overly flattering description, and while certainly not thorough, Biard's effort to capture what he witnessed of this complex interactivity is nonetheless helpful.

Their whole religion consists of certain incantations, dances and sorcery, which they have recourse to, it seems, either to procure the necessaries of life or to get rid of their enemies; they have *Autmoins*, that is, medicine-men, who consult the evil Spirit regarding life and death and future events; and the evil spirit [great beast] often presents himself before them, as they themselves assert, approves or disapproves their schemes of vengeance, promises them the death of their enemies or friends, or prosperity in the chase, and other mockeries of the same sort. To make these complete they even have faith in dreams; if they happen to awake from a pleasing and auspicious dream, they rise even in the middle of the night and hail the omen with songs and dances. They have no temples, sacred edifices, rites, ceremonies or religious teaching, just as they have no laws, arts or government, save certain customs and traditions of which they are very tenacious (Biard 1612, Vol. 2, 26).

One can imagine, for example, that the religious participants in the dances and “sorcery” as well as those offering incantations – most likely songs and verbalized prayers – would be perceived as having participated in the “witch doctor's” effort to either summon or drive out evil spirits. In defense of a different way of understanding this encounter, Rita Joe, elder, renowned *Mi'kmaw* poet, and member of the Order of

Canada, reflects on oral traditional teachings with which she grew up. One can sense the decades of frustration this residentially schooled woman of letters has experienced in her effort to understand how it was that the Jesuits and other newcomers could form the conclusions they did. She observes,

The Mi'kmaq had no religion, some early historians say. How does one know the practices of another culture if one does not understand the meaning of their chants or dances? I know my people fasted for days at a time, and when one abstained from food and water, finally a person has visions of supernatural beings. I often wonder how our Creator, who had compassion for childlike people, may have shown himself to them. When I read early history I always try to interpret the words the explorers heard, trying to sound them out in my own way. I've heard of the word Kisulkip (which means Creator). Kisulkip was everything to the Native people (Joe and Choyce 1997, 9).

As we have seen in this brief discussion, *Mi'kmaw* cosmology did indeed provide that the creation was full of *manitou* – spirits who were at large, some for good and some for evil purposes, but ultimately to engage individuals and communities, most often in the provision of their needs. Campeau (2000, 146) notes quite correctly that the ways people, whether *buoins*, *kinaps* or other individuals, engaged the *manitou* were the same. He suggests that the two were dreams and divination.⁹⁰ It should be noted that while consultation of spiritual beings is not prohibited in scripture (consultation with angels and animals is described on a number of occasions in scripture and, in Job 12, is even promoted and advocated), consultation with evil spirits and, as John would summarize them, “spirits of the anti-Christ” is expressly forbidden. Biard, it seems, has a difficult time – as do each of the Jesuits – drawing a distinction between the two. This is particularly relevant given

⁹⁰ Dreams and visions are not the same as divination and it is not clear that the latter was, in fact, the practice of the *Mi'kmaq*. See Robinson (2005, 11–13) for her brief discussion of this in relation to the comparison made of *Mi'kmaw* practice to shamanism.

Biard's observation on the one hand, "Of the one supreme God they have a certain slender notion," while on the other and, almost immediately, he remonstrates, "but they are so perverted by false ideas and by custom, that, as I have said, they really worship the Devil" (Biard 1612, Vol. 2, 27). It follows then, that a huge leap is being made to infer that each and every time a consultation with a "*manitou*" is undertaken by the *Mi'kmaq*, it is the latter. I will have more to say about this in Chapter 6.

If the religious reality was, for the *Mi'kmaq* what the Jesuits often interpreted it to be and, not as the *Mi'kmaq* have confessed it to be, it would be a challenge to see Jesuit attitudes as other than religious ethnocentrism – which, of course it often was. For example, Biard's observation "Concerning the one God and the reward of the just, they have learned some things, but they declare that they had always heard and believed thus," is repeated far too often in one form or another – not only by Jouveny but also by Denys and also once by the very diligent but clearly ethnocentric Marc Lescarbot – for it not to have significant traction as actual *Mi'kmaw* belief.

There is among them no system of religion, or care for it. They honor a Deity who has no definite character or regular code of worship. They perceive however, through the twilight, as it were, that some deity does exist. What each boy sees in his dreams, when his reason begins to develop, is to him thereafter a deity, whether it be a dog, a bear, or a bird. They often derive their principles of life and action from dreams. (Jouveny 1710, Vol. 1, 68)

They call some divinity, who is the author of evil, "*Manitou*", and fear him exceedingly. (Denys, in LeClercq 1691, 121)

As to the other countries beyond the sea, some of them have indeed a certain vague knowledge of the deluge, and of the immortality of the soul, together with the future reward of those who live aright; they might have handed this obscure doctrine down, from generation to generation.... (Lescarbot 1610, Vol. 1, 24)

I will let Rita Joe have the final word on this.

Right now my body is weak. This shaking body from head to foot makes me realize so much needs to be done, but I am so determined to show how much we knew about our Creator. Every part of Mi'kmaq life was for the betterment of our people, and if the so-called founders did not agree that we were Christian enough, their shortsightedness missed all the goodness we have tried to show. We helped heal the newcomers of scurvy and we shared our food. Anything explored asked for, they received.... I dare to say to everyone now, look at us in a Christian way. Join our celebrations, sing our honour song, take part in our ceremonies. My Kisulkip and my God are the same. If we take part in each other's ceremonies, we may find something that each of us never fully understood: unity and love in the eyes of the Spirit (Joe and Choyce 1997, 10).

Life and Death

I explained to them and made them see by a round figure what country it was where the sun sets according to their idea, assuring them that no one had ever found this great village, that all that was nothing but nonsense; that the souls of men alone were immortal; and, that if they were good, they would go to heaven, and if they were bad they would descend into hell, there to burn forever; and that each one would receive according to his works. "In that," he said, "you lie, you people, in assigning different places for souls, – they go to the same country, at least, ours do; for the souls of two of our countrymen once returned from this great village, and explained to us all that I have told thee, then they returned to their dwelling place." They call the milky way, Tchipaï meskenau, the path of souls, because they think that the souls raise themselves through this way in going to that great village. (Le Jeune 1634, Vol. 6, 52)

That there was a world beyond this one, which a person traversed death to reach, was, to the *Mi'kmaq*, incontrovertible. Both the creation narrative of the *Mi'kmaw* people and their capacity for intuition based on the rest of creation made it difficult to believe otherwise. Unfortunately, speculation as to the nature of the "life-after-death" experience has usually landed with some form of "Happy Hunting Ground." Campeau's rather worn idea about tribal people, therefore, comes as no surprise: "For the *Mi'kmaq* as is often the

case in other religious frameworks, death is simply the return of the human being and other living beings to the spatial and temporal dimension of the mythical hero” (2000, 144). The idea lacks enough substance to make it a viable conclusion, given what else we know about the *Mi'kmaq*. Biard, for all his other observational shortcomings makes one clear statement that rings closest to the foundation for traditions with which most *Mi'kmaw* were familiar.

They have an incoherent and general idea of the immortality of the soul and of future reward and punishment: but farther than this they do not seek nor care for the causes of these things, occupied and engrossed always either in the material things of life, or in their own ways and customs. Now these are briefly the principal features of what I have been able to learn about these nations and their life. (Biard 1616, Vol. 3, 35)

Contrary to Biard’s statement of their incoherency, reasoned notions of the transition between life and death existed in the *Mi'kmaw* mind. Clearly and concisely stated, the *Mi'kmaw* conception of life, death, and the hereafter went something like this: “We know this occurs; our experience tells us. We anticipate something after it for our loved ones and for ourselves; our hopes and belief convince us. But we do not know how, when, or what it will fully mean; our contentment that it is a part of the mystery assures us.” Jouvency expands his previous description with the following passage in which he notes that the departed person was being prepared in death to spend time in the “kingdom of the dead.”⁹¹ No elder with whom I have ever spoken, nor any story from the lore and tradition of the People I have ever heard, reflects this concept.⁹²

⁹¹ It is entirely likely that Biard is doing one of two things or both with this image: either creating a picture for his home audience sufficiently appalling to them to loosen the purse strings, and/or repeating an image he has created of an image of hell – the land of the dead – so that the new proselyte can wrestle with the possibilities.

⁹² This is an interposition of the meaning of a story or myth from the foundations of

They never bear out the corpses of the dead through the door of the lodge, but through that part toward which the sick person turned when he expired. They think that the soul flies out through the smoke-hole; and, in order that it may not linger through longing for its old home, nor while departing breathe upon any of the children, who by such an act would be, as they think, doomed to death, they beat the walls of the wigwam with frequent blows of a club, in order that they may compel the soul to depart more quickly. They believe it to be immortal. That it may not thereafter perish with hunger, they bury with the body a large quantity of provisions; also, garments, pots, and various utensils of great expense, and acquired by many years labor, in order, they say, that he may use them and pass his time more suitably in the kingdom of the dead. (Jouveney 1710, Vol. 1, 64)

Once again, Jouveney's and other Jesuits' interpolation reflects their naivete and lack of facility – both of the concepts being discussed and of the language used to discuss them.⁹³ *Mi'kmaw* people understood that the soul departs for a life beyond this one. While not as theologically intricate in their description of this event or its implications as were the well-formed and historic Christian constructs, it was nonetheless a sound perspective of life beyond the one currently being lived. Some years after Biard's mission, Chrestien Le Clercq would note *Mi'kmaw* belief in somewhat more considered detail.⁹⁴

French and wider Euro-Christian culture on another culture whose undergirding myth and story is entirely different. Having then done that, they denigrate it by applying the same social and, in this case, spiritual meaning.

⁹³ Biard and Ennemond Masse, his fellow missionary, found great difficulty with acquiring the *Mi'kmaw* language as the following notation indicates: “They found great practical difficulties in acquiring the Indian languages, and made slight progress in the Herculean task to which they had been set” (Thwaites 1896, Vol. 1, 7). They were therefore heavily dependent on translation – most often in the early going, this service was provided by Charles de Biencourt, the young son of Msr. De Poutrincourt, the governor of the new colonial expedition and a person known not to be overly supportive of the Jesuit mission. (Biard 1616, Vol. 3, 49)

⁹⁴ This account is based on his hearing what was a common tale from the *Kluskap* exploits. It reads: “A certain Savage [of old] had received from *Messou* the gift of immortality in a little package, with a strict injunction not to open it; while he kept it closed he was immortal, but his wife, being curious and incredulous, wish to see what was inside this present; and having opened it, it all flew away and since then the Savages have been subject to death” (Le Jeune 1634, Vol. 6, 46).

Based upon a tradition so fabulous, they have drawn these extravagant conclusions, – that everything is animated and that souls are nothing other than the ghost of that which had been animated: that the rational soul is a sombre and black image of the man himself: that it had feet, hands, a mouth, a head, and all other parts of the human body : that it had still the same needs for drinking, for eating, for clothing, for hunting and fishing, as when it was in the body.... (Le Clercq 1691, 213)

Perhaps the only concern for the *Mi'kmaq*, since the fact that they were all traversing this life into the next was a given, was that their loved ones be properly dispatched from this life to the next, that they be accorded all the honors due to them, and that they rested in a posture of readiness for their journey. Biard records this attitude of preparation and respect – as well as his own chagrin that the European outlook on death is not so bright.⁹⁵

I have nearly forgotten the most beautiful part of all; it is that they bury with the dead man all that he owns, such as his bag, his arrows, his skins and all his other articles and baggage, even his dogs if they have not been eaten. Moreover, the survivors add to these a number of other such offerings, as tokens of friendship. Judge from this whether these good people are not far removed from this cursed avarice which we see among us; who, to become possessed of the riches of the dead, desire and seek eagerly for the loss and departure of the living. (1616, Vol. 3, 34)

The idea that each day provided enough concerns for itself was not difficult for the *Mi'kmaq* to contend with; after all, they lived a hand-to-mouth existence, and no amount of fret or anxiety about a day beyond the present would make it different.⁹⁶ Not so for the

⁹⁵ Biard is adept as juxtaposing two images for his French audience: that the wretched savages need our missionary endeavors to save them from hell and that the savages have a greater ability to part with their substance than have the Europeans and hence the latter should feel guilty. Together they make a powerful plea for more resources. And contemporary charities thought they invented the method!

⁹⁶ This does not mean that they had neither concern nor capacity to engage the future as a people, prepared for contingencies. They simply recognized that there were limits on what they could do, including prayer and preparation, to change things. Reid's (1995) and Paul's (1993) discussions on no less a concern for themselves than their relationship with the newcomers to *Mi'kma'ki*, in respect of the impact of Treaty and the Treaty process, is helpful in confirming this disposition.

Jesuits. For them there was much to be concerned with beyond the present moment and life's tasks to ensure that the moment was lived well. Biard's further reflection provides us with the ethos that surrounded the death of the *Mi'kmaw* proselyte *Membertou* in early 1612. For the bereaved, there was anticipation for their loved one's journey and the expectation that he would come to the place of his ancestors; for Biard – and *Membertou* – there was the corresponding angst that Catholic rites thrust upon both the missionary, as he looked on, and the proselyte as they wrestled with the impact of the expected changes.

So then, seeing that his life was drawing to a close, I confessed him as well as I could; and after that he delivered his oration (this is their sole testament). Now, among other things in this speech, he said that he wished to be buried with his wife and children, and among the ancient tombs of his family.

I manifested great dissatisfaction with this, fearing that the French and Savages would suspect that he had not died a good Christian. But I was assured that this promise had been made before he was baptized, and that otherwise, if he were buried in our cemetery, his children and his friends would never again come to see us, since it is the custom of this nation to shun all reminders of death and of the dead. (Biard 1612, Vol. 2, 11)

This portended a struggle for a reconciliation of faith, culture, and their social and spiritual tradition and understanding that would continue for the next four hundred plus years – still manifesting in the lives of *Mi'kmaw* people today.

Implications for Discussion

We have seen in this chapter that the *Mi'kmaw* people, even by the descriptions offered by the Jesuits themselves, were anything but what the Jesuits and the colonials, in their more honest moments, had expected. In place of the uncivilized they found a people who, while not technologically advanced, nonetheless lived an extended healthy life,

barring accidents or traumatic injury; enjoyed a significant measure of familial cordiality and respect; could engage in meaningful reciprocity in relationships with others; knew how to live on the land and seas; and had the capacity to govern their affairs with wisdom. They knew the ways of the land and seas and were welcoming and hospitable. The latter got them into trouble.

What will the encounter mean in the future in terms of ramifications for *Mi'kmaw* understanding and way of life? For this chapter, more questions come to mind than observations waiting to be fleshed out.

First, the *Mi'kmaw* people's normative understanding of the interchange of ideas between two peoples has created for them a conundrum. Even when it seems apparent that one understands the other's language and intent, there is not always a one-on-one correspondence of meaning or motive as they are used to experiencing with other Native groups. How will this further impact them?

Second, given that the relationship with the French will create additional challenges as more French come and fewer *Mi'kmaq* survive in the years ahead, what will this mean for transmission of the teachings and stories of *Mi'kmaw* cosmology? How will their ways of life survive into the next generation? What strategies, if any, will become visible by which they will seek to do so?

What will the treaty process between the *Mi'kmaq* and the French, and subsequently the British, mean to their concept of community life and, in particular, the religious leadership exercised by *Bouin* and *Ginap*, *Mi'kmaw* persons who had the capacity to wield great power for good or for evil respectively? Will the Jesuits succeed in supplanting them?

How will the engagement of the *Mi'kmaq* and French worldview perspectives shape each people's spiritual understanding and religious practice, and how will it affect the relationship between the two?

Will the *Mi'kmaq* be able to retain their religious and spiritual perspectives in such a way that subsequent generations will believe and experience the essential quality of being *Mi'kmaq*? We turn now in the next chapters to a discussion first of the Jesuit world at contact, and then to the impact of the encounter of Jesuit and other French missions, on both cultures – each as transmitter and each as receptor.

Chapter 3

The Seventeenth-Century French/Jesuit World and Worldview

In this chapter we examine the Jesuits and their context – both the roots out of which the order sprang, theologically speaking, and the sociopolitical environments in existence during the period of their formation and early mission. Our concern is to obtain a global overview of those forces at work in the French Jesuit world which would, in some measure, shape their understanding of themselves and their mission. To do this we have chosen to do a literature review that is inclusive of their own self-description and the reflections of others – both those who were contemporaries of the Jesuits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and those who provide us with a retrospective look from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The goal is to discover the Jesuit understanding of the nature of the spiritual and therefore of spirituality. In many ways this is accessible to us only obliquely as the terminology that we are employing in this study, and the way in which we are employing it, was not available or in use during the period in question. In addition to this global overview we will also make an effort to examine in somewhat more detail the worldview perspectives that are apparent in those of the Society of the Friends of Jesus in this era.

To undertake this task, we will conduct a limited survey of the literature, including but not restricted to the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*, the *Jesuit Relations*, any correspondence to or from the Jesuits that might be available and salient to the discovery, as well as any related secondary sources that could furnish us with indications of the beliefs and pragmatic worldview of the Jesuits. Finally, we will survey the literature for

any understanding of the Jesuit understanding of the spiritual with a tight focus on any impact that may be evident on the theology of mission subsequent methodology – particularly in the North American context.

Introduction

The authors of the journals which formed the basis of the Relations were for the most part men of trained intellect, acute observers, and practiced in the art of keeping records of their experiences. They had left the most highly civilized country of their times, to plunge at once in o the heart of the American wilderness, and attempt to win to the Christian faith the fiercest savages known to history....

We seem, in the Relations, to know this crafty savage, to measure him intellectually as well as physically, his inmost thoughts as well as open speech. The fathers did not understand him from an ethnological point of view, as well as he is to-day understood; their minds were tintured with the scientific fallacies of their time. But, with what is known to-day, the photographic reports in the Relations help the student to an accurate picture of the untamed aborigine, and much that mystified the fathers, is now, by aid of their careful journals, easily susceptible of explanation. Few periods of history are so well illuminated as the French regime in North America. This we owe in large measure to the existence of the Jesuit Relations. (Thwaites 1896, 37, 40)

At issue in this chapter is the nature of French/Jesuit Catholic worldview and understandings of the nature of the spiritual and of spirituality between 1600 and 1750 (strictly delimited) as it impacted on the contact points with the *Mi'kmaw* people. As a reader you may simply say, “That’s an easy task, why take so much space? All that needs be done is a review of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius!” While at first, this might appear to be true, not only my thesis, but the method I will employ as the means of evaluation of the nature of the spiritual, requires me to do more. It requires me to look at

Jesuit behavior as well as examine their stated belief. A *Mi'kmaw* understanding of Jesuit spirituality would require this at least. We, therefore, need to look carefully at the Jesuit context and praxis to determine what influenced their behaviors so it might then be compared with any statements either directly or indirectly made concerning spiritual belief. This must, of course, include any observations of the world around them, which they have committed to the written record. Of particular interest to this study will be their grasp of the Indigenous populations they encounter.

As noted in the opening chapter, and will become even more clear in our closing discussion in Chapter 7 the literature is filled with what appear to be contradictions concerning Jesuit perceptions of the Indigenous populations. On the one hand, significant numbers of passages reflect the, not unexpected, Jesuit perception of French civilization's superiority to those of the Indigenous populations they encounter. Yet a large number of tracts – numerous in the Jesuit *Relations* alone – extol the virtues, even the lack of vices, of these same Indigenous peoples. In fact, on a multitude of occasions Jesuits appear to be in awe of the civil and moral behavior of the *Mi'kmaq* and other Indigenous peoples with whom they have commerce, bemoaning the lack of any such pretense of behavior among their own countrywomen and men. Take, for example one set of these contradictions:

It will be seen in the course of this relation, that all I have said in this chapter is very true; and yet I would not dare to assert that I have seen one act of real moral virtue in a Savage. They have nothing but their own pleasure and satisfaction in view. (Le Jeune 1634 Vol. 6, 68)

If we were to be reading this description cold, that is to say, with no preconceptions as to context and circumstance, we would imagine that the people to whom the remarks refer

were altogether reprobate, completely without any redeeming quality of life or behavior. If the same reading context were to be applied to the following passage, however, our assumptions would be altogether different. Indeed, here we would assume that we were speaking of some of Jesus' very own disciples or, at the least, the folks of whom the Apostle James wrote in his epistle.

As there are many orphans among these people, – these poor children are scattered among the Cabins of their uncles, aunts, or other relatives. Do not suppose that they are snubbed and reproached because they eat the food of the household. Nothing of the kind, they are treated the same as the children of the father of the family, or at least almost the same, and are dressed as well as possible. (L'e Jeune 1634, Vol. 6, 68)

What is there that might explain this apparent inconsistency in perception? Is it situational prejudice – that is, the observer/writer has a bias toward someone or something that has happened so as to color the recording and comment? Or, is it simply a matter of different circumstances eliciting different behaviors from the Indigenous populations?⁹⁷ As we explore the apparent contradictions further, how might the Indigenous people's behaviors – the ones that are of an avowedly positive nature – be viewed if not as moral, socially upright, and/or virtuous? Perhaps it is as simple as observer bias clouded by inaccurate perceptions of just what is happening, and assigning culturally bound meaning to something in one context that has a very different meaning in another – the form and meaning issue.⁹⁸ Of just as great an interest is this: What does

⁹⁷ Or is it a matter of where the writer is in a given text? If it is a summary that serves as propaganda for general consumption, then are the comments more negative? If buried in the text where there may be more nuance allowed, and less chance of crossing swords with authorities or donors, then are the comments more positive?

⁹⁸ For a fuller discussion of this issue and to be immediately immersed in the difference of opinion that exists in the form/meaning debate, see Hiebert (1985) and Kraft (1996).

this say of the French populous – more to the point, the Jesuit perception of the French populous?

In this section then, I will briefly review some of the literature that describes the French/Jesuit perceptions of Europe and the North American world into which they entered. I will discuss some of the ways in which these Jesuit missionaries understood and were impacted by Europe and North America – what they and their countrymen would ultimately describe as “*La Nouvelle France*.” In so doing, I will attempt to ascertain the way in which they understood the realm of the spiritual. Since the term “spirituality” does not appear in common usage until toward the end of the nineteenth century, I will have to surmise from the descriptions of their behavior, and from their own words where available, whether or not they are speaking of the concepts currently in use to define spirituality.

The French/Jesuit World: Origins

The Society of Jesus formally established by papal bull in 1540 existed prior to that date in a variety of developmental stages beginning with the meeting of Ignatius Loyola with some of the original members at the University of Paris circa the late 1520s. With the early 1530s entrance into Italy of what John Addington Symonds (1886, 65) would describe as the “Seven Spanish Devils,”⁹⁹ the society moved one step closer to its formal establishment through papal decree. And so it was that in 1534 seven friends, led by Loyola, a Basque, took mutual vows of poverty and service, seeking a mission to the

⁹⁹ For a more complete discussion of Jesuit formation history see the Introduction to O’Malley (1993) and Bangert and McCoog (1993, 92).

Holy Land, a mission that was not to be but the denial of which would lead to the formation of the largest, and many would argue quite convincingly, the most powerful order of the Catholic Church. O'Malley (1993, 3) recounts that Ignatius of Loyola, the leader of Symonds' seven devils, actually arrived in Italy in 1535, joined the following year by eight, not seven, colleagues from the University of Paris. These nine formed the core of the Jesuit order.

The sixteenth century was a time of significant conflict in Europe, not least in France. With the rise of the French Calvinist movement, and the Lutheran assault on Catholic religious orthodoxy already in full bloom, a series of internal political machinations had destabilized much of France, leading to a series of ostensibly religious civil wars, the first following a Huguenot massacre in 1562. At first it might appear that the conflicts were, as most often described, strictly religious in nature. Coming as they did on the heels of a series of protracted wars with England, Spain, and other European interests,¹⁰⁰ however, it would seem the reverse might just as well be true. There was much of the formation of religious purpose in France – whether for the Huguenots, the Lutherans, or the various Catholic sects – that had to do with nation-state political maneuvering as much or more than it did with service to God and restoration of orthodox ecclesial praxis and theology. D'Aubigne, in his *History of the Reformation of the 16th Century*, offers substantive support to this notion that spiritual power was being used at least as much for the accomplishment of civil aims as it was ecclesial or evangelization purposes.

¹⁰⁰ These were Territorial Wars that led to the Colonial Wars of the next century, which spilled over increasingly into the territories and life-ways of the Indigenous peoples of North America, to their continued and intensifying detriment.

This happened naturally enough. It was in truth the spiritual order which the church had at first undertaken to defend. But to protect it against the resistance and attacks of the people, she had recourse to earthly means, to vulgar arms, which a false policy had induced her to take up. When once the Church had begun to handle such weapons, her spirituality was at an end. Her arms could not become temporal and her heart not become temporal also. Erelong was seen apparently the reverse of what had been at first. After resolving to employ earth to defend heaven, she made use of heaven to defend the earth. Theocratic forms became in her hands the means of accomplishing worldly enterprises. The offerings which people laid at the feet of the sovereign Pontiff of Christendom were employed in maintaining the splendor of his court and in paying his armies. His spiritual power served as steps by which to place the kings and nations of the earth under his feet. The charm ceased, and the power of the Church was lost, so soon as the men of those days could say, She is become as one of us. (D'Aubigne, 1799, 22)

This is not altogether unexpected given the embedded dualism within the thinking of the religious and civil authorities of the day. As noted above, even when it pertained to the various European sovereigns, there was a clear separation between the material and spiritual aspects of the monarch's existence and the corresponding use of their power for worldly and eternal purposes respectively. Bangert and McCoog reiterate this.

Continuity ordinarily seemed to be the first principle of the French state, and it was inherent in the concept of king itself: the king was held to have two bodies, a physical one, which necessarily decayed, and a spiritual one, which never died. In this view, the main purpose of the French state was to defend vested interests – i.e., to maintain continuity rather than to change the existing order. (Bangert and McCoog, 1993, 294)

It is within and into this socio-religious and political milieu of Europe in the middle 1500s that the Jesuit order springs into existence, and because of the orbit of Paris around which the embryonic order was wrapped, from which the French Jesuits emerged.¹⁰¹ To a large extent, they too, are rooted in a ruler's political needs and

¹⁰¹ For a fuller discussion of the socio-political ethos of the early Jesuits, see O'Malley (1993), Moore (1982), and Donnelly (2006).

aspirations – this time however, those of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church whose objectives, to stamp out heresy, maintain the Church’s political influence in Europe, and restore its dominance in the religious affairs of its monarchs, were paramount. According to O’Malley, this made for an interesting tightrope for the Jesuits to walk. On the one hand, they were seen to be disinterested in the politics of Church reform; on the other, they were deeply ensconced in the politics of being the Church.

Then as now a line of demarcation between religion and politics, including ecclesiastical politics, was easier to propose as an ideal than to implement in practice. By actively seeking the friendship of princes and prelates, moreover, the Jesuits were almost perforce drawn into policy and partisanship. The fact that some Jesuits acted as theologians at the Council of Trent meant that, sooner or later, they would take positions with which other members of the Council would bitterly disagree. Often enough, however, the Jesuits ran into trouble with their fellow Catholics not because of a particular position they defended or attacked but because they’re very Institute was considered suspect or subversive. (O’Malley (1993, 287)

Many people have described the Society of Jesus, almost since their formation, as the “shock troop” of the counter-reformation.¹⁰² Fr. William McGucken describes precisely this purpose as being clear in the imagination of Ignatius of Loyola in founding the Company of Jesus. He notes,

To specifically found an order in order to educate was not ... at all in [the] mind of St. Ignatius at the beginning. St. Ignatius was trying to form a shock troop for the Papacy, a small, mobile, well-educated, group of men who had mobility – they were to be tied down by neither parochial nor educational duties. When the Pope needed them somewhere, they were to be sent. That was what St. Ignatius had in mind in founding the Company of Jesus. (1932, 9)

The Society included a relatively small number of “Professed Fathers” committed

¹⁰² A further discussion of this and other considerations of the teaching focus of the Jesuits that influenced their development can be found in Fr. Michael McMahon’s article (2004).

to unquestioned papal support that, according to Donnelly (2006, 231), meant any mission, anywhere. Organized essentially as an order of secular priests, the time they committed to the *Spiritual Exercises* as practiced by the traditional religious orders was reduced significantly to devote themselves to “working for souls: teaching, writing, studying, preaching, hearing confessions, visiting hospitals, and other apostolic works” (Donnelly 2006, 157). They did this to dedicate themselves to what they perceived to be a key goal of Jesuit spirituality: “finding God in all things” (Donnelly 2006, 157).¹⁰³ Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* (Preparatory Prayer: The Second Point) are quite straightforward in this regard.

I will consider how God dwells in creatures; in the elements, giving them existence; and the plants, giving them life; in the animals giving them sensation; in human beings, giving them intelligence; and finally how in this way he dwells also in myself, giving me existence, life, sensation, and intelligence; and even further, making me his temple, since I’m created as a likeness and image of his Divine Majesty. (Donnelly 2006, 157)

It needs to be said quickly, however, that even though the Jesuits have been lauded for their essentially inculturative approach to mission, “finding God in all things” nonetheless effectively meant “all things that could be seen to be or made to be, both French and Catholic.”¹⁰⁴ French civilization is clearly deemed to be superior; French behavior, irrespective of its consistency with a professed faith, is being proclaimed to be

¹⁰³ This has also been stated in the literature by some authors as “seeing God in all things.” Both will be used here dependent on usage in the contexts cited.

¹⁰⁴ This propensity was not restricted to the Jesuits, however, as every other order of the Catholic Church that was involved with *Mi’kmaq* mission held the same view. Chrestien Le Clercq (1696, 111), for example, said, “To civilize them [the Indians] it was necessary first that the French should mingle with them and habituating them among us [and] to make the Indians sedentary, without which nothing can be done for the salvation of these heathens.” Elsewhere, this quote was reduced to “These heathen must first be civilized so that they then might be fit receptacles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

essential for Christian life. As evidence of this disposition, Pierre Biard, one of the earliest Jesuits in *Mi'kmaw* mission, quite emphatically proclaimed,

If they are savages, it is to domesticate and civilize them that we have come here; if they are rude, that is no reason that we should be idle; if they have until now profited little, it is no wonder, for would be too much to expect fruit from this grafting, and to demand reason and beard¹⁰⁵ [maturity] from a child. (Biard 1611, Vol. 1, 47)

How strange then, in light of this rather emphatic denigration of Indigenous civil capacity, that many others who made record of Jesuit and other French missionary relationships in the new land, would take note of contradictory and more positive virtues among the Indigenous populations, extolling these same moral rectitudes as superior, at least in actual behavior, than those of the French citizenry that were being encountered.

John Ralston Saul, celebrated Canadian philosopher and social critic, is one such observer. He notes,

The early French missionaries arrived filled with certainty that they spoke for a superior civilization. Most of them quickly altered their view as they noticed the aboriginals unusual sense of community and the built-in patience that meant each person had to be listened to. (Saul 2008, 58)

It seems quite clear that the disconnect between intellectual and spiritual values and the practice of those values (in terms of actual observed behavior), if not taken for granted, is at least understood to be somewhat normative of mainstream French behavior. Is this also true in the behavior of the Jesuits themselves? Do they also allow that human behavior and stated ideals will not and cannot comport one with the other? This we must

¹⁰⁵ It is perhaps more than an interesting comparative that this kind of language (beard as a reflection of maturity) would be used by Biard who would then also describe the bearded *Membertou* – an anomaly among most Native North Americans of the day – as the most noble and upright of all the *Mi'kmaq*. Is this simply a metaphor or, is there something more to it?

explore sufficiently to be convinced one way or the other as it clearly contributes to any decision we might take with respect to Jesuit understanding of the nature of the spiritual and what constitutes appropriate Christian spirituality.

For the Jesuits, all things French included that society's understanding of the place and role of women – particularly where that view was mediated by the Catholic Church's stance on women and their role in both society and Church. In what would seem to be yet another permutation of their binary approach to the world around them, the Jesuits appeared to borrow heavily from Greek thought with respect to gender, separating maleness and femaleness into two levels of redemptive activity. Pagden wrestles with this notion, finally suggesting, "Like other elements of their intellectual system, the Jesuits' perceptions of women were shaped by Aristotelian ideas" (1982, 27). Welton however, not wanting to gloss the reality of Jesuit perspective with philosophical discussion, goes even further:

The Jesuit invasion of the Amerindian lifeworld was directed with fierce aggression and hostility toward women. Women posed considerable threat to the Jesuit project. Women were passive and men active, they were deemed to be men's helpmates, they were more feeble than men, they possessed less capacity to reason, and it was natural that they be governed by men. Within Catholic teachings, women's sexual nature was threatening and dangerous, always poised to subvert service to God by luring men into bodily pleasure. (Welton (2005, 106–107)

Not surprisingly then, Jesuit mission, when directed toward women, engaged them as the lesser vessels that French society and the Catholic Church had come to view them to be.

Welton, commenting on notes in the Jesuit *Relations* to that effect, states,

The Jesuits worked hard to create a moral regime that put considerable coercive pressure on women to see themselves as the cause of domestic disputes. Young girls were even cloistered and guarded by male relatives and bells to ensure that young lovers did not crawl into their beds. (2005, 113)

Karen Anderson, feminist historian and period scholar, shocked that *Huron* and *Montagnais* women would capitulate to such obvious oppression, suggests that they moved from “resistance to compliance, to self-policing” (1991, 96). Welton offers the view that “the converts were actually behaving as if the Jesuit conception of the world were true” (2005, 114).

Jesuit Philosophy and Foundations

The following passage sets out the foundational philosophy of Jesuitism. It is taken from *The Formula of the Institute, Foundational Document of the Society of Jesus 1540*.

Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the Cross in our Society, which we desire to be designated by the Name of Jesus, and to serve the Lord alone and the Church, his spouse, under the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth, should, after a solemn vow of perpetual chastity, poverty and obedience, keep what follows in mind.

He is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, by means of public preaching, lectures and any other ministration whatsoever of the Word of God, and further by means of retreats, the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity, and the spiritual consolation of Christ’s faithful through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments.

Moreover, he should show himself ready to reconcile the estranged, compassionately assist and serve those who are in prisons or hospitals, and indeed, to perform any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good. (In Gerhart and Udoh 2007, 482)

Since earlier Christian teachings are tributaries feeding the wider Catholic theological stream and therefore, ultimately, the theology of the Jesuits, reference to the

theology of a few of the contributors to Jesuit thought is warranted so as to understand more fully the Jesuit way of thinking. I therefore briefly highlight four of them – three of the early Church Fathers and Thomas Aquinas – and where appropriate and helpful contrast their understandings with those of *Mi'kmaw* people.

According to Athanasius, opponent and ultimate defeater of Arianism, but also an early articulator of a dualist theology, a form of “special revelation” was essential for salvation. Athanasius claimed that “the divine revelation, communicated by Scripture, is given to all the faithful in common and at once, and is mediated for them by the Church itself by its rights, its sacraments, and its true openness to the gospel message” (Bright and Kannengiesser 1986, 17–24). In the Athanasian frame of reference, spirituality, admittedly an inward experience, at least in part, is constructed by an outward material display of its reality. Let’s look at the extreme example of what this meant. Revelation of the spiritual – of God or the Creator – to an individual, requires first that one be found within the faithful Church. Apart from this position there is no revelation, no experience of the living God (Bright and Kannengiesser 1986, 25ff).

Clearly then, this means that anything of an Indigenous spiritual encounter with the Creator that predates Christian contact cannot be of divine origin. This of course raises the question as to how one becomes a part of the community of faith if being a part of said community is itself a requirement for any sort of divine revelation to take place. Since, for the Jesuits and other French missionaries of the day, the *Mi'kmaq* were heathens, lacking even the very basic God-given revelation, it became necessary, as Chrestian Le Clercq (1691, 205) and others would note, to civilize them so that they then might become fit receptacles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words, causing the

Mi'kmaq to become as the Jesuits, or at least as the best of the Europeans, would situate them to become useable by God and potentially transformed by God.

Gregory of Nyssa, one of the three Cappadocian Fathers, framer of the doctrine of the trinity, and arguably one of the most significant contributors to the creation of the Nicene Creed, was not only a universalist but, according to a number of scholars of the patristic period, leaned heavily on neoplatonist philosophy.¹⁰⁶ Whether he actually quoted from neoplatonist thinkers or not may be a point for much discussion. He did, however, orient several key points of his theology around themes similar to those found in Neoplatonism. The dualist perspective of Gregory that resulted is clarified for us in Kannengieser's analysis of patristic and therefore, I would suggest, Jesuit cosmology:

This *theos* is by itself an immaterial *logos*; "invisible" which also meant unknowable in a proper way; "improbable," which underscores the degree of absolute transcendency. Finally, this *theos* needed to be confessed as "timeless" for there were always ongoing debates, dedicated in the majority schools of philosophy, to the notions of time and eternity assumed in theology. In a discreetly anti-Arian turn, Gregory makes a clear distinction between the "timeless" son of God and the "time" incarnate son of God. (1986, 24)

In this framing, Jesus, the Creator and sustainer of the universe, the one through whom all things have been made and in whom all things hold together, the eternal *logos* made flesh, this Jesus is existential more than physical and therefore unknowable through the physical realities of His own creation. Such is the nature of the dualist argument – almost Gnostic in flavor: divine revelation must be obtained in order to engage the divine and the revelation itself presupposes a form and type of behavior that requires divine animation. It would be wonderful if we were to imagine that this is simply a description

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of the pros and cons of the notion of Gregory as a neoplatonist, see Cleary (1997).

of *sola gratia* – a brief statement of salvation by grace alone. Unfortunately the potential that Gnostic and neoplatonic influence was very much present in the theology of Athanasius, Gregory, and a number of other of the patriarchs – a force very much at play in the early Church – suggests quite strongly that this is not the case. Esoteric spiritual knowledge would seem to be the reference here.

Augustine of Hippo is the third of the early Church Fathers whose theological discourses would clearly be of significant influence on the theology of the Jesuits – particularly his doctrines of original sin and just-war theory – a doctrine that would be expanded on later by Thomas Aquinas. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, “In his early years [Augustine] was heavily influenced by Manichaeism and afterward by the Neo-platonism of Plotinus.” Robert Park takes this a step further and suggests,

Augustine’s thought ... is deeply influenced by Neo-Platonism. In fact, his conversion to Christianity follows directly from his adoption of Neo-Platonic thought. He understood Neo-Platonism to be, on the whole, consistent with much of Christian doctrine. However, it is also important to remember that Augustine did not merely adopt Neo-Platonism. He altered it when it conflicted with Christian doctrine. (1998, 4)

Aquinas offers the same clarification as Park alludes to: “Whenever Augustine, who was imbued with the doctrines of the Platonists, found in their teaching anything consistent with faith, he adopted it; and those things which he found contrary to faith he amended.” This leads us forward one step closer to Jesuit understandings as we come to Thomas Aquinas.

According to most contemporary sources, the Society of Jesus also adhered significantly to the *Summa Theologica* of Aquinas.¹⁰⁷ According to the Encyclopedia of Science and Religion,

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Ross (2003, 165) and Gilson (1994, 502).

Some Platonic Christians in the medieval period speculated that God creates a host of various forms of intelligence in either embodied or disembodied form. This formed part of the principle of plenitude in medieval thought. The philosopher Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) preserved much of the Platonic, Augustinian tradition but he more firmly insisted that human beings are comprised of matter and form. He still allowed that a person's soul persists after death, so Aquinas's reservations about radical dualism were limited.¹⁰⁸

Four principles of Aquinas' *Summa* in particular have direct bearing on the theology, and ostensibly the mission praxis, of the Jesuits, placing them quite clearly and fully in the Thomist school:

The existence of something and its essence are separate. That is, its being and the conception of being man has or can imagine of it (for example, a mountain of solid gold would have essence – since it can be imagined – but not existence, as it is not in the world) are separate in all things – except for God, who is;

The existence of God has total simplicity or lack of composition, his eternal nature (“eternal,” in this case, means that he is altogether outside of time; that is, time is held to be a part of God's created universe), his knowledge, the way his will operates, and his power can all be proved by human reasoning alone.

The contemplative life is greater than the active life, but greater still is the contemplative life that takes action to call others to the contemplative life and give them the fruits of contemplation.

After the end of the world (in which all living material will be destroyed), the world will be composed of non-living matter (such as rocks) but it will be illuminated or enhanced in beauty by the fires of the apocalypse; a new heaven and new earth will be established. (Aquinas 1981, 23, 35-37, 4416-20, 6781)

The *Summa* is adamant that creation “met its zenith” in the creation of human beings. The remainder of creation was to be understood as below and subject to humanity in all ways. What, however, did this say about the *Mi'kmaq* and other Indigenous peoples, given that the Church has just barely announced that they may, in fact, be human? What

¹⁰⁸ *Encyclopedia of Science and Religion* online, s.v. “Dualism.” <http://www.enotes.com/dualism-reference/> (accessed October 23, 2012). For a full discussion of dualist influences on Augustine and other contributors to Western theological thought, see John Cooper (1989) and John Foster (1991).

kind of holdover in thinking might there be about the nature of Indigenous peoples given the proximity in time of this decision? More to the point, what then did this say about *Mi'kmaq* as human beings – since for them this concept of the Creator as First Mover outside of time is foreign, they who thought of the Creator in strictly action-in-relationship terms?

A cursory reading of the Jesuit *Spiritual Exercises* (Ignatius 1543) makes plain their focus was on inner preparation of the individual to the virtual exclusion of all exterior influences – as if the physicality of the human being is irrelevant, set in place only to provide a setting in which the human can “praise and worship God” and be conformed to the expectations of God prerequisite for their salvation. Note for, example, *The First Week: Principle and Foundation* from the *Spiritual Exercises* as instituted by Loyola, which captures quite significantly the arguments of Aquinas in the fourth principle:

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created. From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it. For this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things in all that is allowed to the choice of our free will and is not prohibited to it. (Ignatius 1543)

As I examine Jesuit understandings of the nature of the spiritual and of spirituality then, these foundational patristic perspectives need to be held in mind. And, if that were not enough to make a strong case that dualisms resided at the core of Jesuit theology, I note the following:

Due to the efforts of the Christian philosopher *Boethius* (480–525 CE), who translated Porphyry's *Isagoge*, and composed numerous original

works as well, the Middle Ages received a faint glimmer of the ancient glories of the Platonic philosophy. St. Augustine also, was responsible for imparting a sense of Neoplatonic doctrine to the Latin West, but this was by way of commentary and critique, and not in any way a systematic exposition of the philosophy. Generally speaking, it is safe to say that the European Middle Ages remained in the grip of Aristotelianism until the early Renaissance, when certain brilliant Italian thinkers began to rediscover, translate, and expound upon the original texts of Platonism.¹⁰⁹ (Cassirer et al 1948, 211-212)

Politics and Perception: Jesuit Allegiance and Relationships

For all intents and purposes the Jesuits' single-mindedness of vision left their spiritual and communal practice significantly less conformed to Catholic monastic and spiritual tradition than other orders. As previously noted, given the copious conflicts between ostensibly Catholic European nations – France having fought seven wars in the sixteenth century with Spain alone (Donnelly 2006, 232) – this made for an interesting political arena within which a perceptibly Spanish-led Jesuit ministry in France especially was to blossom. As national and ecclesial allegiances came into play, the Jesuits were to become sophists with an entirely pragmatic edge. In many respects, Jesuit practice and politics were driven by this selective pragmatism – one that Symonds et al. (1909, 1, 65) would describe many years later as “Jesuistry, with its sham learning, shameless lying, and casuistical economy of sins.” This hard-nosed approach was driven, in part, by teachings deeply entrenched in Ignatian spiritual practices through sets of rules codified for rigid observance by all Jesuits and taught in modified form in their schools.

¹⁰⁹ See for example Edward Moore's writings at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/neoplato/> (accessed February 2012).

Instructions such as Ignatius' (1914, 75)¹¹⁰ Rule XIII, "To be right in everything, we ought always to hold that the white which I see, is black, if the Hierarchical Church so decides it," provide a window into the level of commitment to ecclesial authority that fashioned Jesuit thinking. All things Catholic, particularly those established by papal decree, were to be upheld and taught with vigor.

The Jesuits were, after all, not reformers in the institutional sense but only in the individual. In institutional terms, although members of their order served as theologians to the Council of Trent, theirs was the task of maintaining the order of the Church as it had been and would be again under the auspices of papal authority – not its reformation. O'Malley makes this point quite clearly.

This was not the Jesuit's primary focus. Their starting point was not the institution but the individual or voluntary groupings of individuals, beginning with themselves. They had forsworn participation in precisely the institutions with which the others were primarily concerned. Polanco reported that when Paul III saw the "Five chapters" in 1539 he was moved by prophetic spirit to say that the Society would do "much for the reform of the church," but reform as an aim of the Jesuits is nowhere found in the official documents of the Society defining its purpose. When equivalent terms occur in the writings of some Jesuits, they generally do not bear the same meaning as they did at Trent?" (O'Malley 1993, 286)

Clearly though, in the face of Calvinist advances and the growing Lutheran schism, the Jesuits' renewed focus on the good works by which one attained heaven was of significant importance to the way they structured life and mission. They were, after all, at the leading edge of the counter-reformation, responsible for the most powerful singular effort to restore the Church to its unified state of obedience to papal authority and prescribed teaching. In fact, the Jesuits were so central to this effort that in the middle of

¹¹⁰ For a more complete overview of all of the Ignatian *Rules for Thinking with the Church*, see Hardon (1998).

the seventeenth century, none other than Blaise Pascal¹¹¹ would take them to task over their apparent relaxation of morality in Jesuit life, teaching, and ministry that, in his thinking, may have portended, once again, both simony and the sale of indulgences. This, of course, is not at all surprising given Pascal's experiences with Jansenism, replete with its required affirmations of Augustinianism and the drive toward faith that was focused on an interior experience with God versus a hoped-for appropriation of salvation through an external system of rigid spiritual practice and legality.

It seems likely, then, that in addition to the powerful spiritual experience of Ignatius, Jesuit theological leanings and spiritual understandings were born out of the several powerful constraints in their sociopolitical context prior to and during their formative years – pressures for which they subsequently sought a missional response. First was their effort to stave off heresy. The increasingly varied, yet well-argued, expressions of the Protestant Reformation demanded action if the Church they had been formed to serve was to be defended with vigor from the perils of heterodoxy. However, if they were to succeed, this would demand a clear and well-articulated understanding of not just theology and mission but also political strategy. This had obvious implications for the admixture of colonial politics with religious conversions. Again, we hear this reflected in the words of Francis Parkman commenting on the Jesuit context – a context that required the often, then as now, unholy alliance of spiritual pursuit with civil politics.

The Jesuits were strong at court. One of their number, the famous Father Coton, was confessor to Henry the Fourth, and on matters of this world as

¹¹¹ See for example, the discussion of Pascal's concern for the casuistry of the Jesuits and their "desire to lower the Christian ideal and to soften down the moral code in the interest of its policy" in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, online, s.v. "Blaise Pascal," <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11511a.htm> (accessed January 2012).

of the next, was ever whispering at the facile ear of the renegade King. New France offered a fresh field of action to the indefatigable Society of Jesus, and Coton urged upon the royal convert, that, for the saving of souls, some of its members should be attached to the proposed enterprise.... Other influences, too, seconded the confessor. Devout ladies of the court, and the Queen herself, supplying the lack of virtue with an overflowing piety, burned, we are assured, with a holy zeal for snatching the tribes of the West from the bondage of Satan. Therefore it was insisted that the projected colony should combine the spiritual with the temporal character, – or, in other words, that Poutrincourt should take Jesuits with him. Pierre Biard, Professor of Theology at Lyons, was named for the mission. (Parkman 1865, 207)

A second constraint under which the Jesuits operated was the previously noted attempt to reassert the principles of a religion focused through the lens of an uncertain exteriority – where good works were still central to salvation and therefore the gospel, but which required constant reaffirmation and renewal through payments and penance. In this, at least one element of the Reformation – the works of French theologian John Calvin – were found to have some resonance in practice, if not in content, as he formulated his Institutes.¹¹² Perhaps, then, it is not altogether too surprising that the French Calvinists (the Huguenots) and the French Jesuits were able to engage one another, if not in full agreement, at least with a measure of civility in their respective ministries in the North American context. Note the following entry in the Encyclopedia Britannica:

¹¹² This is altogether curious given the fact that Luther, the other major opponent of the Jesuits, whose theology was clearly Catholic at its core, focused his initial efforts toward reforming the existing ecclesial, theological, and sacramental error – not creating a new church body as did John Calvin. See also the proceedings of the “Calvin and Loyola Conference” of 2010 held at Union Theological College, Belfast, where the framing Statements include, “Both certainly attended the University of Paris in the 1520s. The university at that time comprised of about forty colleges situated in the Latin Quarter of the city. Calvin and Loyola were both students at the celebrated College de Montaigu, Calvin arriving there in the latter part of 1523. Loyola’s dates of attendance are uncertain but may well have overlapped.” <http://www.calvinandloyolaconference.org/> (accessed January 2012).

Calvin's reservations about the capacities of the human mind and his insistence that Christians exert themselves to bring the world under the rule of Christ suggest that it is less instructive to approach his thought as a theology to be comprehended by the mind than as a set of principles for the Christian life – in short, as *spirituality*. His *spirituality* begins with the conviction that human beings do not so much “know” God as “experience” him indirectly, through his mighty acts and works in the world, as they experience but can hardly be said to know thunder, one of Calvin's favourite metaphors for religious experience.¹¹³

Third was their response to culture. Once again, we find a contradiction between what they said and what they did. While the evidence, past and present, suggests that the Jesuits were open to the expression of French Jesuit Catholic Christianity in *Mi'kmaw* vessels, using *Mi'kmaw* cultural forms, it is not as simple as that. In fact, the methodologies of the Jesuits in most of the educative and mission contexts where they were engaged with Indigenous peoples were more likely to be culturally manipulative or altogether culturally emasculating.¹¹⁴ Gradie, albeit discussing a different context, speaks clearly to the Jesuit mind and intent noting that,

Other than attempting to preserve the superior status of the principales so that it could be used to promote the goal of acculturation, the curriculum of the Jesuit schools for native children gave no consideration to preserving any aspect of native culture. Although the Jesuits, as well as the other Orders and the Church in general, saw themselves as protectors of the Indians against Spanish exploitation, for example, they all opposed Indian enslavement, this role never included the conservation of native culture which, as we have seen, the Jesuits meant to replace with a

¹¹³ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s.v. “John Calvin.”

