

Encountering Spirits: Evangelical and Holiness Revivals in Victoria, B.C., and the “Colonial Project”

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Christian revivals in British Columbia in the late 1800s were natural extensions of the assimilationist impulse so strongly associated with missionary objectives of controlling, reforming, and re-educating Native peoples. Beyond being a tool of the colonial project, however, Christian missions were also shaped and adapted by First Nations in the region to fit their own social, political, and cultural needs. Evangelical forms prospered and proliferated under the direction of devout and inspired Native Christians. Gender was also a factor in revivalism in the province, especially with regard to the Salvation Army in Victoria, whose officers were overwhelmingly women despite the preponderance of men in the city. Women leaders challenged yet also represented the dominant culture's assumptions about feminine behaviour in revivalist religion.

Les mouvements de renouveau chrétien de la fin des années 1800 en Colombie-Britannique furent des prolongements naturels de l'impulsion assimilationniste si fortement associée aux objectifs missionnaires du contrôle, de la réforme et de la rééducation des peuples autochtones. Bien qu'elles servaient d'outil pour le projet colonial, les missions chrétiennes ont aussi été façonnées et adaptées par les Premières nations de la région pour répondre à leurs propres besoins sociaux, politiques et culturels. Les formes évangéliques ont prospéré et proliféré sous la direction de chrétiens autochtones dévots et inspirés. Le sexe a également été un facteur

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du « revivalisme » dans la province, surtout en ce qui a trait à l'Armée du Salut à Victoria, dont une écrasante majorité d'officiers étaient des femmes, malgré la prépondérance des hommes dans la ville. Les femmes leaders contestaient tout en incarnant les hypothèses de la culture dominante sur le comportement féminin dans la religion revivaliste.

SOCIAL HISTORIANS over the last three decades have often grappled with the complex and intersecting nature of ethnic, gender, and class identities in nineteenth-century British Columbia, especially for the period in which the region transformed from colony to province. Rarely have these categories been analysed by taking religion and religious experience into serious consideration.¹ Indeed, one historian's recent study has suggested that, by century's end, British Columbia was relatively "godless" in comparison to the rest of Canada.² Has religion been remarkably overlooked and under-represented by historians seeking to understand social and cultural patterns in British Columbia?

In Adele Perry's recent and award-winning study of nineteenth-century British Columbian society (1849–1871), she illustrates how delineating race and gender in the emerging colony was a contested and shifting process.³ She adopts the term "colonial project", a phrase adapted from the writings of such cultural anthropologists as Nicholas Thomas and Jean and John Comaroff. The concept refers to the shared understanding of the dominant culture towards race, gender, and even class identities which locates European or Western ones as the norm, whether they be values, social roles, or institutions related to these categories. In this sense, as Thomas puts it, the colonial project is "a socially transformative endeavour that is localized, politicized, and partial, yet also engendered by larger historical developments and ways of nar-

1 A notable exception has been recent interest in First Nations and missionaries and in how missionary and other colonial agendas influenced the race, class, and gender identities of Aboriginal persons. For example, see Michael Harkin, *The Heiltsuks: Dialogues of Culture and History on the Northwest Coast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press in cooperation with the American Indian Studies Research Institute, Indian University, Bloomington, 1997); Brett Christophers, *Positioning the Missionary: John Booth Good and the Confluence of Cultures in Nineteenth Century British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998); Jean Barman, "Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850–1900", *BC Studies*, no. 115–116 (Autumn/Winter 1997/1998), pp. 237–266, to name but a few works.

2 Lynne Marks, "Exploring Regional Diversity in Patterns of Religious Participation: Canada in 1901", *Historical Methods*, vol. 33, no. 4 (Fall 2000), pp. 247–254. While indeed, according to 1901 census data, people were "ten times" more likely in British Columbia than elsewhere in Canada to identify themselves as "atheist, agnostic, freethinker, and 'no religion'", in my estimation Marks's finding of only 1.5% supports the very opposite argument; it seems the vast majority of British Columbians in 1901 associated with some form of religious organization. This process was well underway in the preceding quarter century.

3 Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). It won the Canadian Historical Association's Clío Award (B.C. region) in 2002.

rating them”.⁴ It is also knowledge in formation and reformulation, however, because of the colonial circumstances. The colonial project both reinforces and creates the unequal power relationship between colonizer and indigenous populations and between the dominating and subordinate groups in the emergent society. While the imposition of constructions of “whiteness”, “Aboriginality”, “Asianness”, or masculine and feminine identities by the dominant colonial culture had real impact on colonial policies and the experiences of individuals, there was also frequently a divergence between discourse and practice.⁵

The same argument holds true for many parts of British Columbia in its formative years following Confederation in 1871. Remaining ethnically heterogeneous, the province’s major urban centre and seat of government, the city of Victoria, provides a fruitful sphere to explore how this colonial project continued to shape conceptions of race and gender in B.C.’s early days as a province.⁶ Yet, as I demonstrate, the process could and did unfold in unexpected ways, and not always as deeply as the dominant culture intended; alternative modes of understanding and influencing ethnic and gendered identities can be illuminated within particular events related to the transmission of religious traditions through revivalist forms. Christian revivals reveal to a certain extent the ways in which mid- and late nineteenth-century British Columbians created, expressed, and challenged social constructions of race and gender. My preliminary findings suggest that, in the case of expressions of intensive experiential religious forms, like Methodist camp meetings or Salvation Army services, the so-called colonial project aimed at delineating these identities was only partially successful, and certainly not the only conceptual framework expressed.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, demand for Vancouver Island coal, timber, sealskins, and salmon contributed to the growth, expansion, and commercial prosperity of the city of Victoria. While envisioned as the pre-eminent urban centre of a burgeoning English settler colony, the city had a cosmopolitan rather than ethnically homogeneous population. The diversity extended to religious forms. As Methodist minister William Pollard noted by 1874, many of its churches were “composed of persons from every quarter of the globe: of every hue and almost every language ... all united in one congregation, in singing the same hymns, and worshipping”, each in their own lan-

4 Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 104; also quoted in Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, p. 7.

5 One of the best examples of this “sharp disjuncture between colonial discourse and colonial practice” is Perry’s chapter 7 on “white” women in colonial society (*On the Edge of Empire*, pp. 167–191).

6 The term “colonial project” still seems appropriate here, even though I take my inquiry into the “provincial” period. Colonization of First Peoples and the marginality of other ethnic groups within the emerging polity suggest similar or continuing forces at work. I prefer not to impose specific or narrow definitions for race, ethnicity, and gender, as most readers of *Histoire sociale/Social History* will be familiar with the broad meaning of these categories. I believe none are fixed or static, as they are historically and culturally bound constructs.

guages. “Though all in the congregation cannot always comprehend what is said, the power which attends their prayers and experiences, sufficiently indicates that they come from hearts regenerated by Divine graces.”⁷ In the late 1860s and early 1870s, revivalism among the significant non-Anglo populations in the city appears to have developed as a by-product of Protestant evangelism among First Nations in the immediate vicinity. From the 1860s onward, the city received Aboriginal visitors from coastal B.C. in notable numbers, attracted by trade, wage labour, and social opportunities. Mission work on the nearby Lekwammen (then known as Songhees) reserve moved into Victoria itself, and this resulted in the conversion of a number of Aboriginal residents and visitors alike to Methodism. Peaking between 1869 and 1873, much excitement was centred at the Methodist mission hall at the corner of Government and Fisgard Streets, which had only been lately converted from an old bar room.⁸ Nineteenth-century Methodist missionary books and pamphlets are littered with references to the story of the bar room mission and the central role played by its Native converts in subsequent years in spreading Christianity throughout the province. Perhaps the most famous was the Tsimshian family of Elizabeth Lawson (Diiks) and her son and daughter-in-law, Alfred (Chief Sgagweet) and Kate Dudoward, but many self-directed initiatives and notable Aboriginal catechists had their genesis at these same revivals.⁹ A decade and a half later in 1887 the Salvation Army, led by predominantly female officers, arrived in Victoria bringing its own brand of revivalist evangelism to the city streets. Both these forms of revivalist, experiential religion are prime expressions through which to explore race and gender issues in the late colonial and early provincial periods.

Revivals are literally modes of recharging religious emotion and conviction in a group and, frequently, public setting. They “functioned both as a means whereby they transmitted ... [an] understanding of life and as a way to incorporate other people, whether their own families or outsiders, into their communities of faith”.¹⁰ For denominations with roots in evangelical Protestantism, revivals operated as opportunities for both conversion of new Christians

7 Rev. William Pollard, Chairman, British Columbia District, letter dated July 24, 1874, in Wesleyan Methodist Church of Canada, *Missionary Society Notices*, no. 25 (November 1874), pp. 401–402.

8 There is conflicting information about the exact location of this abandoned saloon, long since vanished. In a sermon celebrating the history of Victoria’s Metropolitan United Church (now First Metropolitan United Church), Rev. Albert King described the bar room as being on the corner of Herald and Government Streets (which may have been the location of the “Indian” church rather than the earlier saloon). Regardless, in either location, it was situated in Victoria’s Chinatown. University of Waterloo Library microforms, “Our rich heritage”, sermon preached by Dr. Albert E. King, Sunday, February 10, 1974.

9 For more on the Dudoward family, see Susan Neylan, “Contested Family: Navigating Kin and Culture in Protestant Missions to the Tsimshian”, in Nancy Christie, ed., *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada, 1730–1969* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), pp. 167–202.

