



Good Samaritan Hospital,  
Klondike, Yukon

# Presbyterian History

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Editor's Note: Readers will have noticed a change of the photo at the top of the front page. The Good Samaritan Hospital in Dawson City was opened by Andrew S. Grant, a Presbyterian minister and McGill-trained doctor. (Photo credit: Grant Photo Album, PCCA, 1973-5003, Box 4, File 1)

## *Health and Nutrition at Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, 1946-1954*

by Peter Bush

In May 2013, Ian Mosby, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Guelph, published his article on nutritional research and human biomedical experimentation in Aboriginal communities and residential schools in Canada between 1942 and 1952. Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School outside Kenora, Ontario and operated by the Presbyterian Church in Canada, (hereafter CJ) was one of the schools which participated in the studies funded by the federal government. The experiment at CJ used "Newfoundland Flour Mix" to make whole wheat bread. "Newfoundland Flour Mix" which contained added thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, and bonemeal was not legal for sale in Canada under the prohibition against food adulteration. The CJ experiment also involved an educational program for students and staff on good nutrition to determine if nutrition education impacted food choices at the dinner table. Further, during the experiment there was a ban on dental care for students, except for emergency care.

Three months after Mosby's academic article grabbed national attention, in August 2013, CBC Thunder Bay broke the story about Kathleen Stewart's work on students' ears in the

early 1950s at CJ. CBC framed this as another case of experimentation on school children.

This short article uses material found in the Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives to shed light on what was occurring at CJ around health and nutrition between 1946 and 1954.

A detailed report on food service at CJ produced by the Dept. of Indian Affairs in 1946, noted students were not receiving the nutrition they needed when measured by the Canadian Food Guide. In specific each child was to receive an additional 250 ml of milk a day; four more servings of tomatoes or citrus fruit per week; an additional serving of vegetables (not potato) per day; one to two more servings of whole grain breakfast cereal per week; serving only Canada Approved Bread; and more cheese and liver. Further the cooks were to be better trained both in food handling and hygiene as well as in menu planning for better nutritional outcomes. Given the experiment beginning in 1948 with "Newfoundland Flour Mix" insisted on bread that would not be "Canada Approved", it is ironic the 1946 inspection asked for the use of "Canada Approved Bread".

Reading through the correspondence between church appointed staff at CJ and the Women's Missionary Society mission administrators in Toronto who managed the school, it is not clear how much the staff understood about the nature of the nutritional experiment going on at CJ.

On the one hand, Kathleen Stewart, the school nurse, wrote in May 1952 to parents who had children in the school: "active steps were taken to find what food would be best for the Indian people in Canada." Stewart who believed in the power of medical science and the need for research, appears to have had a sense that what was going on at CJ was part of this broader vision of figuring out the best diet for Aboriginal people in Canada. She supported the work of the nutrition team under the leadership of Dr. Pett and Miss Burns, both employed by National Health and Welfare Canada, who annually visited the school. The team, Stewart wrote to parents, "find out from the children after each meal how much and what they ate, this is compared with the amount prepared. The waste is observed, also the way of serving, and the children's table manners." She understood research was underway. So was education for Stewart invited parents, "When the children come home, ask them about it and see if they remember what Dr. Pett and Miss Burns told them about what they should eat, how they should care for their teeth, how to sleep, eat and walk to be healthy and happy and able to learn easily."

Such education about eating, walking, sleeping would bring about a clash between children and parents, or within children. For example, tomatoes and citrus fruit were not easily available to people living on reserves, let alone being affordable. If children returned home from school saying, Dr. Pett says "We should eat more tomatoes", what was a parent to do? How would a child view their parent, if the parent was unable to provide what the nutrition team said was an appropriate diet? Further, how much of determining if a diet is appropriate is in fact an evaluation of culture?

