

# Women Were Made For Such Things: Women Missionaries in British Columbia 1850s-1940s

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## ABSTRACT

As Canadian Church historians have traditionally portrayed men as the movers and shakers of Canadian Church historical development, most published scholarship on the history of Canada's missionaries deal almost exclusively with men. Yet, preliminary research on British Columbia's missionary frontier suggests that women made a vital contribution to the Churches' proselytization work among the province's "heathens." This paper argues that female missionaries, acting in the dual roles of church functionaries and society's cultural emissaries, played a crucial role in the development not only of frontier educational, medical, and social services but also of white/native relationships. These women found in their missionary roles both continuing limitations and new opportunities for independence.

## RÉSUMÉ

Les historiens dea églises canadiennes et des missionnaires canadiens dépeignent les hommes d'église comme des figures éminentes du développement de l'histoire religieuse. Cependant à le jour la recherche sur la frontière missionnaires de Colombie Britannique révèle que les femmes ont joué un rôle vital dans les travail des églises parmi "les sauvages" de la province. Cette étude tend à montrer que les femmes missionnaires en tout que fonctionnaires des églises et emissaires culturels de la société ont joué un rôle décisif non seulement dans la développement des écoles et des services médicaux et sociaux de la frontière mais encore dans les relations entre colons et indigents. Si ces femmes missionnaires étaient encore souvent réduites à des taches domestiques, leur rôles dans les missions leur donnaient aussi des possibilités nouvelles d'affirmer leur indépendance.

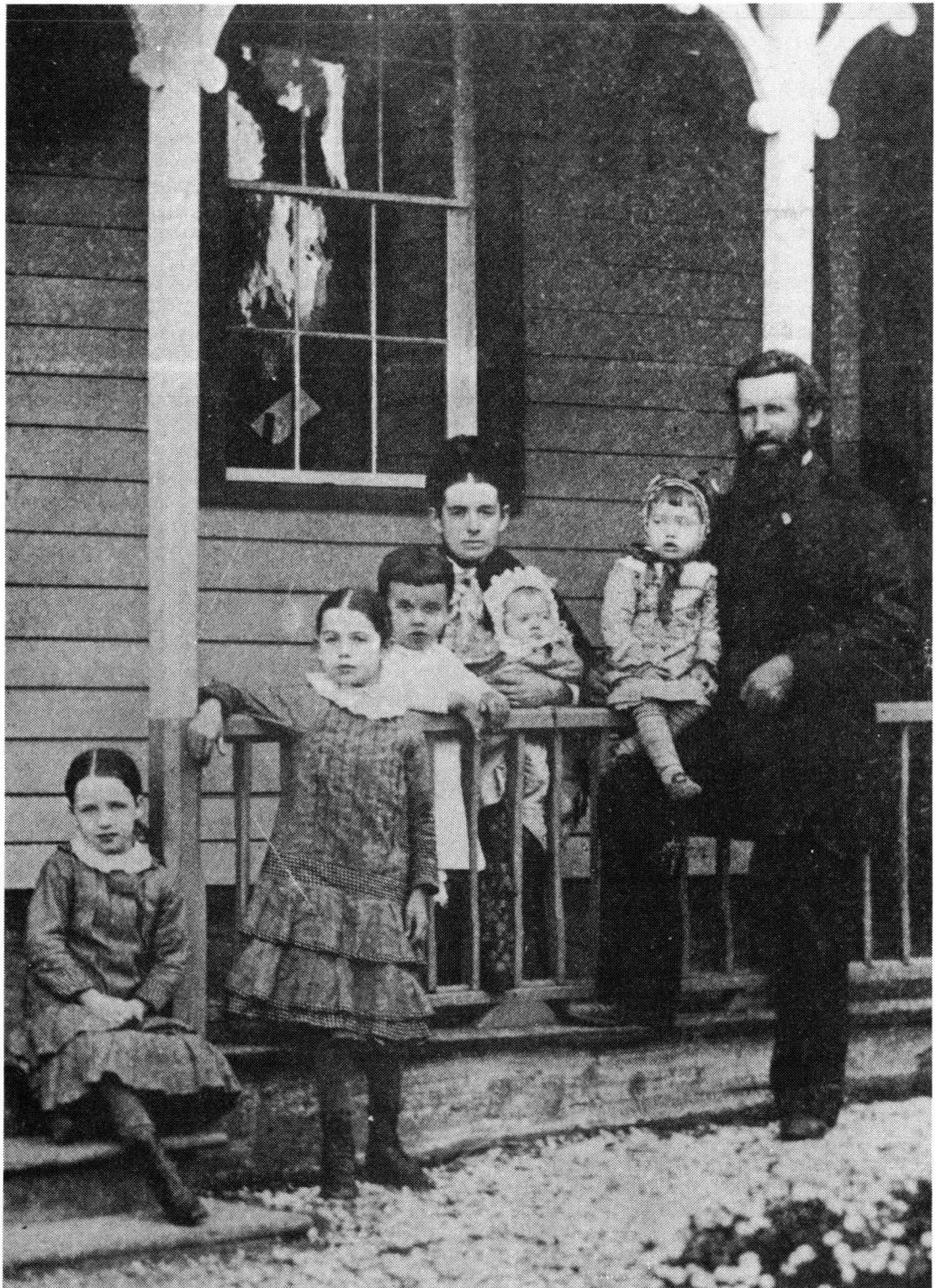
Oh, why did God  
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven  
With spirits masculine, create at last  
This novelty on earth, this fair defect  
Of nature, and not fill the world at once  
With men, as angels, without feminine;  
or find some other way to generate  
Mankind?