10 Marguerite Van Die, “‘The Marks of a Genuine Revival’: Religion, Social Change, Gender, and Community in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario”, *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 79, no. 3 (September 1998), p. 528.

and the renewal of the faithful through intense transformative experiences. For some Aboriginal groups who were participants in these events, this aspect resonated with similarities to their pre-existing beliefs about empowerment and receiving spiritual gifts from non-human or otherworldly beings, or to a number of historical prophet movements that both preceded and followed missionary activity in the province.¹¹ Revivals marked a spiritual transformation that carried certain behavioural expectations, or, as one historian put it, “conversion was expected to express itself in a new life of service within one’s community. Its impact was to extend beyond family and church to include one’s social and business relations within the wider community.”¹² In this respect, revivals were natural extensions of the assimilationist impulse so strongly associated with missionary objectives of controlling, reforming, and re-educating Native peoples;¹³ religious transformation was key to the salvation of the “Indian race” in missionary eyes.

How were public and highly emotional manifestations of Christianity perceived by the participants, initiators, and secular observers? Did they transcend or reinforce existing social boundaries, especially those based on race or gender? What role did they play in formation of indigenized Christianity or for Aboriginal spiritual leaders who rejected the idea that this new religion was an outright replacement of their existing spiritual worlds? Why did women dominate leadership of the revivalist Salvation Army, when men significantly outnumbered women in the city? Some of these questions can be addressed in an exploration of how religious revivals in the south coast and Vancouver Island area reflected existing social and cultural forms, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and in turn were influenced by them. There is no doubt that, beyond being a tool of the colonial project, Christian missions were also shaped and adapted by First Nations in the region to fit their own social, political, and cultural needs. Evangelical forms prospered and proliferated under the direction of devout and inspired Native Christians, many of whom identified their original conversion experiences with the evangelical (1860s–1870s) and holiness (1880s–1890s) revivals that occurred in Victoria. While it is immeasurably important to view Christianity in its colonial context, nonetheless, this type of “contact” must not always be seen as a radical

11 The impetus for this paper came from my previous research into the founding of Methodism among the Tsimshian on the north coast of British Columbia, which has its origins in evangelical revivalism in the city of Victoria, as well as Native politics in Fort Simpson. See Susan Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003).

12 Van Die, “The Marks of a Genuine Revival’ ”, p. 528.

13 Examples of this well-documented missionary discourse on First Nations can be found in numerous works, including Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774–1890* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1977); C. L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched, and Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians of Canada and the United States, 1820–1900* (Albuquerque and Calgary: University of New Mexico Press and University of Calgary Press, 2000).

break from the Aboriginal past.¹⁴ For many Native groups, the reception of Christian “power” represented a continuity with a century-long process of religious innovation through the adoption of ceremonies, symbols, and ideas from “outside” local cultural traditions. Secondly, gender is considered as a category debated and challenged through Salvation Army work in the city beginning in the late 1880s. This discussion is much more speculative, owing to the absence of serious historical analysis of the movement in the Canadian west and to the general lack of regard for religion as a topic of interest among historians of British Columbia. My tentative findings reveal a paradox of gender ideals related to the femaleness of the Victoria corps’ commissions — women leaders challenged yet also represented the dominant culture’s assumptions about feminine behaviour in revivalist religion.

Representing Christianity

Historian John Lutz argues that the resettlement of the Victoria area by non-Natives was “less a conquest, based on the sum force of arms, than ‘an anti-conquest’, based on the extension of state and quasi-state surveillance, knowledge, and power, all couched in terms of solicitousness” for local (Lekwammen) and visiting Native groups alike.¹⁵ Here, Lutz harkens back to Mary Pratt’s concept of anti-conquest — “the strategies of power and representation used by certain European colonists and colonial states to secure European hegemony over occupied lands while publicly deploring the violence of conquest”.¹⁶ Key to Lutz’s contention is the belief that the extension of this resettlement was accomplished particularly through naming, surveillance, and examination, which he sees in the Foucauldian fashion as techniques of knowledge creation, “the process of the creation of state knowledge about Aboriginal people”.¹⁷ Indian agents were not sent among Vancouver Island’s First Nations groups until the 1880s, long after the establishment of a permanent missionary presence among many groups, including the building of “Indian churches” and day-schools.¹⁸ Salvation rather than conquest

14 Here I paraphrase James Axtell, who wrote two decades ago: “It would be easy — and foolish, to lament this particular revitalizing break with their pre-Columbian past as a tragic loss of innocence for the Indians. It was indeed a loss for them, but not necessarily a tragic one. Only if we continue to see the precontact Indian as the only real Indian, as the ‘noble savage’ in other words, can we mourn his [or her] loss of innocence. Only if we persist in equating courage with mortal resistance to the forces of change can we condemn the praying Indians as cultural cop-outs or moral cowards.” James Axtell, “Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions”, *Ethnohistory*, vol. 29, no. 1 (1982), p. 37.

15 John Lutz, “‘Relating to the Country’: The Lekwammen and the Extension of European Settlement, 1843–1911”, in R. W. Sandwell, ed., *Beyond the City Limits: Rural History in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999), p. 18.

16 Mary Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 7.

17 Lutz, “‘Relating to the Country’”, p. 18.

18 Lutz explains that, although “the legal apparatus for intervening in all aspects of Songhees life” was created with the *Indian Act* of 1876, “it took longer to establish the full administrative structure”; in the Lekwammen/Songhees case, Indian agents were not active among them not until 1881 (“‘Relating to the Country’”, pp. 24–25). This is not to say that First Nations were bereft of other forms of government intervention in their daily lives.

framed their discourse on Aboriginal peoples.¹⁹ Thus the function of revivalism among First Nations populations can be seen as being intimately connected to missionary agendas within the colonial project, which they defined in the oft-worn phrase, to “Christianize” and “civilize” Native peoples. It is key to consider the establishment of missions and, by extension, revivalism as a form of knowledge creation — the setting out of the dominant standard of norms with regard to race, gender, and even religion.

One missionary’s description of Methodist “Indian” work in Victoria in the early 1870s, which appeared in the secular press, is worth quoting as an example of the pervasive adherence to the discourse of “salvation” and “civilization” so frequently connected to the conceptions of the Aboriginal “race”. Writing of the “Indian Work”, the author, one A. B. (likely missionary Arthur Browning), celebrated the dawn of a new era for the province’s Native peoples: “A Sabbath School was inaugurated three years ago by a few men and women who sympathized with the Indians and who had made up their minds, notwithstanding discouragements not only from Indians but also from whites, to start out on their mission of love and errand of mercy; and with the Bible in one hand and the Gospel trumpet in the other, they went forth.” Through “Christian patience and fortitude, a foothold was obtained and by means of religious instruction on the Sabbath and meetings held during the weeks as many as a score were brought into the Church and united themselves with the Sabbath School; all this the work of two years.”²⁰ The heroic “errand of mercy” and struggle by lay workers to “civilize and [C]hristianize the savages” were highlighted by the writer. Native conversion was not the only outcome; it soon included an extension of their original work by the converts themselves, and by the third year of the mission apparently “it was not very difficult to obtain assistants to satisfy the increasing demand”.²¹

Last winter [1872], however, through the influence of some Christian friends, not identified with the Wesleyans, a number of Northern Indians came to the school which had been established for the Victoria Indians, and on hearing their simple story of the cross, as it could only come from a newly born Christian, it touched their hearts, and many, very many, of them immediately inquired after the Saviour [*sic*] of whom they had heard for the first time at that meeting. At the request of the Indians special meetings were held and for five successive weeks were these meetings carried on every night and at the close there were thirty-five [who] wished to be enrolled as church members. Last Sunday morning twelve of these were baptized in the Wesley Church and it was a very impressive service. Thus we see the results of three years’ faithful toil to be over fifty members enrolled in the Church Register and a Sabbath School of over seventy, of whom many can read the Bible. This must be very

19 Lutz, “‘Relating to the Country’”, p. 30.

20 A. B. [Arthur Browning?], *Daily Colonist* [Victoria], May 2, 1873, p. 3.

21 *Ibid.*

encouraging to the teachers, but more especially to the instigators, and shows that with the Lord on our side we are greater than all that can be against us. Toil on for the Master and “work while it is day for the night cometh when no man can work”.²²

It is also striking that descriptions of Victoria’s “Indian revivals” show that the actual impetus behind the revivals in the city were the efforts of individual, identifiable, Aboriginal Christians. While biographies of heroic missionaries dominate the literature, it is difficult to deny the active role of First Nations in their own Christianization. For Protestant missions throughout B.C., Aboriginal workers were often the first representatives of Christianity in an area and became its first teachers. Native Christians were hired by missionary agencies as assistants frequently responsible for setting up a mission site, organizing the community, teaching, preaching, fund-raising for the building of a church and mission house, and promoting the building of roads, single-family dwellings, or sometimes industrial enterprises, such as the construction of a saw-mill or cannery. Euro-Canadian missionaries and ordained ministers or priests were chronically few in number and were rarely unassisted by local, Aboriginal supporters.²³ Hence Victoria’s Protestant revivalism must be seen through Native converts’ and evangelists’ own understanding about the meanings of the religious encounter between Christian and Native beliefs. Here is prime example of the divergence between discourse about religion as laid out by missionaries (that the march of Christian progress and Western civilization would conquer the “savage race”) and how religious encounters were played out in places like British Columbia.

Pre-Missionary Exposure to Christianity

When Methodist missionary Thomas Crosby reported on the revivalism gripping his church’s missions to North Coast First Nations in the 1870s, he also acknowledged that positive results were not necessarily owing to the missionaries’ efforts alone. “At the time of the great revival on the North Coast, in 1875, when the people became so aroused that they did not eat or sleep for days, the old [Aboriginal] men would say ‘Oh I saw this when I was a boy many years ago. A man came down the Skeena and spoke to the people, and they began to cry and pray, and this is the same.’ ”²⁴ Crosby added, “[T]here

²² *Ibid.*

²³ While beyond the scope of a paper on evangelical and holiness religious forms derived from Protestant Christianity, the extent of Native participation in Catholic missions should also be noted. See Vincent J. McNally, *The Lord’s Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000), *passim*.

