
“I Wish the Men Were Half as Good”

*Gender Constructions in the Canadian
North-Western Mission Field, 1860–1940*

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New opportunities for women’s mission work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were inextricably linked to the expansion of the British Empire. The Empire, upon which the sun was said never to set, provided what British, American, and Canadian evangelicals saw as an infinite opportunity to spread the Christian gospel. Women’s mission work began in India’s *zenanas*, where Muslim and high-caste Hindu women lived in seclusion and were permitted to socialize only with other women. Male missionaries were not permitted to attempt to convert these women and were forced to hand the work over to female missionaries.¹ Throughout the nineteenth century religious work in North America and Britain became increasingly feminized. Clergy relied on women to fill the pews, organize church groups, and raise funds.

This involvement notwithstanding, women’s entrance into mission work still met resistance. In fact, Ann Douglas has argued that women entered the mission field despite “repeated widespread clerical objection.”² They were clearly able to overcome clerical hostility since, by the end of the century, foreign and domestic mission work had become the preserve of women. According to the Church of England’s *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, by 1895 women outnumbered men in the mission field: “The latest statistics of all Protestant Missionary Societies, British, Continental, American &c., give no less than 2,576 unmarried women missionaries. The male missionaries are given as 5,233, and as these have 3,641 wives, the total number of women, married and unmarried, exceeds that of men by just a thousand.”³

Mission work allowed women to leave both the “private sphere” and their home towns to travel to new environments where they encountered unfamiliar conditions. Historian Ruth Compton Brouwer, who has written on Canadian Presbyterian women in India at the turn of the century, argues that mission work was indeed a liberating experience for women. Brouwer contends that the missionary movement was presented to critics of women’s rights as a “‘less injurious’ sphere to true Western womanhood than others being contemplated or pursued by the era’s restless ‘new woman.’”⁴ While mission work could be and often was strategically constructed to appear to be an extension of the domestic sphere, women in the mission field went well beyond that realm.

The study of missionaries who came to northwestern Canada to Christianize Aboriginals has focused on men.⁵ There are several popular and scholarly histories on “wilderness saints” like William Bompas, William Duncan, and William Ridley. Like other denominations, the Anglican Church began to recruit unmarried women in the late nineteenth century while at the same time encouraging missionary wives to work as unpaid missionaries. The Church’s first male missionary was sent to northern British Columbia, the future Diocese of Caledonia, in 1856, and throughout the 1860s and 1870s the number of mission stations expanded throughout the Yukon and North-West Territories.

One of the largest Anglican missionary societies during this period in northern Canada was the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which was based in London, England. Between 1860 and 1945, the dates focused on in this chapter, the CMS and, later, the Canadian-based Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (MSCC) sent nearly 150 women to work in the North. These women were from both Britain and Canada, and most had spent from one to two years training at deaconess houses either in Toronto or in England.

Despite the growing numbers of women enrolling as missionaries, the mission calling was still thought of as a male occupation. This misconception seemed to be reinforced in both popular and church literature. In 1904 Norman Tucker, the first secretary of the MSCC, suggested that, since it was becoming more difficult to find new male recruits for the North, women should be sent there: “Owing to the great lack of men for the ministry and the unlimited field for workers in the territories and western provinces, it is necessary that trained, God fearing women should stand in the gap.” Tucker typically overlooked the fact that women had been working in the North for years. In fact, especially at the turn of the century, the majority of Anglican missionaries in the North were women. Their experiences in many respects should direct us to consider social

responses to sexual difference. In other words, where were gender boundaries drawn?

This chapter examines constructions of gender within the context of the Anglican missionary experience in Canada's North-West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It considers gender from a relational perspective by approaching interactions among male and female missionaries as well as friendships among women missionaries.

Images of masculine and feminine conduct were well ingrained in those who ventured into the mission field. Despite society's intent to impose gender identities, there were occasional slippages in behaviour. As Denise Riley argues in *Am I That Name?*, it is obvious that "any attention to the life of a woman, if traced out carefully, must admit the degree to which the effects of lived gender are at least sometimes unpredictable and fleeting."⁶ "Can anyone," Riley asks, "fully inhabit a gender without a degree of horror? How could someone 'be a woman' through and through, make a final home in that classification without suffering claustrophobia?"⁷

This chapter shows that, despite an attempt to maintain the feminine ideal in the mission field, there were moments when women fleetingly and unpredictably escaped its confines. Normative gender constructions were based on a "separate sphere" ideology, in which masculinity and femininity were thought to be dichotomous. Women were to be the moral guardians of society, with their influence centred on the domestic sphere, whereas men were to be arbitrators over matters deemed to be public, including business and government.⁸ In the mission field, however, conventional gender identities were disrupted, and both women and men were required to transcend boundaries that were fixed in their home settings. I will present the contradictions between women's images and the work they actually did as missionaries. First, however, I will discuss popular masculine images.

Although the numbers of missionary women were growing, in fact, the image of missionaries was still closely tied to masculinity. Late nineteenth-century writers like George Alfred Henty and Rider Haggard romanticized and popularized the masculine character of Empire in their so-called epic tales of adventure. Using such literature, scholars have recently turned critical attention to the construction of masculinity in the late Victorian and early Edwardian periods. According to historian Patrick A. Dunae, boys' literature "reflected the missionary zeal and the pragmatic materialism associated with empire during the last decades of the nineteenth century."⁹

The middle- and upper-class discourse of masculinity employed terms like "virile," "manly," "muscular," and "forceful." In describing the mythical

portrait of a colonizer, Albert Memmi states: “We sometimes enjoy picturing the colonizer as a tall man, bronzed by the sun, wearing Wellington boots, proudly leaning on a shovel as he rivets his gaze far away on the land. When not engaged in battles against nature, we think of him labouring selflessly for mankind, attending the sick, and spreading culture to the non-literate. In other words his pose is one of the noble adventurer, a righteous pioneer.”¹⁰ Typically, colonizers were portrayed in boyhood adventure texts as “gentlemen” who were loyal to the queen, patriotic, and both physically and morally superior. Muscular Christianity and boys’ leisure movements (e.g., the Boy Scouts) fused to produce an image of masculinity associated with Empire – a masculinist culture of which missionaries, too, were a part.

Similarities between male missionary correspondence/memoirs and the texts of late nineteenth-century adventure writers are quite striking. The language of masculine adventure was especially evident in the writing of at least two Caledonia-based missionaries, both of whom served in northern British Columbia for over twenty years. Bishop William Ridley’s diaries and letters and Archdeacon William Henry Collison’s evocatively entitled *In the Wake of the War Canoe* epitomized muscular Christianity and masculinity. Bold undertakings often involved long canoe trips with risky portages and harrowing weather conditions. Strength and endurance were exhibited by hunting or building log houses, churches, and schools. Manful leadership was called upon when crews were organized for extended travel.¹¹

Missionary societies appealed to masculinity to attract recruits, and, at the same time, images of missionary men continued to be reinforced by those already in the field. Whether shooting rapids or being heralded as great hunters, male missionaries appeared, at least from the correspondence, to revel in the glories of the outdoor life of muscular Christianity. As we shall see, however, men also had to learn some small measure of women’s traditional work in order to survive in the mission field. In the same way that images of masculinity were a social-cultural construct, so too were images of femininity.