If Stewart in May 1952 appeared to understand an experiment ongoing; the Rev. J. Eldon Andrews, Principal of CJ, seven months later seems not to have understood the nature of the nutrition experiment. Andrews, concerned about the hemoglobin levels of students, suggested to Dr. Pett that instead of using the "Newfoundland Flour Mix" the school simply give children iron pills. Pett responded urging Andrews to find a mill that would provide the school's baker with flour containing bonemeal. Because Pett preferred that the children receive no additional supplements other than cod liver oil "until the end of this project." Andrews does not seem to have been fully versed in what the project was, even though it was happening in a school for which he was responsible. Strikingly no one seems to have raised questions about the fact that blood was being drawn from students not for medical reasons, but rather to determine average hemoglobin counts for the research study.

The nutrition clinic held at CJ did have an impact on the food service. Mr. Mingay, Regional Inspector of Indian Schools, commented on CJ in 1952, "The kitchen was clean and well kept. The children look well fed. Meals are good. If they keep that standard of meals they will come out on the wrong side of the budget." While the nutrition experiments raise fundamental questions about ethics and informed consent, the nutrition question requiring further study is this: Did the schools have enough financial resources to properly feed the students in a way that reflected the culture and practice the students' home communities? The short answer to that question is, "No." CJ along with most Indian Residential Schools had their students working large gardens or farms, not for educational purposes, but to grow food to supplement the inadequate food budgets.

Kathleen Stewart wrote of CJ in 1954, "It is more like a convalescent home for children than a school." She documented students suffering from tuberculosis who had been sent to

the sanatorium, she noted that eleven students that year had had tonsillectomies, and one student had been fitted with an artificial leg due to an accident. All of this was in addition to the regular bumps, bruises, scrapes, and flu symptoms that were part of having 165 students living in the school. Stewart estimated in the first three months of 1954 she handled 2,733 visits from or to students and staff.

Stewart had worked in the school since 1950. She took a pediatric nursing course at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto in 1952. In the fall of 1953 she put her new found knowledge to work. She had noticed “the offensive odour of the children’s breath, discharging ears, lack of sustained attention, poor enunciation when speaking, and loud talking.” For her these symptoms pointed to a single cause – “ear trouble.” She had evidence for her claim. She built a simple mechanism so students could wash out their own ears – it took two quarts of water at 110 degrees F. Students found the process “convenient and soothing”. For some students it took more than two hours to get the mass of wax out of their ears. While the children were grateful to have their ears cleaned out, they were “distressed for a few days by loud radios, etc., which they had ignored before.” In all, during the 1953-1954 school year, 80 children were treated for ear problems.

The medical officer responsible for the Indian Residential schools in the region, Dr. Ling, noted what Stewart was doing. In the spring of 1954 she was invited to participate in a field study. She wrote to the WMS leadership in Toronto, “We think we can do something about deafness among young Indians....we are likely to be the field for a survey...I am to write a report as soon as I can, then it is likely that with statistics and records of treatments and results something more will be understood and the sources of infection attacked.”

Ling provided the school with syringes to more accurately direct the water when cleaning out ears, and the Department of Indian Affairs found CJ an auriscope. (A local Kenora doctor,

hearing of Stewart’s work, had leant the school one for the fall of 1954.) The auriscope allowed Stewart to see if students had ear problems beyond earwax. So impressed was Ling by Stewart’s work that he arranged to move students from other Residential Schools in the area who had ear problems to CJ “where we were interested in actually curing them.” Stewart wrote a report on the most difficult cases documenting the treatments she followed with each student.

Stewart’s report was interpreted by CBC Thunder Bay as evidence of experimentation on students. The reports by themselves might lead one to such a conclusion, however when the reports are placed against the context of Stewart’s overall work, her reports on students with ear problems should be more accurately described as a series of case studies. Her work did not involve experimentation with new methods or medications; rather she was evaluating the effectiveness of generally accepted treatments among a population who had a history of ear problems.