²⁴ One of the Aboriginal men explained that the movement he had experienced as a child was not the first. “Long before this a man came down from Alaska and told the people that Ta-kus had travelled far away, for a month or more, in the mountains, and they had met with people who prayed to the Good Spirit. When they took their food they would read from a strange book, and when the people heard this they got much excited.” Thomas Crosby, *Among the An-ko-me-nums Or Flathead Tribes of Indians of the Pacific Coast* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1907), pp. 18–19.

is no doubt that a great revival spread across the continent at about the time before mentioned, filling the minds of the natives with expectation.”²⁵ This reference is to a spiritual movement transmitted through Aboriginal prophets, circa the 1830s. Similarly, the resident Methodist missionary assigned to the Lower Fraser River valley remarked that, in 1871 around Cultus Lake, he encountered an elderly Native man who told him that he was no longer interested in the message of the Catholic missionaries, who had for some time been among his people:

He had heard years ago, from a young man, of salvation and Jesus, from some Indians who had come across the mountains from the Far East. He was glad to see us because we told him of God, and heaven, and Jesus. He could not expect to live much longer, and he wanted to know about the heavenly country and how to get there. He had long been wishing to see this day, when God would send them teachers, and now he was glad that his people were leaving the Priest and enquiring what God’s commands concerning them were.²⁶

Consideration of earlier spiritual movements like these (especially those movements that latched onto some aspects of Christianity directly) reveals many of the processes involved in religious contact. Generally, the term prophet can be applied to an individual who teaches or interprets the alleged will of God or some other non-human power, someone who acts as spokesperson or advocate for a specific cause or viewpoint, or a person who foretells events.²⁷ Both shaman and missionary were teachers, interpreters, and spokespersons for their particular spiritual beliefs. They were religious specialists, and the dialogue that arose from contact between them created new expressions of spiritual power (although, as Euro-Canadian missionaries proved repeatedly, they were the much poorer listeners in the cultural exchange). Prophecy and prophets were also ways of understanding change itself. For many B.C. First Nations, literally and conceptually, prophecies about the coming of newcomers were utilized to interpret rapid change. Some prophet movements must be considered in conjunction with mission activity because they define Native activism within the process of Christianization. Ultimately, they point to a different understanding at work, counteracting the dominance of the colonial project in the province.

Prophet movements in British Columbia historiography, especially those incorporating Christian elements, have frequently been connected to religious encounters between “traditional” Native and Christian cosmologies. Leslie Spier’s *The Prophet Dance of the Northwest and its Derivative*,

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Rev. George Clarkson, letter dated November 10, 1870, Chilliwack, B.C., *Wesleyan Church of Canada, Missionary Society Notices*, no. 10 (February 1871), p. 156.

²⁷ *The Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), s.v. “prophet”.

although an older work caught up in the debate over the pre-contact or post-contact origins of prophet movements, pays particular attention to the integration of Christian elements into Native religion.²⁸ In it, Spier identifies the transmission of a religious movement decades before missionaries arrived, with strikingly Christian-like elements (observance of the Sabbath, the sign of the cross), among many diverse First Nations throughout B.C., including Salishian peoples. Wayne Suttles's research on the prophet dance among the Coast Salish revisited this material, describing how in the 1830s it arrived in southern B.C. from the interior Plateau.²⁹ Characterized by a marriage dance, the worship of a deity identified as the Chief Above, and prophecy regarding the arrival of whites, the movement may have paved the way for later interest in Christianity.³⁰

The pre-missionary exposure to Christianity undoubtedly shaped the nature of Aboriginal participation in the later revivals connected to mission work. This was especially true for the Coast Salish world — a considerable cultural zone comprised of speakers of Salish languages, stretching from Vancouver Island to the southern end of Puget Sound and covering coastal areas of mainland B.C. to the northern end of the Strait of Georgia — into which Victoria and its mission hinterland entered. Wilson Duff recorded that the Stó:lo (a Coast Salish people along the Lower Fraser River valley, in whose territory Methodist camp meetings were later held near Chilliwack) believed in a supreme deity (the High Chief or Chief Above) whom they later equated with the Christian God, a belief that had preceded the arrival of missionaries.³¹ He links this knowledge to prophet movements: “The deity concept was probably introduced in the first half of the nineteenth century by a prophet (*á lia*). There were at least two such prophets in the Stalo area — men who received visions of what the deity wanted, and travelled around preaching, healing, and performing miracles. They also were gifted with far-sightedness and probably clairvoyance.”³² Duff also cites several versions of narratives about these prophets who received powerful visions about a church in a rock bluff, gave instructions on how to pray (including making the sign of the cross), and predicted the arrival of Catholic missionaries who were “half bad and half good”. In addition to anticipating the arrival of European technologies, according to one narrative, the prophet read from a book

28 Leslie Spier, *The Prophet Dance of the Northwest and its Derivatives: The Source of the Ghost Dance* (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing, 1935).

29 Wayne Suttles, “The Plateau Prophet Dance among the Coast Salish” in *Coast Salish Essays* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987), pp. 152–198.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

31 Wilson Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians of the Fraser Valley* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, Anthropology in British Columbia Memoir no. 1, 1952), pp. 98, 119.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 98; Duff's terminology is slightly incorrect. The Stó:lo word for prophet or seer is *syú:we*, while prophet dreams are *s'éltyá*. Keith Thor Carlson, ed., *A Stó:lo Coast Salish Historical Atlas* (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 2001), p. 155.

that Europeans were unable to comprehend and incorporated healing practices into this new religion.³³

Catholic practices were not the only Christian traditions the Coast Salish groups claimed to have known about prior to direct mission work among them. When Methodist Thomas Crosby first began proselytizing at Chilliwack, he was surprised that many Natives he encountered already knew some of the old Protestant hymns. He was told “that before the white settlers or the missionaries arrived ... *Snaahkul*, came from the south to the Chilliwack Valley and told them that some years before a white man had come to his people and taught them the ‘words of God’ out of His own Book, and that many gave up their old ways and turned to God’s way.” According to Crosby, “the missionary who brought the Gospel to *Snaahkul*’s people was undoubtedly Jason Lee, who had reached the coast in 1834 and worked among the Indians of Puget Sound.”³⁴ Regardless of its origins, the fact that Christian knowledge was acquired, spread, and adapted by Aboriginal group to Aboriginal group is significant to understanding the process of Christianization. The transmission of songs and other physical manifestations of Christianity would have made sense in pre-Christian Aboriginal terms. Manifestations of Christian power — Protestant songs and hymns, or the charts that Catholics used to portray Christian history called “Catholic ladders” — circulated long before the arrival of missionaries.³⁵

As Keith Thor Carlson recently reminded me, there are “other ways of appreciating the role of prophets outside the Christian derivation model”. “Oral traditions of other prophetic Stó:lo teachers similarly emphasize how God (the same God worshipped by Europeans) imparted special information to Stó:lo people to allow them to live and prosper in a rapidly changing world.”³⁶ Indeed, the contemporary relevance of some nineteenth-century prophets’ teachings, illustrated by the recitation of their stories and messages by modern-day elders to the younger generation, supports the continuance of these same modes of transmission of religious traditions.³⁷ It may be that by applying the label “Native” or “Christian” we miss a dynamic component of Aboriginal religious traditions — the borrowing from “outsider”. Hence, I concur with Wayne Suttles’s assessment, made nearly half a century ago, as to why the movement known as the prophet dance has been ignored as part of the process of Christianization of First Nations in B.C. Scholars have long attempted “to give a timeless, impersonal description of the culture of a

33 Duff, *The Upper Stalo Indians*, pp. 121–122.

34 Mrs. Frederick C. Stephenson, *One Hundred Years of Canadian Methodist Missions* (Toronto: Methodist Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada and the Young People’s Forward Movement, 1925), vol. 1, pp. 151–152.

35 See Margaret Whitehead, “Christianity, a Matter of Choice: The Historic Role of Indian Catechists in the Oregon Territory and British Columbia”, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, vol. 72, no. 3 (July 1981), pp. 98–106.

36 Carlson, *A Stó:lo Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, p. 155.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 155–156.

Native tribe". In so doing, they "have tended to assume that they are dealing with two mutually exclusive systems, 'Native' and 'Christian' and (except for the relatively late Shaker Church) these two systems only, and thus have exercised two great a selectivity in collecting and reporting 'Native' religious practices and beliefs".³⁸ In other words, the colonial project alone cannot adequately frame the significance of revivalist religion in B.C.

Victoria's "Indian Revival"

Scholars seeking to understand the process of Christianization of Native peoples must take into account the Aboriginal discourses on experiential religion stemming from prophet movements and Native diffusion patterns of Christian symbols and practices. However, the story of the founding of Methodism among First Nations in B.C. is also inextricably linked to revivals in the Victoria area in the early 1870s. In 1868 or 1869 Wesleyan Methodists (the denomination barely a decade old in the colony) opened a Sunday School and conducted class meetings on the Lekwammen (Songhees) reserve across the bay from the city. Lay workers soon found it more desirable to relocate to the city proper as a means to reach more potential converts and to avoid competition with other mission groups (particularly Anglicans) who regarded the reserve as "their" area.³⁹ Methodists converted the old bar room on the corner of Government and Fisgard Streets. Located in the heart of Victoria's Chinatown, the same building was also used for a mission and school for the Chinese, but it soon became the centre of Methodist activity among First Nations.⁴⁰ By 1872 a full-scale "revival" was underway at the reclaimed

38 Suttles, "The Plateau Prophet Dance", pp. 194–195.

39 Indeed, rivalry between denominations over Aboriginal converts gave First Nations some leverage to resist assimilationist policies by playing one Christian group against another, to incorporate selective elements of this new faith, and to continue older social division through different denominational affiliations. For an exploration of this on British Columbia's north coast mission field, see Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, pp. 51, 62–63, 253.