CONSTRUCTS OF WOMANHOOD AND MISSIONARY MARRIAGES

Prevailing representations of missionary women were tied closely to Victorian constructs of womanhood. Though it was true that numerically women dominated mission work, shadows of separate sphere ideology were cast as far as the mission field in northern Canada. Just as male missionaries were constructed as masculine and responsible for the public

sphere, women missionaries were portrayed as feminine and responsible for the private sphere. One dominant metaphor applied to missionary wives in particular was that of helpmate. Within this role, White missionary women were to function primarily as role models for Native women, displaying to them proper womanly and domestic conduct. Beneath the performance of womanly rituals rested an assumption that the British (and Anglo-Canadian) way was the only way and that Native women were lacking the skills necessary to maintain households and raise children. However, for White women the mission field also provided an opportunity to transcend the boundaries of gender that, ironically, they were attempting to impose on Native women.¹²

Women were simultaneously trapped by tradition and liberated by their unique positions as missionary wives. This juxtaposition is clearly shown in Lois Boyd's insightful article, which outlines the various duties and responsibilities that befell Presbyterian ministers' wives in the nineteenth-century United States. She claims that even the title "minister's wife" signified a certain category that implied specific obligations. Yet, despite the great and at times unachievable expectations, she argues that to be a minister's wife also gave a woman the potential to step outside the boundaries of womanhood: "Although the denomination expected women to remain silent in public, in actuality a number of ministers' wives addressed groups of men and women, assumed leadership positions in church and community organizations, became active in social concerns, and at times taught and prayed in front of some public gatherings."¹³ It was still true, though, that they were expected to keep a perfect household, control the family economy, and counsel their husbands. In an ironic mode, one Presbyterian periodical suggested that the dilemma of ministers' wives was that they should be "always at home and always abroad, always serving God and always serving tables."¹⁴

Wives on the northern mission "frontier" were not as vulnerable to public scrutiny as were those located elsewhere – at least in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, prior to permanent White settlement. This fact alone provided for some relief from prescribed roles. There were still clear expectations that were associated more with gendered perceptions than with women's individual personalities. Expectations about the duties of missionary women were especially apparent to male missionaries and their wives in the early years of contact. Charlotte Selina Bompas was quite conscious of the role that White Christian women in the North should play. Bompas was the daughter of Charlotte and Joseph Cox, MD, of Montague Square in London, England. She spent most of her youth in Italy due to her father's asthma. She had her coming out

party in Italy and read and spoke Italian fluently. Bompas arrived at Fort Simpson at the confluence of the Liard and MacKenzie Rivers in September 1874 to join her husband, the Reverend William Carpenter Bompas, the first bishop of Athabasca.

In November 1907, after many years of living in the North, Charlotte Bompas wrote an article for the *Canadian Churchman* concerning the type of White women needed there. She insisted that White women were to act as role models for Native women: “Dear sister-settlers amongst the Indians, there is power given you from on high which is intended you should use among them or any other race with whom you may be placed – it is the power of *influence* . . . In your Christian households, in your modest demeanour, in your fair dealings with all let them see what they should seek to copy more than the jewels and costly attire which in their eyes are all that is needed to constitute a lady.”¹⁵ The implication was that Native women needed White role models to learn how to behave like so-called “proper ladies.” As Nancy Pagh argues in Chapter 3, Native women’s own cultural traditions regarding care-giving and domesticity were rarely acknowledged. The White women in her study found little in common with the so-called “counterfeit women” of the Northwest Coast.¹⁶



Charlotte Selina Bompas

Other missionaries were equally explicit in their views that Native women needed to be taught feminine rituals and etiquette. The first married woman missionary in the Diocese of Caledonia sent by the CMS came out from England in 1860. The Reverend Lewin S. Tugwell and Mrs. Tugwell arrived at Victoria in August 1860 and were greeted by William Duncan who, at that time, was one of only two Anglican missionaries serving in northern British Columbia. Duncan quickly grew resentful of the recently married Tugwells and claimed early on to be doubtful of their commitment to the work: "I see that wives after all may be a great hindrance to a man in diverting his mind from the work before him."¹⁷ Upon their arrival at Port Simpson, the Tugwells began to unpack their possessions. It was at this time Duncan apparently told Mrs. Tugwell that he and the Reverend Tugwell could manage the baggage but that she should prepare biscuits. To Duncan's surprise she replied that she had never made bread in her life. Many years later, Duncan recounted this anecdote to one of his co-workers, adding, "What do you think of that? The C.M.S. had sent more than five thousand miles, somebody to help me teach the Indians Christian home life, and here I was obliged to make bread for her myself."¹⁸ Note Duncan's assumption of a gendered division of labour, despite the fact that he was able to make bread himself.

When Reverend J.B. McCullagh's second wife, Mary Webster McCullagh, joined him in his work in northern British Columbia's Nass River Valley, he wrote to the Nishga Missionary Union to report on her success. He boasted of her capable management of the daily chores, which included "cooking, washing up, brushing and dusting rooms, washing, starching and ironing, and every other thing that has to be done in a house." He claimed that this routine tested her strength, and he wrote in glowing terms of her "missionary spirit": "Looking at her amongst a crowd of Indian women, teaching them to cut and make up articles of wearing apparel, my wife is a source of intense joy and astonishment to me. When one considers how difficult it is to 'handle' Indians, the tact, patience and self-forgetting spirit it requires, to say nothing of the demand on one's physical energy, it is a wonder to me to find her put in two solid hours of this work, and then come away as fresh as the proverbial daisy."¹⁹ Clearly, the rhetoric of the "Angel in the Home" was easily transferred to the mission field. Orientalist discourse and separate sphere ideology were intricately connected in a seamless web of relationships that connected the colonizers and the colonized.

Attempts to export Christian domesticity were characteristic of the global mission movement. According to historian Jane Hunter, women

missionaries defined themselves within the context of an “expansive domesticity, endeavouring to embody traditional notions of nurturance, gentility, and affection which distinguished them from men.”²⁰ Ultimately, their purpose was to aid in the conversion process, but, as in other settings, Native women did not necessarily convert because of their new knowledge of Western housekeeping.

While modelling domesticity was standard for women, very little was said in the official correspondence about teaching Native men how to be “proper gentlemen.” The act of consciously modelling gentlemanly behaviour was not a common feature in the discourse of male missionaries. There was not the same concern for teaching men manners as there was for teaching women manners. According to the newcomers, Native men had to be civilized but not to the same extent as did women. Male missionaries were more concerned with conversion statistics, linguistic translations, and itinerant schedules. They sought Native knowledge from their guides and translators, hoping to learn skills that would make them more adept at travelling and living in the outdoors.

Despite the seemingly rigid categories of femininity and masculinity, when we look at the relationship between missionary men and missionary women in the field the boundaries of gender often appear to be shifting. At times men had to do what might be traditionally considered women’s work and women often had to do what might be traditionally considered men’s work. At times, too, it was necessary to overlook the rhetoric, if not the practice, of true womanhood altogether. When Isaac Stringer wrote back to his future bride, Sarah Alexander, then training to be a nurse at Grace Hospital in Toronto, he suggested some areas of medicine to which she should pay particular attention: “I must just mention that syphilis is one of the common diseases amongst the Eskimos. It may seem out of place to mention this to a lady but in our circumstances we must be practical and the mention of this may lead you to study up the different forms of the disease.”²¹ Stringer thought that it would be impractical to shield his future partner in the mission field from the reality of what would soon face her, even if society might sanction any discussion of sexuality. Separate-spheres ideology was not always practical in the mission field, where husbands and wives had to eschew tensions between masculinity and femininity and face the day-to-day realities of their work. Dealing with prolonged absences stands out as a particular problem, perhaps because of the extended period of experimentation that was required. At times Selina Bompas complained bitterly about being alone. Luckily, she was spirited enough to overcome these periods of loneliness. So, too, was Jane Ridley of the Diocese of

