Questioning Devotions, Reorienting Commitments: Using Christian Religious Archives and Church History to Study Indian Residential Schools

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Since the early 1990s and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), Christian leaders in Canada have issued apologies to Indigenous people for church involvement in the genocidal system of Indian Residential Schools (IRS).[1] In turn, in an effort to address the deep intergenerational harms done by residential schools, Indigenous people have been appointed to leadership positions by various national churches and church organizations.[2]

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[1] For the chronology and the texts of these apologies, see Glen Lowry, "Learning from the Past: Selected Documents of Reconciliation and Apology from Canadian Government and Churches," in *Speaking My Truth: Reflections on Reconciliation and Residential School*, ed. Shelagh Rogers, et al. (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2012), 231–248; David Macdonald, *The Sleeping Giant Awakens: Genocide, Indian Residential Schools, and the Challenge of Conciliation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019); J.R. Miller, *Residential Schools and Reconciliation: Canada Confronts its History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 11–40.

[2] For examples of actions taken by the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada in the domain of Indigenous ministries, see their respective websites, "Indigenous Ministries," The Anglican Church of Canada, accessed March 5, 2024, https://www.anglican.ca/im/ and "Indigenous Ministries," The United Church of Canada, accessed March 5, 2024,

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Meanwhile, since 2015 and the release of the calls to action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC), religious studies scholars at Canadian universities have been slow to apply the relevant calls to action to our discipline in a widely recognizable or organized way. This paper is a methodological reflection on the study of Christian mission history and residential schools through archival sources. I will survey the field of recent academic engagement on reconciliation and present critical observations I have made from my own research anchored in primary sources and influenced by Indigenous critiques,[3] decolonial perspectives, and researcher positionality.[4] My comments will

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https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/being-community/indigenous-ministries. Also, Aaron Ross, *The Holy Spirit and the Eagle Feather: The Struggle for Indigenous Pentecostalism in Canada* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023), 193–194.

[3] Michelle Pidgeon, "Contested Spaces of Indigenization in Canadian Higher Education: Reciprocal Relationships and Institutional Responsibilities," in *Indigenous Education: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, ed. Huia Tomlins-Janhke, et al. (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2019), 205–229; Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Dian Million, "Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 53–76; Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

[4] For a sampling of the decolonial perspectives that have influenced this paper, see: Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2021); Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); Marie Battiste, *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 2013). For perspectives on researcher

synthesize aspects of the methods and frameworks that I have found useful amid current public discourses of indigenization, truth-telling, and reconciliation. I offer these observations as a prospectus for future scholarship on the intersections of church and mission history, colonial schooling, and Indigenous-settler relations of the past, present, and future. I will contextualize the TRCC as an example of Christian public discourse that calls for reparative actions, including witnessing IRS survivor testimony and critical intervention in the historiographies of churches, missions, and Indigenous people. By balancing IRS survivor testimony alongside scholarly engagements with archival collections, truth-telling can emerge as reparative acts that might, in turn, forward reconciliation by addressing the internal histories of church congregations. I apply this model to three examples and then propose an integrative move toward critically considering residential schools in a global colonial context.

To speak briefly from my own experience in the archives, and to introduce a decolonial concept that has informed my work, I suggest researchers approach the contents of archives as Gail Mackay describes and studies the contents of a medicine pouch. We might think of the boxes and folders in archives as pouches of information, affect, and history. Following Mackay, the pouch is not inanimate, it is steeped in context. "The pouch is the vehicle for a meditative engagement with the philosophy of life"[5] – an evocative

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positionality, see: Denise Nadeau, *Unsettling Spirit: A Journey into Decolonization* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020); Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019); Emma Battell Lowman and Adam Barker, *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* (Halifax: Fernwood, 2015); Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010).

[5] Gail Mackay, "What this Pouch Holds," in *The Arts of Indigenous Health and*

and compelling method for sensitively engaging archival material steeped in contexts of colonial violence and policies of cultural genocide.

The observations that follow reflect research I conducted in 2021 and 2023 on the history of Concordia University's relationships with Indigenous people.[6] This research included investigations on the Jesuits and the Grey Nuns (otherwise known as the Sisters of Charity of Montreal), as well as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) – all Christian corporate bodies that laid the foundations of, or later partnered with, Concordia University. The Grey Nuns and Jesuits will thus be two of the three historical examples I expand on below.

Truth and Reconciliation as Christian Discourse?

Anthropologist Ronald Niezen has placed the TRCC within a global historical context of the Roman Catholic church being brought before legal courts for the abuse of children by Catholic religious. Niezen says the TRCC "came more than anything else from the growing credence given to remembrances and claims of sexual abuse of children […]. It came from a change in perception that made it possible to see members of the clergy as perpetrators of sexual crimes. It came above all from the willingness of individuals to tell, and their audiences to compassionately hear, narratives of abuse with

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Well-Being, ed. Nancy Van Styvendale, et al. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2021), 36.

[6] This project was a response to Concordia's Indigenous Directions Action Plan (released 2019, updated 2021): https://www.concordia.ca/indigenous/action-plan.html.

considerable emotional impact."[7] In October 1990, Phil Fontaine, then Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, became the first IRS survivor to publicly disclose that he had been physically and sexually abused as a student. Fontaine was a forerunner for the testimonies of abuse of Indigenous children that later reached Canadian public awareness during RCAP which concluded in 1996. By the early 2000s, sexual abuse allegations against Catholic religious were taking on international dimensions across dioceses in Canada, the US, Ireland, the UK, and Australia.[8] Such abuse of children constitutes what historian of American Catholicism Robert Orsi has called "events of abundant evil" for which the church must atone.[9] The abuse of Indigenous children in the IRS system represents a significant dimension of such abundant evil in the Canadian historical context.

During the TRCC's national public events held between 2008 and 2014, media analyst Naomi Angel says an estimated 9,000 IRS survivors registered to attend, with 155,000 general attendees from all regions of Canada. During the commission's proceedings, "Survivors often used the space of public testimony given at the national gatherings as a site to speak not only to the commission but also to their family members and other former students."[10] According to Niezen, the TRCC "to a unique degree gave preference to information-gathering and dissemination over judicial process."[11] Considering the lack of legal weight to the commission, Angel observed that "a clear tension between the IRS TRC as a healing or confessional mechanism and the TRC as a pseudo-juridical body for civic action was ever present."[12] The TRCC proceedings thus presented opportunities for healing – on individual, community, and social levels – but the commission itself entailed no legal dimensions.