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/90247/John-Calvin/13435/Spirituality> (accessed October 23, 2012).

A question comes to mind: Is there something about the Jesuit focus on education that is in fact, a response to Calvin?

¹¹⁴ It must be said that this was not the case with people from cultures that were “literate” and therefore determined to be more sophisticated, such as the Indians of high caste and the highly placed in mainland Chinese society. See, for example, the work of Jesuit Missionaries Robert de Nobili and Matteo Ricci in Southern India and China respectively.

Christianized, hispanicized one through the agency of educated elites.
(1987, 8)

This is certainly not an anomalous experience given the evidence and discussion I will provide below concerning the focus of the educative methods of the Jesuits; their hoped-for outcome of a total transition of power and authority from spiritual leaders of the Indigenous community, such as the *Bouin* and *Ginap* persons of power among the *Mi'kmaq*, to an allegiance of power and authority attached to themselves. If the goal could not be achieved through accommodation – itself manipulative, pressing toward the goal of assimilative Christian faith – then they would seek to engage in contests of power and coercion.

Black Robe Religion and Pedagogy

Fr. Richard Tierney, at the beginning of the twentieth century, would say of the focus of Jesuit ministry that theirs was an order whose purpose was, from its beginning, the shaping of the individual life, the forming of the person from the raw material to the finished product.

Teachers are more concerned with the formation of the soul, not the intellect alone, the formation of character. Maintaining close relationships is a means of inspiring the students, of forming high ideals, of teaching by example in both the spiritual and in the intellectual orders.... What part is the teacher to play in forming the pupil's character? In general, he must both inculcate principles and foster the formation of habit. This requires constant activity and elaborate but definite knowledge. Mere acquaintance with certain common foibles of human nature is not sufficient. Each boy in particular must be known intimately and trained individually. Otherwise, there is much useless beating of the air. (1914, 106)

Perhaps this is why, very early in the Jesuit mission, there was a reluctance to baptize many – there was a fear that, lacking instruction, the converts would fall away. And indeed, many did. Biard noted this concern as the French returned in the spring of 1612 to renew their efforts in mission, trade and colonial expansion:

Since we have observed that those who had been previously baptized had gotten scarcely anything else through their baptism than increased peril, we have restrained this eager inclination to administer this sacrament without discrimination, and we insist that no adult person shall receive it until he has the necessary understanding of his faith and his profession. So, as we have thus far been ignorant of the language and have been unable to explain our doctrines through any interpreter, or to commit them to writing, howsoever great a labor that may prove – and it will certainly prove a great one – the course of the Gospel is, up to this point, embarrassed by these shoals and quicksands. We try to persuade the savages to bring their babes to us for baptism; and this, with God's blessing, they are beginning to do. (1612 Vol. 2, 31,32)

What was the purpose of all of this training and formation? To become fit receptacles of God's grace.

But, lest we be misled, this was not simply about the spiritual disciplines. The controversy of Acts 15 and the Jerusalem Council had been exhumed from its grave, its death-dealing legalism unleashed yet again to plague the created order in humanity as the Jesuits sought to make the *Mi'kmaq* over into the image and likeness of French Christians – a task which, according to Lescarbot (1610, Vol. 1, 29) and others who wrote home of their experiences in “The New World,” was not even remotely accomplished by the Jesuits or any other order of the Catholic Church in France among the French people themselves. Moore asserts that this transformation of the Indigenous peoples of North American took place in an atmosphere of “accommodation.” He goes on to say,

This openness to change was based upon the Jesuit's concepts of natural revelation and natural law. For the Jesuits, good already existed in the

native cultures and provided the foundation upon which native Christianity could be built.... The Jesuit missionary effort, therefore, was based on the premise that native tribal culture was to be left largely intact and become the context for a new expression of Christianity. (1982, xi)

This seems a naive portrayal of Jesuit mission method and attitude, however, as the *Relations* themselves attest that Jesuits most times saw little of value in the Indigenous cultures. The now famous scene from *The Mission*, where the Guarani, carrying the cross, playing violins, and singing in European voice, meet their doom, is a stunning, if semi-fictional portrayal of an attitude clearly contained in the written record of the *Relations*. Welton suggests this is indeed the more sinister objective present in the minds of the Jesuits, observing, “The Jesuit desire to understand the Amerindian other was motivated by an interest in exercising a symbolic, cultural domination over their student adversaries” (2005, 102).

The competition for the political and spiritual allegiance of the *Mi'kmaq* people was clear, and the French Crown and the Jesuits, respectively, meant to have it. Moore observes, “The Jesuit missionaries carried out their work in North America amidst colonial rivalry and ferocious Indian warfare, some of which was the by-product of the machinations of the colonial powers” (1982, xi), hinting at a mission context of a less complicit reality than many others would suggest. Welton once again offers a critique of motive more sympathetic, if not affirming of the Indigenous context.

The Jesuit attack pedagogy was aimed primarily at undermining the lifeworld foundations of Indian ways of life. The lifeworld is the taken-for-granted source of meaning and action, and various spiritual-religious practices (animism) were interwoven into everyday life. The shaman, a person of considerable spiritual power and therefore of cultural authority, performed medicinal and psychotherapeutic functions in all tribes. The Jesuits sought to dislodge him from his place of lifeworld supremacy through ridicule, mockery, and one-upmanship and to insert themselves in

his place. This was a brilliant, ruthless pedagogical strategy. They used their scientific knowledge of solar and lunar eclipses, tides, and the magical power of the printed word to de-authorize the shaman. They marshaled their own lifeworld resources (now increasingly penetrated by scientific forms of knowledge) to undermine the Amerindian cultural foundations. (2005, 103)

When the evidence is carefully weighed it seems quite clear then, to be perfected and acceptable in one's Christianity as per this primal, ethnocentric drive of French Jesuit mission, whether in *Mi'kma'ki* or elsewhere, people were expected to embrace French social forms, norms, and structures. What's more, they were to be required to observe Jesuit-interpreted Catholic rites including such things as taking French baptismal names.¹¹⁵ In fact, such was the degree of French/Jesuit ethn  and "ecclesia-centrism" that when it came to the baptism of *kitche sagamaw Membertou* and his extended family, "to each one was given the name of some illustrious or notable personage here in France." (Lescarbot 1610 Vol. 1, 26)¹¹⁶

Perhaps, as much as anything, this is why Biard would write with a measure of satisfaction that *Membertou*

was the greatest, most renowned and most formidable savage within the memory of man; of splendid physique, taller and larger limbed than is usual among them; *bearded like a Frenchman*, although scarcely any other have hair upon their chin; grave and reserved; feeling a proper sense of dignity for his position as commander. (1612 Vol. 1, 11, emphasis added)

Quite simply put, *Membertou* was closer to the French/Jesuit understanding of a

¹¹⁵ Here we must note that, according to Jouveny (1701 Vol. 1, 66), this was often a two-way practice in which Jesuits would take on Indian names. Clearly this was for purposes of identification with the Native community versus upholding the religious beliefs and expectations of Catholic piety.

¹¹⁶ To make the point even stronger, up until my generation, it was expected that males would be baptized with the first baptismal name Joseph – as were all of my ancestral males and I – and females with the baptismal name Mary – all in honor of the "royal family of heaven."

civilized person of authority and stature than others they had encountered. They had but to ensure that *Membertou* and the other *Mi'kmaq* were available to their teaching and shaping. And, of course, this would require the *Mi'kmaq* to become sedentary in lifestyle and significantly more agrarian in focus – something the Jesuit ultimately failed in significant measure to do.

While the Jesuits believed in the presence of God in “all the beauties of nature,” that belief appeared to be circumscribed by the need to look primarily to the interior of the human being and see there God’s image and likeness. Nature, the rest of creation if you will, was but window dressing for the unveiling of the triumphant human being in relationship with the Creator in an ecstatic spiritual encounter which, while it had an exteriority to it, was primarily about the transformation of the inner being. In other words, while their labors were for the purpose of uncovering the presence of God, there was some expectation that God’s presence was to be found very much in the interior spaces, which, having been fashioned in the image of Jesuit spiritual behavior, would render a clear likeness of Jesus strangely resembling themselves. Furthermore, that image and likeness needed to comport with their own so that the novitiate might, together with them, be able to “praise the spiritual exercises over the corporal, since the latter are but of little avail” (Donnelly 2006, 26). The material world was of little overall consequence other than as a means to an end. Biard would make this clear in discussing the need for thorough catechesis prior to baptism, conferring salvation.

So, just as we must proceed with the temporal, as it is convenient to do, so in the same proportion with the spiritual; catechize, instruct, educate, and train the Savages properly and with long patience, and not expect that in one year, or in two, we can make Christians of people who have not felt the need of either a Priest or a Bishop. I am sure that God has never made

any such Christians, and that he never will make them. For our spiritual life depends upon the Doctrine and the Sacraments, and consequently upon those who administer them, according to his holy institution. (1616 Vol. 3, 37)

One can intimate easily from the language and tone of Biard's missive, that this understanding of the need to force religious behavior into a particular pattern in order to please the Creator contrasts rather sharply with *Mi'kmaw* views. What's more, that the Creator of all things would require the kind of intermediation that is being referenced by Biard is unthinkable. *Bouin*, *Kinap* and other people of power were not intermediaries for the Creator – for their destination upon death was the same regardless – they were simply people with specific power. *Mi'kmaw* people understood two clear things about the Creator – about God: first, that one does not engage in specific kinds of activity as a prerequisite to see or experience God; one sees and experiences Him regardless of what one does; second, that the Creator, *Nisgam*, *Kitche Nisgam*, or *Kesoult*, was the same for all people such that *Mi'kmaw* people (even those living in the present) would say, as Daniel Paul observes, “If the same God was worshipped by all men, the mode of worship is incidental” (1993, 9).

For the *Mi'kmaw* people it was inconceivable that the same Creator of all things would act preferentially in revelation to and for some, as over against others. It is quite likely then that *Membertou* acted as he did toward the invitation of Jesse Fleché, to receive baptism, not as an eager embrace of its symbolism as understood by the French Jesuit but rather as a statement of common cause, now embraced with the French because they served the same Creator. This was less about an interior transformation than about adopting an exterior set of behaviors to ensure that alliances being agreed upon were

visibly supported in the changed relationship between the two peoples. In other words, not unlike the giving and receiving of a bride and/or groom between two bands of *Mi'kmaw* people sealed the relationship with the outward sign of a newly shared couple, baptism and the taking of French baptismal names sealed the relationship and ensured what was spoken between the two peoples would endure.

Jesuit Focus: Words and Deeds

Their pedagogical disposition combined with the regimental orientation of the Society created a tendency in the Jesuits to reduce what they encountered to known and manageable processes and categories. Establishing clear boundaries, procedures, and practices also provided a sense of progress and accomplishment, the reverse of which can be noted in some of the ways in which Jesuits experienced frustration.¹¹⁷ Most obvious was the difficulty they had identifying what constituted tribal borders – presumably to facilitate not only the “proper training” of the new converts, but also division of the territory among various missionaries, as they had in Europe, where distinct provinces were marked out for the ordering of Jesuit mission. In this regard, Thwaites comments,

The migrations of some of the Indian tribes were frequent, and they occupied over-lapping territories, so that it is impossible to fix the tribal boundaries with any degree of exactness. Again, the tribes were so merged by intermarriage, by affiliation, by consolidation, by the fact that there were numerous polyglot villages of renegades, by similarities in manner, habits, and appearance, that it is difficult even to separate the savages into families. (1896, 8)

¹¹⁷ This was not a unique experience to the Jesuits and was not restricted to an experience of their time; contemporary non-Native missionaries experience similar feelings.

This inevitably frustrated efforts the Jesuits made to catechize the *Mi'kmaq* before, during, and following conversion and was a continuing point of irritation for them, as the *Relations* recount numerous times. Finding ways to turn semi-nomadic peoples into sedentary agrarians was a significant challenge and was probably the most significant reason for their differential success among the Native North American peoples to whom they ministered.

Contrast Jesuit receptivity to *Mi'kmaw* ways and those of the Indians (the real ones) and the Chinese, for example.¹¹⁸ They had an entirely open disposition to Chinese and Indian culture – an openness for which they were continuously and soundly criticized by the members of other Catholic orders, and for which they were censured and then ultimately suspended in 1773. Indian and Chinese culture, by this time based in a written history, was of sufficient similarity in format that the Jesuits had no difficulty perceiving the value of inculturation. One therefore has to conclude that Jesuit dualism extended into their epistemology as well. That is to say an inscribed epistemology complete with codified social behavior and political institutions was able to be incorporated into one's Christian expression, whereas oral tradition, absent any codification, was, by default, to be excluded. Biard makes the point quite clearly in a set of paired observations. He first observes, “They love justice and hate violence and robbery, a thing really remarkable in men who have neither laws nor magistrates; for, among them, each man is his own master and his own protector” (1612, Vol 2, 26). Then, only pages later noting his disdain for *Mi'kmaw* religiosity – or perhaps in his mind the lack thereof – he states, “They have no

¹¹⁸ See Stephen Neill's short treatment in *A History of Christian Mission* (1964, 139–41, 156–65) and Ruth Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* (1983, 63–66).

temples, sacred edifices, rites, ceremonies or religious teaching, just as they have no laws, arts or government” (1612, Vol. 2, 27). Was right behavior therefore less relevant, less important to the Jesuits than the appropriate codification of that right behavior? Let’s examine this inconsistency from another angle for a moment.

Jesuit missionaries were prone to reduce the world in which they operated to a manageable and understandable size in other ways as well. Acting under the specific instruction of General Claudius Acquaviva, the Jesuits did not set their “eyes on having a great number of penitents, but on those that we have to deal with making good progress” (Donnelly 2006, 160). When it proved difficult, therefore, to work with the whole of the community, the Jesuit propensity to focus on individuals versus the community moved them to establish the mission centers common to the period. Among other things, one wonders at what interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares the Jesuits may have had as they “sought to draw Abenaki converts to Sillery, and later to St. Francis de Sales, at the falls of the Chaudiere, which soon became almost exclusively an Abenaki mission” (Thwaites 1896, Vol. 1,10).

Common, it seems, to the French/Jesuit missionary understanding of the day was the idea of orderly progress – complete with the seldom-unqualified division of life into “civilized” and “uncivilized.”¹¹⁹ The notion of the untamed wilderness, as expressed by Thwaites in the quotation with which I introduced this chapter, lay clearly in the mind of the Jesuits – even in their correspondence home to recruit new missionaries to the field

¹¹⁹ The French Protestant Huguenots also looked to the educational realm for the purposes of bringing civilization and for Christianizing. And while their charter in New France forbade them from engaging in direct mission to the “savages,” it seems likely that their work among their own settlers, even this early, would have spin-offs impact in mission.

they reported on the harshness, both of the climate and environment as well as the lifestyle and “lack of morals of the savages.” It can only be concluded that although they, of all missionaries in this era, were the most open to the presence of spiritual realities all about them and the Indigenous populations with whom they worked,¹²⁰ they were still unable to see this spiritual climate, the very nature of the Indigenous populations themselves, as a reflection of God himself among them. In that sense, the Jesuits were still forcefully carrying forward into their methods the view that this was still, to a large extent, a “godless, heathen land.”

Mission stations or locations, where condensed populations could be subjected to intensive mission training, allowed for “civilizing” activity to be undertaken with minimal distraction and maximum impact. This was most certainly contained within the aims and purposes of the standard fare of Catholic mission in seventeenth-century North America, whether in the ministries of Lescarbot, Le Clercq, Biard, or any other member of a religious teaching order. Centers of “education” continued to be used as a primary focus of mission in Canada until 1991, not just by the Jesuits but other orders, missions, and churches. By the mid-1800s these had morphed into the residential and boarding schools, whose stated objective was, as Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy Superintendent general of Indian Affairs in Canada would remark, to “kill the Indian in the child” (Dickason 1997, 309). Responding to the question, “Why does any order of the Catholic Church exist?” William McGucken, himself a Jesuit, merely points us to what Ignatius wrote in the *Institutions*, to make the purpose crystal clear:

¹²⁰ See for example Moore (1982, 100–21).

The end of the Society is not only to care for the salvation and perfection of their own souls with divine grace, but with the same [divine grace] seriously to devote themselves to the salvation and perfection of their neighbors. For it was especially instituted for the defense and propagation of the Faith, and the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine. (McGucken, 1932, 9)

And, if that were not enough clarity, Michael McMahon, also a member of the Society of Jesus, elucidates the point, stating, “We must remember the proximate aim of the Jesuits – trying to impart culture, making an eloquent man to be a fit and able receptacle of God’s grace” (2004, 7).¹²¹ Of course, “culture” is not the anthropologist’s generic culture, which everyone has; this is a specific culture, European culture. Lescarbot, speaking to us from the period in question, makes this same point slightly differently. In his note of 1610 to the home office, his almost smug representation of contemporary French society and its ancestry – in contrast to his observation of *Mi’kmaw* society – reflects this sense of forward civil progress. Commenting on *Mi’kmaw* diet and lodging he says,

As to their beds, a skin spread out upon the ground serves as mattress. And in this we have nothing to jest about, for our old Gallic ancestors did the same thing, and even dined from the skins of dogs and wolves, if Diodorus and Strabo tell the truth. (1610, Vol. 1, 27)

What makes this altogether curious is that within eight pages in the same note, Lescarbot remonstrates the sad state of affairs in which France finds itself – that it will not take the task of mission seriously because as a society, it does not take its own Christianity seriously. Comparing this situation to that of the *Gaspesians*¹²² he observes,

And, in this respect, I consider all these poor savages, whom we

¹²¹ The Jesuit model of education is described at some length, in the article by Fr. Michael McMahon (2004).

¹²² *Gaspesians* is a term used in the early contact period to refer to the *Mi’kmaw* people in the Gaspé Peninsula region but which, in some cases, was used to refer to *Mi’kmaq* elsewhere.

commiserate, to be very happy; for pale Envy doth not emaciate them, neither do they feel the inhumanity of those who serve God hypocritically, harassing their fellow-creatures under this mask: nor are they subject to the artifices of those who, lacking virtue and goodness wrap themselves up in a mantle of false piety to nourish their ambition. If they do not know God, at least they do not blaspheme him, as the greater number of Christians do. Nor do they understand the art of poisoning, or of corrupting chastity by devilish artifice. (1610, Vol. 1, 29)

As if to drive the point fully home, Chrestien Le Clercq, the Récollet who wrote in his *New Relations of Gaspesia*, concerning the *Mi'kmaq*, “These heathen must first be civilized before they can then become fit receptacles of the gospel of Jesus Christ,”¹²³ quotes a *Mi'kmaw sagamaw* concerning the nature of civilization.¹²⁴

I am greatly astonished that the French have so little cleverness, as they seem to exhibit in the matter of which thou hast just told me on their behalf, in the effort to persuade us to convert our poles, our barks, and our wigwams into those houses of stone and of wood which are tall and lofty, according to their account, as these trees. Very well! But why now, do men of five to six feet in height need houses which are sixty to eighty? For, in fact, as thou knowest very well thyself, Patriarch – do we not find in our own all the conveniences and the advantages that you have with yours, such as reposing, drinking, sleeping, eating, and amusing ourselves with our friends when we wish?... Thou reproachest us, very inappropriately, that our country is a little hell in contrast with France, which thou comparest to a terrestrial paradise, inasmuch as it yields thee, so thou sayest, every kind of provision in abundance. Thou sayest of us also that

¹²³ It needs to be clearly understood that not only was there difference in the perspective of the various Jesuits, there was a significant difference among the several orders of the Catholic Church engaged in North American mission. For example, the Récollets, of whom Le Clercq was a member, were entirely convinced of the lack of civilization of the *Mi'kmaw* people, whereas the Jesuits observed an intelligence and orderliness about the *Mi'kmaw* way of life. Baron Lahontan would take note of this in his writing in 1703, commenting that “The [Franciscan] Recollect brand the Indians for stupid, gross and rustick Persons, incapable of Thought or Reflection: But the Jesuits give them other sort of Language, for they intitle them to good Sense, to a tenacious Memory, and took quick Apprehension season'd with a solid Judgment.” (Lahontan 1905, 2:411–14)

¹²⁴ Note the flowery language in which he translates the words of the *Mi'kmaw sagamou* as contrasted with his own.

we are the most miserable and most unhappy of all men, living without religion, without manners, without honour, without social order, and, in a word, without any rules, like the beasts in our woods and our forests, lacking bread, wine, and a thousand other comforts which thou hast in superfluity in Europe.... It is true, that we have not always had the use of bread and of wine which your France produces; but, in fact, before the arrival of the French in these parts, did not the Gaspesians live much longer than now? And if we have not any longer among us any of those old men of a hundred and thirty to forty years, it is only because we are gradually adopting your manner of living, for experience is making it very plain that those of us live longest who, despising your bread, your wine, and your brandy, are content with their natural food of beaver, of moose, of waterfowl, and fish, in accord with the custom of our ancestors and of all the Gaspesian nation. Learn now, my brother, once for all, because I must open to thee my heart: there is no Indian who does not consider himself infinitely more happy and more powerful than the French. (1691, 103)

In an exchange where the Récollet missionary Le Clercq is extolling the benefits of French society, seeking to win the *sagamaw*, this response is powerful. The content of the exchange stands in stark contrast to the expressions of personal Jesuit spirituality one finds in the writings of the early period and which continue to drive Jesuit writings today. For instance, in his description of the difference between Franciscan and Ignatian spirituality, O'Malley notes,

Where Francis of Assisi's concept of poverty emphasized the spiritual benefits of simplicity and dependency, Ignatius emphasized detachment, or "indifference." For Ignatius, whether one was rich or poor, healthy or sick, in an assignment one enjoyed or one didn't, was comfortable in a culture or not, etc., should be a matter of spiritual indifference – a modern phrasing might put it as serene acceptance. Hence, a Jesuit (or one following Ignatian spirituality), placed in a comfortable, wealthy neighborhood should continue to live the Gospel life without anxiety or possessiveness, and if plucked instantly from that situation to be placed in a poor area and subjected to hardships should simply cheerfully accept that as well, without a sense of loss or being deprived. (1993, 25)

Clearly then, competing interests were at play in the French missionaries from the outset. First, as they looked upon the *Mi'kmaq* and other Native peoples of *Mi'kma'ki*

they did so with very mixed reflections on their own society. On the one hand, the advantages of the lower stress lifestyle of the *Mi'kmaq* – if only in the increased years of life, were attractive. On the other hand, a distinct sense that *Mi'kmaw* civilization – if only because of its semi-nomadic nature – was unsuited to Christian faith and therefore uncivilized. It would appear, then, that this is what drove them then to desire to “civilize” the *Gaspesians* – meaning, to make them look like the missionaries.

Let it finally be noted that, in contrast to the *Mi'kmaw* sense of community, where even individual triumph – winning, if you will – was for the benefit of all,¹²⁵ the Jesuit and other French missionaries, like European society in general, were in a competition for the benefit of the few – few in terms of economic benefit, few in terms of convert benefit,¹²⁶ and few in terms of winning territory.¹²⁷ In fact, financial and territorial gain

¹²⁵ See the earlier discussion in which Daniel Paul highlighted the difference in understanding of the nature of and purpose for competition.

¹²⁶ It is well known that the various orders within the Catholic Church vied constantly for position and power, appealing to the papacy regularly for their own order to obtain more than their siblings would get, whether of leniency, opportunity, or influence. In light of the doctrine of the One Church this seems incongruous, but in light of human frailty, especially in a naturally, highly individualistic social environment, quite understandable.

¹²⁷ Adrian Jacobs, Cayuga student of mission and mission theology, has noted of the Jesuit motive,

“The Jesuit letters were fundamentally fund-raising instruments. In order to inspire the philanthropic spirit of folks from the homeland you needed to convey: the virtue of your own cause; the sacrifice of your efforts and deprivations; the utter need among those you work among; their barbarism and need for your civilizing, Christianizing mission, emphasizing the strange and pagan ways of “the other”; narratives that touch deeply the emotions of others so that it makes them reach into their pockets of charity.

“Because of the foregoing I contend that missionary descriptions of Native people, emphasizing our barbarism (including cannibalism and torture), are exaggerations meant to elicit horror among folks from the missionaries homeland so that their ‘saintly’ sacrifices (by comparison) are worthy of huge endowments. I draw this conclusion based on my own experience of the media’s take on the ‘Caledonia-Six Nations land conflict of

was a carrot used frequently to entice financiers to give to mission and was exploited in the tone of the missionary letters home that constituted the Jesuit *Relations* (Lescarbot 1610, Vol. 1, 28, 29). Donnelly confirms this, noting, for example, that in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries “the survival of the Jesuit schools depended on the Order’s ability to cultivate political leaders” (2006, 208). No less could be said for the mission in New France – it was entirely dependent on the Jesuit capacity to balance political, financial, and religious interests, the decrees of the Fifth General Congregation of 1594 notwithstanding (Donnelly 2006, 209).

Jesuit Cosmology

We will assume it as a given that one’s cosmology influences how one understands not just the physicality of the cosmos but also spiritual forces and therefore spirituality, making it important for us to gain a brief perspective of Jesuit cosmology at the time of contact and in the early mission period. While this will not be an in-depth investigation of Jesuit cosmology, it will be sufficient for our purpose: gaining an understanding of how the Jesuits viewed and positioned themselves in the debate about the changing notions of the universe in which they lived – particularly those offered by

2006.’ Corporate interest, backed by supportive governmental powers, through media services: dramatized everything they could to get a ‘paying audience.’ Tire fires, bridge fires, masked Mohawks, defiant Native flags, defiant Natives facing police, etc. were all to ‘sell a paper,’ ‘get a listening (radio) and viewing (TV and internet) audience’; did not tell the historical story from the Six Nations side; reported nothing from negotiations; made surprise ‘announcements’ without telling Six Nations. The effect of all this was to prejudice a Canadian populace against the rogue element inspiring fear – Six Nations. It is the same fund-raising propaganda as the Jesuits used 350 years ago.” (Personal e-mail communication March 2012)

the new sciences and most particularly those concerning the earth and its relationship to the Creator and the created heavens. It will also paint a picture for us of how they viewed the interplay of spiritual and “natural” forces and the place of good and evil in the created order.

European cosmology was in a state of significant flux in the early years of the Jesuit order. Heliocentric views of the solar system were being hotly debated in most scholarly circles and sides were being taken – including by the Jesuits. According to Edward Grant,

During the sixteenth century, and within the first sixty years of the history of the Jesuit order, Jesuit cosmological opinion was best represented by the Conimbricenses, the Jesuits at the University of Coimbra, Portugal, who wrote commentaries on most of Aristotle’s works, and by Christopher Clavius whose *Commentary on the Sphere of Sacrobosco*, first published in 1570, went through many editions well into the seventeenth century. The works represented by these authors exerted considerable influence on seventeenth century Jesuit natural philosophers. (1991, 1)

It will come as no surprise then that the Jesuits viewed the earth, the center of the universe, as a place less than holy, if not altogether profane. Most certainly building on a theology that inevitably originates in the third chapter of Genesis and moves forward from there, the Jesuits would have viewed the world as God’s footstool for a specific reason: that its fall from grace and perfection rendered it suited only to secondary purpose, and no longer sacred as it had been in the beginning. It was, as it now existed, the product of our First Parent’s willful act of choosing to “know about” rather than being known.¹²⁸ As Neoplatonism would suggest, the creation of the world as we know it was

¹²⁸ While the Jesuits were oriented in their theology and cosmology essentially as I have shown, it is important to say that they were not Jansenists. That is to say, their theological underpinnings were not strictly ordered around The four pillars of Jansenism:

as a result of “valuing the expression over the principle.”¹²⁹ As Grant would observe,

For most Jesuits, as for most scholastics, the center of the world was the most ignoble place in the world because it was occupied by the earth, which was considered the heaviest and least noble body in the universe. The earth’s ignobility was further manifested by the fact that it was also the body most remote from the heavens, which were judged the noblest bodies in the world. (1991, 4)

There would be clear implications for this conception of the place, status, and role of the earth – and therefore its inhabitants – in Jesuit thinking, particularly as it played into their notion of mission to those who were so obviously unlearned and untaught. How were they to reconcile these thoughts with the emerging new science of the cosmos? In what many historians have commented on as an interesting turn of events and perspective, the Jesuits led by Riccioli¹³⁰ proposed that the real difference lay in the nature of the supernatural as against the natural order. They asserted that in the natural order of the universe the center is the noblest place, but not in the supernatural order, where the noblest place is what they termed the Emyrean sphere,¹³¹ the highest place in the worst place is the center of the world where the damned are located (Grant 1991, 7).¹³²

And so, while the Jesuits eventually did lead the way for the embrace of much of

“original sin, the depravity of all human beings, predestination, and the necessity of divine grace which would have made them more amenable to Calvinism and the Huguenots.

¹²⁹ See for example the discussion in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy, online, s.v. “Neoplatonism,” at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/neoplat/> (accessed February 2012).

¹³⁰ Giovanni Battista Riccioli (1598–1671) was an Italian astronomer who entered the Society of Jesus in 1614 and was given the task of rebutting the Copernican heresy of the Heliocentric cosmos. His work “*Almagestum novum, astronomiam veterem novamque complectens*” (2 vols. Bologna, 1651), is considered by many to be the most important literary work of the Jesuits during the seventeenth century. See also <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13040a.htm>.

¹³¹ The Emyrean sphere was believed to be the highest point of the heavens – in Christian terminology, the resident place of God and His angelic beings.

¹³² See also the remainder of Grant’s paper as noted in the Works Cited.

what the new sciences had to offer, for the moment, they were content to remain geocentric, and committed to the idea of the corrupt earth. In this, the Jesuits led the way for Catholic cosmology and therefore, Catholic theology of the day – both having their respective implications for missiology, including the perception that the Indigenous populations were lacking both spiritually and morally, the necessary “stuff” of civilized humanity.

Implications for Discussion

Some of the implications of this chapter on the Jesuit worldview relate specifically to their conception that development of the interior of the human person must be given primacy, so that spiritual behavior might be rooted in right thinking and therefore made manifest in right behavior. While at first blush this might seem precisely what we are looking for, we must remember the young lad who was lost on the streets of Edmonton, whose behavior was not “acceptably Christian.” His question rings still today, “You don’t think I am spiritual do you?” For the Jesuits, external behavior was, in fact, the measure of the spiritual. Though they clearly focused inwardly through the Exercises, developing an inner reflective state, the intent was not to find there the spiritual essence of the individual, nor of the rest of creation within which that individual existed. They focused instead on specific, predetermined verbal affirmations and behaviours as the essence of what it meant to be spiritual. Loyola’s spiritual pedagogy was not named the *Spiritual Exercises* without reason. For the Jesuits and other French missionaries of the day, put in its best frame of reference, it is as if one needed to exercise and condition

one's spirituality to ensure that it was robust and acceptable to God.

Several ramifications for this study stand out:

First, the Jesuit focus on bringing themselves and their neighbors to perfection created a narrow band of theological and missional understanding within which to interpret the development of acceptable spiritual behavior and thereby success. This seems quite clear given the notation by Marc Lescarbot that, "It would have been rash and unwise to administer baptism to people whom it was necessary afterwards to abandon, and give them an opportunity to return to their corruption" (1610 Vol. 1, 69).

Second, competition that had powerful "secular" and religious players, within and outside the Catholic Church,¹³³ was a significant driver for the way they thought about and structured mission.¹³⁴ It was clearly important to the Jesuits that they be able to present *Mi'kmaw* people in a particular behavioral light so as to make them acceptable not only to the "folks back home" but also to the Church authorities with whom they corresponded, describing their successes and or failures in mission. Implicit in their correspondence were embedded sets of expectations of the kind of behavior that "good Christian people" would exhibit.

Third, they found themselves frustrated with French society's Christianity, and

¹³³ Bradshaw (1999, 1) points this out in an even more condemning way than others: "Almost as soon as the Jesuits set foot on land, they began to argue with Poutrincourt, who was a good Catholic, but a better businessman. He didn't want the Jesuits in his colony either. The [Jesuit] order was Spanish in origin and policy, and he suspected the priests had more on their minds than saving Micmac [sic] souls. He almost immediately sailed back to France, hoping to make a new deal with Madame de Guercheville." Bradshaw further suggests that once Henri was killed, "the Jesuits had even more influence over the king's widow, Marie de Medicis" (1999:1) with respect to Poutrincourt's business in Acadia.

¹³⁴ See the brief discussion in this chapter, pp. 123-28

with that same society's response to the need for mission. It is to be wondered whether this might have been an additional driver for Jesuit mission: seeking to make the Indian over into their image as an object of "show and tell" to the complacent and reprobate French.¹³⁵ What's more, the effort to describe to the *Mi'kmaq* and other Indigenous peoples, what that needed to look like as an end-product of discipleship, most probably created some sense of internal discord whereby what they observed in the "savages" did not mesh with the Jesuit picture of the "savage," whereas the Christian French resembled less what it meant to be civilized. This would have created ambiguity about their categorical separation of the sacred and profane – it did not always work; that which they deemed spiritual was, within their own ethnic community, often functioning in a very profane way, and that which on first blush would appear to have been profane behavior on the part of the *Mi'kmaq* was frequently, when contrasted with French behavior, found in fact to be more of a more sacred quality.

A fourth implication is found in the drive to civilize and educate, which caused the Jesuits to separate the converted from the non-converted, encouraging the former to move into closer proximity to the mission, thus impinging on family bonds – not because of alienation caused by differential response to the gospel, but for pedagogical expediency. This clearly demonstrates that to the Jesuit the creation context was determined to be incapable of providing the necessary climate for appropriate growth and development of a spiritually vital life; only in a controlled environment could one experience the vitality of Christian spirituality and develop the spiritual focus necessary

¹³⁵ This continues to be a curiosity since both the French of the era and writers in subsequent times would describe French society as "the most highly civilized country of their times." See for example Thwaites' introduction to the *Jesuit Relations* (1896, Vol. 1, 18).

for living a good Christian life. Here again, the idea of interiority of faith and therefore of “spiritual nature by praxis” comes to the fore.¹³⁶

Fifth, we see once again that conflict of a dual purpose: the growing profanity of colonial purpose – a purpose that papal authority itself has helped establish – and the sacred effort to bring the “most holy faith of our Lord Jesus Christ” to the savages. That is to say, the binary separation of spiritual and material reality in a clearly separated purpose is deeply entrenched in their sense of propriety about that purpose.

Finally, it appears there is every reason to believe that the carefully guarded *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius, ostensibly designed to make one better suited to follow God’s will in all things, may mask a not-too-carefully concealed sense that the critical focus of evangelism and discipleship was strictly the salvation of the human soul – at the expense of an integrated social, temporal, physical, and spiritual restoration. I will examine this more in Chapters 5 and 6.

¹³⁶ The policy of creating stable mission centers, expecting the Indigenous populations to cease their semi-nomadic ways, caused them to establish a sedentary mission policy. In testament to this, Thwaites observes, “It was soon realized by the missionaries that but meagre results could be obtained until the Indians were induced to lead a sedentary life. Their wandering habit nullified all attempts at permanent instruction to the young; it engendered improvidence and laziness, bred famine and disease; and the constant struggle to kill fur-bearing animals for their pelts rapidly depleted the game, while the fur trade wrought contamination in many forms” (1896, Vol. 1, 17). He goes on to say, “In pursuance of the sedentary policy, and also to protect the wretched [Indians], the Jesuits, in 1637, established for them a palisaded mission four miles above Québec, at first giving it the name St. Joseph, but later that of Sillery” (1896, Vol. 1, 18).

Chapter 4

Encounter and Change: Seventeenth- to Twentieth-Century French/Jesuits

This chapter will focus on several specific encounters of the French people and Jesuit missionaries with the *Mi'kmaw* people and their communities, highlighting several points of change that appear to correspond to the *Mi'kmaw* context. These we will take up in our discussion in Chapters 6 and 7. We will examine what changes may have occurred for the Jesuits in the seventeenth through twentieth centuries and what, if anything, those changes may have contributed to the experience of Jesuit theology, their mission practice, and any corresponding understanding of the nature of the spiritual. However, since the Jesuits are no longer represented in any significant way within *Mi'kma'ki* we will also focus on the descendants of the original Acadian settlers because they have the longest tenure in the land – albeit not an unbroken one. Since theirs is the logical extension of the work of the Jesuits and other French missionaries within the traditional territories of the *Mi'kmaw* people, we will briefly examine their cultural, spiritual, and religious life, attempting to access their sense of the spiritual as rooted in Jesuit instruction.

What did the culture and spiritual/religious life of the Acadians look like at the end of the twentieth century? What, if anything, can we determine to be changes in their grasp of the spiritual, of spirituality, and of personal and collective being since their ancestors came to *Mi'kma'ki*?

Introduction

The early French missionaries arrived filled with certainty that they spoke for a superior civilization. Most of them quickly altered their view as they noticed the Aboriginals' unusual sense of community and the built-in patience that meant each person had to be listened to. This balance of individualism – which could be understood as constantly proving yourself – with “the practice of sharing,” and the resulting belief in group interests did not fade away. (Saul 2008, 58)

In sharp contrast to the values of Native Americans, the Renaissance European missionary was in the middle of a movement that asserted man's control over nature, masculine rule over the household, and the Christian religious fundamentalism that alleged certainty in everything. These core values clashed headlong with Native American beliefs and living conditions. (Cushner 2006, 15)

Some years back, I was at the Lennox Island reserve on Prince Edward Island.

The chief at the time was an intuitive and intelligent *Mi'kmaw* leader. I was meeting them and their spouse for the first time. The husband and wife had welcomed me and a couple of colleagues to stay in their home during the week leading up to St. Anne's Day Sunday just following the 26th of July. Together with my colleagues I was in the community to meet and engage in ministry with a number of other *Mi'kmaw* believers. As I began to talk with the chief and spouse, it dawned on me that the each of their surnames prior to marriage had been the same. What made this an interesting study is that one was a *Mi'kmaw* woman with a long lineage in her community, but the other was an Acadian – also possessing a lengthy lineage, but within the Acadian community.

This presented a most interesting picture of the interrelatedness of the *Mi'kmaq* and Acadian communities – how they had, over time, embraced a number of aspects of each other's culture and context, including each other in regular, welcomed intermarriage.

The Nature of the Intercultural Encounter

Mission encounter with the *Mi'kmaw* people did not have an effect that was unidirectional. The French were also impacted in obvious and some not-so-obvious ways. And it was not only the Acadians, who immigrated here in the early years and whose descendants still reside here, who were impacted. So were the Jesuit and other French missionaries – though not often widely acknowledged. As noted in previous chapters, much more frequently than is typically acknowledged, recordings of the encounter described *Mi'kmaw* people in far more positive, almost envious, terms than were accorded the general population of France. It would not be amiss to think that the Jesuits would have thought the same of the early Acadians. Take, for example, Le Jeune's reflections on the "Good Things Which Are Found Among The Savages." While at this point in his experience and writing Le Jeune is completely oblivious to the well-established political realities of the *Mi'kmaw* people, he nonetheless notes,

Moreover, if it is a great blessing to be free from a great evil, our Savages are happy; for the two tyrants who provide hell and torture for many of our Europeans, do not reign in their great forests, – I mean ambition and avarice. As they have neither political organization, nor offices, nor dignities, nor any authority, for they only obey their Chief through good will toward him, therefore they never kill each other to acquire these honors. Also, as they are contented with a mere living, not one of them gives himself to the Devil to acquire wealth. (1634, Vol. 6, 66)

Perhaps, however, as we have noted in previous chapters, of most significance at the outset were the differences in understanding between the Jesuits and *Mi'kmaq* on the nature of the cosmos – inasmuch as either culture in that day had a grasp of the intricacies of the universe.

It was clear from the beginning of the encounter that because of their differing perceptions of the wider natural world and its purpose, living comfortably on the land

together would tax their resourcefulness and would be an ongoing source of contention. As we have noted and will emphasize again, the Jesuits were a part of a larger picture of colonial intentions – premeditated goals that the Acadians, in turn, served to help meet. Since the dominant European view of land, mitigated not at all by the Jesuits, was as territory to be possessed, land and the Acadians became pawns in the political machinations of both the British and the French. But that did not let the Acadians off the hook, for they too viewed the physical world as raw material, suited only to human development – not, as the *Mi'kmaq* did, a living organism with whom they were interdependent. What's more, we have seen that the Jesuits, ostensibly driven by their credo to seek God in all of nature, were less able to see the world in which they now found themselves as orderly and managed, more likely to see it as wild and untamed – a marked contrast to their *Mi'kmaw* hosts. Exonerating the Jesuits somewhat, as Jennifer Reid would observe, this was a credo that transcended specific European ethnicity since it was resident in Spanish, Portuguese, and British alike – though in the context of *Mi'kma'ki*, the British would prosecute the experience far more intensely than the French.

Civilization and human progress became the symbols that reconciled the reality of discontinuity with their sense of being British. The Acadia they had fixed upon was wild, and so, profane. The necessity that it become civilized – and sacred – space justified the retention of a sense of meaning founded in another space (Reid 1995, 98).

This edge of belief is still as sharp for the French Jesuit and Récollet faithful, the Acadians, as it is for the Jesuits themselves. Though by European standards they were excellent husbandmen and agriculturalists, driven by the need to conquer, and in so doing, unravel the mysteries of the cosmos, they treated the land as a commodity, not a soul mate. This drive is clearly predicated on the dualism of Christian philosophy and

theology, which, while making room for spiritual realities to exist within the framework of their understanding of land and place, circumscribe them as being “otherworldly” nevertheless. Barre Toelken, in his exploration of the European American sense of land, place, and time says,

For Anglo-Americans ... the central interests of Indian life are largely served through mutual concerns, human interactions, and reciprocating responsibilities among men and between man and nature. The Indian sees himself as in nature, surrounded by it, not placed over it in position to impose a plan. (1975, 265)

This is a stark contrast to both the historic and contemporary Jesuit and Acadian mindset.

Theological Shifts

I must note at the outset that I am quite aware that the Jesuit experience was as varied and multifarious in the early days of contact with *Mi'kmaw* people as it is today in the wider world. No single Jesuit missionary or set of teachings apart from the order's Foundational Documents and the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius ever seem to have prescribed the essential beliefs and precepts of the Society of Jesus.¹³⁷ However, having said that, it is clear that there were common points of reference and understanding that characterized Jesuit theology, mission, and understanding of the world in the seventeenth century, just as there are common points of reference for Jesuits in the twenty-first.

For the sixteenth century European Jesuit, religion was not just concepts or even ethics, but a collection of rights and symbols as well. For a

¹³⁷ Gradie (1987, 6) says as much in her effort to peg the down Jesuits in her thesis. She notes, “From all this I have come to understand that the Jesuits were not the monolithic order that I had originally assumed them to be and that they never shied away from controversy, either within the Order itself, with other orders (particularly the Franciscans) or with the Spanish military authorities.”

European still possessing an understanding of the meaning of symbols, rights were a Christian shorthand that explain the substance of his or her belief system. Baptism spoke to the American Indians in shorthand about their entrance into another life. What in actuality the viewer understood was another matter. The Roman Catholic mass with its movements, gestures, and words, reenacted the master idea of Roman Christianity, the redemptive death of Christ. The bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ. These two elements were raised heavenward during the rite, changed into the actual body and blood of Christ at the part called the Consecration, and the host (the Eucharistic bread) was broken in half to symbolize Christ's death. Then the water and wine were consumed. (Cushner 2006,18).

As I have already noted, there is no singular, widespread transformation of Jesuit thought and practice between the early seventeenth and late twentieth centuries that captures the essence of what it means to be Jesuit, at least theologically speaking.¹³⁸ True, several clear holdovers from their roots in the sixteenth century continue to define or, perhaps better put, undergird what they do and how they think – the formative documents of the order in 1540 and the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* are the principle ones. These we briefly discussed in Chapter 3. However, it can be said that, beginning with the immediate post-Enlightenment era to the present, other theological developments have also shaped Jesuit theology and praxis. Since it is beyond the scope of this work to determine the exact contributive theological ideas that shaped the twentieth century Jesuit, however, I will for our purposes here, group them for ease of discussion into three main categories: liberation theology, neo-Thomism, and what has been termed, often pejoratively, *nouvelle théologie*. These I will examine only briefly, focusing on key propositions of each whose influence may be visible in the context in question for our

¹³⁸ Since, by all accounts, the Jesuit order has been central to the theological developments of the Catholic Church for many years, I have stepped outside a strictly Jesuit frame of reference at this time to access the nature of Jesuit theological and missional development over time – especially post 1814.

study and applicable to our discussion. The interplay of all of these is often rooted in arcane and challenging philosophy – itself quite foreign to *Mi'kmaw* ways of thinking and probably only slightly less so for other Jesuit pupils.

The first theological change that will come to many people's minds, of course, is to be found in the Jesuit's not single-minded but nonetheless significant pursuit of and support for liberation theology.¹³⁹ In fact, Letson and Higgins (1995, 102) assert that being a Jesuit and a liberationist after 1975 were inextricably linked. There are those who place the origins of liberation theology in the very era in which the impact of colonial advance was beginning to be felt most earnestly. It seems difficult to imagine that there were socially conscious individuals engaged in mission at that time, who actually created the theological framework for what came to be known as liberation theology in the mid-twentieth century. In the theory's defense, however, no less a figure than the twentieth-century Franciscan theologian Leonardo Boff credits, among others, Dominican friar Bartolome de las Casas as having planted the seeds of this theological left turn in his time. Leonardo and Clodovis Boff go further:

The historical roots of liberation theology are to be found in the prophetic tradition of evangelists and missionaries from the earliest colonial days and Latin America – churchmen who question the type of presence adopted by the church and the way indigenous peoples, blacks, mestizos, and the poor rural and urban masses were treated. The names of Bartolome de las Casas, Antonio the Montesinos, Antonio Vieira, brother Caneca and

¹³⁹ While the seeds of what came to be the formal expression of liberation theology had been sown many years before in the work of Jesuits and others among the poor and marginalized, critiquing the faith from the vantage point of those they served, the movement toward change finally became clearly situate in Central America by the mid 1950s through early 1960s. The actual term and theological movement, “liberation theology,” however, emerged from Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez's work titled *A Theology of Liberation*, published in 1971. Jesuit influence has continued to be significant from the beginning.

others can stand for a whole host of religious personalities who have graced every century of our short history. They were the source of the type of social and ecclesial understanding that is emerging today. (Boff and Boff 1987, 3)

De las Casas was indeed appointed as the first “Protector of the Indians.” But, we must keep in mind that the appointment was by the unarguably colonial expansionist monarch of Spain, whose greater concern was placating the papacy and wealthy aristocracy – the very people who decimated populations in their thirst for gold and other wealth in the “New World.” Clearly, mixed motives affect most people. Location in time aside, it is entirely likely that mixed motives were also at the root of much of the colonial expansion of the era. But it is nonetheless difficult to place a great deal of emphasis on the establishment of the parameters for a liberation theology within the social and religious context that was itself in significant measure responsible for the impacts that colonized Indigenous people were experiencing.

Instead, if we were to read a particular motive or drive into this trend toward a social activism, it would seem reasonable to conclude that, consciously or not, there was an attempt to make amends for the harm caused by the forebears of those who embraced such a theology and praxis, whose forebears were responsible, at least in part, for the tone of colonial expansion into Indigenous lands. It has been vogue in the past several decades to excuse past missionary behavior with a casual “This is the way the times were” or “They did not know any better” or “They had good motives.”¹⁴⁰ If this is true, then let us

¹⁴⁰ Ryan Messmore, the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at Heritage Foundation, offered this interpretation of a Jesuit articulation of social justice (see footnote below on Luigi Taparelli D’Azeglio) in the November 26, 2010 issue of *First Things*: “(D’Azeglio’s) vision of social justice, then, emphasized freedom and respect for human beings and the small institutions through which they pursue basic

examine what the times were, what they knew, and what their motive or motives may have been – beyond what might be considered the obvious: conversion.

In the case of *Mi'kmaw* mission, we find that Jesuit motive was clearly stated by the Jesuits themselves as being to bring glory to France and then exaltation of God. It is possible, as many suggest, that in this period in history, there would be a perception that the two were, in fact, one. The following exchange between Biard and the home office, an exchange he repeats on a number of occasions in his *Relations*, suggests that there may be some truth to that. However, the degree to which king and country – and their welfare – come first in the correspondence could just as easily be interpreted as primary motive¹⁴¹ whereby the spiritual and eternal motive for mission is viewed as separate from the temporal at best.

There has always been a complaint that affairs of general importance are ruined by giving too much attention to the consideration of personal interests. It is to be feared this may be the case in the affairs of the new

needs. He held that true justice can't be achieved without doing justice to our social nature and natural forms of association. Social justice entailed a social order in which government doesn't overrun or crowd out institutions of civil society such as family, church and local organizations. Rather, they are respected, protected and allowed to flourish."

¹⁴¹ See for example, Jim Bradshaw, in *History of Acadiana*, who suggests, "The king decided to send two missionaries back with Biencourt. They were Fathers Ennemond Masse and Pierre Biard. But mostly Protestant merchants financed Poutrincourt, like De Monts before him. They didn't want Jesuits involved in their business. When the king insisted, the merchants not only refused to provide new credit and supplies to Poutrincourt, they called in the loans they had already made." He further notes, "Biencourt was caught in the tug of war while his family waited for more supplies. In desperation, he turned to Antoinette de Pons, Marquise de Guercheville, who had money and who had influence with Marie de Medicis. She paid off the loans that were called by Poutrincourt's first backers and bought their Acadian rights. That was the good news. The bad news was that she then turned over those rights to the two Jesuits, Masse and Biard. Now they not only had religious say-so in the colony, there were Poutrincourt's business partners." (1999, 2)

World, if we neglect them, and do not encourage those who, with an unchangeable purpose, take great risks for the welfare, the honor, and the glory of France, and for the exaltation of the name of God, and of his Church. (Lescarbot 1612, Vol. 2, 43, 44)

And then, as if in a response to the questions posed about the focus and purpose for which mission has been enjoined Lescarbot says,

Also for the sake of Religion and of permanent colonization, from which France can derive both profit and glory, it is well that those who settle there should enjoy fully and wholly the advantages guaranteed by them; since no one does anything in this direction for the sake of the leaders of the enterprise, who, at the risk of their lives and their fortunes, have discovered coasts and interior lands where no Christian had ever been. *There is another consideration which I do not wish to set down in writing, and which alone ought to obtain the above-mentioned privileges to those who present and offer themselves to settle and defend the province, and indeed to give assistance to the entire French colony over there.* (1612, Vol. 2, 43, emphasis added).

