

Forming Civilization at Red River: 19th-Century Missionary Education of Métis and First Nations Children

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ABSTRACT. Pre-Confederation missionary education was an attempt by missionaries from Europe to civilize the Red River settlement in Rupert's Land. The missionary societies arrived at Red River with an idea of what the elements of a civilized community were. The missionaries then developed the concept of the ideal child, and the pedagogy suitable to the rearing of the ideal child. The different denominations hoped that the ideal child would then grow up to civilize the settlement. While the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups at the settlement wanted their children instructed in the rudiments of reading, writing, and industry, not all groups were ready to accept the Church's vision of the civilized child. This paper explores why not all groups accepted the Anglican and Roman Catholic view of the civilized child in 19th-century Red River, and why missionary education, through the process of civilization, was not always successful.

SOMMAIRE. L'éducation missionnaire antérieure à la Confédération représentait une tentative européenne de civiliser la colonie de la Rivière Rouge, dans le Territoire de Rupert. Les communautés missionnaires arrivèrent à la Rivière Rouge avec une idée bien arrêtée sur la vie civilisée, puis développèrent le concept de l'enfant idéal ainsi que la pédagogie appropriée à son éducation. Les différentes confessions espéraient alors que cet enfant idéal, une fois adulte, civiliserait la colonie. Tandis que les groupes autochtones et non autochtones souhaitaient que leurs enfants reçoivent des rudiments de lecture, d'écriture et d'éducation pratique, ils n'étaient pas tous prêts à accepter la vision que l'Église avait de l'enfant civilisé. Cet article analyse pourquoi certains groupes dans la Rivière Rouge du 19^{ième} siècle n'acceptaient pas la vision anglicane et catholique, et pourquoi l'éducation missionnaire et son processus de civilisation ne réussissaient pas toujours.

In the early 1820s, a number of Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries developed school systems in Red River that transmitted European civilization to the settlement in Hudson's Bay Company (HBC)-controlled Rupert's Land. The settlement was rife with tension between the indigenous First Nations and Métis peoples and the new Canadian, British, and continental European colonizers. The development of denominational schooling, designed by the missionaries to educate a next generation of "civilized" children, exposed the cultural differences. The missionaries believed Christianity to be the main pillar of European civilization, and also held that agriculture was essential to a civilized economy; they also believed that children would be most receptive to their teachings of British civilization. Consequently, the missionaries concentrated their efforts on establishing denominational school systems, and used then-current pedagogical theories to form the civilized child. The different denominations hoped that this educated child would then grow up to "civilize" the settlement. Overall, the formed child was, to the missionaries, Christian, educated, and agrarian; but not all parents saw the

need for this type of education. Consequently, all parents did not agree: this fundamental lack of consensus thus created two formidable challenges to education when its foundations were being laid, in the period between 1820 and the late 1850s.

Civilization was the goal of the missionaries, but the ideal and the term itself are problematic. By civilizing, the missionaries hoped to transplant 19th-century British culture—with its accumulated scientific and technical knowledge, its capitalist, industrializing and urbanizing economy, its literature and Christian religion—into the Red River settlement. The missionaries perceived that children, especially the cross-cultured Métis children, would be the best recipients and transmitters of civilization, and thus erected churches and schools to disseminate the principles of civilization. Civilization implied European superiority, and civilizing was the act of British “superior” education, religion, industry, and economics into an “inferior” Aboriginal culture and settlement. For the missionaries, a “productive” Aboriginal society would result from their teachings. They considered working for the HBC freight brigades or buffalo hunting to be antithetical to their concept of civilization; but transplanting their favoured mode of economic production brought poor results for those who followed their religious and educational plans.

From 1820 to 1870, the population of Red River was composed of a variety of ethnic and religious groups. The four most prominent ethnic groups were the Métis, the Scots, the Canadiens, and the First Nations. The Métis formed the majority of the population at the settlement, but where members of this group lived depended on their ethnic parentage and religious affiliation. Persons of different religious affiliations clustered in particular areas; most historians refer to these different areas as parishes with a particular religious affiliation. The majority of anglophone and Anglican Métis settled on the west side of the Assiniboine and Red rivers, while the francophone and Catholic Métis settled in the central area of the settlement, at St. Boniface and White Horse Plain, later known as Saint-François-Xavier.¹ The divisions in ethnicity and religion were a result of tension between Anglicans and Catholics from the 1840s to the 1860s; the pedagogues differed in their opinion about what constituted the principles of civilization for children.²

The missionary ideal of civilization for Métis children was that of a structured becoming: they perceived that undisciplined, disobedient, and uneducated children should be formed into Christian, literate, industrious, sedentary, polite, and obedient adults. To the missionaries, this formative process would consist of instruction in scriptural and doctrinal knowledge as well as in basic academic and industrial subjects.³ In order to mold children into the perceived ideal, the pedagogues would implant a more conditioned personality.⁴ Ideally, as civilized adults, the children would pursue activities such as agriculture, and would also spread the faith of God both to their children and to the non-Christian bands into which they were born.

The one group whose attitudes about childhood conflicted most with the missionary ideal of the civilized child was the francophone Métis. In the first three decades of Red River, the HBC and the governing Council of Assiniboia encouraged the francophone Métis to abandon the hunt and become farmers. However, the hunt and the HBC freight brigades proved more profitable for the francophone Métis—especially after 1849, when the monopoly of the HBC on trade declined. From 1850 to 1870, the settlement relied on imports for food, a need the francophone Métis helped to fulfill through the hunt; as a result, the economic demands of these industries kept many of the children from

becoming civilized.⁵ In order to educate these Métis children, the missionaries believed they would have to remove them from territory where their "heathen" behaviour was encouraged and isolate them at Red River.