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[7] Ronald Niezen, *Truth and Indignation: Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 29. See Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Final Report, seven volumes (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).

[8] Niezen, *Truth and Indignation*, 30–31; Miller, *Residential Schools and Reconciliation*, 50–51.

[9] Robert Orsi, *History and Presence* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 215–248.

[10] Naomi Angel, *Fragments of Truth: Residential Schools and the Challenge of Reconciliation in Canada* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), 91–92. Also, Brieg Capitaine, "Telling a Story and Performing the Truth: The Indian

Angel emphasizes the fragmented nature of truth-telling during the commission. She notes that participants voluntarily gave testimony. As "the commission had no powers of subpoena through which participation might be compelled," this resulted "in a lack of testimonies given by perpetrators of violence."[13] Niezen says critically that the commission's narrative of the IRS system was "skewed" because "the rank and file of the religious orders and clergy, particularly those who at some point in their careers worked in Indian residential schools, were notably absent from the proceedings."[14] As I will address more below, focused scholarly studies of the archives of Christian church bodies can serve as a way of engaging those church authorities responsible for the IRS system and the abuses that occurred there. To be clear, such a study of textual archives should be conducted in the spirit of complementing and deepening not undermining or overwriting the oral truth-telling of the TRCC.

Residential School as Cultural Trauma," in *Power through Testimony: Reframing Residential Schools in the Age of Reconciliation*, ed. Brieg Capitaine and Karine Vanthuyne (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2017), 50–73.

[11] Niezen, *Truth and Indignation*, 3.

[12] Angel, *Fragments of Truth*, 113.

[13] Angel, *Fragments of Truth*, 100.

[14] Niezen, *Truth and Indignation*, 137–138.

Still, the very notions of truth-telling and reconciliation are steeped in Christian symbolic meanings. For theologian Siphiwe Dube, who compares the TRCC to the South African TRC, "Christian discourse [. . .] inform[ed] the commission's aim of truth-finding and reconciliation."[15] For instance, the commission's opening ceremonies in Winnipeg included traditional Indigenous blessings as well as a recitation of the Lord's Prayer by Commissioner Murray Sinclair. For Dube, the general Christian logic that permeated the TRCC, while problematic for some who experienced trauma at the hands of the church, provided "a language with which to share personal experiences in public."[16] While the rituals of traditional Indigenous spirituality were also used in the TRCC (such as smudging and the use of talking sticks), the Christian framework of sin, confession, penance, and redemption was also present throughout the commission's public proceedings. These forms of public religion not only helped IRS survivors tell their truths, but the Christian dimension of the commission also helped navigate "the particular instantiation of this religious tradition as a vehicle for atrocity."[17] As such, Christianity was "both the source of the atrocity and the means to address it."[18] Christianity – its practitioners, victims, and theological concepts such as the economy of salvation –

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[15] Siphiwe Dube, "Aporia, Atrocity, and Religion in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," in *Mixed Blessings: Indigenous Encounters with Christianity in Canada*, ed. Tolly Bradford and Chelsea Horton (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016), 145.

[16] Dube, "Aporia, Atrocity, and Religion," 145.

[17] Dube, "Aporia, Atrocity, and Religion," 150. Also, Roxana Waterson, "Reconciliation as Ritual: Comparative Perspectives on Innovation and Performance in Processes of Reconciliation," *Humanities Research* 15, no. 3 (2009): 27–47.

[18] Dube, "Aporia, Atrocity, and Religion," 155.

is inextricably bound up in the aspirational notions of truth and reconciliation. Further to government-driven policies and financing, the Christian religious cultures of the schools must also be interrogated as part of the truth-telling and reconciliatory process. This is especially so considering some scholars have argued that residential schools were seen as a "sacred duty" of Christians of their time.[19] Yet, as critical voices on reconciliation and decolonization have stated, actions speak louder than words. Reconciliatory discourse must be backed up with concrete, material reparations and actionable results that unsettle the "comfortable intentions" of liberal multiculturalism and what Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang have called the "moves to innocence" characteristic of settler colonialism.[20]

Rather than a move to innocence, a Christian framework of sin and confession might compel some Canadians to turn and face the harmful legacy of the IRS system as acts of witnessing, humility, and contrition.[21] Such acts have the potential to propel decoloniality within Christianity, using aspects of its own ideology to go beyond comfortable intentions. Atalia Omer suggests that decolonial praxis "entails connecting to the core of religious traditions as a resource and a motivation for imagining peaceful cohabitation."[22] As I suggest below, part of this process of "imagining peaceful cohabitation" for the future would entail a willingness on the part of church and academic communities to address unsettling aspects of congregational and mission history that contributed to the assimilative ideology behind residential schools and other institutions, including hospitals and convents, as well as many early Canadian colleges and universities.

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[19] On residential schools as a "sacred enterprise" or a "sacred duty," see Eric Taylor Woods, "A Cultural Approach to a Canadian Tragedy: The Indian Residential Schools as a Sacred Enterprise," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 26, no. 2 (June 2013): 173–187; and Elizabeth Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1995), 26.

[20] David Macdonald, "Paved with Comfortable Intentions: Moving Beyond Liberal Multiculturalism and Civil Rights Frames on the Road to Transformative Reconciliation," in *Pathways of Reconciliation: Indigenous and Settler Approaches to Implementing the TRC's Calls to Action*, ed. Aimée Craft and Paulette Regan (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020), 3–34; Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40; Eva Mackey, "The Apologizer's Apology," in *Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress*, ed. Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 47–62.

[21] On these ideas, see Frank Deer, "Discovering Truth in the Post-TRC Era: Morality and Spirituality Discourses in the Reconciliatory Journeys of Schools," in *Troubling Truth and Reconciliation in Canadian Education: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Sandra Styres and Arlo Kempf (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2022), 3–14; Shirley Hager and Mawopiyane, *The Gatherings:*

Survivor Testimony, Calls to Action, Historiography

In academic milieux, questions raised by RCAP spurred some historians to turn their attention to Canada's IRS system, yet comprehensive large-scale studies remain minimal and date to the 1990s.[23] As with John Milloy's study, a focus has been placed on the Canadian state and governmental policies. Religious studies scholars

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Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022); *Quest for Respect: The Church and Indigenous Spirituality*, Special Issue, *Intotemak* (Spring 2017); Michael Wilkinson, "Public Acts of Forgiveness: What Happens When Canadian Churches and Governments Seek Forgiveness for Social Sins of the Past?" in *Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Restoration: Multidisciplinary Studies from a Pentecostal Perspective*, ed. Martin William Mittelstadt and Geoffrey Sutton (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 177–196.