Caledonia. In 1884, Bishop Ridley went to Ottawa to present his interpretation of the Duncan uprising. He found himself in an awkward position with regard to Hazelton, where the CMS had just established a station. The missionary there was forced to return to England due to his wife's ill health, and Bishop Ridley did not want to leave the station unattended. So Jane Ridley volunteered to stay behind while Ridley went to Ottawa and then on to England. As the *Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record* reported in March 1884:

Mrs. Ridley can have no idea of his having come on to England. He had left her at Hazelton, the interior station at the Skeena Forks, vacated by the return to England of the Rev. W.J. Faulconer on account of his wife's illness; and there she is spending the winter and carrying on the work of the station entirely alone. We cannot but be too thankful for the self-denying courage with which she has thrown herself into the breach, and for the happy influence she evidently exercises upon the Indians.²²

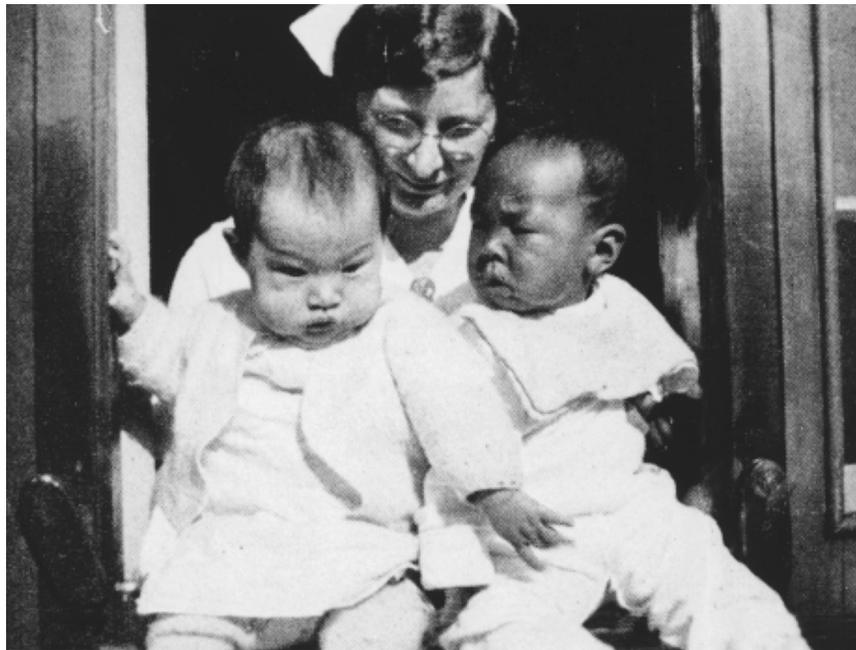
After her death Jane Ridley was described by the *Canadian Church Magazine* as a "Missionary Heroine" because she had so successfully maintained the Hazelton station in the winter of 1880-1.²³ At her deathbed her husband wrote a very melodramatic testimony to the CMS: "crowds of Indians hung round her bed and she was delighted . . . In her death she, by her beautiful and tender words, and patient endurance of agony at times through choking, drew more souls to Jesus than ever. It was victory on victory, triumph on triumph. Quite two hundred souls shared in the blessing."²⁴ In the end he claimed to have given her body over to the Tsimshian.

Ridley was using the hyperbole commonly adopted in missionary obituaries, but it appears that he believed that in the theatre of Jane Ridley's death, souls were saved. William Collison attended her funeral, and he too was swept up in the emotion: "She bade farewell to all the Zimshian [sic] native Christians individually and gave to each a parting charge. She was thus enabled by the divine grace to set a seal on the teachings of a life consecrated & devoted to the service of the master amongst the Zimshians [sic]."²⁵ In the fashion of missionary eulogies, Jane Ridley was constructed as a heroine.

While traditional gender roles reflected in the discourse applied either to men or women in the mission field, descriptions of certain religious identities could blur gender distinctions. In the case of Jane Ridley an apparent freedom from gendered constraints was implied in her "higher calling." Within the context of a calling, Ridley's gender identity could

at times appear to be subsumed. In a subsequent tribute to women missionaries Bishop Ridley stated that women in the mission field “work hardest and by their example fire the men with emulation. There is not one married woman among us who would think she was free to devote nearly all her time to domestic economy. The wife is as much called of God to be his instrument in soul-winning as the husband.”²⁶ From Ridley’s perspective the Christian calling was not gender-specific. This is not to say that Ridley would necessarily have supported equal political or legal rights for women, but with respect to religious work, or “soul-winning,” he tended to cast men and women as equals.

As much as Christianity could serve as a strategic force for women, in terms of the day-to-day realities of mission life, it was important for both men and women to go beyond their traditional spheres if for no other reason than to ensure survival. Men certainly had to know how to cook and do other household chores in the mission field. The Reverend G. Neilson attracted the compliments of Pangnirtung missionaries Florence Hirst and Prudence Hockin because of his capable shortbread cookies and doughnuts, although both agreed that “men don’t look right cooking doughnuts somehow.”²⁷ In this case Hirst and Hockin found it



Nurse Prudence Hockin at St. Luke's Hospital, Pangnirtung, NWT

odd to see a man do what was traditionally defined as women's work. The Reverend Alfred Price, stationed at Kitwanga, wrote back to the CMS complaining that the Native woman they had hired to help his wife in the delivery of their child had abandoned them as the date became imminent: "there was no one to do the washing. I had to do everything even to delivering the child."²⁸

Childbirth in the mission field posed new challenges for missionary couples. Alice Woods, who had been raised in Victoria, married Robert Tomlinson, originally from Ireland, when she was seventeen. In the summer of 1871, while stationed at Kincolith, Alice Tomlinson, who was expecting her first child, contracted typhoid fever. Fortunately, her husband had some medical training and was with her throughout the crisis of the fever. She gave birth, but their first-born survived only a few hours. Tomlinson expressed his feeling of isolation in his report back to the parent committee: "It is hard for those living among sympathizing friends to realize the trials of those more isolated. On this day I had to fill the place of Father, Husband, Mourner, Doctor, Nurse, Clergyman."²⁹ All of these roles required a sympathetic individual rather unlike the one portrayed by the rugged frontiersman or masculine stereotype. The trials of marriage and childbirth often recast the boundaries of gender.

Sarah Stringer had her first two children when she and her husband were stationed at Herschel Island, a coastal island off the northwest tip of the North-West Territories. In her diary she recorded the birth of her first-born, Rowena, on 14 December 1896. Up until the baby's birth Stringer had kept active, claiming that she had taught school, gone for walks, and held choir practice until just days before the birth. From the tone of her diary it seems that she was very calm about the arrival of their child. Ten days after the delivery she wrote that she had been "an invalid for the past few days Mr. Stringer being my physician he was also my nurse also Mr. Whittaker helping and cooking me many dainty dishes. He excelled in this much to my pleasure."³⁰ The Reverend Whittaker had been at Wycliffe College in Toronto with the Reverend Stringer and was sent to the North in 1896. Whittaker and the Reverend Stringer both cared for Sarah Stringer and were able to manage the household while she was recovering from childbirth. They not only coped, but they actually cooked fancy dishes. One month after Rowena was born Sarah Stringer was teaching again.³¹

Her apparent calm during childbirth may be traced to her medical experience as a nurse and, perhaps, to her personality. Her letters and diaries give the impression that she rarely complained about feeling lonely or isolated. However, she could be critical of women in the field who