This study is too limited to draw larger conclusions, other than to say more work needs to be done in understanding how aware the staff were of the ways in which the schools were being used by the larger society for purposes that had little to do with education of Aboriginal children. What awareness did the staff have of the larger society’s using the schools as places for experimentation?

For further study see:

Ian Mosby, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952,” *Histoire sociale/Social history*, vol. 46, #91, May 2013, 145-172.

Jody Porter, “Ear experiments done on kids at Kenora residential school”, Aug. 8, 2013, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/ear-experiments-done-on-kids-at-kenora-residential-school-1.1343992>

# Charlie Wenjack and the Indian Residential School System

by Peter Bush

The body of Charlie Wenjack, a 12 year old Ojibway from the Marten Falls First Nation, Northern Ontario and student at Cecilia Jeffery Indian Residential School, Kenora, Ontario was found on Oct. 23, 1966 by railway tracks near Redditt, Ontario some 40 miles from the school. Wenjack was trying to walk home. Cecilia Jeffery School was operated by the Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Charlie Wenjack's short life and tragic death quickly became iconic in the debate about the Indian Residential School (IRS) system.

The jury at the Coroner's Inquest in 1966 offered a challenge to the IRS system: "The Indian education system causes tremendous emotional and adjustment problems for these children. It behooves we who are responsible for this organization to do everything possible to mitigate their problems." Among the recommendations was the following: "A study be made of the present Indian education and philosophy. Is it right?"

Charlie Wenjack's death became an opportunity for Ian Adams to confront the larger Canadian society with the reality of Residential Schools. "The Lonely Death of Charlie Wenjack" appeared in the February 1967 issue of MacLean's. The article was straight forward telling of what the Coroner's Inquest learned about the last days of Wenjack's life. Among the witnesses were the boys who ran away with Wenjack. Adams wrote: "It was through the stumbling testimony of the boys, and in the bewildered silences behind those soft one-word answers, the full horror began to come out. No, they didn't understand why they had to be at school. No, they didn't understand why they couldn't be with relatives. Yes, they were lonesome. Would they run away again? Silence."

A revised version of Adams' article appeared in his 1970 book *The Poverty Wall* under the title "Why did Charlie Wenjack die?" The second

version framed Aboriginal-Newcomer issues in terms of poverty, rather than in terms of race.

Charlie Wenjack's death had an impact throughout the First Nations community in Canada. In the early 1970's Trent University was building its new campus. Trent was to be a collection of colleges, each with a particular emphasis. The Trent University Native Association suggested that "College Five" which would house the Native Studies program of which Trent was proud be named for Charlie Wenjack.

First Nations students saw in Wenjack resistance to the power of colonization. They sought to find in his death a legacy leading to change and hope. They wrote of their conversation with the naming committee:

"We told them that while Charlie Wenjack was indeed a symbol of all the brutality and ugliness represented by Indian education in Canada here was a chance to end that....instead of Charlie Wenjack being a negative symbol his death could be the symbolic cornerstone, not of deaf and pain, but of a positive force spearheaded by Trent with its Native Studies Program."

The college was not named for Wenjack, instead the theatre in the college was. Although for many years no plaque explained the theatre's name.

Charlie Wenjack's story has become part of the cultural life of Canada appearing in song and art. Singer, film maker, and activist Willie Dunn, a Mi'kmaq, in his 1971 self-titled album recorded "Charlie" later known as "Little Charlie". The song describes Wenjack's loneliness hauntingly: "he's looking out for love" and "just a lost little boy." The loneliness of Wenjack's journey and death are reminders of the loneliness endemic in the Indian Residential School system. [Willie Dunn can be heard singing the song at [wawataynews.ca/node/17640](http://wawataynews.ca/node/17640) or a slightly different version at [mocom.ca/Music/Title.aspx?TitleId=277368](http://mocom.ca/Music/Title.aspx?TitleId=277368)]

Walk on, little Charlie  
Walk on through the snow.  
Heading down the railway line,  
Trying to make it home.  
Well, he's made it forty miles,  
Six hundred left to go.  
It's a long old lonesome journey,  
Shufflin' through the snow.

