

Titley concludes with general analysis. The question of colonial rule and its effects on the colonized demands further scrutiny. To state that "The authoritarianism of the colonial system was the only legacy of significance" (208) is an obvious understatement. The psychology of dependence and inferiority creates lasting scars on a people who have been under colonial rule. Add to this the exploitation of indigenous economic resources and the results are both psychological and physiological poverty.

"Bokassa's absolute power was reinforced by his style of heroic leadership." (210) Systematically eliminating one's opponents seems far from heroic leadership, but rather the hallmark of a despot. Further, reference to "dependency theorists" (212) raises yet another set of questions about capital accumulation in developing countries. Titley might have considered the work of Andre Gunder Frank, whose thesis (that the centre progresses at the expense of the periphery) may apply to the situation in Centrafrique. In other words, what did France gain at the expense of this African country? One must surely consider the raw materials, the sphere of influence in Africa, and capital development in France.

Although Titley claims Bokassa "was one of the most progressive of his African contemporaries on the question of women's advancement" (214-15), it is clear from Titley's own research that women were ill-treated by this leader. Is ill-treatment or inhumanity a situational phenomenon or are there some standards of decency and human rights that transcend geographical and racial boundaries? Titley could have said a lot more, especially in light of women's persistent quest for equality and respect, and especially in African countries.

This well-crafted book combines factual information gleaned from arduous research, offered with panache. Although one cannot exonerate a consummate dictator, Titley certainly raises reasonable doubts about allegations of Bokassa's atrocities. For this, Titley and his book should be commended.

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Raymond J.A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996. Pp. 388.

Historians have begun the arduous and often unwelcome task of demolishing the Canadian myth of a peaceful, orderly, and Anglo-centric West. Where once they emphasized the region's historical developments as a frontier or meeting place between civilization and savagery, now they imagine the frontier as a crossroads where diverse segments of the population, Native and non-Native, engaged in inter-cultural dialogue. With *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, Raymond J. A. Huel, a historian at the University of Lethbridge, somewhat uneasily establishes himself as a proponent of the "new" western history.

His study explores the historic role that a French-speaking and Catholic religious order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, played as missionaries

among the Indian and Métis populations of what are now the three Prairie provinces. Huel begins with the arrival of the first Oblate missionary at Red River in 1845 and ends in 1945, with the Oblate Order celebrating the hundredth anniversary of its Apostolate. Although the Oblates remained steadfast to their declared mission to ensure the salvation of the Indian and Métis populations of the West, Huel shows how both their methods of proclaiming the gospel and their definition of "salvation" changed and adapted over time. Prior to the transfer of Rupert's Land to the Dominion of Canada in 1870 and subsequent signing of treaties, the Oblates confronted the realities of preaching to a non-literate, non-Christian, and non-sedentary population. Individual Oblates held missions at traditional Indian meeting places, travelled among various tribes during the hunt, learned and preached in Native languages, and adopted pedagogical techniques—music, coloured illustrations, and bilingual catechisms—tailored to their Métis and Indian audiences. For instance, Father Albert Lacombe transformed the Catholic ladder, first developed by Catholic missionaries in the Pacific North West, into a "small masterpiece of pedagogy" (94) visually presenting Catholic history, dogma, and morality as two paths: one to redemption, and the other to damnation. Unsurprisingly, "most of the Indians depicted on Lacombe's ladder were on the path to perdition" (97).

The nature and substance of the Oblate missions changed in the 1870s with the erection of reserves and the federal government's adoption of the 'policy of the Bible and the plough.' An 1883 Order-in-Council established three industrial schools in western Canada, two of them—Dunbow in Alberta and Qu'Appelle in Saskatchewan—entrusted to the care of the Oblate Order.

Fearful that the advancing agricultural frontier would destroy Native and Métis society, the Oblates envisaged the industrial school as a controlled environment where Indian and Métis children—divorced from the "corrupting" influence of their parents—would receive the practical education and vocational skills necessary for their physical survival and spiritual salvation. Tellingly, Bishop Vital Grandin, "architect of Catholic Indian residential education in the North West," finalized his concept of the industrial school after visiting a reformatory school for juvenile delinquents in Citeaux, France. This experiment never fulfilled its early promise. Many Indian and Métis parents welcomed and demanded education for their children, but refused to send their children to schools "designed not to enhance a lifestyle but replace a traditional one with another" (144). Beset by enrollment and consequent financial difficulties, the schools disappeared by the 1920s. Oblate-run residential schools—boarding schools located on the reserves, funded by the federal government, and dedicated to training Indian children in the agricultural and domestic sciences—suffered the same problems: low enrollments, desertion, and disease. At Qu'Appelle residential school alone, fifty pupils died in the first eight years of operation.