40 A Sunday School for Chinese converts was opened as early as 1865, apparently the brainchild of Mrs. Russ, the Methodist minister's wife. Soon regular class meetings under the supervision of Rev. Ephriam Evans were held in the bar room on Government Street, giving instruction in both religion and the English language. First Metropolitan United Church Archives [hereafter FMUCA], File 84–19, Dorothy Peters, "Information on the Oriental Home and Chinese United Church Kindergarten of Victoria, BC", typescript, 1997. One of the challenges Methodists immediately faced was the transient nature of the city's Chinese population. Remarking on the first year of the Chinese class (1865–1866), the Superintendent of Sunday School John Jessop reported, "This class was a most interesting one during the summer of last year and notwithstanding some of its members have left the country it still exists and may yet be the means of effecting much good." FMUCA, File 79–8, John Jessop, "Report of the Superintendent of the W.M. Sunday School for the year ending 4 March 1866", *Sunday School Secretary's Register and Teachers' Minutes*. Both the Chinese and Aboriginal facets of the Victoria work expanded rapidly and were deemed stable enough for the church to invest the financial resources necessary for the construction of separate "Indian" and Chinese churches. The site for an "Indian" church and school was selected and secured on Herald Street by 1874, while a Methodist Chinese Mission church and school opened its doors on Fisgard Street in 1891. FMUCA, File 84–19, Peters, "Information on the Oriental Home"; FMUCA, *Minutes of the Quarterly Board Meetings*,

saloon, and the converted disseminated Christian teachings rapidly to their home communities, including those as far away as Fort Simpson, on the north coast. By 1874 a new “Indian” church was constructed a block away, on Herald Street, which also became a day school.

The first outbreak of evangelical excitement in the city was attributed to the arrival of David Sallosalton, a young Aboriginal man from the Sneneymexw (Nanaimo) area, who until then had also been employed by the Methodists at their other mission stations on Vancouver Island and the lower mainland. As the ability to communicate the message of Christianity was an important factor in the work, the appointment of Sallosalton meant that language was less of an impediment than it had been for many of the non-Native teachers who could only speak the Chinook jargon.⁴¹ The 1871 report from the Chairman of the Methodist District of Victoria, Rev. William Pollard, alludes to this issue, while emphasizing the importance of the Aboriginal role, particularly that of Sallosalton, in mission work:

I have brought David Sallasalton to Victoria, and we have had a very gracious revival among the Indians. Last Tuesday evening I received nineteen on trial. This is the first class ever formed among the Victoria tribe of Indians and the fruit of much prayer.... He came about the middle of September and has preached to them every Sabbath since. On the 30th of October, Bro. Crosby and David commenced a series of services; held preaching and prayer meeting[s] each night, and sometimes in the afternoon, and the result is nineteen to profess to have experienced religion. ...David is working hard.... We could not carry on the mission without him. He is exceedingly popular among the Indians. He is the most pious and popular Indian I have known and I think I might say the most talented.⁴²

December 4, 1874. Victoria's *Weekly Colonist* newspaper reported that the Chinese community had between 50 and 60 converts by this time and predicted that Christianization was part and parcel in compelling the Chinese “to abide more closely by the laws and customs of whites” so “there would be no occasion for the cry that ‘the Chinese must go!’ ” (February 20, 1891). Hence, further examination into the relationship of missionary work among the Chinese in Victoria should reveal a similar paradox as found with Aboriginal missions in the city, or, as Peter Ward wrote nearly three decades ago, “at the heart of missionary thought lay an unrecognized conflict between evangelical humanitarianism and ethnocentric nationalism.” Peter Ward, “The Oriental Immigrant and Canada's Protestant Clergy, 1858–1925”, *BC Studies*, no. 22 (Summer 1974), p. 41.

41 The Chinook jargon was a trade jargon, blending Aboriginal and European words and grammatical conventions. While an effective mode of communication for the purposes of trade, it was of limited use when it came to expressing abstract concepts or symbolic meanings. Lekwammen (a Northern Straits Salish language) was spoken by indigenous groups in the Victoria area. Halkomelem, another Salish language divided into island (Hul'q'umín'um') and mainland (downriver: Hun'qumyi'num'; upriver: Halq'eméylem) dialects, was used by the Native groups within the region affected by the revivals.

42 Rev. William Pollard, letter dated December 3, 1871, *Wesleyan Church of Canada, Missionary Society Notices*, no. 14 (February 1872), pp. 220–221.

After the death of Sallosalton in the fall of 1872, the revivals continued. However, now they involved a notable number of First Nations from all over coastal B.C. (such northern groups as the Tsimshian, Heiltsuk, and Haida), who since the 1860s annually travelled hundreds of kilometres to Victoria for seasonal work and supplies. The principal figures identified as leaders of this phase of Victoria's "Indian revivals" were the Coast Tsimshian woman Diiks (Mrs. Elizabeth Lawson, commonly referred to as Elizabeth Diex), whom Rev. Charles M. Tate called "the mother of Methodism among the Tsimpshean tribes", her son, Chief Alfred Dudoward (Sgagweet), and his wife Kate, also a Tsimshian chief.⁴³ At the time, Diiks was living in Victoria and had been drawn to the hymn singing at the Methodist services.⁴⁴ She was converted and soon wanted the same for her family. Methodist missionary C. M. Tate summarized the outcome, which led to the founding of the Methodist mission among the Tsimshian:

On the night of her [Diiks's] conversion she commenced to pray for her son, Alfred Dudoire [Dudoward], one of the chiefs at Port Simpson, six hundred miles north. In three weeks he arrived in Victoria in a large war canoe capable of carrying three or four tons. He was not at all pleased with the state of affairs, and set about testing the new converts, but in the operation he himself was converted, and the next morning ... instead of carrying a cargo of rum, which he intended, he took Bibles and hymn-books, wherewith to carry on the work of God among his people.⁴⁵

With many good wishes and much prayer, we sent them forth in the name of the Blessed Saviour of men, whose command was (and is to every child of God): "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, and lo, I am with you alway[s]." Can you picture a canoe load of painted savages coming to Victoria to procure a thousand dollars' worth of the white man's rum wherewith to make more devilish a projected heathen feast and that same canoe filled with converted, baptized Indian people, singing songs of salvation which had filled their hearts with joy and gladness? On a previous Sunday thirty of those people had been baptized in the old Pandora Methodist Church.⁴⁶

43 C. M. Tate, *Our Indian Missions in British Columbia* (Toronto: Methodist Young People's Forward Movement for Missions, Methodist Mission Rooms, [1900]), p. 4. There is another explanation. Diiks had apparently been dismissed from her position as a domestic servant after being falsely accused of theft. The authority she garnered through taking a very active role in the Victoria revivals may have counteracted the stain upon her character and reclaimed some of her tarnished status. For further elaboration, see Carol Williams, "Framing the West: Race, Gender, and the Photographic Frontier on the Northwest Coast, 1858–1912" (PhD dissertation, Rutgers University, 1999), pp. 278, 322–325.

44 Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down the North Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship* (Toronto: Methodist Missionary Society and the Young People's Forward Movement, 1914), p. 20.

45 Tate, *Our Indian Missions*, pp. 4–5.

46 Rev. C. M. Tate, "Thrilling Story of Missionary Adventure and Success", *The Western Recorder*, vol. 5, no. 3 (October 1929), p. 12; also reprinted as "Early Work Among the Pacific Coast Indians", *United Church Record* (April 1930), pp. 18–19.

The imagery in both of Tate's accounts emphasized the physical and behavioural transformations he believed paralleled genuine spiritual conversion. Missionaries expected (and represented in their discourse) changed attitudes, especially the "turning away" from "traditional" Native culture ("devilish feasts") towards Christian behaviour ("singing songs of salvation" and with "hearts with joy and gladness" at "preaching the gospel"). They also assumed that the fruition of these transforming possibilities came ultimately from Euro-Canadian guidance, even when attributed to the actions of Native converts.

According to Tate, the conversion of Diiks and her son Alfred was the direct result of the Methodist missionaries who had conducted revival meetings in the converted bar in Victoria. Tate emphasized how he had attempted to get Alfred to join his mother in services but made little headway until "he finally landed one night in the mission and was brought under conviction that his life was wrong".⁴⁷ By converting to Christianity, Tate reasoned, Alfred changed his behaviour and had forsaken his Tsimshian obligations such as supplying alcohol for feasting. The description of a canoe loaded with Bibles instead of a "cargo of rum" was a powerful metaphor for what successful mission work could achieve.⁴⁸ Not ironically, when Kate Dudoward recalled the story, the role of her husband was not as strongly emphasized. At the sixtieth anniversary of Methodist presence in Port Simpson, Kate (speaking through William Beynon) described how she had already begun evangelistic efforts (in the form of a school and services) among her own people long before her "change of church" in Victoria, and it was she (not Alfred) who received the supply of books and Bibles with which to continue her work after attending Methodist services with her mother-in-law.⁴⁹

Regardless of the importance of placing this mission work in Victoria within the context of the colonialist discourse, especially constructions of "Indians", it is imperative not to miss the alternative conceptual frameworks. From an Aboriginal perspective, the Dudowards' return to the north coast with the new spiritual power of Methodism was a natural outcome of the long and dangerous journey required to get from Fort Simpson on the mainland's north coast to Victoria on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Successful travel of this distance, over 1,000 kilometres, in an open, dug-out canoe undoubtedly lent a spiritual dimension to the exercise, above and beyond the physical demands of the travellers. The acquisition of new knowledge was an

47 Victoria, British Columbia Archives [hereafter BCA], British Columbia's Information, Science, and Technology Agency, Add. MSS 303, Box 1, File 2, Tate Family Collection, C. M. Tate, "Reminiscences, 1852–1933," typescript, p. 11.