What are Lescarbot, Biard and the other Jesuits unwilling to set down in writing since they are so forward in all his other correspondence whether it be about the *Mi'kmaq* or about French society?¹⁴² Their collective references to hopes of Indigenous people becoming “like us,”¹⁴³ and their frustration with the unwillingness of *Mi'kmaw* people to do so, would certainly fit such a picture as this frames. Not only would such a scenario help us to understand *Mi'kmaq* and French contention over land and the attendant social conflict, but it makes entirely clear that their motives, although indeed mixed, were

¹⁴² It seems far too convenient an answer to suggest that this was a formula required for formal correspondence that would be subject to scrutiny by the monarchy. To be sure, the Jesuits were in New France by the good graces of the French monarch Henri, with whom they ingratiated themselves by ensuring their names were well represented in the baptismal names of the first converts. But, they were also there under sole papal authority, to which they had committed themselves fully.

¹⁴³ In the *Relations*, as we have outlined, it is clear he is not referring to their conversion to the image and likeness of Christ, but rather the image and likeness of the French.

primarily about ensuring that French economic and territorial concerns were met.¹⁴⁴

Their reflection on the journey of Moses as a beacon of hope for the conquest of the land, as a consequence of mission, even a century after their initial foray into mission among the *Mi'kmaq*, if nothing else, makes this quite clear.

There occurred sometimes to the Fathers, in the midst of the miseries, the words of those to whom Moses had given the task of reconnoitering Canaan: *This land ... devoureth its inhabitants;... there we saw certain monsters of the sons of Enac of the Giant-kind: in comparison of whom, we seemed like locusts.* But at the same time there came into mind the speech of Joshua and of Caleb, full of divine trust: *The land which we have ,gone round is very good. If the Lord is favorable, he will bring us into it,... Fear ye not the people of this land,... the Lord is with us* (Jouveney 1710, Vol. 1, 54 emphasis in original).

Overall, this must be seen as an expression of Jesuit understandings of the relationship of Christian faith to civil authority and of civil authority to mission.¹⁴⁵ That is to say, there is no evidence of any effort made by Biard or other Jesuits – or for that matter, members of other missionary orders – to decry the exploitation of the Indigenous peoples by the French monarch or the monarch of Rome, who took possession of and exploited for their own gain, the lands of “*Nouvelle France*.” The reason is that they themselves were complicit in the effort. Though, in some circumstances, Jesuits appear to berate unscrupulous individuals taking advantage of the Indigenous peoples, it would seem there is a different logic operating on the level of the individual as against the civil – at least with respect to civil and religious authority. Exploitation was an act for which

¹⁴⁴ See for example, *The Jesuit Relations*, Vol. 1, p.34 and also LeClercq, *New Relations of Gaspesia* (1691, 127ff).

¹⁴⁵ Note here that the Jesuits were under constraint by vows to the pope; in turn, the pope was, in addition to all his other roles, a nation-state “monarch” and politician with vast holdings of territory to lose or gain and also to “protect.” See, for example, Cahill and McMahon’s research in *Who Owns The World* (2010).

there was certainly no biblical¹⁴⁶ but only philosophical and theological justification.¹⁴⁷ The justification must have been rooted in the works of the forerunners upon whom they had built their theologies. Biard knows implicitly that civil expansion and conquest must go hand in hand with the extension of the “Kingdom of God” – an expansion interpreted as the fulfilling of the ideals and interests of the European and papal nation states.

So then, it is not inconceivable, perhaps not even unlikely, that in the face of this twentieth-century knowledge of the consequences their own order’s activities had wrought in the past, and in light of the climate of revelation and subsequent confession of guilt that has existed in the latter quarter of the century, they would seek to make amends in some way. Regardless of how they viewed their forebears’ decisions (be it as conscious aids in the colonial process or unconscious participants in the attitudes of the time), identifying with the poor and downtrodden – those who had become so because of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century colonial “kingdom” ideals – would have made great sense. What does this suggest about any changes in the way they may have viewed the nature of the spiritual or spirituality?

First, let me suggest that it does indicate a change in Jesuit thinking. There is a perception that the gospel calls for social transformation and social justice.¹⁴⁸ As Ray Aldred would say, “If in the proclamation of the gospel, the evangelist is not also

¹⁴⁶ The notions of Manifest Destiny, *Terra Nullius*, and Divine Right certainly come to mind as being rooted in a biblical justification that, it could be said, were a product of the times. I still reject this as too convenient an answer for sin.

¹⁴⁷ Arguably, this is found within the writings of Augustine and Aquinas and is foundational to Catholic Church doctrine and understanding.

¹⁴⁸ It will interest the reader to know that the term “social justice” was first coined by Luigi Taparelli D’Azeglio, an Italian Jesuit scholar born in 1793, who was cofounder of the theological journal, *Civiltà Cattolica*.

transformed, then there has been no evangelism.”¹⁴⁹ Unfortunately, it also indicates a continued binary conception of creation. Now, however, the separation is between the need to engage in justice and the need for spiritual transformation. Perhaps this could be stated in a slightly different way by suggesting that liberation theology perceives spiritual transformation as being undertaken when a strictly social justice agenda is pursued and successfully prosecuted. This would suggest that the gospel of Jesus Christ, while definitely concerned with the issues of a wider social justice, is not concerned with the issue of one’s personal experience of transformation, one that is focused on restoring individuals as well as collective peoples to right relationship with God, right relationship with other human beings, and right relatedness to the rest of creation. There are those who would suggest that in pursuing this line of theology and praxis, the Society of Jesus has abandoned their moorings as both papist sentinels and teachers committed to the Thomist traditions of reason and truth. Of these, some, such as the controversial Malachi Martin,¹⁵⁰ are a challenge to deal with in and of themselves. Martin, an apparently disaffected Jesuit, holds the view that the Society of Jesus had embraced within their strong support of liberal theological and social teachings (liberation theology in particular) a radical departure from their moorings as an order.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Ray Aldred, taken from a message delivered at Urbana 2006 in the author’s possession.

¹⁵⁰ Martin has had a polarizing effect in some conservative Christian circles – some seeing his work on devilry in the Vatican as sensationalist, others as portending the end of all things.

¹⁵¹ “Disturbed by what it considered Marxist overtones of class struggle, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), under the current pope, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, issued two cautionary documents. Its Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation (1984) and Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation (1986) distanced Church social teaching from political activism. The accusations that

The second theological change that has impacted Jesuit theology, and ostensibly its praxis, found its focus in the mid through late twentieth century in the work of a number of Catholic theologians, among them a number of leading Jesuits, responding to the perception that the theology of the Catholic Church had taken a wrong turn. The focus of their work was to return Catholic theology to (what they perceived was) its original purity of thought and expression. To accomplish this, they advocated a “return to the sources” of the Christian faith: scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers. Militating against the neo-Thomists in the Church and critiquing the errors of scholasticism,¹⁵² they sought to restore the works of Augustine and the rest of the Church Fathers to their rightful place in the foundation of Catholic theology. Oddly, they also simultaneously promoted the works of Aquinas – arguably the medieval theologian at the pinnacle of scholasticism! Described pejoratively as *nouvelle théologie*, this methodological shift is more appropriately known by the name, *Ressourcement* (“return to the sources”).¹⁵³ Along with the methodological shift they advocated, the movement adopted an openness to dialogue with the contemporary world on issues of theology. In addition to these two major adjustments, proponents of *Ressourcement* also developed a renewed interest in biblical exegesis and mysticism.

have beset the Liberation movement are also those which challenge the wider Catholic social agenda: to seek a balance between collectivism and individualism and defend the rights of the poor, while accepting the reality of the dominant global capitalist system.” For the full text of the censure, see http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19860322_freedom-liberation_en.html.

¹⁵² For an excellent resource concerning the mediaeval period in general and scholasticism in particular see <http://bartholomew.stanford.edu/scholasticism.html>.

¹⁵³ For current news and articles as well as a regular blog on *ressourcement*, see <http://ressourcement.blogspot.ca/>.

The theological scholarship for Vatican II was undertaken, in significant measure, by Jesuit *Ressourcement* scholars such as Karl Rahner, Hans Kung, Jean Danielou, Teilhard de Chardin, and Joseph Ratzinger (current Pope Benedict XVI). Though Jesuit positions differed in significant respects from those of the Dominican order, along with them they worked diligently to refocus the theology and praxis of the Catholic Church and bring it back to its moorings in the sacrament of Christ. To the proponents of *Ressourcement*,¹⁵⁴ liberation theology – while not the Marxist enemy John Paul II would later make it out to be as he sought to discredit then dismantle it – nonetheless directed the Church away from its moorings in the mystery of Christ. At the same time, the theologians of the *nouvelle théologie* believed that the Church’s establishment had entrenched the Church within a modern intellectualism driven by “neo-Thomists.” According to Hans Boersma, the most important contribution of this stream of theological development was its advocacy of a return to mystery by way of a sacramental ontology. Three key features of this approach included

1. a return to the spiritual interpretation of scripture;
2. an entry point for ecumenical dialogue;
3. an attempt to overcome the dualism of modernity through sacramental reintegration of nature and the supernatural. (Boersma 2009, 131–153)

Neo-Thomists are of two varieties: those who sought quite simply to regain the purer form of Aquinas’ thought and theology and the Thomists who sought to adapt classical Aquinian thought to Kantian philosophy. Of the latter, *Catholic Star Herald* writer Michael Canaris observed that Karl Rahner’s approach was

¹⁵⁴ For a thorough treatment of the rise of and contributions of Jesuit and Dominican scholars to *Ressourcement*’s twentieth-century development, see Flynn and Murray, (2010) and Flynn (2005)

an attempt to place traditional Christian teaching in dialogue with modern, post-Kantian philosophy. Such a theological system, appreciating medieval scholasticism while reading it through the lens of rational Enlightenment categories of thought and applying it to contemporary issues, has been called Transcendental Thomism. (Canaris 2009:3)¹⁵⁵

Both mainstream and transcendental Thomism have had an impact in the matters under our consideration here as both have essentially engaged, at a foundational level, a rudimentary form of existentialism captured in the Thomist maxim that “existence precedes essence.”

For the *Mi'kmaq*, this would be and still is unthinkable. Hornborg, referencing the work of Janice Boddy, observes the clearly interconnected reality of the *Mi'kmaq*:

The *Mi'kmaq* complaint about dominant society's reluctance to acknowledge the importance of spirituality as a means of resurrection should not be underestimated. From a *Mi'kmaq* perspective, spirituality involves body, mind and soul simultaneously, and it seems that their rituals are considered to address and accommodate all three levels. (2008, 178)

Ultimately, neo-Thomists, like Rahner, were seeking to do with contemporary issues, what Aquinas had done with Aristotle in his day. As Chang notes in *Engaging Unbelief*, “The objective is to enter the argument of the ‘opponent,’ getting to know it from the inside better than your opponent knows it herself; then, unpacking the argument's weaknesses, expose its flaws and offer a way forward” (2000, 25–30). Lonergan's particular focus was in using modern scientific, historical, and hermeneutical thought to explore the contemporary theological and social issues of the day. As a critical realist,¹⁵⁶ he sought to engage the discussions of modernism and postmodernism simultaneously

¹⁵⁵ For the full reprinting of the original article, see the *Catholic Star Herald*. August 2009.

¹⁵⁶ According to Paul Hiebert (1999, 68–72), this meant they were taking the right way forward epistemologically speaking.

from within a universalist argument, using the rationale of Heidegger¹⁵⁷ and other existentialists. Unfortunately, the arguments still reside within a distinctive dualism – in this case, not at all unlike the cognitive/materiality split offered by Descartes. The Thomist’s residence, philosophically speaking, within Aristotelian thought makes it difficult to do otherwise. For the *Mi’kmaq* context, such a split as we have seen above, is purely artificial and mystifying.

Critical to our discussion about the nature of the spiritual is the transcendental school of thought concerning the nature of existence and, inasmuch as it is focused on the nature of Jesuit mission today, the requirement of salvation through Jesus. In regard to our first concern, according to Michael Canaris (2009, 2), Karl Rahner “views humanity as embodied spirits, historically situated in a concrete existence of freedom and temporality.” He goes on to say that “this ‘categorical’ situation must always be read against the horizon of Absolute transcendence ... in the Infinite, whom Christians identify as the triune God.”¹⁵⁸ One of Rahner’s most lasting contributions is his inter-religious thinking, which centers on his “anonymous Christian theory” that suggests a person in such a condition is seen to be living in the grace of Jesus Christ, whether he or she knows it or not.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ I find this intriguing – that Heidegger’s work would lead to a proposition of a form of universalism when Heidegger, though a profound influence on this school of thought, was a Nazi party member who never renounced his support of Hitler. For a critical look at the interview (published in 1966 as “Only a God Can Save Us,” *Der Spiegel*), see the “Special Feature on Heidegger and Nazism” in *Critical Inquiry* 15:2 (Winter 1989).

¹⁵⁸ See the brief essay by Michael Canaris on the theological renaissance ushered in by the Jesuit and Dominican scholars of the early to mid twentieth century.

¹⁵⁹ This change in theological considerations that Rahner is proposing is precisely what was lacking in the theology of Biard, Le Jeune, and the others when it came to understanding how was that *Mi’kmaq* people could exhibit character traits and behavior that was of a more Christian nature than even their own peasantry or nobility in France.

Religious and Spiritual Life in Acadia¹⁶⁰

And so, while the theological side of the Jesuits had undergone some significant changes in the course of the four centuries, their foundations still seemed quite intact: Augustine and Aquinas were still central, if not the lived theology of the Jesuits, at least to their articulated theologies. What about the common folk? What about the Acadians – those people who had ostensibly been impacted by the several centuries of Jesuit theology, teaching, and ministry? While the early Jesuits understood a particular cosmology, and adhered to a specific praxis of faith, was the same picture true for Acadians and others under their tutelage?¹⁶¹

I would be remiss were I to attempt to overgeneralize the spiritual and religious perspectives of the Acadian population in the United States and Canada as being less than dedicated. However, it is clear that, not unlike the rest of the North American European-origin population, religious life underwent significant transformation in the latter part of the twentieth century. Allegiances to regular attendance at Catholic mass, consistent

¹⁶⁰ Given that Acadians have been the longest-resident colonial population with continuous commerce and intermarriage with the *Mi'kmaq*, I deemed it might be helpful to see what Jesuit Catholicism in the French laity was like where it intersected with the *Mi'kmaq* expressions of faith.

¹⁶¹ Since the Acadians are obviously not Jesuits (at least not all of them) I have included this section to attempt to provide a fuller treatment of the contrasts and comparisons of Jesuit and *Mi'kmaq* understandings of the nature of the spiritual and of spirituality, since not all *Mi'kmaq* are spiritual leaders and teachers, and not all people currently engaged with *Mi'kmaq* people are Jesuits, and since the Jesuits have arguably influenced the beliefs and behaviors of those Acadians living beside and inter-married with the *Mi'kmaq* for several centuries now. Given that the Cajuns of Louisiana are in fact, Acadians, it would be interesting to undertake an analysis of the differences in religious life and spiritual perspective between these two groups of people to see if the national context, Canada as against the United States, has had any significant impact on the nature of Acadian religious expression. Unfortunately this falls outside of the scope of this study.

participation of children in catechism, and a lifestyle at least ostensibly based in a worldview founded on Catholic teaching have dramatically declined in the latter part of the twentieth century – not unlike participation in other traditions of the Christian faith. Modernism and a generalized experience of “spiritual autonomy” have replaced the sense of dependence on a professional, expert clergy among the populations of North America that have European origins. The sense in which one needs “organized religion” to understand one’s drives and needs with respect to the transcendent have been replaced with a more generalized experience of the need for spiritual care emerging from a self-directed understanding of the spiritual and of spirituality.¹⁶² Modernism has worked its magic in North America. This would be no less true for the Acadian peoples in eastern Canada. As part of an introduction to the annual Acadian festival, the master of ceremonies offered this vignette concerning Acadian religion:

Well as far as faith and the religion aspect of it and the practicing of our faith as our people, well we have been impacted we have been touched in the same way as most other cultures and it’s obvious that the practicing or the practice of the faith is not the same today as it was 35–40 years ago when we had 95, 99% even of our people going to church all the time and you know not questioning anything. And so now-a-days there might be 20–25% of our people you know involved on a regular basis. And especially when you look at the youth there’s a very small percentage that are practicing on a regular basis, but the religion for the Acadian people has always been very very important and still is even for people who don’t go to church. (Acadie Vivante n.d.)

Needless to say, the description offered here of the religious context of the Acadian people is not vastly different from what would be found among other populations within the same region. Yet, implicit in this statement is an expectation that

¹⁶² For a most interesting recent study of the changing religious landscape in Canada among Native youth on an off reserve compared to non-Native youth, see Bibby (2010, 41, 42)

something within the Acadian people continues to draw them to the religion of their ancestors. It is, after all, the religious convictions of their ancestors that they would attest had kept them steadfastly, diligently pursuing life throughout the last several centuries. But was it not something deeper than religious behavior that had captured the affiliation of ancestral Acadians? How about today? Was it now simply a naive affinity that was being felt by the present generations? In a review of the cultural context of Acadia for an anniversary celebration in Canada, one of the Acadians interviewed had this to say about their religious and spiritual understanding:

It remains very important for my generation especially, and at least it's an eye opener for the younger generation, that if we want to live according to the Acadian values or traditions, well, there's not only music and dancing and singing and culture, there's also religion that carried through our forefathers and our ancestors and that was even the most important part for them. So we ought to respect that value and try to integrate it as much as we can. (Acadie vivante, n.d.)

Clearly this reflects a changed orientation toward the Acadians' historic religious affiliations with the Catholic Church. The same "quiet revolution" that took the province of Quebec by storm¹⁶³ as Quebec emerged from "*les années noire*"¹⁶⁴ into an embrace of the ideals and values of modernity,¹⁶⁵ also swept the Acadian community into its grip –

¹⁶³ The beginning of the quiet revolution is pegged at about 1960, extending through 1966.

¹⁶⁴ This was often considered the Quebec equivalent of the Dark Ages.

¹⁶⁵ Claude Bélanger (1999), of Marianopolis College, in an article on the Quiet Revolution of Quebec notes, "The first major change that took place during the Quiet Revolution was the large-scale rejection of past values. Chief among these are those that Michel Brunet called 'les trois dominantes de la pensée canadienne-française: l'agriculturalisme, le messianisme et l'anti-étatisme' [the three main components of French Canadian thought: agriculturalism, anti-statism and messianism]. In this respect, Quebec entered resolutely into a phase of modernisation: its outlook became more secular (as opposed to religious), much of the traditionalism that characterised the past was replaced by increasingly liberal attitudes; long standing demographic tendencies, associated with a

albeit in a more muted form. Where Catholic religion and influence once ruled with an unquestioned authority over the lives of the Francophone populations in eastern Canada, it was now significantly emasculated. Note, for example, the subdued influence as expressed by another respondent to the anniversary interview as they observed,

The Catholic Church and Acadian identity have always gone hand in hand; indeed, until the late 1940s, a significant proportion of the Acadian elite were either members of the clergy or had been educated in Catholic colleges. Nevertheless, while religious belief is still important to Acadians, the Catholic Church is as much in crisis among them as it is elsewhere.¹⁶⁶

By the beginning of the twenty-first century then, it would appear that Catholic religion for Acadians had become a “value” as opposed to a spiritually sustaining practice – not unlike the experience of other ethnic groupings of European ancestry in Canada – though more intensely characterizing the French Catholic community. As the spokesperson above has indicated, the faith that once had substantially upheld their forebears of the preceding centuries was now a cherished part of their history – but not a specific personal practice. In what may well be a prophetic reference to the ultimate effect of the “quiet revolution” among the Acadians, once person noted, “The link between Catholicism and Acadian identity in the future is clearly going to be a much different matter than it was in the past.”

The question remains however, is the Acadian expression of Catholic faith an illustration of authentic religiosity, influenced by the context of *Mi'kma'ki*, or

traditional rural way of life (high marriage, birth and fertility rates), were rapidly reversed. In fact, of all of the values associated with the past, only nationalism continued with any vigour in the period.” For additional information see <http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/events/quiet.htm>.

¹⁶⁶ Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples, s.v. "Religion." Multicultural Canada. n.d. <http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z/a14/8> (accessed June 20, 2012).

is it merely the declaring of an Acadian “value”? Religious behavior and statements of a religious value do not always comport with one another. An observer of Acadian religiosity for instance noted,

Quebec priests who worked among the Acadians in New Brunswick complained bitterly of their behaviour. In the words of one such worker in the vineyard, the Acadians “boasted ... of having abandoned all for their faith and ... a great number ignore ... the fact that faith is worth nothing without works.”¹⁶⁷

What’s more, this cluster of historic behaviors is as much a part of the way in which Acadians have related to the Church throughout their history as it is a contemporary phenomenon. In fact, though culturally speaking the Acadians consider themselves committed Catholics, they were and are clearly intransigent in their attitudes toward Church leadership, and deeply held commitments to Church were and are less obvious. “Even before the deportation a report of the archdiocese of Quebec suggested that the Acadians had as much interest in drinking on Sunday¹⁶⁸ as in going to Mass” (Chute 1933: 47). Not unlike the *Mi’kmaq*, then, Acadians were not about to be told what, when, and how to express their Catholicity or their religiosity, though clearly both had come to mean significantly less to them than they had to the *Mi’kmaq*.

Mi’kmaq, while also intransigent in their attitudes toward Church leadership, were

¹⁶⁷ Encyclopedia of Canada’s Peoples, s.v. “Religion.” Multicultural Canada. n.d. <http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/Encyclopedia/A-Z/a14/8> (accessed October 21, 2011).

¹⁶⁸ Sadly, we find here yet another similarity between the Acadian and *Mi’kmaq* communities – the heightened consumption of alcohol. Originally introduced to the *Mi’kmaq* by the French, Portuguese, Spanish, and British on their respective early visits, the *Mi’kmaq* had learned very quickly the use and abuse of this substance. In all likelihood then this would be a point of common contact between the growing Acadian community, who had acquired a facility with the use of alcohol over the centuries, and the *Mi’kmaq* peoples for whom this was yet a new experience. For an extensive discussion of this issue, see the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report available online at <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597>.

nonetheless committed to Church life, spiritually speaking as well as culturally – though many as likely as not are apt to describe Church life in terms of what Robinson has described as “spiritual duality”¹⁶⁹ where church attendance is supplemented by *Mi'kmaw* “spirituality.”¹⁷⁰ We will have more to say about this in the next chapter.

Shifting Philosophies: Spirits and Souls

Le Jeune provided us with a glimpse of what the Jesuits of his era saw in the “savages” of the day – what substance they were made of and what was needed, in Jesuit opinion, to make them over into what they should be in his reflection about their value.

As to the mind of the Savage, it is of good quality. I believe that souls¹⁷¹ are all made from the same stock, and that they do not materially differ; hence, these barbarians having well formed bodies, and organs well regulated and well arranged, their minds ought to work with ease. Education and instruction alone are lacking. (1634, Vol. 6, 65)

But, exactly how do contemporary Jesuits and Acadians understand the *Mi'kmaq* – if, in

¹⁶⁹ This may or may not describe an example of what Jamie Bulatao originally termed “split-level Christianity,” though it is more likely that Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou (1999) capture it more fully in their book *Understanding Folk Religion*. Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou speak of something that is not quite split-level Christianity; nor is it syncretism. They suggest it is more accurately described in terms of dual allegiance. This may be a more realistic reflection of what we see occurring among the *Mi'kmaw* people.

¹⁷⁰ See, for example, Robinson’s discussion of this (2005, 31–34).

¹⁷¹ It needs to be understood that, as per the European usage of the day, “souls” could and did stand in for a simple reference to the physical being of an individual complete with personality traits and life-force – for example, “forty souls were lost that day” – as would appear to be the case in this first usage. It was also quite common to refer to the soul as an interior aspect of the physical being; but the term may also encompass the spiritual and physical reality of existence together when referring to human beings in other contexts, such as the biblical reference in Genesis: “and man became a living soul” (Heb. *khayah nephesh*).

fact the Jesuits give them any consideration at all today?¹⁷² Have they been able to shake the “bipolar” views of the *Mi'kmaq* they had held right from the beginnings of their missions as captured in another of Le Jeune's (1634, Vol. 6, 66) assertions that “their soul is a soil which is naturally good, but loaded down with all the evils that a land abandoned since the birth of the world can produce?” Clearly, the Jesuits had experienced an obvious conflict – one that juxtaposed what they actually experienced with what they had expected to find. Their own writings make evident that on many occasions the behavior of the “savage” had mystified them, causing them on numerous occasions to extol their virtues as surpassing those of French Christians. They struggled with how it was possible for savages to express Christlike behavior while avowed Christians lived as if they were unbelievers.

It seems quite clear in what we have found – the contradiction between observation and behavior – that the Acadians and other peasant French concerning whom the Jesuits wrote behaved as they would have expected the *Mi'kmaq* to behave and the *Mi'kmaq* conducted themselves in the way they would have expected good Christians to have done. The Simon Fraser University Multicultural Canada project online encyclopedia¹⁷³ makes this point: “During the last years of the eighteenth century, the Acadians never hesitated to argue with their spiritual advisers over moral, doctrinal, and such practical matters as the times of Mass.” What's more, both the stories in the literature and the anecdotes in circulation, suggest that Acadian behavior, particularly

¹⁷² Jesuit ministry within the *Mi'kmaw* community has all but ended – in part because the mission was assumed by the missionaries from other Catholic orders who followed the Jesuits and in part due to the widespread decline in the availability of Catholic priests for parish ministry, irrespective of the order with which they are attached.

¹⁷³ For a complete treatment see <http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca>

following the “quiet revolution,” was very much consistent with the “Sunday Christian” experience¹⁷⁴ of other groups of people, despite their affirmations of a particular code of belief.

And, while for the Acadians stories about *Mi'kmaw* kindness and generosity, of their good relationship with the *Mi'kmaq* of the early era, continued to be told, it is clear that in the period of the late nineteenth through mid twentieth centuries things did change. For the Acadians, fact was replaced with folklore; idealized relationships were still expounded on while actual friendly interchange declined. Labelle notes,

In his survey of the place occupied by Natives in Acadian literature up to the 1950s, Dennis Bourque finds an admiration for the *Mi'kmaq* in the writings of authors from all periods since the seventeenth century. In their view, the Natives deserved recognition not only as friends and allies, but also as the saviours of the Acadian people in the post-deportation era. However, Bourque points out that Acadian authors preferred to express their admiration for the *Mi'kmaq* from a distance, mentioning that two of the most important writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Pascal Poirier and André-Thaddée Bourque, both went out of their way to stress that the Acadian people had no “Indian blood” in their veins. (2008, 144)

What had caused the nineteenth- and-twentieth century Acadian people to separate life into entirely disparate categories, where cognition and experience no longer seemed to relate to one another – where they articulated one thing and did something entirely different? Let us have a look once again at the foundation upon which their behavior has been built.

It is clear, as was discussed in Chapter 3 that the Jesuits had understood life through the lens of Greek philosophy – it was the developmental framework within which they undertook their Christian theology. This should come as no surprise since

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, the work of Reginald Bibby in *Fragmented gods* (1990).

both the era and the order – the late Renaissance/early Enlightenment and the Society of Jesus – are of a time together. Neither is discontinuous with the other. And, since the Jesuits were arguably both the intellectual elite and the most missionally innovative of all Catholic Church work in their day, it is not surprising then that the influence of this dualistic frame of reference would become quite prominent in their ministry to the Indigenous peoples of North America. The binary perceptions that such a framework offered extended from contrasts in their depictions of the civilized European and uncivilized Indigenous peoples through their observations of the tamed and untamed world.

Though, as has been previously noted, the Jesuits were ostensibly about finding God in all of creation, His presence was not easily seen, not easily witnessed, when the pattern of His appearance was other than what was to be expected – European form. In fact, they were looking for a particular French European form. Not surprisingly then, though they would often extol the spiritual virtues of the Indigenous population, they could not see religious expression as being of value or significance unless it was in specifically Catholic Church forms.¹⁷⁵ As Biard was taking note of *Mi'kmaw* religious behavior early in the 1600s, the incongruence between what he observed and what he and the other Jesuits ostensibly believed was clear. “They even have faith in dreams; if they happen to awake from a pleasing and auspicious dream, they rise in the middle of the night to hail the omen with song and dances” (1612, Vol. 2, 27). The tone of the comment is altogether curious since the Hebrew and Christian experience recorded in the scriptures

¹⁷⁵ See for example the discussion of Hornborg (2010, 48), Robinson (2005, 31–44), and Prins (2002, 71–85).

is filled with people putting their faith in dreams and visions. Take, for example, Joseph's dreams or Daniel's visions, the oft-quoted passage of young dreamers in Joel, the dreams of Jesus' earthly father Joseph protecting the family, and, of course, the refrain of Joel in Acts 2:17. In each case faith in dreams and visions allowed for the dreamer or the visionary to engage life differently; doing otherwise would have had, in many cases, destructive outcomes.¹⁷⁶ So, when the Jesuits excoriated the *Mi'kmaw* dreamer, one they called *autmoin*, they were doing so on the basis of non-compliance with a particular framework of French making via Catholic hermeneutics – one which, as we have noted with respect to Acadian “witchcraft and sorcery”¹⁷⁷ had not seemed to work even for their own people.

Records and family anecdotes show that widespread belief in and practice of forms of “sorcery” existed among Acadians during their first three centuries in *Mi'kma'ki*. Their understanding of spiritual reality in those days, particularly the real presence of both positive and negative spiritual forces within creation, was certainly more closely aligned with *Mi'kmaw* understanding than it is today. Rationalism, however, found its way into Acadian thinking at about the same time as everyone else in Francophone Canada, dispelling for them the “myths of old.” Once again it was the silent revolution that contributed significantly to this changed disposition while simultaneously moving them far and quickly from loyalty to strict Catholic teachings and expectations.

¹⁷⁶ Is this perspective, shared by Biard and his colleague Ennemond Massé, indicative of the newly embraced rationalism of the period – an intellectual pursuit moving Christians away from the experience of a God who moves in “natural” ways within the wider creation, in favor of a God who only spoke through the scriptures, the rational mind, and ecclesial authority?

¹⁷⁷ See for example, Labelle (2008, 139–142).

Their concept of the spiritual and of spirituality in a broad, general sense became very much as it was for other people of European origins in the twentieth century.

Encounter and the Land

If the ground of this new [sic] France had feeling, as the Poets pretend their goddess Tellus had, doubtless it would have experienced an altogether novel sensation of joy this year, for, thank God, having had very successful crops from the little that was tilled, we made from the harvest some hosts [Wafers for consecration] and offered them to God. These are, as we believe, the first hosts which have been made from the wheat of these lands. (Biard 1612, Vol. 2, 12)

So, what about the ways in which people came to understand the nature of the land? Had that changed at all over the years? Was there still prominence in the thinking of the French that land was a commodity – even with environmental issues rising to the fore and Canadians in general beginning to think differently about such things in the latter part of the twentieth century? For the *Mi'kmaq*, there has been no appreciable change over the centuries – as Robinson's and Hornborg's works¹⁷⁸ have pointed out quite consistently. The quotation above, however, identifies the Jesuit Biard scoffing at the idea that the earth could actually feel anything. For the Jesuits, it would seem, the “groaning in travail,” about which the Apostle Paul spoke in Romans, was simply metaphoric – the land is inanimate stuff, unable to feel.¹⁷⁹ The contrast between their cosmology and that of the *Mi'kmaq*¹⁸⁰ – even today – is abundantly evident. This is perhaps one of the more

¹⁷⁸ See for example, Hornborg (2008, 56–60) and Robinson (2005, 83–86).

¹⁷⁹ Or, as Rynkiewicz (2001, 220, quoting Leviticus 11:17) noted, this could be framed by the warning in the Old Testament that if the Israelites sinned (oppressed the widow, orphan, and alien) then the land itself would vomit them out.

¹⁸⁰ Jennifer Reid (1995, 102–106) offers compelling testimony from *Mi'kmaw*

obvious places where we begin to see most clearly the difference between *Mi'kmaq* and Jesuit/Acadian beliefs and behavior. For the Jesuits and the Acadians in the twentieth century, religious belief, as outlined by Philip Hughes (1984, 251–258), is very clearly articulated. They may “believe” that God created all things – the entirety of the cosmos. They may grasp the precepts of the Creator/creation relationship; they are defined and described well in their liturgies and statements of faith. Yet so often they forgo the praxis of those beliefs. In contrast, *Mi'kmaw* people today continue to express a belief in the ontological spirituality of the land – indeed, of the entirety of creation. Hornborg notes, “For the *Mi'kmaq*, it was the insider perspective that dominated their relation to the land. There is much to suggest that they talked about the landscape as if they were surrounded by a living being.... The wilderness that cartographers tried to transform into a land to their liking was the *Mi'kmaq*'s [sic] home” (2008, 57). For the *Mi'kmaq*, belief is coterminous with praxis, albeit at times not in the way their ancestors might have imagined.

When the *Mi'kmaq* entered into discussions, first with the French and then British Europeans, about land and its use, about place, personal habitation, and individual occupation, the concept of “fee simple” ownership was far from their (*Mi'kmaq*) minds.¹⁸¹ Yet the idea of individual *and* collective possession was not a foreign concept. Districts of the *Mi'kmaq* had been in existence for centuries – since the inception of the *Wa'bana'ki* Confederacy at the very least (Paul 1993, 7). Early records of *Mi'kmaw* land use and subsequent analyses of their understanding of territories, be they hunting, fishing,

people concerning their continued understanding of the land in animate terms.

¹⁸¹ Mike Rynkiewich quipped at this point as we reviewed my dissertation proposal, “I keep telling people that it’s about the land! But no one listens.”

or tribal residence, however, make clear that in the final analysis the concepts were not perceived in the same way by the Europeans as they were the *Mi'kmaq* (Wicken 2002, 4).

Mi'kmaw conceptions of treaty and those of Euro-North Americans were and are no less different. Both the process and outcomes were understood differently. This can be clearly seen in a cursory examination of the *Mi'kmaq Treaty Handbook* jointly published by the grand Council of Micmacs (sic), the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, and the Native Council of Nova Scotia in 1987. In its introduction, reflecting on their historic understanding of treaty – one that significantly pre-dated European contact – the writers note,

Like the members of the family, representatives of the nations that have entered into a treaty met from time to time to exchange gifts, forgive one another and renew their friendship. We, the *Mi'kmaq*, related to Europeans the same way. (Patterson 1987, i)

Contrast this with European understandings of treaty.

Having usurped *Mi'kmaq* country, the British Crown hired surveyors to measure out the newly won tribal territory. The lands were then divided into sections and lots to be auctioned off in London... No one bothered to inform the Micmac about the transfer of their hunting districts to newcomers, and the process was anything but orderly. Soon their favorite places were occupied by strangers who took without asking. (Prins 2005, 155)

Wicken (2002, 216–222) suggests that the differences were so many and so marked that they created the framework of misunderstanding that surrounds the understanding of land, treaty, and the land claims negotiation process to the present day.¹⁸² Johnson (1999, 3), writing about a treaty context many miles away with a tribe who were cousins to the *Mi'kmaw* people, makes the point that treaty concerned itself

¹⁸² For an excellent discussion of this see *Nation to Nation: Aboriginal Sovereignty and the Future of Canada* (Bird and Land 2002, 44–61).

with “dealing in land, the process and outcomes of which were inconceivable in traditional culture.”¹⁸³ There is a dramatic difference in perception between the understanding of treaty as contractual obligation (the British concept) and understanding that describes an agreement for mutual benefit – even survival – as with the *Mi'kmaq*.¹⁸⁴

Unfortunately, even as the *Mi'kmaq* people were increasingly placing their faith in the Jesus of the Jesuits,¹⁸⁵ the Jesuits, in turn were assisting in the assimilation of lands and territories for French dominion. This was not undertaken however, through the development of formal written treaty. When undertaken in its strictly European context, treaty meant little – for there was inevitably built into the thinking, the expectation of abrogation. Here again we see the disconnect between an articulated belief in honesty and fairness rooted in Matthew 5:37, “Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay,” and the commandment of Matthew 7:12, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,”

¹⁸³ Johnson and Wicken are equally emphatic that there is an unmistakable and tremendously significant difference of perspective between First Nations people and Europeans, if only around what actually constituted the whole of the treaties. In European thought, treaties were the written recording of a transaction, interpreted and applied as needed in subsequent generations; for the *Mi'kmaq*, it was not simply the words spoken but the oral traditions and the richness of the entire process that carried the story of the treaty negotiation, its signing, and its meaning, which were (and still are) equally important, equally impacting on behavior – in some cases, more so.

¹⁸⁴ See, for example, the discussion in *The Mi'kmaq Treaty Handbook* (Patterson 1987).

¹⁸⁵ As we have noted above, many have argued that missionaries were not engaged in the colonial advance and assimilation of Indigenous peoples – that their purposes were strictly religious in nature. While this may be true of specific individuals in the later era of North American mission, such an assertion is absurd in the case of the French and British in the first three hundred years, given the facts of European society as any cursory analysis of history will show and as we have argued herein – that the religious and civil authorities were, in fact “in bed” together as they had been, arguably, since 323 CE. I note particularly that the head of the Church of England was the English monarch and the Catholic monarchs were referred to as “Christian Monarchs.” To suggest that the civil and religious causes in the colonial era were therefore separate would appear to have a specific bias of interpretation in favor of European impressions.

and the actual behavior we see of both the Jesuits and the “Christian French monarch,” colluding to disenfranchise the *Mi'kmaq*.¹⁸⁶

For the French colonial enterprise it went a step further for, unlike the British, “the French had based their colonial claims simply on the principle of First Discovery” (Prins 2002, 154). Their belief or hope was that the Native peoples, seeing the value and merit of French civilization, would themselves become citizens. And so, “dispossessed by default, the *Mi'kmaq* received nothing in compensation for these lands” (Upton, 1979, 98–99). As time moved on, all *Mi'kmaw* lands were then “[transformed] ‘magically’ into Crown land ... [and] it was as if a terrible curse had been put upon its indigenous inhabitants” (Prins 2002, 154).

In consequence of this process – or lack thereof – there is today between *Mi'kmaw* people and their organizations and Euro-American and Euro-Canadian ones, a continuous surge of contemporary litigation and dispute around the meaning, validity, and application of treaty rights and responsibilities. On the one hand there is the European understanding, transmitted through the years, that treaty is contractual in nature, neither understood as permanent in their signing nor contemporarily binding; on the other hand is the clear commitment to understanding treaty as an agreement about behavior of one people toward another with give-and-take from one another in some kind of dynamic equilibrium which,

¹⁸⁶ As an interesting point of support for the collusive attitudes of the Jesuits consider the following comment from Robert Kaiser (1997, 3,4), “The pope had given his approval for a small Jesuit Order – no more than 60 professed fathers? Well, sixteen years later, in 1556, Ignatius Loyola could say, as he lay dying, that he had kept the letter of the law. He had kept the number of professed fathers in the Society of Jesus down to 50. In fact, at the time, he actually had more than 1,000 Jesuits at work in 74 countries.... How did he do that? He wrote new rules. One hundred years after the founding of the Society, in 1640, the Jesuits had 15,683 members in 868 houses....What was St. Ignatius doing? He sure wasn't working for the pope.”

while it may be renegotiated, stands complete until such time as it is.¹⁸⁷

Given these very obvious differences in such basic conceptions as the ownership and use of land and the nature of treaty, it is inevitable that understandings of the spiritual and spirituality were to be similarly marred by differences in perspective.

The Changing Face of Relationships

Jesuit relationship, whether within the order or directed outward, centered around three things: their task, ostensibly to repatriate the lost; their commitment to papal directive and authority in the Church; and personal spiritual development – that is to say, the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius. Though their origins as an order focused them first and foremost on the objective of reconverting those who had left the faith, this naturally led them to become an educative order, using those same *Spiritual Exercises* as the focus for education of both the no longer faithful and those who were the focus for conversion by their mission, in this case, the *Mi'kmaq*. For the Acadian, the new life in a new world meant first and foremost learning how to survive. That the focus of those lessons was primarily and significantly in a learning environment with the *Mi'kmaw* people is beyond question. The creation of a significant interrelationship between the two peoples is, as a result, well documented – in the literature, in the oral tradition of the *Mi'kmaq*, and in the stories of the Acadians.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Is this simply an issue of timing and opportunity? In other words, are such things being argued in courts in recent years because it is now possible to do so – actual understandings and meanings aside – whereas 100 years ago (indeed, 50) it was not possible? It could explain the reason for the increase in attention at the present time, but is highly unlikely given the degree to which the issue has perseverated, unchanged in its expression and content, in the Native community's consciousness.

¹⁸⁸ See, for example, Wicken (2002, 119–130), Whitehead (1991); and Paul (1993).

The question arises, Are there any overlaps to be observed with respect to patterns of relationship between the Acadian French and the *Mi'kmaw* community? *Mi'kmaw* historian and writer Daniel Paul believes there are. Paul (1993, 12) attests, “During this period, the two peoples established many social exchanges. Inter-marriage was quite common and each adapted to many of the customs of the other.¹⁸⁹ French schools were established and *Mi'kmaw* children attended them on a daily basis alongside Acadian children.” The relationship was so fully reciprocal in nature that following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, efforts to force Acadians out were met with offers of unconditional asylum by the *Mi'kmaq*. British attempts to play one another off were futile “primarily because they [*Mi'kmaq* and Acadian] communicated their experiences with the English to each other, and many of the barbarities committed against one party often penalized both” (Paul 1993, 14). Unfortunately, this pattern ultimately changed as the British sought to neutralize the alliance of the Acadians and *Mi'kmaq*. In all likelihood, it was Anglophone Roman Catholic priests,¹⁹⁰ already experiencing difficulty communicating in culturally appropriate ways with the respective peoples who, now enlisted by the British to serve them – willingly or not – ensured British demands in the colony were met.

Ronald Labelle of the University of Moncton observes,

Despite the fact that they shared a common religion, Roman Catholic priests did their best to keep the two groups apart, especially in communities such as Chezzetcook, Nova Scotia, where they lived in close proximity to each other and even shared a parish church. The Acadians and the *Mi'kmaq* were thus never permitted to become “neighbours.” (2008,144)

¹⁸⁹ Paul, not a vocally committed Catholic himself, nevertheless writes concerning the Catholic faith that it was one of the positive exchanges in the ongoing relationship of the *Mi'kmaq* and Acadian communities.

¹⁹⁰ See Labelle (2008, 144–147).

It is not difficult to find other overlaps as well, and a few are of specific interest to this study – though the exact nature of the influence may be difficult to ascertain with certainty. The first is quite straightforward and can be easily understood in light of the ongoing French and British conflict that pushed the *Mi'kmaq* and Acadians into closer relational proximity.

Throughout much of Acadian history, particularly for those who returned from expulsion,¹⁹¹ there was a dearth of priests – and many who became available were Anglophone and, as noted above, culturally inept.¹⁹² Therefore, “in the absence of a priest, it was customary for villagers to gather for Sunday prayers led by an elder of the community” (Bradshaw 1999, 4). This was often also true for the *Mi'kmaq*. According to Robinson, in *Eskasoni*, for example, prior to 1944, “The *Mi'kmaq* had control of their own church and were accustomed to conducting prayers, rituals, and devotional services in their own way. They were not used to the intervention of church representatives in regular devotional services” (2005, 55). A coincidence? Perhaps, but one must imagine that a long history of close relationship would, as Daniel Paul has noted, “cause each to adopt the other’s habits” (1993, 5) – perhaps to a greater extent than imagined.

The second experience, however, is not so easily understood. It pertains to the

¹⁹¹ The majority of Acadians were expelled between 1755 and 1764, although British raiding parties continued to rampage throughout the country destroying farmsteads and property and expelling the occupants up until approximately 1793. Nova Scotia became open for resettlement at the end of the Seven Years War in 1763, the same year in which the British current crown made its Royal proclamation concerning the non-trespass of Indian lands.

¹⁹² See, for example, the discussion of this in Robinson (2005), Griffiths (1992), and Bradshaw (2000) as well as Acadia University’s site (<http://history.acadiau.ca/>) and the wide variations in Acadian-maintained websites such as <http://www.doucetfamily.org/heritage/Religion.htm>.

religious role of women. As we have seen, the *Mi'kmaq* had almost singularly focused their developing Catholic faith through the female personages of the biblical narrative and Catholic saints, particularly Anne, the mother of Mary; to a more limited extent, so also had the Acadians.

The fact that Acadian women have established their own religious orders is not surprising. The interpretation of Catholicism among the Acadians has always has always attached much importance to the role of women. Parishes are frequently dedicated to women patron saints and the major cathedrals are dedicated either to Mary or to Mary's Mother, Saint Anne. (Griffiths 1992, 31)¹⁹³

Did the focus on Anne come from Acadian dedication to her, or was it the other way around? Let me suggest that it was rooted in their common Catholic framework despite the uniquenesses that continued to exist between the two cultures. Ethnohistorian Denise Lamontagne asserts that in her study of witchcraft and religion in Acadian society,

Acadians and Natives even shared a common spirituality characterized by a strong devotion to Saint Anne. As the grandmother of Christ, Saint Anne was perfectly adapted to the Native system of belief based on ancestor worship, where she embodied the figure of the grandmother/midwife/healer. She was also a powerful traditional figure in Acadian spirituality, despite efforts by the Church to replace her with the cult of the Virgin Mary. (2005, 33, 34)

John Ralston Saul suggests that values and perceptions like this common experience of St. Anne, while not immediately identifiable as having sprung from this or that place, are nonetheless part of the "Métis" nation experience that was/is Canada. He further notes that, "From the beginning the French grasped enough of this to settle into negotiations and so develop oral treaties which were effectively family relationships"

¹⁹³ For a more complete discussion of Acadian history in this regard, see Griffiths and also note the Acadian site, <http://www.acadievivante.ca/en/Themes/Identity/Religion> accessed March 20, 2012.

(2008, 65). Since the *Mi'kmaq* have intermarried significantly¹⁹⁴ with the Acadians and vice versa over the centuries, perhaps this common focus on St. Anne should come as no surprise. When Robinson observes of the *Mi'kmaq*, “Even in the late 1990s tensions existed between perceptions of the church held by *Mi'kmaw* Catholics and the views and policies embraced by church officials” (2005 57) and an historiographer of Acadian life suggests, “Though the majority of Acadians have always been firmly Catholic in their religious life, their relations with the institutions of the Church have often been less than completely cordial” (Griffiths 1992, 27), perhaps there is something to Daniel Paul’s and John Ralston Saul’s suggestions.

Clearly, Acadians had changed in their understandings of the nature of community life from the days of their original encounter with the people of *Mi'kma'ki*. This was true for the Acadians in and of themselves but, it was also true with respect to the *Mi'kmaq*. What’s more, the “quiet evolution” in the middle of the twentieth century had opened the door to rationalism whereby most Acadians now began to question their spiritual beliefs as people had or were in most other Western cultures. The spiritual simplicity of a Catholicism more widely practiced by the Acadian community was now set aside in favor of what had definitely become a better articulated but less-participated-in faith. Spirituality in turn became more and more defined by specific sets of behaviors that corresponded to church attendance, or lack thereof – participation in church rites, including rites of passage such as baptisms and weddings, and a clearer sense of

¹⁹⁴ Labelle would suggest this is a significantly smaller number of people than has been historically understood to be true. However, the elders say that one just has to look at the old marriage registers in the churches on only a few of the reserves to know that the numbers are more than valid.

individual autonomy of action. The more mystical quality of the early Acadian sense of the spiritual, hence their “spirituality,” characterized by an openness to *Mi'kmaw* spiritual behavior, was gone. We will have more to say about this in Chapter 6.

Words, Deeds, and Values

I recall each year at Christmas time the words of Ebenezer Scrooge as he kneels before, pleads before, the ghost of Christmas yet to come. There, agonizing over the full revelation of the nature of his life, he states, “Men’s courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead,” said Scrooge. “But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change” (Dickens 1843, 44). Philip Hughes (1984, 251–258), in his work concerning belief and behavior, makes a strong argument that it is in fact our behavior that demonstrates what we really believe, and not our statements about our faith or belief, our statements of dogma. Given Paroissien’s description of Jesuit behavior – their non-dissembling exteriority for purposes of acceptance and communication – one must ask whether Hughes’s assertions concerning the connection between actual belief, “religious systems of belief,” and “banked beliefs” as related to behavior are applicable. Or perhaps one must inquire as to whether human behavior can be layered in such a way as to permit a certain level of incongruence between what one says and what one does if it has a specific purpose of ensuring internal preservation and external adaptability, as with the *Mi'kmaq*.¹⁹⁵ If this is the case then the analysis of

¹⁹⁵ At this point my mentor reminded me “anthropologists have never found a group whose behavior matches up perfectly with their beliefs. It is called the ‘ideal-real gap.’ Sometimes people have perfectly good justifications or rationalizations, other times they

behavior and belief must include at least one additional level – a level of interchange between two or more peoples for the purpose of communication and or initial acceptance. How does this read in the current situation between contemporary peoples with a lengthy history? What did each side say they valued? What words did they use? What actions did they take that supported the words and the values? Given the limits of this work, it is not possible to examine everything that Jesuits, individually and collectively, believed and valued; so we will limit our discussion to some of the more obvious ones that have a bearing on this topic.

When considering Jesuit stated belief, it would seem logical to begin with what they commit themselves to by way of the Constitutions – the formal statements of Jesuit commitment, which Loyola solidified during the early years of the order. The Constitutions are as follows:

- 1) The Jesuits were to be at the disposal of the pope.
- 2) They were to go wherever he ordered them to go to save souls.
- 3) They were never to accept a bishopric etc. unless the pope ordered it.
- 4) They were to wear no special habit.
- 5) There were to be no special mortifications, e.g., no fasting without a medical report.
- 6) They were excused from communal prayer and masses.
- 7) All members were to take the three traditional monastic vows.¹⁹⁶ An elite would take a fourth vow of direct obedience to the pope if he sent them on a foreign mission.
- 8) Faith was to be spread by preaching, spiritual exercises, charity, and education in Christianity. (Paroissien 1860, 60–99)

As can be seen by this brief list, centralizing within their order an unflinching allegiance to

just shrug and say: ‘That’s the way it is.’”