Bishop and Mrs. Stringer, London, England, 1929

did. Emma Hatley, born and raised in London, England, arrived in July 1898 to marry the Reverend C. Whittaker and to work with him at Peel River. Sarah Stringer gave away the bride, and Reverend I.O. Stringer performed the service. The next summer the Stringers visited Peel River again, just after the delivery of the Whittakers' first child. Apparently, Emma Whittaker felt nervous and was reluctant to return to Herschel Island with the Stringers for a visit. In a letter to her friend back in Ontario, Sarah Stringer recorded her impression of Whittaker: "Mrs. Whittaker does not know whether she will go or not. She fears this that and the other so I do not know if she will go . . . She is rather delicate."³² The challenges of adapting to a new environment, married life, and a new baby all at the same time were great, as the Reverend Whittaker himself acknowledged. In a letter back to the Toronto's Women's Auxiliary he boasted of having a new companion but cast some doubt on her adaptability: "Personally, you will be glad to know that I have now some one of my own to get a lunch for me if I come in late. My wife enjoys life here very much, although it is rather hard for one delicately reared."³³ Indeed, in describing his marriage proposal, he spoke of the practicality of the arrangement. Emma Hatley had, according to the Reverend Whittaker, "responded to my invitation to be co-helper in the mission."³⁴

Many years later Archibald Fleming, the first bishop of the Arctic, recalled the trials of the Whittakers and other pioneer missionaries when he visited a church in Fort McPherson: “Memorial brasses in the Arctic are somehow much more poignant than those in the south. I suppose it is because they represent suffering remote from the comfort of friends. Here in St. Matthew’s church this experience is told so eloquently and yet so briefly on three small brass plates each bearing the name of a child born to Archdeacon and Mrs. Whittaker. Two had died at Herschel Island and their bodies were carried two hundred and fifty miles by sledge and dog team to Fort McPherson for burial; the third died up the river.”³⁵

Life in the North presented unique sets of challenges. For some mission couples these challenges were unbearable, forcing early resignation from the field. As it turned out, the Whittakers were in the North until 1921, but not everyone could adapt to such new conditions. The Tugwells stayed for only two years. The next couple sent out to help Duncan, the Gribbells, lasted only six weeks.³⁶ In both cases it was claimed that the women’s health was too delicate to prolong their stay – a common explanation when couples chose to leave their assigned station earlier than anticipated by the CMS. Women missionaries had to be physically and emotionally equipped to adapt to life in the northern mission field. Many challenges, particularly in areas thought to be isolated, may have been impossible for some women as well as for some men.³⁷ Many may have found it impossible to adjust to such a different way of life.

Newcomers, both men and women, especially complained about the lack of privacy that suddenly faced them in isolated communities. When the Collisons moved to the Queen Charlotte Islands they were immediately faced with this issue. As a cultural construct, privacy, according to the Reverend Collison, was not important to the Haida. In his memoirs he confessed that it often was difficult to insist that his family be left alone in its hut:

The Haida, many of whom had not seen a white woman, crowded into our little shanty in their paint and feathers, and squatted down on the floor, so closely packed together that there was no room to move . . . Not knowing their language, I could not convey to them our desire, or had I attempted to drive them out, I might have been ejected in turn, or subjected to even rougher treatment. I concluded therefore that what could not be helped must be endured. Day after day this continued, so that it was impossible to get near the stove to prepare any food. Any article of wearing apparel within reach was freely made use of. Hats, coats, and boots were passed from one another, each one trying them on and inviting the opinions of the others as to the appearance or otherwise.³⁸

From Collison's recollections we can see that his mission was so tenuous that he feared causing offence to visitors by asking them to leave. His acceptance of the visitors meant that it would be difficult to spend any private time with his family. Writing to Bishop Stringer in 1922, Catherine Hoare, originally from Ottawa, Ontario, who was stationed at Aklavik with her husband, expressed similar concerns: "I often wonder how you people managed about eating etc. We had quite a time of it. They even sat in the bedroom and watched us dress. One hates to offend them for they mean no harm."³⁹ Stringer replied to Hoare that it was most important that they treat their unwanted visitors delicately, but in his view they should not sit in the bedroom to watch the Hoares dress. He suggested a few words they could use to encourage them to leave without offence.⁴⁰

Mission houses were never private homes; rather, they were places where visitors, wanted and unwanted, often crossed family thresholds. Some missionaries encouraged Natives who were leaving the villages for winter to leave their children behind at the mission so that the missionaries' wives could teach them English. Mission homes were often converted into schools during the day. The issue of privacy had an impact on both men and women, but one could argue that, because the running of the household was deemed a woman's responsibility, the lack of privacy affected women more than it did men. As well, because male missionaries tended to travel more than their wives, the mission household developed into a gendered space. In negotiating the living space, as well as in determining other duties related to mission work, marriages had to be partnerships or a couple's failure in the mission field would be certain.

The lack of privacy should not have been surprising, as the problem was often raised during training and preparation. Parent societies invariably warned that women who married missionaries would themselves become missionaries and, more particularly, share their challenges. The *Canadian Church Magazine* of January 1897 commented that the work done by missionary wives was not always mentioned in reports back to the parent society but that their contributions were, nonetheless, "valuable items of solid missionary usefulness."⁴¹ In another article, which originally appeared in the *Missionary Herald*, Dr. Herrick boasted about the value of missionary wives: "I never yet saw a missionary's wife whose companionship did not double her husband's usefulness. One of the choicest things of missionary work is the unwritten heroism of missionary homes. It is the missionary's wife, who by years of endurance and acquired experience in the foreign field, has made it possible in these later years – the years of Women's Missionary Societies – for unmarried ladies to go abroad and live and work among the people of Eastern lands."⁴²

Mission societies were also likely to comment on the appropriateness of certain marriages. When William Collison went out to Metlakatla after completing his education at the CMS's Islington College in London, England, he was accompanied by his wife, Marion M. Goodwin. He was told that, since there was no female missionary at Metlakatla, he should marry, and he did so three weeks prior to sailing in September 1873. The CMS applauded his choice and expressed its sincere satisfaction that he was about to marry a nurse and a woman that, it was convinced, would be a wonderful help in the mission field.⁴³ Marion Goodwin was herself a deaconess. She had a wealth of nursing experience, from assisting the wounded soldiers on the battlefields of the Franco-Prussian War to establishing a hospital for incurables at Cork.⁴⁴ In its instructions to Collison, the CMS demonstrated that it saw the value of sending married men into the field.

The bishops in the field also recognized the importance of missionary wives. Writing back to the parent committee in 1895, the Yukon's Bishop Bompas described the type of man he wanted in the North: "I may say that I prefer a married Missionary or if not thus, then one engaged to be married to whom his wife may be sent without his returning to fetch her."⁴⁵ He was quite delighted when Reverend J. Naylor, a McGill University graduate, was on his way to the Yukon with his wife, Ada Esther (Mount) Naylor. In the summer of 1896 he wrote to Naylor to tell him how anxious he was about their arrival: "I cannot tell you how earnestly I have longed for additional help and I still cannot but hope that you are bringing with you a second recruit for our work besides Mrs. Naylor to whom please to offer our best respects, and who will I doubt not be an important acquisition in our Mission field."⁴⁶ Bompas viewed Ada Naylor as an acquisition, but, in his strained circumstances, this is perhaps understandable. He was continually calling out for more recruits.

The Reverend Isaac Stringer, who became the bishop of the Yukon in 1906, also saw the value of married couples in the mission field. In a letter of recommendation for Reverend W.H. Fry, a graduate of Wycliffe College who had worked on Herschel Island for four years, Stringer found himself boasting about both Fry and his wife: "Mrs. Fry is an excellent helpmeet possessing all the qualities that a clergyman's wife should possess – tactful and judicious, a good housekeeper and interested in the work of the church. She was formerly a school teacher, and did good work as teacher at the school at Herschel Island."⁴⁷ Underlying such praise was the fact that the mission society was getting two workers for the price of one.