22. Atalia Omer, *Decolonizing Religion and Peacebuilding* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2023), 236.

23. John Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999); J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

have only recently begun to consider religion alongside settler colonization, Indigenous dispossession, and assimilative education in North America.[24] In 2021, as the numbers of unmarked graves of Indigenous children at former residential school sites began to break into mainstream Canadian public awareness, historian Martha Walls called attention to the fact that the Shubenacadie IRS – the only residential school to have existed in Atlantic Canada – has received little scholarly attention from historians of the region.[25] Survivor experiences of the Catholic-operated Shubenacadie IRS have been disseminated through the work of Mi'kmaw author Isabelle Knockwood in her memoir *Out of the Depths* (first published in 1992, now in its fourth edition).[26] Knockwood herself attended the Shubenacadie IRS in the 1930s and 1940s. In her memoir, she supplements her memories of day-to-day student life at the residential school with assembled testimonies from other student survivors. A first step for a historian of religion to begin a study of residential schools might be to survey survivor memoirs such as Knockwood's and many others.[27] Such memoirs provide important first-hand testimonial accounts. A strength of Knockwood's writing for non-Indigenous readers is her ability to communicate the incongruences between Euro-Canadian and Mi'kmaw worldviews, and the negative effects such incongruences yielded for Mi'kmaw children at the Shubenacadie school. I have thus turned to such narratives of memory and lived experiences to balance the archival research that has otherwise formed the basis of my research.

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[24] For examples of religious studies scholars embracing these critical frameworks, see Pamela Klassen, *The Story of Radio Mind: A Missionary's Journey on Indigenous Land* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018); Jennifer Graber, *The Gods of Indian Country: Religion and the Struggle for the American West* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018). Also, Emma Anderson, "Residential School Saint: The Life, Death, and Turbulent Afterlife of Rose Prince of the Carrier Nation," *Church History* 89, no. 3 (September 2020): 592–632.

[25] Martha Walls, "The TRC, Reconciliation, and the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School," *Acadiensis* 50, no. 2 (Autumn 2021): 72–84.

[26] Isabelle Knockwood, *Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia*, 4th ed. (Halifax: Fernwood, 2015 [1992]). Also, Rita Joe, "I Lost My Talk," in *Song of Eskasoni: More Poems of Rita Joe* (Charlottetown, PE: Ragweed Press, 1988), 32.

In a post-TRCC intellectual climate, historians of religion and religion specialists generally, have an opportunity to critically apply our discipline in response to Call to Action 59 of the commission's Final Report:

> We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement [the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement of 2007] to develop ongoing educational strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential school, and

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[27] For examples of IRS survivor memoirs, see Cecil King, *The Boy from Buzwah: A Life in Indian Education* (Regina, SK: University of Regina Press, 2022); Bevann Fox, *Genocidal Love: A Life After Residential School* (Regina, SK: University of Regina Press, 2020); Joseph Auguste Merasty and David Carpenter, *The Education of Augie Merasty: A Residential School Memoir* (Regina, SK: University of Regina Press, 2017); Alice Blondin-Perrin, *My Heart Shook Like a Drum: What I Learned at the Indian Mission Schools, Northwest Territories* (Ottawa: Borealis Press, 2009); Basil Johnston, *Indian School Days* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988). Also, Celia Haig-Brown et al., *Tsqelmucwílc: The Kamloops Indian Residential School – Resistance and a Reckoning* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2022); Daniel Heath Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2018).

> why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary.[28]

While addressed to church congregations, Call to Action 59 can be taken to task by scholars of religion working at Canadian universities and elsewhere. The well-trod domain of 'church history' offers apt tools for approaching the scholarly study of residential schools. Turning critically to the tradition of church history and its relationship to residential schooling affords an opportunity for non-Indigenous scholars to contribute to the larger decolonial project of truth-telling. Only after such truth-telling can reconciliation make demonstrable advances – in this context, either in the academy or in church congregations.

Church history – premised on tracing the development of distinct denominational traditions, the intellectual ideas of clerical thinkers, and attending theological movements and debates – can provide useful tools for ongoing and committed study of the various churches' roles in colonization referenced in Call to Action 59. While reorienting the traditional priorities of church history, paying close attention to specific church groups – their beliefs, practices, and policies – can help focus the otherwise vast field that is the IRS history writ large. Scholars of religion might thus renew some of our disciplinary commitments by using church archives "against the grain" (i.e. the grain of hagiography) or without the investment of saving face as a confessing member of any particular church community. I thus question the limits of church history, yet acknowledge its potential to further a more robust and complex

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28. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Calls to Action*, 2015, https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

historical knowledge of the IRS system. Rather than attempting to survey the entire history of residential schools systematically – as in Miller's *Shingwauk's Vision* from 1996 – scholars of religion might engage the histories of specific residential schools or the missions to which they were attached. It is this latter approach to mission history that I have found most useful. I recommend the application of denominational lenses to follow the works and the records of specific church bodies. Religion specialists might thus contribute incrementally to the secondary literature on the IRS mission by elucidating with greater clarity the evolving differences, synchronicities, or collaborations among members of church organizations, only sometimes in relation to the state, over several centuries.

Church History and the Archival Grain

As noted, church history is a historiographic discipline that adheres to the boundaries of church tradition.[29] Such church history also often adheres to a teleological model, tracing the successes and setbacks of missions over time. Still, bearing these observations cautiously in mind, having a comprehension of – for example – "Anglican-specific" or "Catholic-specific" or even "Jesuit-specific" or "Grey-Nuns-specific" history can help scholars better understand why or how certain residential schools were established in certain

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29. For a discussion of church history and its possibilities for scholarship, see Michael Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert, "Beyond Church History: Recent Developments in the History of Religion in Canada," in *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Canada*, ed. Michael Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 3–45. For a classic in Canadian mission history, see John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

regions, or why certain protocols, policies, or pedagogies were pursued, debated, or replaced over time. Further, I have also found church history helpful when considering church-state policy development, and the collaborative work that was inaugurated between the Canadian federal *and* church governments in the operation of residential schools. Much of the published history of residential schools has focused on federal state actors and archives without consideration of the religious or theological dimensions. This is where scholars of religion can contribute. Textual or photographic material[30] from church archives can be placed into effective dialogue with survivor testimonies to present balanced, yet complex, perspectives.