— Milton: *Paradise Lost*<sup>1</sup>

The "Fall of Man," blamed on Eve, (Adam's weakness has tended to be somewhat downplayed) has long been the starting point for delineating the relationship between women and men within the Christian churches.<sup>2</sup> For centuries, Eve's "irresponsibility" was used to justify the marginalization of women within both the Judaic and Christian traditions. There is growing evidence that, not only within the early Christian community—which new scholarship reveals to have been more egalitarian than formerly recognized—but also in later centuries, women played leadership roles;<sup>3</sup> however, it is undeniable that in spite of the careers of certain outstanding individuals,

women's power and influence within the Christian church eroded over time.<sup>4</sup> Paul's writings on the topic of women, in particular his purported instructions to Timothy (2:11-14) that women should not be permitted to teach or "have authority over men," justified Church actions in limiting women's religious roles. A "lethal rebuff" was delivered to later generations of Christian women when that most influential theologian, Thomas Aquinas, wrote not only that "the voice of women [was] and invitation to unchastity, and therefore must not be heard in Church," but also that women did not possess "the required wisdom" to be preachers and teachers.<sup>5</sup>

Most male Canadian church historians appear to have subscribed sufficiently to Thomist theory regarding the peripheral nature of the role of women within the churches to have delineated men as the movers and shakers of Canadian church historical development.<sup>6</sup> Since men exercised the power in the churches, historians have tended to become preoccupied with male-dominated official bureaucracies. However, Gail Malmgreen's recent comment that in Britain "religion has so far been a some-



what neglected element in the women's history revival" applies equally to Canada. This is somewhat surprising given that, as Malmgreen points out, the history of women within the Churches cannot be separated from such areas of major concern as class and social, economic, and political power. To put it simply, the hierarchical power structure of most denominations and religious communities clearly reflected the class and power divisions of society at large.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the churches have long been arenas where women have fought to have an equal voice with men and where some, against tremendous odds, have achieved remarkable success.<sup>8</sup>

One area that has been particularly neglected is that of the role of female missionaries and their vital contribution to both frontier cultural development and what Jacques Monet has referred to as "the Voice of God" in the Canadian experience. Like their male counterparts, missionary women were concerned with the salvation of "heathen" peoples. However, for the most part, tended to translate this concern into offers of primarily, domestic-based, practical skills. British Columbia, where missionary work included the Christianization of native peoples and orientals, provides a useful case study of the work of female missionaries. Partially this is because from the earliest settlement period to the present women missionaries of numerous denominations have played a major role in the development of education, medical services and church extension among both native and white populations. Primarily, because of the large numbers of Roman Catholic nuns, Protestant deaconesses, missionary nurses and teachers, and the wives of missionary personnel—who, although not always officially classified as missionaries, frequently acted in that capacity—it is possible, if not highly probable, that women missionaries in British Columbia have always outnumbered men. Statistical data on missionaries—men and women—is not readily available. Such religious organizations as the Sisters of St. Anne, the missionary Sisters of Christ the King, and various Protestant women's missionary associations have some statistics available; but they are uneven at best.<sup>9</sup> However, my own limited research on a few missions from the 1860s to the 1940s appears to support Janet Wilson James' argument that any exploration of women's part in the history of religion reveals that women usually outnumbered men.<sup>10</sup>

Neglect of women in the mission field can be traced partially to methodological problems.<sup>11</sup> The marginality of women in the Christian tradition means there are few sources available from which to judge women's perceptions of their roles, their motivations, their ambitions,

their difficulties and, perhaps, their distinct ethical voice. Male recorded sources of church developments naturally display male bias. But the use of specific women's records such as diaries, journals, and letters present another difficulty. Although, unlike much male produced literature, women's writings were seldom written for publication or promotion purposes, such writings have to be examined "from the perspective of women's internalization of patriarchal ideologies."<sup>12</sup> Most missionary women appear to have accepted their prescribed role and their writings often reflected this acquiescence. However, as Vickers argues, we must try "to understand more deeply, women's experience under patriarchy."<sup>13</sup>

An examination of women on the mission frontier of British Columbia, presents an opportunity to examine through a variety of sources missionary women's "actual behaviour" in their dual role as frontier settlers and church functionaries. These include: official church record books, comments in male-oriented church histories, newspapers, government records, diaries, journals, obituaries, and interview data. Because there is a dearth of secondary sources on either missionary women, or frontier women in general in both Canada and British Columbia historiography, comparisons are made with American studies.<sup>14</sup> However enough evidence exists to allow a brief, preliminary examination of women's special contribution to the province's mission development in what has been presented traditionally as a male-dominated field.