To ensure that students would learn virtue and good moral conduct, the teachers of civilization would have to install discipline early, or all instruction that children had received would run the risk of being lost. According to the missionaries, children were inherently undisciplined, especially orphan Métis children who wandered around the fur trade posts and Red River without purpose,⁶ or Métis children who travelled with the hunt. For the missionary societies, civilized children would have to learn order and virtue early so that ideas like discipline would not be foreign to them.⁷ Part of discipline was good moral conduct: throughout the years of Red River, good moral conduct was an important goal of civilization, because it enforced discipline and conformity to the rural British Christian and agricultural landscape.

In order to Christianize and educate children, teachers were to provide them with religious instruction and to ensure that they understood religious teaching; they would also teach children basic academic skills such as reading and writing. These two objectives were intertwined: the teachers would use the Bible to facilitate the development of reading and writing; once a child was Christianized, disciplined, and literate, teaching topics such as agriculture would be simple. While teaching students to be agriculturalists, instructors would also reinforce the value of attendance and obedience: only by attendance and obedience would children be educated to fulfill a role in the civilized society, as farmers, clergy, teachers, HBC officers or servants, or as wives to settlers, and HBC officers or servants.

According to the missionaries, civilized male and female children would have different roles; children would thus be prepared for these distinct roles in the classrooms of Red River. Gender separation in the classroom was the 19th-century British way of preparing male and female children for their adult roles. The same picture developed at Red River. Civilized male children would learn agriculture, husbandry, carpentry, and weaving, or would receive an academic education; both industrial and agricultural instruction would allow these adult men to financially support their families. Civilized male children would also spread the word of God and the habits of industry to their Aboriginal families. Civilized female children would become domestics, learning trades such as spinning, knitting, sewing, milking, and making butter; in the home, civilized women would also be the providers of comfort for their families.⁸ In the domestic sphere, civilized women would be the transmitters of morality and discipline to their children, and would be the upholders of a good moral standard.⁹ Therefore, women would teach discipline and obedience to children, who then would be willing participants in the Christianization and education provided at the schools.

The majority of the male and female children who would be Christianized, educated, and agrarian were Métis, and both genders were being reared for the mission of transmitting civilization to future generations. The missionaries thought of Métis children as the bridge between the First Nations, or "heathen" orders, and the European or civilized society: in sum, they hoped that their civilized Métis children would grow into adults and parents who would demonstrate to their First Nations communities and children the principles of a sedentary existence on a British cultural landscape.¹⁰

In order to rear the first generation of Christianized, educated, and agrarian Métis

children, the missionaries had to convince three different types of parents of the value of education. The first group was the elite parents, or those adults who were retired HBC and North West Company (NWC) officers and, in some cases, discharged servants. These individuals made up the new middle class evolving in the settlement in the 1820s, and were often adults who served on the governing Council of Assiniboia or worked as merchants or farmers. The new middle class parents supported the missionaries in their plans for civilization, as they desired that their Métis children be educated as Europeans, and distanced from their First Nations and Métis cultural ties as well as from economic activities like the hunt. These parents had the financial means to ensure that their children received at least an elementary education, and often to send them to Canada or Britain for secondary and post-secondary education. The second group consisted of settler parents who came from Europe to engage in agricultural pursuits. These parents appreciated the opportunities that education brought their children, but due to their economic circumstances could not send their children to school on a regular basis—nor could they not afford the education that the missionaries provided. They did want their children to become farmers, however, and owned land on which their children could learn industry. Finally, there were the hunter, gatherer, and trader parents. This group of adults looked to these activities rather than to agriculture for subsistence, and they relied on their children's help for survival. When they were not hunting, they squatted in shacks and engaged in subsistence agriculture; they were often illiterate, and in some cases saw no benefit from the education that the missionaries proposed for their children: instead, they taught their children the practical skills they needed to survive on the plains. Consequently, they were the individuals who co-operated the least with the missionaries, and their children were the least likely to attend school. The missionaries met all three groups of parents at Red River, and the attitudes about child-rearing and education from each group both advanced and stalled missionary plans to civilize the children.

The agricultural parents could not afford to educate their children, so the children usually received education financed by the missionaries. In 1833, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) granted £100 to the regular day schools at Upper Church, Frog Plain, Image Plains/Middle Church, and Grand Rapids. The schools were established to instruct the poor of the settlement, who were usually anglophone Métis, Scottish, or central European. Funding problems plagued these schools, and administrators could often not afford qualified teachers. The CMS continually attempted to reduce costs, looking to HBC Governor Sir George Simpson for extra funding or reducing teacher wages to better provide education.¹¹ The children were not the best students: Reverend William Cockran, at Grand Rapids, noted that they were undisciplined and “read & play according to their own weight & measure.”¹² He believed that parents were to blame for the lack of academic appreciation of their children in school¹³; however, in the 19th century, education for most children would be partial and incomplete.¹⁴

Anglican missionary and schoolmaster Cockran disliked the economic pursuits of the hunter, gatherer, and trader parents:

The Females being Natives & Half-Breeds, and consequently entirely ignorant of the economy and industry necessary to make a family comfortable in civilized life. And they are Naturely, so, indolent, ... and licentious, that it requires a great deal, both of instruction and grace, to make them honest and virtuous Christians.¹⁵

For Cockran and other missionaries, fur trade children and parents were of the most concern, because nothing had conditioned them to absorbing the principles of civilization and becoming either farmers or future missionaries.