Since the TRCC, church and state bodies in Canada have taken steps to make their archival holdings available for inquiry on the matter of residential schools, and, in some cases, to repatriate material items to Indigenous communities of origin.[31] In response to the commission's calls to action, digital and other archives have been made publicly available by organizations such as the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) at the University of Manitoba, the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre at the University of British Columbia, and the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre at Algoma University.[32] These centres have assembled primary materials from various sources, including church and state archives, as well as oral histories and autobiographies from Indigenous communities. Further to these collections, the state records of the Office of Indian Affairs known as RG-10, held by Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa,[33] have become the archival collection most readily sourced and cited by scholars working on Canadian residential school history. Contrastingly, the records of Christian church organizations have largely remained the domain of historians working on religious or imperial history. Furthermore, ecclesiastical politics have made some of these church records more accessible to researchers than others. With some exceptions, church archives are usually closed to the public except by request and require supervision and mediation upon visits. It should be noted the church contributions to the above-listed public research centres were selective donations made by the members of the respective church bodies. Such selective politics reflect the observations made by anthropologist Ann Stoler who, from her study of French and Dutch

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[30] See Chapter 2, "Images of Contact: Archival Photographs and the Work of Reconciliation in Canada," in Angel, *Fragments of Truth*. Also, J.R. Miller, "Reading Photographs, Reading Voices: Documenting the History of Native Residential Schools," in *Reflections on Native-Newcomer Relations: Selected Essays*, ed. J.R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 82–103.

[31] For the example of the United Church of Canada Archives, see "Colonizing Institution Records," United Church of Canada Archives, accessed February 24, 2024, https://www.unitedchurcharchives.ca/archives/colonizing-institution-records/. Also, Andrea Walsh, "Repatriation, Reconciliation, and Refiguring Relationships: A Case Study of the Return of Children's Artwork from the Alberni Indian Residential School to Survivors and Their Families," in *Pathways of Reconciliation: Indigenous and Settler Approaches to Implementing the TRC's Calls to Action*, ed. Aimée Craft and Paulette Regan (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020), 249–267; Raymond Frogner, "The Train from Dunvegan: Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Public Archives in Canada," *Archival Science* 22, no. 2 (June 2022): 209–238; Krista McCracken, "Challenging Colonial

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Spaces: Reconciliation and Decolonizing Work in Canadian Archives," *The Canadian Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (June 2019): 182–201.

[32] See National Center for Truth and Reconciliation, accessed March 4, 2024, https://nctr.ca/; "Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre," The University of British Columbia, accessed March 4, 2024, https://irshdc.ubc.ca/; "Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre," Algoma University, accessed March 4, 2024, https://algomau.ca/research/shingwauk-residential-schools-centre/.

[33] "School Files Series 1879-1953 (RG10)," Library and Archives Canada, accessed March 6, 2024, https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/school-files-1879-1953.aspx.

imperial archives, argues for the importance of understanding archives not only as things, but archiving-as-process.[34] This is why I have found archival photographs so compelling to study in the context of residential schools. Whereas the written reports and letters of church and state administrators could be deliberately stylized or rhetorically framed to generate certain omissions, some photographs capture sudden and candid moments of everyday life that otherwise evade textual archives. Meanwhile, other photographs starkly convey the harsh regimentation of residential school life.[35]

As my personal research specialization has been Roman Catholicism, I will structure my observations around a trio of Catholic organizations: the Jesuits of Canada; the Sisters of Charity of Halifax; and the Sisters of Charity of Montreal (who, hereafter, I will refer to by their informal name, the Grey Nuns). The former group being a male clerical order; the latter two groups being distinct congregations of female religious. Each of these Catholic bodies was responsible for operating Indian Residential Schools: the Jesuits ran the Spanish IRS in Spanish River, Ontario from 1913 to 1958; the Sisters of Charity ran the Shubenacadie IRS in Nova Scotia from 1929 to 1967; and the Grey Nuns worked at many different Indian Residential Schools between the 1860s and the 1970s.[36] As Catholic religious orders are gender specific, the Jesuits, the Sisters of Charity, and the Grey Nuns each operated their respective schools in partnership with other orders. The Jesuits, who operated the boys' school at Spanish partnered with the Daughters of the Heart of Mary to operate the site's girls' school. At Shubenacadie, the Sisters of Charity partnered first with the Archdiocese of Halifax, and later with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.[37] The Grey Nuns partnered most frequently with the Oblates.[38]

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[34] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 20.

[35] For example, the Spanish Residential School Fonds at the Archive of the Jesuits in Canada contains over 3,000 photographs that have been recently organized and catalogued.

[36] For a list of 14 "Indian industrial" and "Indian boarding schools" the Grey Nuns had in their charge by 1917, see Pierre Duchaussois, *Grey Nuns in the Far North, 1867–1917* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1919), 278–79.

Such Catholic church bodies as the Jesuits, the Sisters of Charity, and the Grey Nuns each have their own unique self-authored historiographic traditions in which male or female scribes kept their own respective institutional archives and annals – a chronicle, or journal of events, often kept in real-time, but sometimes written retrospectively.[39] Reflecting centuries of church tradition, copies of a religious community's annals were subsequently made (copied by hand) as a devotional practice and passed down over the generations of brothers and sisters (priests and nuns) within that community.[40] As evidenced in the Jesuits' own publications, they have long positioned themselves as "teachers" and "builders" of the Canadian nation.[41] The literary tropes of Christian hagiography are also apparent in many of the early historiographies of the Grey Nuns and their foundress, the eighteenth-century Montreal widow Marguerite d'Youville.[42] Such self-conceived notions characteristic of the internal dynamics of early modern religious bodies are readily problematized by critical, postmodern outsider observers, but they reflect the internal nature of religious archival traditions, church history, the constructions of mission ideology, and the politics of memory.