Studies on mission work in British Columbia must begin by recognizing that missionary women's frontier experience differed considerably from that of men. This was partly by virtue of physiology. Studies of pioneer women in both Canada and the United States have revealed that women proved as capable as men of handling the physical hardships of frontier environment.<sup>15</sup> However, both single and married women were subject to a painful lack of privacy, the possibility of monthly stresses and depressions, and inadequate medical treatment; women often experienced pregnancy and childbirth under particularly harsh conditions. In the nineteenth century, even with the best of care, childbirth was a precarious business. On the frontier, often remote from family and medical support, missionary women faced the reality of the frailty of infant life in remote regions.<sup>16</sup> Midwifery was often practiced by inexperienced white women, although some women availed themselves of the help of Indian and Metis women.<sup>17</sup> Contraception was not unknown to missionary women but, perhaps more than among other women, religious conviction prevented widespread use.<sup>18</sup> In spite of these physiological realities,

according to an American study, women in a frontier environment “asked no special help or privileges”;<sup>19</sup> consequently neither pregnancy nor impending birth—or indeed the responsibilities of motherhood—impeded or deferred family plans. The experiences of missionary women in British Columbia support these findings.

For example, the wife of well-known Methodist missionary Thomas Crosby routinely visited sick children and a visit to a child suffering a sore throat resulted in the death of Mrs. Crosby’s two small daughters to diphtheria. By the time Crosby returned from a missionary circuit both children were buried.<sup>20</sup> Emma Crosby lost a third child two years later. In 1887, Thomas Crosby, on his return from a visit to the mission station at Greenville on the Naas river, wrote that he found Reverend Green very ill and both Green and his wife grieving over the loss of “their fine son.” During a scarlet fever epidemic in the neighbouring Indian village of Kiticks, the Greens had taken several sick Indian children into their home. The children recovered, but the missionaries’ son died; a second son, weakened by the fever, died eleven months later—in spite of his parents’ attempt to aid his recovery by moving him to the comparatively civilized town of Nanaimo.<sup>21</sup> No one doubts that fathers felt a child’s loss, but as Silverman notes:

At the heart of the family, where women were both givers and receivers, teachers and learners, lay the mother-child nexus. Its purest form was the bond with infants. The death of a baby was, therefore, the most horrific sundering of the connection to life, the most poignant and also the most jarring reminder of the threat of destruction.<sup>22</sup>

Missionary work among native peoples highly susceptible to European diseases made illness and death for both missionaries and their spiritual charges constant companions.

Alice Tomlinson, young wife of C.M.S. missionary the Reverend Robert Tomlinson, did not lose her child, but she came close to losing both the baby and her life. In 1878, Tomlinson asked to be allowed to open a new mission among the native peoples of the Skeena River region. In spite of Alice’s pregnancy, in 1879, the family made a difficult journey over the “grease trail” from Kincolith on the Naas River to Kispiox on the Skeena.<sup>23</sup> The family kept a log book during the journey and although Alice became critically ill with typhoid, her entries are non-

complaintive. Alice’s difficulties are hinted at in the following entry by Edward Tomlinson:

Luggvian and I carried Mrs. T. for about 8 miles on a Bear Skin between two poles it was not at all very easy work over the rough trail she walked up the hill as we could not possibly carry her up. We camped in the home of mosquitoes.<sup>24</sup>

While her husband was slaughtering animals suffering from extreme cold, Alice gave birth to her baby in a cattle barn because it was warmer than their tiny cabin.<sup>25</sup>

Missionary women’s experiences differed from men’s also by virtue of society’s expectation of their role. Missionary women in British Columbia appear to have been predominantly middle-class and, as such, were perceived of as “a major force for human betterment”—a role particularly important on a new frontier.<sup>26</sup> Nineteenth century writings stressed the precepts of “true womanhood,”<sup>27</sup> and society expected married frontier women, even those who combined the two roles of cultural determinant and missionary, to carry out the daily routines of housekeeping and efficiently manage their resources, to bear, raise, and transmit society’s cultural values to children, to care for the sick, to meet emergency situations with competence and without complaint, and to exercise “selfless, gentle, benign and humane moral influence over all.”<sup>28</sup> The churches perceived of such women as “help-mates” for men, in supplementary roles, as “helping hands.”<sup>29</sup> Catholic women who joined missionary religious orders were seen as “handmaids” in the service of the church, which, in reality, meant “helpmates” at the disposal of a male hierarchy.<sup>30</sup> As all missionaries—firm believers in the power of individual example—hoped to encourage the Christianization and civilization process by inducing change in the lives of native families, missionary women had to extend their exemplary role to cover Indian society, becoming role models for Indian women. An American missionary wife might have spoken for Canadians also when she clearly stated the problems attached to this particular role:

This taking care of teething babies and teaching darkies to darn stockings, and talking English back end foremost...in order to get an eatable dinner is really very odd diversion...But I begin to her reconciled to my minute cares. I believe women were made for such things.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps, in part, because they acquiesced to the “help-mate” role assigned them and did not directly challenge

their subordinate role,<sup>32</sup> and in part because their lives left little time for leisure, women missionaries in British Columbia appear to have left few records of their work. And existing historical records that refer to women missionaries are frequently unhelpful. In 1914, Thomas Crosby wrote a book on missionary work among the Indian peoples of the province's northwest coast. One chapter was devoted to delineating the need for medical missionaries and a second chapter to the response to that need. Crosby listed the men who responded, detailed their work, the hardships they encountered, and their heroism. Then Crosby noted: "The Women's Missionary Society was asked for a nurse and sent Miss Spence who rendered fine service in that capacity and remained for 13 years in the work." We learn nothing of Miss Spence's difficulties and hardships but, small comment as it is, it is a veritable outpouring compared with Crosby's remark on other nurses: "they [the W.M.S.] afterwards sent other nurses!"<sup>33</sup>