The missionary societies planned to transmit their idea of the civilized child through a curriculum that involved obedience, discipline, religion, reading, rote memorization, writing, arithmetic, and industry. The attempt to form a civilized child through education contradicted the undisciplined and roving education of the First Nations and Métis societies. While some First Nations and Métis welcomed the chance for their children to be taught subjects such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as industrial pursuits like agriculture, the two groups did not want this form of education to change the personality and culture of their children. The parents wanted to help themselves and their children adapt, but they did not want to assimilate into a 19th-century Victorian British cultural terrain.¹⁶ The missionaries, especially the Anglican missionaries, hoped to convert Indian Schools into Schools of Industry, where First Nations children would learn weaving, carpentry, agriculture, and any other pursuits the missionaries thought were civilized.¹⁷ Consequently, while parents welcomed the chance for education and were reasonably co-operative, the implementation of the denominational system of education and the plan for forming a civilized child met several challenges.

Two major factors seriously affected denominational civilization programs. First, parents and guardians influenced their children; if they either did not initially support denominational education, or withdrew their children from the program, then the potential for rearing civilized children was lost. Parents and guardians needed the help of their children in industries like farming, hunting, gathering, and trading; as well, Métis hunter, gatherer, and trader parents who were squatters during the off-season and often illiterate saw little benefit from education. Secondly, financing the tools required for civilization—schoolrooms, schoolbooks, and schoolmasters and schoolmistresses—was a continual challenge. Parents and guardians rarely had the funds available, so missionary societies usually had to finance most or all of the education provided to children. Overall these two factors would always plague denominational efforts at civilizing the child.

As a community remote from trade, Red River was suitable for the evolution of a system of denominational education that imposed the 19th-century European model of the civilized child on what the missionaries perceived as a primitive Métis society. The Anglicans and the Catholics developed this denominational system, and key individuals in each group were responsible for its formation. The education contained religious, academic, and industrial components, and its implementation resulted in divisions based on race, class, and gender. All education would begin with lessons from the Bible, which would allow children to acquire spoken and written English and would serve as the basic textbook of instruction. Once Christianized and literate, these children could embark on a path of academic and industrial instruction.

The Reverend John West laid the foundation for the CMS's program of civilization.¹⁸ West came to Rupert's Land from his native Britain after the HBC appointed him chaplain and the CMS appointed him as a missionary. He arrived at Red River in October, 1820. Prior to his arrival, West lived at York Factory, where he used his British training to come up with a plan for educating the children at the post. West's philosophy of educating First Nations and Métis children focused on removing them from the fur trade, the industry that in his view had negatively changed their culture. West planned to

remove First Nations and Métis children from York Factory to Red River, where they would "be educated in white man's knowledge and religion."¹⁹ He planned to educate a generation of agriculturalists who could return to their families and teach them the value of agriculture.²⁰ The children would be taught to read the Bible, or "Book which the Great Spirit had given to White people...which would show them how to live well and die happy."²¹ The First Nations and the Métis seemed to like what West proposed, as he noted that "the Indians were willing to part with their children for the purpose of their being instructed."²² At Red River, West established a day school in November 1820 in the area of what would later be known as Kildonan, and instructed children taken from trading posts in Rupert's Land. The children were educated at the expense of the CMS at a cost of £12 per annum.²³

To better carry out his plans for civilization, West would soon receive a helper. Reverend David Jones arrived at Red River in January 1822. Prior to his arrival, he had studied for two years at the Lampeter Seminary in Wales, and after completing his studies there, was accepted by the CMS as a missionary candidate. Jones was ordained deacon in December 1822 and became a priest in April 1823. He assumed West's position as HBC chaplain in 1823 after serving as West's assistant for one year. Upon assuming West's position, he commenced a large-scale project of schoolroom erection. Jones attempted to increase the number of students attending schools by including the Métis in the Anglican school system. He also initiated the first recorded schools for First Nations and Métis children, as well as a training school for future missionaries. In 1824, he established a day school at Middle Church in St. Paul's parish, a few miles down the river from St. John's parish. He also formalized religious and industrial instruction in the schools, and developed schools that segregated groups of students.

From 1822 to 1823, Jones worked to expand the number of individuals the CMS reached in its mission efforts. Jones and his schoolmasters went door to door in parish or settler communities, and obtained almost 50 children.²⁴ By going door to door, Jones recognized the importance of educating "a numerous race of Half-caste children, [who] equally claim the attention of the Christian Philanthropist."²⁵ He was especially concerned about orphaned or abandoned anglophone Métis children at HBC posts, and wanted to remove them to the settlement²⁶ or to one of the HBC posts.²⁷ For the francophone Métis, Jones hoped that failures in the hunt would motivate them to receive instruction in agriculture and separate them from what he considered "uncivilized" and "semi-nomadic" pursuits.²⁸ Overall, education was very important for Jones, especially the education of Métis children left orphaned by the 1821 merger of the HBC and the NWC, or by fur trader fathers.