¹⁹⁶ These were chastity, perpetual poverty, and obedience (Paroissien 1860, 67).

the pope meant that, unlike all other orders within the Catholic Church, they could “move fast and travel light.” Commitments were limited to those that directly served the purposes to which they were called by the papacy. All other values were expected to emerge from these core commitments. In addition to these, as a peculiarity of the Jesuit order,¹⁹⁷ they valued the use of *Spiritual Exercises* of Loyola, the use of which, in turn, emphasized the development of the inner life through the discipline of prayer. As obvious corollaries, they would historically have valued the Catholic Church as the only vehicle through which salvation came. And, of course, there was the self-professed drive in mission – “finding God in all things.”

As we have seen, there was an obvious clash between the stated objective and the reality of its pursuit, although writers such as Prins would suggest that this was mitigated early on in the Jesuit mission. He points out a directive in the early 1600s that was supposed to change Jesuit mission behavior:

Soon, however, Jesuits became less ethnocentric. Unlike the Franciscans, they rejected the idea that Indians had to become “civilized” before they could be Christianized. In 1622 the order officially adopted a foreign mission policy based on the doctrine of adaptivity, its guidelines held that: “there is no stronger cause for alienation of heathen peoples than an attack on local customs especially when these go back to a venerable antiquity.” (Prins 2002, 73)

Unfortunately, if in fact this was adhered to, the outcomes of its adherence are not quite as visible in *Mi'kmaw* country, as would be suggested. As I have noted, there appeared to

¹⁹⁷ Perhaps the most “peculiar” and controversial order of the Roman Catholic Church – as seen both by those who are within the Catholic Church and those outside of it – the Jesuits have been the focus of countless conspiracy theories as well as countless charges of collusion and deception. Websites purporting to have discovered plots of various sorts abound. This is not difficult to understand since their self-attestation of “If the Church called black, white, then it would be to me white” is suggestive of collusion in thought.

be a significant difference in the way Jesuit mission was undertaken with literate and “civilized” people – such as the Indians and Chinese – and those who were not considered so – such as the *Mi'kmaq*. Sadly, it would appear that Jesuit and Récollet missionaries alike were held fast in their approach as attested by the literature in the early days and their behavior toward the *Mi'kmaw* population in the latter days of our study. That the *Mi'kmaw* people embraced the faith in large numbers is a wonder, given the continued attempts to eradicate their understanding of the spiritual.

As we have shown, though the Jesuits were ostensibly looking for God in all created things, their search was somewhat circumscribed. Since for them the realm of the spiritual, and therefore God, was/is deeply enmeshed with specific behaviors, patterns and understandings, God had to manifest in creation in expected ways. What's more, given that the early Jesuits had pronounced themselves “semi” geocentric, cosmologically speaking, and given that this meant a profane earth with sin's locus in the earth, it is difficult to imagine just what they actually intended to find of the peoples that populated such a profane place apart from the Jesuit Catholic gospel.

In answer, it is not so much what they expected to find as what they expected not to find – that is to say, people who behaved in a good way without, to borrow from a contemporary metaphor, “having got religion.” Because the *Mi'kmaq* had made clear in their thinking and cosmology that “the world was not a human creation – that any power the human possessed was likewise not self-engendered but a gift of the Creator” (Reid 1995, 89), the Jesuit had no place in their thinking for such a conception. Their cosmology of a fallen world in the throes of sin and their Augustinian-birthing theology of depravity did not have room for altruistic behavior and honorable engagement with their

fellow human beings. The non-baptized could not act in other than a reprobate way. The preached gospel and the religion that accompanied it, instilled via Catholic catechesis, were prerequisite to such behavior. This is what Biard (1612, Vol. 1, 66, 67) and Le Clercq (1696, 52) mean when they describe their mission as being “for the sake of Religion” and “of religion” respectively. It would appear to be the root from which contemporary Acadian Christian understandings of the spiritual have grown – specific sets of behavior related to Catholic religious expectation apart from which no fulfilling spiritual life is possible.¹⁹⁸

This is, perhaps, where more contemporary Jesuits such as Rahner and Lonergan have both made strides, and then again perhaps stepped back. Two areas are noteworthy for Rahner: a re-embrace of the mystical, and the openness of his theology of redemption. Rahner, particularly in his discussion of the “anonymous Christian” has opened the door to salvation outside the Catholic Church, but equally importantly, to revelatory experience outside the narrowed Christian understanding of the past 1,800 years. In other words, a Rahnerian Jesuism would have been able to do two important things for *Mi'kmaq* and other missions, if it had been available earlier to Jesuit missionaries, or had its influence been more widely felt in the mission of the Church in the twentieth century. First, the Church would have been able to take note of the revelation of God within *Mi'kmaw* cosmology and would have been able to build on it with a presentation of the good news of Jesus. Second, the pursuit of a more mystical embrace of the scriptures and

¹⁹⁸ It seems needful to say that Protestants were no different; they also had a specific set of expectations of behavior that, if not engaged in, left suspect one's commitment to Christian faith, if not one's salvation altogether. Take note, for example, the codified expectations of early Jesuit contemporaries as found in the Institutes of Calvin and the theses of Luther.

the cosmos would have been more likely to predispose people to an understanding of the spiritual nature existing in all things – hence an approach to understanding *Mi'kmaw* cosmology. There would have been more openness to seeing a non-dualist vision of creation. That is, of course, if it had been allowed to do so. Unfortunately, by this time, Catholic Church officials were deeply engaged in the residential schools experiment – one more in a line of efforts to transform the spiritually heathen into the spiritually redeemed,¹⁹⁹ attempting to erase any memory and experience of being Native – of being *Mi'kmaq*.

Loneragan, on the other hand, focused on a reappropriation of the realists' truth with an internal critique of both the content of that truth and the method by which the assignment of that truth could be or was reached. Kant looms large above his work. Lonergan sought to address the idealism present in so much of what passed for Christian theology, philosophy, and praxis and open it to a transcendent quality of thought (Loneragan et al. 2004, 21–38). Hiebert, in *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*, supports Lonergan on this point. For Hiebert (1999: 68–75), critical realism is the way out of the morass of the various constructions of idealism, the way around the quagmire of postmodern instrumentalism, and the means by which to sidestep the determinism of blind fate. Unfortunately, critical realism loses its way when it comes to the notion of mystery – the “real” yet unknowable²⁰⁰ rooted in “subjectivity.” This is, at

¹⁹⁹ See the work of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) available online at the Library of Parliament website <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/prb9924-e.htm>.

²⁰⁰ As I once remarked to Paul Hiebert in a personal conversation, his critique of positivism in *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts* used the same instruments of positivism to frame its arguments that he was critiquing. In so doing, I

least in part, the realm of the *Mi'kmaq* – life is, but it (1) is not wholly knowable, (2) may be different for one person than for another, and (3) may change for each at a moment's notice. Lonergan's contribution through the lens of the critical realist was, to a large extent, diametrically opposed to the way *Mi'kmaw* people thought and acted. As such, it would and did not contribute much to a changed perspective for them.

For the Acadians seeking to tame the new wilderness, newly arrived from the highly familiar and structured Europe, the unknown and (at least temporarily) unknowable New World lay all around them. Their drive, rooted in European expansionism and a worldview in which land was territory and commodity, would carry them forward in a continuing form of conquest. And that is precisely what you see in the Acadian communities in the present day as we have briefly noted – the loss of mystery and the embrace of certainty, in their religious and spiritual practices and in family life.²⁰¹

For the *Mi'kmaq*, a people who were, as Hornborg notes, “regarded as lacking human significance, and so were ignored altogether or imagined to be material for further acts of transformation” (2008, 98), relationships with the Acadians would go through a period of decline, mired in suspicion and distrust. The mentality of the British era of colonialism, which determined to a large extent the middle-period (1750–1950) tone of relationship with the newcomers, also now set the more contemporary course and, as recent history makes quite clear, it was a course closely followed: *Mi'kmaq* continued to be part of the landscape to be adjusted to suit the new occupants. Merleau-Ponty has

said, he was acting as a good Thomist.

²⁰¹ One of the more significant overtones of the works of Labelle and Lamontagne around witchcraft and sorcery in Acadian contexts is the imposition of rationalism as the means of discernment of matters of a spiritual nature. See Lamontagne (2005, 31–48); also Labelle (2005, 137–152).

suggested that in considering the issue of Indigenous identity, “In order to be determined ... by an external factor, it is necessary that I should be a thing” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 505). *Mi'kmaq* were part of the unknown landscape, knowable only through transformation of the wild into the tamed and requiring the collaboration of civil and religious authority in a process known as “civilizing.” And so, efforts were undertaken in the 1800s through the late 1900s to drive the spiritual understandings of the *Mi'kmaw* people out, replacing them with the domesticated spiritual understanding of French and Jesuit Catholic Christianity.

The Hereafter

There is no evidence to suggest that the Jesuit perception of the hereafter was significantly different than that of the rest of the Catholic Church at any time in the period in question in this study. Therefore we can expect that the full orb of Catholic theology and its cosmology would have been and still would be brought to bear in a presentation of life beyond the temporal in any ministry or mission context, *Mi'kmaw* and Acadian uniquenesses notwithstanding. And so in their historic tendering to both the Acadian and *Mi'kmaw* people an understanding of the hereafter, the concepts of purgatory, heaven, hell, and limbo were most certainly present, if not predominant. Rev. Challis Paroissien, quoting historic Jesuit writings in his book, *The Principles of the Jesuits* offers this picture of historic Jesuistry:

Besides the purgatory in which by faith we believe, there is another place like a flowery field of unclouded brightness, sweetly perfumed and very pleasant, where the spirits by which it is inhabited never suffer any pain of sense. This place will therefore be as very mild purgatory, like an honorable

state prison. If one were to inquire – if such a thing is even desirable to do – which was of greatest consequence, an interior faith or a desirable external circumstance, the literature concerning the Jesuits would appear to suggest – at least in what has been read to date – the devout Jesuit would select the interior life.²⁰² They had, after all, chosen chastity, poverty and obedience over external gratification, comfort and willfulness. What's more their dualism would show through in the fact they believed in a redeemed world to come which would in one of the various version of the life to come that exists in vernacular Catholic cosmology, see this one replaced. If the same question was put to the contemporary Acadian, they would be more inclined to acknowledge the life to come but affirm they were not yet ready to embrace it – they needed little more work and a lot more time! As with so many in conservative evangelical traditions, this world is understood to be transient and destined for destruction – only the human soul is subject to salvation and transformation. Heaven is their goal and they act like it – as long as entry is delayed as much as possible. (1860, 137)

Are these different understandings rooted in worldview or is it more basic than that? What's more, if there is a clear disparity, is it possible that this discrepancy might explain the abysmal outcomes in evangelism and discipleship of First Peoples which we have historically observed – and indeed continue to experience in the present?²⁰³ Are these differences tied, as has been posited by Hiebert et al. (1999), to differences in worldview, specifically concerning the holistic worldview of Native peoples as against the dualistic worldview of Western people? Is this rooted in different conceptions of the spiritual? These and many other questions lie at the root of the encounter between Jesuit and *Mi'kmaw* people and their religions.

²⁰² For the very contemporary Catholic, the whole range of Jesuit understanding is open to new interpretation as is attested to by the following electronic essay suggesting a liberalization of the Jesuit vows: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/267211/The-Vows-of-the-Jesuit-Order>.

²⁰³ This is a result, which according to the US Center for World Mission, stands as an abysmal reflection of the 400+ years of effort expended. That issue is the subject of this research.

Implications for Discussion

Incumbent on Jesuit spirituality – demonstration of the spiritual – is a prescribed and very specific set of behaviors. And, irrespective of the theological developments in the more contemporary setting, whether liberation theology or the various streams of the *nouvelle théologie*, behavior still lies at the core of what it means for one to be spiritual within their frameworks. Ostensibly it is the behavior that points to the spiritual that lies within. Hence, for the Jesuits and/or Acadian persons it would appear a particular behavior is required – either attending mass, demonstrating some other form of devotion or speaking in a specific way about holy matters that would otherwise be deemed religious in nature – in order to be spiritual.

For the *Mi'kmaq*, being spiritual neither requires nor implies a specific set of behaviors – though, as must be acknowledged, neither is it absent observable and specifically identifiable behavior. That is to say, one does not look at a particular set of behaviors of an individual *Mi'kmaq* and say, “There goes a spiritual person.” Instead, for the *Mi'kmaq* person, “the spiritual” is indeed ontological. That is, it is considered to be a part of the core and essence of one’s being – an essence that can neither be demonstrated or substantiated by particular acts, nor denied should a particular behavior not be visibly present. While behavior may serve to demonstrate some form of religious disposition, orientation, or commitment, stemming from that ontological reality of being, it is neither required nor substantive to demonstrating that one is spiritual. Several questions surface once again. First, from a biblical and theological perspective, is it possible for the two points of view concerning the ontology of the spiritual to occupy the same space at the same time as it were? In other words can the meaning of the spiritual and of spirituality

hold what appear to be two entirely different meanings in Catholic and *Mi'kmaw*, or *Mi'kmaw* Christian religious constructs concurrently? Second, what, if anything, does it mean for something or someone to be spiritual? Is there a quality of essence about being spiritual? Or is being spiritual a function of a particular type, quantity, and quality of behavior? Finally, have transformations that have taken place within Jesuit thinking found their way also into *Mi'kmaw* thought and vice versa? In Chapters 6 and 7 these questions and others will be explored further.

Chapter 5

Encounter and Change: Seventeenth- to Twentieth-Century *Mi'kmaq*

There is one thought however which is constantly occurred to us in the preparation of these letters, and which we cannot but suggest. Look over the world and read the history of the Jesuit missions. After one or two generations they have always come to naught. There is not a recorded instance of their permanency, or their spreading each generation wider and deeper, like our own missions in India. Thus it has been in China, Japan, South America, and our own land. For centuries the Jesuit foreign missionaries have been like those “beating the air.” And yet, greater devotion to the cause than theirs has never been seen since the Apostles’ days. Why then was this result? If “the blood of the martyrs be the seed of the church,” why is this the only instance in which it has not proved so? Must there not have been something wrong in the whole system – some grievous errors mingled with their teaching, which thus denied them a measure of success proportioned to their efforts. (Kip 1847, xiii–xiv)

This chapter will focus on what has changed for the *Mi'kmaw* people – did they embrace the Jesuit Christian faith as a cognitive and largely internalized experience with its concomitant understanding of the nature of the spiritual and of spirituality? Or did the *Mi'kmaq* simply embrace the Jesuits as messengers of an imposing and uncertain future – one which, if the *Mi'kmaw* were wise, they might be able to manage in a more controlled way? Or had the *Mi'kmaq* simply added this new thing to their already vastly experiential sense of the nature of the six worlds in which they found themselves – including their spirituality? Can we determine what was embraced, with any level of certainty, by analyzing contemporary *Mi'kmaw* behaviors and understandings? Can we ascertain, from observation of the literature and the stories and reactions of *Mi'kmaw* people, how they have been transformed by the encounter with respect to their understanding of the spiritual and of spirituality?

Furthermore, we will explore what the experience of Christianity, Church, faith, and Jesus has meant – the changes that have taken place in their understanding of the spiritual and of spirituality over the centuries since Jesus was first presented to the people of *Mi'kma'ki*. I will focus on several areas to narrow the discussion for the purposes of this thesis:

- a brief review of the historical setting
- a discussion of the socio-religious and spiritual allegiances affected by the religious interpositions of colonial encounter
- an examination of the religious and spiritual frameworks historic and extant within the *Mi'kmaq*
- an examination of the impact of language on spiritual practice and perspective
- cosmology and the sacred
- religion and gender

Introduction

Roddy Gould is a *Mi'kmaw* man in his mid-sixties who has lived, together with his wife Donna, in the community of Scotch Fort (one of three communities that make up Abegweit First Nation) on Prince Edward Island for the past thirty-plus years.²⁰⁴ He is

²⁰⁴ Scotch Fort is the site where, in 1629, Sir William Alexander built a fort that he and the number of settlers from Scotland occupied between 1629 and 1632 after receiving this marvelous “gift” of land from the King of England. The plaque commemorating the Fort reads, “Alexander planted his colony and built a new fort near the earlier French post. After three lean years the territory was restored to France, and the surviving settlers repatriated.”

Gi'gwesu – Muskrat. His face-wide smile and his generosity, not simply toward his extended family but to any with whom he crosses paths, is widely known. Although not acknowledged as much as he should be for his work in *Mi'kma'ki*, Roddy is an elder who has been active in the establishment of a number of initiatives within the community – particularly as they relate to residential school healing and restitution.

Originally from the Shubenacadie area, Roddy moved to Boston when he was young man. It was in Boston that Roddy, along with many other *Mi'kmaw* people, would try to make his way in the world – a life away from the memories of reserve and residential school. The time was difficult for Roddy in the Boston area, as it was for most *Mi'kmaw* men and women of his generation. He strove to earn a living in the local foundry as a laborer in hard, sweaty, and dangerous work. But to say that Roddy had a good sense of his identity as a *Mi'kmaw* man would have been false. Like many in his generation Roddy, had been educated in the residential school at Shubenacadie prior to moving to Boston. It was as if Boston was an escape from the realities of the reserve and from the pain caused by the residential school. As with many in this era, Roddy sought to address the pain through the use of alcohol. For years following their marriage, he and Donna both would drown their sorrows and dream of better times. Those times never seemed to come for them, always just out of their grasp, eluding them and taunting them.

One day Roddy was presented with an option for life – an option that would ultimately transform him in ways unimaginable. He was presented with the person of Jesus – not just any Jesus but the one who could turn his life around, instilling hope where hopelessness had prevailed. Receiving the gift of God's grace in Jesus, Roddy hurried home to share this news with his wife Donna. She would have none of it – at least

not at this point. It would take almost two more years – years when Roddy’s life began to change tremendously – before Donna would capitulate to God’s Spirit, acknowledging and receiving Jesus for her own healing. Raising their five children and several grand and great-grandchildren has occupied much of their time these past thirty-plus years since life changed for them.

When I met Roddy for the first time, it was through a phone call. He had heard about what I was doing in the Native world, and he wanted to know more. We have since become fast friends and, in the tradition of our ancestors, traveling companions in what, at least on occasion, is our semi-nomadic life together. Roddy’s experience of Christian faith is in the Nazarene tradition – where he still attends church regularly with Donna and several of their children and grandchildren. To say, however, that Roddy is Nazarene would be a misstatement. His expression of Christian faith has more to do with a *Mi’kmaq* experience of the person of Jesus than it does a commitment to Jesus through the doctrines and practices of particular tradition of the Church. And perhaps that is just the point. The Church – the Eurocentric institutional Church – is not what Roddy embraced. It is simply Jesus within the context and culture he lives as a *Mi’kmaq* person. Now, that may sound like hair-splitting, but it is perhaps precisely what most Native people have had to do in order to respond to the good news of Jesus: ignore – more to the point, dismiss – the Eurocentric Christian Church at some level since it has not and does not address what they understand to be the nature of the spiritual.

The Setting for the Encounter

By the early 1600s and the era of French Jesuit mission, Cabot's sighting of *Unamáki*²⁰⁵ in 1497 was old news. Assuming we discount contact with, as Thwaites (1896, 6) calls them, "Norse Vikings" in the 900s CE, *Mi'kmaw* continuous contact with European ways was well over a century old when the missionaries arrived. Basque, Norman, Breton, and Portuguese fishers had all made their way to the shores of *Mi'kma'ki* during the intervening 100-plus years but, it was not until the founding of the initially short-lived colony at Port Royal in 1605, in what is now Nova Scotia, that *Mi'kmaq* and French Jesuit contact would begin to have a lasting impact on their respective ways of life. Port Royal would go on to become the central habitation of the Acadian French colony, a focal point for *Mi'kmaq*/French relationship, and the "tennis ball" lobbed back and forth in the ongoing conflict between French and British colonial forces during the 1600s and early 1700s – now captured, now liberated, now captured.²⁰⁶ *Mi'kmaw* people would, as history has witnessed, become willing and unwilling, witting and unwitting allies of the French in their battle with the British – a battle that had been exported from Europe and other contexts of the world to *Mi'kma'ki*.

It was not until the French, seeking to establish a more permanent presence in what they began to describe as *La Nouvelle France*, secured the services of the secular priest Jesse Fléché that their two cultures were ultimately brought into contact, first into sharp relief and then into sharp contrast. Fléché's baptism of *Membertou* and his

²⁰⁵ *Unamaki* is the *Mi'kmaw* word that refers to that part of Canadian geography that has come to be known as Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

²⁰⁶ Port Royal was the second home and fort of Sir William Alexander during his brief stay in *Mi'kma'ki*.

extended family, though premature from the Catholic hierarchy's perspective, created for them the necessary foothold for French expansion into the land. And so it was that on June 24, 1610, *Kitche Sagamaw Membertou* – given the baptismal name Henri after the late king of France – was baptized along with twenty-one others²⁰⁷ of his immediate and extended family. *Membertou* was of such stature among the *Mi'kmaw* people that his conversion was thought to have created the initial inroad needed for French²⁰⁸ expansion into this part of North America. *Membertou* was described as a *Mi'kmaw* person who was “greatly dreaded” for he was an *autmoin* (medicine man), war leader, and *sagamaw* (Lescarbot 1610, Vol. 1, 26, 27, 87–97). The combination of all three of these gifts in a single person was all but unheard of and therefore of great consequence. That *Membertou*, possessing all these gifts of leadership, would be baptized – even if only to seal the commitment of friendship with the French – was therefore all the more astounding and consequential. In reflecting on the impact of colonialism and this watershed in the collective experience of the *Mi'kmaw* people, Daniel Paul simply describes *Membertou* as “the greatest Micmac [sic] chief in living memory” (1993, 7). And so he was – and so the event was.

²⁰⁷ Since the monument to this event is on the *Listuguj* reserve, I feel compelled to say that some oral traditions still being passed on place the number higher for this inaugural baptismal event among the *Mi'kmaw* peoples – as many as thirty-three extended family members and, of course, the 140 recorded by the Jesuit in total in the month(s) that followed. See Lescarbot (1612, Vol. 2, 56) and see also the University of Cape Breton's well-tended electronic archive <http://mrc.uccb.ns.ca/miscellany.html> (accessed January 2010).

²⁰⁸ See Daniel Paul's discussion of this (1993, 8, 9).

Changed Allegiances and Faith?

The baptism of *Membertou* created a pivotal moment for the growing *Mi'kmaq*/French relationship that would ultimately ensure it would prosper at the expense, at least initially, of all other European relationships. That unique friendship would endure for just over one hundred years before British incursions into *Mi'kma'ki* would place a significant stress on it.²⁰⁹ What about the nature of the relationship? What was there that characterized this relationship, as being of any greater significance than any other that would emerge in the increasingly challenging environment of European and First Nations contact? After all, it was clear early on that there were differences in perspective between *Mi'kmaq* and Europeans – be they French or any other. It is equally clear that it was crucial for both parties to find a mutually acceptable means of dealing with these dissimilarities in the ongoing relationship – for the French so as to advance their interests, for the *Mi'kmaq* so as to ensure their survival. How did this take place? What were the differences and the accommodations – and how did they impact the relationship in both positive and negative ways?²¹⁰

To begin with, the introduction of the *Mi'kmaw* people to French Jesuit Catholic Christian faith ushered in an era of significant social and political change for the *Mi'kmaq* – one not without controversies as to the nature of the impact even to the present day. The old alliances within the *Wa'bana'ki* Confederacy would now begin to experience an exterior pressure such as they had not felt before. It would be just over a century after the

²⁰⁹ For an excellent treatment of the pre-British era, see Dickason (1997, 177–198); for the post-British encounter, see Reid (1995).

²¹⁰ An interesting, albeit different, way of examining this point in contact can be found in Whitehead (1980). Whitehead explores the historical period in question in juxtaposition to historical written and oral traditions of the two peoples.

baptism of *Membertou*, beginning with the Massachusetts peace of 1725 and culminating with the Annapolis siege of 1744, that the Confederacy would fall to the divisiveness created among its member tribes by the British and French conflict, as did the Iroquois Confederacy to the south and southwest.²¹¹ After centuries of relatively peaceful commerce in the combined territories of the *Wa'bana'ki* peoples, land – understood in a way completely foreign to them – had become the wedge that colonial forces used to sever their relationships.

These age-old political alliances had been sundered by a situation where, for the first time in their collective experience, the land itself was at issue. No longer did Mother Earth – she who had been used of the Creator to place each of the peoples in their respective areas – provide the common means of relationship, mutual respect, and support. This challenge to relationship was not simply about the sharing of her gifts in a mutually beneficial way – where all were included so long as the bounty she was able to provide could bear them. Now it would be rooted in a concept of exclusionary use, not inclusivity,²¹² where security, not sufficiency was not the issue. What's more, this new concept of the land would no longer carry with it the notion that the land itself and all the creatures that inhabited it – including the *Mi'kmaq* and the other peoples of the Confederacy – were spiritual.²¹³ These newcomers would bring with them an entirely

²¹¹ I have previously noted the difference in perspective as to the nature of the Confederacy, both with respect to its origins and the occasion of its collapse. For further information on the Confederacy please see Paul (1993, 98 ff); also Prins (2002, 117–19, 126–39).

²¹² See for example the excellent discussion of this in Wicken (2002).

²¹³ In considering this issue, we must remind ourselves that it was less than a century earlier that Pope Paul III issued a papal bull – one in a long series from preceding papacies dealing with Indigenous peoples. This one, known as “*Sublimus Deus*” (see

foreign perspective of the creation in which the *Mi'kmaw* people had been birthed and in which they still found themselves. European cosmology was much more confined, less expansive, more static; their view of the creation more cognitive, circumscribed, and binding. How were *Mi'kmaw* people to cope with this new way of being in the land? Did their comprehension of the land and their place in it change, becoming the same as the newcomers'? Did the land become a commodity, losing its sense of being, its depth of spiritual reality?

As if in answer to these questions, *Mi'kmaw* people, all the while proudly celebrating the 400-year commemoration of *Membertou's* baptism, continued their centuries-old reframing of its significance – not as spiritual capitulation but as an effort to placate the French and, in the tradition of *Mi'kmaw* treaty making, forge an alliance of an ongoing nature that was sociopolitical as much or more than it was spiritual.²¹⁴ Biard makes clear, concerning *Mi'kmaw* conversions, that “they accepted baptism as a sort of sacred pledge of friendship and alliance with the French” (1612, Vol. 2, 30). Thwaites is more than convinced in his introduction to the Jesuit *Relations*, that Biard places the

Appendix “A”) proclaimed that Indigenous peoples were “truly men and that they are not only capable of understanding the Catholic faith but, according to our information, they desire exceedingly to receive it.” Unfortunately, what this essentially meant – and continued to mean to the colonial powers – was that the colonial powers were required to have the heathen baptized before mistreating and or executing them until April 22, 1639 when Pope Urban VIII issued another bull “strictly prohibiting slavery of any kind among the Indians of Paraguay, Brazil and the entire West Indies.” (It needs to be pointed out that these were “Christian” colonial authorities ostensibly under papal religious and Christian Catholic sovereign civil authority)

²¹⁴ For a more thorough discussion of treaty making, during this era and subsequently, from a *Mi'kmaw* perspective, see the excellent discussion by Paul in *We Were Not the Savages* (1993) – especially his excellent treatment of the transfer of treaty from the French to British at the Treaty of Utrecht and forward. Also see Wicken, *Mi'kmaq treaties on trial: history, land and Donald Marshall Junior* (2002).

correct interpretation on the event of baptism, noting that upon the return of the French to Port Royal in the spring of 1610, Jesse Fléché in hand, *Membertou* “expressed his faithfulness to the French by converting to Catholicism” (Thwaites 1896, Vol. 1, 23).

Confusion over just what had transpired during the act of baptism continued to be a problem in the early stages of Jesuit mission. It is not at all unlikely that the early meaning of baptism – that is to say as political cultural allegiance with the French – carried more weight than the idea of spiritual transformation conveyed by Catholic teachings. Biard observes,

I had them make the sign of the cross; but I was very much astonished, for the unbaptized understood almost as much about it as the Christians. I asked each one his baptismal name; some did not know theirs, so they called themselves *Patriarchs*, because it is the Patriarch who gives them their names, and thus they conclude that, when they have forgotten their own names, they ought to be called *Patriarchs*. It was also rather amusing that, when I asked them if they were Christians, they did not know what I meant; when I asked them if they had been baptized, they answered: *Hetaion enderquir Vortmandia Patriarché*, that is to say, “Yes, the Patriarch has made us like the Normans.” Now they call all the French “Normans.” (1611, Vol. 1, 43)

This interpretation is clearly upheld in the contemporary *Mi'kmaq* oral traditional context, as most people would suggest in some fashion or another:

The historical and cultural relevance of Catholicism derives from the early contact period when alliances between the *Mi'kmaq* and the church were established. For instance ... this alliance is actually a treaty that has been orally transmitted, and like all treaties it has to be honored.... We honor what has been passed on to us by our elders. (Robinson 2005, 49)

For the *Mi'kmaq* who celebrated the 400th anniversary, Henri *Membertou* was indeed a hero, a *Mi'kmaq* of renown. But that renown was quite likely for two different, some might say entirely separate, reasons – sociopolitical and spiritual. This was because *Membertou* was the first – whether in foresight or circumstance – to create the space

necessary for *Mi'kmaw* people to regenerate both numerically and spiritually; until the time when they could once again come into their own, spiritually and politically.²¹⁵ Bern Francis²¹⁶ of *Eskasoni* is one such person. In an interview in the early 2000s, he commented,

The missionaries told the Mi'kmaq that you must believe this [the Catholic] way otherwise you will be damned and you will go to hell.... You must believe in Jesus as being the absolute and only begotten son of God and you must believe that Jesus is the only way – that's more conditioning, and that's more based on fear than any reality in the mind of the M'kmaw person. In other words, because of that fear, they will ascribe to that kind of belief, at least on the surface. But really, a reality check will tell us that many of the elders, when you begin to speak with them in the Mi'kmaw language, you will say “Gee, I know they go to church, but just listen to them! Look at what they're saying!” They speak very differently than the way any Christian would speak.... I consider myself fortunate in that I was able to look at Native spirituality, specifically Mi'kmaw spirituality ... and I was able to speak with elders who spoke to me without being threatened and without being pressured and without having fear.... They have taught me so much over the years. (Francis in Robinson 2005, 36)

As if to confirm Francis's remarks, Prins observes that in the early days of mission, “some priests actually staged little theatrical dramas to frighten Indians into accepting the new faith – portraying the soul of an unbeliever undergoing horrible torments at the hands of demons” (2002, 72). Bern reflects the attitude that numerous *Mi'kmaw* people today would have: embracing Christian faith was simply a means to ensure *Mi'kmaw* survival. And, now that survival has been assured, *Mi'kmaw* people are

²¹⁵ The social, political, and spiritual renewal of the *Mi'kmaw* people can be clearly noted in the economic and social development activities reported on frequently on various sites on the Internet, a vehicle that has become a significant means of extending the “moccasin telegraph's” reach – not just for the *Mi'kmaq* but for other Indigenous people as well. See, for example, the only Native Canadian news feed, <http://www.nationtalk.ca>.

²¹⁶ Bern Francis, community member of *Eskasoni*, is not to be confused with Bernie Francis, the co-author of one of the work referenced herein.

once again in a place to express and live out their own spiritual and cosmological perspectives.

It is trite and extremely patronizing therefore, to suggest, as Dierville in Prins does:

Mi'kmaq [sic], in a time of great emotional affliction and cultural confusion, adopted some of the magic ceremonies of the newcomers. Catholic religious objects – rosaries, crucifixes and sacred–books were especially intriguing to them, as were ritual gestures. (Dierville in Prins 2002, 72)

This attitude continues the colonial mentality of wardship: that *Mi'kmaq* were like children needing to be entertained by bright things, incapable of complex reasoning or long-term projections, people whose decisions therefore, needed to be made for them. To suggest, for example, as Dierville (1933, 149-150) did, that “*Mi'kmaq* [sic] began making the sign of the cross and wearing wooden, brass, or even silver crucifixes around their necks; some said grace before eating,” as if the toys and trinkets were to amuse small minds, or that saying the grace was a form of childlike mimicry, is absurd²¹⁷ – though the grace may indeed have been a sincere, albeit experimental, attempt to learn this new way to speak their prayers. The narrow focus on cognition and the religious tasks associated with narrow Jesuit concepts of the spiritual made it impossible for the Jesuits to perceive that the *Mi'kmaq* were rehearsing a new piece of understanding so as to determine the place it held and the role it filled in a wider *Mi'kmaw* cosmology. Randy Woodley, in his discussion about the “large concept” of shalom, may offer us some

²¹⁷ I note for example the following: Thwaites comments, “The craftiest, most daring, and most intelligent of North American Indians,” (1896, Vol. 1, 9), “The intelligence and mobility of...,” (1896, Vol. 1, 22), “Such are the marks of intelligence of these people in these countries...,” and “For they claim praise because of their intelligence, and not without good reason. No one among them is stupid or sluggish, a fact which is evident in their inborn foresight in deliberation and their fluency in speaking” (1896, Vol. 1, 67).

assistance in wrestling with this Western tendency:

Western philosophy tends to require precise definitions and prior knowledge in order to fully discuss what is common to us all. When delving into such cosmological realms it may be easier to ask our questions in the same way a child would ask them, rather than to think “philosophy.” (2012, 1)

Woodley is not here affirming the “childlike” treatment described by Dierville and others but is suggesting instead that, rather than trying to have all of the varied notions of a complicated belief or behavior completely charted, the Native person would do what came more naturally – begin at the end of a complex task and work toward the beginning. This way one can assimilate a new teaching or behavior more effectively, making it one’s own more quickly. Though not a learning behavior as obviously needed in contemporary society, in historic *Mi’kmaq* life it would have positioned an astute learner for survival.²¹⁸

Another example of this misperception in behavior is found in the following observation by Biard: “But when once they have gotten their fill they go off, mocking the French and everybody else at a distance and secretly laughing at everything, even the religion which they have received” (1612, Vol. 2, 28). This is not the response of a childlike person any more that the same use of humor and jesting is among Native North Americans today. It is for *Mi’kmaq*, then and now, a means of engaging otherwise uncomfortable or challenging circumstance by placing the issue in the center and

²¹⁸ Ray Aldred, in a personal conversation at a recent conference (Stony Plain, AB, October 2011) described learning how to trap from an elder in precisely this way. The first step the novice learns is the last task to be done in setting the trap – not the first, and definitely not the theory. In this way, by the time all of the steps have been undertaken, the first step can be understood in relation to the desired outcome, and the theory is immediately rooted in praxis.

ourselves, together, outside. Unfortunately it was then, and in many quarters still is today, misinterpreted and therefore misunderstood.²¹⁹ More to the point in all of this, however, is the question of what was done in receiving baptism. If it was truly about faith, then the answer is clear.²²⁰ But if there is at the very least, mixed motive, then the answer is far more complex; faith may then have been as much about survival in the present and near future as it was about life eternal. If, as statements of faith are intended to do, baptism was a means of attesting that the *Mi'kmaq* were affirming everything they had been taught, “without spiritual or mental reservation,” it missed the mark. The more holistic understanding of baptism for the *Mi'kmaq*, including the connotation of sociopolitical allegiance, would have been applied, since *Kisu'lkw*²²¹ was wider than the narrow frame of Jesuit teaching. The same is true for many today.

Complicating the issue even further is the conception – still widely held – that a contemporary *Mi'kmaw* reading of history, looking back through the extant oral tradition and worldview, is simply naive historical revisionism, or a rationalization of history.

²¹⁹ Steve Julian, an *Ojibway* from Canada, recently blogged about Indian humor. While the blog purportedly seeks to describe and pin down the nature of Indian humor, in the end Steve Julian simply says, “*kawiin imaa* – You know it when it happens that’s fur shore.” <http://rightojibwe.blogspot.ca/2010/05/indian-humour-what-heck.html>.

²²⁰ And herein lies a problem. Inevitably, as the Jesuit motive was of a mixed nature, so will have been the motive and response among *Mi'kmaw* people – then and now. *Membertou* was not and is not praised highly by every contemporary *Mi'kmaw* person; some believe, in an ABW (anything but white) worldview, that he opened the doors to European advance through his religious conversion.

²²¹ *Kisu'lkw*, or one of its many variant spellings, was used as a translation for “God” in early translations of the Bible into the *Mi'kmaw* language, and indeed most *Mi'kmaq* today consider the Creator and the Christian God to be one and the same, probably as a consequence; alternately spelled *Kisúlkw*, *Kisu'lkw*, *Kisu'lk*, *Kisulk*, *Kesoolkw*, *Gisoolg*, *Kesoult*, *Keswolk* refers to the Creator. Creator is also known as *Kjikinap*, (or *Kji-Kinap*), *Kji-Niskam*, or simply *Niskam*, the Creator, or the Great Spirit, and reference either power or relationship as a Grandfather respectively. There has been a degree of interchangeability of terms over the years.

Revisionist though it may be called, however, deeply rooted in the psyche and oral tradition of the *Mi'kmaw* community is the notion of adaptation for the purpose of continued survival in a constantly changing creation order. Nothing could be more adaptive, to the *Mi'kmaw* mind, than a purposeful embrace of the religious perspectives of the “other” to allow for the survival of *L'nug* – the people. Asking a question of himself and the circumstance of his people’s survival would lead *Membertou* to a specific set of actions so as to engage the world around him. Yazzie-Burkart, in his powerful essay “What Coyote and Thales Can Teach Us,” expresses what could reasonably be construed to be an analysis of *Membertou*’s actions this way:

The questions we choose to ask are more important than any truths we might hope to discover and asking such questions, since how we act impacts the way the world is, the way in which a question will get answered. The way in which we ask questions (the way in which we act toward our relations) guides us, then, to the right answers, rather than the other way around wherein what is true directs the method of questioning and the question itself (i.e. we can ask any question we desire and in any way we desire and the answer will remain the same). (Yazzie-Burkart in Waters 2004, 16)

Perhaps, just perhaps, this is the *Mi'kmaw* version of Thomism. What if *Membertou* simply entered the argument of the French colonial people, including the Jesuit priests, and understanding it thoroughly, took it captive? Then, using those arguments, in the form of questions about his people’s circumstance, began to put forward an alternative truth in the form of *Mi'kmaw* spiritual and religious perspective, embraced within a uniquely *Mi'kmaw* Catholic Christianity?

As if offering the same perspective in a contemporary setting, at the last of a recent series of workshops I delivered together with long-time Cree friend, Kenny Blacksmith, he remarked to our Native students,

First Nations people have been told to try and solve the problems of their lives by the same methods that were used by others to create them. Our hope is that by asking the right question – an appreciative inquiry question – instead of looking for where things have gone wrong, we will begin to see where, in fact, it has been right – we are still here. Having done that we will be able to plan for a future based on our previous success.²²²

Yazzie-Burkhart further elucidates this way of Native North American people's being and acting in the world in this observation:

We participate in the meaning making of the world. There is no world, no truth, without meaning and value, in meaning and value arise in the intersection between us and all that is around us. How we behave, then, in a certain sense shapes meaning, gives shape to the world in this way, what we do, how we act, is as important as any truths and any fact. We can think of this as the meaning shaping principle of action. (Yazzie-Burkhart in Waters 2002, 17)

Furthermore, not only is this way of being deeply entrenched in the people, it is in the bones of the land itself. It would appear then that, often to their immediate detriment, as they looked toward the long-term survival of their peoples, this is exactly what *Mi'kmaw* people did.²²³ Listen again to the words of Bern Francis.

The church is negligent in this regard. It teaches about the sinfulness of persons and how we are insignificant and too human. We are not taught respect of the self, but that we are sinful creatures. Also, that we are masters of the earth, that all living creatures are beneath us. This is wrong! We should teach respect for all living things, ourselves, others and all other living matter on the planet. The church is much more concerned with souls than the welfare of the *Mi'kmaw* people. We were granted souls in 1610, before that we didn't have any. The *Mi'kmaw* people have been in

²²² Taken from a personal communication with Kenny Blacksmith at the ROQ youth symposium, February 25, 2012 at the National Art Centre, Ottawa ON.

²²³ Daniel Paul suggests not so much an alternative but a complementary reading of the events leading up to and including *Membertou's* baptism. He notes, "Nevertheless many people remark on the seeming ease with which the Micmac [sic] and other tribes adopted Christianity. The explanation is simply the 'civility' of the People. They believed that a host should make every effort to please a guest. If this required them to worship the great spirit in another manner, then so be it. After all, they reasoned, if the same God is worshiped by all men, the mode of worship is incidental" (1993, 9).

servitude to the church ever since. Many *Mi'kmaw* people do not go to church out of love and respect for God, but out of fear. Fear is not a solid spiritual base (Robinson 2005, 36).

Francis goes on to talk of the reconstruction of *Mi'kmaw* identity that has been taking place over the years since the *Mi'kmaw* voice has finally begun to be heard. It is a reconstruction predicated on the spiritual understandings of the *Mi'kmaw* people – an understanding that has continued to be handed down generation to generation since those days following the baptism of *Membertou* and his extended family in 1610. Jennifer Reid makes this very point when she suggests that as their numbers continued to decline – a consequence of contact – the *Mi'kmaq* sought “to initiate new modes of being within the context of colonialism,” and they did so not once but continually, “through renewed contact with their traditional spirituality” (1995, 21). In so doing, they would find a way to preserve the past even as they embraced the present through this clearly *Mi'kmaw* “means of reconstructing identity.” Reid adds an exclamation mark in noting, “*Gluskap's* people were firmly *Mi'kmaq*, but this did not preclude the historical reality of becoming also New World people” (1995, 88).²²⁴

Given all of the forgoing, however, essentializing the *Mi'kmaq*, religiously or spiritually speaking, would be a mistake. Theirs was and is a multifarious culture and context with wide variation in life-way understandings in most things – spiritual and religious things not least of all. Their embrace of the faith was, after all, not strictly cognitive and affective in nature. It was far more holistic than that. This would be

²²⁴ See Reid's discussion (1995, 80–90). While I believe Reid is assigning a greater shift to contemporary *Mi'kmaw* behavior than the observations warrant, it is clear that she is describing the accommodation factor; she portrays this as being very different than assimilation. The former is directed by the *Mi'kmaq*, the latter the effort of the colonialists.

especially true, whether past or present, with respect to affiliations with the Christian Church – both its historic influence and present acceptability within *Mi'kmaw* culture. As Angela Robinson describes, the largest contemporary community in the *Mi'kmaw* district of *Unama'ki* carries a mixed religious heritage:

Eskasoni residents are predominantly Christian with approximately 95% claiming affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church. But “affiliation” does not necessarily imply that the relationship with the Church is a close one. Of those who are baptized into Catholicism, many are nominally Catholic and participate in church activities, such as funerals and christenings, often only perfunctorily. The remaining 5% of the population are either *Traditionalists*, of which there are about 100, or practitioners of the Baha'i faith, which claims a membership of 30 to 40 people. For the *Mi'kmaq*, the term *Traditionalist* is laden with meaning. While for the most part it refers to someone who subscribes exclusively to a non-Christian, Aboriginal religion, such a definition is misleading. (Robinson 2005, 4, 5, emphases in the original)

Robinson goes on to say, however, “These simple statistics obscure the distinctiveness and creativity of *Mi'kmaw* beliefs and expressions” (2005, 5). Her clear concern is the degree to which Christianity – specifically, but not only, Catholicism – has influenced traditional beliefs and worldview, has been vastly overstated. Frideres (2001, 88–89), picking up this discussion, notes that the degree to which Christianity predominates Aboriginal religious affiliations, as found in the various statistical analyses offered in official government documents in Canada, must be questioned. This must be done, if only because the enumerating of Christian experience as a practice is an extension of the colonial process, marking such people as, to some degree, assimilated. We would hasten to add that anything defined strictly in terms of creedal statements, liturgies, and prescribed behavior that did not allow for or encourage liberty in praxis would be difficult for *Mi'kmaw* people to embrace fully, because they valued social consensus, not

social constraint, as a means of maintaining harmony.

Very much connecting to the Chapter 2 discussion of the interactivity of the realms of life that characterized the *Mi'kmaw* language, Robinson suggests,

Generally speaking, the *Mi'kmaw* people do not think of spirituality as an abstract entity. Spirituality is not something that one *has*. Rather, it is something that one *does* every day. Accordingly, *Mi'kmaw* spirituality must be embodied in real people and real contexts. Because spirituality is perceived to be evident and expressed in everyday life, spirituality and culture are often inextricably intertwined for the *Mi'kmaq*. As a result, *Mi'kmaw* religion cannot be confined within the dogma and ritual of the Catholic Church, but must be understood in more comprehensive terms and must be recognized as playing a role in all aspects of *Mi'kmaw* social life. (2005, 5)

So then, the question to be asked is whether or not the *Mi'kmaw* people actually embraced French Catholic Christian faith – a faith very much rooted in introspection and cognition – as presented to them by the Jesuits. Or did they simply embrace social forms that would placate these newcomers so as to ensure their survival until such a time as they had regained their strength and could once again elevate their own understandings of the creation and the Creator – of the spiritual – to the place that they had once held?

Changed Religious Frameworks

Since it is generally acknowledged that the Catholic faith has been central to *Mi'kmaw* religious life since the early seventeenth century, it would not be a surprise to find that *Mi'kmaw* Catholic practice is deeply intertwined with the sociopolitical life of the people. Until the mid-1940s in fact, it was not uncommon for the members of the *Sante' Mawio'mi* (the Grand Council) of the *Mi'kmaq*, particularly the *Kji-saqamaw* or the *Keptins*, to preside over religious services on a regular basis when priests were not

available. The people, therefore, became used to conducting their religious affairs as Catholics in their own way and resented any intrusions that called their understanding of the faith and its practice into question.²²⁵ To some extent *Mi'kmaw* Catholic practice was a blend of the “translation model” of contextual theology with an “anthropological model”²²⁶ – where allegiance to the Catholic Church is reflected in an effort to translate the concepts of Catholicism into the local *Mi'kmaw* cultural context, and the passionate focus on cultural preservation is reflected in what Robinson describes as “a Catholicism that is distinctive from mainstream Catholic practice” (2005, 57).

So deeply ingrained in *Mi'kmaw* culture was the Catholic faith by the time the British had defeated the French that every effort the British made to convert them to Protestantism through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was met with failure.²²⁷ Whitehead records that at the 1761 re-signing of the *Mi'kmaw* treaty²²⁸ in Nova Scotia with Governor Jonathan Belcher, of grave concern to the *Mi'kmaw* signatories was “the free Exercise of the Religion in which [we] have been instructed from [our] Cradle” (Whitehead 1991, 159). In fact, Whitehead (1991, 192) goes on to report that *Mi'kmaw* dedication to the faith was so strong that when it was reported that a *saqamaw* had

²²⁵ In effect, the elder was letting the priest know that the Micmac [sic] claim ownership of their religion and that interference from any outsider, even a priest, is an unwelcome intrusion. (Robinson 2005, 60)

²²⁶ See Bevans (2002, 140) for his detailed descriptions of the various methods of contextual theology and practice.

²²⁷ Hornborg (2008, 59) suggests that the *Mi'kmaq*, “by allying themselves closer with Catholicism, could at least win a ‘freedom of the soul’ and resist the British attempts to Anglicanize them.” This was an effort that fully and utterly failed, but in the face of the failure, the British, in 1820, created the reserves upon which the *Mi'kmaq* continue to reside.

²²⁸ The treaty, originally signed with the French and based on earlier oral treaties with them, was transferred to British relationship following the conclusion of hostilities (at least temporarily) between the two European powers.

converted to Methodism, the members of his community threatened his life until he publicly denounced the Protestant faith as “worthless,” convincing his accusers that he was still a loyal Catholic. This must not be seen as a strictly religious response with the *Mi'kmaq* now enjoined in the continuation of the hostilities of the counter-reformation.²²⁹ Instead, in light of our previous discussion, this must be seen as an effort to ensure a member of *Mi'kmaw* society did not abrogate the treaty with the French,²³⁰ to whom they still felt a strong allegiance.

In the matter of religious understanding and behavior, *Mi'kmaw* cosmology once again comes to the fore, creating at least the framework, if not the actual behaviors, of *Mi'kmaw* thinking and response. There is a simple cosmological framework, one which is often derided by the trained Western theologian as too simplistic. Yet philosophical economies are found in it that have merit in today's world. For example, if, within the contemporary Euro-Canadian or Euro-American society – those distinctly rooted in European heritage – one wanted to engage in a conversation about “spiritual” matters, one would often have to begin with an effort to convince one's conversation partner of the existence of “God.” This would not be necessary with a contemporary *Mi'kmaw* person any more than it was for their ancestors. As Reid correctly notes, albeit in the context of *Mi'kma'ki* following British occupation,

²²⁹ This was so much a part of *Mi'kmaw* society that my own birth was marked by the usual christening, which in our community required the baptismal name Joseph for all males and Mary for all females. So deeply rooted was the allegiance to the French through the Catholic Church that to do otherwise would be to live in abrogation of the covenant of treaty.

²³⁰ Though by now, *Mi'kmaw* treaties had largely been transferred to the British as a consequence of the French defeat in the region, *Mi'kmaw* people still clung to their allegiance with the French through their religious loyalty. For a further discussion of this, see Reid (1995, 109–115).

The *Mi'kmaq* knew that the world of the British was not all there was. They also knew that while there might well be power in coercion and violence, there was another form of power in knowing that humans do not create themselves nor the world about them.

In ascribing names to everything, Gluskap had conferred upon the creation inhabited by the *Mi'kmaq* a structure of meaning not governed by the human agents within the world. To name something is to control its significance and since, for the *Mi'kmaq*, this power was located in the primordium, human beings who sought to exercise this sort of prerogative in Acadia were deluded in their sense of self-importance. (1995, 89)

Mi'kmaw humility within creation was clear, then and now, for the Creator's existence is a given in any of life's equations – one not argued about or philosophized over.²³¹

Mi'kmaw cosmology is balanced on a couple of simple premises that continue to be in evidence today and that are central to the religious framework of the *Mi'kmaw* people. First is the clear assumption that we – human beings – have been created, since our pre-existence is denied by experience and the collective myth. Second is the simple tautology that says, you cannot be a son or daughter unless you have a father, and you cannot be a father unless you have a son or daughter. In other words, there is a distinctive symbiosis in evidence between the creation and its Creator. Making the equation more complex than this, as the Jesuits seemed predisposed to do, seemed pointless to the *Mi'kmaq* and, the preceding discussion on humor aside, was a point on which they may indeed have laughed at, not with, the Jesuits.