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[37] For more information about these schools see "Residential Schools Archives," National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/.

[38] Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten, *Inuit, Oblate Missionaries, and Grey Nuns in the Keewatin, 1865–1965* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2019); Frédéric Laugrand and Jarich Oosten, "The Case of Pelagie Inuk: The only Inuk Woman to Become a Grey Nun," *Inuit Studies* 38, no. 1–2 (2014): 157–176; Robert Carney, "The Grey Nuns and the Children of Holy Angels: Fort Chipewyan, 1874–1924," in *The Uncovered Past: Roots of Northern Alberta Societies*, ed. Robert Carney and Geoffrey Ironside (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1993), 105–125; Diane Persson, "The Changing Experience of Indian Residential Schooling: Blue Quills, 1931–1970," in *Indian Education in Canada, Volume 2: The Challenge*, ed. Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert, and Don McCaskill (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 150–168.

[39] For the annals kept by the Sisters of Charity at the Shubenacadie IRS, see "Folder 01a-c000003 - Shubenacadie Residential School Annals," National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Archives, accessed February 20, 2024, https://archives.nctr.ca/01a-c000003. Also, G. Marcoux, *The History of the Qu'Appelle Residential School, Lebret, Saskatchewan* (n.p.: 1955). For a study of the annals tradition of another Catholic congregation of women religious, see Thomas Carr, Jr., *A Touch of Fire: Marie-André Duplessis, the Hôtel-Dieu of Quebec, and the Writing of New France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020); Elizabeth Smyth, "Women Religious and Their Work of History in Canada, 1639–1978: A Starting Point for Analysis," *Historical Studies of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association* 64 (1998): 135–150.

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[40] For histories of the Jesuits in North America, see Bronwen McShea, *Apostles of Empire: The Jesuits and New France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019); Micah True, *Masters and Students: Jesuit Mission Ethnography in Seventeenth-Century New France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015); Emma Anderson, *The Death and Afterlife of the North American Martyrs* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); Gerald McKevitt, *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848–1919* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005); France Lord, "The Silent Eloquence of Things: The Missionary Collections and Exhibitions of the Society of Jesus in Quebec, 1843-1946," in *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples: Representing Religion at Home and Abroad*, ed. Alvyn Austin and Jamie Scott (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 205–234. For histories of the Sisters of Charity of Halifax, see Mary Olga McKenna, "An Educational Odyssey: The Sisters of Charity of Halifax," in *Changing Habits: Women's Religious Orders in Canada*, ed. Elizabeth Smyth (Ottawa: Novalis, 2007), 69–85; Sasha Mullally and Heidi MacDonald, "Arts, Crafts, and Rural Rehabilitation: The Sisters of Charity, Halifax, and Vocational Education in Terence Bay, Nova Scotia, 1938–1942," *Historia de la Educación* 35 (2016): 35–51; and the commemorative history, *Sisters of Charity, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1849-1949* (Archdiocese of Halifax, 1949).

[41] Joseph Gavin, ed., *Teachers of a Nation: Jesuits in English Canada, 1842–2013*, volume 1 in the Jesuit History Series (Toronto: Novalis, 2015); Jacques Monet, ed*., Builders of a Nation: Jesuits in English Canada, 1842-2013*, volume 2 in the Jesuit History Series (Toronto: Novalis, 2015). Also, Emma Anderson, "'White' Martyrs and 'Red' Saints: The Ongoing Distortions of Hagiography on Historiography," *American Catholic Studies* 127, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 9–13; Allan Greer, "Colonial Saints: Gender, Race, and Hagiography in New France," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (April 2000): 323–348.

The Jesuits, the Sisters of Charity, and the Grey Nuns have each contributed documents and photographs from their own institutional collections to the NCTR database.[43] The NCTR digital archives are arranged in many ways and a visitor to their website can navigate IRS history by school location, by religious affiliation, or by a variety of subject headings. I have found the NCTR Religious Entities Series to be the most useful subcategorization considering my interest in Christian church bodies.[44] One can explore the digitized archival materials provided to the NCTR by the respective religious entity: the Jesuits, Sisters of Charity, or Grey Nuns in the cases I discuss here, but many more are available both Catholic and

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[42] Pauline Mary Fitts, *Hands to the Needy: Blessed Marguerite d'Youville, Apostle to the Poor* (New York City: Doubleday, 1958); Albertine Ferland-Angers, *Mère d'Youville: Vénérable Marie-Marguerite du Frost de Lajemmerais Veuve d'Youville, 1701-1771* (Montreal: Librairie Beauchemin, 1945); Berthe Laflamme Jetté, *Vie de la vénérable Mère d'Youville, fondatrice des Sœurs de la Charité de Montréal* (Montreal: Cadieux and Derome, 1900).

[43] "Sub-sub-series S00062-001-001 - Sisters of Charity of Halifax," National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Archives, accessed March 5, 2024, https://archives.nctr.ca/S00062-001-001; "Sub-sub-series S00062-001-011 - Jesuit Archives," National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Archives, accessed March 5, 2024, https://archives.nctr.ca/S00062-001-011; "Sub-sub-series S00062-001-007 - Soeurs Grises de Montréal / Grey Nuns of Montreal," National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Archives, accessed March 5, 2024, https://archives.nctr.ca/S00062-001-007.

[44] "Sub-series S00062-001 - Religious Entities," National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Archives, accessed February 20, 2024, https://archives.nctr.ca/S00062-001.

Protestant. For instance, a researcher could also use the NCTR Religious Entities Series to pursue studies of other Christian collaborators in the IRS system. Files are available from Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Mennonite, Moravian, and United Church communities.