Huel's negative interpretation of Oblate educational endeavours reflects his larger assessment of the Oblate Apostolate in the North West: Oblate missions remained foreign institutions rather than indigenous churches that reflected the

needs and aspirations of the people they served. (xiv). The Oblates believed that their educational efforts would build a Native Roman Catholic Church in the West, but only four Métis, and not a single Indian, became priests. This is a dramatic contrast to the Oblate experience in Sri Lanka, where European Oblates served under an indigenous clergy by the 1930s.

That said, Huel's depiction of Oblate-run schools as foreign and colonial institutions imposed upon a local majority by a distant and alien minority is not supported by his evidence. Unlike their Protestant counterparts, he Oblates were quick to learn Native languages and to adopt non-verbal pedagogical tools. Their status as French-speaking priests in a predominantly Anglo-Canadian country made them especially sensitive to the language issue. They associated English with Protestantism, and believed that loss of one's mother tongue would quickly lead to the loss of the Catholic faith. Individual Oblates continued to adapt their pedagogical techniques to the realities of Indian society well into the period of industrial and residential schools. Joseph Hugonnard, principal at Qu'Appelle Industrial School, requested that pupils first be taught in Cree before they learned English. In order to further enhance his students' learning experience, Hugonnard introduced a bilingual English-Cree primer to the curriculum in defiance of the English-only policy demanded by the Department of Indian Affairs. Huel never directly confronts the issue of how the Oblate's own status as ethnic minorities may have given them greater sympathy for Native and Métis cultural aspirations. This oversight is due largely to his unwillingness to explore the personal experiences and attitudes of individual Oblates.

Huel's negative assessment of Catholic missions is perhaps a product of his exclusive use of official Oblate sources. The Oblate papers provide not only a purely non-Native perspective on Catholic missionary goals and achievements, but a particularly masculine one. Huel notably dedicates a number of pages to the evolving relationship between the Oblate missionaries and the Grey Nuns, who taught in Oblate schools. Overall, the reader is left with the impression that administrative difficulties, pedagogical disputes, and petty jealousies between the Oblates and the Grey Nuns undermined Oblate schools. Huel perpetuates the Oblate Order's misogyny by referring to the Grey Nuns' classrooms, orphanages, and charities as "auxiliary" features of the Catholic mission. Other research (my own included) has shown that missionaries—Catholic and Protestant alike—believed that salvation of the Indian and Métis rested upon the missionary's ability to transform Native girls into exemplary wives and mothers to sedentary and agricultural families. Huel himself alludes to this emphasis upon female education: at both the Dunbow and Qu'Appelle industrial schools, Oblate principals had to convince government to build additional facilities for female education. In a letter to Commissioner Edgar Dewdney, Hugonnard asserted that if the purpose of Indian education was to engender "a reformation more or less of the tribes," the girls had to be educated (135). "That the Grey Nuns had no trouble recruiting female students into their classrooms or Native and Métis

women into their congregation suggests response to the Oblate church was more complex than Huel allows.

Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and Métis demonstrates the integral role the Oblate Order played in the development of prairie society. Whether the Oblates' contribution was quite as negative as Huel insists is a question future historians must address. Huel himself acknowledges the limitations of his monograph, noting the need for in-depth case studies of individual missions such as Île-à-la-Crosse and St. Albert. Such studies would allow for more thorough assessment of how power relationships—among Oblates, the federal government, and Protestant missionaries—played themselves out at the local (and at a more personal) level. One would also like to know to what degree Oblate educational endeavours disrupted Native and Métis communities by creating hierarchies of class, race, and gender. To answer this question, the diverse perspectives of the Métis and Indian students (male and female) who attended the schools and those individual nuns and priests who taught in them must be taken into account.

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