Lonely as a single star,  
In the skies above,  
His father in a mining camp,  
His mother in the ground,  
And he's looking for his dad,  
And he's looking out for love,  
Just a lost little boy by the railroad track  
Heading homeward bound.

He's lonesome and he's hungry,  
It's been a time since last he ate,  
And as the night grows colder,  
He wonders at his fate.  
For his legs are wracked with pain  
As he staggers through the night.  
And he sees through his troubled eyes,  
That his hands are turning white.

Is that the great Wendigo  
Come to look upon my face?  
And are the skies exploding  
Down the misty aisles of space?  
Who's that coming down the track,  
Walking up to me?  
Her arms outstretched and waiting,  
Waiting just for me

Walk on, little Charlie,  
Walk on through the snow.  
Moving down the railway line,  
Try to make it home.  
And he's made it forty miles,  
Six hundred left to go.  
It's a long old lonesome journey,  
Shufflin' through the snow.

Roy Kakegamic, an artist and economic development officer from the Sandy Lake community in Ontario, in 2008 painted "Little Charlie Wenjack's Escape from Residential School." Kakegamic views Wenjack's action as escape, a heroic act of seeking freedom from oppression; he did not run away, a phrase which implies irresponsibility and disobedience.

The oil on canvas painting is large, 122 cm high and 182.5 cm wide (4 ft high and 6 ft wide – the size of hockey net), with strong colours of orange and red, yellow and green. Across the lower portion of the painting are railway tracks on which a silhouetted figure stands alone amongst the rocks and against the tree line. The figure is Wenjack, who Mother Earth sees with an eye on the far right of the painting. As well an eagle or Thunderbird in the background provides a protective presence. Two circles are in the sky, the one to Wenjack's left is half red and half white and it is connected to Wenjack by a black cord. Kakegamic said the red represented Wenjack's Aboriginal heritage which was being changed to be more like white culture. The second circle, to Wenjack's right, is not uniform with parts off center creating a jagged edge around the circle. Wenjack appears to be looking at this circle. For Kakegamic the circle's lack of unity indicates that Wenjack was not whole either, torn in different directions.

[To see the painting, from Trent University collection, go to [trentu.ca/admin/artcollection/htmlfinearts/2008.016.1.htm](http://trentu.ca/admin/artcollection/htmlfinearts/2008.016.1.htm). Artist's description: [cbc.ca/player/Shows/ID/2276091784/](http://cbc.ca/player/Shows/ID/2276091784/)]

The story of Charlie Wenjack remains alive today nearly fifty years after his tragic death. CBC Thunder Bay has recently told his story again, using it as a way to ask questions about how young Aboriginals are educated today often hundreds of miles from their families. [[www.cbc.ca/thunderbay/interactives/dyingforane/education/](http://www.cbc.ca/thunderbay/interactives/dyingforane/education/)]

As the PCC marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Confession regarding Aboriginal People the story of Charlie Wenjack still has echoes today.

## HISTORICAL VIGNETTE

Cecilia Jeffery Indian Residential School was opened at its original site from 1902 to 1929. The 212 acre site, known as: School Point; Camp Prescawa; and Mission Point, sticks into Shoal Lake, on the western edge of Lake of the Woods about 40 kilometers west of Kenora, Ontario. Before the opening of the school leaders of the three First Nations bands in the area: Northwest Angle 37 First Nation; Iskatewizaagegan 39 Independent First Nation; and Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, negotiated an agreement with The Presbyterian Church in Canada about how the school would be operated. As far as is known no similar agreement was negotiated in relation to any other Indian Residential School in Canada. The agreement, known in the First Nations community around Shoal Lake as “The Thirteen Point Agreement”, follows:

### AGREEMENT

Cecilia Jeffery School  
Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1902

*A meeting of the chiefs held here this afternoon. Present at the meeting – Chiefs Red Sky and Pazindawind, counsellor Keekah, missionary Rev. A. G. McKittrick, principal J.C. Gandier.*

*The following is agreed upon –*

*1<sup>st</sup> That while children are young and at school they shall not be baptized without the consent of their parents but if then they reach years of understanding they wish to be baptized, relations and friends shall be invited to the baptism.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> That this building shall be a school building.*

*3<sup>rd</sup> That the government shall be requested to continue the treaty payment while the church are at school, instead of putting the money in the bank and this not only in the case of children from Shoal Lake but for any that may come.*

*4<sup>th</sup> That a number of children shall be sent now and if they are well treated more shall be sent.*

*5<sup>th</sup> That children shall not be transferred from this school to another without the consent, in writing, of their parents.*

*6<sup>th</sup> Little children (under 8 years) shall not be given heavy work and larger children shall attend school at least half of each school day.*

*7<sup>th</sup> That if the school should realize from the sale of farm produce profits beyond expense of maintenance, the children shall receive partial remuneration according to their work on the farm.*

*8<sup>th</sup> That parents shall be allowed to take their children to their religious festivals, but only one child at a time and the child shall not remain away overnight.*

*9<sup>th</sup> That during the busy season the larger children shall have at least three weeks holidays or part of this time may be given at the rice harvest.*

*10<sup>th</sup> That if any of a family is seriously ill (sick in bed), the child belonging to them shall be allowed to make a visit.*

*11<sup>th</sup> That in case of a child running away, police aid shall not be used, but the parents shall bring back the child.*

*12<sup>th</sup> That if possible the children shall be taken in the mission steamer to the treaty payment.*

*13<sup>th</sup> That children shall pass a medical examination on entering the school but afterward in case of light sickness they shall be cared for at the school but in the case of serious illness they shall be cared for at home or at school depending on the wishes of the parents.*

## Review Essay

Craig Van Gelder, ed, *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry*, (Eerdmans, 2007), 243 pgs.

Craig Van Gelder, ed, *The Missional Church & Denominations: Helping Congregations a Missional Identity*, (Eerdmans, 2008), 282 pgs.

Richard Lints, ed, *Renewing the Evangelical Mission*, (Eerdmans, 2013), 272 pgs.

Mary Sue Dehmlow Drier, ed, *Created and Led by the Spirit: Planting Missional Congregations*, (Eerdmans, 2013), 209 pgs.

Missional has become a much used word in the church, often as a way to describe all forms of outreach in which a congregation engages. Missional, however, has a very particular meaning. Missional refers to the church's way of being. A missional church is one that has the mission of God as its reason to be. Mission is not one program alongside Bible study and music ministry, for example, rather the missional church is one that constantly asks, "How does this help us in our calling to engage in the mission of God?" The missional church understands that the church itself is not the end goal of God's mission in the world, instead the church is called to be transformed as all creation is being transformed into the kingdom of God. This conversion of the church makes the church less concerned about its survival and more concerned about the reign of God in the world. Becoming a missional church is not a means of growing or having more people in church to help pay the bills. Becoming a missional church is about choosing to leave behind the safety of church to join God in God's mission in the world. These books invite reflection and action by leaders and congregations seeking to become missional churches.

Van Gelder has brought together papers from two conferences at Luther Seminary, Minneapolis. The first collection invites reflection on how con-

gregations effectively engage their context. Space does to allow for comment on each article.

Scott Frederickson astutely notes one of the challenges for the church in North America is that it is overcontextualized, being indistinguishable from the culture. Only when the church is more loyal to God's mission than it is to the surrounding culture will there be any opportunity to gain a hearing for the "strange world" of the Bible and the gospel.