48 This Bible-cargo reveals the priority of temperance among Methodist missionaries, and the symbolism of the newly converted carrying material manifestations of their transformation was a typical image in the missionary literature about the Northwest Coast.

49 BCA, #A001651, J. C. Goodfellow's clipping file on the United Church in British Columbia, William Beynon, typescript, March 5, 1934, Port Simpson, B.C. Of mixed Tsimshian-European parentage, Beynon became an important anthropologist of Tsimshianic-speaking peoples in the early twentieth century.

expected outcome of such a passage; spiritual power was the result, not the cause of travel.⁵⁰

Indeed, while historians have long emphasized the many differences between Aboriginal and Christian expressions, and rightly so, there were also similarities. One example, relevant to revivals in particular, was the shared function of religious gatherings as occasions for retelling or re-enacting a spiritual transformation. The guardian spirit system, a form of which was practised by nearly all Native groups in B.C., was based on the assumption that humans acquired spiritual power through direct contact with superhuman or non-human beings. As was the case with many coastal groups, this could be accomplished through a vision. As Pamela Amoss explains, “[T]he vision encounter endows the person with a song and dance which are at the same time visible proof of his [or her] contact and the means to mobilize the power of the vision. The vision experience is an intensely private affair and no one else has any right to mediate between the seeker and his [or her] vision. The song and dance are part of this public demonstration of the seeker’s supernatural power and as such must conform to certain cultural standards.”⁵¹ Evangelical Protestantism had a similar experience with meetings full of hymns and with the practice of testimonials, whereby the moment and meaning of one’s rebirth in Christ was recounted and retold. Unlike previous traditions of empowering one’s vision, this was done publicly (and, of course, minus the dancing). While often formulaic, Christian testimony allowed the convert to relive the intensely emotional experience of conversion in a group setting.⁵²

William Henry Pierce, the first man of Aboriginal descent in B.C. to be ordained by the Methodist Church, traced his conversion to Victoria’s bar-room revivals. He recalled how, after attending a class meeting, “I gave my heart to God. I felt that a great weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I went back to the meetings and the more I saw of them the more I liked.”⁵³ He was so inspired that he convinced a Tsimshian friend, George Edgar, to attend the services too. In time, Edgar was also converted (and, like Pierce, was later ordained by the Methodist Church). The narrative of Edgar’s conversion experience and first public confession in Victoria before a number of Tsimshian peers encapsulates the pervasiveness of his sense of faith and how

50 Thanks to Keith Thor Carlson for reminding me to take the Aboriginal perspective into account.

51 Pamela Amoss, *Coast Salish Spirit Dancing: The Survival of an Ancestral Religion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), p. 48.

52 Usually the disclosure of one’s vision impeded the acquisition or retention of the power received. However, as sometimes occurred with new religious forms imported from outside local cultural traditions, the normal rules and procedures were inverted. The public disclosure of one’s Christian vision, therefore, may not have been at odds with prior practices after all.

53 William Henry Pierce, *From Potlatch to Pulpit: Being the Autobiography of the Rev. William Henry Pierce, Native Missionary to the Indian Tribes of the Northwest Coast of British Columbia*, ed. Rev. J. P. Hicks (Vancouver: Vancouver Bindery Ltd., 1933), p. 13. Pierce and Edgar were of mixed ethnic heritage (Tsimshian and European), although both raised in “traditional” Tsimshian society.

it would affect his life, but perhaps also harkens back to “traditional” methods of spiritual transformation:

When the testimony meeting opened he arose and in his own tongue sang a hymn he had learned from Mr. [William] Duncan, “Father I have sinned against heaven.” At this Diex (Mrs. Lawson) burst into tears and coming to him led him forward. He now began to attend these services regularly and also a class meeting.... One evening at this class-meeting he was asked to speak. As everyone spoke in English, Mr. Edgar objected, saying “I cannot speak like you, but only in broken English.” But the leader reminded him that God understood and it was to testify what was in his heart, he said, but in his own way, “I am not like you people. When I a little boy my people no church, no school, no Jesus, no God like you, only pray to god in tree, fish, mountain and seas. What you people learn in Sunday School I not know. But like our old women who have two baskets, a big one in the back and a little in front. They fill the little basket with all kind of berries, red, blue, purple and black, then put in big basket. When both basket full they put big basket on back and go home. I have two baskets, a little one and a big one. I fill the little one from you people about Jesus, in church, in Sunday School, in class-meeting, everywhere. I learn to read and to write. When my little basket full, I put into my big basket. When both full, I go home to my Father in Heaven.”⁵⁴

The source quoting Edgar’s comments believed that the little basket (a charming reference to everyday life and food gathering) referred to Edgar’s “mind” and the big basket to his “heart”. This may be an accurate Christian reading of the narrative, and one that may have been overtly understood by Edgar himself. Apparently, “the earnestness of this testimony melted the whole class to tears”.⁵⁵ However, if the same narrative is located in its Aboriginal context, Edgar’s use of the two baskets can be interpreted to mean the position of the convert, his location and role in his Aboriginal community (his extended matrilineal kin group or “house”, in this case), and his potential for transformation. The small basket was filled by Edgar’s acquisition of missionary teachings and Christian knowledge, or more precisely by attaining Christian powers and wealth. Because Edgar’s Tsimshian identity was connected to his position and status within his community, he fulfilled his social responsibilities by putting the power and wealth (perhaps a metaphor for his own evangelism) into the big basket, his Tsimshian group. This is how he

54 I have analysed this brief narrative in light of pre-existing Tsimshian belief systems in greater detail in a sub-section on George Edgar in chapter 5 of my book, *The Heavens are Changing*. The Edgar quotation is from an un-referenced source (possibly taken from Dr. Spenser’s notes or letters and testimony from T. Crosby) contained in United Church Archives, B.C. Conference, Vancouver [hereafter UCABC], vertical file: George Edgar, L. Morrice, “History of George and Mary Ann Edgar”, unpublished typescript, p. 4.

55 *Ibid.*

achieved a spiritual transformation, not only for himself, but to the benefit of his house and community. His reference to ascension into Heaven (“I go home to my Father in Heaven”) after filling both baskets corresponds to Edgar’s attainment of superhuman or more-than-human powers as much as it describes the Christian afterlife. Thus this is an example of how conversion memories, explicitly recalled within a Christian discourse (the moment of one’s spiritual awakening so central to the conversion testimonial), remain informed by other perspectives on spiritual experience and social identity beyond just those of the colonial project.

The Maple Bay and Chilliwack Camp Meetings

While the events in Victoria must be seen within the context of the work with local First Nations and as an attempt to mitigate what the recently founded Methodist organization viewed as the negative influence of a transient, unsettled (and often “irreligious” in their estimation) population on Natives and non-Natives alike in the city, revivalism also characterized Methodism elsewhere on Vancouver Island and in British Columbia. Here again there are parallels or alternative discourses to consider. Camp meetings were very emotional encounters with the Holy Spirit that occurred over several days and were still very much part of Methodist tradition in Canada. As historian Phyllis Airhart explains: “Revivalism shaped Methodism’s understanding of religious experience by underlining the importance of conversion as the first step of the Christian journey and the prelude to both personal and social righteousness. Revivalism also affected the expression of religious ideas, for its profoundly influenced Methodist theology,” particularly the importance of the experiential character of one’s Christian identity.⁵⁶ By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, these gatherings were subdued affairs relative to the practice in eastern Canada earlier in the century.⁵⁷ For newly resettled areas like British Columbia, however, “old-fashioned” camp meetings seem to have remained characteristic of the experience for some participants. Were the Victoria conversions perhaps related to a much larger regional phenomenon concerning how the Methodists went about “founding” their missions? One can begin to consider an answer by looking at the activity of the church at a regional level for the same period.

B.C.’s first camp meeting at Maple Bay (located about halfway between the only two substantial non-Native urban settlements on Vancouver Island — Nanaimo and Victoria) was held in 1869, with some 350 men, women, and children taking part.⁵⁸ The revivalist enthusiasm wrought through these meetings appears to have had far-reaching effects, whereby the religious excite-

56 Phyllis Airhart, *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), p. 26.

57 For a discussion of the continuance of revivalist expressions within Methodism or revivalism as a central tradition of the church, see *ibid.*, pp. 12–37.

58 *British Colonist* [Victoria], July 26, 1869.

ment produced converts who then disseminated the message elsewhere. Rev. George Clarkson, assigned to the Maple Bay District but frequently joined by Aboriginal evangelists from the Nanaimo area of the island (Amos Cushman and David Sallosalton, among others), remarked in the fall of 1870 that the “fruits of the late camp-meeting here are plainly observable among the Indians. Before the Maple Bay camp-meeting there was not a single member here, and now there are four classes. I have been astonished whenever I have gone among those camps which are not swayed by the Priests [referring to Catholic missionaries in the region], at the earnest spirit of enquiry which is manifested — by old as well as young. They are thoroughly in earnest, and avail themselves of every opportunity of hearing the Gospel.”⁵⁹ The Maple Bay camp meetings became an annual event, as did a similar summer gathering near Chilliwack on the mainland. Likewise, the Nanaimo district on the island continued to report success in the early 1870s. Attendees were an ethnically and socially mixed collection of Natives and non-Natives, full church members and newcomers; the lines of class and ethnicity were blurred in the face of personal, experiential Christianity. However, I am cautious in suggesting that there was a transcendence of these categories. The evidence surrounding the Chilliwack camp meeting clearly states the existence of separate Native and non-Native services. While the practicality of communication (different services because of different languages) may have been the reason for this, the demarcation of “race” may have been another.