Jones quickly became frustrated with the HBC, a company which he thought ignored his plans for a formal solution to the civilization of Métis children.²⁹ Consequently, by the end of the 1820s he had done little to remove the orphan children from the HBC posts or the hunt. Jones was not alone in his pleas, as all CMS personnel, from missionaries to teachers, advocated that at least orphaned Métis children be removed from the HBC posts and placed at Red River. The question of how to civilize them was not answered until 1829, when the CMS officially decided to include amongst its students orphan Métis children who drifted around the settlement.³⁰

Jones' system of education paralleled 19th-century British educational principles: although education in Britain was becoming more accessible, students in school were still

separated by gender and social status. Male and female children were thus to be trained for different roles in the civilized agricultural landscape. In 1827, Jones entered into "an engagement with some of the gentlemen of the Compy's Service, [to] commence a Female School under the charge of Mr. Cockran," with female students to arrive in the summer of 1827.³¹ If female children were educated in the same classroom as male children, they were segregated. For example, in CMS schoolmaster Reverend Alfred C. Garrioch's schoolhouse, "the chimney end of the building was reserved for the girls, of whom in the school's best days, there were from twenty-five to thirty. The other and more frigid zone, was allocated to the boys, of whom there were about an equal number."³² In the schools, male children were educated as the next generation of family providers, learning trades like husbandry and carpentry; the female students were taught to transmit morality, obedience, and discipline to their children, as well as domestic subjects like spinning, knitting, sewing, milking, and making butter.³³ Jones thought that "the bearing...which female education is calculated to have on the moral and spiritual improvement of a country, will urge us to prosecute this object [the education of female children] with unremitting attention."³⁴ In accordance with British principles of education, students were separated not only by gender, but also by social status.

Jones responded to the request from HBC officers that their children receive an elementary and high school education superior to that of other children at the settlement: he proposed that their children needed to be educated separately from the other Métis and non-Métis groups at the settlement. From 1832 to 1833, he established a respectable seminary for the sons and daughters of Chief Factors of the HBC. The seminary was known as the Red River Academy,³⁵ and its teachers had the goals of moral improvement, religious instruction, and general education for the sons and daughters of settlers in the fur trade. The Academy was the first high school in Red River. In an attempt to discourage individuals who were socially unqualified from attending, Jones charged £30 per year per student; he also hired a schoolmistress to instruct all children in the ornamental branches of education, such as music and drawing. Overall, the school was Jones' response to the fear of fur trade officers that their sons and daughters would associate with their First Nations ties. Former traders hoped that their children, if distanced from their First Nations and Métis ties at a young age, would forget their First Nations or Métis ancestry. For Jones, the Academy was the institution to prevent cultural contact.³⁶

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, the Anglicans continued to use education to separate groups on the basis of social status. Inevitably, these forms of class separation resulted in the separation of racial groups: the poorer Métis, especially anglophone Métis elements and continental European settler children, were separated from the affluent anglophone Métis children of the retired HBC officers. CMS-educated Peter Garrioch, former NWC officer John Pritchard, principal settler Donald Gunn, and CMS missionary Reverend William Cockran taught the poorer anglophone Métis at Upper Church, Frog Plain, Middle Church, and Grand Rapids respectively. Those who taught poorer anglophone Métis and settler children often had less education than schoolmasters at the Academy established by Jones.³⁷ Therefore, the Academy or Boarding School served to separate the Europeans from the First Nations and Anglican Métis of the settlement.³⁸

Jones was a motivator for civilization who found a follower in Alexander Ross and a teacher of religion and industry in his successor, Cockran. Cockran arrived at Red River in 1825 and was initially a co-worker of Jones. The two men modified their liturgy to

attract the settlement's Presbyterian and Gaelic-speaking settlers. Jones and Cockran also ran the Academy, and after the departure of Jones in 1838 Cockran assumed complete responsibility for the Academy and for Jones' ministry. Through instruction and examination in religion, academics and industry, as well as in discipline and obedience, Cockran formalized the curriculum for the schools that Jones had established.

Cockran employed harsh discipline to ensure the compliance of his students. This practice was in accordance with 19th-century pedagogy. As historians of education such as Ellen Key and Alice Miller have observed, a will and wickedness common in all young children had to be eradicated before children participated in learning; Key and Miller both agree that physical discipline, laced with concern for conformity and discipline in children, was a form of "poisonous pedagogy."³⁹ In the 1820s and 1830s, the missionaries perceived themselves as not only responsible for the education of children, but also as teachers of discipline and obedience—roles usually fulfilled by parents. Cockran believed in the use of corporal punishment to enforce conformity and discipline in children; he thought that children would conform to the civilized society by becoming virtuous adults who maintained and developed the community.⁴⁰ While West removed children from their parents and Jones provided the first curriculum and increased the number of schools, Cockran had the clearest vision of what defined the civilized child and used a combination of discipline, industry, and religious instruction to accomplish this task.

Cockran also thought that industrial instruction was necessary for rearing self-sufficient adults. Like his predecessors, West and Jones, Cockran continually advocated the founding of a school of industry that would train students to fulfill industrial roles in the growing settlement⁴¹: he wanted to convert the existing Indian School at the Rapids into a school of industry, where there would be "5 distinct apartments, for the boys and girls to learn to read and write in, one to weave in, and one to learn the trade of carpenters."⁴² At the proposed school, children would learn farming by practice and the agricultural products they produced, such as grain, potatoes, and hogs, would feed them while they learned to farm.⁴³

Like West and Jones, Cockran combined religious and secular objectives with his curriculum of industry. He hoped that through religious instruction teachers and students would learn to worship God together, and that students would be faithful to the lessons of the Scriptures.⁴⁴ He observed that through instruction in the Bible, the schools "afford them [the students] the means of obtaining a scriptural education... [and one] embraces the whole bible, thus by its precepts, they are taught their duty to God...[and] are allured to a willing obedience."⁴⁵ The full integration of spiritual and practical objectives was illustrated by the regular visitations and examinations that Cockran and other missionaries conducted. An example of such an examination was one conducted at the Middle Church School on October 3, 1842. The examiner, schoolmaster John Roberts, reported that "after examining the first and second class in Arithmetic, Geography, History & c. I directed their attention to the sacred Scriptures and told them to read in the books of Leviticus [*sic*]."⁴⁶