I have found that focusing on specific schools and the religious entities attached to them can open the researcher to the broader context of mission or church history from which the schools themselves emerged in collaboration with state agents. The Spanish and Shubenacadie schools each have a claim to uniqueness that can be productively complicated by attending to the greater mission history behind these schools. The Spanish IRS was the only residential school operated by the Jesuits, and the Shubenacadie IRS was the only residential school to have existed in the Canadian Maritimes. Such assertions of uniqueness occlude the deep mission histories of not only the Jesuits and the Sisters of Charity, but such assertions of uniqueness also occlude the histories of geographic regions as sites of Christian mission that predate the formation of the IRS system or the erection of the first residential schools on the federally-funded model. The Jesuits have extensive colonial histories, when studied closely, can illuminate the contours of their order's extensive involvements in missions to Indigenous people or education generally. While the Jesuits operated one residential school in post-Confederation Canada, they have a long and entrenched history of colonial education that dates to the era of New France, including a seminary for Wendat boys in seventeenth-century Quebec City and several mission settlements along the St. Lawrence Valley.[45] The Spanish IRS was opened in 1913 and was an extension of the Jesuits' earlier mission school at Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island. The Wikwemikong mission school began receiving federal funding in 1879 but dated to the arrival of French Jesuits to Manitoulin in the late 1840s (themselves the first cohort of Jesuits deployed to work in Canadian territory since the global suppression of the Jesuit order by the papacy in 1773).[46]

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[45] Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 39–60; Victoria Jackson, "Silent Diplomacy: Wendat Boys' 'Adoptions' at the Jesuit Seminary, 1636–1642," *Journal of the*

The example of the Sisters of Charity of Halifax is equally complex with multiple extensions and continuities. Established in Halifax in 1855, the Sisters of Charity were originally established by Elizabeth Seton in the United States in 1809. Seton's congregation was itself an extension of the French Daughters of Charity established by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac in 1633.[47] The group of nuns who travelled to Halifax to establish a convent there had come from New York City. The Sisters of Charity would not begin the residential school for Mi'kmaw children at Shubenacadie until 1929, yet applying a "Vincentian" lens to this history links the Shubenacadie IRS to a much earlier history of Christian mission. The choice made in the late 1920s by the Archdiocese of Halifax to make

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Canadian Historical Association 27, no. 1 (2016): 139–168; Jean-François Lozier, *Flesh Reborn: The Saint Lawrence Valley Mission Settlements through the Seventeenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2018); Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America, 1632–1650* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2000).

[46] David Shanahan, *The Jesuit Residential School at Spanish: More Than Mere Talent* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Jesuit Studies, 2004); David Shanahan, "The Manitoulin Treaties, 1836 and 1862: The Indian Department and Indian Destiny," *Ontario History* 86, no. 1 (March 1994): 13–32; John Meehan and Jacques Monet, "The Restoration in Canada: An Enduring Patrimony," in *Jesuit Survival and Restoration: A Global History, 1773–1900*, ed. Robert Maryks and Jonathan Wright (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 386–398.

[47] Ellin Kelly, "The Vincentian Mission from Paris to the Mississippi: The American Sisters of Charity," *Vincentian Heritage Journal* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 179–195.

Shubenacadie a location for a residential school also reflects the history of Shubenacadie – or *Sipekne'katik* in the Mi'kmaw language – as an influential Catholic mission site dating to the 1730s.[48]

Similarly, the Grey Nuns' mission in the Northwest can be traced to their 1844 voyage from Montreal to Red River to establish their first convent west of Quebec.[49] This growing congregation of Grey Nuns instructed First Nations, Métis, and settler children, and they trained early Indigenous nuns, including Sara Riel, the sister of the Métis leader Louis Riel. From Red River, the Grey Nuns gradually expanded, deploying dozens of sisters in the ensuing decades to operate new residential schools across the Northwest Territories and regions that would eventually become the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

While all these Catholic organizations partnered with the Canadian federal government in the years after 1867, their mission practices, ideologies, and pedagogical principles predate Confederation and were firmly anchored in the evangelistic and educational ethos of nineteenth-century Catholic renewal.

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[48] Thomas Peace, *The Slow Rush of Colonization: Spaces of Power in the Maritime Peninsula, 1680–1790* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2023), 206; Norman McLeod Rogers, "Apostle to the Micmacs," *The Dalhousie Review* 6, no. 2 (1926): 166–176; Gérard Finn, "Jean-Louis Le Loutre," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 2003, accessed March 5. 2024, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/le_loutre_jean_louis_ 4E.html.

[49] Estelle Mitchell, *Les Sœurs Grises de Montréal à la Rivière-Rouge, 1844–1984* (Montreal: Éditions du Méridien, 1987). Also, Catherine Larochelle, "L'histoire des pensionnats de l'Ouest est une histoire québécoise," *Histoire Engagée,* June 8, 2021, accessed July 16, 2024, https://histoireengagee.ca/lhistoire-des-pensionnats-de-louest-est-une-histoire-quebecoise/.

Day Schools, Mission Schools, and Other Assimilative Education

A church history approach therefore allows scholars to study elements of what was often the much longer history of missions that predated the IRS system and that sometimes impacted the choice of location for the residential schools, often built on or near (or in some cases, deliberately removed from) mission sites which had accrued meaning as Christian and Indigenous spiritual loci.[50] As a methodological lens, mission history also has the capacity to illuminate those other colonial institutions – such as day schools, mission schools, hospitals, sanitoria, orphanages, convents – operated by the churches, but that fall outside or beyond the definitions of what constitutes an IRS as defined by the TRCC.[51] These other institutionalized modes of assimilative education were operated by the church and have otherwise largely evaded mainstream public awareness. Unlike residential schools that were sometimes quite distant from students' home communities, day schools and mission schools were often operated by the churches in Indigenous communities, where children and youths were able to return to their homes at night after a day of instruction. Residential schools were sometimes called "industrial schools" because students there were also subjected to daily labour regimes. Boys worked in fields and workshops, while girls worked in kitchens and laundries. In the Catholic context, convents such as those operated by the Grey Nuns served to train future nuns from the female Indigenous and settler populations.[52] Health care was also a key aspect of the Grey Nuns' mission and dated to the congregation's eighteenth-century Montreal general hospital. Hospitals and sanatoria established as part of mission networks functioned to remove sick, especially tubercular, Indigenous children from their home communities. If they did not recover, such children died at these places. Considered in this way, these other church-operated institutions enforced the assimilative policies that characterized the residential schools.[53]

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[50] For studies of other regional Catholic missions, see Laugrand and Oosten, *Inuit, Oblate Missionaries*; Timothy Foran, *Defining Métis: Catholic Missionaries and the Idea of Civilization in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1845–1898* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017); Vincent McNally, *The Lord's Distant Vineyard: A History of the Oblates and the Catholic Community in British Columbia* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000); Martha McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to the Dene, 1847–1921* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1995).