Commenting upon this simple idea, Robinson notes, “This perspective implies [for the *Mi'kmaq*] that there is no Creator without creation, and there is no creation without a Creator” (2005, 36). In this conception, the spiritual – and therefore the

²³¹ Consider the discussion by Maureen Smith in “Crippling the Spirit, Wounding the Soul: Native American Spiritual and Religious Suppression” in *American Indian Thought*, ed. Anne Waters (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2004) 116–129.

contemporary notion of spirituality – has a distinctly ontological ring to it. Eva, a *Mi'kmaw* woman from *Eskasoni*, observes, “Spirituality is how you live your life and religion is just one way of making contact [with] or praying to the Creator.” She goes on to note, “You can be spiritual without being religious.” Now, contrast this with the theological arguments of Christianity, wrestling with the relationship between the transcendent Father God who is separate from His creation (perhaps both relationally and ontologically) and the immanent Redeemer God in Jesus, who became His own creation!²³² Herein lies at least some of the cause of tension between *Mi'kmaq* and Jesuit cosmology, which, in addition to being discussed immediately below, will also be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Language and Spirituality

We once again owe a great deal to Angela Robinson and Bern Francis, who set the stage for our discussion of any changes in evidence in *Mi'kmaw* cosmology and their

²³² The discussions that have raged from the earliest days of the Christian faith about the nature of Jesus, the “God-man,” have centered on Eutychianism (the “mixing together” of the two natures), monophysitism (the single, combined nature of Jesus as neither God nor man but a hybridization), and what is known as the hypostatic union (two separate natures in one flesh). The latter has held greatest influence for the longest period.

Since Jesus in John 14:9 suggested that “Anyone who has seen me has seen the father,” I prefer to place both feet firmly in mid-air and suggest this is a moot discussion – either He became His creation, or he did not, regardless of the theological and philosophical jargon we use to try and make the concept humanly appropriate. I have not “seen” Jesus with my physical eye as this passage clearly suggests, and yet I have seen the Father through His works and activities in the creation that God (the Father, the Son, the Spirit?) became part of as Jesus. The first option – he became his creation – provides for our redemption; the latter – he did not – ensures that we do not have it.

experience of the Church through their discussion of *Mi'kamooage*,²³³ the *Mi'kmaw* language.

Bern's description of the way the Micmac language operates suggests a way of looking at the world that is conceptually different from the teachings espoused and disseminated by the Catholic Church. Catholic cosmology and philosophy promote exclusivist claims of Roman Catholicism as the authority on all things. Can the adaptable and inclusive beliefs and values linked with the *Mi'kmaw* language be reconciled with the more inflexible and exclusionary principles of Catholicism. (Robinson 2005, 37)

This is not simply semantics – or perhaps it actually is. It is about the way in which *Mi'kamooage* shapes one's perspectives. Inclusivity, as we have already seen, is central to the construction of this verb-based language, a tongue structured around the active relationship between two or more things, two or more beings – and not about the way in which they thought about one another or the hierarchy of their relationship. There is no such thing as a stand-alone, self-referential being or object. Only the uncreated Creator per the Christian scriptures can make the claim to an identity that is singularly self-referential – “I AM.” Yet even here, in *Mi'kmaw* thinking, the Creator and the creation express a level of interdependence that would make Christian theology wince.²³⁴ In *Mi'kmaw* thought, all of the rest of creation must reference “itself” to some other being or beings in order to identify itself. This is done through an active, not passive, description of his or her relationship with those other beings. This is such an integral part of *Mi'kmaw* cosmology that it cannot be overstated. A brief overview of the language is warranted to help us understand the *Mi'kmaw* context.

²³³ The *Mi'kmaw* language, *Mi'kamooage*, is an *Algonkin (Algonquian)* root language in the same family as *Cree*, *Ojibwe*, *Pottawotomie*, and a number of others of the eastern and central woodlands of North America.

²³⁴ Note the conversations with the five interviewees in Robinson (2005).

Mi'kamoogee is a rich language that Baptist missionary Silas Rand, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century would describe as “mellifluous.” Based around the verb and the interaction of the elements of creation, including humans and all else, it is a language of action and interaction that is quite complex. It is curious then, that Biard would offer such a harsh and critical reflection on *Mi'kamoogee* and the capacity of both the people and the language to convey and sustain reason:

Now all this talk about the difficulty of the language will not only serve to show how laborious is our task in learning it, but also still make our Europeans appreciate their own blessings ... for it is certain that these miserable people, continually weakened by hardships ... will always remain in a perpetual infancy as to language and reason. I say language and reason, because it is evident that there words, the messengers and dispensers of thought and speech, remain totally rude, poor and confused, it is impossible that the mind and reason be greatly refined, rich, and disciplined. (1612, Vol. 2, 8)

Contrast this with Silas Rand’s description of the language a few centuries later. After having spent most of his life documenting both the language and culture, he observes, “The Micmac [sic] ... is remarkable for its copiousness, its regularity of Declension and Conjunction, its expressiveness, its simplicity of vocables, and its mellifluousness” (1888, iv). Rand further remarks, “Even the numerals are verbs, and any noun can assume the form and nature of a verb²³⁵ without any difficulty;” and again “Cotton Mather said they looked as though they had been growing ever since the confusion of Babel, – a remark which contains as much philosophical truth as it does wit” (1888, xxxvii). As if overhearing Rand, in his reflection on the writings of the Jesuit encounter with Native

²³⁵ Much as I would like to have Rand be fully the hero here, his comment about the noun becoming the verb at any point is, in fact, stated in reverse; it is actually the verb that serves as a noun when required. Everything is about action in relationship. For a fuller discussion of this, see Campeau’s very short but thorough explanation (2000, 114–124).

North Americans, William Kip remarks about the challenge of the “Indian” language:

It cannot be denied that the language of the Indians has its real beauties, and a certain indescribable energy in the turn and manner of expression. I will give you an example of this. If I should ask *you*, why God has created you? You would answer me, That I might know him, love him, and serve him, and by this means procure eternal glory. Which I put the same question to an Indian, he would answer in this way, according to their manner of expression: Thus thought the Great Spirit concerning us; Let them know me, let them honor me, let them love me, and obey me; and then I may cause them to enter into my wonderful felicity. If I wish to say in their style, that you will find difficulty in learning the Indian language, see how it will be necessary for me to express myself: I think of my dear brother, that he will find difficulty in learning the Indian language. (1847, 28)

Let the final comment on this be left with Rand. Fluent in twelve languages, including both biblical and modern Greek, Hebrew, Latin and all of the romance languages, Rand would comment that after an entire life of study of the *Mi'kmaw* language, “Micmac will bear comparison with any of the most learned and polished languages of the world” (1888, xivi). Biard’s comments then, in the face of a more reasoned consideration, while they may be intriguing, appear as an absurd mix of arrogance and Jesuit intellectual pride, gestated in a deep European ethnocentrism.

Is this simply a reflection of the difference in the construction of language between French, English, and other European languages, and Huron, *Mi'kmaq* and other Native North American ones? Or is this a reflection of the difference in worldview²³⁶ between the two sets of cultures, whereby the Native North American language is describing a more inclusive worldview – a more complex worldview – that seeks to express a spiritual perspective of the relationship that exists between all manner of things

²³⁶ V.F. Cordova, Native American philosopher, makes clear that “to pretend that one can interpret a particular idea from an alien context without understanding that context is to engage in misinterpretation, i.e. to make such ideas ‘plausible’ only to those who think like ourselves” (Waters 2004, 28).

versus an introspective of the way things are with respect to the person in the world? As noted in Chapter 1, there is indeed a significant interrelationship between the structure of the language and the worldview it describes, or, according to the ideas of linguists such as Sapir and Whorf, the worldview it “creates.”

The *Mi'kmaw* language, different from noun-based European languages, is not unlike the Hebrew language, focusing more on the action and interaction of the various aspects of creation – including the Creator – than it does on the simple existence of the creatures or persons of that creation – particularly human beings. And, while the *Mi'kmaw* language is, as with all languages, in a constant state of adaptation to new circumstances, there is still a significant degree to which the language and the people who have been shaped by that language, view the world significantly differently. As Robinson has noted in her work with the *Eskasoni* community, “Because it is verb-based the *Mi'kmaw* language exhibits a flexibility that can readily accommodate change and thereby reflects the *Mi'kmaw* understanding that the universe is active and ever-changing. Such notions of fluidity and adaptability are also evident in the *Mi'kmaw* spirituality and culture” (2005, 45). In this respect, it is very much like biblical Hebrew.²³⁷

For a more contemporary example than Rand, let's take Wallis and Wallis's (1955, 142) interpretation of the *Mi'kmaw* expression for the sun. As the *Mi'kmaq* understood the phrasing, even in the twentieth century, the sun, *Kisu'lkw*,²³⁸ was the

²³⁷ This is true of both biblical and contemporary Hebrew, though the implications in terms of socialization and worldview may not be entirely diachronic. See also John Huehnergard and Jo Ann Hackett “The Hebrew and Aramaic languages,” In *The Biblical World*, Volume 2, ed. John Barton, 19 (London; New York: Routledge, 2002).

²³⁸ Throughout this work we have talked of *Niskam* (alternately *Nisgam*) and *Kisu'lkw* (alternately *Kesoult*). In one set of community interpretations with which I have

“giver of life.” Assigning a European noun-focused relational value to the term, Wallis and Wallis create an immediate problem: “This must be a relationship of worship,” they conclude, personifying the sun in the way an English speaker might be prone to do, versus acknowledging its activity with respect to the rest of creation as “life-giving” (1955, 142–46). This is also precisely what Prins does with his analysis of the Jesuit and other missionary literature of early contact when he states,

When *Mi'kmaq* shamanic tradition blended with French Catholicism, the sun was thought of as the Father in Heaven, and Grandmother Moon had become associated with the Virgin Mary. Later in time some began to equate the culture hero Klu'skap with the Messiah, the Christian redeemer. In other cases, Klu'skap became associated with the biblical patriarch Noah who built the ark to survive the flood, sending out a white dove that returned him colored black, as a Raven. (2002, 83)

But, if we examine this a little closer, whereas Wallis and Wallis and Prins use the English language framework and its interpretive system – its noun-based system – as their means of analysis, the *Mi'kmaq* obviously did not.²³⁹ Instead, as per Robinson's discussion (2005, 34–44), they assigned the term, in their verb-based system, to a framework of activity and relationship per, “We exist because the sun has provided heat and light, which is needed for life, therefore it is, in terms of its action with respect to us, the giver of that life.”

It is clear in the context of this understanding that the *Mi'kmaq* spoke not of worship

been raised, *Kisu'lkw* has meant “giver of life” and/or the sun in the sky; *Nisgam* has been used to refer to “God.” Others have reversed these two.

²³⁹ In so doing, Wallis and Wallis (1955) create the inevitable construction: animism and idolatry. Because the European, noun-based languages have both created and defined the categories and terminology, they are the arbiters of what behavioral constructs fit within those categories and are defined by that terminology. In this case it is impossible for the Micmac [sic] to have behaved in such a way as to ensure they were understood – the behavior would have immediately been assigned a label and a category by the observer from the European context, making it impossible to change either the context for the interpretation of the behavior as interpreted within that context. See Cordova's discussion in Waters (2004, 28).

as defined within the European system of relationships – a sovereign to a subordinate – but of connectedness through related activity. To evaluate this in light of European values expressed in language then was, to use a common analogy, speaking of the difference between apples and oranges. This provides us with an entirely different frame of reference within which to understand the relationship between aspects of creation and its Creator – one that describes relationship in terms of interactivity and engagement versus a listing of hierarchical associations with the Creator at the “top” and all else below as an intensely Greco-Roman Christianity had come to define. For the *Mi'kmaq*, the Creator was far more immanent and active than it would appear the Christians believed “Him”²⁴⁰ to be. Let’s now examine what that might have meant within the Cosmology and Religion of the *Mi'kmaq*.

Cosmology, Sacredness, and Religion

It is clear from the early contact period to the present day that “*Mi'kmaw* perceptions of the cosmological order influenced the diverse ways in which the sacred is understood and venerated on both personal and collective levels” (Robinson 2005, 45). What’s more, according to Robinson, “The *Mi'kmaw* metaphysical sense of place, which informs locality, also holds significant philosophical and teleological orientations that impact on existing *Mi'kmaw* culture” today (2005:46). This means that for the majority of *Mi'kmaw* people today, irrespective of their particular formal religious orientation, the idea of “life force,” the pervasive spiritual reality of the creation, is a commonly

²⁴⁰ Given that *Mi'kamoogae* is non-gendered, where the Creator or God is being referred to by a pronoun, I will describe God using the masculine pronoun in quotation marks to indicate that scripture is clear that God is neither male nor female but possesses both qualities of gender.

understood and commonly held belief. It is this “spiritual essence,” if you will, that animates each aspect of creation, whether human, animal, bird, fish, tree, plant, or rock. What’s more, it is this “spiritual essence” that provides each aspect of creation with its unique character and useful purpose in the overall order of things. This is not a monist statement of the spiritual! Neither is it the “Lucasian Force.” Rather, this appears to be one of those tautological statements of *Mi’kmaw* cosmology: if the Creator is Himself a spirit then that which the Creator makes must also be *possessed* of a spirit.

Also central to *Mi’kmaw* cosmology – past and present – is the notion of the interrelatedness, flexibility, and fluidity of all things. Cosmic hierarchy of the sort espoused in many Christian teachings, which places human beings on the top of the created order under God, does not wash well with most, though not all, *Mi’kmaw* people today. According to Robinson’s more contemporary religious ethnography, this appears to be true whether said *Mi’kmaq* are Traditionalists, Catholic Traditionalists, Catholics who do not participate in their cultural traditions to any extent, or Protestant Christians. Jonal, a *Mi’kmaw* man, offers such a perspective.²⁴¹

I don’t buy into the way in which the hierarchy of God-man-nature is divided up. I’ve done a lot of thinking about this and when you think about such things there is a logic that defies Church teachings. First, there is water – our life-blood – then plants and animals.... Everything on the planet needs water, and animals need plants and water, but man needs animals, plants and water. The last three can exist without man, but men can’t exist without those three things. This should tell us something, how dependent we are and where we really are in the order of things. (Robinson 2005, 41)

²⁴¹ It seems that the references Jonal makes are an effort to expand the six worlds view as described earlier in this project – post-contact, some people have attempted to add the “world of the person,” which, according to some writers, clearly moves to an “us/them” orientation, borrowing something from a more dichotomous worldview and is, perhaps, a holdover of earlier contact with the internalization that became so prominent in Jesuit taught catholicity.

While, for the Western-oriented Christian, a modest biblical exegesis could poke several large holes in this part of Jonal's cosmology (from a strictly Western Christian vantage point), it nonetheless reflects the underlying principle of interconnectivity that continues to the present as a central tenet in *Mi'kmaw* cosmology very much in contrast with the dominant Catholic view – even of contemporary Jesuits.²⁴² Jonal's words also stand in stark contrast to the struggling element of Christian theology today that has come to be associated with a revived interest in creation, the Creation Care discussion. Jonal speaks non-anthropocentrically – something the Creation Care discussion has yet to learn.

Fluidity in *Mi'kmaw* cosmology speaks to the lived notion that parts of creation have the capacity – sometimes inherent within themselves, other times by direction of the Creator – to transform or change from one form, shape, or being into another. The creation narrative of the *Mi'kmaw* people²⁴³ is replete with references to such behavior, not only of the central figure of the story, *Kluskap*, but also of *Netaoansom* and *Nogami*, secondary figures of the seven-day *Mi'kmaw* narrative. This idea of shape-shifting is resident within the overall religious construct in which the *Bouin* and *Ginap* spiritual people of *Mi'kmaw* traditional religious life find a measure of their spiritual power, and it is one aspect of that life that causes it to be mistaken for shamanism.

²⁴² While contemporary Jesuit theology, even the mystical, tends to be more embracing of *Mi'kmaw* beliefs, in itself the theology still creates a separation between the various actors in creation since it is framed with a dualist philosophy. See for example the writings of Bernard Lonergan and Karl Rahner – particularly Rahner.

²⁴³ Contrary to Wallis and Wallis's (1955, 143) assertions that there was no articulate *Mi'kmaw* cosmology of origins, apart from the "worship" of the sun and moon, a narrative of creation exists that predates contact and that identifies the relationship of the Creator with the activity among its various actors with similar detail to the Genesis narrative.

Flexibility, or adaptability, on the other hand, refers to two things that go hand-in-glove. First is the capacity for someone or something to shift its outer appearance or even function while retaining its essential quality and identity. This can be seen in the capability of *Mi'kmaw* people to appear to change their frame of mind toward an aspect of life such as living at a stable residence, complete with outward habits and mannerisms,²⁴⁴ while concurrently holding to the belief that being tied down like that is not the *Mi'kmaw* way. Thus, they hold in a kind of competing tension the ideal scenario – some might say the naive representation of that scenario – and the known and expected or desired scenario.²⁴⁵ Mainstream Canadians perceive this kind of behavior to be a falsity. “They are lying and/or telling tales, being inconsistent with what they say and what they do,” they observe. In reality, however, for the *Mi'kmaq*, this is a mechanism for coping with change that has been in evidence since the early days of contact at least, if not before, and has become a value of life for them as a people.

Very much at the center of this concept of flexibility or adaptability, though, is its cultural preservationist capacity. This exists in two parts. First, in the mind of the *Mi'kmaw* person or community is held the historic and/or traditional ideal – a picture of what it could and should look like to engage a specific behavior or belief – an image that

²⁴⁴ Take note of the change from a semi-nomadic to more sedentary lifestyle on the surface – static residential addresses, stable homes and locations while simply changing or adapting traveling behavior to the new circumstances – hence, blueberry picking in Maine and the movement of peoples between reserve communities and the contemporary urban-reserve shuttle as I refer to it.

²⁴⁵ This may be a point of similarity between the Jesuits and the *Mi'kmaw* people. For, as Paroissien points out in *Principles of the Jesuits*, “Naaman the Syrian did not dissemble his faith when he bowed the knee with the king in the house of Rimmon: neither do the fathers of the Society of Jesus dissemble, when they adopt the Institute in the habit of the *Talapoins* of Siam” (1860, 163). The external appearance, for purposes of acceptance in a given situation, does not imply interior disingenuousness.

is connected to the traditions and values of the past. This ensures that when the stories of the ancestors and their ways are told and retold, they have a greater measure of consistency and, of concern to mainstream society, accuracy. The second part lies with the *Mi'kmaw* ability to absorb a significant degree of change without loss of cultural integrity – the ideal image is held securely, resident with both individual and community and so a temporary departure or, a permanent adoption of a different way, is acceptable.²⁴⁶

Gender and Religion

Another significant impact of the French and *Mi'kmaw* encounter can be seen in gender understanding and gender relationship. Prior to contact and, in the early days of the newly forged relationship with the French, women's roles, contrary to the perception of many people writing from the more contemporary vantage point, were revered and held in high honor.²⁴⁷ This is why women were as free to choose their own mates, as were men. In his reflection on this practice for example, Le Clercq notes,

For they do not wish, say these barbarians, to force the inclinations of their children in the matter of marriage, or to induce them, whether by use of force, obedience, or affection, to marry men whom they cannot bring

²⁴⁶ While this might appear to reflect a platonic or neo-platonic view of the cosmos – a reflection of the contrast between the ideal heavenly state and that which is found in the mortal world – even a cursory examination of the entirety of *Mi'kmaw* cosmology makes clear that this is not the case. Instead, as opposed to an escape from the “less than ideal” to the “ideal” as a spiritual exercise of transcendence, this is an entirely adaptive response to the circumstance in which the *Mi'kmaw* person finds him or herself, which ensures the survivability not only of the individual but more importantly, the people.

²⁴⁷ See, for example, the discussion on the contemporary and traditional roles of women, contrasted with European cultures, by Ian Hingley in Marie Battiste's, *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (Hingley 2000, 108,109).

themselves to like. Hence it is that the fathers and mothers of our Gaspeians leave to their children the entire liberty of choosing the persons whom they think most adaptable to their dispositions, and most conformable to their affections, although the parents, nevertheless, always keep the right to indicate to them the one whom they think most likely to be most suitable for them. (Le Clercq, as quoted in Hoffman 1955, 190)

It is at this point that the very distinct male bias of Western society, be it French or British, created a clear demarcation between the value and role of women, from post-contact through to contemporary society – for Western society and for the *Mi'kmaq*. For, until very recently, *Mi'kmaw* people held fast to the tradition that elevated women, because of their specific role in bringing new life into the world, to a respected and protected place in their society. Once again we observe an action focus through the respective roles that women played within the society – roles that were not evaluated in respect of hierarchy but simply the action performed with respect to others. In Euro-Canadian or Euro-American society, in contrast, only in recent decades has this begun to change from simply words of support for a different ideal to an active effort at changed, lived values. And it can easily be argued that some contemporary immigrant populations migrating to this land continue to bring with them this pro-male, anti-female bias – particularly but not exclusively in the civil arena.

Sadly, this European view of women, rooted in a Genesis 3 argument for diminished social standing due to “first sin” and the “curse” has also had an impact on the way in which *Mi'kmaw* people have contemporarily engaged women. Vanderburgh suggests that in the viewpoint of many Indian women scholars,

The Indian woman was an esteemed and essential part of her society until the imposition of Judeo/Christian beliefs regarding the nature of women. An Ontario native woman argues that “problems such as abortion, birth control, treaty rights and parental roles were never encountered in

traditional society” and that Indian women, unlike their White counterparts, “have always taken equality and power for granted (Vanderburgh as quoted in Brodribb 1984, 91,92).

Contemporary rates of abuse and sexual assault, for example, are now extremely high among Canadian Indigenous people,²⁴⁸ a phenomenon unheard of pre and early contact. It would appear, based on the work of Collin-Vézina et al., that this is rooted in a transformed praxis with respect to the nature and role of women – from its historic *Mi'kmaw* praxis to the favored European one.²⁴⁹ What's more, these European views of women predominated until well into the twentieth century. When such views are taken into account with the provisions of the *Indian Act*,²⁵⁰ which, as a result of patrilineal bias reflecting Western values, ensured *Mi'kmaw* women who married non-Indian men, lost Indian status—as did their children. The trajectory for women is clear as a consequence – down! Not surprisingly then, although there continues to be an affirmation in *Mi'kmaw* society, of the traditional place of women and their centrality to *Mi'kmaw* cosmology and collective life, individual and community behavior today often belies the ideal of which they speak.²⁵¹

In a strange way, though, it makes sense, given our previous discussion concerning adaptability, that *Mi'kmaw* efforts to ensure survival would naturally favor adapting, if not outright embracing, the policy toward women of the wider society. This

²⁴⁸ Based on the most current statistics available at <http://www.sexassault.ca/aboriginal.htm>.

²⁴⁹ “Violence in Aboriginal communities has its roots, at least in part, in historical trauma and in the social realities created by historical processes. Several traumas have disrupted the climate of harmony, respect, and mutual cooperation that bound Aboriginal families and communities in the past” (Collin-Vézina et al. 2009, 31).

²⁵⁰ Proclaimed in 1876 in Canada, the *Indian Act* provisions continue to the present day to dominate the lives and affairs of Native peoples in Canada.

²⁵¹ See, for example, Brodribb (1984, 18, 85–103).

attitude would furthermore be more likely to entrench its implications in *Mi'kmaw* communities quite deeply so as to provide some form of substantive role for *Mi'kmaw* men in the face of lost traditional roles. Add to this, the 150-plus years of residential schooling,²⁵² which disrupted the normative development of family relationships, including male/female, and we have a recipe not only for change but also, as the history of Canada has borne out, for social disaster. Other than in affirmed traditional teachings, in late nineteenth and the majority of twentieth century *Mi'kmaw* society there was an overall decrease in the experienced value of women. And Canadians – *Mi'kmaw* and immigrant alike – continue to consume the product of the recipe: strained relationships, extreme levels of abuse, and dysfunction within *Mi'kmaw* and other First Nations societies and, as noted in the McIntyre study referenced earlier in this thesis, much higher-than-average levels of sexual abuse, suicide, and substance abuse. Throughout all of this, however, the valued commitment by Native men and women to a spiritual framework that was ontologically more holistic and prescriptive of better health and well-being is unmistakable. We can see this reflected in the embrace of Catholic feminine persona.

While the repercussions of contact encroached significantly on the historic *Mi'kmaw* perspective of women and women's roles, spiraling women into abusive and dysfunctional relationships, they also included what, for *Mi'kmaw* people, was a broadly

²⁵² Residential schools were begun in the Province of Canada in 1840 but were not imposed Dominion-wide until 1879, following the Davin Report of March in that year, which, founded on the *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857, set forth a vigorous campaign for assimilation. For a further discussion of residential school history in Canada, see the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report, *The Path to Healing*, (Erasmus 1993, 22–23).

held affection and positive embrace of the feminine persons and images of Catholic faith.²⁵³ This is observed most poignantly in the not exclusive but very special focus on Anne, the woman commonly held to have been the mother of Jesus' mother, Mary. In this, if in nothing else, at least some contemporary Jesuits have found affinity with the *Mi'kmaq* in a present-day expression of Catholic faith.²⁵⁴ *Se'ta'n* (St. Anne) and the St. Anne's day celebration, however, was, and still is, more obvious in *Mi'kmaw* religious expression than in the mainstream Catholic community.²⁵⁵ "As a modern continuation of the *Mi'kmaq*s [sic] traditional summer gatherings, St. Anne's Day turned into a grand ritual of religious celebration and cultural affirmation" (Prins 2002, 172). As Holmes Whitehead notes,

Anne, who became the sainted patroness of the *Mi'kmaw* people beginning roughly in the mid 1700s was, and still is, held in very high regard/reverence by the wider *Mi'kmaw* population – irrespective of whether an individual is a Catholic believer or not. (1991, 191–93)

As *Mi'kmaw* people pray, it is not at all uncommon to direct their prayers to and through

²⁵³ See Prins (2002, 84, 85) and Robinson (2005, 71).

²⁵⁴ Among contemporary Jesuits, Karl Rahner stands out as both the theologian and philosopher who has focused much thought and consideration on the role of Mary in Christian theology. Rahner extols her virtue as he notes, "For our salvation you said Yes, for us you spoke your Fiat; as a woman of our race you accepted and bore in your womb and in your love him in whose Name alone there is salvation in heaven or on earth. Your Yes of consent ever remained, was never revoked, even when the course of the life and death of your Son fully revealed who it was that you had conceived: the Lamb of God, taking on himself the sins of the world, the Son of Man, nailed to the cross by our sinful race's hatred of God, and thrown, even the Light of the world, into the darkness of death, the lot that was ours" (Mignano 2009, 2).

²⁵⁵ This can be seen as a very adaptive behavior since the elevation of Anne and other feminine personages can be held in tension with the broader societal expectations around women, thus ensuring that a traditional understanding of women is maintained, if only within the specific confines of *Mi'kmaw* Catholic teaching and behavior. This is made all the more likely given that St. Anne's day is celebrated by *Mi'kmaw* people regardless of their Catholicity.

the person of St. Anne, whom they name *Nukumijinen* (the grandmother). This is largely due, it would seem, to the fact that mothers and *ki'ju* (grandmothers) were and continue to be of extreme importance to the social fabric – and not simply because they bore children to repopulate or ensure lineage succession but because they provided unique avenues for spirituality to be expressed.

It is clear, in early contact *Mi'kmaw* cosmology, that Mother Earth has the preeminent role as the giver of life and the sustainer of all that emerges from her womb. She is the focal point for *Mi'kmaw* spiritual understandings past and, it would appear from our study, present. In the here and now, however, there appear to be three possible and slightly divergent focal points: a traditional understanding of the essential qualities of Mother Earth, a quasi-traditional understanding of the earth using a more environmentalist/New Age framework, and a view that is expressed and interpreted through the commitment to the mother figures – particularly St. Anne – that exist within the Catholic *Mi'kmaw* experience.²⁵⁶ I would argue that the first and third reflect a continuity with historic understandings while the second has risen in popularity but misses the mark, choosing instead an ABW (anything but white) approach to interpretation. The third, on the other hand, provides us with a substantial understanding of traditional *Mi'kmaw* beliefs interpreted within a Christian framework – one to which

²⁵⁶ There are those who would offer a fourth. According to Denise Lamontagne, *Mi'kmaw* women, through their identification with both healing practices and witchcraft, perfectly embody the ambivalent nature of female spirituality in Western culture. The *Mi'kmaq* are thus seen as both powerful and dangerous. Lamontagne mirrors Rieti's description of *Mi'kmaq* women as “dangerous strangers,” referring to their “*inquiétante étrangeté*” (Lamontagne 2005, 38). Given that this has never been witnessed or experienced by me, or any *Mi'kmaw* person I know well, I would have significant reservations about adopting this view of *Mi'kmaw* women.

significant numbers of *Mi'kmaw* people have and continue to subscribe.²⁵⁷

If only for these reasons, it seems quite likely that the embrace of Catholic female personages was, for the *Mi'kmaw* people, a means of ensuring the survival of their great respect for the spiritual import of women. This most certainly included the perpetuation of the, oft-derided, affection for “Mother Earth,” a *Mi'kmaw* cosmological foundation articulated in Daniel Paul’s reflection:

The Micmac had a well-developed religion based upon respect for nature or “Mother Earth,” rather than upon the “blind faith” that forms the foundation of many religious systems. “Mother Earth” was the giver of all the essentials of life. The People recognized that without her providence life would cease to exist, thus she was revered and respected. (1993, 8)

Paul goes on to say,

Above mother Earth, was a supreme being, the “Great Spirit,” who is responsible for all existence and was personified in all things: the rivers, the trees, families and friends. His dominion was all-inclusive, and he characterized all positive attributes such as love, kindness, compassion, knowledge, and wisdom. (1993, 8–9)

So, there are clear evidences that the *Mi'kmaq* were able to withstand the near annihilation of the place and role of women, and the feminine gifts, through the embrace of women in Catholic Christian theology and cosmology. However, the place of women in a more traditional spiritual sense, such as the role of *buoin* or *kinap*, people of power, is less distinct, less obvious – particularly post 1750s. Unfortunately, there is equally compelling evidence that *Mi'kmaw* men capitulated, to a large extent, to the majority cultural influence – women began to lose their sacred place and began to be dominated by men as they were in European culture. And although, as presented here, there is a

²⁵⁷ For a more thorough treatment of this topic in the largest *Mi'kmaw* community in Canada, see Robinson (2005, 31–38).

distinctive adaptive framework within which to interpret this, there is still a noticeable male bias evident in *Mi'kmaw* society that mirrors that of the majority Western culture. The nature of the spirituality of women – or rather the appropriate and historical contribution women make to *Mi'kmaw* society – that is unique to *Mi'kmaw* tradition and held clearly in the collective memory through Catholic veneration, continues to be marred by the dominant culture encounter and may restrict, somewhat, the way contemporary *Mi'kmaq* engage with the land as well. We now turn our attention to that subject.

The Land Still Speaks to Us

In the opening years of the seventeenth century, Jesuit missionary Le Jeune, surveyed the land he had newly entered. As he looked out across what he could see of it and its people, he was moved to observe,

Their soul is a soil which is naturally good, but loaded down with all the evils that *a land abandoned since the birth of the world* can produce. I naturally compare our Savages with certain villagers, because both are usually without education, though our Peasants are superior in this regard; and yet I have not seen any one thus far, of those who have come to this country, who does not confess and frankly admit that the Savages are more intelligent than our ordinary peasants. (1634, Vol. 4, 66, emphasis added)

From these comments we can surmise that, though there were laudable intellectual qualities to be found among the *Mi'kmaq* in contrast with the average peasant in France, to Le Jeune and his contemporaries *Mi'kma'ki* nonetheless appeared to be a godless, heathen place.²⁵⁸ One could almost imagine by their statements that, after a thirty-five day

²⁵⁸ There is an obvious trail to be pursued related to the contrast that Le Jeune's

voyage across the Atlantic, their theology had changed and they had suddenly become Deists who had come upon a land abandoned by the Creator who may, at some distant future time, come back to see what had become of it. Whereas the *Mi'kmaq* understood and experienced the land as a place indwelled by the spiritual, where their Creator had regular interaction, the Jesuit perceived it as Satan's land – a place of the demonic.²⁵⁹

Jouveny appears to offer a fuller description

They call some divinity, who is the author of evil, “Manitou”, and fear him exceedingly. Beyond doubt it is the enemy of the human race, who extorts from some people divine honors and sacrifices. Concerning the nature of spirits, they go none the less astray. They make them corporeal images which require food and drink. They believe that the appointed place for souls, to which after death they are to retire, is in the direction of the setting sun, and there they are to enjoy feasting, hunting, and dancing; for these pleasures are held in the highest repute among them. (1710, Vol. 1, 67)

How, if at all, had this perception of the people and the land changed over the centuries for the *Mi'kmaq*, for the Jesuits?

Roddy Gould is clear in the stories he tells that the land continues to communicate with the *Mi'kmaq* today as it did with his ancestors. His stories are alive with the places and personages of creation – the muskrat, the otter, the beaver and moose, the birds and other persons of the created order – as well as the land formations and “inanimate” structures of *Mi'kma'ki*. They continue, as before, to be very much resident in their roles as teachers and companions to the *Mi'kmaq* and others who are willing to engage in such a journey. Bernie Francis – one of the co-constructors of the Smith-Francis orthography of *Mi'kamooage*, the *Mi'kmaw* language, is equally adamant about the continued

comments depict between the elites and peasants and the way in which this may have influenced the missionaries' perceptions of the *Mi'kmaw* and other Indigenous peoples.

²⁵⁹ See for example, the comments by Biard (1612, Vol 2, 21; 1616, Vol. 3, 11, 30), Lescarbot (1610, Vol 1, 24., 45), and Le Clercq (1691, 216–220).

understanding of the complex interrelationship between animate and inanimate.²⁶⁰ Sable and Francis observe, for example,

The term for rock is an inanimate noun. When the question is posed how something inanimate could be viewed as a “Grandmother” or “Grandfather,” one sees that it is not the outward image alone but the *experience* of the rock that brings it into the animate realm. In the case of Grandmother (and Grandfather) “rocks,” the rock is no longer a rock but becomes a Grandmother because it is experienced that way. Similarly, if a rock is shaped like a bear it might become animate in the mind of the perceiver and referred to as a bear, ceasing to be a rock. Because the rock is now experienced as a bear or bear-like, a person would relate to it as a conscious being and therefore it is animate. (2012, 44)

To say that these are unique experiences to the *Mi'kmaq* would miss the mark, however. Roddy's stories, and the way of perceiving creation that they belie, would not be unlike those of other First Nations peoples. Kenny Blacksmith,²⁶¹ for example, tells of a time when he was wrestling with a problem of huge consequence to his people, the James Bay Cree of northern Quebec. He took home to his mother his angst at not knowing just what to do. She spoke quietly, yet forcefully, saying, “Kenny, listen to the trees and they will tell you!” And that is precisely what Kenny did. As with other Indigenous peoples in North America, the *Mi'kmaq* continue to look for and believe in the signs of the land. The groaning in travail of the Romans 8 passage is not a metaphor for them, neither is it anthropomorphic nor literary personification; it is real and profoundly truthful.

The land also spoke to the Jesuits – past and present. They had, after all, stated as one of their formative objectives to “find God in all things” (Donnelly 2006, 157).

²⁶⁰ See also the *Relation* of Le Jeune in which he laboriously describes the verb and noun interaction in (Le Jeune 1634, Vol. 7, 13).

²⁶¹ This was embedded in a lengthier story conveyed to me in a personal conversation with Kenny Blacksmith in September 1996.

Unfortunately, in the past, as we have already noted, the land itself was deemed to speak in the voices of demons and wild beasts. *Mi'kma'ki*, and elsewhere in North America that Europeans went during this period, was untamed and the subject domain of the evil one, forsaken by its Creator. As Le Jeune then noted,

For in truth this people, who, through the progress and experience of centuries, ought to have come to some perfection in the arts, sciences and philosophy, is like a great field of stunted and ill-begotten wild plants, a people which ought to have produced abundant fruits in philosophy, government, customs, and conveniences of life; which ought to be already prepared for the completeness of the Holy Gospel, to be received in the house of God. Yet behold it wretched and dispersed, given up to ravens, owls, and infernal cuckoos, and to be the cursed prey of spiritual foxes, bears, boars, and dragons. O, God of mercy! Wilt thou not have pity upon this misery? Wilt thou not look upon this poor wilderness with a favoring eye? Kind and pious husbandman, so act that the prophecy which follows may be fulfilled upon us and in our time. (1616, Vol. 3, 30)

As experienced and described by the Jesuits, the speech of the land was unintelligible at best, demon talk at worst. This perception reflected the view, previously noted, that the focus of the Creator was to place human beings, at least in the European mind, outside all the rest, somewhat independent in origin and activity. And, given the relatively recent restoration of Indigenous populations to the register of humanity by the papacy of the era in question, it is not unlikely there was still some lingering doubt about the nature of the Indigenous place in the cosmos. But, what of the present?

If we were to carefully examine the work of Canadian Jesuit Bernard Lonergan, we would find it steeped in the empiricism of modernity and the compounded dualisms of the historic Western Church. The rest of creation would be understood as “stuff,” which God used to bring about God’s purposes, but of a different substance and purpose than God’s creation of and salvific intentions for humanity. Karl Rahner, while equally ensconced in the historic roots of the Catholic Church’s philosophy, provides some

breathing space for the mystical – in fact, human spiritual evolution is paramount.

Unfortunately, he is equally dismissive of a non-human redemptive focus in God's actions in history. This should not be surprising for Rahner is, after all, an anthropocentric exceptionalist in his theology:

Humanity has a unique vocation and destiny that the remainder of creation does not share (or only shares *through* humanity's administration ... natural history develops towards man, continues in him as *his* history, is conserved and surpassed in him and hence reaches its proper goal with and in the history of the human spirit). The created world fades into the background as the shining destiny of humanity comes to the foreground. (1966, 168 emphasis added)

In his brief critique of Rahner's anthropocentrism, Eric Daryl Meyer says,

Rahner's construal of the culmination of creation's history in divine self-communication – essentially a verbal metaphor – rather than in divine communion essentially limits the *experience* of salvation to human beings (or any other creatures capable of “knowing”). This way of telling the story risks making the rest of nature unnecessary as soon as it plays its part in producing humanity through evolution; humanity becomes the central location of redemption. (2009:2 emphasis added)

We will briefly discuss Rahner and Lonergan further in Chapter 6.

For the *Mi'kmaq* the stories of the land are not simply children's tales by which to induce sleep. Rather, they are the deeply embedded history of the land's creation and of *Mi'kmaw* journeys that took place upon the land. Several years ago in a court case in British Columbia, a First Nation fighting for their rights on their land, were asked how it was that they could empirically verify their pre-existence on and use of the lands of their ancestors since there were no structures or technological developments in evidence. The court asserted that British common law gave title by reason of people having developed the land. A wise elder of the people of that region simply said, “If this is your land then where are the stories of the land among your people?” The land is as alive and familiar to

the *Mi'kmaq* today as it was in the distant past of their ancestors and it is the language that makes it so.

It is the power of the stories and the consequent significance of the place names to individuals within the cultural community that gives us a glimpse into what can be termed another worldview. The *Mi'kmaw* culture, essentially, is inseparable from the land of the Eastern Canada. (Sable and Francis 2012, 51)

The Here and Now and What Comes After

On September 24, 2011 my family held the memorial for my father. He had passed on July 24 of that year. In preparation for his passing, I had prayed for him using cedar – a form of preparation for death. Then, in the memorial, we used the cedar again to announce that because we all carried something of his teaching, personality, story, and skill, he remained with us.

This is one way of thinking about the hereafter – about eternity. It is a common theme among many First Nations peoples in North America. It roots in the familiar idea of continuity within creation through both cyclical and recyclable process, materials, and sequences. *Navajo* stories of eternal life, for example, speak of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and beyond as the means of procuring that life. For the *Mi'kmaq* this expectation of eternity was deeply entrenched in their stories of the wider creation, whether in the stories of the elders of the day or the oldest stories of their ancestors.

Clearly, however, life changes over time. No culture or worldview remains static for long or else, as the commonly accepted wisdom notes, it dies. *Mi'kmaw* culture has evolved to the interloper culture of the French, then the English, and lastly the Canadian

multicultural/US melting pot reality – and it has done very well, adapting itself to the changing realities of the Canadian and US contexts respectively. There are many voices that suggest *Mi'kmaq* culture and religion has been dead for the better part of two centuries. Other voices suggest something quite different. Christine Hornborg suggests that in the contemporary era, cultural pride has been enwrapped with the historic connectedness to the Catholic traditions of the *Mi'kmaq*.

When St. Ann's Day became important for the traditionalist *Mi'kmaq* in the 1970s, it was foremost not as the day when the believers should be joined with their patron saint, but as a way to show ethnic belonging and a demand for a *Mi'kmaq* nation. The *Mi'kmaq* are, of course, aware of the Christian background to St. Anne's Festival, but the celebration has become such a great event for the tribal community that they do not think the Catholic features disturb the message of being a *Mi'kmaq* area when some *Mi'kmaq* noticed how other tribes tried to eliminate European influences in their traditions, their reaction was that this was unnecessary. The reaction was instead that the *Mi'kmaq* religion was Catholicism, but with a strong dose of aboriginal religion. (2008, 129)

Angela Robinson, another proponent for a different reading of the past and present, reflecting the thoughts of Stanley Brandes in 1990, noted, "*Mi'kmaq* religion did not emerge from a fixed pattern. It developed, and continues to develop, 'in response to an infinite variety of social, economic, political and cultural circumstances'" (2005, 130).

In one aspect of their lives only can it be clearly seen that the *Mi'kmaq* continue to maintain a solid grip on past understandings with little change – their firm commitment to an integrative and holistic spirituality. In a conversation some years ago with a young person about the birth of Christianity among their people with the baptism of *Membertou*, Rita Joe reports him as saying, "They may have brought Christianity to us, but we taught spirituality to them" (1996, 153). Joe observes of his response, "I was surprised by his thinking; but the more I thought about it, the more I was convinced that it may be true."

In the following chapter, I will discuss the nature of the change that has taken place with respect to the markers we have identified and ask some questions about their current impact on actual behavior of the *Mi'kmaw* people. I will also examine these markers in the view of a few Canadian Jesuits of some renown so as to determine whether they have been impacted in their beliefs and practices.

Chapter 6

Analysis

While Taking part in a traditional ceremony,
I felt good.
When I take part in a Christian ritual,
I sense the two functions are not that different,
Sincerity playing part in both.
I experience both, I am Micmac,
The true bond dwelling in my heart,
Spirituality bridging the two.

The true sense was always with my people,
Only my rituals were banned.
Today the value begins to grow,
Spark becomes flame.
I am truly happy,
The darkness gone.

If you try my core bond,
You too, will feel the song. (Joe 1996, 156)

Introduction

In a recent meeting in San Diego with other Native leaders, we discussed what has become the vogue concept of “Native spirituality.”²⁶² Among all the attendees there was unanimous agreement that “Native spirituality” is qualitatively different from Euro-American spirituality. There was an equally clear sense that the concept is increasingly being co-opted by North American seekers of some form of ethereal experience minus

²⁶² There was no particular definition offered at any point in the discussion, but there was a clear understanding that we were talking about the same thing. As the conversation progressed, this was affirmed by the stories told and the examples used.

the underlying meaning.²⁶³ We also took note, however, that the behavior of the people engaged in this co-opting practice did not seem to differ markedly from that of the majority population who were not so inclined. Was this a matter of a memory image of the Native community being implanted in the mainstream of society – a longed-for-but-no-longer-real experience of a dominant Euro-North American society? Or is it simply, as we have posited, that the non-dualistic frames of reference that still appear to predominate in the Native North American community allow for a more engaged spiritual reality – one that is both internally and externally presented with a simultaneity that makes it appear unified and therefore attractive?

Clearly, from what we have uncovered, the Jesuit cognitive understanding of the physical and material worlds was closer than many others to the *Mi'kmaq* in that they had a deeper articulated understanding of the realm of the spirits and of the mystical. It was therefore more likely that it was acceptable to the *Mi'kmaq* and equally likely that it therefore contributed to the early adoption of Jesuit Christianity as presented to them in the early days of the seventeenth century. But how did this play out given that we have already identified *Mi'kmaq* understanding of the spiritual was not strictly cognitive/affective in nature?

Analytical Framework

The historical data acquired from the literature has been subjected to a meta-analysis – asking questions such as, What is the nature of French/Jesuit and *Mi'kmaq*

²⁶³ See Jenkins (2004).

spirituality, and How do the spiritualities of the two groups compare in terms of

1. articulated or stated belief as inferred from direct statements in the literature?
2. religious systems of belief – the Catholic doctrines, formative doctrines of the Jesuit and other missionary orders, and any specific directives related to mission in North America?
3. actual belief – what is actually observed to take place in the missionaries, as noted in the descriptive narrative and any direct statements in the literature?

The table that follows is the template used for collecting, discerning the nature of and analyzing the data acquired through the literature.

Table 6.1. Method of Data Analysis

	A	B	C	D
Cases of Spirituality	17th-Century <i>Mi'kmaq</i>	17th-Century French/Jesuit	20th-Century <i>Mi'kmaq</i>	20th-Century French/Jesuit
Data sources	French/Jesuit writings <i>Mi'kmaw</i> oral history	French/Jesuit writings	<i>Mi'kmaq</i> and other <i>Wa'bana'ki</i> writings <i>Mi'kmaw</i> oral history & interviews	Jesuit and Acadian Writings ²⁶⁴
Comparisons	A to B, A to C	B to A, B to D	C to A, C to D	D to B, D to C

²⁶⁴ Since the Acadians are, by and large, the descendants of the French colonials who were pastored by French/Jesuit missions and the Huguenot ministers, in addition to the people most closely associated over time with the *Mi'kmaq*, it seems reasonable to include them in the survey for this study.

The Challenge of Spirituality

As we have observed from the literature available in the early contact era, *Mi'kmaq* understandings of the spiritual were significantly different from the Jesuit notion, which, as Grimes notes, “treat[ed] [the spiritual] as a sector of life alongside other sectors rather than as something permeating all life” (2000, 86). Jesuit notions of what they termed “religion,” while bearing the central theme of “seeing God in all things,” as we have observed in their own reflections, were expressed ambivalently in the real world of the *Mi'kmaq* and others they encountered. In the *Mi'kmaq* they encountered both an intelligent people but also, by their own assessment, a spiritually profane folk. *Mi'kmaq* and other Indigenous peoples fell into the category of godless heathens.

While we might vindicate the Jesuits by pointing out that they felt equally repulsed by the spiritual state of affairs of their own French peasantry, their attitude seems all the more condemning in that they are clearly classifying spirituality as behavioral, not ontological. What's more it was judged to be behavioral with a very specific rational and intellectual flavor. This was, in fact, what the Jesuits soundly criticized of their own peasantry – their lack of intellectual sophistication. In other words, they looked for specific cognitive behaviors, complete with externally observable functions such as the use of the *Spiritual Exercises*, to identify the presence of spiritual vitality. In so doing, they discovered in the “non-religious,” that is to say in this case, the *Mi'kmaq*, only sporadic and incompletely formed expressions of human spirituality as they had defined and come to understand it.

All the while, the Jesuits were wrapping themselves in a more phenomenologically oriented way of life. That is to say, they had become disengaged

from the natural world and a more natural human attitude and had moved to one of contemplative introspection and the cerebral appropriation of the spiritual. They made this move despite their stated goal of “seeing God in everything.” Theirs was, strictly speaking, an intellectual and phenomenological examination of the world around them, not an experiential embrace of what they saw, heard, smelled, tasted, and felt. The very foundation of the Jesuit order’s understanding of the spiritual, the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius, mandated this as the focus of their Christian spirituality, if nothing else did.

Yazzie-Burkhart, in his discussion of a generally accepted understanding of Native North American philosophical difference, critiques this as he observes,

Phenomenology begins with a distinction between two different attitudes: the natural one and the phenomenological attitude. The natural attitude is the way we are normally taken up with the various things in the world. We walk down the street and pass the trees. We have conversations with our friends and talk about our jobs. What we do not do in this attitude is step back and reflect on this natural way we carry on in this world.... However, the phenomenological attitude is just this kind of disengagement. (Yazzie-Burkhart in Waters, 2004, 24)

While it would appear on first examination therefore, that the natural world, including its various non-European peoples, was the world the Jesuits thought of as the one in which “God was to be found,” the Jesuit disposition was more likely represented in the comments of Luis de La Puente of the early seventeenth century. In his popular Jesuit meditations of the day, De La Puente, observes of the world the Jesuits had encountered, that God had sown God’s seed “in a ground so vile and so contemptible” (1605:221). Jesuit Christianity was, after all, very much rooted in Augustinian theology which, in turn, was embedded in an embrace of Aristotelian logic and philosophy

including both his endoxic²⁶⁵ and scientific methods. De La Puente's reflection on the contrast between the Creator and "His" creation was much more central to Jesuit, and it would be reasonable to suggest, other Christian thought of the day, than we might imagine. This lay in stark contrast to the view of the *Mi'kmaq* that both Creator and the creation in which they found themselves – and were indeed only a part of – while filled with mystery, were nonetheless good.

The Jesuit notion of religion then was not only a more phenomenological one, separating the world into the respective categories of mind and matter, material and spirit, but was also focused on the evil contained therein as opposed to the good that sustained life as a gift of the Creator. In contrast, the *Mi'kmaw* notion of the spiritual focused on integrating what was observed with what was experienced, so as to acknowledge and appreciate all of creation within which they existed in an equation of balance.²⁶⁶ Edmund Husserl, in his discussion of the predicates of contemporary Western philosophy – a philosophy that we have noted several key Jesuits have had a hand in bringing to its current state – makes clear that this orientation "effaced the notion of who we are in the 'pre-given' world," replacing it with a perspective that

²⁶⁵ Joseph Anthony Karbowski describes the endoxic method as follows: "The endoxic method involves gathering reputable beliefs (endoxa), i.e., beliefs held by the majority of human beings or one or more wise individuals, about the subject of investigation; raising puzzles about the reputable beliefs; and solving the puzzles in a way that clarifies the initial reputable beliefs" (2009, abstract). The method was focused on explaining phenomena as opposed to simply experiencing them and placing them within an existing set of behavioral repertoires and understandings that had been previously learned and so understand the relationship between one and another.