A medical missionary who was widely acclaimed both during his lifetime and long after his death was Dr. Horace Cooper Wrinch of Hazelton. Articles in newspapers and writings in family journals heap numerous accolades upon him. These writings stress his constant struggle with the elements, with Indian medicine men, with lack of funds and with the growing need for bigger and better medical facilities. His wife, who trained as a missionary, who became a nurse for that purpose, who acted as district nurse—presumably under the same difficult conditions as her husband—who was both teacher and administrator for the hospital she and Dr. Wrinch built, receives scant attention; during a ceremony in 1945 to honour her late husband's work, Mrs. Wrinch was referred to as his "help-mate."<sup>34</sup>

Frequently women missionaries appear simply as names in account books with little or no reference given to their roles.<sup>35</sup> But existing historical writings by women missionaries, or their supporters, can be equally uninformative, even misleading, and need careful appraisal. This is partially because of society's controlling mores. As American historians have discovered, frontier women, completely controlled by taboos on sex and other bodily functions, did not even mention in their own private diaries that they were pregnant;<sup>36</sup> in British Columbia, Alice Tomlinson makes no mention of her pregnancy in the family record of travel. Commentary written by members of women's missionary associations sometimes tend to hagiography and, while important, have to be used with the same care accorded male promotional literature.<sup>37</sup> Just as many of their private hardships remain hidden, British Columbia's missionary women's crucial roles in the fields

of education, medicine, and social services also remain under-publicized—although it is evident that without their work, missions would have had little success.

All women in the mission field, particularly in the early years, were expected to teach, regardless of their qualifications to do so.<sup>38</sup> Missionary wives taught practical skills such as Western-style cooking and sewing and sometimes they added the rudiments of reading and writing. Young Alice Tomlinson was ordered by her husband's superior, William Duncan, to teach Indian women how to cook European foods, how to sew Christian garments for themselves and their families, and how to knit. Alice's upbringing had not prepared her for such work. The daughter of a prominent, wealthy Victoria family (former Irish gentry) Alice had done little housework and certainly did not know how to knit. Proving resourceful, she purchased socks, unravelled them, and knit them up again—teaching herself, her husband, and her pupils.<sup>39</sup> Another resourceful woman was Methodist missionary, Miss C. Laurence, who "nobly volunteered" to go to Kitamaat, 160 miles north of the Port Simpson mission centre, to open a school for native children. It took her two weeks by Indian canoe, in stormy weather, to reach her destination.<sup>40</sup> Thomas Crosby's more experienced wife ran a school for Indian girls and an adult Indian education programme in the evenings; Caroline Knox, who married Wesleyan Methodist Charles Tate, helped her husband to organize and run the Colqualeetza Indian Residential School in the Fraser Valley.<sup>41</sup> Because of their numbers and their involvement in both boys' and girls' education throughout the province, Roman Catholic nuns appear to have formed the largest percentage of women missionary teachers.

For over thirty years, the Sisters of St. Anne dominated the field. Beginning in 1858 with a two-room house—bedroom and classroom—on the edge of Beacon Hill Park, in Victoria, these missionary nuns at one time ran thirty-four educational establishments.<sup>42</sup> Over time, as the Roman Catholic Church extended its educational work to reach all native peoples, other women's missionary orders entered British Columbia. Native education has become a controversial issue yet we know little of these missionary women who, because they had Indian children in residential care and under their control for ten months each year, must have made a profound impact on many aspects of Indian culture—particularly Indian women's culture. As one historian has noted, Roman Catholic nuns lived relatively secluded from society, their lives centred on the institutions they managed and staffed; most literature on them has been written by devotees, published by the Catholic press and tends to deal typically with devotional

lives or the history of specific orders. This is certainly true of British Columbia.<sup>45</sup>

Nursing was perhaps a less controversial area, although the nurses' role in undermining the work of traditional native healers must not be minimized. Women missionaries provided a variety of nursing care, often combining medical services with other roles. In the 1890s, Elizabeth Emsley Long was sent to the Wesleyan Methodist School in remote Fort Simpson where "she not only had to cook, sew, play the organ, but to teach and nurse the sick"; Caroline Tate cared for the sick of the isolated areas of Bella Bella, Rivers Inlet, and Burrard Inlet.<sup>44</sup> The inexperienced Alice Tomlinson had to administer chloroform while her husband operated.<sup>45</sup> Some missionary women, like Mrs. Wrinch, worked as district nurses among Indians and white settlers alike and helped to run the numerous mission hospitals scattered throughout the province's remote regions. Missionary orders usually worked in groups and provided a spectrum of missionary activities. A Québec order, the Sisters of Christ the King, who resided on the Chilcotin Anaham Reserve, worked as medical personnel, teachers and nursery staff.