For women, missionary work offered both work and the possibility of

marriage. Women like Mrs. Fry could, at the same time, work as school-teachers and be considered exemplary missionary wives. Stringer's letter also indicated that, at least in the case of Mrs. Fry, and undoubtedly in the case of other missionary wives, these women did double duty. They were expected to teach school, nurse, hold choir practices, start women's auxiliaries, and do other similar work as well as all of the household chores. Many of these tasks were categorized as traditional women's work, but when women, as was often the case, were left alone to maintain the mission station, they took on public roles, thus transcending gender barriers. Men had to know how to cook and perform other domestic and nurturing tasks, while women had to be physically active and able to perform roles that demanded strength and endurance.

UNMARRIED WOMEN MISSIONARIES

Like their married sisters, unmarried women missionaries were also expected to participate in all aspects of mission work. In 1896 Ridley wrote back to the CMS to describe the exact type of woman missionary he wanted. Interestingly, he insisted on "ladies accustomed to refined environments." "Refined women," Ridley had found, were more willing to agree to perform undesirable tasks. Scrubbing and cleaning children with "crawling things" were listed as two jobs that "servants or unrefined women" would not perform. "I want ladies," Ridley concluded, "who for Christ's sake will undertake anything in the path of duty." He also argued that women who "are not refined in thought and behavior . . . would not meet with the same unreservedness socially as others who are refined."⁴⁸ Ridley clearly had a type in mind, and although he employed the rhetoric of traditional womanhood, when he turned to practical issues his definition of the ideal woman changed dramatically. Ridley expected "ladies" to be something quite different from "proverbial daisies." He demanded that they be prepared to do absolutely any work that was "in the path of duty." If that meant work that appeared undesirable, then so be it. Women who would respond to "higher claims" despite gendered expectations were considered essential.

Ridley was pleased with the first unmarried missionary women in his diocese, writing back to the CMS in October 1898: "We do get splendid lady workers for this place. I wish the men were half as good."⁴⁹ Eleanor Dickenson of the Isle of Wight arrived in June 1890 and was instantly in demand. According to Ridley she was the "maid of all work." Her duties, listed by Ridley in a letter back to the CMS, were extensive: "She is secretary to the ladies prayer union and Bible reading union . . .

she is always ready to go to the rescue when trained nursing is required at the hospital. This is her forte. She would have taken charge of it but that I feared her energy (which is great) would have brought her into collision with our doctor who though much improved of late is not and never will be energetic. She attends to the sick at their homes and so has won the hearts of all the mothers in the place. Her chief work is the girls home. She has nine girls with her.⁵⁰ Her hard work had earned her much respect among the other missionaries, and, because she would never rest, Ridley said that he had to insist that she submit to the “curb.” In other words, in Ridley’s estimation, Eleanor Dickinson was an excellent worker but had to be warned not to overdo it. He also seemed to be afraid that Dickinson’s energy would show up the doctor’s lassitude.

While there is ample evidence to suggest that women missionaries spent much of their time, as the CMS described it, in “the performance of everyday common place duties,” it is also apparent that they were not perpetually trapped in the category of “women.”⁵¹ In fact, they often did almost the same work as their male counterparts, and they experienced similar moments of adventure in the outdoors. In *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism*, Sara Mills argues that women travel writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries “were restricted as to the type of language they might use and the sort of ‘experience’ they might depict, and thus their work was judged to be limited compared to the relative freedom of male novelists.”⁵² Mills focuses on travel writers, but the same can be said for women missionaries. Their letters and diaries do not contain the masculine discourse of Haggard or Henty. Women were not conditioned, like their male counterparts, to glory in the adventure of tipping canoes or chopping wood, or to romanticize the general hardships of life in the North. Yet their experiences indicate that they shared, thrived, and suffered equally with men in the experience offered by missionary work.

An incident that illustrates this point was reported in the official CMS history, ironically entitled *History of the Church Missionary Society, Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work*, chronicled by Eugene Stock. Bishop Ridley reported back to the CMS that, during the summer months, missionaries were stationed at coastal fish canneries. In the summer of 1893, Margaret West taught school and held meetings at Sunnyside and Inverness – two coastal canneries located about twelve miles from Metlakatla. West rowed her own boat between the canneries despite the treacherous tidal currents and rough landings. Ridley claimed that “she pursued her steady course, so that she has become an expert sailor, handling her 16 foot boat all alone as well as any man on our staff. She had it all to learn

to her cost. Once she got into serious difficulties, being capsized in deep and rough water, and was half drowned before she could climb back into the boat. It was a risk to appoint a lady to such a station single-handed where there are some hundreds of Indians, Chinese, Japanese and a band of white men unaccustomed to social or religious restraints.”⁵³

According to Ridley, by the end of the summer West had proven the effectiveness of what he called “true womanliness” combined with “self sacrificing service for Christ.” It is striking that, while she could handle a boat “as well as any man” in the mission, she was still characterized by Ridley according to the distinctive features of “true womanliness.” Her accomplishments were described in the language of work for Christ, and little reflection was given to the fact that she had crossed traditional gender boundaries.⁵⁴

Women working in the Diocese of Caledonia both taught school and conducted services. However, the list did not end there. Bessie Quirt’s diary reveals the range of activities experienced by missionary women. Originally from Orillia, Ontario, Quirt was the first schoolteacher at the first Anglican school for Inuit children at Shingle Point. In a four-month period she spoke of the joy of “taking the new canoe out for a wonderful paddle,” the excitement of having the bishop come to visit (at which time she commented that she had “acted as a scullery maid at the mission house”), and the pride of the first day of school: “I couldn’t help feeling thrilled as I walked over to school that morning feeling what a privilege was mine being the first teacher.”⁵⁵ She also recorded humorous moments: “Flossie and I will never forget Christmas eve and Christmas morning hacking, sewing and cutting at that Cariboo to make it into Christmas dinner . . . We certainly could see the funny side of it and stopped to enjoy the novelty of it quite often.”

From piling wood to canoeing to experiencing her first Arctic winter, Quirt was apparently thrilled to be in the North: “I can scarcely realize at times yet that it is actually the Arctic ocean over which I am looking and that I am here working among the Eskimo. The glamour certainly has not entirely worn off yet.”⁵⁶ There was never a shortage of work or adventure for women missionaries. Unmarried women often travelled considerable distances from their stations. In the spring of 1896 the *Canadian Church Magazine* recorded that Caledonia’s “lady” missionaries “have sometimes pretty trying times of it, for they go up and down the rivers in small boats, teaching and nursing at their various stopping places, which are not always of the smoothest as regards either water or land.”⁵⁷ Women experienced the multifaceted demands of mission work and enjoyed freedoms that went well beyond normative gender constructs.

Through their religious work they also developed long-lasting and close friendships with other women missionaries, and it is to these that I will now turn.

FEMALE FRIENDSHIPS

The community of Anglican missionary women in the North was small. Distance may have divided these women, but a spirit of neighbourliness and sometimes even intimacy was part of their mutual experience. In order to overcome the feeling of isolation, most women kept up a regular correspondence with their friends and relatives at home and struck up friendships with other women in the field.⁵⁸ These ties were valuable and important, especially at times of crisis or loneliness. In her *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* Martha Vicinus explores relationships among unmarried Victorian professional women. Her focus is entirely on single women who worked in specific institutions, like deaconess houses, boarding schools, or convents. Vicinus argues that, publicly, many of the women in her study were typical “upper-class ladies of severe manners and distinct demeanour. But privately their society permitted, and they experienced, a wide range of emotional behavior with intimate friends. The very distance and self-control demanded of them in public rebounded to make moments of intimacy more precious; friendships bore the entire weight of the emotions.”⁵⁹

This pattern certainly applies to single women missionaries in the North, and it could apply to married women as well. Husbands were often away for months at a time, and the intensity of the work and the isolation frequently led to close friendships amongst women. Because of Charlotte Selina Bompas’s long tenure in the Yukon she came to know many of the missionary wives very well.⁶⁰ For example, when Bompas was visiting Britain in 1885 she corresponded with Sarah French, who was planning to leave for the Yukon to marry the Reverend T.H. Canham, the Anglican missionary at Fort McPherson. French was from Monivea, Galway County, Ireland, and at the age of forty agreed to marry Canham. Bompas wrote to her sister-in-law to tell her about French: “Miss French (Mr. C’s fiancée) seems a very sweet girl I have had several letters from her & had to tell her about all her outfit and advise her about many things.”⁶¹ She and Bompas travelled back to Canada together in the spring of 1885. Apparently, they were detained in Winnipeg for one year because of the second Riel Rebellion. Their friendship began with Bompas offering advice on life in the North and lasted through travelling and living together in Winnipeg for one year, until the Canhams’ retirement.