[51] "Indian Day Schools," Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre, The University of British Columbia, accessed March 8, 2024, https://irshdc.ubc.ca/learn/indian-day-schools/.

In the years since RCAP, the term 'Indian Residential School' has come to signify the system of residential schools for Indigenous children launched and operated by church-state collaborators in the years after the recommendation for such collaboration was forwarded in the 1879 Davin Report. While focused research on the IRS system has been crucial to defining a recognizable system of residential schools, the IRS terminology narrows our understanding of colonialism and assimilative education by disregarding the other modes of schooling and instructive care deployed in Indigenous communities. Federally operated day schools are receiving increased attention, with survivors of day schools becoming eligible to receive compensation in 2019 (an action for parity with the survivors of residential schools granted compensation in 2006).[54] Mission schools (those schools operated solely by the powers of the church without state aid), however, are still on the margins of public awareness. Largely dating to the pre-Confederation period, mission schools fade from view when studies focus on the national model of the IRS officially launched in 1879 and expanded in 1884.[55] As with the Jesuit example of Wikwemikong, which later moved to Spanish River, Ontario. Mission schools of the colonial era frequently laid the literal and conceptual groundwork for the later launching of residential and day school systems. Such developments over time reflect the enduring and evolving nature of "civilizing missions" and their many economies at sites of colonial contact.

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[52] Lesley Erickson, "Repositioning the Missionary: Sara Riel, the Grey Nuns, and Aboriginal Women in Catholic Mission of the Northwest," in *Recollecting: Lives of Aboriginal Women of the Canadian Northwest and Borderlands*, ed. Sarah Carter and Patricia McCormack (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2011), 115–134.

[53] Kristin Burnett, *Taking Medicine: Women's Healing Work and Colonial Contact in Southern Alberta, 1880–1930* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010); Maureen Lux, *Separate Beds: A History of Indian Hospitals in Canada, 1920s-1980s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016); Martha Walls, "'[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed': Colonialism, Resistance, and Female Mi'kmaw Teachers in New Brunswick Day Schools, 1900-1923," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 22, no. 1 (2011): 35–67; Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900–1950* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998). Also, "St. Boniface Sanatorium," Manitoba Indigenous Tuberculosis History Project, accessed July 21, 2024, https://indigenoustbhistory.ca/history/st-boniface-sanatorium.

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[54] "Background," Federal Indian Day School Class Action, accessed February 3, 2024, https://indiandayschools.com/en/about/background/.

[55] This information can be found in the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, volume 1. *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1 – Origins to 1939* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 154–162.

An Integrative History of Education

As the history of education is receiving renewed attention in Canadian scholarship,[56] it is an appropriate moment to invigorate interest in historical studies of religious schooling and its relationships with state schooling. In Sean Carleton's recent 2022 study of British Columbia, he traces the entangled histories of state schooling to elucidate the coeval nature of (1) public schools for settler and immigrant children and (2) residential and day schools for Indigenous children. Carleton demonstrates the payoffs of studying the residential school system in tandem with the development of the public school system. If historians or religion specialists isolate these two histories of education, significant insights into the developments of the settler state, colonialism, race, religion, civility, and citizenship are missed. Colonial education deployed a complex and multifaceted institutional apparatus. In Carleton's view, which he anchors in the findings of the TRCC, "if settler Canadians are serious about repairing relations with Indigenous Peoples, the full extent of Canada's history of education and colonialism – including schooling for settlers – must first be understood and addressed."[57] Carleton makes it clear that "ruling by schooling" was designed to preserve social order in early Canada. "Students [Indigenous and non-Indigenous] got lessons […] in ways that built their character and prepared them for their future roles as loyal subjects and defenders of empire."[58] While it will be important not to suggest public schooling for non-Indigenous children and residential schooling for Indigenous children were the same, or to suggest they carried comparable or relative consequences for students, the entanglement of church initiatives and state policies across these categories of education suggests the depth of the civilizing mission's roots in Canadian origin stories.

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[56] Catherine Larochelle, *School of Racism: A Canadian History, 1830–1915,* trans. S.E. Stewart (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2023); James Farney and Clark Banack, *Faith, Rights, and Choice: The Politics of Religious Schools in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023); Funké Aladejebi, *Schooling the System: A History of Black Women Teachers* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021).

[57] Sean Carleton, *Lessons in Legitimacy: Colonialism, Capitalism, and the Rise of State Schooling in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2022), 4.

Following Carleton's example, it is clear from my research on the Jesuits that they were key educators in Canadian history, for many decades they established educational institutions for Indigenous and settler children and youth. The Jesuits ran important colleges for boys in Montreal (such as Loyola College, Collège Sainte-Marie, and Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf) and in Kingston, Ontario (such as Regiopolis College), and in many other locations across Canada.[59] While most of the boys who attended these colleges were Euro-Canadians, at least some Indigenous boys from the Spanish IRS later attended Loyola College in Montreal.[60] Likewise, the Sisters of Charity undertook many educational initiatives for girls in the Canadian Maritimes, including Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) and a number of convents in non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities alike.[61] To this renewed scholarly interest in state schooling modelled by Carleton and others, I wish to emphasize the importance of religious contributions to this system of education, particularly via pre-Confederation missions.[62] While my examples in this essay have been Roman Catholic, recent studies of some Canadian universities have also shed light on Anglican examples. The colonial-era forerunner to the University of New Brunswick (UNB) was sponsored for a time by a Protestant mission society that also funded a school for Indigenous children in rural New Brunswick. A similar Anglican mission history has been uncovered in the case of Western University in Ontario.[63] Such inter-institutional networks as those that connected early colleges to residential and mission schools demonstrate the scope of the colonial institutional apparatus.

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[58] Carleton, *Lessons in Legitimacy*, 6.

[59] Jean Cinq-Mars, *Histoire du Collège Sainte-Marie de Montréal, 1848–1969* (Montreal: Éditions Hurtubise, 1998); T.P. Slattery, *Loyola and Montreal: A History* (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1962).

[60] See Basil Johnston in Loyola College yearbooks, 1951–53, and 1954 graduating class photo, Concordia University Records Management and Archives.

[61] McKenna, "An Educational Odyssey"; *Sisters of Charity, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1849–1949* (Archdiocese of Halifax, 1949).