The experiences of the Sisters of Christ the King illustrate a major problem facing women in British Columbia's mission field, their lack of adequate training. For women, mission work was seen as a natural extension of their domestic role; training was therefore unnecessary. And while some, like the missionary orders, and individuals such as Mrs. Harold Wrinch, had come to the work with professional training, many others, like Alice Tomlinson and Mrs. Victor Sansum—wife of Skeena area missionary Victor Sansum—who simply accompanied their husbands to the mission field, had the missionary role thrust upon them. But even those who "trained" for the work, were unprepared for both the unknown cultural and difficult physical conditions they encountered. Knowledge of native culture, which might have eased their work, does not appear to have been considered necessary. Sister Patricia, a Sister of the Child Jesus, who arrived in the province from Ireland in 1911 to teach Indian children knew only that all North American Indians were known as "Red Indians" and thought "they would not be civilized."<sup>46</sup>

Some missionary orders prepared their members for specific work in specific countries and the Sisters of Christ the King decided to make Japan their primary missionary objective. The young nuns studied Japanese language and geography but before more than a handful had established themselves in Japan, was intervened. The Sisters' ability to communicate in Japanese proved useful to the Cana-

dian government which employed some among the Japanese interns at Sandon in the interior of British Columbia. When this camp closed in 1944, Roman Catholic Archbishop Duke of Vancouver asked the nuns to undertake work among the Chilcotin Indians. Knowing nothing of the Indian peoples, their language and customs, the Sisters found themselves running a medical facility, a nursery, teaching school, and, within the space of a few years, operating a novitiate for Indian girls, among a native people noted for their resistance to white encroachment.<sup>47</sup>

The histories of male missionary figures have dominated such missionary biography as there is in British Columbia. Only occasionally does a woman missionary emerge from the unknown mass to be noted, at least in her own time if not by later generations. Such a figure is Kathleen O'Brien whose work at the Alert Bay Anglican missions won her an M.B.E. in the 1935 King George's birthday honours' list. In brief, in 1920, at the suggestion of Anglican Bishop Charles Schofield, she arrived in the province and took upon herself the task of public health nurse in Alert Bay district. She made contact with the sick and the convalescent and followed up, in the Indians' own homes, the work being done by St. George's Hospital of the Columbia Coast Mission. For three years she continued this task but felt the need to broaden her activities. With the help of Marion Nixon, a teacher in the girls' Indian Residential School at Alert Bay, she relocated in the small Indian village of Mimkumlees on Village Island, the home of the Mamalilikulla people, where Indian tribal customs were still strong. The two women built a house for themselves and rented a house from the Indians which they turned into a school. Initially the school was a haphazard affair, for there were few books and the children had to bring their own desks; moreover, the Indians had little knowledge of English.

Around 1930, the Church Missionary Society built a modern one-room school which served also as a chapel. As her plans progressed, Kathleen O'Brien came to realize that there was a tremendous need for tuberculosis preventative work. The few mission hospitals in the north were constantly overcrowded and could take only advanced and bedridden cases. Miss O'Brien realized that the high death rate among the Indians could be checked only if the disease itself was checked at an early stage. Using her own funds, she built a small sanitarium on Village Island. She called it the "hyuyatsi," which means resting place. It was a cottage with three beds and its many windows overlooked a lagoon. As soon as someone appeared to have contracted the disease, Miss O'Brien isolated the patient and applied a

process of complete rest, fresh air and nourishing food. The majority of her patients were returned to their homes in good health. Before leaving the hyuyatsi, children, a special concern of Kathleen O'Brien, spent a few days in her home until she felt certain that they were absolutely well.<sup>48</sup>

As well as contributing their time, Kathleen O'Brien and her companion, contributed money to not only mission projects but also other diocesan needs. In 1927, for example, both women paid for "Painting, Oiling, Varnishing and Staining School, board and lodging of men working on the school and rafting of lumber and carrying to the site. The latter was expensive because there was no wharf . . ." <sup>49</sup> Six months later, Miss O'Brien donated money towards the building of a new cathedral in Victoria.<sup>50</sup> Much research needs to be done on the numerous other women missionaries of the province to discover the extent to which church projects depended on the efforts of female personnel.

The demands of frontier conditions in general presented women missionaries with both extension of familiar roles and opportunities for new responsibilities. Some nineteenth century women may have simply responded to the frustrations and limitations of their lives by seeking out an option "that involved danger, loneliness, and a difficult life in primitive conditions."<sup>51</sup> Undoubtedly British Columbia women missionaries experienced difficulties and loneliness; the diaries of both Caroline Tate, missionary wife, and Agnes Knight, missionary teacher, attest to this.<sup>52</sup> While some found that missionary work was simply an extension of domestic activities, others found their experiences broadened.<sup>53</sup> Kathleen Patterson, a young nurse hired by the United Church for its thirty-five bed hospital in Bella Coola, recorded in her memoirs that she had to learn "to pull teeth, deliver babies and colts, give anesthetics...assist the doctor with anything from a breast operation to calsoing the ceiling was introduced to the business of undertaking with all its grimness and to the art of comforting the bereaved."<sup>54</sup> Sometimes women acted without any male supervision. French Canadian missionary Sister Teresa Bernard recalled her added responsibilities:

We started a nursing home [and] at the beginning I didn't have any experience. You know you train in a hospital. In a hospital you have young doctors and you're not supposed to give any medication without [it] being prescribed, you are not supposed to do anything without it's ordered, and then you are sent

way back in the field, all by yourself, there's nobody to help you.<sup>55</sup>

Like Alice Tomlinson, Kathleen Patterson of Bella Coola, and Kathleen O'Brien, Sister Teresa Bernard found her customary role and her responsibilities expanded.