Another woman she befriended was Susan Mellett, the first unmarried woman missionary sent to the Yukon by the Anglican Church. Mellett, like French, was originally from Ireland, where she had taught in the Ragged Schools. In 1893 she signed up as a missionary at the age of twenty-three and was met at Forty Mile, her first station, by Bishop Bompas.⁶² She lived with the Bompas family and taught school at Forty Mile and later at Rampart House. According to her diary Charlotte Selina Bompas appreciated Mellett from the outset: "Our household goes on very peacefully and happily. Miss Millett [sic] is a real blessing to us. She is a thorough Irish girl and a good churchwoman. She gets on well with everybody. The children are devoted to her, and she keeps them in first-rate order. One comfort is that she has good health and is not troubled with nerves. She bears the cold manfully, and was only a little startled lately when her blanket at night was fringed with icicles from her breath freezing."⁶³ Interestingly, Bompas chose the term "manfully" to describe Mellett's endurance of the cold, implying that it took the kind of grit that may not be associated with "proverbial daisies." Bompas and Mellett spent many hours together learning the Tukudah language.

In 1898 Bishop Bompas performed the marriage of Mellett and the Reverend R.J. Bowen, who had arrived in the Yukon in 1895. The Bowens moved to Dawson and then to Whitehorse, where Charlotte Selina Bompas became a regular houseguest and their friendship continued.⁶⁴ In May 1901, when Bompas became ill with pneumonia, she noted in her diary that she had "been most tenderly and lovingly nursed and cared for. Mrs. Bowen came from Whitehorse and stayed a fortnight."⁶⁵ When a missionary wife became ill or was about to deliver a child it was not uncommon for her co-workers to go and nurse her if they were within travelling distance.

Women could also count on each other during stressful times. At one point in 1909, when Bishop Stringer was on circuit in the Mackenzie River area and had not been in contact with Sarah Stringer, Bompas wrote a letter of reassurance: "I think you have good reason for anxiety but not for alarm, his long absence can all be explained." She ended by advising her to "keep up yr. character" and suggesting that if she had not already, then she must try to get a copy of *Anne of Green Gables* and "read it at once."⁶⁶ Bompas was no doubt speaking from experience. She remembered waiting for Bishop Bompas to return from his many long travels. Whether offering support during pregnancies, comforting one another, or simply catching up on news, missionary wives often relied on each other. Furthermore, even after the women left Canada's North it appears that many of their friendships continued.

Unmarried missionary women often turned to each other for comfort. At Shingle Point Bessie Quirt recognized that other workers in the mission field looked up to her. Flossie Hirst, who worked as an assistant nurse at Pangnirtung after an eight-year tenure at Shingle Point, became very close to Quirt. Quirt related to her diary that she felt an intense loyalty towards, and spiritual responsibility for, Hirst:

Last week she was feeling all right physically but got a depressed and lonesome streak on. However she's been quite herself since I went and slept with her on Wednesday night. She seemed to enjoy so much having me back to cuddle her up again. My Flossie darlin she has caused me a lot of worry and unhappiness but I am glad my love for her has cost me something. I feel almost frightened knowing upon what a pinnacle she places me and how she looks to me for her example and tries to live to please me. Oh that I may never lead her even a step off the path her master would have her tread.⁶⁷



Florence Hirst and Bessie Quirt
skating, 1932

The demands of missionary life often shifted boundaries of gender, yet women missionaries did not cease to respond to one another as women. The evidence suggests that these relationships exhibited emotional and physical bonding. The isolation and strain of missionary work encouraged this closeness. Female closeness provided important emotional security that was expressed by many women in the language of joy and contentment. Rarely, however, was this same intensity expressed between men. Men travelled and worked together in the mission field, but they did not discuss their friendships in intimate language.⁶⁸

Monica Storrs, who became well known in the Peace River region of northern British Columbia in the late 1920s, shared a similarly intimate friendship with Adeline Harmer, who joined her in 1931. Storrs worked in the region as a Sunday school teacher and scout and guide leader for two years before she returned to England to retrieve her lifelong friend. In her diary Storrs reflected upon how she felt to be with Harmer: "It was almost a joy being at Peace Coupe again, the place where I had been so anxious last September and was now so perfectly hopeful and happy with Adeline."⁶⁹ She and Harmer immediately began building a home in which they intended to share a bedroom. Although much of the building was contracted, Harmer and Storrs found themselves doing some of the physical labour. "On Sunday as usual," Harmer quipped in her diary "we became perfect ladies in cotton dresses, shaking off the crysalis [sic] of filthy dark blue overalls."⁷⁰ Interestingly, Harmer, for a fleeting and perhaps unconscious moment, had adopted a new gendered space for herself and Storrs.

At Metlakatla an equally intense friendship developed between Jane Ridley and Margaret West. Bishop Ridley often commented in his letters back to the CMS on how close they were. They often spent as much as two hours a day reading Tsimshian together, and when Jane Ridley was forced to return to England for one year Margaret West accompanied her as her nurse. When Jane died one year after their return in December 1896, Margaret expressed her grief: "What her loss is to me I cannot tell. She was more than guide and friend and I do trust that her loving words and example may fit me for the work our master has set out here. It is difficult to write much more now."⁷¹

Despite the loss of her close friend, Margaret West continued with her work and developed other similar friendships. Bishop Ridley observed that "Miss West mothers the young fellow workers and the new ones already have given their love and trust to her as she did to her who has just died."⁷²

Like Quirt, West was placed on the pedestal of the feminine ideal, but it was not a place that either inhabited permanently. They did not, to return to Denise Riley's characterization, "make a final home in that classification."⁷³ The boundaries of gender were more fluid than that. While West "mothered" the young workers, she simultaneously endured physical challenges that went beyond those associated with traditional images of womanhood. Years later, in 1931, when West died at Metlakatla, it was noted that she and Rose Davies, who went to Metlakatla in 1896, had worked in "harmonious and loving agreement."⁷⁴ West and Davies were partners in supervising the Ridley House for Métis children, and, so boasted the *North British Columbia News*, they would be "inscribed on the Roll of Honour, of the Pioneer Missionaries of Caledonia."

The network of female companionship was often tight and long-lasting. The women in the Yukon and the Arctic kept in close contact with one another and appeared to have a strong sense of comradeship and, later, social memory. During the 1930s it was common for missionary women in the Arctic to refer back to the early twentieth century and the origins of the Anglican Church in the region. In fact, on her way to Shingle Point in 1932, Adelaide Butler stopped at Winnipeg to visit with the Stringers. She described her visit as follows: "[I] was in *society* and I enjoyed myself."⁷⁵ She thought Sarah Stringer was "very motherly" because she insisted that Butler should take a long rest before leaving on her journey.⁷⁶ Like Bompas, well into the 1930s Stringer kept up a correspondence with the women who went to the North. The Anglican community in the North was small, and the women who entered it shared experiences that bound them together. The unique setting and conditions of their work heightened the intensity of their friendships and produced a certain camaraderie that has too often been overlooked or attributed only to male experience.