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[62] For other relevant histories of education, see Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York City: Bloomsbury, 2013); Colin Calloway, *The Indian History of an American Institution: Native Americans and Dartmouth* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2010); Paul Axelrod, *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Johanna Selles, *Methodists and Women's Education in Ontario: 1836–1925* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); Michael Gauvreau, *The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991); Micheline Dumont and Nadia Fahmy-Eid, *Les couventines: l'éducation des filles au Québec dans les congrégations religieuses enseignantes, 1840–1960* (Montreal: Éditions Boréal, 1986); Claude Galarneau, *Les collèges classiques au Canada français: 1620–1970* (Montreal: Fides, 1978).

[63] See Richard Yeomans, "Land Rich, Cash Poor: The Settler-Colonial Beginnings of the University of New Brunswick, 1785–1829," *Acadiensis* 52, no. 2 (Autumn 2023): 11–44; Natalie Cross and Thomas Peace, "'My Own Old English Friends': Networking Anglican Settler Colonialism at the Shingwauk Home, Huron College, and Western University," *Historical Studies in Education / Revue d'histoire de l'education* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 22–49; Caitlin Harvey, "University Land Grabs: Indigenous Dispossession and the Universities of Toronto and Manitoba," *The Canadian Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (December 2023): 467–493.

An expansive view on colonial schooling also suggests that some pre-Confederation educational initiatives were advocated and undertaken by Indigenous leaders or their communities as acts of political agency. Before the policies of assimilation and enfranchisement enshrined in the *Indian Act* (1876), Indigenous people used schooling and the acquisition of literacy and numeracy to resist or counteract settler encroachments on their lands. A longue durée approach to the study of colonial schooling, as recommended by Thomas Peace,[64] would permit historians to trace such dis/continuities between pre- and post-Confederation institutions and the impact of schooling on the lived experiences of Indigenous students and their communities.

Toward a Global Perspective

Attending to pre-Confederation, colonial history also lends a transnational scope to a topic that is often framed in the context of national history, i.e., 'Canada's residential school system'. Yet, in the years before Confederation, Catholic-run mission schools frequently obtained their funds from Europe, for instance, via the Œeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi (Roman Catholic, based in Lyon, France), while Protestant missions obtained funds from the Society for Propagating the Gospel and the New England Company (based in London and Massachusetts, respectively).[65] In the years before Newfoundland and Labrador joined Confederation, the missions that operated residential schools for Indigenous children there received their funding from organizations as diverse as the Moravian Church to American and European philanthropic and medical aid organizations.[66] Thus, mission-specific studies that examine funding sources or pedagogical models employed by missions could also guide scholarly inquiries toward a global perspective on residential schools. Christian missions seldom adhered to national boundaries. In the late nineteenth century, the Grey Nuns of Montreal, for instance, went south of the Canadian border to establish a residential school at Fort Totten in North Dakota. This and other examples suggest a potential for transnational studies of residential and industrial schools across the borders of Canada and the United States.[67]

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[64] Thomas Peace, "Borderlands, Primary Sources, and the Longue Durée: Contextualizing Colonial Schooling at Odanak, Lorette, and Kahnawake, 1600–1850," *Historical Studies in Education / Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 8–31; Thomas Peace, "Searching for Order in a Settlers' World: Wendat and Mississauga Schooling, Politics, and Networks at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century," in *Violence, Order, and Unrest: A History of British North America, 1749–1876*, ed. Elizabeth Mancke, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 185–213. Also, Robert Carney, "Aboriginal Residential Schools Before Confederation: The Early Experience," *Historical Studies of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association*, 6 (1995): 13–40.

A focus on church mission history also bears potential for studies of what anthropologist Hillary Kaell has termed "Christian globalism." Kaell examines the ways individual Christians in the United States gave financially to support 'heathen' children abroad.[68] Charitable programs sponsored by Christian religious also supported the assimilative education of Indigenous children within national boundaries, contributing significantly to the development of varied mission projects including the US Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions.[69] For historian Kris Manjapra, the colonial schooling provided by Christian missionaries to non-European children across the globe was intended to "keep the colonized in place and in thrall."[70] Ongoing research is required to determine how schooling models from one regional, national, or imperial context were related to those models employed elsewhere. Insights gleaned from the scholarship on global and transnational mission projects could situate colonial schooling in Canada amid larger contexts of modernity. A global perspective on colonial education could help historians of religion assess the legacies of church, empire, and imperialism on Canada's national model of residential schooling.

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[65] Accounts of pre-Confederation Catholic missions were frequently described by the Jesuits and Oblates in letters published in the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* between 1845 and 1861. For the Protestant context, see Laura Stevens, *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Judith Fingard, "The New England Company and the New Brunswick Indians, 1786–1826: A Comment on the Colonial Perversion of British Benevolence," *Acadiensis* 1, no. 2 (Spring 1972): 29–42.

[66] Andrea Proctor, *A Long Journey: Residential Schools in Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's, NL: ISER Books, 2020).

[67] Andrew Woolford, "Discipline, Territory, and the Colonial Mesh: Indigenous Boarding Schools in the United States and Canada," in *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America*, ed. Laban Hinton, et al. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 29–48.

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68. Hillary Kaell, *Christian Globalism at Home: Child Sponsorship in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020); Hillary Kaell, "The Holy Childhood Association on Earth and in Heaven: Catholic Globalism in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (2020): 827–851. Also, Kathryn Gin Lum, *Heathen: Religion and Race in American History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022); Peter Stamatov, *The Origins of Global Humanitarianism: Religion, Empires, Advocacy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

69. Amanda Bresie, "Mother Katharine Drexel's Benevolent Empire: The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions and the Education of Native Americans, 1885-1935," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 32, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 1–24.

70. Kris Manjapra, *Colonialism in Global Perspective* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 144. Also, Catherine Hall, "Making Colonial Subjects: Education in the Age of Empire," *History of Education* 37, no. 6 (November 2008): 773–787.

I have suggested here analytic frameworks that could guide religion specialists in future scholarship on residential schools. While the local contexts of specific Indigenous communities should not be eclipsed or reduced by comparative methods, the expansive and scalable lenses of denominational affiliations, mission histories, transnationalism, and globalism suggest avenues that those in our field might follow to strengthen knowledge about colonialism, religion, and assimilative techniques used at Indian Residential Schools.

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