Little is known of the attitudes and expectations women missionaries brought to their work, or whether these changed over time. However, there is some evidence that like their male counterparts women missionaries displayed a variety of attitudes in their dealings with native peoples, ranged from ethnocentric and/or racist to maternalistic and sympathetic—or a combination of these. Although they lacked specific knowledge of their charges, most carried "certain deeply ingrained images and preconceptions of the native groups they would meet."<sup>56</sup> For most, the starting point in their relationship with Indians was their belief in the superiority of white civilization and particularly in the superiority of Christianity over indigenous religions. As one missionary nun explained it, the Indians were "simple pagans" and it was the God-ordered role of all missionaries to teach them the Christian gospel.<sup>57</sup> It was this sense of superiority that led the Sisters of Christ the King on their arrival at the Anaham Reserve to "clean up" the Indian church, an act Sister Teresa now considers a mistake:

We didn't understand the Indians' customs because we shouldn't have touched that...Now I see all the mistakes we made. Reminds me of that Irish song 'The English came to show us their ways.' Well, it's the same. We went there with the idea of show them how to live and show our ways.<sup>58</sup>

Sometimes ethnocentricity became overt racism. Mary England, and Indian woman who attended a Residential School, recalled the attitude of many of her teachers: "They were always degrading us because we were Indian. We didn't come from homes, we came from *camps*...They never let us forget that we were *Indian*, and that we weren't very civilized, that we were more or less savages."<sup>59</sup> Open racism could be found in the school policy adopted by the Sisters of St. Anne in 1858. For a year, the Sisters taught Indian, Metis, White and Black children together; there was no distinction of class or rank, of rich or poor. The daughters of Governor James Douglas and the daughters of the merchant Yates family sat alongside Emilia Morrell, daughter of an Indian woman. In 1859, a new superior, Sister Mary Providence, segregated the children; there was a select school, for paying pupils, and a free school. However, the select school was for whites only, as Black parents

willing to pay for their children's education soon discovered.<sup>60</sup> More subtle racism coloured the attitude of the Reverend Tomlinson's daughter, Anne. She explained that the reason she received only \$33 ½ a month as teacher was because "there was nothing but Indians. No half-breeds, no whites, nothing but Indians."<sup>61</sup> These attitudes tell only part of the story.

While some, like Caroline Tate, found it extremely difficult to understand Indian culture, other women missionaries identified with, even sympathized with, some aspects of it.<sup>62</sup> Some missionary nuns for example were popular with their pupils. When asked if she recalled Sister Patricia, one of her teachers, Shuswap Indian Celestine Johnson remarked: "I liked her, she was a nice Sister. Once she tried to get mad at us; we talked to her till she laughed! She was nice."<sup>63</sup> In spite of her bitterness over racist attitudes, Lillooet Mary Englund also spoke warmly of two nuns "who really showed their affection" towards Indian pupils.<sup>64</sup> Because of her tremendous work for tuberculosis victims, Kathleen O'Brien could easily have used her influence to preach Christianity and the "advantages" of white civilization. She appears to have sympathized fully with tribal life and the cultural aspirations of the native peoples. She never adopted an attitude of opposition to totem poles, native dances or the potlatch; she considered them to have been too important a part of Indian life to be abolished.<sup>65</sup>

The information on women missionaries in British Columbia remains sketchy but it is clear that women on the province's missionary frontier cannot be placed in easy categories. Their backgrounds were similar in some respects, diverse in others; and their frontier experiences, unique to women, were varied. Their society-ordered task of civilizing an expanding frontier was compounded by their added responsibility of "civilizing" native peoples. Whether the missionary role was thrust upon them through marriage or whether it was a chosen career, it offered differentiated opportunities: additional drudgery for some, "emotional and practical satisfaction" with expanded career opportunities for others. Collectively, however, women missionaries appear to have been a major productive force of British Columbia's frontier educational and medical services, a finding which indicates that the study of missionary women needs to be added to the historiographical agenda of both Canadian feminist history and missionary history in general. The British Columbia example offered above provides telling illustrations of the importance of this field of endeavour.

## NOTES

1. M. H. Abrams, ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (Revised), Vol. 1 (New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1968), p. 1134.
2. Georgia Harkness, *Women in Church and Society* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 66-71.
3. See, for example, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities," in Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor Mcaughlin, eds., *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979; Rosemary Skinner Keller, "Lay Women in the Protestant Tradition," in Rosemary Redford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, *Women and Religion in America, Volume 1: The Nineteenth Century* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981); E. Clark and H. Richardson, eds., *Women and Religion* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977); Margaret Brackenbury Crook, *Women and Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); Gail Malmgreen, ed., *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); Christine Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), chapter 6.
4. Sara Maitland, *A Map of the New Country: Women and Christianity* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 4-11; Harkness, *Women in Church and Society*; Ruether and McLaughlin, *Women of Spirit*, pp. 17-18; Crook, *Women and Religion*, pp. 1-5.
5. Crook, *Women and Religion*, pp. 200-2. Crook does not indicate from which translation of the *Summa Theologicae* she takes her quotations; however, a similar translation can be found in *Summa Theologicae*, IIa-IIae, Q. 177, Article 2, translators the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benzinger Brother Inc., 1947), p. 1923. It can be argued that attitudes towards women can be traced back to the basic principles of Augustine filtered through Thomist thought: see George H. Tavard, *Women in Christian Tradition* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973), p. 125.
6. For example: among older works that ignore the role of women, H. H. Walsh, *The Christian Church in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1956); Philip Carrington, *The Anglican Church in Canada* (Toronto: Collins, 1963); John Webster Grant, ed., *The Churches and the Canadian Experience* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1963); John Webster Grant, *The Canadian Expression of Church Union* (London: Luxworth Press, 1967). Richard Allen's much admired *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-28* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971) ignores the powerful influence of women on the reform tradition; Richard Allen, ed., *Religion and Society in the Prairie West* (Canadian Plains Research Center: University of Regina Press, 1974) ignores women; John Webster Grant's *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984) gives little attention to women in spite of Grant's awareness of their important role in the relationship between native peoples and the churches: see Grant, "Presbyterian Women and the Indians," *Papers of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History*, 1978, pp. 21-36; more balanced, although not totally adequate is Denis L. Butcher et al., eds., *Prairie Spirit: Perspectives on the Heritage of the United Church of Canada in the West* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985).
7. Malmgreen, *Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930*, p. 3.
8. See, for example, the arguments of Maitland, Malmgreen, Fiorenza, and Harkness.
9. For example, the *Annual Report of the Methodist Woman's Missionary Society, 1906-1907* lists women missionaries in B.C. but does not give the specific number of deaconesses and missionary nurses it was supporting in the province. *Annual Reports of the Methodist Woman's Missionary Society*, United Church Archives, Vancouver School of Theology, B.C. Roman Catholic women's missionary orders working among both the native peoples and white settlers