For Cockran, providing religious instruction was a challenge. He had not failed in teaching the rudiments of religion to children, as they could read, write, sing psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, and say prayers; but he noted that the students made little progress in the knowledge they acquired. He blamed Aboriginal mothers for the lack of

comprehension in children, noting that these women had no use for the lessons of the Sunday schools and therefore did not encourage their children to remember the lessons they learned.⁴⁷

From 1820 until 1850, the Anglicans laid the foundations for a system of education that became firmly implanted. West first removed children from what he perceived made them "uncivilized," the fur trade; then Jones followed West and established the schools that West had envisioned; finally, Cockran worked with Jones' curriculum of obedience, discipline, religion, basic academics, and industry to train a generation of virtuous adults. The Catholics followed a similar plan, and by the end of the 1850s had developed an education system similar to that of the Anglicans.

Several individuals contributed to the formation of Catholic education at Red River. Joseph-Octave Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, brought the Catholic Church to the settlement. In the late 1810s, Plessis requested that Joseph-Norbert Provencher, Sévère Dumoulin, and William Edge bring religion and schools to Red River. As well, Plessis wanted the three men to legitimize European marriages to First Nations wives through Christian instruction, erect schools, and develop catechism classes for children. Subsequently, Georges-Antoine Belcourt came to Red River in 1830 as an assistant to Provencher. The two Nolin sisters, Angélique and Marguerite, provided female children with primary education and separated them from the male children. The Grey Sisters, who arrived in the late 1850s, continued this gender-separated education. Other important Catholics were Reverend L. Laflèche, who established year-round schooling at Saint-François-Xavier, and Provencher's successor, Alexandre-Antonin Taché, who focused on agricultural instruction. Overall, all of these Catholic missionaries saw the Métis as the bridge that connected European and First Nations societies at Red River.

Plessis established a mission at Red River around 1818. He wanted to educate the First Nations at the settlement, as well as French Canadians and Métis Christians who lived amongst the First Nations. For Plessis, instructing potential converts and converts in marriage customs, family life, and the education of children sowed the seeds for growing cultural change.⁴⁸

Ordained Bishop of Juliopolis, and coadjutor Bishop of Quebec in 1822, Provencher made several contributions to Catholic education. He became a schoolmaster at St. Boniface, a parish on the east side of the settlement, composed of French Canadian families who travelled with the Catholic missionaries from Montreal to Red River.⁴⁹ However, his attempts at education were informal at best, and focused on training in industry. He brought in two weaving instructors from Quebec to teach Métis women; the students attended class in an older chapel that he provided. However, a fire destroyed this quasi-school of industry and the industrial machinery in March 1839 and left him without a residence for the schoolmistresses and the children.⁵⁰ Provencher also instructed a Latin class geared toward preparing six male children for the priesthood. However, none of them succeeded when they went on to Montreal or Quebec for higher education. Provencher's initiatives were costly, and moreover the Catholic ideologies for education, which involved taking their mission and their education to the Métis, conflicted with the theory of civilization: to rear a sedentary generation of Métis child industrialists and missionaries.

As an assistant to Provencher, Belcourt was very involved in the education of Catholic children. In 1834 he was stationed at Baie St. Paul, where he acted as a pastor,

teacher, advisor, and confidant to the First Nations and the Métis there and at various other missions from Lake Winnipegosis to Fort Francis. Finally, Belcourt wrote textbooks that he used as curriculum in the schools.⁵¹ When Belcourt commenced his school at Baie St. Paul, he hired the Nolin sisters as teachers. The francophone Métis daughters of former NWC officer Louis Nolin, they had been educated in Quebec as teachers, and in 1825 arrived at St. Boniface to teach school. In 1829, the two sisters opened the first girls' school in St. Boniface,⁵² providing the first Catholic education to female children.

Two other individuals and one group also played roles in the development of Catholic education during the foundation years. Laflèche established a school at Saint François-Xavier in the early 1850s for the boys; the school operated throughout the year, but was suspended during the bi-annual hunts, when Laflèche left to educate and minister to adults and children who travelled with the hunt. Taché arrived in the Catholic parish of St. Boniface on August 25, 1845; he was ordained deacon on August 31, and priest on October 12 of the same year. On October 13, 1845, he entered the Oblate order.⁵³ As a member of the Oblate order, Taché ministered to the French-Canadian and Métis population at Saint-François-Xavier.⁵⁴ In the late 1850s, he succeeded Provencher as the Bishop of St. Boniface; in this capacity he proposed that the reason why Anglican missions experienced success in the 1840s was that they provided food and clothing for the students they educated. He wanted to establish a model farm similar to the Anglican one in order to educate children in agriculture and different branches of industry.⁵⁵ He, like Provencher, also wanted to train francophone Métis children for the priesthood; in 1858, he sent Louis Riel and two other students to Quebec for classical education.⁵⁶ Finally, the Grey Sisters at Saint François-Xavier established a convent school; they were well received at Saint François, and in their first year of operation their school had 80 students.⁵⁷

After 1845, the Catholics too concluded that the only way that students could be civilized through education was by being removed from their parents. The Catholics had allowed the Métis to continue with their ancestral pursuits, and consequently had not attained much success with projects of Christianization and education in religion and industry. The missionaries wanted First Nations and Métis children to interact, so that First Nations children could pattern their behaviour after the more civilized Métis children.⁵⁸ However, even post-1845 missionaries like Laflèche, Taché, and the Grey Sisters were not very successful in rearing civilized children: their lack of success was caused by their habit of bringing education to the Métis hunters, gatherers and traders, and their reluctance to remove them to the mission schools on a permanent basis.