Methodist missionary C. M. Tate captured the emotional intensity of the annual Chilliwack camp meeting in his journal entries for June 1875:

Thursday 3 June 1875: In all our meetings the Spirit of the Lord seemed to work upon the people. Some weeping for sorrow. Others for joy. The order of our meeting are as follows. Prayer Meeting at 6:30. Preaching at 10 followed by a prayer & fellowship meeting. Preaching at 2:30 with prayer meeting. Preaching at 6:30 with an experience meeting at the close.

Friday 4 June 1875: Meetings in the same order as yesterday. Blessings upon blessings were showered upon us. Sinners converted — Backsliders reclaimed. Believers strengthened [*sic*] and the church built up.

Saturday 5 June 1875: proved to be a blessed day. Several other friends arrived by Steamer. O. that they may returned filled with the Holy Ghost.

Sunday 6 June 1875: A large number of people present. The power of the Spirit felt mightily in our midst. A glorious day to my Soul. Although scarcely able to preach to the dear people through my being so hoarse with continued

59 Rev. George Clarkson, letter dated November 10, 1870, Chilliwack, B.C., *Wesleyan Church of Canada, Missionary Society Notices*, no. 10 (February 1871), p. 155.

speaking, having no assistance whatever — Myself being the only person that can speak the Indian tongue.

Monday 7 June 1875: The time for departure is at hand. Those who wished to join the church were asked to come forward and when 7 white & 8 Indians gave in their names. Glory to god for such results. A glorious time was experienced in the love feast — Indians & Whites testifying to the cleansing powers of Jesus' blood. The closing ceremony was a very affecting scene & very few could keep from weeping as we shook hands with each other singing "Shall we gather at the river." One of the Indians felt so overcome that he fell flat to the ground. Oh if fellowship with Jesus here be so sweet what will it be when we encircle the throne & sing the song of Moses & the Lamb for ever and ever? The steamboat arrived about 2pm when we bade adieu to our friends thus terminating one of the happiest seasons that I ever *experienced*. Praise the Lord.⁶⁰

Several themes in relation to the colonial project and its disparity from social realities stand out in the above quotation. The function of the event included bringing new converts into the fold, but also renewed or reclaimed the faith of existing church members. Despite the obvious Christian colonialism implicit in the missionary impulse itself, these purposes are identical to those identified by scholars writing about revivals in eastern Canadian contexts.⁶¹ However, there were also notable differences from other Canadian gatherings, particularly the bi-racial aspect of the Chilliwack camp meetings. The emotional experience was shared by "white" and "Indian" alike, although in separate forums, apparently owing to difficulties of communication or perhaps because divisions by "race" were either deemed appropriate for organizers or demanded by participants. The actual numbers of new converts listed by Tate are fairly modest, given that other descriptions of the Chilliwack camp meetings reckoned participants in the hundreds only a few years earlier.

Paradoxically, the measure of a "revival" (how many converted or how many joined the church permanently as a result) is actually a difficult issue for which to find exacting evidence. In my estimation, convert-counting is very problematic for social groups like First Nations, or indeed for several other ethnic groups racialized as "Other", whose "traditional" religious practices were scorned, discouraged, or banned outright by the dominant culture. On one hand, many church structures had built into them venues for all converts to express their personal calling and faith. Evangelical denominations like the Methodists usually created weekly class meetings, often characterized by testimonials of faith as well as worship, and it appears there were few barriers to becoming a class leader or local preacher, beyond a personal con-

60 BCA, Ms 303, Box 2, file 3, C. M. Tate, Diary 1874–75.

61 Van Die, " 'The Marks of a Genuine Revival' ", p. 528; Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 191.

viction. As Michael Harkin observes of these phenomena among First Nations, “the large gatherings at these meetings, in this respect similar to a potlatch, conferred status among native people on the evangelical message and its messengers.”⁶² On the other hand, attempts were made to channel this evangelistic impulse through study and more formalized training. Finances, too, could be a barrier. Ironically, at the peak of revivalist activity and the expansion of missions to First Nations on Vancouver Island and along the lower Fraser River valley, the Methodists could not afford to keep their two most influential Aboriginal preachers — Amos Cushan and David Sallosalton — on the payroll, compelling the two to find employment to support themselves elsewhere.⁶³

Prior to the excitement around the bar room in Victoria in the early 1870s, the Pandora Avenue Methodist Church boasted that 15 of its 120 members were “Indians.”⁶⁴ Yet by 1873–1874 membership in the church’s “Indian Mission” in the city had allegedly tripled.⁶⁵ Elsewhere in southern British Columbia, the pattern was similar, with the numbers of conversions apparently climbing. In 1870 it was alleged that half of the 120 Natives in attendance at the Chilliwack camp meeting gave their names for enrolment as converts.⁶⁶ Attendance at the 1873 meeting “was limited”, wrote one missionary attendee, “but, the salutary effect of the meeting, the melting and subduing influence, the converting and sanctifying power, — felt both by Indians and whites, — will never be forgotten. The result may not be seen in an augmented membership; but the religious life of the Church has been quickened and revived.”⁶⁷ This particular Chilliwack meeting was “enlivened” by a number of Tsimshian (possibly Diiks and the Dudowards, although they are not mentioned by name) recently converted to Methodism in Victoria, who testified and encouraged further interest in the denomination. The source of new conversions was acknowledged by Rev. C. Bryant: “By the conversion of these Indians at Victoria, we hear the Macedonian cry coming from thousands of their perishing brethren on the north-west coast; and by these conversions, too, we have the earnest of a mighty harvest of souls, which might be garnered for heaven if we could only send among them reapers to do the work.”⁶⁸ Understanding the meaning and results of revival-

62 Michael Harkin, “Power and Progress: The Evangelic Dialogue Among the Heiltsuk”, *Ethnohistory*, vol. 40, no. 1 (Winter 1993), p. 6.

63 Rev. E. White, letter dated June 21, 1870, Nanaimo, B.C., *Wesleyan Church of Canada, Missionary Society Notices*, no. 8 (August 1870), pp. 123–124.

64 UCABC, Mrs. Thomas H. Johns, “History of the Metropolitan Church, Victoria, B.C.”, unpublished typescript, p. 118.

65 UCABC, Rev. William Pollard, “Annual Report 1873–4”, Wesleyan Church of Canada, *Annual Reports of the Missionary Society*, p. xvii.

66 *Mainland Guardian* [New Westminster], September 21, 1870, p. 3.

67 Rev. C. Bryant, letter dated July 21, 1873, Sumas, B.C., *Wesleyan Methodist Church of Canada, Missionary Society Notices*, no. 21 (November 1873), p. 333.

68 *Ibid.*

ism and the efforts of these so-called “reapers” can also provide explanations alternative to those of the colonial project.

**“Beating Their Tambourines for Dear Life”:
Women and Salvation Army Work in Victoria**

If experiential forms of religion must be considered within their local context (in this case, the Aboriginal discourse of spiritual acquisition, including Christian power) and if the pattern of transmission supposedly introduced by missionaries intent on achieving their own objectives within the colonial project was not the only one at work, then the meaning of Victoria’s revivalism has a complicated social history indeed. What other complexities can be discerned from Victoria’s religious life in the late nineteenth century? Do other expressions of revivalist faith reveal discrepancies between discourse and practice in some other key social category, such as gender? Much more scholarly analysis needs to be done on the introduction and early decades of the Salvation Army in western Canadian communities such as Victoria.⁶⁹ Preliminary and speculative investigations reveal some of the same incongruities within the colonial project with respect to Salvation Army work in the late 1880s and early 1890s on the issue of gender as were raised earlier with respect to First Nations. Once again, the theme of religion in B.C. needs to be further examined by social historians if we are to understand better the constructions of gender and the discrepancies between ideals and lived realities. For example, I was surprised to find how closely patterns of the early work of the Salvation Army in Victoria correspond to some trends in eastern Canada, despite the recent nature of non-Native settlement, the transient and cosmopolitan character to the city’s population, and the imbalanced ratio of the sexes in all but the Aboriginal population in Victoria.

BLOOD & FIRE! WAR! WAR! WAR! AGAINST THE HOSTS OF BEEL-
ZEBUB AND THE GREAT DEVIL, BY THE SALVATION ARMY. THE
FIRST SHOT WILL BE FIRED AT FRANK CAMPBELL’S CORNER
TOMORROW AT 10 A.M. GOD SAVE THE PEOPLE!⁷⁰

The Salvation Army inaugurated its work in the city of Victoria in the summer of 1887, the *Victoria Daily Colonist* reporting the appearance of the “Hallelujah Lassies beating their tambourines for dear life”.⁷¹ The Salvation

69 Brief descriptions and passing mention to Salvation Army activities in Victoria can be found in general histories of the Salvation Army in Canada such as Robert Collins, *The Holy War of Sally Ann: The Salvation Army in Canada* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1994); R. G. Moyles, *The Blood and the Fire in Canada: A History of the Salvation Army in the Dominion, 1882–1976* (Toronto: Peter Martin, 1977).

70 Salvation Army Archives, George Scott Railton Heritage Centre, Toronto [hereafter SAA], Captain Mary Hackett, Salvation Army handbill, June 25, 1887.

71 *Daily Colonist*, June 28, 1887.