- included: The Sisters of St. Anne, The Sisters of the Child Jesus, The Missionary Sisters of Christ the King, The Sisters of Providence, The Sisters of St. Joseph (Newark), and The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Protestant women missionaries included Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Salvation Army workers.
10. Janet Wilson James, "Women and Religion: An Introduction," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 5, Winter 1978, pp. 579-82.
  11. British Columbia's major work on the history of native peoples mentions women missionaries only briefly: Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1977). The major work on women missionaries in British Columbia was written by a member of the missionary order: Edith Downs, *A Century of Service* (Victoria: Sisters of St. Anne, 1966); an earlier work on missionaries in the province, also written by a Sister of St. Anne, is interesting in that the authoress stresses the work of the men and devotes only one brief chapter to her own order's work: Sister Mary Theodore, *Heralds of Christ the King* (New York: P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 1939); Margaret Whitehead's *The Cariboo Mission: A History of the Oblates* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1981) draws attention to the role of women missionaries in the mission's success but does not develop this aspect enough; Margaret Whitehead, *Now You Are My Brother: Missionaries in British Columbia*, Sound Heritage Series, No. 34, Winter 1981, draws on the experiences of both missionary women and men.
  12. Ruth Pierson and Alison Prentice, "Feminism and the Writing and Teaching of History," in Angela R. Miles, Geraldine Finn, eds., *Feminism in Canada: From Pressure to Politics* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982), p. 111.
  13. Jill McCalla Vickers, "Memoirs of an Ortological Exile: The Methodological Rebellions of Feminist Research," in Miles and Finn, eds., *Feminism in Canada*, p. 28.
  14. Wendy Mitchinson's "Canadian Women and Church Missionary Societies," *Atlantis*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Spring 1977, deals, primarily, with women missionary supporters; Mrs. Robert Holmes' "Experiences of a Missionary's Wife," *Alberta Historical Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Spring 1964, is an autobiographical sketch of Mrs. Holmes' life at the Anglican missions on Lesser Slave Lake and at Shaftsbury, on the Peace River, Alberta.
  15. For example: Elaine Leslau Silverman, *The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier 1880-1930* (Montreal: Eden Press, 1984); Lillian Schlissel, *Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982).
  16. Schlissel, *Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey*, p. 4.
  17. Silverman, *The Last Best West*, p. 128.
  18. Angus McLaren, "Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920," *Canadian Historical Review* LIX (1978), pp. 319-40.
  19. Schlissel, *Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey*, p. 14.
  20. Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down the North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship*, Toronto: The Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1914, p. 284-86.
  21. Rev. Thomas Crosby letter, December 20, 1887, *Missionary Outlook*, February 1888, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 30-32; Rev. A.E. Green, letter, November 27, 1888, *Missionary Outlook*, February 1889, Vol. 9, No. 2, p. 31.
  22. Silverman, *The Last Best West*, p. 133.
  23. The "grease trail" was so named because the Indians in the areas collected grease from the oolichan fish and used this particular route to the river each year.
  24. Tomlinson family, "Way-Side Log," May 25, 1879, PABC.
  25. Uncatalogued family records of the Cox family of Hazelton, B.C. shown to the author.
  26. Beverley J. Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed: The Image of the Frontier Women," *Journal of American Folklore*, January-March, 1975, pp. 25-41; Beth Light and Alison Prentice, eds., *Pioneer and Gentlewomen of British North America, 1713-1867* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1980), pp. 8-9; Veronica Strong-Boag, *A Woman with a Purpose: The Diaries of Elizabeth Smith, 1872-1884* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. xvi.
  27. Glenda Riley, *Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), p. 2. Riley argues that industrialization gave rise to "vague fears" about the role of women and increased stress, in published writings, on "womanly virtues."
  28. Mary E. Young, "Women, Civilization and the Indian Question," in *Clio Was a Woman, Studies on the History of American Women*, Mabel E. Deutrich and Virginia C. Purdy, eds. (Washington: Harvard University Press, 1980) p. 98; Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed," p. 32; for the Roman Catholic Church official view of womanhood see Marc Rondeau, *La promotion de la femme dans la perrée de l'église contemporaine* (Montreal: Fides, 1969).
  29. Keller, "Lay Women in the Protestant Tradition," p. 292.
  30. Those women who founded religious orders controlled their own communities, but nuns who worked in the mission field, whether Mother Superiors or kitchen helpers were ultimately subject to male hierarchical control.
  31. Barbara Welter, "She Hath Done What She Could: Protestant Women's Missionary Careers in Nineteenth Century America," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 5, Winter 1978, p. 628.
  32. For acquiescence of women missionaries see Keller "Lay Women in the Protestant Tradition," p. 242; Crook, *Women and Religion*, pp. 229-30.
  33. Crosby, *Up and Down the North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship*, p. 297. Crosby did however appreciate his wife's work; he referred to her as "that greater burden bearer." Thomas Crosby, *Up and Down the North Pacific Coast by Canoe and Mission Ship*. Toronto: The Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, 1914, p. 219.
  34. Information on Mrs. Wrinch taken primarily from family records shown to the author, and the *Omineca Herald and Terrace News*, January 3, 1945.
  35. See, for example, the "C.M.S. Account Book of the Annual Expenditure in the Several Stations of the North Pacific Missions, 1881-1900," Text 261, Map 11, Anglican Archives, Victoria, B.C.
  36. Schlissel, *Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey*, p. 4.
  37. See, for example, H. L. Platt, *The Story of the Years, 1881-1906*, Woman's Missionary Society Publication, 1906, United Church Archives, Vancouver School of Theology, B.C.
  38. Whitehead, *Now You Are My Brother: Missionaries in British Columbia*. The quality of teachers for Indian children has long been a complaint of native peoples. Admittedly it was difficult for the government to find teachers willing to establish in remote regions; one reason why the missionary orders were so popular with government agencies was their willingness to do so. However, there was tremendous indifference on the part of some government officials when hiring teachers. For example, Anne Tomlinson who "hated school" and had little education applied for and obtained the job of teacher to some Skeena River Indians.
  39. Information on the Tomlinson family is taken from an interview with Mrs. Robert Tomlinson by Imbert Orchard, *Imbert Orchard Collection*, July 12, 1961, Sound and Moving Image Division, PABC.
  40. Rev. Thomas Crosby letter, December 20, 1882, *Missionary Outlook*, May 1883, Vol. 3, No. 5, p. 46.
  41. Information on Knox, Jan Gould, *Women of British Columbia* (Victoria: Hancock House Publishers, 1975), p. 159. Mrs. Crosby had been a teacher formerly at Hamilton Ladies' College: Platt, *The Story of the Years, 1880-1906*, p. 15.
  42. Edith Downs, *A Century of Service* (Victoria: The Sisters of St. Anne, 1966), p. 165.
  43. Elizabeth Kolmer, "Catholic Women Religious And Women's History: A Survey of the Literature," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 5, Winter 1978, pp. 639-41.
  44. Gould, *Women of British Columbia*, p. 159.
  45. Interview with Agnes (Kathy) Johnson, *Imbert Orchard Collection*, Sound and Moving Image Division, PABC.