Overall, Anglicans and Catholics contributed significantly to the development of civilization at Red River. The mission groups provided academic and industrial instruction, directed toward rearing a generation of civilized individuals who farmed and worshiped God, and spread the example of civilization to other First Nations and Métis groups. However, two factors conspired to interfere with each missionary group's plan for civilization: attendance and funding. As a result, educators became convinced that only with compulsion would the program of civilization function properly, and a Christian and agricultural Red River take shape.

Attendance fluctuated in the schools: attitude of parents, place of residence, illness, whether children were fed and clothed, the availability of textbooks, and children's participation in the rural economy all played a part. In the first place, parents had the option

not to send children to school, as education was not compulsory. Secondly, many children lived far away from the schools: isolation affected attendance, especially during the winter months, when many children did not have warm enough clothing for travel. Thirdly, illness affected attendance: one of the epidemics that plagued the settlement in the early years was scarlet fever, and when such an epidemic afflicted students, attendance declined,⁵⁹ not only because of fatalities but also because parents refused to send healthy children to school.⁶⁰ Fourthly, the Anglicans recruited several of their students by promising parents that their children would be fed and clothed. However, parents sometimes took advantage of the CMS's promise: many children attended only to receive food and clothing, and then left the schools.⁶¹ The only type of education that children and families received was Sabbath School instruction, where attendance numbers, on average, were higher than in the day schools.⁶² Consequently, the fluctuation in student attendance resulted in marginal student success, primarily because of the remunerative work their parents performed and the apathy of these parents to their education.

The occupations of parents was another factor that greatly affected attendance of children. Only the discharged fur trade officers, and servants and the individuals connected to the governing Council of Assiniboia, really encouraged school attendance. These children attended the school regularly because their parents did not need them to survive.⁶³ Although the settler parents valued missionary education, most were farmers who needed the assistance of their children on their farms⁶⁴: seeding and harvesting took precedence over education. In 1848, Anglican missionary Reverend Robert James, who had arrived in Red River in 1845, allowing Cockran to retire temporarily to Toronto, reported that by the age of 12 to 14 years children had left school because their help was required in the home. Gunn thought that the need for child labour during the months of August and September, in conjunction with the cold weather of the winter months, contributed to a drastic decline in student success.⁶⁵ However, the Anglicans were not as concerned about the settler children, some of whom were anglophone Métis, because they knew that agricultural parents would be good role models to their children and would ensure that they grew into sedentary and civilized farmers who attended church.⁶⁶

The occupations of the third group of parents, the hunters, gatherers and traders, also affected student attendance at school. In this case, the Anglicans believed that these children were being led astray from civilization, and quickly became frustrated with a group of children whom they could not civilize. The Catholics, who were most often responsible for educating this group of Métis, were very concerned about their children. Unlike anglophone parents, francophone Métis parents demonstrated less regard for Catholic schools.⁶⁷ When the Catholic Church arrived at Red River, the francophone Métis were totally dependent on the hunt, whose migratory nature complicated education. In addition, the HBC's demand for furs and provisions meant that parents were unwilling to settle.⁶⁸ Finally, after 1849 the francophone Métis looked to the hunt as a profit-generating business, and as less of a means of feeding their families⁶⁹; this resulted in the removal of children from school for long periods of the year. As in agriculture, in this traditional economy children were an economic asset whose help was required; the only difference was that the missionaries looked down on the participation of children in this traditional pursuit.⁷⁰

Although parental attitudes toward education were a major problem with the success of civilization, financial pressures always undermined the civilizing attempts of the CMS

and the Catholic Church, primarily because parents could not afford to educate their children. Schoolhouses required maintenance and stretched the budgets of missionary societies. Throughout the 1850s, missionaries and schoolmasters appealed to the CMS for increases in their grants so that they could afford to maintain their buildings, but the grants provided were never enough.⁷¹

For the Catholics, funding was also an ongoing problem. Frustrated by the cost of educating poor children, Provencher asked the Grey Nuns to erect an English-language school that took both Catholic and non-Catholic students. Provencher hoped that he would be able to use the school fees paid by the wealthy fur traders to cover the expense of educating children who could not afford school.⁷² Although Taché hoped to establish a model farming school, he thought that the plan would be impossible because of money;⁷³ consequently, for the Catholics, keeping the schoolrooms operational while paying for the education of children proved to be a challenge.

Although attendance and funding were significant problems for denominational education, by the 1840s and 1850s the problems were growing pains of a system that was, for Anglicans and Catholics, planted firmly. Problems such as attendance, student isolation, and epidemics represented continuous social issues in education that would take years to overcome. Each missionary group provided at least a partial education in classrooms ranging from 10 to 120 students. However, the over-arching goal of forming civilized children continued to be a challenge, regardless of how developed the curriculum was, how many textbooks were in the schoolroom, and how many schoolrooms were erected. The missionary societies failed to convince many Métis that their ancestral economic activities, and the involvement of their children in these enterprises, were antithetical to their being civilized. Most francophone Métis never shared the missionary goal of civilization or perceived the benefits that the missionaries thought civilization had for their children most likely because throughout this period, hunting, gathering, and trading remained more profitable than agriculture.

For 20 to 30 years, the missionaries transmitted a concept of civilized childhood through their burgeoning system of education. However, the civilization of children had only been partially accomplished by 1870, because the missionary societies could not compel children to remain away from their traditional culture. While many Métis children attended school, the missionaries believed that the effectiveness of the lessons depended on how long and how often the children stayed in missionary schools and away from their ancestral economy.