The individualism deeply rooted in our culture makes difficult conversations about ecclesiology, but ecclesiology is precisely one of the issues the missional movement invites reflection upon. Mark Lau Branson's essay asks what does saying the missional church is a worshipping, learning community mean about how the church is formed and led. A seemingly theoretical conversation actually speaks to what the church does.

Any conversation about changing the local congregation involves, at least for Presbyterians a discussion about the structures of the denomination. In her essay, Terri Martinson Elton, provides a brief history the evolving role of denominations in the American context, and asks how denominations need to change to assist congregations to develop contextual ministry in the present landscape. While Elton's work focuses on the American landscape her insights can be translated to the Canadian context.

The second collection of essays, focused on organizational structure, asks the question of how denominational structures can best assist congregations in developing missional identities. Van Gelder's opening essay covers similar ground to that covered by Elton. He does provide a striking contrast between the denominational church and missional church. The denominational church: "exists as an organization with a purposive intent to accomplish something on behalf of God in the world, with this role being legitimated by the presence of its members who attend on a voluntary basis." The church on this model exists as a result of human action. The missional church: "exists as

a community created by the Spirit that is missionary by nature in being called and sent to participate in God's mission in the world." (43) The obvious role of the Spirit in creating and sending the church provides a definition quite different than the denominational church self-definition. Marion Wyvetta Bullock explores how the denominational agencies, esp. the mission agency, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has been remade in the light of being a missional church. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson's description of the remaking of the Reformed Church of America highlights the practical steps taken to live into being a missional church.

The title of the Lints' edited book may put off readers who do not think of themselves as evangelicals. If that is the case, those not prepared to read this book will be the losers.

Miroslav Volf's essay on human flourishing is a must read. He challenges individual Christians and the community of the church (a) to explain the link between God and the concrete needs of human flourishing, (b) to make plausible the claim that love of God and love of neighbour are essential to human flourishing, and (c) to believe "as a rock bottom conviction" that God is fundamental to human flourishing. (30)

Tite Tienou's essay on how the church is and can be renewed from the margins is a powerful challenge to any in the church who still believe the hope of a renewed church rests with those who have status and organizational authority. For Tienou one of the margins offering the hope of renewal is the emerging Third World church.

The wider culture points regularly to the disunity of the church, and by that they mean the multitude of denominations, but those within denominations know only too well the divisions that exist within communities of faith that share the same name. Lints challenges the Protestant churches in particular to claim in this new post-modern world a unity that transcends the old divisions.

Thinking hard about the faith is important as Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., so cogently argues in his essay. He concludes, the church "requires a recovered faith in the holiness of God, a recovered con-

fidence that God's Word is alive for our time, and a renewed determination to preach Jesus Christ crucified and risen, the head of the church and the Lord of the universe." (200)

As the essays collected by Dreier hammer home the point that one of the best ways to develop missional congregations is by planting new churches where missional values are built into the congregation's DNA. Dreier's opening essay provides an excellent map of the missional church planting landscape and some of the ways the Spirit is at work in that action.

Just as Tienou highlighted the hope coming to the church from the margins of the church in global south, Harvey Kwiyanzi discusses the ways in which African immigrants to North America are opening up new opportunities for multi-cultural churches. Such churches are not merely "North American" congregations with a collection of people from many countries in the world, these are multi-cultural congregations forging new ways of worshipping and being that blend, integrate, and meld the expressions of Christian faith present in various parts of the world into a new organic community. Such processes follow the unpredictable action of the Holy Spirit producing results having few signs of the being made by human hands.

The missional church does not have the same structures and decision-making processes that have developed over the last fifty years in North American congregations. Todd Hobart describes some ways in which new organization and leadership structures are emerging in missional churches. Such models are experimental, flexible, and not yet capable of being categorized. However neither is the action of the Spirit.

The present times call for new ways of thinking and being in the church, and among the most difficult of those changes will be changes to the structures of the church. But without new wineskins the new wine will be lost. If the church is to be renewed it will require new wineskins.

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