²⁶⁶ Was this not Paul's point in Acts 17 where he proclaimed that it was "within" the singular Creator that all of humanity and all else in creation, "lived and moved and had [its] being"? Note: "within" is a more appropriate rendering of the Greek than the usual use of "in."

saw fit to recast the idea of “knowledge” and “truth” in natural existence and to ascribe to the newly formed idea of “objective truth” a higher dignity, that of a norm for all knowledge. From this arises the idea of a universal science encompassing all possible knowledge in its infinity. (1970, 121)

In Husserl’s discussion we could just as easily insert Jesuit philosophy for Western since Jesuit thought, as we have observed, was quite arguably predicated on Greek philosophical constructs. In fact, this dualistic orientation that included the categorical separation of cognition and experience in the pursuit of “objective truth” – is the precise focus of the differentiation between *Mi’kmaw* concepts of the spiritual in creation, their own spirituality, and that which is evidenced in Jesuit philosophy and Christianity; between Jesuit views of spirituality, largely expressed in terms of specific behaviors, and those of the *Mi’kmaw* community, expressed in an intuitive yet experiential embrace of the spiritual reality present in all of creation.

Responding to the notion of “objective truth,” Yazzie-Burkhart (2004, 25) asserts that *Mi’kmaw* people must “maintain our connectedness, we must maintain our relations, and never abandon them in search of understanding but rather find understanding through them.” *Mi’kmaw* spirituality as a pervasive expression of “natural” spirituality understood through experience of natural creation as over against Jesuit religiosity, which according to Burkhart’s assertions, would be described as intellectually and phenomenologically oriented²⁶⁷ must be what we diligently retain – it is the way of our ancestors in the land of *Mi’kma’ki* itself.

²⁶⁷ See Albanese (2001), where the author discusses this distinction, which appears evident to many, between religion and spirituality, noting particularly the move away from a strictly phenomenological approach to one that is, as Yazzie Burkhart has noted, more “natural” and experiential. Note that even the dedication, “For my sister, Lucille, who is spiritual but not religious,” we see this effort to distance oneself from religious behaviorisms.

This understanding of spirituality clearly connects all aspects of life. It is a spiritual experience and understanding that is, as Ridington attests, “at the core of an identity that is deeper than ethnicity” (2000, 98). I would extend this further based on our study and suggest that in *Mi'kmaw* understanding, spirituality was and is at the core of the entirety of creation – as a part of the Creator’s design. This means contemporarily for them – for us – that the invitation to Job’s counselors to inquire of the rest of creation after the intentions of the Creator in Job 12 was neither an anthropomorphic nor rhetorically framed one. It was an authentic invitation.

“But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
 or the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
 or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,
 or let the fish of the sea inform you.
 Which of all these does not know
 that the hand of the LORD has done this?
 In his hand is the life of every creature
 and the breath of all mankind.”²⁶⁸

If Jesuit and *Mi'kmaw* spirituality are each independently and separately identifying a reality that is significantly different for each person or group of people, because worldview is the central organizing tenet and spirituality is simply a part of that cluster, then our assessments herein are faulty and humanity is indeed under the direction of a multiplicity of gods as Hinduism and other religious expressions suggest. But if they are simply divergent expressions of the same basic core spiritual reality, then present conceptions of spirituality must be addressed as being inadequate to express the nature of the Creator/creation relationship. If human beings are a product of cognition as the construct of spirituality that simply has concomitant behavioral implications, then the

²⁶⁸ *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), Job 12:7–10.

Creator is indeed only in our mind and not a living Spirit manifestly engaged in creation. Furthermore, if worldview is the central organizing construct of people's conception of life, then spirituality is, by extension, a non-entity as a definer of human existence inasmuch as there would need to be as many "spiritualities" as there are human beings – not to mention the rest of creation if we were to embrace pantheism as a valid construct of spiritual reality (which I do not). Worldview itself must, of necessity then, be assumed to be a package of filters, socially and consciously chosen to create a manageable framework by which to understand life and make choices for individual and group behavior. Clearly, if this is the case, the Jesuits historically privileged cognitive and affective realms of understanding as being spiritual. This was manifest, in turn, in certain behaviors. This led to them relegating the more holistic understandings of the *Mi'kmaq* to the idolatrous or demonic.

How then are we to meet the challenge of the unnecessary tension and the difficult choice for present-day *Mi'kmaw* people concerning Christian faith and *Mi'kmaw* socio-cultural identity? Must it be an either/or choice – either a Christian walk that rejects *Mi'kmaw* identity within its spirituality or an authentic *Mi'kmaw* spirituality minus the fullness of relationship with the Creator in Christ? Why not both, without the accompanying internalized anxiety that there is some inherent spiritual conflict? Furthermore, if the thesis of this project is correct, how are we to assist others – particularly in the West – in regaining a full expression of the spirituality within which they have been created? This effort, it would seem to me, requires a bi-cultural perspective, one that has experience with both life-ways and understands, from the

furthest hill yet reached by such a thinker, two ways of knowing *Nisgam* who is God.²⁶⁹ This, I believe, is why so many of us in the Native North American community who lead in the movement of contextualization are of mixed ancestry and are bi-cultural.

A Biblical, Theological Analysis

If the biblical creation narrative offers us an authentic, albeit brief, picture of God's intentions, then all of humanity was created in God's image, an image that embraced diversity in unity, rooted in the oneness of God's self as expressed in the plurality of the trinity. As the narrative of Genesis suggests quite emphatically, at the conclusion of creation all was in communion and harmony, each part of creation acting "according to their kind" (Genesis 1:21, NIV). Each aspect of creation was expressing itself and living from the spiritual reality placed within it at the moment of its creation. So much so in fact, that the summative statement of the Creator made it clear that "it was all very good."

If humanity emerged from a common spiritual root, how is it then possible that the degree of human "spiritual" diversity witnessed through the ages – the plethora of understandings and practices – can have emerged given this common start, if not in location, at least in the Creator's intent? These and other questions seem to me to be foundational if we are to provide proper perspective for understanding the difference in the Jesuit and *Mi'kmaw* understanding of the spiritual and of spirituality. I will now offer a biblical theological critique within which to understand this phenomenon and, it is to be

²⁶⁹ As V.F. Cordova notes, "The greatest bridge between cultures is the person who is schooled in the philosophies and histories of both cultures" (2004, 30).

hoped, clarify the difference between Jesuit and *Mi'kmaw* understandings.

According to the biblical account, when humanity was created in God's image, it was an image of singular integrity though, as we have noted, it was an image expressed in diverse ways. There were no racial or ethnic divisions, no social or technological inequities, and certainly no indication of differences in human spiritual understanding that would drive humanity toward such radically divergent insights concerning their existence – though there was quite probably difference in Adam as against Eve.²⁷⁰ The relationship of woman and man, as with the image of their Creator within them, was a “same but different” kind of reality, not unlike the sameness yet difference of the persons of the trinity. Apart from this, there was simply Creator and creation engaged, as scripture makes clear, in relationship, fellowship, and worship.

Elohim (whom *Mi'kmaq* call *Niskam*²⁷¹), Creator of the universe had fashioned all, and all that had been made appropriately reflected and honored its Creator. The “four legs,” crawling things, flying and swimming things knew their Creator²⁷² and walked in the ways they had been made to walk – innate “spiritual instinct” ensuring this was so.

²⁷⁰ This we might reasonably infer from their different responses to their Creator that would come later, in Genesis 3. Was this a gender-based difference or is it simply the age-old idea of vantage point distinction – i.e., two points of view that differ only because of the place from which two viewers stand to make their respective observations?

²⁷¹ In the past several decades, there has been a tug of war over the correct *Mi'kmaw* term to be used for the equivalent of *Theos* or the English word “God.” The early Jesuits were often confused by terminology since the verb-focused language, as we have previously discussed, focused on the action relationship not the hierarchical one, as would be more likely rooted in a noun-structured language. The Jesuits often used *Niscaminou* in this way. In some of the more contemporary writings *Kisu'lkw* is used. In other settings *Nisgam* or a derivative is employed. See for example Bernie Francis's use of *Kisu'lkw* versus *Niskam* (Sable and Francis 2012).

²⁷² See Job 12:7–9.

God's image, however, walked on two legs with a will to choose and to act stamped deep within – perhaps even tightly framing a significant component of that image as it was transmitted from generation to generation. We note, for example, in the Genesis account (Genesis 5:1–3), that the image of God instilled in Adam and Eve imprints in Seth; through Seth it is passed to Enosh; through Enosh to Kenan, and so on down through the generations of the developing human race. To be sure, it is a marred image since the Fall, incomplete and lacking in some essential quality that it possessed when knowledge of good and evil was not in the human domain. Nonetheless, it is this image that all who came after our “First Parents” received. Snyder et al, during a consultation on world missions in which they discuss intercultural encounter and the matter of God's image offer this thought:

God has created all men and women in the Triune image with an inherent capacity to love and serve God. Though this capacity has been marred and distorted by sin, it has not been totally lost. We therefore recognize and honor the image of God in all persons and peoples. (2003, 3)²⁷³

As each successive generation appears, they move further toward religious plurality marked by division, less reflective of the intended unity. We find, for example, that Cain and Abel worshiped even more divergently than their parents, each seeking to venerate and appease God with offerings – one received, the other rejected. Humanity was now on a different path from the one they were set on in the beginning – perhaps only slightly tangential to the original, but nonetheless at odds with the one intended. Yet the essential quality of their being spiritual had not changed; only the behavior through

²⁷³ What we must not do here is conflate the image and likeness of God and the concept of the Hebrew *khayah nephesh* (the “living soul”), two descriptors found in Genesis 1 and 2. This is one area in which Jesuit and *Mi'knaw* cosmologies diverged significantly during first contact and which continues to the present day.

which they sought to express this ontological reality differed. This is critical to understand. All of creation, including human beings, had been made to experience one overarching reality – to be in a worshipping relationship with the Creator, with one another, and with the rest of creation. This was focused through the ontological fact of their being of a common spiritual construction, a universal core essence.²⁷⁴ In the human community it is a reflection of the spiritual unity found in the Trinity, expressed in our First Parents as an ontological spiritual reality transmitted, albeit in a distorted way, down through the ages of humanity through its subsequently diverging societies and cultures. And, in the rest of creation, it was manifested as “futility.”²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Clearly this is Paul’s contention in Acts 17. Though some would have us believe this is simply a reference for evangelistic contact, not spiritual affirmation, it seems to serve only a narrow Calvinist frame of reference, is a hermeneutical stretch to do so, and flies in the face of what we surmise from scripture to be the purpose of human creation.

²⁷⁵ From Genesis 3 forward we see the potential for social, moral, physical and other forms of influence to impact spiritual understanding. Life is no longer the same. Adam and Eve now understand God differently from one another, and their spiritual understandings, already taking form as an expression of God’s diversity in community, begin to change in significant ways, expressing in increasingly conflicting ways what was intended to be a positive diversity. They become influenced by context and perspective – by sin, intrinsic and extrinsic. Initially, the change is minor, the divergence ever so slight.

The man said, “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” *The woman said*, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate” (Genesis 3:12, 13 NIV, emphasis mine).

It is evident in the Genesis narrative above, that the perspectives of the events of creation and the cause of its Fall are already diverging in the man and the woman. “*The woman, you gave me...*” versus “*The serpent...*” makes clear that while the blame is placed on the Creator by both, the means of his culpability is different for each. As time passes, the difference increases in measure and significance. Spiritual plurality begins to be driven by new forces – culturally embedded forces – when the question, “Did God really say?” forms at its root and the human persona respond differently. The woman and the man both embrace the desire for knowledge, and the creation falls from certainty of relationship into relational doubt and chaos – a culturally “genetic” doubt, passing from generation to generation. This doubt enervates the intended diversity of expression of spirituality in creation while paradoxically and simultaneously becoming the motivator

For a *Mi'kmaq* examining the biblical narrative through a *Mi'kmaw* lens, the truth of this rests in the fact that the *khayah nephesh* of God, the living soul, is infused in all of creation in the moment of its making via the breath (*ruach*) of God, thus ensuring that all things carry a spiritual nature.²⁷⁶ Any differentiation lies in the fact that the image of God is instilled only in humanity – an instillation that transmits cocreative and coredemptive capacity to humanity.²⁷⁷ That the image is qualitatively different from *khayah nephesh* is beyond question from the narrative of scripture. This does not, however, either at the moment of that instillation or subsequently, diminish the spiritual nature of the rest of creation for the *Mi'kmaq*. Nor does this compromise our understanding of creation and redemption from a biblical perspective.

That the whole of creation is spiritual is, to the *Mi'kmaw* people, then and now,

for the array of options that will become the center of the human spiritual quest down through history.

It becomes clear that whereas a walk with God was once possible, a search is now required. First it is the Creator in search of his creation – wayward humanity in the garden; the tables quickly turn so that at least the human part of creation is forced to seek after their maker. To the soon-to-be-multiplying human race, it appears that God has become more distant and less engaged in their affairs. Humanity now strives to find relationship with their Creator – more often than not looking in all the wrong places.

John Wesley notes for example, “It is certain that God made man upright; perfectly holy and perfectly happy: But by rebelling against God, he destroyed himself, lost the favor and the image of God, and entailed sin, with its attendant, pain, on himself and all his posterity” (Wesley, 1836, 383).

Worship must now be contrived, at times reluctant, where once it was natural and willing. Human spiritual reality, once clear, direct and reflective of the diversity of the Trinity, is now indistinct, obtuse and influenced by the forces that will become widely divergent in the globe’s varying cultures and environments.

²⁷⁶ Note that the word for living thing in the Hebrew means literally “in which there is a living soul” and is applied to all of creation in the Genesis narrative. Cf. Genesis 1:29, 30. Contrast this with the *Mi'kmaq* teaching that “all things in the world have their own spirit, and all things must work in harmony with each other” (Joe and Choyce 1997, 53).

²⁷⁷ See for example, Paul’s admonition in 1 Corinthians 3 that human beings are collaborators with God in the work of God’s mission.

beyond question – God is spirit and God has placed within the rest of creation this *khayah nephesh*, the breath of life (Genesis 1:28–30). It is this latter assertion with which mainstream Christianity struggles, and that confounded the Jesuits. “How can material things which the historic Jesuit or the contemporary Christian perceive to be inanimate (lacking life) actually have life,” they ask? Is that not pantheism, animism or worse? Once again both the dualism of Jesuit thought and the requirement of either/or categories forces a separation of spirit and matter into neatly manageable packages. For the *Mi’kmaw* person, however, this is not a requirement. Both/and reasoning, with the scriptures or in other areas of life, does not require the abandonment of logic or rational thought; it simply asks that we accede to the fact that we understand only partially.²⁷⁸ The same working of the Creator’s Spirit in the rest of creation is precisely what we find in human beings groaning in their prayer closets. This is what Jesuit theologies failed, ultimately, to comprehend – that the transcendence and immanence of the Creator need not be privileged, one over the other. Put another way, they needed to believe that loss of authentic Christian faith, vis-à-vis the fine point of balance between these two, would not be the result should they embrace a more holistic way of understanding creation and spirituality.

When pressed to account for the concern of God for the rest of creation expressed in such texts as Genesis 1, 2, Psalm 104,²⁷⁹ Romans 8, Colossians, and countless others,

²⁷⁸ Paul was clear in his Hebraic frame of reference that, “now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:12, NIV).

²⁷⁹ “How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number –

historic Christian theologies are, if not bereft of answers, certainly very circumscribed in their presentation. In interpreting the redemptive narrative of scripture, Jesuit and other Christian theologies have been famously void of explanation for this deeply entrenched concern of God – other than as window dressing for human salvation or as an afterthought on the way to the restoration of human beings to a new heaven and earth. This kind of theological reflection and the corollaries produced in such thinking are almost exclusively human centered.²⁸⁰ What's more, as Peter Bellini has made clear, they owe their foundations, at least in part, to Jesuit thought. For the purposes of our discussion here I might make an even more emphatic point: Jesuit theology could not, because of its circumscribed and cognitively framed categories, perceive the work of the Spirit of God in and through the rest of creation²⁸¹ and therefore dismissed it, when experienced by *Mi'kmaw* people, as being witchcraft or demonism.

It seems clear that to assume any other starting point than a singular human spirituality reflected through time in varying and divergent behavioral expressions is to

living things both large and small. There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there. These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.”

²⁸⁰ Chuck Gutenson briefly discusses this in his paper *Knowing and Truth* (2005, 49,50), in which he quotes Pannenberg's work concerning God's great concern for all of creation.

²⁸¹ They could and did focus on discussions of the gifts of the Spirit, the timing of those gifts, the possession of the gifts – individual or collective – the purposes of the gifting and so on. Rarely, if ever, did they speak of the Spirit's animation of the rest of creation in any more than passing reference on the way to the focal point or pinnacle of God's story of the Spirit – humanity's blessing at Pentecost. I am aware that there are some writers who have begun to move into this vacuum in recent years. But our history is clear: we have not historically believed it – as is evidenced in the distance between lived and articulated theologies!

attempt to fill the same space simultaneously with different objects. An *Oneida* friend of mine tried this in his inadvertent attempt to posit countless numbers of gods of creation as the reason for differing human “spiritualities.” While the Heisenberg principle of uncertainty in quantum physics may allow for the possibility of two things occupying the same space simultaneously, it seems a remote possibility in the realm of ontological human spirituality given the singular origin of humanity. “What does this diversity look like?” you might ask. Let’s have a look at that question for a moment as we compare Jesuit spirituality and understanding with that of *Mi’kmaw* people.

Spirituality, Dualism, Duality, and Religion

To provide a lens through which to view the challenges of this study, consider the following: ask people from a Euro-Canadian origin about their “spirituality,” and until recently, unless they were a New-Ager, Buddhist, Hindu, or similar, they might just have given you an odd look – one that seemed to question your sanity. But ask a different question, one related to religion, and they would have responded in a relatively straightforward manner to articulate the tradition or lack of tradition of faith they are connected to – in addition, perhaps, to describing the religious thoughts and behaviors they might regularly engage in. This is not simply a construct of modern society. It is a hand-me-down of a trajectory set in motion by developing Christian thought rooted in the thinking of Christians like the Jesuits.

Now, ask *Mi’kmaw* people²⁸² about their religion and you will get a similar odd

²⁸² Except for *Mi’kmaw* Christians with a recent conservative, or more

look but for a different reason. A *Mi'kmaw* audience, in contrast to the Euro-Canadian, would be more likely to acknowledge words or phrases like spirituality, balance, harmony, and mystery²⁸³ as descriptors of, though not limits to an inclusive notion of, their “spirituality,” not their religion. What’s more, it would be clear, were you to ask a number of *Mi'kmaw* people from different places, that this would describe a spirituality that was not systematic and explicitly organized in its expression. Jouveny remarked, for example, concerning organized religion among the *Mi'kmaq*,

There is among them no system of religion, or care for it. They honor a Deity who has no definite character or regular code of worship. They perceive however, through the twilight, as it were, that some deity does exist. (1710, Vol. 1, 67)

More contemporarily, people in the generation of Arthur Amiotte (1989, 246) would offer a very simple observation concerning spirituality and its all-encompassing nature, that historically “sacred and temporal dimensions were one.” To think of the question in any other way than integrated would be seeking to resolve the issue of spirituality through material and spiritual separation, which to the *Mi'kmaq* would be an oxymoron.

In a very significant way, this is what we have encountered in our study of the Jesuit and *Mi'kmaq* – not simply a difference in terminology but a marked difference in

fundamentalist Christian experience, who would be more prone to respond similar to a Euro-Canadian Christian.

²⁸³ I note this same orientation in Celtic Christianity, not separating the known and the unknown into neat categories but instead enfolding all things in the mystery of God – some of which we have a partial understanding of through our experience and some of which we have no idea or sense at all. See, for example, Newell’s work, *The Book of Creation*, a work on Celtic spirituality where he reflects on the “...ever-present mystery of creation” (Newell 1999, 1–4). We note also that many descriptors of “God” in *Mi'kmaw* languages carry this connotation. As James West notes in his essay, for example, *Maheo* in the Cheyenne, connotes “Great Mystery” (1996, 31).

understanding what the terms actually refer to. The Jesuits focused on the transmission, inculcation, and maintenance of religious practice through a cognitively engaged and affirmed catechism. For the priests this was undertaken via personal appropriation of the *Spiritual Exercises*; for the laity, it was by way of instruction in the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church about the trajectory of God's work leading from a devastated past through the cross toward a renewed future. We note this, for example, in the words of Marc Lescarbot.

He that cometh to God, must believe that he is; and after believing this, one comes gradually to ideas which are farther removed from mere sensual apprehension, such as the belief that out of nothing God created all things, that he made himself man, that he was born of a Virgin, that he consented to die for man, etc. (1610, Vol. 1, 25 emphasis in original)

And again in Biard's 1612 report,

However, it comforts us to see these little Savages, though not yet Christians, yet willingly, when they are here, carrying the candles, bells, holy water and other things, marching in good order in the processions and funerals which occur here. Thus they become accustomed to act as Christians, to become so in reality in his time. (1612, Vol. 2, 21)

And finally, in Biard's 1616 *Relation*,

For our spiritual life depends upon the Doctrine and the Sacraments, and consequently upon those who administer them, according to his holy institution. (1616, Vol. 3, 37)

The *Mi'kmaq*, on the other hand, were concerned about the world in which they found themselves: their way of being within it, the maintenance and the balance of its power, the restoration of its harmony, and provision for the generations within it yet to come – both human and non-human.²⁸⁴ And they believed the Creator provided the means

²⁸⁴ Joe and Choyce note, for example, that “all things in the world have their own spirit, and all things must work in harmony with each other” (1997, 53).

for it to be so by ensuring that everything possessed a measure of the sacred through its inherent spiritual nature. For the Jesuits, on the other hand, who understood the *Mi'kmaq* to have embraced the notion of spiritual forces, witchcraft, and demons, there was still a clear separation between the sacred and the profane, the spiritual and material – and the task before them was to promote the one and drive out the other. We observe this belief in their handling of interment. Their understanding of the land itself was such that one portion of God's creation could be made to have a greater degree of holiness than another. The officiating priest of a *Mi'kmaw* funeral describes, for example, “This Barbarian finally acquiesced; and our Fathers took little André from the profane grave, and placed him in holy ground” (Le Jeune 1636, Vol. 8, 60).

Samuel Vinay and Chris Sugden narrow this point down for us with their description of the historic and very problematic Eurocentric perspective that “human history has been separated into sacred – where God is at work among his people – and secular” (1999, 209). Samuel and Sugden further suggest a firmly held belief that these two spheres of creation will be reunited at some future time of “the final Kingdom in which God will fulfill his purpose by the renewal of all creation” (1999, 210). The implication: there is a future time in which the spiritual reality infused in creation in the beginning of time – the life-giving force which animates, sustains, and pervades all things – will be released again in it when the rest of “creation shares in the glorious freedom of God's children” (1999:210). The intervening period is fraught necessarily, it would seem, with a separation of the spiritual from the material, interrupted only briefly and sporadically by the human being encountering God at worship – itself a limited experience of short duration, cognitively focused and transmitted, and which engages

little of the natural environment except in very narrowly prescribed ways. Said environment is, after all, “natural” and unspiritual and therefore unfit for use – or so the argument frequently goes.²⁸⁵

Though the Jesuits spoke boldly of “discovering [seeing] God in all things,” it seems they ensured that God looked and acted precisely like their theology and fit their religious categories as shaped by the forces we have described herein. Were the Jesuits actually seeing the hand of God at work in the creation or simply looking for pre-determined markers of God’s presence? As a conclusion to our comparison of *Mi’kmaw* and Jesuit spirituality, the latter would appear to be so, given the Jesuit propensity to use reason to guide their understanding. And, if our analysis is accurate, without an awareness of their non-holistic experience of reality, the Jesuits were in no position to see anything new in what God might be doing. In this regard, their views markedly differed from those encountered in the *Mi’kmaq*, who as we have previously noted, were magnanimous enough to acknowledge that there were other ways of being in the world – ways that were very foreign to their experience – yet still proceeding from a singular Creator.

Also central to the Jesuit way of thinking is a form of dualism with a twist – that is to say their idea that sometime in the future God will show His concern for the rest of His creation. For now, His attention is reserved for humanity. This flies in the face of the

²⁸⁵ It is noteworthy that while Samuel and Sugden attempt to show that God’s purposes in society – through an engaged social ethic in the church and direct intervention in the world – are to be seen as in line with His work in individuals in salvation, he, like so many Western-trained theologians, stops short of describing God’s work throughout creation in the full scope of time, past, present, and future, as inclusive of this concern and action.

Apostle Paul's clear teaching that "creation groans in travail awaiting its own redemption even as we also do" (Romans 8: 20–22). Furthermore it suggests that the God of the universe who took five-sixths of creation time to make all of the rest of the creation – a creation which was pronounced "very good" upon its completion²⁸⁶ – would then destroy it as if it had been the cause of the fall, while focusing redemptive activity in Christ on human beings alone. This is somewhat like the booster rocket of the space shuttle, which, having fulfilled its purpose of launching humanity God-ward once again (see Romans 1), is destroyed or cast aside in favor of the smaller vehicle of God's penetrating grace – humanity! The notion seems beyond belief. In the *Mi'kmaw* way of understanding Christian faith, humanity, as well as the rest of creation by the fact of God's life breathed into them,²⁸⁷ enjoy the same place in the schema of God's grace – redeemed by Christ, being redeemed by Christ, and anticipating the redemption of Christ. How is it that the rest of creation attests to God's grace and presence within it as per Job 12 unless it is possessed of a spiritual essence? In this, as we have seen, Jesuit and *Mi'kmaw* diverged historically. And, though there is a space for renewed consideration in the works of twentieth-century Jesuits such as Lonergan, actually their proposals have a qualitatively different feel and expression. The contemporary Jesuit is more likely to discuss these matters in terms of the philosophical and intellectual notion of the "cosmic Christ," but one separated from their own and the rest of creation's temporal, authentic existence in the physical world. The *Mi'kmaq*, on the other hand, would be more likely to see it as a

²⁸⁶ Each day God looked at what he had created and saw that it was good, but on the sixth day, God looked at *everything that he had made* (not just humans), and saw that it was very good.

²⁸⁷ This seems both implicit and explicit in the scriptures – at least from a *Mi'kmaw* understanding of scripture.

lived experience of the interactivity of the Creator engaged with the creation.

To *Mi'kmaw* people, dualism is illogical and linear and does not adequately account for what they observe. By way of example, note the following discussion by Sable and Francis of a common issue in education that *Mi'kmaw* still experience after a century and a-half of residential schooling.

Mi'kmaw has no word for time. Storytelling as it is done in *Mi'kmaw*, has caused difficulties for *Mi'kmaw*-speaking (and thinking) students in writing English essays because they do not follow Western logic for sequencing time. Instead, they often tell stories in the present tense, as though something that happened long ago is happening now. Consequently, despite writing what they consider a good story, they often get lower grades in conventional non-native education programs. Invariably they are told by their teachers that they did not have proper grammar, and their logic needed sequencing. One *Mi'kmaw* woman reported being advised by an Elder that she would do fine if she just learned to think in a linear fashion. (2012, 36, 7)

When the way one thinks is entirely integrated and mostly non-linear, embracing a compartmentalized notion of the spiritual and of spirituality is not simply difficult, it is absurd.

Ferguson and Packer challenge the above widely held notion concerning spirituality with a more palatable perspective. They suggest,

Spirituality as a term is necessarily more synthetic than analytic, since the Bible knows nothing of the fragmentation of the divine-human relationship [and therefore incursions of God into time, incursions significantly vested in the human-God relationship] into sacred and secular, religious and social, *etc.* (1988,103)

Josué Fonseca's (2004, 267) work on spirituality goes further to suggest that perhaps this has been what God had frequently railed about in the up and down relationship with the children of Israel; that they had divided their spirituality – the internal compass that had them pointed toward God – into a distinctly separate spiritual and secular reality. Isaiah

58 is written and directed, observes Fonseca (2004:268), toward this separation and God's anger toward Israel – that they had deemed only a portion of human life important enough to offer as worship and spiritual expression. Perhaps this is the very real crux of Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees, who had separated religious behavior into compartments (Matthew 23:23), of the Apostle Paul's admonition to Timothy that the members of his flock "put [their] religion into practice" (1 Timothy 5:4), and of James' admonition concerning what constitutes "religion, pure and undefiled" (James 1:27).

It would appear from our investigation and discussion that this is precisely what the Jesuits, albeit with a different categorization of the compartments, continued to do in respect of the *Mi'kmaw* and mission. So clearly was this division made that Biard, in his 1616 *Relation*, following his listing of the vast array of material benefits that had accrued to the mission, would sum up the section beginning with these words:

So much for the temporal; but as to the spiritual, in which the inexpressible grace of God raises us to the surname and glory of "most Christian," let us calculate and sum up the benefits which accompany and favor us. (1616, Vol. 4, 28)

Spirituality for *Mi'kmaw* people today continues, for the most part, to be an all-pervasive reality – not one that is segmented and compartmentalized. Furthermore, it is not primarily, if at all, cognitively embraced or apprehended. It is something, which for most, cannot be described except obliquely and incompletely. Furthermore, while it is subject to great individual variability, it is not done as if it were an individual quality of being or form of behavior apart from an active relationship within the rest of creation. The verb-based reality of *Mi'kamoogee*, if nothing else, has continued to make it so. Strictly speaking, it is an intuitive thing but one that is nonetheless real to *Mi'kmaw*

people. It is as if spirituality were the ether in which all things exist much like the fish exists in water. It is all around, and we might reasonably conclude, within the fish, but, were it to possess the capacity for speech, it would not be able to describe it, or perhaps even be cognizant of it except by contrast with some other state in their repertoire of experiences or through the observation of another fish.

Jesuit Spirituality: a Cognitive, Introspective Christianity

European Christian spirituality grew and developed within three influential spheres: discovery and categorization, conquest and consolidation, and evangelism and assimilation.²⁸⁸ Within the order, Jesuit spiritual development, in addition to owing allegiance to other factors, was firmly rooted in this overarching European trajectory. These three counterpoint modalities became the drives of and provided the structural and operational models for evangelization for the Church in lands newly encountered by the European colonial enterprise. They also became the mechanisms by which the Jesuits, as agents of the growing European Catholic intelligentsia, the forerunners of European colonial advance, and the sociopolitical chess pieces of the papacy, articulated Catholic philosophy of the presence of and will of God for humanity. While these three counterpoint modalities are not a direct projection of any single philosophical stream, they nonetheless sit, in nested fashion, in the philosophies of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Socrates, the first of the great trio, engaged the “interior voice,” the voice of

²⁸⁸ See the discussion of the impacts of Western expansion in Neill (1964), Diamond (1998), and Jenkins (2004).

reason and direction in discerning the ways of the maker. According to Anne Waters, Native philosopher, this “was neither an intuitive conscience nor a symptom of mental disorder but an interior psychic audition” (2004, 162).²⁸⁹ It was the means by which Socrates reflected on both his own actions and, more importantly, the actions of “God.” This primal being whom Aristotle later referred to as “the first mover” is not the Creator of the world – indeed, Aristotle thought that the world was not created at all but had been in existence for all eternity – but the fountainhead of all motion. In that sense he is the ultimate cause of everything that happens in the world and is, therefore, able to be logically apprehended. The emphasis is on reason and logic.

It is upon this premise of the logical apprehension of reality and its counterpart, rational dualism, that both Jesuit and wider European thought had been constructed. As Socrates and his cultural colleagues, Plato and Aristotle in their respective times of influence also engaged in this same exercise of thought, doing so out of a committed Greek spiritual understanding set in a specific cultural and locational context which Anne Waters (2004:160) refers to as a “mindspace.”²⁹⁰ In the case of the Greek thinkers, it is rationalistic to be sure, but it is more widely “spiritual” nonetheless. It is this “mindspace” that the Apostle Paul confronts in Acts 17 in the Areopagus on Mars Hill – the need to know and classify, to categorize, to place in logical associations, to apprehend with the mind.

Though birthed in the cradle of this developed logic and epistemology – this

²⁸⁹ See Anne Waters’s discussion of Western philosophical foundations in her essay “Ontology of Identity and Interstitial Being,” in *American Indian Thought*, ed. Anne Waters (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 153–170.

²⁹⁰ Waters, 160-63. Her discussion of “mindspace” provides an insightful analysis of the rudiments of colonial mentality.

inherent life-way rooted in Greek thought and “mindspace” – Jesuit spiritual understanding is, nonetheless, just as much a product of the sociopolitical and intellectual environments through which it grew, particularly the period immediately preceding and during the Enlightenment and the Reformation. This we addressed briefly in Chapter 3. It is this set of assumptions and the logical praxis associated with them that founded the school of Jesuit thought. In fact, it is arguable that the Jesuits were not only the “shock troops” of the counter-reformation but that their propensity for investigation, philosophical debate, and the questions of scientific discovery also made them, in their early days, harbingers of Enlightenment thought – except, of course, where such thought brooked Catholic doctrine and was therefore heresy.²⁹¹ Their positioning within the University of Paris at the outset of the order’s existence made this inevitable.

To push the case further, Edward Grant (1991, 1ff) has made clear that the Jesuit order was significantly influenced by the works of late-sixteenth-century astronomers and natural scientists.²⁹² Since the period between 1543 and 1650 was filled with various forays into contemporary scientific and philosophical investigation, and since the Jesuits were to be the front-runners of Papal directive in regards to dealing with heresy, it seems not only plausible but likely that they were deeply involved in the considerations of, if not embracing, the growing edge of scientific rationalism.²⁹³ In support of this argument I note that the *Journal de Trévoux*, edited by the Jesuits from 1702 through the date of their papal suspension in late 1762, was a mainstay publication of Enlightenment thinkers, including Voltaire.

Robert Palmer is quite certain about Jesuit contribution to and support of the

²⁹¹ See Palmer (1939, 44–58).

²⁹² See our brief discussion on this in Chapter 3.

²⁹³ See Palmer (1939, 44–58).

Enlightenment, from its rudiments to the promotion of its key thinkers:

We must conclude that up to 1750 the Catholic authorities did little to hinder it, that this enlightenment was a general spread of ideas in which persons of many kinds took an active and willing part, and that the Jesuit *Journal de Trévoux* may well have been one of its agents. (1939, 58)

What can be said, therefore, with a measure of certainty, is that during the period of *Mi'kmaw* mission, Jesuit thought – including, we would suggest, their views concerning the nature of the spiritual – was significantly influenced by the growing edge of the scientific/religious debate that would manifest in the doctrines of the Enlightenment emerging between 1650 and 1800. This meant, without much question, that the physical and material world was to be understood very differently from the spiritual; that the spiritual was to be understood primarily in terms of “otherworldliness,” and that it was to be apprehended in a primarily cognitive/emotive fashion. The rest of creation, including its lands and peoples was, by extension, to be viewed as physical and material “stuff,” suited to discovery and manipulation by science and, in the case of its now admittedly human components, for instruction in more civilized ways of thinking and being by European religionists.

Maureen Smith (Waters 2004, 118) makes this point quite emphatically as she describes European culture and spirituality of this period and forward as “intent of the idea of discovery, a religious and a contractual construct which promoted the alleged legitimacy of Christian conquerors.” As Waters herself also notes,

It was from this vantage point of human nature and the European binary dualisms of ontological being in the world, that the newcomers brought a theistic life-way of value hierarchy to America's shores. The Eurocentric ontological depiction of a disconnected, bounded, rational, cultured male father Creator of the universe, stood in antithesis to (what was seen Eurocentrically as) an unrestrained, unbounded, irrational, raw female mother-nature destroyer of the universe. (2004, 102)

Unquestionably, this contributed to the difference in perspective already observed between Jesuit thought and that of the *Mi'kmaw* in Chapter 3 with respect to “being” as an end in itself and “doing” as a function of “being.” Discovery and cognition about discovery framed the experience of being in Jesuit praxis. Furthermore, in Jesuit thought it seems that doing actually created an impetus toward a very circumscribed experience of being,²⁹⁴ whereas in *Mi'kmaw* thought a more robust understanding of their being moved them toward an engaged spiritual praxis – their doing.²⁹⁵ We can imagine that this is at least in part due to the verb-driven nature of *Mi'kamooage* framing the way in which self is conceived.²⁹⁶ Perhaps, for the *Mi'kmaw* person, Descartes would best be restated as *Je pense car je suis* – I think because I am!²⁹⁷

The apparent result of this European developmental trajectory is that Jesuit spirituality became deeply rooted in an appropriate understanding of God as Creator but equally fully in a corollary, though often skewed, perspective of humanity as co-Creator where the focus of their creative energies was the transmission of “truth” as an interior experience of the divine. This was undertaken through liturgy, catechism, and other religious instruction and was, ostensibly, for the coterminous purpose of establishing the eternal and temporal kingdoms. Howard Snyder (Samuel and Sugden 1999, 128) notes that in the extreme this has manifest itself in Christian perspectives of the kingdom of God as a theocratic kingdom or the kingdom as a political state, much like the call for a

²⁹⁴ Or, as some have offered, doing and being in a linear development model ending with the individual “becoming.”

²⁹⁵ Further investigation might reveal this to be perception as opposed to reality, but at the moment it seems a reasonable and fairly commonly held view.

²⁹⁶ For a further treatment of this subject, see Sable and Francis (2012, 33–36).

²⁹⁷ See also footnote 298 and Yazzie Burkart’s rendition of this Descartes turn of phrase.

king in Israel of old. This phenomenon is observable in the correspondence within the Jesuit orbit as in the following portion of dialogue by Marc Lescarbot.

But we must first establish the State, without which the Church cannot exist. And for this reason the first help should be given to this State, and not to what has the pretext of piety. For, when the state is founded it will be its duty to provide for that which is spiritual. (1612, Vol. 2, 49)

The kingdom does not come as announcement vis-à-vis Christ's declaration but as a force of effort and will. God alone cannot usher it in; we must help. That help is, in part, given through the "forced" accession to the will of God in respect of one's faith, material culture, and the exercise of particular religious behaviors – and, it can be reasonably assumed, an equally circumscribed understanding of the nature of the spiritual for which they fought to gain souls.

Mi'kmaw Life – An Experiential Spirituality

In the *Mi'kmaw* realm, as we have seen, spiritual expression is neither forced nor dictated. *Mi'kmaw* people are spiritual by reason of their being, not by reason of their doing – though, as noted previously, *Mi'kmaw* spirituality is very much oriented toward experience within the whole of creation. This experience, however, is a cumulative of the individual's and others' journeys in the world.²⁹⁸ It captures the experience of humanity and the rest of creation with whom they share the earth as sustaining their being and as engaged actively by the Creator.

It is out of this understanding that West (Treat 1996, 32) describes two principle

²⁹⁸ Yazzie Burkhart in Waters (2004:25) observes, "'Cogito, ergo sum' tells us, 'I think, therefore I am.' But Native philosophy tells us, 'We are, therefore I am.'"

differentiations that we can observe between European Christian²⁹⁹ religious perspectives and the premises of the spiritual generally held by *Mi'kmaw* peoples. The first principle is the notion of a shared created reality. That is to say, humans have been created to share in the creation, being neither above nor below all else that has been made. Each aspect of creation is deemed to have a spiritual reality to it and to serve a purpose.³⁰⁰ In most respects, as noted above, this would not conflict at all with the Genesis account of creation, where the writer notes,

Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground – *everything that has the breath of life* in it – I give every green plant for food.” And it was so

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: “*I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you – the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you – every living creature on earth.*” (Genesis 1:29, 30; Genesis 9:8–10 NIV, emphasis added)

This breath of life infused into the rest of creation is the same breath of life infused into humanity, and the same covenant with humanity is made with the rest of creation. This breath, *khayah nephesh*, causes Adam to become a “living soul” (Genesis 1:28–30) and so also with the rest of creation referenced in this part of the narrative.³⁰¹

The second difference is observed in the pursuit of a spiritual vision. For the *Mi'kmaw* person, pursuit of a vision through an experience in and through any other

²⁹⁹ While not specifically a reference to the Jesuits, I believe a case has been sufficiently made for the founding of European society in the same sets of premises as those held by the Jesuits that we can, at this point in the discussion, conflate the two.

³⁰⁰ Or, in many cases, several purposes that are interchangeable.

³⁰¹ The word translated for living חַיָּה (*chay /khah-ee/*) means also the “breath of life,” though it differs from the “breathing” in Genesis 2:7 in the creation of the human, nonetheless, connotes a “spiritual” life.

aspect of creation provides a trail to follow in life as one's spiritual journey unfolds.

Creation is believed to be an integral part of the Creator's ongoing means of revelation and therefore tautologically possessed of a spiritual nature. Dividing the world into spirit and matter, which are respectively good and evil, is therefore antithetical and counter-productive to expressing authentic spirituality since creation, being largely animate and not passive in response to the one who made it, is an ongoing part of the Creator's spiritual revelation.³⁰² As *Mi'kmaw* poet Rita Joe expresses it,

Given the *Mi'kmaq* view that all things in the world have their own spirit, and all things must work in harmony with each other, *Mi'kmaq* show respect for the spirit by extending certain rituals to our interaction with nature. Just as we send off the spirit of our dead with proper rituals and ceremony, we extend a certain amount of recognition to the tree, animal, plants and elements we disturb for our own use.... There are gestures we must follow to keep our minds at ease. We do not apologize for our needs but [in this way] accept the interdependence of all things. (Joe and Choyce 1997, 53)

The above discussion identifies a clear divergence in perspective between *Mi'kmaw* and Jesuit concerning the way in which the spiritual within humanity and the rest of creation is observed and understood. As we have shown, despite the self-imposed commission of the Jesuit order to "discover [see] God in all things," that discovery was predicated on observing or inculcating prescribed understandings, beliefs, and behaviors in a mostly, if not exclusively, cognitive and intellectual fashion. How do we account for this?

³⁰² For an excellent treatment of this as an experiential and linguistic reality in *Mi'kmaw* existence, see Sable and Francis (2012, 39–41).

Spiritual Understanding and Worldview

Some years ago, Paul Hiebert in his work on epistemology, affirmed that “anthropologists have not found a way to move beyond phenomenology to ontological evaluations of the truthfulness and morality of different knowledge” (1999, 96) – and, we might add, ways of being in the world. I would suggest this would also apply to religionists of many stripes in regard to both the innate quality of spirituality and the variation in its experience. Hiebert goes on to note, “In this sense, anthropologists have a long way to go [epistemologically] in moving into a critical realist stance” (1999, 96). Viewed linguistically, this may simply be an example of the framing of the world’s realities and the separation of one from the other through the constructions of language in theories of perception such as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as we have previously noted. Sable and Francis note, for instance, that

There is a subtle difference between *Mi'kmaw* and most Western languages: the placement of the self in the language structure is not the central feature. In fact, there is no distinct, separate word for self. It is only inferred by the inflectional ending added to the verb implying that the self is part of the web of ever-changing relationships. The structure of the language indicates that a *Mi'kmaw* does not put him or herself in the forefront of anything: they seem to leave themselves second to other things or other people. The focus will be on another individual first and then the speaker will be second. (2012, 36)

Focusing outward not only creates a particular disposition toward other human beings, as Sable and Francis observe, it also creates a different disposition toward the other beings within creation, and we would logically assume, the Creator. This disposition positions them in an outward-looking orientation with respect to the “spiritual realm.”

When contrasted with the Jesuit experience, a significantly internalized orientation, many *Mi'kmaw* behaviors may be explained variously: to name a few, we

note, for example, the observed compliance with the interests of the newcomers, which all of the early Jesuits commented on and what Daniel Paul describes as “a host [making] every effort to please a guest” (1993, 9); we observe the willingness to share sustenance, though in the sharing the giver might be placed in jeopardy; and we see the provision for leadership that places one who establishes the needs of the people as his or her focus before being asked to lead. For the *Mi'kmaq* such behaviors would be central to any expression of the nature of the spiritual. It is also, in an abbreviated statement in scripture, the focus of “religion pure and undefiled” (James 1:27). We will return to this in a discussion of belief later in the chapter.

But, the reader may ask, coming back to the comfortable role of empiricism in accessing truth, Can spirituality be “measured” in any way that provides us with a clear description and, out of that description, an unambiguous understanding of the way in which one’s spirituality is expressed in and influences one’s behavior? There are those who would suggest that religiosity is such a measure. This is the usual response of the contemporary Christian when asked about “spirituality,” as I noted above – to proceed to describe the religious behavior in which they engage. It has also been demonstrated to have been the Jesuit understanding – past and present. Is religiosity simply the quantification of external behavior catalogued in prescribed categories as established by European thought? Our survey of the *Mi'kmaw* past and present would suggest that the contemporary *Mi'kmaq* might be repulsed at such an outcome after these many years of resistance to it.

Based on his comments concerning worldview, Richard Tarnas believes that if such a thing as a common spiritual understanding rooted in worldview exists, within European societies at least, it has

experienced a gradual but finally radical shift of psychological allegiance; from God to man, from dependence to independence, from otherworldliness to this world, from the transcendent to the empirical, from myth and belief to reason and fact, from universals to particulars, from a supernaturally determined static cosmos to a naturally determined evolving cosmos, and from a fallen humanity to an advancing humanity. (1991, 119)

As previously noted, given the discussion in his recent work, *Modes of Religiosity*,³⁰³

Harvey Whitehouse (2004: ii) appears to think that religiosity itself, as a function of worldview, can indeed be measured. And, while Whitehouse's work bears more examination, it would appear through his cognitive approach to religious behavior that he has, inadvertently perhaps, only offered a case for religiosity as a measure of spiritual orientation – simply another way of saying religious orientation or lack thereof. Is this not also what the Jesuits were attempting to do as they inculcated religious teachings in *Mi'kmaq* people – seeking to impart a measurable Christian religiosity? Whitehouse's work to the contrary, however, this still leads us right back to the same place from which we started. What continues to obtain is for us to identify that this internal orientation within *Mi'kmaq* – and we would argue, biblically, all of creation – is in fact spirituality, not religious disposition, and that it is itself ontologically situated because of and through the act of creation as something “internal” – that is to say, a spirituality that is outside of and different from what we have referred to as religiosity, worldview, or one of its other constructs, that is identical in all of humanity irrespective of religious focus or behavior.

Hiebert (1976, 357–9), in a more robust attempt to access the nature of worldview and human behavior while not dealing directly with the question of spirituality, does reference religious observance and behavior in his pyramidal perspective of the

³⁰³ The chapter titles are *Modes of Religiosity and Memory*, *The Doctrinal Mode of Religiosity*, *The Imagistic Mode of Religiosity*, *Modes of Religiosity Contrasted*, *Modes of Religiosity in the Real World*, and *The Origins of Modes of Religiosity*.

interaction of worldview and culture. He allows for a variety of constructs in the creation of worldview, which, as can be noted in the adapted table in Appendix E, includes religious orientation. But he does not provide for any clear indication of the role or function of one's spirituality or spiritual understanding in the interplay of these various aspects of worldview. And yet clearly this ought to be, at least for a Christian understanding of the ontology of creation, the most central reality of our anthropology – our understanding of human beings created in God's spiritual image.

Steinbronn (2007, 129-188) represents yet another effort to use worldview as a means of accessing appropriate "Christian spirituality." In his effort to identify worldview as religious pluralism's root, he offers as his corrective a singular, biblically framed perspective that, on first glance, appears to be just what we might want but that, on closer examination, simply re-presents Christian (in this case Lutheran) propositionally appropriated dogma as its foundation. Other works from Christian authors have done very much the same. This is simply a mirror of Jesuit efforts to collect spiritual reality in a cognitively transmissible package that is intellectually appropriated and regurgitated as Christian spirituality. Their collective rootedness in a Eurocentric worldview and theological history leaves the rest of the world's peoples – peoples for whom the dualist's arguments appear fallacious – out in the cold as second-class citizens of our common Creator's universe and its Savior's kingdom.

As we continue in our considerations of the spiritual then, questions surface about worldview and its relationship to spirituality. In compartmentalizing human beings in the aging classification system called worldview, where spirituality is absent in the constellation of its contributors, are scholars such as Hiebert (1976, 358–9) creating a real

and necessary distinction or an imagined and spurious separation of lived realities?³⁰⁴ Or are Hiebert, Whitehouse, and others suggesting that spirituality is not measurable, and therefore not empirically verifiable, so only religious orientation or the lack thereof makes it into worldview because it is substantively verifiable?³⁰⁵ If so, we find ourselves at the continuing impasse of the Eurocentric “worldview” as arbiter of behavioral truth since it has both created and holds for itself the authority to maintain the categories it has created. Let me suggest that perhaps *Mi'kmaw* and other Indigenous perspectives that offer spirituality as ontological in nature and therefore outside, beside, or perhaps even undergirding worldview and its categorical contributors, is a way forward.

In the chart in Appendix “E” I have adapted and added to Hiebert’s original work undertaken in 1976 with peoples from India so as to provide a comparative of Jesuit and *Mi'kmaw* worldview – including a conception of their respective, “observed” spiritual understandings.³⁰⁶ While the inclusion of spirituality as an innate quality of life is offered here as an inclusion in the worldview matrix, it is done only to suggest what might work for some people – not as either the preferred way forward or, for that matter, the *Mi'kmaw* way of understanding. The work that needs to be done at this point is the conception and construction of a model to graphically and metaphorically represent a different interaction – one that shows spirituality as an ontologically generated and interconnecting reality of creation. The chart is flat, categorical, and segmented, whereas

³⁰⁴ A question arises as to whether this is what Hiebert (1999) refers to in his assessment that for Christian faith to be fully integrated change must occur at the worldview level, bringing significant and lasting Christian discipleship?

³⁰⁵ This is certainly what many in the Christian academic community would attest to be true.

³⁰⁶ This has been adapted from Hiebert (1976).

the conception is dynamic, interconnected, and interactive; spirituality would, in fact, be the locus. In the last chapter we will propose a way forward with this.