The missionaries experienced trouble transmitting their concept of childhood because the traditional economy prevented the regular attendance of children at school. The francophone Métis hunters, gatherers, small-scale agriculturalists, and traders saw their children as participants in their subsistence family economy, not as large-scale farmers, a pursuit the missionaries equated with civilization. However, the HBC officer, servant, and settler parents were more inclined to accept the teachings of civilization through Christianity and agriculture. According to the missionaries, many students did not become civilized because their parents or guardians did not understand or did not want to understand what the missionaries wanted to accomplish.⁷⁴ In response, the missionaries wanted to completely remove students from First Nations and Métis communities and place them in an environment where missionary principles of discipline, obedience, Christianity, academics, and industry predominated over trading, hunting, and

gathering. The missionaries thought that cultural confusion would be alleviated only if the removal of children from First Nations and Métis communities was mandatory and permanent.⁷⁵ However, the post-Confederation period proved the civilizing missionaries wrong: the federal government justified missionary education and politicians would develop legislation that compelled children to attend schools designed to disassociate them from their Aboriginal cultural ties. However, Aboriginal children would resist these systematic attempts to erode their culture and identity, and reject the ideology of Victorian civilization.

Notes

1. A.A. den Otter, "The 1849 Sayer Trial: An Ecological Perspective," in Derek Pollard and Ged Martin (eds.), *Canada 1849: A Selection of Papers Given at the University of Edinburgh Centre for Canadian Studies Annual Conference May 1999* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Centre for Canadian Studies, 1999), 31.
2. Frits Pannekoek, "The Anglican Church and the Disintegration of Red River Society," in Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (eds.), *The West and the Nation: Essays in Honour of W.L. Morton* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976), 81.
3. Berry Mayall, *Children, Health, and the Social Order* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1996), 5, 19–21, 54.
4. Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), 113. Priscilla Robertson, "Home as a Nest: Middle Class Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Europe," in Lloyd deMause (ed.), *The History of Childhood* (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974), 407–8, 421.
5. den Otter, "The 1849 Sayer Trial," 130, 135, 146.
6. National Archives of Canada (NA), CMS, Jones' Journal, August 22, 1822, A-77, 36–37 and *ibid.*, Clockhouse in Fairham, December 3, 1823, A-77, 64.
7. Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence* (trans. Hildegard Hannum and Hunter Hannum) (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1983), 11–13, 27, 45–46. Alice Miller referred to childhood theorist J. Sülzer, who, in 1748, wrote that willfulness in children would have to be eliminated early so that the educational process could take over.
8. NA, CMS, Cockran to Woodroffe, August 3, 1831, A-77, 438.
9. Mayall, *Children, Health, and the Social Order* 5, 19–21, 54.
10. Raymond J.A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and Métis* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), 104.
11. NA, CMS, Cockran to the Secretaries, August 5, 1833, A-77.
12. *Ibid.*, Cockran to the Secretary, Grand Rapids, December 16, 1833, A-77.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836–1871* (London: Althouse Press, 1988), 72, 169–70, 184–85, 187, 201, 299, 311. Education in Red River and in Canada West was resisted by agricultural adults who did not understand the benefit their children would receive from completing or fully participating in education. Bruce Curtis, in his monograph *Building the Educational State*, noted that many male students withdrew from education around the age of 12 to 14 years because many parents did not understand the value of discipline and the need to keep their children in school from 9 am to 3:30 pm daily year-round.
15. NA, CMS, Cockran to Rev. T. Woodroffe, Red River Settlement, August 3, 1831, Private, A-77.
16. J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 129–30, 135, 142.
17. NA, CMS, Rev. Mr. Cockran to the Secretaries (Private), Grand Rapids, July 30, 1833, A-77.
18. Robert J. Coutts, *The Road to the Rapids: Nineteenth-Century Church and Society at St. Andrew's Parish, Red River* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000) 14.
19. John West, *The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Settlement* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966), 14.
20. NA, CMS, Rev. David Jones's Journal from June 1 to August 1, 1823, A-77, 37.
21. *Ibid.*, Jones's Journal from June 1 to August 1, 1823, 37.
22. NA, CMS, Minutes of Benjamin Harrison, Esq. on the formation of a Mission Among the Indians in the Hudson's Bay HBC's Territories, A-77. However, West's plans for education were not well received by the