Army was a recent arrival on the Canadian religious scene as of 1882 — a holiness movement with roots in Wesleyan Methodism. The Victoria Citadel was founded and staffed by officers sent from eastern Canada until local ranks could be promoted.⁷² Captain Mary Hackett was in charge of starting the work in the province, with another woman, Lieutenant Graham, and Captain James Desson also dispatched to assist her.⁷³ After searching out the only temperance hotel to stay in until other boarding arrangements could be devised, these three Salvationists “opened fire” with their first outdoor service held at a favourite male gathering place, Campbell’s Corners (outside the Aldephi saloon at Yates and Government Streets). Their first indoor service soon followed, held in an abandoned skating rink on Fort Street. Four weeks later, two other women, Captain Coffin and Lieutenant Lizzie Tierney, joined the Victoria corps, “bringing with them that essential to Army warfare — the Big Drum”.⁷⁴ By this time, Desson had departed, and the four “Lassies” held the fort: “They found their work cut out,” the Salvation Army publication *War Cry* declared, “for the meetings were very noisy and hard to manage, but they were bent on victory, and often while the Lieutenant was assisting unruly members out of the door at one end of the barracks, the Captain could be seen leading someone to the penitent form.”⁷⁵

As with the Salvation Army everywhere, it attracted the curiosity of Victoria’s public because of its revivalist “Blood and Fire” methods:

Almost every night the soldiers are to be met with as they parade the principle [*sic*] streets with flags flying, the music of the drum and tambourine heralding their approach. The curiosity, if nothing else, generally induces a crowd composed principally of those who would never think of entering a church to stop and listen. Some of course follow to the barracks and are induced to remain for the entire service. It is in this way that the work of the army is accomplished. They aim to reach those who would never go to a place of worship by going to them.⁷⁶

If Salvationist literature is to be taken at face value, the crowds frequently numbered in the hundreds.⁷⁷ To publicize the nature and results of local work, as well as to provide further information on the movement itself, Salvationists sold the Army newspaper, *The Way Cry*, door to door, in shops or other businesses, and in the streets. Duties of officers included everything required to keep the local corps operating: preaching at services held nightly

72 The first local officers received their commissions in 1890.

73 Hackett went on to establish the Vancouver corps of the Salvation Army later that year — in another disproportionately male field.

74 *War Cry*, April 29, 1893, p. 6.

75 *Ibid.*

76 *Daily Colonist*, November 11, 1888.

77 *War Cry*, March 17, 1888, p. 4; April 29, 1893, p. 6.

and each Sunday, organizing and participating in the frequent street parades and other lively public spectacles aimed at attracting potential converts, and pastoral care and home visits.⁷⁸

Until the 1890s members in the Salvation Army, soldiers as they were called, remained few in number until the arrival of Captain Laura Aikenhead and, with her, a revival.⁷⁹ In 1890 there were only 16 soldiers on the rolls, but within a year the Army witnessed over 100 conversions and had 60 full members; the shift was apparent.⁸⁰ By 1891 they had outgrown their old barracks and took possession of the old Pandora Avenue Methodist Church, which had been replaced with a newer building.⁸¹ Accompanying this rise in membership was the expansion of the corps' activities in the city. The Salvation Army's hallmark, the brass band, was created in 1890 and "marched out" the following year, with an all-female version following in 1894. The Victoria Citadel soon developed a training school for cadets, so that local officers could be trained and commissioned. Social outreach work by the Salvation Army was also commenced by the early 1890s — including a Women's Rescue Home and the Army's food and shelter depot for men, known as the "Salvation Ark".⁸² Aboriginal and Chinese work was also part of the Army's work in Victoria by this time.⁸³

The Salvation Army was generally well received by Victorians in comparison to the sometimes violent confrontations the Army faced elsewhere upon the commencement of a new corps.⁸⁴ "It is very pleasant to find", reported the

78 See Lynne Marks's succinct list of typical officers' duties in *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, p. 178.

79 Indeed, one of the more humorous observations by the secular press on the modest growth of the Salvation Army since its arrival in the city was this: "The local organization seems to be falling into the sere and yellow leaf. The number of soldiers is constantly decreasing, the singing is execrable and the speaking worse. Either more interest or greater strength will have to be infused into the rank and file or the whole affair must tumble to pieces." *Daily Colonist*, March 25, 1888.

80 SSA, Victoria Citadel Corps Centenary, 1887–1987, brochure; *War Cry*, April 29, 1893, p. 7.

81 *Daily Colonist*, May 7, 1891.

82 The Women's Home, aimed at saving and reforming female prostitutes, opened on Vancouver Street in 1891, while the Salvation Ark, which grew out of the 1895 soup kitchen, opened in 1897 in the Market building on Cormorant Street.

83 In Victoria, both Aboriginal and Chinese residents of the city were targets of Salvationist attention. As early as 1889, an outpost for "Indian" work in Victoria was "ready for opening, and there were strong calls for Chinese work" (*War Cry*, March 30, 1889, p. 7; December 14, 1889). Like the founding of Methodism on the north coast of B.C., the introduction of the Salvation Army to visiting northern First Nations can be traced to Native attendance at Army meetings in Victoria. (For further history of the Salvation Army among northern First Nations groups like the Tsimshian or Gitksan, see Neylan, *The Heavens are Changing*, pp. 61–63.) Very early, the organization realized the potential but was unable to implement the work until many years after self-styled corps had been established by the Natives themselves. In 1889 the *War Cry* reported: "There are thousands ... of Indians who need Jesus, and how shall they hear without a preacher? They want Jesus! Capt. Harris told me of some Indians who were saved and saw the S.A. and its modes etc., and went back to their tribe and commenced on S.A. lines, and since then their success has been wonderful." *War Cry*, February 2, 1889, p. 11.

84 The struggle for acceptance and the persecution experienced were enduring themes within Salvationist literature and a historical characteristic of the work the world over, especially in the nineteenth century.

Colonist, “that The Salvation Army is being well treated in Victoria, in striking contrast to those ‘moral’ cities in the East....”⁸⁵ The incidents in Victoria seem relatively minor in nature: throwing of eggs or snowballs, name-calling, and one instance of firecrackers thrown into the doorway during a meeting.⁸⁶ Sometimes even minor infractions against the Army were not tolerated by the public, implying some degree of good will and acceptance. For example, when two youths broke into the Salvation Army barracks and slashed drums and tambourines, at least one was brought before the courts to account for his crime.⁸⁷ In fact, the most repeated complaints announced by the secular press pointed to the inconvenience to the public because of the Army’s use of the centre of the street rather than the sidewalk, how flags and instruments spooked horses, and against the noise accompanying nightly parades.⁸⁸

When the Commander-in-chief and founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, and his son, Commandant Hebert Booth, arrived for their first visit in 1895, Victoria’s mayor and entire municipal council welcomed them both. Apparently this was more than mere formality, as the Army press was pleased to report contributions totaling \$150 and the promise of a municipal building for use as a shelter.⁸⁹ Accompanying his review of the local corps, General Booth gave numerous, well-attended public addresses and received many more from sympathetic organizations and reformers, such as the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). The Booths were the personal guests of the city’s elite, and on this occasion stayed with Attorney General Justice Crease and his family for the duration of their visit.⁹⁰ In several public lectures, the General recounted the history and current work of the Army around the globe, using the compelling stories “out of darkest England”. Notable in the *Colonist*’s daily summaries of these was how Booth had framed the Army’s work in Victoria, apparently acknowledging the gendered nature of the fight against sin and poverty: “So he said to them in regard of the poor destitute ‘get the men out. (Applause) If a ship was foundering off the shore would Canadians take an organ down to the shore and sing pretty hymns (Laughter). No! If the men did not go out in the lifeboat, the women would’ (Laughter and applause).”⁹¹ Was this perhaps a not-so-subtle reference to the significant efforts of women in the B.C. field?

Reading over the officer lists for the first two decades of the Victoria Citadel, it is difficult not to notice that officers were overwhelmingly women.⁹²

85 *Daily Colonist*, July 16, 1887.

86 *War Cry*, June 16, 1888, p. 15; February 25, 1888; December 14, 1889, p. 2.

87 *War Cry*, April 29, 1893, p. 7.

88 *Daily Colonist*, July 28, 1887; March 25, 1888; July 27, 1888.

89 *The Conqueror: A Monthly Magazine* [an American Salvation Army publication], vol. 4 (April 1895), p. 163.

90 *Daily Colonist*, January 3, 1895.

91 *Ibid.*

92 SAA, “The Salvation Army Corps, Listings and Corps Officers, Canada & Bermuda Territory: Canada West-British Columbia-South Pacific”, unpublished manuscript.

The femaleness of the Salvation Army's leadership may not be surprising, given it was the pattern across Canada at the time. As Lynne Marks remarked on the Canadian corps in general, "[I]n the 1880s, more than half of all Salvation Army officers were women — a striking contrast to the exclusively male religious leadership of all other Canadian denominations."⁹³ It is interesting, however, that this development also occurred in places like British Columbia, where the male-to-female ratio in the non-Native population was dramatically skewed in favour of the men. On the eve of B.C.'s joining Canada, "white" females (2,794) made up approximately 33 per cent of the total "white" population (8,576). The majority of these "white females" were found in Victoria or New Westminster. Victoria was likely the most balanced in terms of "white" men and "white" women, but men still outnumbered women — four men for every three women, according to an 1870 census (1,645 white males and 1,197 white females).⁹⁴ In the following two decades the gap between males and females in the city widened to 3:2, despite the increase in non-Native immigration to the province.⁹⁵ Yet the Victoria corps' leadership was dominated by women, and indeed had a number of "firsts" in Canada with respect to women. The first female divisional officer in Canada, Staff-Captain Alice Grayson, was sent to take charge of British Columbia (which she ran from Victoria) in 1890.⁹⁶ The first all-female brass band in Canada was Victoria's Jubilee Lassies' Band, organized in 1894. My preliminary investigations have not yet yielded evidence for absolute "equal rights" for women adherents in the Salvation Army; however, in theory at least, when the organization was legally recognized by the province in 1895, presumably both male and female Salvation Army officers could perform marriages — something that other denominations could not offer its female members. The first "hallelujah wedding" performed by Salvation Army officers occurred in March 1897.⁹⁷

What should we make of this female majority? "The role of the Salvation Army officer violated almost every facet of the dominant female ideal," observed Marks in her study of the Salvation Army in two nineteenth-cen-

93 Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, pp. 169–170.