46. Interview with Sister Patricia, *Margaret Whitehead Collection*, Sound and Moving Image Division, PABC.
47. Interview with Sister Teresa Bernard, *Whitehead Collection*, PABC. For resistance of Chilcotin to white encroachment see Whitehead, *The Cariboo Mission*, pp. 27-29.
48. *Vancouver Province*, October 5, 1935. O'Brien's special interest in children surfaced at a meeting of missionaries and Indians at Alert Bay, June 1936, "Special Meeting Held at Alert Bay, June 1, 1936," Text 198, Box 1, File 50, Anglican Archives, Victoria, B.C.
49. Report of the Reverend F. Comley to the Synod of Clumbia re: New Missions School at Mimquamlees, Village Island, B.C., September 16, 1927, Text 63, Box 12, File 11, Anglican Archives, Victoria, B.C.
50. Bishop Charles Scholfield to Kathleen O'Brien, April 5, 1928, Text 203, Box 1, File 2, Anglican Archives, Victoria, B.C.
51. Isabel Bassett, *The Parlour Rebellion: Profiles in the Struggle for Women's Rights* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), p. 21. For the argument that men also used the missionary field as an avenue of escape or for upward mobility see Max Warren, *Social History and Christian Mission* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1967), pp. 51-53.
52. Diary of Carolone Sarah Tate, 1897-98, 1906, 1908-11, M.S., PABC; Diary of Miss Agnes Knight, July 10, 1885-October 23, 1887, M.S., PABC.
53. Barbara Brown Zikmund has argued that American missionary women in foreign mission fields supported by Mission Boards had the right to preach, which was denied to women at home. See Zikmund, "The Struggle for the Right to Preach," Ruether and Keller, *Women and Religion in America*, pp. 193-241.
54. Gould, *Women of British Columbia*, p. 164.
55. Whitehead, *Now You Are My Brother*, p. 80.
56. Riley, *Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915*, p. xiii.
57. Whitehead, *Now You Are My Brother*, p. 80.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
60. Downs, *A Century of Service*, pp. 49-50; *St. Anne's Journal*, April 1946, p. 7, Archives of the Sisters of St. Anne, Lachine, Quebec.
61. Johnson interview, *Orchard Collection*, PABC.
62. Welter, "She Hath Done What She Could," p. 637; Gould, *Women of British Columbia*, p. 159.
63. Whitehead, *Now Your Are My Brother*, p. 55.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
65. *Vancouver Province*, October 5, 1935. See also "Special Meeting Held at Alert Bay, June 1, 1936," Text 198, Box 1, File 50, Anglican Archives, Victoria, B.C.