- HBC, and in 1823, while in England on a brief leave of absence, the HBC decided not to renew his contract as their chaplain. Richard A. Willie, "West, John," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. VII (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 900–902.
23. Willie, "West, John," 900.
 24. NA, CMS, Jones to the Secretaries, 31 Jan. 1827, A-77, 234.
 25. *Ibid.*, Jones's Journal from June 1 to August 1, 1823, August 22, 1822, A-77, 36.
 26. *Ibid.*, 36–37.
 27. *Ibid.*, Clockhouse in Fairham, December 3, 1823, A-77, 64.
 28. Thomas F. Bredin, "The Reverend David Jones: Missionary at Red River 1823–38," *Beaver* 312, no. 2 (1981): 48–49.
 29. NA, CMS, Clockhouse, December 23, 1823, A-77, 64.
 30. *Ibid.*, D.T. Jones, G. Harbidge, and Mrs. Harbidge, Particulars respecting the Schools at Red River Settlement during the Summer of 1824, A-77.
 31. *Ibid.*, Jones to the Secretaries, 31 Jan. 1827, A-77, 227.
 32. Rev. A.C. Garrioch, *First Furrows: A History of the Early Settlement of the Red River Country, Including That of Portage La Prairie* (Winnipeg: Stovel Company Limited, 1923) 121.
 33. NA, CMS, Cockran to the Secretaries, July 30, 1833, A-77, 539.
 34. *Ibid.*, Jones to the Secretaries, January 31, 1827, A-77, 235.
 35. Wayne K.D. Davies, "A Welsh Missionary at Canada's Red River Settlement, 1823–38," *National Library of Wales* 27, no. 2 (1991): 223. The Bishop of Rupert's Land, David Anderson or David Rupert's Land, changed the name of the Red River Academy to St. John's Collegiate School when he became Bishop of the newly formed diocese of Rupert's Land, in 1849. In 1867, St. John's Collegiate School became St. John's College, and is now a part of the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba.
 36. Pannekoek, "Anglican Church," 67, 69–70.
 37. *Ibid.*, 69, 79.
 38. Davies, "Welsh Missionary," 223.
 39. Key, *Century of the Child*, 108. See Miller, *For Your Own Good*, 11–12, 14–15, 27, 31, 45–46, 59, 65–66, 70, 76. According to Key and Miller, the administration of corporal punishment facilitated resentment and fear in children, and did not inspire obedience and enthusiasm for education. In the 20th century, educational theorists discouraged the use of corporal punishment and advised teachers to instill respect and not fear in their students.
 40. George van der Goes Ladd, "Father Cockran and his Children: Poisonous Pedagogy on the Banks of the Red," in Barry Ferguson (ed.), *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada, 1820–1970* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991). Van der Goes Ladd's analysis is limited, in that he failed to observe specific instances of corporal punishment. However, van der Goes Ladd found evidence to support the claim that the students of Cockran respected him, especially the future Reverend Garrioch.
 41. NA, CMS, Cockran's Journal, Sept. 1831 to Aug. 1832, November 17, 1831, A-77, 463.
 42. *Ibid.*, Cockran to the Secretaries, July 30, 1833, A-77, 539.
 43. *Ibid.*, Smithurst's Journal from Aug. 1st 1842 to Nov. 8/42, A-78.
 44. *Ibid.*, Cockran to the Secretaries, July 30, 1827, extract from journals, 21 January 21, 1827, A-77, 271.
 45. *Ibid.*, Cockran to the Secretaries, August 4, 1841, A-78, 539–40.
 46. *Ibid.*, Robert's Report from August 1842 to July 1843, October 3, 1842, A-78, 255.
 47. *Ibid.*, Cockran to the Secretaries, Parsonage House, Red River Settlement, August 11/28, A-77.
 48. Martha McCarthy, *To Evangelize the Nations: Roman Catholic Missions in Manitoba 1818–1870*, Papers in Manitoba History Report Number 2 (Winnipeg: Manitoba Culture Heritage and Recreation Historic Resources, 1990), iv, 3–6, 25.
 49. Andr  e D  silets, "Hout, Marie-Fran  oise," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. VII (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 431–32.
 50. *Bulletin de la Soci  t   Historique de Saint-Boniface: Lettres de Monseigneur Joseph Norbert Provencher, Premier Ev  que de Saint Boniface* 3 (Soci  t   Historique de St. Boniface, MB), J.N. Ev. de Juliopolis A Monseigneur J. Signay, Ev  que de Quebec St-Boniface de la Riv  re Rouge (Rivi  re Rouge, juillet 1839), 181.
 51. *Georges-Antoine Belcourt* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Culture, Heritage, and Recreation, 1984), 1.
 52. McCarthy, *To Evangelize the Nations*, 26.

- 53 Henry Youle Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858*, vol. 1 (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1969), xi.
- 54 Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel*, xii–xiii, 17–18, 24–25, 100.
- 55 McCarthy, *To Evangelize the Nations*, 41, 44.
- 56 Robert Gosman, *The Riel and Lagimodiere Families in Métis Society 1840–1860, St. Vital, Manitoba* (Parks Canada, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, July 1975), 28.
- 57 Margaret MacLeod, W.L. Morton, and Alice R. Brown, *Cuthbert Grant of Grantown: Warden of the Plains of Red River*, The Carleton Library No. 71 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1974), 141.
- 58 Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel*, 104.
- 59 NA, CMS, Hunter's Journal from May 13th to July 28th, 1845, A-78.
- 60 Ibid., Pembrum's Report, A-78, 314.
- 61 Ibid., Cowley's Journal, 19 Oct. 1845 and 1 Jan. 1846, A-78.
- 62 Ibid., Memoranda respecting the Settlement at Red River, A-77.
- 63 Gosman, *Riel and Lagimodiere Families in Métis Society*, 28–29, 34.
- 64 Curtis, *Building the Educational State*, 185.
- 65 NA, CMS, Gunn to Cockran, July 6, 1843, A-78 165.
- 66 Ibid., Cowley to the Secretaries, July 31, 1843, A-78, 165.
- 67 Gosman, *Riel and Lagimodiere Families in Métis Society*, 28, 34.
- 68 McCarthy, *To Evangelize the Nations*, 15, 20; Heather Devine, personal communication, Wednesday, February 26, 2003.
- 69 den Otter, "The 1849 Sayer Trial," 146.
- 70 Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Métis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 28, 37.
- 71 NA, CMS, Cowley To Hon. Lay Secretary, August 8, 1854, A-79, 558.
- 72 McCarthy *To Evangelize the Nations*, 28.
- 73 Ibid., 44.
- 74 NA, CMS, Cockran to Secretaries, August 11, 1828, A-77, 314.
- 75 Ibid.