94 Census material gathered by Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, Table 1.1, p. 13; also p.17. Among other ethnic groups living in the city, results were very different. Chinese men vastly outnumbered Chinese women, whereas among the Aboriginal population the ratio was relatively equal.

95 While the Victoria district grew rapidly in population size — 3,270 in 1870, 5,925 in 1881, 18,538 in 1891, and 23,688 in 1901 — the male-to-female ratio widened from 4:3 to 3:2 during that period. B.C.'s non-Aboriginal population as a whole remained three-quarters male until the twentieth century. Canada, *Fourth Census of Canada, 1901 – Vol. 1: Population* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1902); Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), Table 11, p. 369.

96 The *War Cry* proclaimed "Equal Rights" when it announced Grayson's appointment (June 28, 1890, p. 3). Indeed, only a few years later, from 1896 until 1904, the Salvation Army Commander in charge of all of Canada was a woman — Evangeline Booth, another of the founder's children.

97 SAA, vertical file on the Victoria Corps.

tury Ontario communities. “Ladies were not expected to call attention to themselves, certainly not by marching in the streets in bizarre outfits that conjured up images of actresses and circus performers — or even more sexually suspect women. Respectable women were not supposed to abandon the domestic sphere for the public platform in any form, let alone by usurping the role of religious leader.”⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the feminine ideals of self-sacrifice, service, and submission were frequently how the work of the “Hallelujah Lasses” was framed, and therefore active female participation could be seen as an activity that paradoxically adhered to certain aspects of dominant gender notions.⁹⁹ This same mixed challenge to and acceptance of gender roles for women occurred in B.C. In pointing out the strong leadership and initiative among female officers in Victoria, I do not wish to imply that the city’s female Salvationists did not also conduct the kinds of work traditionally associated with women. For example, 1891 witnessed the creation of a Women’s Rescue Home in Victoria, not long after the first Rescue home in Canada had been opened by the Army in Toronto.¹⁰⁰ Many of the women who took up this work did so by abandoning their less-feminine duties in the all-female brass band, which eventually led to the band’s demise for lack of committed members.¹⁰¹

Another pattern for the Salvation Army elsewhere in Canada (and one typical of other mainstream churches as well) was the female majority among Army membership or audiences attending services.¹⁰² My early analysis suggests this may not have been a remarkable characteristic of the work in British Columbia. While there are certainly narratives about the importance of resident families’ commitment to the Salvation Army (for example, the Porters or the Rogers family, of Rogers’ Chocolates fame), who had opened their homes to the officers when they first arrived and continued to support the movement throughout their lives,¹⁰³ anecdotal evidence indicates crowds attending open-air and indoor services were generally male.¹⁰⁴ This may have been a by-product of the particular location of Army activities and its attempt to reach those who would not usually step into a church. The heart of Victoria’s commercial old town “housed hotels, saloons, and shops where sailors, miners, Indians, ‘tarnished doves’, barkeeps, and Chinese merchants worked, traded, and played”.¹⁰⁵ Imagine the reception of female officers and

98 Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, p. 179.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 184.

100 SAA, Victoria Citadel Corps Diamond Jubilee 1887–1947 Souvenir Programme; Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, p. 185.

101 “The [brass band] sisters have devoted their efforts to other work in which they have been signally successful,” explained the *War Cry*, August 19, 1916.

102 Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, p. 170.

103 *War Cry*, April 29, 1893; June 25, 1927, p. 3.

104 *War Cry*, June 14, 1890, p. 10; February 11, 1893; April 29, 1893.

105 I could not resist quoting from a historical plaque located in the heart of what was once Victoria’s “Old Town”, Market Square, Victoria.

soldiers in a town like Victoria, where women remained a noticeable minority, especially in those areas in which the Army conducted the bulk of its street work. In the wintertime in particular, male seasonal workers converged on the city and “spent money lavishly — chiefly in public houses and dance houses and extravagance in general”.¹⁰⁶ As a commemorative pamphlet celebrating the achievements of the corps in another southwestern B.C. urban centre, Vancouver, observed: “Officers were the only members of their sex in the meetings and on the open-air marches in which from 50 to 70 men took part. (In those days it is estimated that there was only one woman to every five men in the cities and one to twenty in the Interior). Such was the ‘far west’ in those epoch making days! Small wonder that the press commented on the splendid work accomplished by the Army women.”¹⁰⁷ Several Army publications recalling Victoria’s “revival” in the early 1890s noted that many of the new converts were men: “Many of those who left the devil’s ranks at this time, belong to the crews of the sealing fleets.”¹⁰⁸ A number of the individuals whose experiences were held up as exemplary conversions (“trophies of grace”) in *War Cry* reports were also principally men — from Brother William Jackson, who went from “too bad and too far gone to save” to the corps’ big drummer, to Brother Brewster who gave up his life as a tavern keeper: “now he stands outside the same saloon, where he dealt out damnation by the glass, and testifies for Jesus.”¹⁰⁹ Only further and more detailed historical examination will prove whether these references to a majority of male soldiers in the Victoria corps are indeed accurate or merely impressionistic.

As others have observed of Protestantism in the late nineteenth century, female piety and imagery within Christian discourse and the feminization of church congregations made it natural for late-Victorian Canadians to associate ideals of womanhood and Christianity as two sides of the same coin.¹¹⁰ In the earliest days the *Colonist* reported on the mild harassment of Army officers as they marched, framing the criticism within the boundaries of conventional gender roles, according to which males adopted appropriate manners towards women, who remained “lady-like”: “The small boys who whistle and kick up generally while The Salvation Army is marching through the streets ought to be taught to behave themselves better. The ‘Lassies’ conduct their exercises in a lady-like manner and ought to receive better treatment. It’s hardly chivalrous, to say the least, to so annoy a band of unoffending

106 Dorothy Blakey Smith, ed., *The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastian Helmcken* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1975), p. 208; quoted in Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, p. 42.

107 SAA, Golden Jubilee brochure, Vancouver, Citadel Corps, 1887–1937.

108 *War Cry*, April 29, 1893, p. 10.

109 For example, *ibid.*; *War Cry*, August 19, 1916, pp. 3–4; June 25, 1927. All are issues recounting the history of the corps in Victoria.

110 Indeed, Lynne Marks’s study of the “Hallelujah Lassies” concludes that the very gendered nature of Protestantism in late nineteenth-century Canada is key to understanding why in small-town Ontario the Army was so appealing to some working-class women, but not as attractive to their male counterparts (*Revivals and Roller Rinks*, pp. 169–188).

women.”¹¹¹ Several male officers in Victoria were driven from the work — or, as one publication put it, “[B]ecause men officers were not appreciated in Victoria, they all departed to more congenial Corps further east.”¹¹² Army publications themselves attempted to explain the dominance of women in the early days of the corps in Victoria: “male officers were not accepted by the public; and opposition became so strong that they were forced to move to more congenial fields. Officership was not considered a man’s job, and they were frequently told to ‘Go to work’.”¹¹³ The gendered nature of evangelical culture in the 1880s and early 1890s may thus offer another explanation for female dominance as officers, but not necessarily as soldiers, in the city of Victoria, in addition to the imbalanced ratio of men to women.

Conclusions

The most inflexible, punitive strategies of conversion or assimilation ... obstructed native strategies of accommodation, attempting to confine the dream of a future of moral order to the orthodox visions of the Christian empire or the emerging nation, leaving no room for the “docile” Indians to follow their own exceptional men and women in dreaming, or observing Christianity, or practicing healing.¹¹⁴

Now as we celebrate our centenary, can we not pause for a moment, to pay tribute to those early Salvationists? The work was pioneered chiefly by women; their dedication and perseverance in the face of adversity laid the foundation for our working Victoria.¹¹⁵

Revivalist forms of religious expression, by their very natures, do not last. Evangelical Protestant churches and holiness movements like the Salvation Army anticipated the creation of stable congregations with only periodic regenerations through the kinds of intense and emotional religious transformations that typified their early work. With these changes, constructions of race, gender, and other social categories within Aboriginal mission work and female participation in the Salvation Army also shifted in meaning as the century waned. The opportunities for Native initiative and leadership in the process became more limited. Moreover, as other intrusions into Aboriginal territories — the appropriation of their resources, the inadequacies of the reserve system, and the legislative repression of cultural and political autonomies — expanded, Christianity, with its inseparable nineteenth-century

111 *Daily Colonist*, August 25, 1887.

112 SAA, Victoria Citadel Corps Diamond Jubilee, 1887–1947, Souvenir Programme.

113 SAA, Victoria Citadel Corps Centenary 1887–1987 brochure.

114 Ronald Niezen, *Spirit Wars: Native North American Religions in the Age of Nation Building* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 227.

115 SAA, Victoria Citadel Corps Centenary 1887–1987, brochure.

baggage of “civilization”, was not so appealing.¹¹⁶ In case of the Salvation Army, the dominance of women among officers in the Victoria Citadel in the 1880s and 1890s may not have endured long into the new century, and further inquiry into the makeup of Salvationist converts and soldiers may yield results that indicate that the gendered characteristics of the work may not have been as pronounced as my preliminary reading of sources suggests.¹¹⁷ What is certain is that historians need to pay greater attention to the role of religion in the formation, maintenance, or challenges to constructions of race and gender in British Columbia. Perceptions of religious revivalism and the functions of such phenomena were clearly far more varied in lived experience than the colonial project framework offered by the dominant Anglo-Canadian culture allowed.

116 I do not mean to underplay these developments; however, while it is important to explore the colonialist side of the “colonial project” in the provincial era, the better to understand race relations in B.C., we should not forget to examine points of meeting, such as religious revivalism.

117 By 1916 the list of the board of local officers in charge of different sections of the work listed only two women among six men (*War Cry*, August 19, 1916, p. 4).