Behavior and Belief – *Mi'kmaq* and Jesuit

The story is told of the time in the late 1800s when Niagara Falls was a popular spot to engage in all manner of feats of daring. One such feat was crossing the falls on a tightrope. Several had succeeded, and so it had become somewhat passé. That is, until one enterprising young man set up his apparatus, traversed the falls several times, and then put a wheelbarrow, filled with several objects of some size, on the rope. He proceeded to push it back and forth across the falls. Then the moment came. He asked if the people in the assembled audience believed he could push the wheelbarrow across the falls with one of them in it. By this time all were convinced of his prowess, so they acknowledged that he could. His next question stunned them all, however, as he asked, “Then who will get in?” Not a person came forward until a young boy shouted, “I will!” The boy’s response, we can be sure, left the onlookers to wonder and leaves us to ask, “Who truly believed?”

In my consideration of belief and behavior I acknowledge that there is no simple binary correlation between the two things. Life is more complex than that – especially in contemporary settings. But there is an observable relationship between the two nonetheless. What one believes does have some form of tangible expression in religious behavior, altruism, or self and/or other-directed activity. What’s more, by way of example, the epistle of James suggests that a particular kind of behavior is to be an

expectation of one who expresses Christian belief or faith.

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder.³⁰⁷

But we must be clear, neither behavior nor belief is what we are describing as spirituality – they are simply an indication that such might, in fact, exist alongside, or undergirding and providing the impetus for it. Let's compare statements made by missionaries in the first period of contact and mission then to see if we can ascertain what that relationship might have looked like for the *Mi'kmaq*:

Furthermore, rude and untutored as they are, all their conceptions are limited to sensible and material things; there is nothing abstract, internal, spiritual or distinct. *Good, strong, red, Black, large, hard*, they will repeat to you in their jargon; *goodness, strength, redness, blackness* – they do not know what they are. And as to all the virtues you may enumerate to them, *wisdom, fidelity, justice, mercy, gratitude, piety*, and others, these are not found among them at all except as expressed in the words *happy, tender love, good heart*.

Likewise they will name to you a wolf, a fox, a squirrel, a moose, and so on to every kind of animal they have, all of which are wild, except the dog; but as to words expressing universal and generic ideas, such as *beast, animal, body, substance*, and the like, these are altogether too learned for them. (Biard 1612, Vol. 2, 7)

Clearly, the Jesuits valued and promoted the internalized concepts of what they deemed spiritual behavior – “goodness, strength, redness, blackness” or “wisdom, fidelity, justice, mercy, gratitude, piety” – almost as much as the behavior itself. This was a very circumscribed understanding of what constituted spirituality – it was embodied in civilized and/or uncivilized activities and behaviors. And the *Mi'kmaq* neither experienced nor expressed it like that.

³⁰⁷ *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), James 2:18–19.

What is clear is that Jesuit writings indicate that among the *Mi'kmaq* there was a deep belief in the interconnectedness of the physical and spiritual realms, and in the simultaneous provision of their Creator for all circumstances life might bring, via this interconnectivity. Le Jeune, it would seem, notes this trait in the lack of *Mi'kmaw* attachment to wealth and possessions in offering the following comment.

They are very generous among themselves and even make a show of not loving anything, of not being attached to the riches of the earth, so that they may not grieve if they lose them. (1634, Vol. 6, 68)

If, as the Bible says, to place one's thoughts on the things above is to deny those things on earth; and, if [by] the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get³⁰⁸; and, if in everything [you] do to others as you would have them do to you³⁰⁹; and, if such behaviors are, according to Jesus' own teachings, the measure of spirituality, then perhaps *Mi'kmaw* people were much further ahead than the Jesuit assessment of them. What's more, the Jesuits might have done well to focus on their own people with the same intensity³¹⁰ given French society of the day. So once again we ask, is it behavior or cognition or interiority or something else that accesses

³⁰⁸ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Mt 7:2.

³⁰⁹ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Mt 7:12.

³¹⁰ This is not to incite the age-old Jesuit controversy but a simple acknowledgment of the degree to which the Jesuit order has and, by some accounts, continues to be involved in the political machinations of the papacy and of the wider Catholic Church, often condemning social change while simultaneously brooking those changes in their own midst. See, for example, McDonough and Bianchi (2003). The authors note, "the Society of Jesus [has gone] from a fairly unified organization into a smaller, looser community with disparate goals and an elusive corporate identity. From its role as a traditional subculture during the days of immigrant Catholicism, the order has changed into an amalgam of countercultures shaped around social mission, sexual identity, and an eclectic spirituality. The story of the Jesuits reflects the crisis of clerical authority and the deep ambivalence."

what it means to be spiritual and to be possessed of spirituality?

For Phillip Hughes “actual beliefs,” as over against stated ones, “are those beliefs a person holds which influence his behaviour and actions” (1984, 251). By this Hughes means that action observed related to belief provides the real indication of tenets fully held, not the other way around. He suggests that deeply held internal observances are expressed in specific action related to belief. Hughes further defines “religious system of beliefs” as “the organized body of teachings and precepts, ceremonial instructions, etc; of a given religion” (1984, 252). In effect, he asserts that a religious system of beliefs is coterminous with the entire corpus of that which theologically and historically defines any religious system such as Christianity or Hinduism.³¹¹ In what ways does this theory of relationship between belief and action related to belief reflect what we observe in *Mi'kmaq* and Jesuit and how does it support our thesis?

The *Mi'kmaq*, in contrast to the Jesuits, had little in the way of systematized or organized belief. As Biard himself noted, “They have no temples, sacred edifices, rites, ceremonies or religious teaching, just as they have no laws, arts or government” (1612, Vol. 2, 26). Religious systems of belief then, according to this account, were limited to “certain customs and traditions of which they are very tenacious.”³¹²

³¹¹ Hughes (1984, 251–258) describes three levels of belief: “banked beliefs,” “religious systems of belief,” and “actual beliefs.” For our purposes, only the “religious systems of belief” and “actual beliefs” of the *Mi'kmaq* and Jesuits will be analyzed through selected examples. Banked beliefs come into play as we note, for example, the Jesuit disposition toward scientific discovery – a discipline at times in conflict with the stated dogma of the Jesuit Catholic religious system and therefore held in check by them behaviorally in favor of the latter. See, for example, the discussion in Grant (1991, 1–5).

³¹² As for banked belief, none is immediately forthcoming in either the literature or the praxis observed in contemporary *Mi'kmaw* society, save their value in honest speech, which at times flies in contradiction to their non-confrontational behavior.

In the matter of actual belief for the *Mi'kmaq*, however, there is a more complex picture of behavior that demonstrates an understanding of the interconnectedness of all things. As has become clear from the many Jesuit accounts and *Mi'kmaw* oral traditions, the historic *Mi'kmaw* desire for balance, and its restoration when breeched, extended much further than the Jesuits were otherwise familiar with. In his reflection on this trait, Biard noted, for example,

If they suspect that any one seeks to accomplish an evil deed by means of false pretenses, they do not restrain him with threats, but with gifts. From the same desire for harmony comes their ready assent to whatever one teaches them. (1610, Vol. 1, 66)

Contemporarily, in his description of “the founding principles” of our relationships, Mohawk philosopher Taiaiake Alfred comments about such behavior as the *Mi'kmaq* displayed, that it reflects an innate “spiritual foundation.” He notes, for example,

[This] spiritual foundation links politics, family, society and the individual together.... It is not about judging public life in religious terms. Instead, it has to do with a sense of place that involves treating humans as just one of the elements in the great circle (Alfred in Ralston Saul 2008, 75)

As if in support of Alfred’s assertion, and as an example of “religion pure and undefiled,” Le Jeune observed,

There are many orphans among these people.... These poor children are scattered among the Cabins of their uncles, aunts, or other relatives. Do not suppose that they are snubbed and reproached because they eat the food of the household. Nothing of the kind, they are treated the same as the children of the father of the family, or at least almost the same, and are dressed as well as possible (1634, Vol. 6, 68).

In respect of organized religion, there is no debating that the Jesuits had and continue to have a clearly defined and complex “religious system.”³¹³ As we have seen,

³¹³ Because we are not in contact with the individuals and groups in question

the focus of their engagement in mission with the *Mi'kmaq* on an individual and small-group basis was almost exclusively catechetical and systematic in nature – inculcating the Jesuit system of belief into *Mi'kmaq* converts. Mission enclaves, such as the one at Sillery,³¹⁴ were established to ensure greatest possible success in such a venture. Catholic tradition, forged in the fire of European Christian development, as interpreted through the Jesuit lenses of Ignatian structure, the *Spiritual Exercises*, and their allegiance to the papacy, took precedence, irrespective of any differences in language, experience, and “worldview” they and the *Mi'kmaq* may have had. What is perhaps of greatest concern to our discussion here, however, plays out in how they plied their stated goal of “seeing God in all things” within this intricate and convoluted religious system they were a part of, particularly the way in which they applied this belief, or tenet, to the *Mi'kmaq* and the context of *Mi'kma'ki*.

Frequently throughout this study we have noted Jesuit behavior toward the *Mi'kmaq* (and others) at variance with the belief that God was to be seen in all things. For example, to describe both the context of the land, the people and its other creatures as pagan, heathen, wild, devil worshippers, and demonic hardly seems like a discovery of God!³¹⁵ Furthermore, to observe the world of the *Mi'kmaq* as godless and spiritually reprobate, while simultaneously seeking to establish an earthly kingdom there “in the place of Creation’s bounty,” seems to describe a set of beliefs and actions related to those

(some have since died) so as to observe action related to belief, we are left to use their words and the words of others at times as both the statement of belief and the evaluator of their actions concomitant with those beliefs.

³¹⁴See Thwaites (1896, Vol. 1, 9) for a description of this and other mission enclaves used in the inculcation of the Catholic catechism.

³¹⁵ Though we did note in Chapter 3 that their orientation toward the universe necessarily disposed them to take this view.

beliefs at odds with one another. Lastly, to suggest, as they did, that the French society and civilization were far superior to that of the *Mi'kmaq* while in virtually the next sentence condemning their own people as miscreant and degenerate, uneducated and spiritually dead, suggests significant incongruence, while simultaneously raising questions about the efficacy of what the Jesuits taught concerning the nature of the spiritual and of Godly spirituality. If cognition and introspection concerning the spiritual, alongside the inculcation of new understandings through instruction and intellectual development was the way toward Christian spirituality, then the Jesuits failed miserably since, by their own admission, many French people were not at the level of development they assumed should be the case. What of the more contemporary context?

Contemporary Contrasts

In contemporary society among Canadian Jesuits, there is significant diversity of thought and action – though the September 15, 2011 *Catholic Register* proclaimed that the *Spiritual Exercises* of Loyola were still at the Jesuits' core. Our focus in this section will be on two of the most prominent Canadian Jesuits of the twentieth century, Bernard Lonergan and Karl Rahner – both of whom are classified as forerunners of the post liberal school.³¹⁶

Jesuits such as Bernard Lonergan continue to hold, at least publicly, to the theological fundamentals and spiritual praxis of Jesuit Catholicism, but as in the case of Lonergan, many have delved even more deeply into the historic philosophical constructs of its theology. Almost as if it were specifically designed to provide the focus for

³¹⁶ Peter Bellini has noted that the post liberals include such heavyweights as George Lindbeck, Hans Frei, Stanley Hauerwas, and R.R. Reno.

Hiebert's epistemological critique, Lonergan's notion of a generalized empirical method is deeply entrenched in his philosophy and theology. Dunne similarly, observes,

Lonergan ... referred to [generalized empirical method] as a *critical realism*. By *realism*, in line with the Aristotelian and Thomist philosophies, he affirmed that we make true judgments of fact and of value, and by *critical*, he aimed to ground knowing and valuing in a *critique* of the mind similar to that proposed by Kant. (1985, 6)

In appealing to Aristotle, Aquinas, and Kant, Lonergan nods once more to the pairing of Greco-Roman dualism and structure to construct the philosophical foundations of his theology, shunning, in large measure, a more holistic and ontologically rooted framework. "Self-governing reason" and a self-referential, self-centered thought process for morality stand in stark contrast to the *Mi'kmaw* notion of other-centeredness. Though Lonergan offers a critique of much in society today, Dunne's treatment of Lonergan suggests his notion of spirituality appears to reflect more "when we come to knowledge" than it does an ontological impartation of God's spirit.

Examining Karl Rahner's work, on the other hand, we find that he focused his efforts within the developing school of thought known as transcendental Thomism. His "anonymous Christian theory," developed within this framework, would fly in the face of the often-contradictory critique of his forebears who observed the *Mi'kmaq* as at one time "devilish" and "pagan" and at another "laudable savages." Rahner would offer instead that the times when the very commendable behavior of the *Mi'kmaq* was observed, as reflected in Biard's and other observations, it would itself serve to appropriate God's generous grace for salvation. This attitude is commendable in its direction even if not agreed with.

Rahner's understanding of the nature of the spiritual is more mystical than Lonergan's, but both are still largely framed within a philosophical view that has epistemology trumping ontology as the framer of human existence.³¹⁷ Both are also very individualistic and place the center of transcendence within the individual intellect, and see the purpose for transcendence as being, strictly speaking, anthropocentric. In this sense, it is not vastly different than many non-Christian or humanistic responses such as are found in the various academies of science.³¹⁸ Rahner, clearly more situate in a phenomenological appropriation of God, invites people toward "union with God" with an almost ethereal call. One can sense the influence of the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* here, yet they surface in such a way as to be interpreted within the closed system of Cartesian thought.

Peter Bellini offers a sound critique of the epistemic foundations in Cartesian and

³¹⁷ Both Rahner and Lonergan have a very utilitarian view of the rest of creation – that it serves to cradle the growing awareness and need of the human community, providing simultaneously, the raw material to meet their physical needs as they move toward, as Rahner described it, "union with God."

³¹⁸ In a recent dialogue session as part of the Veritas Forum, John Nolt, professor of environmental ethics at the University of Tennessee, spoke of the need for self-transcendence as the means of and focus for the health and well being of nature. By "nature," Nolt meant, "Those parts and aspects of the world that are neither human nor product of humanity. Nature includes, for example, all non-human, non-domesticated, and non-genetically engineered living organisms and various functional aggregates of them – species, populations, ecosystems, etc. But it also includes geological, hydrological and meteorological, planetary, and galactic systems and their components. While one can value any of these things – perhaps even value them somehow as ends – self-transcendence is true only if its object has a good of its own that we both value as an end and conceive reasonably accurately. That any nonliving thing – star, cloud, crystal, atom – has a good of its own is doubtful. True self-transcendence toward an object requires, moreover, an accurate conception of its authentic good, and it seems unlikely that we have any accurate conception of the authentic good of any nonliving thing. Self-transcendence toward nature, then, means primarily, if not exclusively, self-transcendence towards nature's living things" (2010, 162–182). This is an admirable, albeit still anthropocentric and circumscribed idea of the spirituality of all of creation.

Kantian dualism of both Rahner and Lonergan in his book, *Participation: Epistemology and Mission Theology*. He notes, for example,

Descartes would open the door for Kantian dualism, the transcendental ego of the German idealists like Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and the phenomenology of Husserl, Heidegger and the post-structuralists, and other movements that would further deflate the transcendent, that which is above or outside of the transcendental ego, the empirical ego or the empirical world. This Cartesian inversion of being and thinking intensely advances the collapse of ontology into a closed system of individuated pure reason and subjective consciousness. (2010, 31)

This theological and philosophical understanding and praxis is certainly moving away from the notion of the spiritual and of spirituality being ontologically framed, the core or essential quality of a creation in relationship with its Creator. What's more, I would suggest this has taken Jesuitism quite a distance from their forebears in the faith and the order.

Anthropologist Irving Hallowell wrote concerning the study of beliefs embedded in story that

what people choose to talk about is always important for our understanding of them, and the narratives they choose to transmit from generation to generation and listen to over and over again can hardly be considered unimportant in a fully rounded study of their culture. When, in addition, we discover that all of their narratives, or certain classes of them, may be viewed as true stories, their significance for actual behavior becomes apparent. For people act on the basis of what they believe to be true, not on what they think is mere fiction. Thus one of the generic functions of the "true" story, in any human society is to reinforce the existing system of beliefs about the nature of the universe, man and society. (Hallowell in Smith 1995,19)

How have we observed the contemporary Jesuit speaking of themselves in their stories and narratives of Creator and creation? Has it not been largely human centered, dualistic,

and framing the focus on the Creator in an, at times, convoluted cognitive and introspective philosophical exercise? Contrast this with Rita Joe; in the poem we began this chapter with, she proclaims her deep allegiance to both Christian and traditional belief.

While Taking part in a traditional ceremony,
 I felt good.
 When I take part in a Christian ritual,
 I sense the two functions are not that different,
 Sincerity playing part in both.
 I experience both, I am Micmac,
 The true bond dwelling in my heart,
 Spirituality bridging the two. (1996, 156)

Her own response to contemporary socio-cultural reality bears truth to her words and ways: “I am both a Christian person and a traditional person. The traditional part is what I was born into; understanding it reminds me whether or not what I am doing is right” (Joe 1996, 153). Rita Joe reflects what has been observed to be the commonly held *Mi'kmaw* understanding that we framed with Daniel Paul’s words earlier, “If the same God is worshiped by all men, the mode of worship is incidental” (Paul 1993, 9).³¹⁹ To both Joe and Paul, there is but one God and God is not specifically *Mi'kmaq* or European – God is bigger than either and both.

In respect of behavior that reflects belief, we can see from our study that, even in the dire circumstance of the twentieth century, through their culturally rooted and historic practices of sharing, *Mi'kmaw* people moved quickly to the aid of another to ensure that

³¹⁹ Though in some circumstances, as for example, we observe in the interviews recorded in Robinson’s work, individual *Mi'kmaq* may respond to religious colonialism in backlash fashion, there is a widely perceived community expectation that the converged practices of the historic *Mi'kmaq* and Catholic faith continue as the main spiritual foundations of *Mi'kmaw* life.

whatever resource they had was provided to anyone in need. For example, in a contemporary twist on an ancient practice of the funerary rite, contemporary *Mi'kmaq* hold an auction called *salitte*, at which “people donate items to [an] auction, then attend the auction to bid on other items, or even on their own” (Sable and Francis 2012, 25). In this way the needs for the grieving family are ensured to be fully met – though they have done so in a more contemporarily acceptable way.

Unfortunately, some *Mi'kmaq* from the residential school era are like the believers referenced in James 4:17, who “knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it.” This is particularly noteworthy in some people’s engagement with the environment, when they often struggle to care effectively for their own lands and possessions.³²⁰ Contemporary *Mi'kmaq* – particularly those directly impacted by the residential school era³²¹ and other government interventions of an ongoing nature, experience a greater level of conflict in this regard between stated belief and action related to belief than did their ancestors. In situations I have observed, the internal discord is so noteworthy as to cause many to destroy themselves in despair – despondent that that they cannot live as they know they should.

³²⁰ See the work of George Erasmus and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1993). Anecdotally, various sources have suggested that the confinement to small tracts, the suppression of cultural and spiritual practices and the restriction on language transmission have been the single-most significant contributors to this disparity.

³²¹ Though communities like Sillery in the 1600s and forward were essentially established to serve the same purpose, residential schools in Canada, distinctly established for the dual purpose of civilizing and Christianizing, began in 1820 with the Anglican Church. Over more than a century and a half, legislation such as the *Protection of Indians Act* of 1850 and the *Gradual Civilization Act* of the Province of Canada in 1857 would entrench in law what, it could be argued, the Jesuits and other missionaries had begun – the forced assimilation, spiritually, religiously, and culturally, of the Native peoples of Canada.

Despite the forgoing, however, a central aspect of *Mi'kmaw* life that continues to be consistently spoken in story and lived in life, is the *Mi'kmaw* understanding that spirituality is indeed ontological – that it is innate and not a function of specific actions one might take related to that belief. The most destitute and wayward “sinner” is considered as spiritual as the most pious, upright member of the community. While concern may be obvious for such a person’s behavior, it is not so as to castigate or, for that matter remonstrate the person’s spirituality.³²²

Spirituality and Locus

Let me suggest, based on my study, that one way we can begin to deal with the data is to identify the central framing perspective of the Jesuits and *Mi'kmaq* concerning their experience and understanding of spirituality.³²³ Clearly, from this study of the *Mi'kmaw* and Jesuit, we can see their respective views have been defined and shaped by a variety of contributors: for the *Mi'kmaq*, by an engaged, open, integrative notion of the

³²² Note the difference here with the story with which we began Chapter 2.

³²³ In their recent book, *The spiritual brain: A neuroscientist's case for the existence of the soul*, Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary discuss the relationship between neuroscience and religious experience. They note the following “The transcendental impulse to connect with God and the spiritual world represents one of the most basic and powerful forces in *Homo sapiens sapiens*. For that reason, religious, spiritual and/or mystical experiences [RSMs] point to a fundamental dimension of human existence. These experiences are at the heart of the world’s great religions. Not surprisingly, RSMs are commonly reported across all cultures. For instance, a 1990 Gallup poll assessing the incidence of religious experiences in the American adult population revealed that more than half (54%) of the persons polled answered yes to the following question: *Have you ever been aware of, or influenced by, the presence or a power – whether you call it God or not – which is different from your everyday self?* RSMs can have life-changing effects and lead to a marked psychospiritual transformation.” (2007, 290)

creation and Creator; for the Jesuits, by a more circumscribed, cognitively, and introspectively engaged set of “spiritual” practices and behaviors. As they observed life through their respective “locus,” their views and activities were accordingly shaped further. For the contact era *Mi'kmaw* person, we have shown this is most likely to have been an “engaged experience” with and within the wider creation, including the innate spirituality present therein. This was their locus.

For the Jesuit missionary, as we have seen, the context of *Mi'kma'ki* is more likely to have been experienced within a significant cognitive and spiritual dissonance: the expected behavior of the *Mi'kmaq* was not clearly in evidence – at least not all the time if their observations even remotely ring true – whereas the unexpected was. In addition to the obvious, albeit strange, spirituality they witnessed, the Jesuits were forced to try to explain what they experienced of the altruism, care, virtue, and courtesy of the *Mi'kmaq* within their very behaviorally oriented framework for understanding the nature of the spiritual life. Heathens were not supposed to engage in such practices – since many they encountered in France who avowed themselves Christian most certainly did not. Their response, however, was to engage in the default modality of comparing *Mi'kmaw* spirituality to their cognitive and introspective understanding of faith and spiritual practice.³²⁴ *Mi'kmaw* ways fell distinctly short and were therefore dismissed. It was not that they were not interested in seeing such behaviors, it is simply that for the Jesuits, the locus of the spiritual was first and foremost to be found in the intellectual embrace of biblical truth and personal “cognitive introspection.” Note the brief description of the life of one convert:

³²⁴ Contemporary propositional-truth-based faith is of the same ilk – cognitive – asking for “mental assent” to the statements of truth presented – this is strictly speaking intellectual in nature and does not seek to engage the whole being.

This man, who survived hardly fifteen months after becoming a Christian, and was accorded but a few days of our training, was nevertheless rendered illustrious by many virtues truly Christian and belonging to a pious spirit; and, indeed, unique marks of an upright character had presaged in him this fruit which was so rich, a short time previously, while he was still living according to his ancestral customs. (Lescarbot 1618, Vol. 2, 83)

Despite the tautological argument of James (1:27ff), righteous behavior was to follow, not lead conversion. To Lescarbot, whatever pious fruit may have been present before the instruction of the *Mi'kmaq* was simply window dressing – not of spiritual value until the convert was instructed in the catechism and was properly “enlightened.” Spirituality was about cerebral comprehension and prescribed learning of catechetical truths, written prayers, and liturgies.³²⁵ This was proper spiritual behavior for the Jesuits.

Diagramming this by focusing on the six areas of our investigation may be of some help in understanding what we have discovered. I am suggesting that we use the term “locus,” the mathematical concept of convergence, to assess what we have found. This might be considered the “spiritual locus,” that is to say the point where the interpretation of the nature of the spiritual and of spirituality takes place.

³²⁵ This method was used to great effect through the employment, by some Jesuits, of what came to be known as *Mi'kmaq* hieroglyphic writing to encode Catholic prayers and the liturgies of worship. See also Schmidt and Marshall (1995).

Table 6.2. Spiritual Locus Comparison

French Jesuit	Mi'kmaq
PHYSICAL WORLD	PHYSICAL WORLD
world is to conquer	world is kindred
creation is below and subject	creation is beside and shared
FOCAL ACTIVITY in CREATION	FOCAL ACTIVITY in CREATION
▼	▼
<i>Acquisition/accumulation: finding God</i>	<i>Utility/functionality: harmony within the Creator</i>
_____	_____
Drive: Security	Drive: Survival
_____	_____
LOCUS	LOCUS
▼	▼
Cognition, Knowledge and Industry	Intuition and Engaged Experience
SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS	SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS
mechanistic/material spirituality knowledge and destination focus circumscribed view of the sacred idolatrous potential – creating	organic/synthetic spirituality activity and journey focus expansive view of the sacred idolatrous potential – creation

As we can see above, for the Jesuits, this “spiritual locus” is largely resident within the cognitive domain expressed in industrious behavior. Pursuit of success, growth, progress (defined often as increasing technological and material advancement), “getting ahead,” or climbing the social/intellectual ladder in pursuit of an end state defined by “security and stability” as the objective for life – these are appropriate identifiers of a person or group with a befitting Christian spirituality. In contrast, for *Mi'kmaq* the locus is what can, at times, be construed as an over-emphasis on the rest of creation and a diminishment of the uniqueness of the nature and role of human beings within creation. The corollary is a fuzzy idea of the Creator/creation relationship in an almost monistic way. Expressed properly, the focus is harmony with other elements of natural creation, stewardship of the land, restoration of brokenness, preservation and maintenance of created order – all in pursuit of a state similar to the Hebrew concept of “shalom.”³²⁶ Stated another way, this might be expressed as a disposition in life toward industry and progress (“that which we create”) for the Euro-North American, and engaged experience (“that which is created”), for the *Mi'kmaw* person respectively.

As the chart above suggests, each locus has the potential to move people toward different kinds of behavior emerging from their respective understanding of spirituality. Each system is equally “integrated” in that this locus is influenced by or brings together all the various elements of each person, group, or culture’s experience within creation. Furthermore, there is equal potential for a “Creator-centered” expression of the locus or a “creation/creature-centered” expression. Extending what we have discovered here, we can project that this potential, what biblical and Christian theology has called idolatry,

³²⁶ See Woodley (2012). See also Snyder Scandrett (2011).

when acted upon, looks different for the Indigenous person as against the Euro-North American person. For the Euro-North American person, the idolatrous cultural expression is found in the creaturely comforts and satisfactions that can be created through human knowledge and ingenuity. For the Indigenous person on the other hand, it expresses itself in idolatry through the elevation of the natural environment and the things of the created order to occupy the place of the Creator in a confusion of the tension between Creator as transcendent and immanent. Let me interpret some of the contributors to the “why” I have charted *Mi'kmaq* and Jesuit as I have.

Some Interpretation

In the early days of contact, *Mi'kmaw* peoples lived in societies organized around day-to-day existence – what we might simply acknowledge as a survival society. Many of the traditional stories of the people make this point.³²⁷ For any member or collection of members not to contribute to the health and well-being of the entire band would have risked the whole band's continuity. To survive required maintaining balance and harmony within a wide range of situations and contexts, ensuring that relationships were kept in good order, acknowledging and ensuring that each being within the interconnected web of relationships had a contribution to make – and made that contribution – to the existence of every other being. It also necessitated an attitude of thankfulness for the contribution that each made so as to ensure none took their existence for granted or took more than needed. The locus of this drive for survival dictated that creation would necessarily be perceived as

³²⁷ See, for example, Rand and Webster (1894).

a place where sufficient good is available for all – provided that no single person took advantage of that good in a selfish manner. Survival required that one stay attuned to the visible, audible, and tactile nuances within creation that send messages to the observer, helping them to journey well within creation. If a misstep occurred, and balance was lost, this same disposition assisted them to correct the misstep and secure again the correct path – the path of harmony. As we have seen in the study, this characterized much of the way of *Mi'kmaw* life.

On the other hand, when security is the locus, a person's activities in the world are focused so as to ensure that security is maintained. Boundaries are clearly defined and maintained. For the Jesuits this meant that they needed to clearly circumscribe what it meant to be both spiritual and material beings. One did not flow over into nor influence the other except in undesirable ways since temporal existence was simply a vehicle used, when lived in an acceptably spiritual way, to obtain eternal life. The “husk” of life was, ultimately, irrelevant. For the Jesuits, this was even more powerfully true of the “non-human, non-spiritual” aspects of creation. Clearly, this was, to a large extent, a default modality due to the trajectory that they had been inserted into – a trajectory established by earlier events in Christian history outside their direct control.

Security also required one to be intimately aware of one's perimeter – where the boundaries are – in this case, the parameters of a faith that is accepted by God and the church, complete with allowable spiritual practice. Knowledge is of paramount concern as security is achieved through knowledge: if I know the environment in which I find myself then I can apply the template that I have developed over time to analyze those boundaries and makes sense of the context in which I find myself. Security would be an

overarching concern for the Jesuits, given the political, social, spiritual, and religious climate of the day. They were the shock troops of the counter-reformation, and as such theirs was a multi-faceted responsibility that included doctrinal purity and missional effectiveness.³²⁸ Their understanding of spirituality reflected this reality.

While on first blush security and survival might appear to be closely related, a more careful examination would show that whereas security suggests an established and comfortable place that one is seeking to secure, survival is aware of the fragility of life and just how dependent on other aspects within creation, including other human beings, one truly is. Security further suggests that one has acquired sufficient knowledge to know how to provide safeguards and/or ensure that one has developed techniques for investigating new circumstance so as to ensure stability is maintained. Survival on the other hand, is aware that no matter how much knowledge is obtained, no matter how much wisdom is gained, there is always the unknown, the mysterious; the uncontrolled that one must not assume one can fully manage.

If we were to sum up this section simply, it would be to say that while there has been much water under the bridge of *Mi'kmaw* life, their abiding commitment to and practice of an inherent spirituality has not changed dramatically over the years – though, as we have seen, there are at least three frameworks now, two of which include Catholicism, within which this is currently expressed. The stories told concerning such matters, and the behaviors exhibited by the people in respect of the teachings the stories carry, have a measure of congruence that is uncanny given the passage of time and the

³²⁸ Jenkins suggests this is “a fundamental theme in the history of religious attitudes: namely, how mainstream [societies] over time have come to perceive what is and is not religious”(2004, 12).

level of hardship endured. In this sense *Mi'kmaq* continue to demonstrate clear and undeniable action related to the belief they profess about the spirituality of all of creation – irrespective of the religious system within which they might express a particular faith.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and General Implications

They are always good-natured to their guests, whom, for the time, they consider as belonging to the wigwam, especially if they understand even a little of the Gaspesian tongue. You will see them supporting their relatives, the children of their friends, the widows, orphans, and old people, without ever expressing reproach for the support or the other aid which they give them. It is surely necessary to admit this is a true indication of a good heart and a generous soul.

I can say with truth that I have specially devoted myself to the mission of the Gaspesia because of the natural inclination the Gaspesians have for virtue. One never hears in their wigwams any impure words, not even any of those conversations which have a double meaning. Never do they in public take any liberty, I do not say criminal alone, but even the most trifling; no kissing, no badinage [banter] between the young persons of different sexes; in a word, everything is said and is done in their wigwams with much modesty and reserve. (LeClercq 1691, 245,46)

On January 25, 1841, Grand Chief *Pemmeenauweet* sent a letter to Queen Victoria to express his concern for his collected peoples (Nova Scotia 1838, 154). He was the Grand Keptin of the *Mi'kmaw* people of Nova Scotia at the time. In his letter he wrote of the hardship that his people were experiencing in light of the harsh and racist treatment they were receiving at the hands of the colonial government:³²⁹

To the Queen,
Madam,

I am the chief of my people, the Micmac tribe of Indians in your province of Nova Scotia, and I was recognized, and declared to be the Chief, by our good friend Sir John Cope Sherbrooke, in the White man's fashion, twenty-five years ago. I have yet the papers which he gave me.

Sorry to hear that the King is dead. Am glad to hear that we have a

³²⁹ Note that it was just such treatment – not just of the *Mi'kmaq* but of the majority of other Indian people – that ultimately led to the proclamation into legislation in the Province of Canada, by the British Crown, of the Protection of Indians Act of 1850 – some 12 years later.

good Queen, whose Father I saw in this Country. He loved the Indians.

I cannot cross the Great Lake to talk to you, for my Canoe is too small, and I am old and weak. I cannot look upon you, for my eyes do not see so far. You cannot hear my voice across the Great Waters. I therefore send this Waumpum and Paper talk to tell the Queen I am in trouble. My people are in trouble.

I have seen upwards of 1000 moons. When I was young I had plenty, now I'm old, poor and sickly too. My people are poor. No Hunting Grounds, no Beaver, no Otter, No Nothing. Indians poor, poor forever, No Store, No Chest, No Clothes. All these woods once ours. Our Fathers possessed them all. Now we cannot cut a Tree to warm our Wigwam in Winter unless the white man please.

The Micmacs now receive no presents but one small blanket for a whole family. The Governor is a good man, but he cannot help us now, would look to you the Queen. The White Waumpum tell that we hope in you. Pity your poor Indians in Nova Scotia!

White man has taken all that was ours, he has plenty of everything here, but we are told that the White Man has sent to you for more. No wonder I should speak for myself and my people.

The man that takes this talk over the Great Water will tell you what we want to be done for us, let us not perish! Your Indian children love you, and will fight for you against all your enemies.

My head and my heart shall go to the one above for you.

Pausiauhmigh Pemmeenauweet, his mark X. (Paul 1993, 191)

Things had changed dramatically for the *Mi'kmaq* in the two centuries between the observations of Chrestien LeClercq and those of Grand Chief *Pemmeenauweet*.

Introduction

While *Mi'kmaw* people continue to be both the object and subject of people's affections and dislikes, their grace and mistreatment, we have gained a measure of confidence to move forward on a healing journey that continues through the present day. Our spirituality has been at the center of that journey. Unfortunately, our spirituality is the very thing that we continue to struggle to make acceptable in the Christian world. That we can be authentically *Mi'kmaq*, spiritually and culturally speaking, while

simultaneously authentically Christian, without the culturally loaded terms animist, spiritist, or pantheist being hurled at us, is still an uncertainty in many minds.³³⁰ It's ironic to say the least, given Jenkins' observations in his book, *Dream Catchers!*

The Interplay: Worldview, Philosophy, and Spirituality

With Native spirituality having become so contentious on the one hand and influential on the other, in places as disparate as the New Age movement through to the mainstream of North American society, there is much to be said for undertaking a study such as this.³³¹ What's more, with the rise of the sub-discipline of spiritual theology in the writings of such people as Eugene Peterson, understanding the nature of people's grasp of the spiritual may be an important consideration for ministry in the days ahead. God knows we need a better understanding of the spiritual heritage human beings are in mutual possession of, in which to root our inter-religious conversations than the equivalent of twenty-first century henotheism.

It is to be hoped that this study has provided a glimpse into the nature of the spiritual and of spirituality from another vantage point than is currently offered through the empiricism of science – an empiricism that is stripping ontology from our grasp on an almost daily basis. As Peter Bellini, in his work on the loss of ontological primacy, has ably demonstrated, we have replaced the ontology with the secondary discourse of epistemology. As he undertakes his description of this as a trajectory of Western society,

³³⁰ Other peoples, such as Muslim Christians, seeking to embrace the person, work, life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus appear to be having similar challenges in the contemporary world of mission.

³³¹ See Jenkins (2004).

Bellini actively critiques the foundational philosophies of the Jesuit heavyweights, Lonergan and Rahner, identifying them with the collapse of ontological primacy in theology and philosophy. Bellini advocates for an ontology of participation in which to frame mission so that missional thought

is open-ended ontologically because there is an utter and infinite dependence on the eternal God. God is the boundary. It is open-ended in infinite signification and analogical expression of both God and creation. As for the mode of knowledge apprehension in participation, since there are no secular or autonomous domains in an ontology of analogical participation, faith and reason are not bifurcated. All of creation is graced and revelational. (2010, 87)

This begins to approach what *Mi'kmaq* and other Indigenous peoples³³² have been driving at for many years – where the reality of our and others' existence, the acknowledgment of the common origin of that existence, frames the way in which we act in the world. As Ruth Whitehead commented many years ago now, reflecting on *Mi'kmaq* understandings of the ontological and spiritual,

Modern science maintains that all matter is energy, shaping itself to particular patterns. The Old Ones of the People, took this a step further: they maintain that patterns of Power could be conscious, manifesting within the worlds by acts of will. They thought of such entities as Persons, with whom they could have a relationship. (1988, 2–3)

As Parkman also noted in his wanderings among Native peoples over the years of his life,

To the Indian, the material world is sentient and intelligent. Birds, beasts, and reptiles have ears for human prayers, and are endowed with an influence on human destiny.... Through all the works of Nature or of man, nothing exists, however seemingly trivial, that may not be endowed with a secret power for blessing or for bane. Men and animals are closely akin. (Parkman as quoted in Jenkins 2004, 53)

³³² In the eight World Christian Gatherings on Indigenous Peoples with which I have been involved, this has been a constant theme of formal workshops and presentations. See their websites at www.wcgip.org and www.wcgip.com.

The same could most certainly not be said of the experience or understanding of persons from a Euro-Canadian or American middle class, educated in mainstream Canadian or American schools. For many, if not most of them, creation – if indeed they consider it as having been created at all³³³ – is simply “stuff,” not unlike the notions we see expressed in a good deal of contemporary Jesuitism. Apart from providing human beings with raw materials to meet their needs – including the need for esthetics, beauty, and some form of transcendence – it seems, by their behavior toward it, that they believe it to be of no other consequence.

Worldview, Spirituality, and Conversion

Hiebert has said that “Conversion to Christ must encompass all three levels: behavior, beliefs, and the worldview that underlies these” (2008: 11).³³⁴ He goes on to quote Albert Wolters in defining worldview or, *Weltanschauung* as

a point of view on the world, a perspective on things, always looking at the cosmos from a particular vantage point. It therefore tends to carry the

³³³ This, unfortunately, is often true of Christians as well. I am reminded of many conversations over the years about the nature of creation with Christians from a variety of walks of life. For the most part creation, judged by the way in which they framed their thoughts, was something “out there,” apart from but surrounding them. Deeper investigation almost always demonstrated that his was, indeed, the way they thought. My comment, in trying to point this out to them, was inevitably, “If you are not part of creation, then what are you?”

³³⁴ In fairness to Paul Hiebert, he makes clear his own discomfort with the load that worldview has been made to bear since. “‘Worldview’ has many problems associated with it. First, because of its roots in philosophy, it focuses on the cognitive dimensions of cultures and does not deal with the affective and moral dimensions, which are equally important, nor with how these three dimensions of being human relate to one another. Second, it is based on the priority of sight or view over hearing or sound” (2008, 15). These, of course, are significant as part of the reason worldview fails us in understanding the nature of the spiritual and of spirituality.

connotation of being personal, dated, and private, limited in validity by its historical conditions. Even when a worldview is collective (that is, shared by everyone belonging to a given nation, class, or period), it nonetheless shares in the historical individuality of that particular nation or class or period. (Wolters as quoted in Hiebert 2008:13, 14)

As we have already noted in our study, however, behavior and belief do not necessarily comport with one another. If worldview assumptions are predicated in individual and collective sets of beliefs, then does worldview help us to understand human behavior effectively since, as we have seen, there is no consistent correspondence between the two? The Jesuits, for example, were erratic in regard to stated belief and their activity related to those beliefs – pertaining to their own people, to the *Mi'kmaq*, and to *Mi'kma'ki*. So how does worldview accommodate such incongruence?

We have also questioned whether worldview is an adequate container to carry the sum of experiences that an individual or group of individuals owes interpretive allegiance to in assessing and reacting to the stimuli of the cosmos. Worldview dismisses a more holistic way of experiencing the cosmos, privileging the singular lens of the cognitive. More particularly, we have called into question whether spirituality should be placed in the basket of worldview constructs or whether it should be conceived as the thread that weaves the worldview basket together. *Mi'kmaw* people have clung to the central experience of their spirituality as ontologically rooted, the central tenet of existence within which all of creation inheres. To them this is not a construct of something more all encompassing like worldview, especially when understood as a set of preferential intellectual behaviors that become unconscious determiners of life's decisions. What continued to elude the Jesuits was that life and experience with God was able to be partially, and sometimes palely, as Paul might say, captured in linguistic categories, and

these may be only loosely connected to cognitive categories. That is, there is a lot happening that is outside of such categories.

Clearly, it is because spirituality has been allocated as a category within worldview that the controversy over the appropriateness of *Mi'kmaw* spirituality to express allegiance to Jesus existed in the past and still rages.³³⁵ For those choosing the Jesus path as a seemingly means of expressing fulfilled relationship with their Creator, other human beings and the rest of creation, the question therefore continues to linger, Can *Mi'kmaw* spirituality work? When spirituality is subsumed in worldview, this is the unavoidable result with “No!” as the inevitable response. So when Hiebert calls for worldview to be transformed, the inescapable, if not prescriptive outcome is the expectation that *Mi'kmaw* spirituality be jettisoned in favor of a Euro-North American one. Furthermore, what we noted as historical practice with the Jesuits obtains contemporarily, and means embracing a strictly cognitive, propositionally based faith experience that works against the internal tug of the *Mi'kmaw* soul. Furthermore, it militates against spirituality as an ontological category of creation. Listen to the voice of yet another victim of such thinking as those we heard in early *Mi'kmaw* mission:

The European missionary carried with him to Peru in 1568 fixed notions about religion, God, and how a belief system linked ordinary people to the divine. In attempting to characterize Andean religion, early chroniclers tried to identify which Andean gods had been confused with the Christian hierarchy and which with the Hebrew one. By the time the Jesuits arrived, this early attempt at syncretism had been replaced by a more truculent view. Andean gods were simply manifestations of the devil, native priests were Satan's ministers, and Huarochiri, the first Jesuit mission in the

³³⁵ This same argument is at issue with other socio-cultural systems that have become so tightly connected with a religious system or perspective that the assumption is made that one is the other and that they are inextricable one from the other. Mennonism and Muslim Christianity are current examples.

Andes, was labeled the “Cathedral of Idolatry.” (Spalding 1984, 21)

As we have previously noted, *Mi'kmaw* people take an innate, all-encompassing spirituality for granted. It comes from their tautological way of thinking expressed in such simple notions as that for a mother to be a mother, she must have a daughter or a son, and for a daughter or a son to be a daughter or son, she or he must have a mother. More importantly for our discussion, spirituality is an accepted reality implicitly focused in the certainty of a Creator – God, if you will. Again, the tautological: a Creator does not exist apart from creation, and creation lacks reality apart from there being a Creator. I have yet to meet an atheist in the *Mi'kmaw* community. In the Euro-Canadian or American context, the same is not necessarily true – atheistic expressions are in abundant evidence. “Religiosity,” for many a category subsumed in worldview, while clearly present in a majority of Euro-Canadians,³³⁶ may be expressed aside from a belief in God. Behavior, after all, is not a good indicator of belief, as we have seen. To this portrait we must add the clear perception, shared by the *Mi'kmaw* community in general, that Euro-North American spiritual reality is extremely compartmentalized, circumscribed in time, and is confined to one ideological and cognitive³³⁷ construct of “worldview.” That is to say, it is essentially limited to a single facet of life³³⁸ – not all pervasive, as is the case with the *Mi'kmaw* person.

Oddly enough, however, the idea – or perhaps the hope – of spirituality as permeating all of creation seems to have been “bought into,” at least superficially, by a

³³⁶ See for example, James Penner’s recent study, *Hemorrhaging Faith* (2012)

³³⁷ These are my words to express their reality.

³³⁸ It is generally described as having the effect of siloing socio-cultural elements of life and isolating them from the spiritual.

significant number of Euro-North Americans, contributing to an ebb and flow of popular fascination with “Native spirituality.” Jenkins observes, for example,

Over the past 150 years, the mainstream view of Native religions has more or less reversed itself, from a shocked contempt for primitive superstition verging on devil worship, to an envious awe for a holistic spirituality that might be the last best hope for the human race. (2004, 2)

People, it seems, were attempting to change their “worldview.” Some may even have succeeded since, as contemporary scholarship has suggested, worldview is not static. This phenomenon seems to have peaked as a function of the loss of integration of the experience of faith in day-to-day life that has led to increasing dissatisfaction with a traditional experience of Christianity.

Paradoxically, it is the “spirituality” of the Euro-North American that has been held out to be the only appropriate expression of *Mi'kmaw* North American Christian faith, and has become the default externalized modality for many *Mi'kmaw* Christians – despite their internal orientation to the contrary. Tragically, for many, once they have “gone over to the other side,” they find little to be satisfied with and ultimately even less acceptance within mainstream society – including Christianity – unless they perform their Native Christian roles within a narrow spectrum of behavior. It appears, that in an effort to be accepted into mainstream Christianity, some *Mi'kmaq* have set aside the clear attitude of intuition with which their people have operated in the world in favor of a cognitive embrace of the spiritual, giving assent to religious doctrines and statements of belief as a means of being spiritual. Unfortunately, as anecdotal evidence in our families would suggest, even if such a person were successful, great incongruity is experienced in resolving other areas of life and cultural practice into their new way. This, in turn, leads

to a further intensification of cognitive and spiritual dissonance for many. In this intersection between the more compartmentalized way of Euro-North American life and perception, and the more integrated *Mi'kmaw* way of being, there is great social, cognitive, and spiritual stress.

By subsuming spirituality within worldview, traditional efforts to understand the nature of religious observance and of the spiritual have failed to accommodate the commonality of human existence and origin. Worldview, therefore, is not adequate as a primary category within which to understand human beings. Spirituality on the other hand, the nature of the spiritual if you will, places human beings ontologically in the same space and time as one another and as the rest of creation. As such it provides a primal category for understanding human beings more effectively – not only individually, but also in the diversity of human communities, and within the rest of creation.

Avoiding Contemporary Henotheism

Spirituality, when defined by specific behaviors (i.e., prayer, Bible study, devotional life, fasting, etc.) leads us down the trail of a contemporary form of henotheism. We are left to throw stones at one another with the call, “My God (read spirituality) is bigger than your God.” Furthermore if, as Paul Hiebert has suggested, worldviews must be transformed in order for authentic Christian conversion and discipleship to occur, and if spirituality is simply subsumed within worldview, then there is indeed a singular spirituality that we must all embrace in order for us to be followers of Jesus. On the other hand, if spirituality is a primary ontological category of human

existence, then one's spirituality is not an issue – only the focus of one's spiritual behavior vis-à-vis one's religious allegiances, focus, and dedication. Inter-religious dialogue for a follower of the Jesus Way might look very different if the focus is not with the essential quality of an individual's being but rather their religious behavior and belief. Each, after all, is seeking to gain the same outcome – a transcendent experience of the Creator.³³⁹

What is the central reality around which the present discussion must resolve in order to provide for answers to this competitive reality of the human community? How can the now obvious difference among spirituality, religiosity, and worldview be bridged so as to provide relief from the perception and practice of spiritual elitism³⁴⁰ for *Mi'kmaw* people and others?³⁴¹

³³⁹ We are brought once again to the Apostle Paul's model of discourse in the Areopagus of Athens, where he associates himself with common human ontology prior to discussing religious behavior.

³⁴⁰ We note here yet another in the seemingly unending rounds of retrenchment into "conservatism versus liberalism" that has pitted the Gospel Coalition against a perceived loss of commitment to biblical authority and a *neo liberal* wave represented in some of the Emergent Church communities. The pendulum swings yet again!

³⁴¹ Euro-North American Christian notions of what is appropriate "spirituality" have been embraced in much of the *Mi'kmaw* and wider Native community so intensely as to virtually ensure that culture is never spoken of in those circles – never mind that there are no conversations concerning contextualization or inculturation of the gospel in much of Native North America. Responses concerning how these Native folks deal with the actual text of the Bible and the gospel story, as well as the basic "orthodoxies" of the historic Christian church, vary widely. In some cases, respondents advocate complete rejection of anything cultural; in other circumstances, absorption, or syncretism have been advocated or, at least tolerated; and in more recent times, a specific though not yet well-defined, effort has been made toward sanctification of form, often accompanying a change of focus and meaning – a practice that has significant historical precedence.

Significance of the Study

I believe that this study, in part because we have intentionally included a brief analysis of the Acadian component, has applicability to the wider North American context – both Native and non-Native. Experience would suggest that when *Mi'kmaw* and other Native North American people talk about spirituality, Euro-North American people often hear “religion;” when Euro-North Americans mention religion, *Mi'kmaq* and other Native North Americans frequently hear “spirituality.” While a surface analysis would suggest that the religious/religiosity component of “worldview” for the Euro-North American person captures the same reality as spirituality does for the *Mi'kmaq*, a deeper analysis such as we have undertaken with the Jesuits suggests a different likelihood. Our analysis makes clear that when the *Mi'kmaw* person speaks of spirituality as an intuitive, holistic understanding of the spiritual reality within themselves and the rest of creation, the Euro-North American engages the idea largely as a cognitive experience, evaluating religious behaviors they observed or failed to observe in a person or group, to determine whether they comported with their own understandings. Their constellation of arbiters of experience and behavior makes this significantly true.

It seemed intuitive as we began this study, even though it might not have been immediately empirically verifiable, that there must be some way of discussing the nature of the spiritual – of spirituality – that captured the common origin of humanity in a way that “worldview” did not since, as a descriptor, it is framed so significantly in the philosophical and historical foundations of Western society. As we have seen in the research and tried to make clear in the analysis, for the most part, it has been and continues to be clear for *Mi'kmaw* people that spirituality is the organizing principle of

life around which the elements, perspectives, and values of life – what Euro-North Americans have referred to as “worldview” – revolve. Spirituality is both an internal and external reality to the *Mi'kmaq*. There are externally observable and tangible expressions – but the expressions themselves are not their spirituality. Neither is spirituality, strictly speaking, apprehended in a primarily cognitive fashion – though thought enters the picture as a part of a holistic frame of reference. Instead spirituality is, as *Mi'kmaq* continue to describe and experience it, an innate quality of existence that both brings and is simultaneously reflected in the wholeness and integration observable in all of creation, and in their experience of that creation. And it is not about religiosity. In fact religiosity may not even be reflected in the ontological quality about which we speak – that is, religiosity defined as behavior tied to religious ideas or motives. Spirituality is a way of being and knowing, of experiencing and understanding the world, that the *Mi'kmaq* person would say is both integrative in nature and central to their ontology. So the study carries powerful implications for defining and characterizing life apart from the cognitively framed concept of worldview which, as we have seen, characterized the Jesuits. For Christian faith and life this would be a watershed.