CONCLUSION

It becomes clear, with respect to missionary women in the North, that the boundaries of gender were fluid. Masculine stereotypes broke down with the demands of mission work. Despite the fact that the image of missionary women was closely tied to Victorian domesticity, in reality women exercised freedoms in the mission field that they could not have exercised at home. And after leaving the North, Selina Bompas, Sarah Stringer, and others were frequently invited to give public lectures on their missionary experiences. More than "proverbial daisies," or auxiliary

members of a mission team, women were often critical to the survival of missions in the North.

By the middle of the twentieth century the description of the type of women wanted in the North had changed to reflect the reality of mission work. In his memoirs the first bishop of the Arctic, Archibald L. Fleming, praised Prue Hockin, a Canadian missionary nurse who had been in the Arctic for twenty-five years: "In my opinion it is not too much to say that she is the epitome of what a white woman in the Arctic ought to be – efficient, self reliant, generous of nature, good humoured and with an ever increasing devotion to the Lord."⁷⁷ Women in the mission field went beyond the private sphere. In the context of a "higher calling" they challenged traditional images and could both enjoy, and be appreciated for, their self-reliance. The demands of the mission field were equally great for women and men, requiring similar strengths and skills.

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NOTES

- 1 An excellent collection of essays that looks at the origins and impact of women's mission work in Asia is Leslie A. Flemming, ed., *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia* (Boulder: Westview, 1989).
- 2 Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 110. See also Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860," in *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1976), 83-102.
- 3 Eugene Stock, "Women Missionaries in C.M.S. Fields," *Church Missionary Intelligencer* (May 1894): 343.
- 4 Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 188-96.
- 5 One noteworthy exception to this is the welcome contribution of Margaret Whitehead. See, for example, Margaret Whitehead, "Women Were Made for Such Things: Women Missionaries in British Columbia, 1850s to 1940s," *Atlantis* 14 (Fall 1988): 141-50; Margaret Whitehead, "A Useful Christian Woman: First Nations Women and Protestant Missionary Work in British Columbia," *Atlantis* 18 (Fall/Summer 1992/3): 142-68. Ruth Compton Brouwer and Rosemary Gagan have provided a significant corrective to a gender imbalance in the historiography, but their focus has largely been on international mission fields. See Brouwer, as well as Rosemary Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University

- Press, 1992). See also Peter Murray, *The Devil and Mr. Duncan: The Tale of the Two Metlakatlas* (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1985); Jean Usher-Friesen, *William Duncan of Metlakatla: A Victorian Missionary in British Columbia* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man Publications in History No. 5, 1974); Ken Coates, "Send Only Those Who Rise a Peg: Anglican Clergy in the Yukon, 1858-1932," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 28, 1 (1986): 3-17. In this case the North refers to northern British Columbia, the Yukon, and the North-West Territories. In the late nineteenth century the borders of the northern dioceses of the Anglican Church were often shifting. The Church Missionary Society of the Church of England was the first Anglican Church Society in Canada's North, and many of the notorious missionaries, including Duncan, Bompas, and Ridley, were sent out under its auspices.
- 6 Denise Riley, *"Am I That Name?": Feminism and the Category of Women in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 6.
 - 7 Ibid.
 - 8 Separate sphere ideology has received the attention of many scholars who have studied Victorian culture and society. See, for example, Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (1988): 9-39; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987) esp. 149-93.
 - 9 See Patrick A. Dunae, "Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914," *Victorian Studies* 24 (Autumn 1980): 120. See also Louis James, "Tom Brown's Imperialist Sons," *Victorian Studies* 18 (September 1973): 89-99.
 - 10 Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon, 1965), 3.
 - 11 For an example of Ridley's writing, see Charles Lillard, ed., *Warriors of the North Pacific* (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1984), 186-271. See also William Henry Collison, *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, ed. Charles Lillard (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1981).
 - 12 This was not always the pattern for mission wives. In her study of American missionary wives Patricia Grimshaw argues that the eighty Congregationalist women she examined frequently felt disappointed with their experiences as missionaries: "The demands on women for American-style housekeeping," Grimshaw asserts, "and the responsibility mothers were forced to assume for childrearing, however, were experienced as oppressive, though few could attribute blame to anything other than the novel circumstances of their situation. The assumption of a domestic burden first prevented as active a participation as the men's in the public mission work. Further, however, the notion of the sex-specific nature and role of women was used deliberately to restrain mission wives from extending the boundaries of female participation in a direction which conflicted with male dominance." Missionary wives in the context of early nineteenth-century Hawaii were trapped by separate sphere ideology and could not transcend its boundaries. See Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 194.
 - 13 Lois Boyd, "Presbyterian Ministers' Wives: A Nineteenth-Century Portrait," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 59, 1 (Spring 1981): 3-4.
 - 14 Cited in Boyd, "Presbyterian Ministers' Wives," 7.
 - 15 Selina Bompas, "Our Women of the North," *Canadian Churchman*, 14, November 1907.
 - 16 Nancy Pagh, "Imagining Native Women: Feminine Discourse and Four Women Travelling the Northwest Coast," this volume.
 - 17 Murray, *Devil and Mr. Duncan*, 62.
 - 18 Collison, *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, 16.
 - 19 Reverend J.B. McCullagh, "Aiyansh," *Aiyansh Notes*, April 1908. The Reverend J.B. McCullagh, originally from Newry, Ireland, was a CMS veteran, having served in the north British Columbian field since 1883. His first wife died of typhoid fever in Aiyansh.
 - 20 Jane Hunter, "The Home and the World: The Missionary Message of U.S. Domesticity," in *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia*, ed. Leslie A. Flemming (Boulder: Westview, 1989), 160.
 - 21 General Synod Archives (hereafter GSA) M74-3, Stringer Series 1-A-1, correspondence outward, 1888-92. Isaac Stringer to Sadie Alexander, 6 July 1893.
 - 22 "Bishop Ridley and the North Pacific Mission," *Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record*,