Implications for Identity

Human identity and cultural uniqueness in relationship with God is also at issue and impacted by this study. If we apply the broadest possible understanding of human identity to the decision the Jerusalem Council reached, then they expressed an emphatic “No!” concerning a singular identity for the followers of Jesus. Their counsel to the

Gentiles was simple, reflecting no unique “spirituality” or any other stipulation for authentic faith to be in evidence beyond the four behavioral requirements necessary for intercultural fellowship.³⁴² The Apostle Paul, it would seem, expounded further on this in

³⁴² In the various traditions of the church, doctrines have arisen time and again to attest that the Creator of all has created human beings, through the process of natural birth, spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically pointed away from him. That is to say, in the historic language of evangelism, that human beings are pointed away from our maker, requiring a 180-degree turn from our current path of rebellion and waywardness to one oriented toward “Him.” This is called repentance unto salvation. Yet, given all that we read and experience of our Creator, this seems entirely inadequate – no, downright wrong – for a number of reasons.

First, in such a scheme, the Creator is made to be a joker, a prankster, who delights in watching humanity “grope” for “Him” in the wrong direction. Instead of a theistic understanding, this reflects the “deists” belief that our Creator is not engaged with creation but remains at a distance, watching to see how things turn out. Paul does not seem to be saying this; nor is Jeremiah, when he quotes the Creator’s designs for humanity “for good and not for evil, to prosper [us] and give [us] a hope” (Jeremiah 29:13). Aside from the fact that such a God would probably not be even remotely interested in repentance in the first place, this flies in the face of the narrative of creation in Genesis – that it was good and very good! Such a distancing of Creator from creation, given that the biblical narrative has the Creator becoming the creation in the form of a child, seems altogether implausible.

Second, God’s purpose in salvation does not appear to be served well in such a way. Peter makes clear God is not slow concerning his promise, not wanting any to perish, but for all to come to a knowledge of the truth. How does directionality opposite the position of God serve such a desire? It would only seem to serve to further subdivide life into the physically and materially unimportant and the spiritually valued, very much rooted in Gnostic dualism and framed in a the growing myth of a “Christian worldview.”

Third, if the curse(es) is (are) lifted in Christ, there would seem to be postresurrection evidence of it in the behavior of humanity. Before Christ’s death and resurrection the effects of the curse are clearly evident – held at bay only by a supreme effort of the will, motivated by the sent Spirit of God. In the post-resurrection world, however, there is abundant evidence (particularly in the history of the Church) that people everywhere respond to the Spirit sent abroad as per Joel’s prophecy. At the very least then, postresurrection humanity is not spiritually aimless and wandering. Rather, they are pointed in the general direction of God. Only their own willfulness to act other than they should differentiates.

It seems reasonable, then, that while we might expect to find a difference in the structure and form of the religious pursuits that would arise as a part of the search after the transcendent, the internal orientation to do so would not differ. In other words, we might expect to observe difference in the spiritually rooted behavior of the peoples we

Romans 13 and 14 and then again, focused slightly differently, as he stood in the Areopagus in Acts chapter 17. Here, he emphatically observed,

The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we too are his offspring.” (Acts 17:24–28 NRSV)

The issue of which spiritual traditions and practices are acceptable to God for use in Christian faith is a historic one. From the earliest days of the Church, it has reared its ugly head to drive wedges of division and racism between peoples. In my analysis this is, in part, because it has been regularly³⁴³ determined that there is only one authentic “spirituality” out of which to express a faith in the living God.³⁴⁴ In other words, Christianity has consistently (until more recent times) affirmed that only one expression of human “spirituality” is legitimate to express understanding of the eternal God.³⁴⁵ What

encounter in the various parts of the globe but be witness to the same innate spirituality irrespective of the activities it gives rise to. There is nothing in what Paul says that intimates that the search was vain – or that the seekers were searching in their ignorance after some other “god” necessarily – though this is certainly possible as well. He simply suggests that postresurrection, the focus of any search must be clearly navigated through the person, work, life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Christ. This is the objective of his preaching on Mars Hill.

³⁴³ It needs to be acknowledged, as has been pointed out to me, that this has not been without exception – notably with the Eastern Church, the Celtic Christians, and the very early Franciscans.

³⁴⁴ Here I use “spirituality” in quotes to connote religiosity, which, we can say with a measure of confidence, has been the more common understanding in Euro-North American society. And so it is throughout the study.

³⁴⁵ In making this statement I am conscious that many will say that there are indeed various and sundry expressions of “spirituality” within the many traditions of the

Christians have really meant is one form of religious behavior. When that behavior is adjudged by a standard rooted in concepts such as “worldview” that are strictly Eurocentric, we understandably have a singular expectation for Christian identity.

Conclusions and a Suggested Path Forward

In a very good understanding of 1 Corinthians 12, Yazzie-Burkhart captures the direction in which we must move as we conclude.

In Western thought we might say that my experiences and thoughts count more than your experiences because I have them and you cannot. But if we are WE, then this constraint seems rather trivial. The hand may not have the same experiences as the foot, but this hardly matters if we understand them not as feet and hands but as this body. If it is through the body, or the people, that understanding arises, then no one part need shape this understanding. All the experiences of all the parts should be brought into the process of understanding.... Western thought has gotten us far we suppose. We have, through technology, become nearly invincible, but we have forgotten how we are related. We desire what is eternal: eternal life, knowledge that is eternal, truth that is eternal. But are our heads not in the clouds? Have we not forgotten what is behind us and at our feet?
(2004, 26)

Burkhart’s point, clearly illustrated in our study is that despite *Mi’kmaq* hospitality and welcome, the Jesuits could not imagine the *Mi’kmaq* as being related through the common experience of having been created in the image and likeness of God. Their Genesis 3 lens prevented them from doing so. This is why they had such difficulty in the early days imagining the *Mi’kmaq* and *Mi’kma’ki* as other than they did. And,

Christian church. While this may be true, these diverse expressions are themselves simply an indication of the tightly framed and categorized worldview of Christendom out of which the contemporary Church has emerged for few, in any of them has allowed greater tolerance than another of Indigenous understandings of the nature of the spiritual as each of them has framed spirituality in almost exclusively behavioral terms as we have noted of the Jesuits.

although our study has shown a major impact by Jesuit Catholic faith among the *Mi'kmaq*, it does not exonerate their theological premises as being a good foundation for mission. In fact, we have demonstrated an adequate interpretation of the context to suggest that in the early days of mission, the *Mi'kmaq* may simply have incorporated Christian behavior for other purposes, political, social, and survival. Had Jesuit theology taken seriously the beginning of the Genesis story instead of focusing through the lens of Augustinianism,³⁴⁶ reading into it their conceptions of the impact of the Fall, we might have imagined a more clear and mutually beneficial outcome of the encounter. We can therefore, conclude that Genesis 3 is not an appropriate starting point for a biblical theology of mission.³⁴⁷

We have discovered that the Jesuit orientation, not at all exclusive to them, was entirely curious, given that the core elements of the announced curse in Genesis 3 are about changes in a multiplicity of relationships – God with humanity, humanity with the serpent, man with woman,³⁴⁸ and, of course, least understood by many, including, it would seem, the Jesuits, humanity with the rest of creation. They would have been better served to engage

³⁴⁶ This resulted in a starting place for the theology of mission from which humanity fell visibly and inevitably further and for which the need for a savior became less about restoration of the multi-layered relationships resident in all of creation and more about blood price and God's self-flagellation. We observe this attitude throughout the *Jesuit Relations*.

³⁴⁷ It would seem our penchant for embracing Genesis 3 as a statement of total depravity obscures this primal state in Eden altogether too thoroughly. Following the completion of each day's work, "it was good," stated more powerfully at the end of the creation act as "it was very good," misses the mark in the translation. This is an emphatic and summative statement meaning "It cannot be better!"

³⁴⁸ And by extension, the rest of humanity as they emerge and encounter one another in the day-to-day realities of human commerce.

first in a more vigorous investigation of the original intent and plan of the Creator.³⁴⁹ And here is where *Mi'kmaq* and other Indigenous views about the nature of spirituality and its residency in all of creation could be crucial as a way to move away from unhelpful historic theological premises: the curse does not, for us, necessarily imply the eradication of all goodness initially instilled in the creation, be it human or other. What's more, since all of creation has been removed from under the curse through Jesus, a *Mi'kmaw* hermeneutic of redemption suggests that it should be an entirely restorative one. Here human beings embrace cocreative responsibility by participating in the restoration of creation to the state of its ontological origin now, with the intervening years of the development of humanity and the rest of creation, as Snyder and Scandrett have said, “fully healed.”

We have found that a corollary to the theological focus above is the Jesuits' consistent use of a stacked set of philosophical dualisms to engage life and mission, including their encounter with the *Mi'kmaq*. Whether in their appropriation of classical dualism in Greek philosophy or the Gnosticism evident in their disdain for *Mi'kma'ki*, which, they opined, “through Satan's malevolence, which reigns there, is only a horrible wilderness” (Lescarbot 1616, Vol. 3, 11), the Jesuits were clearly unable to see the creation's goodness apart from human industry and a future new creation. As Lescarbot (1616, Vol. 3, 11) again states quite clearly, contrasting France and *Mi'kma'ki*, “Whence such an unequal division of happiness and of misfortune? of garden and of wilderness? of Heaven and of Hell?” Dualisms of many varieties were comfortably embedded in the

³⁴⁹ Let's be clear. It is not that humanity did not step away from the intent of God – we did – or at least our First Parents did and subsequently, so have we. In doing so, our First Parents destroyed the harmony and balance of the creation – a creation so interdependent that their breach caused its collapse into a continuing degeneration – futility as one translation of Romans would describe it.

foundations of Jesuit theology.³⁵⁰ As a consequence it was impossible for their theologies to make sense of what, as we are coming to discover more and more by means of contemporary science, is a far more interrelated cosmos than we had ever imagined.³⁵¹ Returning to my point, Jesuit theology and cognitively founded spiritual understandings, premised in compounded dualisms, inevitably created (intentionally or not) the following considerations:

- that non-human and non-living creation lacks a spiritual origin and essence,
- that non-living creation is inanimate and potentially or actually evil
- that the human spirit, is entirely degenerate³⁵²
- that the physicality of consciousness and the container of that consciousness are not concomitant³⁵³
- that only human beings experience restoration vis-à-vis a renewed heaven and earth³⁵⁴

The outcome is clear: the rest of creation, or the “other” in our shared creation experience, introduces the problem; the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment for the human being via the embrace of theological truths offers the solution.³⁵⁵ Contemporary

³⁵⁰ Including the pre-Enlightenment era discourse of matter and mind, which we have suggested the Jesuits themselves had a hand in shaping,

³⁵¹ Sadly, we still do not offer other than a tweaked set of old theologies premised on the same foundations as a corrective.

³⁵² Or soul.

³⁵³ A more careful read of scripture through a non-dualistic set of lenses and a careful examination of the Eastward-focused church might suggest an alternative reading.

³⁵⁴ Snyder and Scandrett (2011) offer a strong rebuke of this narrowly framed view of salvation.

³⁵⁵ I am reminded of a commercial by the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation against drinking and driving. The advertisement portrays the problems of depth

Christianity, as we have asserted based on our analysis and application, engages in very much the same way. Welcome to the continuation of Christian Gnosticism.

As we examined both historic and contemporary *Mi'kmaw* spiritual experience and teaching, be it traditional, Catholic, traditional Catholic, or even evangelical, we noted the collective affirmation of *Mi'kmaw* people, concerning the gifts of the Spirit – that they are in evidence in all of Creation.³⁵⁶ What's more, we determined they are there for our instruction today if we will engage our common human spirituality in the fullest sense, primarily through intuition and not cognition.

We have concluded that the Jesuits could not understand these things since they utilized a reductionist, categorical thought process to determine the nature of the spiritual in their world. What's more, when the rest of creation acted outside their presupposition that it be strictly instinctual, habitual, non-sentient, or inanimate, the Jesuits did not know how to respond.³⁵⁷ They therefore condemned all spiritual practice among the *Mi'kmaq*, including what we have concluded was the Spirit's work and manifestation among them

perception that the driver of a motor vehicle experiences following the consumption of successive beers, using empty beer glasses stacked in front of the camera lens to make their point: after one glass, a perceptible but manageable difference in vision; after two, a blurring of vision and diminishment of depth perception; following the third, a serious difficulty discerning the reality behind the glasses; after four, a foggy haze and the noise of a crash. Jesuit theology, it seems, has been somewhat like that. Stacked dualities caused a great crash theologically and therefore missionally.

³⁵⁶ It's important to remember the story of the trees of northern Quebec and the faith-filled Cree mother: "Ask the trees Kenny, and they will tell you!" Perhaps we need new language to begin to address ourselves to these ideas so that we can move beyond the stalling points that have continued to plague ministry with Indigenous peoples.

³⁵⁷ Note that trees speaking to a Euro-North American and to an Indigenous person would be very likely to elicit an entirely different response. From the Euro-North American the response would likely be to deny this as a sign from the Creator and assign it to an experience manifest by the evil one; the Indigenous person would be more likely to simply ask if the tree was speaking to them and what it wished from them.

within the rest of creation. In what I have always found to be a statement of simple wisdom in this regard, my grandfather and others of his generation used to say, in one form or another that animals are indeed persons – they are just not people. Perhaps, if I may suggest it, Balaam’s ass and Kenny’s trees were really just speaking in tongues in hopes that someone might hear and obey.³⁵⁸

If We Start With the Fall

Clearly, it’s important to get the order right. If we start with the Fall in Genesis 3 in a cognitively focused and dualistically framed approach to the story of our common creation, it’s not clear that right relationship is the Creator’s focus. Nor are we clear that

³⁵⁸ Note the elements of the story of Balaam and his ass. The donkey sees what is obscure to Balaam, and Balaam’s response is to blame the ass – creation suffers because humans cannot see! Allow me to quote the passage here for the reader’s benefit: “When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road. Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with walls on both sides. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam’s foot against it. So he beat her again. Then the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff. Then the LORD opened the donkey’s mouth, and she said to Balaam, ‘What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?’ Balaam answered the donkey, ‘You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now.’ The donkey said to Balaam, ‘Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?’ ‘No,’ he said. Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown. The angel of the LORD asked him, ‘Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her.’ Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, ‘I have sinned. I did not realize you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are displeased, I will go back.’” (Numbers 22:23–34)

there is a spiritual center to all of creation. Harmful theologies have resulted when theological and doctrinal work was filtered through the lens of the Fall while simultaneously separating the material world from its spiritual nature – the essence of God’s impartation in all of creation. Theologies that label people “godless heathens” suited only to servitude or that argue to “kill the Indian, save the child” proceed from this place of thought. So do notions that at some future time the rest of creation will be consumed by fire and only human beings will be preserved to inhabit a new, *ex nihilo*, created heaven and earth.

If we understand God’s original intention, then we understand the Fall and restoration in the more profound terms of loss and restoration of relationship and relatedness of all things by the Spirit – not simply human soul salvation. Yes, our First Parents descended into a state of separation with the Creator and the rest of creation as they willfully choose to break relationship.³⁵⁹ And a far-reaching pronouncement of the

³⁵⁹ In Genesis 1 and 2, creation is described as primarily and inherently relational. This is because it is innately spiritual. The Spirit of the trinity broods over the waters and is instilled in the rest of creation as life is given. Relationship with God is the intent in the creation act. Each part of creation in its respective way through its form and function (see Genesis 1:28–30, Job 12, Romans 1 and 8) is nested in a set of relationships. Animals, plant life, birds, and fish are linked to their Creator spiritually and intuitively – an intuition that I would suggest is retained in the rest of creation but which in humans has been supplanted by ego and ethnocentrism. Unlike humanity, the rest of creation lives in constant expression of the Spirit and the intent of the Creator (the “futility” of its subjection by God as per the Apostle Paul in Romans aside) illustrating proper relationship and relatedness. We see this clearly and compellingly in Job’s reply to his counselors.

When animals are brought before the prototype human being to ascertain the association this human and the rest of creation will have, it becomes clear that right relationship is at creation’s very core. Genesis 1:28–30 provides a partial picture of the nurturing reciprocity built into creation. It would seem moot in light of all of this to discuss, in a human-focused equation, in which direction the traffic carries the greatest degree of nurturance: humanity toward the rest of creation or the rest of creation toward

outcome of the breach is made, with consequences for all of creation. The curse shreds each aspect of original relationship, its effects implicating all of the created order. For the male, the previous idyllic relationship in creation – wanting for nothing, not having to labor unduly for sustenance – turns to toil and hardship. For the female, egalitarian intimacy with the male, and presumably a less stressful procreation, is replaced with pain, suffering, and subservience – a posture the Church in history has exploited in profound ways. For humanity yet to come, relational intimacy with the One who made them is subjected to distorted yearnings for transcendence and meaning, punctuated regularly by an idolatry that misrepresents the intended relationship among humankind, the Creator, and the rest of creation. This is the curse. But, the Apostle Paul emphatically notes, all of creation, not simply human beings, is subjected to its effect, and all, he enthusiastically observes, awaits its future, full redemption. This is what a holistic, non-cognitive spirituality engages and affirms.

humanity? Our high-handedness has made clear that the normative state of the equation is human dominance over all else. “It” serves us. “Creation Care” proponents, in an effort to soften this historically arrogant approach, have suggested that part of human responsibility in the gospel equation is care for an increasingly degrading creation. I propose that this is what we find neither in scripture’s description nor our actual unbiased experience of the creation. The reality of the relationship is instead, at the very least, symbiotic. Perhaps, though, it is best expressed in the question, “When have humans given more to the relationship than the rest of creation?”

While the other beings of creation may have proven unsatisfactory to meet the full companionship needs of the human being, their spiritual relatedness to one another and to the human is nevertheless described, albeit partially, in the process of naming; these relationships are further delineated, we might imagine, in the days immediately following Creation – though we can only imagine this. The intrinsic, spiritual, and relational understanding of the relationship we possess with the other beings of creation – and the fact that it is of a reciprocal nature – is something that First Nations people have traditionally appreciated more than Western society.

For Further Study

I believe a sufficiently valid argument has been made that this subject warrants further investigation. Furthermore, I believe this study and analysis bears promise as another means of addressing the questions raised in intercultural encounter. This may, as a consequence, encourage a greater degree of engagement with the cultures and contexts of the *Mi'kmaq*, other Native North Americans and Indigenous people in general to determine appropriate methods for ministry.

Areas for further research include investigating such questions as: How might this different understanding of spirituality and its implications for Christian ministry and discipleship impact the way in which followers of the Jesus Way engage interculturally? If spirituality is finally understood in this way, how might this help us bring cohesion to the work of and structure of ministry? Further work is needed to answer these and other questions, but I believe it is a potentially profitable area of study.

Appendix A

His Holiness Pope Paul III
May 29, 1537

Paul III Pope. To all faithful Christians to whom this writing may come, health in Christ our Lord and the apostolic benediction.

THE SUBLIME GOD so loved the human race that He created man in such wise that he might participate, not only in the good that other creatures enjoy, but endowed him with capacity to attain to the inaccessible and invisible Supreme Good and behold it face to face; and since man, according to the testimony of the sacred scriptures, has been created to enjoy eternal life and happiness, which none may obtain save through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, it is necessary that he should possess the nature and faculties enabling him to receive that faith; and that whoever is thus endowed should be capable of receiving that same faith. Nor is it credible that any one should possess so little understanding as to desire the faith and yet be destitute of the most necessary faculty to enable him to receive it. Hence Christ, who is the Truth itself, that has never failed and can never fail, said to the preachers of the faith whom He chose for that office "Go ye and teach all nations." He said all, without exception, for all are capable of receiving the doctrines of the faith.

The enemy of the human race, who opposes all good deeds in order to bring men to destruction, beholding and envying this, invented a means never before heard of, by which he might hinder the preaching of God's word of Salvation to the people: he inspired his satellites who, to please him, have not hesitated to publish abroad that the Indians of the West and the South, and other people of whom We have recent knowledge should be treated as dumb brutes created for our service, pretending that they are incapable of receiving the Catholic Faith.

We, who, though unworthy, exercise on earth the power of our Lord and seek with all our might to bring those sheep of His flock who are outside into the fold committed to our charge, consider, however, that the Indians are truly men and that they are not only capable of understanding the Catholic Faith but, according to our information, they desire exceedingly to receive it. Desiring to provide ample remedy for these evils, We define and declare by these Our letters, or by any translation thereof signed by any notary public and sealed with the seal of any ecclesiastical dignitary, to which the same credit shall be given as to the originals, that, notwithstanding whatever may have been or may be said to the contrary, the said Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ; and that they may and should, freely and legitimately, enjoy their liberty and the possession of their property; nor should they be in any way enslaved; should the contrary happen, it shall be null and have no effect.

By virtue of Our apostolic authority We define and declare by these present letters, or by any translation thereof signed by any notary public and sealed with the seal of any ecclesiastical dignitary, which shall thus command the same obedience as the originals, that the said Indians and other peoples should be converted to the faith of Jesus Christ by preaching the word of God and by the example of good and holy living.

Appendix B

Extract from the Register of Baptism in the Church of Port Royal, New France.

The day of Saint John the Baptist, June 24, 1610

MEMBERTOU, a great Sagamore, over one hundred years old, has been baptized by Messire Jessé Fleche, a priest; and named Henry, by Monsieur de Poutrincourt, after the late king.

Membertoucoichis (called Judas), eldest son of Membertou, over sixty years old, also baptized; and named Louis, by Monsieur de Biencour, after Monsieur the Dauphin.

The eldest son of Membertoucoichis, now called Louis Membertou, aged five years, baptized; Monsieur de Poutrincourt godfather, and named John, after himself.

The eldest daughter of said Louis, aged thirteen years, also baptized; and named Christine by Sieur de Poutrincourt, after Madame the eldest daughter of France.

The second daughter of the said Louis, eleven years old, also baptized; and named Elizabeth by sieur de Poutrincourt, after Madame, the youngest daughter of France.

The third daughter of said Louis, Sieur de Poutrincourt godfather, also baptized, and named Claude, in honor of his wife.

The fourth daughter of said Louis, Monsieur de Coullogne godfather, was named Catherine, after his mother.

The fifth daughter of said Louis was named Jeanne, thus named by sieur de Poutrincourt, after one of his daughters.

The sixth daughter of said Louis, René Maheu godfather, was named Charlotte, after his mother.

Actavdinech, the third son of Henry Membertou, was named Paul by sieur de Poutrincourt, after Pope Paul.

The wife of said Paul was named Renée, after Madame d'Ardanville.

The wife of said Henry, sieur de Poutrincourt sponsor in the name of the Queen, was named MARRE, after her.

The daughter of Henry, sieur de Poutrin court godfather, was named Marguerite, after Queen Marguerite.

One of the wives of Louis, Monsieur de Jouï sponsor in the name of Mme. de Sigogne, was named after her.

The other wife of Louis, sieur de Poutrincourt sponsor in the name of Madame de Dampierre.

Arnest, cousin of Henry, sieur de Poutrincourt godfather in the name of Monsieur the Nuncio, was after him named Robert.

Agovdegoven, also cousin of Henry, was by sieur de Poutrincourt named Nicholas, after Monsieur de Noyers, a Lawyer of the Parliament of Paris.

The wife of said Nicholas, sieur de Poutrincourt godfather in the name of his nephew, was named Philippe.

The eldest daughter of Nicholas, the said Sieur sponsor in the name of Madame de Belloy, his niece, was after her named Louise.

The younger daughter of Nicholas, the said sieur being godfather for Jacques de Salazar, his son, was named Jacqueline.

A niece of Henry, Monsieur de Coullongne sponsor in the name of Mademoiselle de Grandmare, was after her named Anne.

Appendix C

Mi'kmaw Creation Story

This story has been passed down from generation to generation since time immemorial. It explains how *Mi'kmaw* people came into existence in North America. The story tells about the relationship between the Creator, Human Beings and the Environment. It also shows a view of life that is indigenous to North America. This way of thinking is clearly seen in Native languages and cultures and in the spiritual practices.

The creation story is what helped the *Mi'kmaw* people's language, culture, and spirituality survive for centuries. Respect for their elders has given them wisdom about life and the world around them. The strength of their youth has given them the will to survive. The love and trust of their mothers has given them a special understanding of everyday life.

Among the *Mi'kmaw* people, the number seven is very meaningful. Seven districts cover an area of land stretching from the Gaspé coast of Quebec and including New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia. The most powerful spirit medicine is made from seven barks and roots. Seven men, one from each distinct area or Grand Council District, sit inside a sweat lodge, smoke the pipe and burning sweet grass. Inside the sweat lodge, the *Mi'kmaq* pour water over seven, fourteen, and then twenty-one heated rocks to produce steam. A cleansing or purification takes place. It is like they are being born anew, and the men give thanks to the Spirit Creator, the Sun and the Earth. They also give thanks to the first family, *Kluscap*, *Nogami*, *Netaoansom*, and *Neganagonimgoosisgo*. Listen to the story.

ONE – *Kisu'lkw*

Nisgam is the Great Spirit Creator who is the one who made everything. The word *Nisgam* in *Mi'kmaq* means “the one who is not made.” It also means “the one who gives your existence.” The word does not tell whether it is talking about a man or a woman. *Nisgam* is not a He or a She. It is not important whether the Great Spirit is a He or a She.

The *Mi'kmaw* people do not explain how the Great Spirit came to be. They only say that *Nisgam* is responsible for everything being where it is today. *Nisgam* made everything.

TWO – *Nisgam*

Kisu'lkw is the Sun, which travels in a circle and owes its existence to *Nisgam*. *Kisu'lkw* is the giver of life. It is also a giver of light and heat.

The *Mi'kmaw* people believe that *Nisgam* is the one who made the people on earth. *Kisu'lkw* is *Nisgam*'s helper. The power of *Kisu'lkw* is greatly respected among the *Mi'kmaq* and other Indigenous peoples.

THREE – *Ootsitgamoo*

Ootsitgamoo is the Earth or area of land upon which the *Mi'kmaw* people walk. They share its abundant resources with the animals and plants. In the *Mi'kmaw* language *Oetsitpogooin* means “the person or individual who stands upon this surface” or “the one who is given life upon this surface of land.” *Ootsitgamoo* refers to the *Mi'kmaw* world, which makes up all the area where the *Mi'kmaw* people can travel or have traveled upon.

Ootsitgamoo was created by *Nisgam* and was placed in the center of the circular path of *Kisu'lkw*, the sun. *Kisu'lkw* was given the responsibility of watching over the *Mi'kmaw* world or *Ootsitgamoo*. *Kisu'lkw* shines bright light upon *Ootsitgamoo* as it passes around. This brought the days and nights.

FOUR – *Kluscap*

After the *Mi'kmaw* world was created and after the animals, birds and plants were placed on its surface, *Nisgam* caused a bolt of lightning to hit the surface of *Ootsitgamoo*. This bolt of lightning caused the formation of an image of a human body shaped out of sand. It was *Kluscap* who was first shaped out of the basic element of the *Mi'kmaw* world, sand.

Nisgam sent another bolt of lightning which gave life to *Kluscap*. But *Kluscap* could not move yet. He was stuck to the ground and could only watch the world go by and *Kisu'lkw* travel across the sky every day. *Kluscap* watched the animals, the birds, and the plants grow and pass around him. He asked *Nisgam* to give him freedom to move about the *Mi'kmaw* world.

While *Kluscap* was still unable to move, he was lying on his back. His head was facing the direction of the rising sun, the east, called *Oetjgoabaniag* or *Oetjibanoog*. In *Mi'kmaq* these two words mean “where the sun comes up” and “where the summer weather comes from.” His feet were in the direction of the setting sun or *Oetgatsenoog*. Other *Mi'kmaw* words for the west are *Oeloesenoo*, “where the sun settles into a hollow” or *Etgesnoog* “where the cold winds come from.” *Kluscap*'s right hand was pointed in the direction of the north or *Oatnoog*. His left hand was in the direction of the south or *Opgoetasnoog*. It was a third big blast of lightning that caused *Kluscap* to become free and to be able to stand on the surface of the earth.

After *Kluscap* stood up on his feet, he turned around in a full circle seven times. He then looked toward the sky and gave thanks to *Nisgam* for giving him life. He looked down to the Earth, or the ground, and gave thanks to *Ootsitgamoo* for offering its sand for his creation. He looked within himself and gave thanks to *Nisgam* for giving him his soul and spirit.

Kluscap then gave thanks to the four directions east, north, west, and south. In all, he gave his heartfelt thanks to the seven directions.

Kluscap then traveled to the direction of the setting sun until he came to the ocean. He then went south until the land narrowed and he came to the ocean. He then went south until the land narrowed and he could see two oceans on either side. He again traveled back to where he started from and continued toward the north to the land of ice and snow. Later he came back to the east, where he decided to stay. It is where he came into existence. He again watched the animals, the birds, and the plants. He watched the water and the sky. *Kisu'lkw* taught him to watch and learn about the world. *Kluscap* watched but he could not disturb the world around him. He finally asked *Kisu'lkw* and *Nisgam*, what was the purpose of his existence. He was told that he would meet someone soon.

FIVE – *Nogami*

One day when *Kluscap* was traveling in the east he came upon a very old woman. *Kluscap* asked the old woman how she had come to the *Mi'kmaw* world. The old woman introduced herself as *Nogami*. She said to *Kluscap*, “I am your grandmother.” *Nogami* said that she owed her existence to the rock, the dew, and *Nisgam*, the Sun. She went on to explain that on one chilly morning a rock became covered with dew because it was sitting in a low valley. By midday, when the sun was most powerful, the rock got warm and then hot. With the power of *Kisu'lkw*, the sun, *Nisgam*'s helper, the rock was given the body of an old woman. This old woman was *Nogami*, *Kluscap*'s grandmother.

Nogami told *Kluscap* that she had come to the *Mi'kmaw* world as an old woman, already very wise and knowledgeable. She further explained that *Kluscap* would get spiritual strength by listening to and having great respect for his grandmother. *Kluscap* was so glad for his grandmother's arrival to the *Mi'kmaw* world that he called upon *Abistanooj*, a marten swimming in the river, to come ashore. *Abistanooj* came to the shore, where *Kluscap* and *Nogami* were standing. *Kluscap* asked *Abistanooj* to give up his life so that he and his grandmother could live. *Abistanooj* agreed. *Nogami* then took *Abistanooj* and quickly snapped his neck. She placed him on the ground. *Kluscap* for the first time asked *Nisgam* to use his power to give life back to *Abistanooj* because he did not want to be in disfavor with the animals. Because of the marten's sacrifice, *Kluscap* referred to all the animals as his brothers and sisters from that point on. *Nogami* added that the animals will always be in the world to provide food, clothing, tools, and shelter. *Abistanooj* went back to the river and in his place lay another marten. *Kluscap* and *Abistanooj* became friends and brothers forever.

Nogami cleaned the animal to get it ready for eating. She gathered the sparks from the lightning that had hit the ground when *Kluscap* was given life. They were still hot. She placed dry wood over the coals to make a fire. This fire became the Great Spirit Fire and later was known as the Great Council Fire.

The first feast of meat was cooked over the Great Fire, or *Ekjibuctou*. *Kluscap* relied on his grandmother for her survival skills, her knowledge, and her wisdom. Since *Nogami* was old and wise, *Kluscap* learned to respect her for her knowledge. They learned to respect each other because they needed each other's help to survive.

SIX – *Netaoansom*

One day when *Kluscap* and *Nogami* were walking along in the woods, they came upon a young man. This young man looked very strong because he was big and tall. He had gray eyes. *Kluscap* asked the young man his name and how he had arrived in the *Mi'kmaw* world. The young man introduced himself. He told *Kluscap* that his name was *Netaoansom* and that he was *Kluscap*'s sister's son (in other words, his nephew). He told *Kluscap* that he was strong and that they could all live comfortably. *Netaoansom* could run after moose, deer, and caribou and bring them down with his bare hands. *Netaoansom* said that while the east wind was blowing really hard it caused the waters of the ocean to become rough and foamy. This foam was blown to the shore on the sandy beach and finally rested on the tall grass. This tall grass is sweetgrass. Its fragrance was sweet. The sweetgrass held onto the foam until *Kisu'lkw*, the Sun, was high in the midday sky. *Nisgam* gave *Netaoansom* spiritual and physical strength in a human body. *Nisgam* told *Kluscap* that if he relied on the strength and power of his nephew, he too would gain strength and understanding of the world around him.

Kluscap was so glad for his nephew's arrival in the *Mi'kmaw* world that he called upon the salmon of the rivers and seas to come to shore and give up their lives. The reason for this is that *Kluscap*, *Netaoansom*, and *Nogami* did not want to kill all the animals for their survival. So in celebration of his nephew's arrival, they all had a feast of fish. They all gave thanks for their existence. They continued to rely on their brothers and sisters of the woods and waters. They relied on each other for their survival.

SEVEN – *Neganogonimgooseesgo*

While *Kluscap* was sitting near a fire, *Nogam* was making clothing out of animal hides and *Netaoansom* was in the woods getting food. A woman came to the fire and sat beside *Kluscap*. She put her arms around *Kluscap* and asked, "Are you cold my son?" *Kluscap* was surprised. He stood up and asked the woman who she was and where she came from. She explained that she was *Kluscap*'s mother. Her name was *Neganogonimgooseesgo*. *Kluscap* waited until his grandmother and nephew returned to the fire, then he asked his mother to explain how she arrived in the *Mi'kmaw* world.

Neganogonimgooseesgo said that she was a leaf that fell to the ground. Morning dew had formed on the leaf and glistened while the Sun, *Kisu'lkw*, began its journey toward the midday sky. At midday *Nisgam* gave life and a human form to *Kluscap*'s mother. The spirit and strength of *Nisgam* entered into *Kluscap*'s mother.

Kluscap's mother said that she brings all the colors of the world to her children. She also brings strength and understanding. She brings strength to withstand Earth's natural forces and understanding of the *Mi'kmaw* world, its animals, and her children, the *Mi'kmaq*. She told them that they will need understanding and cooperation so they all can live in peace with one another.

Kluscap was very happy that his mother had come into the world. Since she came from a leaf, he called upon his nephew to gather nuts and fruits of the plants while *Nogami* prepared a feast. *Kluscap* gave thanks to *Nisgam*, *Kisu 'lkw*, *Ootsitgamoo*, *Nogami*, *Netaoansom* and *Neganogonimgooseesgo*. They all had a feast in honor of *Kluscap*'s mother's arrival to the world of *Mi 'kmaq*.

The story goes on to say that *Kluscap*, the man created from the sand of the earth, continued to live with his family for a very long time. He gained spiritual strength by having respect for each member of the family. He listened to his grandmother's wisdom. He relied on his nephew's strength and spiritual power. His mother's love and understanding gave him dignity and respect. *Kluscap*'s brothers and sisters of the wood and waters gave him the will and the food he needed to survive. *Kluscap* now learned that respect for his family and the world around him was really important for his survival. *Kluscap*'s task was to pass this knowledge on to his fellow *Mi 'kmaw* people so that they too could survive in the *Mi 'kmaw* world. This is why *Kluscap* became a central figure in *Mi 'kmaw* story telling.

One day when *Kluscap* was talking to *Nogami*, he told her that soon they would leave his mother and nephew. He told her that they should prepare for that occasion. *Nogami* began to prepare the things they needed for a long journey to the north. When everyone was sitting around the Great Fire one evening, *Kluscap* told his mother and nephew that he and *Nogami* were going to leave the *Mi 'kmaw* world. He said that they would travel north. They would return only if the *Mi 'kmaw* people were in danger. *Kluscap* told his mother and nephew to look after the Great Fire and never to let it go out.

Kluscap told them that after the passing of seven winters, "elwigneg daasiboongeg," seven sparks would fly from the fire. When these sparks landed on the ground, seven people would come to life. Seven more sparks would land on the ground and seven more people would come into existence. From these sparks seven women and seven men would be formed. They would form seven families. These seven families would leave the area of the Great Fire and each would go in one of the seven directions. *Kluscap* said that once the seven families reached their places of destination, they would further divide into seven groups.

Each group would have their own area in which to live so they would not disturb the other groups. He instructed his mother that the smaller groups would share the Earth's abundance of resources that included animals, plants, and fellow humans.

Kluscap told his mother that after the passing of seven winters, each of the seven groups would return to the place of the Great Fire. At the place of the Great Fire all the people would dance, sing, and drum in celebration of their continued existence in the *Mi 'kmaw* world. *Kluscap* continued by saying that the Great Fire signified the power of the Great Spirit Creator, *Nisgam*. It also signified the power and strength of the light and heat of *Kisu 'lkw*, the Sun. The Great Fire held the strength of *Ootsitgamoo* the Earth. Finally the

fire represented the bolt of lightning that hit the earth and from which *Kluscap* was created. The fire is very sacred to the *Mi'kmaq*. It is the most powerful spirit on earth.

Kluscap told his mother and nephew that it was important for the *Mi'kmaq* to give honor, respect, and thanks to the seven spiritual elements. The fire signifies the first four stages of creation, *Nisgam*, *Kisu'lkw*, *Oositgamoo* and *Kluscap*. Fire plays a significant role in the last three stages since it represents the power of the Sun, *Kisu'lkw*.

In honor of *Nogami's* arrival to the *Mi'kmaw* world, *Kluscap* instructed his mother that seven, fourteen, and twenty-one rocks would have to be heated over the Great Fire. These heated rocks would be placed inside a wigwam covered with hides of moose and caribou or with mud. The door must face the direction of the rising sun. There should be room for seven men to sit comfortably around a pit dug in the center. Up to twenty-one rocks could be placed in the pit. Seven alders, seven wild willows, and seven beech saplings would be used to make the frame of the lodge. This lodge was to be covered with the hides of moose, caribou, or deer or with mud.

Seven men, representing the seven original families, would enter into the lodge. They would give thanks and honor to the seven directions and the seven stages of creation, and they would continue to live in good health. The men would pour water over the rocks, causing steam to rise in the lodge, which would become very hot. The men would begin to sweat until it become almost unbearable. Only those who believed in the spiritual strength would be able to withstand the heat. Then they would all come out of the lodge covered with steam and shining like new-born babies. This is the way they were to clean their spirits and honor *Nogami's* arrival.

In preparation of the sweat, the seven men were not to eat any food for seven days. They could drink only the water of golden roots and bees' nectar. Before entering the sweat, the seven men would burn sweetgrass. They would honor the seven directions and the seven stages of creation, but mostly *Netawansom's* arrival to the *Mi'kmaw* world. The sweet grass was to be lit from the Great Fire.

Kluscap's mother came into the world from the leaf of a tree, so in honor of her arrival, tobacco made from bark and leaves would be smoked. The tobacco would be smoked in a pipe made from a branch of a tree and a bowl made from stone.

The pipe would be lit from sweetgrass that was lit from the Great Fire. The tobacco made from bark, leaves, and sweetgrass represented *Kluscap's* grandmother, nephew, and mother. The tobacco, called *spebaggan*, would be smoked, and the smoke would be blown in seven directions.

After honoring *Nogami's* arrival, the *Mi'kmaq* were to have a feast or meal. In honor of *Netawansom* they would eat fish. The fruits and roots of the trees and plants would be eaten to honor *Kluscap's* mother.

In *Kluscap*'s final instruction to his mother, he told her how to collect and prepare medicine from the barks and roots of different kinds of plants. The plants together make what is called *ektjimpisun*. It could cure almost any kind of illness in the *Mi'kmaw* world. The ingredients of this medicine were: *wikpe* (alum willow), *waqwonuminokse* (wild black-cherry), *Kastuk* (ground hemlock), and *kowotmonokse* (red spruce). The *Mi'kmaw* people were divided into seven distinct areas as follows:

1. *Gespegiag*
2. *Sigenitog*
3. *Epeggoitg aq, Pigtog*
4. *Gespogoitg*
5. *Segepenegatig*
6. *Esgigiag*
7. *Onamagig*

Appendix D

A *Mi'kmaw* Creation Story (abbr.)

On the other side of the Path of the Spirits, in ancient times, *Kisulk*, the Creator, made a decision. *Kisulk* created the firstborn, *Niskam*, the Sun, to be brought across *Skitchmujeouti* (the Milky Way) to light the earth. Also sent across the sky was a bolt of lightning that created *Sitqamuk*, the Earth, and from the same bolt *Kluskap* was also created out of the dry earth. *Kluskap* lay on *Sitqamuk*, pointing by head, feet, and hands to the Four Directions. *Kluskap* became a powerful teacher, a *kinap* and a *puoin*, whose gifts and allies were great.

In another bolt of lightning came the light of fire, and with it came the animals, the vegetation, and the birds. These other life forms gradually gave *Kluskap* a human form. *Kluskap* rose from the earth and gave thanks to *Kisulk* as he honored the six directions: the Sun, the Earth, and then the East, South, West and North. The abilities within the human form made up the seventh direction.

Kluskap asked *Kisulk* how he should live, and *Kisulk* in response sent *Nukumi*, *Kluskap*'s grandmother, to guide him in life. Created from a rock that was transformed into the body of an old woman through the power of *Niskam*, the Sun, *Nukumi* was an elder whose knowledge and wisdom were enfolded in the *Mi'kmaw* language.

Nukumi taught *Kluskap* to call upon *apistanewj*, the marten, to speak to the guardian spirits for permission to consume other life forms to nourish human existence. Marten returned with their agreement, as well as with songs and rituals. *Kluskap* and his grandmother gave thanks to *Kisulk*, to the Sun, to the Earth, and to the Four Directions and then feasted. As they made their way to understand how they should live, *Kluskap* then met *Netawansum*, his nephew, whom *Kisulk* had created in his human form from the rolling foam of the ocean that had swept upon the shores and clung to the sweetgrass. *Netawansum* had the understanding of the life and the strength of the underwater realms, and he brought gifts from this realm to *Kluskap*, including the ability to see far away. They again gave thanks and feasted on nuts from the trees.

Finally they met *Nikanaprekewisqw*, *Kluskap*'s mother, a woman whose power lay in her ability to tell about the cycles of life or the future. She was born from a leaf on a tree, descended from the power and strength of *Niskam*, the Sun, and made into human form to bring love, wisdom and the colors of the world. As part of the Earth, she brought the strength and wisdom of the Earth and the understanding of the means of maintaining harmony with the forces of nature.

They lived together for a long time, but one day *Kluskap* told his mother and nephew that he and his grandmother *Nukumi* were leaving them to go north. Leaving instructions with his mother, *Kluskap* told of the Great Council Fire that would send seven sparks, which would fly out of the fire and land on the ground, each as a man. Another seven sparks

would fly the other way, and out of these seven sparks would arise seven women. Together they would form seven groups, or families, and these seven families should disperse in seven directions and then divide again into seven different groups.

Like the lightning bolts that created the earth and *Kluskap*, the sparks contained many gifts. The sparks gave life to human form; and in each human form was placed the prospect of continuity. Like *Kluskap* before them, when the people awoke naked and lost, they asked *Kluskap* how they should live. *Kluskap* taught them their lessons and thus he is named “one who is speaking to you” or the Teacher-Creator.

Source: This segment is based on a story taken from the ancient teachings of *Mi'kmaw* elders. Kep'tin Stephen Augustine of Big Cove, New Brunswick, compiled this version of the ancient creation story.

Appendix E

Worldview and Spirituality

Mi'kmaq

French/Jesuit

THE UNIVERSE

The Universe is real and orderly but one cannot know it absolutely – though sensation and intuition give information about it; one attempts to stay in harmony with it. It is personal; however, causation itself may not be definable in personal terms. The universe is full of unknowns some of which are dangerous and others of which are beneficial.

The universe is real and orderly and it can be experienced with a measure of accuracy by the senses. Science has opened the universe to be exploited and used for humanity's pleasures and purposes.

ABSOLUTES

There is no sharp distinction between real or objective experiences and what might be referred to as non-sensate impressions. "Myths" of the past are represented in histories that provide a narrative interpretation of events. Dreams and visions are as much a part of a person's experiential world as his/her conscious life.

In the "real" world there are absolutes and, while science is able to contribute to our understanding of these, Catholic doctrine trumps science.³⁶⁰ There is a difference between the reality of the "real" world and the non-sensate experiences created in our minds, between history and myth, truth and error. Persons experience reality most accurately when awake. Dreams and inner visions are most often considered illusions.

NATURALISM

There is no "natural/supernatural" dichotomy. Spirits are as real in everyday experience as "natural" objects. What others might call "natural" explanations and the "supernatural" are freely interchanged in rationalizing daily occurrences. This blending of the "natural" and "supernatural" realms is the normal Indigenous orientation. The natural and supernatural dichotomy is a non-*Mi'kmaw* invention.

There is a sharp distinction between the "natural" and "supernatural" worlds. The "natural" world is experienced directly through the senses and can be studied by means of the sciences and humanities. Supernatural experiences, while "real," are truthful and good only to the extent they comport with Catholic dogma concerning the nature of and function of spirits and the supernatural. However, few people, even those who are religious, live with a constant awareness that the world around them is inhabited by spirits directly influencing their everyday experiences. This sharp distinction of worlds is one basis for Western secularism.

³⁶⁰ This is perhaps, given our discussion of the heliocentric universe debate in Chapter 3, not as hard and fast as it might otherwise seem. Catholic doctrine that would be irrefutable would likely relate more to the standard propositional truths of the historic Christian creeds.

Rhythmic and cyclical time has a linear progressive quality to it. Activities are determined largely though not solely by the season. Orientation is toward the knowable “past” which lies “in front” of the person – particularly with respect to ancestral actions and life-ways; the future is unknowable and lies behind, but contributes to present conduct in planning for the needs of unborn generations to ensure continuity. Present conduct does not determine future rewards or punishment. Indigenous languages do not have many time symbols.

Land is sacred. There is a clear relationship between the First Nation person and his/her ancestral land that is akin to the relationship between a child and its mother. Special concepts are concrete.

WISDOM – An understanding of the true nature of reality. Unlike knowledge, which comes by rational analysis and often has little effect on a person’s behavior, wisdom comes from age, experience, and generational transmission and has a profound effect on a person’s life and relationship to the world. Knowledge is “entered into” and not owned.

Dominance is rejected. Resources and land are all for the common good. Station in life is determined by contribution to the community or people’s continuance. Competition when embraced at all is for the purpose of recreation, sport, or sharpening skill.

Sublimation of individuality. Each individual has certain contributions to the family and through them to the community. Outstanding individuals are frequently perceived as a threat to the integrity of the community. They are often seen as trying to be “white.” Freedom is unlimited and constrained only by the overarching concerns of community harmony.

TIME

Time is linear. It extends along a uniform scale, from the past, through the present, into the future, without repeating itself. The orientation is toward the future with the past “behind” and completed. Since a person has only one life to live, activities are designed to “make the most of it”; the religious person does this by living well, employing the sacred, and preparing for heaven.

TERRITORY

Land is a commodity and a temporal indication of the extension of both an earthly and heavenly kingdom. Although the acquisition of land provides security, its value resides mainly in monetary worth and market value. Land is commodified and non-sacred except when a particular place is ascribed that value.

WISDOM/KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE – There exists a deep faith that the human mind, by its rational processes, can discover knowledge of the order that underlies the created universe. Moreover, since the Jesuits are an educative order, knowledge itself has a high value. A person is often judged by his knowledge and intellectual capabilities rather than by his/her behavior in everyday experience. Knowledge is a possession.

COMPETITION

In an individualistic world, all forms of life compete for resources and dominance. People must be aggressive in their relationships to nature. In the social order, individuals must compete for status. Station in life is not determined by birth but by God’s gifting and ability and effort.

INDIVIDUALITY

The individuality of each person is taken for granted. The emphasis is on self-realization and “personal salvation.” This results in praise for self-made individuals and the truly pious/religious. Applied to society, the stress on individualism leads to idealization of freedom.

GOOD

LIMITED GOOD – There exists only a limited amount of all desired things in life such as material wealth, power, status, and friendship. There is no direct way to increase the quantities available for all to use. One of the greatest modern “sins” among Indigenous people is the drive to accumulate. By inference, the farther one family progresses materially, educationally, etc., the greater the fracture in the extended family unit.

UNLIMITED GOOD. The belief most prevalent in society at large, including the Jesuits, is that the world of all that is good is expanding because God gives good gifts to His people. Combined with the extension of knowledge, technology, and gross national product, the focus has been to create a kingdom here on earth. People compete for what is good, but one person’s advance is not necessarily seen as being at the expense of another’s fall. Though recent years have witnessed a beginning awareness this is not so.

ACHIEVEMENT

Security and meaning are found in the groups to which one belongs and in the relationships one has with others, rather than in the material possessions one acquires. The building of relationships, particularly with those to whom one is related, is of greatest importance, for they are the measure of an individual’s success. Because the world is not fully predictable, failure leads not so much to blame and self-accusation as to a sense of frustration. This tension is often reduced by dropping out of the situation and returning to the security of the kin group.

Personal achievement is the measure of a person’s worth and social position. Hard work, careful planning, efficiency, and saving of time and effort are values in themselves. In a predictable world, the individual is ultimately personally responsible for failure. It is important, therefore, to fix blame when anything goes wrong. The consequence of blame is guilt. Achievement is closely tied to social mobility. People should be allowed to rise to their own levels of ability and not be tied down by their kinsmen. The results of achievement orientation are often shallow social and geographic roots and insecurity.

ASSOCIATIONAL GROUPS

A person’s primary ties are to the kin group(s). Because membership is by birth or customary adoption, a great deal of individual variation can be permitted the members. One must not, however, defy the cultural dictates of the kin group. The worst punishment is ostracism and banishment.

Social groups above the level of the nuclear family are based primarily on voluntary association or contractual relationships. Status rests primarily in the groups one can join. Groups must guard themselves by segregating themselves from those inferior fellow human beings that might encroach upon them from below.

SPIRITUALITY

All of life is animated by a spiritual essence or indivisible quality of being and each aspect of life is considered to be structured and interconnected by that essence to all else. Spiritual behavior is more likely to be organized around the concept of journey within creation, with the specifics of transcendence left vague.

Spirituality, reserved for reference to humans only, is understood to be largely behavioral, being defined by activities one is engaged with as opposed to an innate quality of being. For the most part it has been historically acted on as if it were a separated aspect or compartment of life. Spiritual behavior is organized around a series of (progressive?) events and directed toward a future destination.

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