- vol. 9, no. 99, March 1884, 166. Jane Ridley was a trained nurse and was decorated for her nursing service during the Franco-Prussian War.
- 23 “Caledonia,” *Canadian Church Magazine*, May 1899, 120.
- 24 Eugene Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society, Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 639.
- 25 Church Missionary Society Papers (hereafter CMS Papers) C.2 British Columbia, C.2./o, original letters to 1900 North Pacific Mission G.1 C2/o3 1897. Collison to parent committee, 6 January 1897.
- 26 Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 638.
- 27 GSA, M71-4, box 12, Diocese of the Arctic Collection, St. Luke’s Mission, Pangnirtung, Florence Hirst Journals, 17 July 1937. Florence (Flossie) Hirst came to the North from Yorkshire, England, in 1928 and stayed until 1955. In the late 1930s she married the Reverend George Nicholson. Prudence Hockin was originally from Oak Lake, Manitoba. She graduated in nursing from Winnipeg Children’s Hospital and started her northern missionary career in 1931. Between 1931 and 1962 she worked as head nurse and hospital supervisor in both Aklavik and Pangnirtung.
- 28 CMS Papers, reel A 125, Price to parent committee, 3 September 1889.
- 29 Books and letters of the Church Missionary Society, London Public Archives of Canada, class C C.2, North Pacific Mission C.2, original letters, etc., correspondence inward, 1857–80. Tomlinson to parent committee, 15 June 1872. Tomlinson’s father was a clergyman in Ireland. Robert Tomlinson was educated at Trinity College in Dublin, and he served in northern British Columbia and Alaska until his death in 1912.
- 30 GSA, Stringer Papers, series 2, Sarah Ann Stringer, diaries 1-17, 97, 2-C, diary, 24 December 1896. Sarah (Alexander) Stringer was born and raised in Biddolph Township in Ontario. Her father was a farmer, and after completing high school she took a secretarial course and then entered Grace Hospital for nurse’s training. She also attended classes at Toronto’s Anglican Women’s Training College.
- 31 Ibid., Stringer Diary, July 1898.
- 32 Ibid., Stringer to Mrs. Newton, 16 July 1899.
- 33 *Letter Leaflet*, September 1899.
- 34 Archdeacon C.E. Whittaker, *Recollections of an Arctic Parson*, n.d. GSA, 24.
- 35 Archibald Lang Fleming, *Archibald the Arctic: The Flying Bishop* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1956), 287.
- 36 CMS Papers, reel 105, Doolan to parent committee, 8 September 1866 and 20 October 1866.
- 37 V.C. Sim, for example, neglected his health to such an extent that he died in service. See Coates, “Send Only Those,” 8.
- 38 Collison, *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, 81.
- 39 Yukon Territorial Archives (hereafter YTA), Anglican Church Series 1-1A, box 4, folder 3, cor. 252, C. Hoare to Bishop Stringer, 11 January 1922.
- 40 Ibid., Stringer to Hoare, 2 June 1922.
- 41 “Missionary Wives,” *Canadian Church Magazine and Mission News*, January 1897, 18.
- 42 Dr. Herrick, “Missionaries’ Wives,” *Canadian Church Magazine and Mission News*, October 1889, 226.
- 43 Collison, *In the Wake of the War Canoe*, 18-9.
- 44 Ibid., 19. Patients deemed to be incurable were sent to these hospitals for extended care until death.
- 45 Coates, “Send Only Those,” 7. See also Sarah Carter, “Categories and Terrains of Exclusion,” this volume, 66.
- 46 Bompas/Naylor correspondence, 14 July 1896.
- 47 YTA, Anglican Church Series 1-1A, box 3, folder 16, cor. 251, Stringer to Venn. Arch. Warren, 15 January 1920.
- 48 CMS Papers, correspondence outward, reel A 123, 16 June 1896, Ridley to parent committee.
- 49 Ibid., reel A 125, 28 October 1898.
- 50 CMS Papers, correspondence outward, Ridley to parent committee, 17 August 1891. Dickenson trained at the Mildmay Deaconess House in England. There she would have had a daily routine that consisted of morning prayers, Bible study classes, and mission work

- practice in nearby neighbourhoods. One hour a day would have been dedicated to meditating or reading religious material. At the age of twenty-seven she departed for northern British Columbia. She retired five years later in 1895.
- 51 CMS Papers, A 122, parent committee to Bertha Davies, 30 March 1900. Bertha Davies started her mission/nursing career in 1897. In 1900 she retired due to her marriage to the Reverend W.E. Collison, the son of Archdeacon and Mrs. W.H. Collison. She continued to live and work in northern British Columbia after her marriage.
- 52 Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991), 42.
- 53 Quoted in Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, 638.
- 54 Edith Beeching had similar experiences in her work at the mission stations near Alert Bay. Originally from Dover, England, Beeching arrived at Alert Bay in the summer of 1894 after a stint at the Highbury Deaconess Home. The following year she was sent for three weeks to a fishing station at River Inlet, fifty miles north of Alert Bay. While there she visited two canneries separated by a river described as a mile in breadth. She met with girls and women in the fields where they prayed and sang together, and she held services with community members in a small Methodist Church. In her physical freedom and in leading meetings Beeching had temporarily achieved a freedom from the specific gendered constraints of women in mission stations. See CMS Papers, A 123, Beeching to parent committee, 14 July 1895; diary, 14 July 1895.
- 55 GSA, Bessie Quirt Papers, diary, 27 August 1929, 26 September 1929, and 16 September 1929. Quirt was likely encouraged to take up mission work by her Orillia clergyman, the Reverend J.R.S. Boyd, a former China missionary. Quirt graduated from the North Bay Normal School and worked as a teacher for four years in Ontario before entering the Anglican Women's Training College in 1928.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 15 January 1930.
- 57 "Caledonia," *Canadian Church Magazine and Mission News*, April 1896, 83.
- 58 In her discussion on female friendships in nineteenth-century United States, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg emphasizes the prevalence of intimate relations between women. She concludes that, within the confines of family and close friends, a woman's world developed, and this world was characterized by what she calls a "generic and unself-conscious pattern of single-sex or homosocial networks. These supportive networks were institutionalized in social conventions or rituals that accompanied virtually every important event in a woman's life, from birth to death. Within such a world of emotional richness and complexity, devotion to and love of other women became a plausible and socially accepted form of human interaction." See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 60.
- 59 Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 202.
- 60 Bompas arrived in the North in 1874, and, except for the years that she went on furlough, she stayed until 1906.
- 61 GSA, M89-3-N4, Bompas Papers. Bompas to Bompas, n.d. The Reverend T.H. Canham started his northern career in 1881 and stayed until 1915.
- 62 YTA, Anglican Church of Canada, Yukon Synod, Bowen Biography File.
- 63 S.A. Archer, ed., *Heroine of the North Pacific: Memoirs of Charlotte Selina Bompas, 1830-1917* (London: Macmillan, 1929), 144-5.
- 64 For example, in a letter to her sister-in-law, Bompas told her about visiting the "kind and hospitable" Bowens in Whitehorse and staying with them for one week. GSA, M89-3-N4, Bompas Papers, Bompas to Bompas, October 1900. The Bowens were sponsored by the London-based Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.
- 65 Archer, *Heroine of the North*, 167.
- 66 *Ibid.*, Bompas to Stringer, n.d.
- 67 Quirt Diary, 21 December 1930.
- 68 This is not to say, however, that men did not have similar intimate relations. For an illuminating study of male friendships in Victorian society, see, Jeffrey Richards, "Passing the

- Love of Women: Manly Love and Victorian Society,” in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 92-122.
- 69 W.L. Morton, ed., *God's Galloping Girl: The Peace River Diaries of Monica Storrs, 1929-1931* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1979), 180. Storrs was originally from London, England, and had attended the Francis Holland Church of England School for Girls and St. Christopher's College. Her father was an Anglican clergyman and the dean of Rochester, England. Harmer's father was the bishop of Rochester. Storrs worked under the auspices of the Fellowship of the Maple Leaf (FML), a missionary society determined to promote assimilation (especially amongst new Canadian immigrants). For more on the FML, see Marilyn Barber, “The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers,” in *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada*, ed. Barry Ferguson (Regina: University of Regina Press, 1991), 154-66.
- 70 Ibid., 229.
- 71 CMS Papers, C.2 British Columbia, C2/original letters to 1900, North Pacific Mission, G.1 C2/03 1897, reel A 125, West to parent committee, 11 December 1896.
- 72 Ibid., Ridley to parent committee, 7 December 1896.
- 73 Riley, “Am I That Name?”, 6.
- 74 “The Late Miss Margaret West,” *North British Columbia News*, July 1931. Excluding furloughs, West stayed in northern British Columbia for forty years. Rose Margaret Davies, a nursing graduate of Mildmay Hospital, started her career at Metlakatla in 1896 and retired in 1942.
- 75 GSA, M88-4, Adelaide Jane Butler Papers. Butler to Dollie, 7 January 1933. Butler was a schoolteacher from England, and she worked as a missionary at Shingle Point for five years.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Fleming, *Archibald the Arctic*, 321. Hockin was presented with the Order of Canada in 1961 in appreciation of her service in northern Canada. She retired in 1962 after thirty-one years of work.