A Nativist Movement at Metlakatla Mission

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In early August of 1877, Anglican lay-missionary William Duncan temporarily handed over leadership of the famous Metlakatla mission to A. J. Hall, a newly ordained clergyman. The authoritarian leader had been directed by the Anglican Church Missionary Society (hereafter referred to as the CMS) to found a new mission on the B.C. coast; Hall was slated to eventually become Duncan's permanent replacement at the famous Skeena community.

Shortly after the exchange, a wave of religious excitement swept the Tsimshian community, marked by several extraordinary declarations. A few Indians claimed to have heard the voice of God; some purportedly witnessed a vision of angels, while still others felt they had discovered the cross of Christ.[1] Although they were ordered to halt their religious activities, the Tsimshian disobeyed, thereby threatening the social organization of the mission.

Existing historical studies of Metlakatla have dealt with this development in a somewhat perfunctory fashion. For example, H. S. Wellcome, the nineteenth-century journalist, considered the incident an unfortunate event caused by excessive religious enthusiasm:

> At one time, Mr. Duncan entirely abdicated the mission to an ordained clergyman sent out by the Society and had only been absent a few weeks, preparing for a new mission, when Metlakatla was thrown into dreadful confusion; and the organization well-nigh wrecked by the unwise ecclesiastical enthusiasm of the new missionary; the effects of those methods, upon many of the still superstitious minds, was to create a fanatical cyclone. Some were led in the fever of their delirium, to declare that they witnessed miracles, beheld and held conversation with the Holy Spirit; and that angels hovered about the village.[2]

[1] W. Duncan to the Anglican Church Missionary Society, 4 March 1978; Metlakatla, British Columbia: *Church Missionary Society Papers* (hereafter denoted C.M.S.P.).

[2] H. S. Wellcome, *The Story of Metlakatla* (London: Saxon and Co., 1887), p. 193.

Metlakatla is quieter than a white village of its size, the Indians themselves are police, and they form a council which settles all matters.[9]

William Duncan had accomplished much in a fifteen-year span; such progress was made possible by the strong loyalty demanded of his followers, and the firm control he exercised over the inhabitants of Metlakatla. "He organized the people into a community, accepting none who would not pledge themselves to the ruler of the community."[10]

Duncan's evangelical values became Metlakatla law and were strictly enforced. Consumption of alcohol and traditional Tsimshian ceremonies were outlawed. Outside influences were limited by segregation; Duncan "kept them apart both from the whites and the rest of the Indians."[11] The missionary further restricted individual freedom by building a dormitory for young, unmarried Tsimshian women, thereby inhibiting courting activity.

In 1863 the Metlakatla leader was appointed Justice of the Peace for the mission, an office which conferred almost dictatorial powers on the holder.[12] As the Tsimshian population had increased greatly, Duncan promptly appointed a number of policemen from among the resident Indians to enforce secular and religious law. No aspect of life in the community was ignored; work habits, marital life and religious practices were all monitored by the newly minted police force.

Despite the fulsome praise showered on the mission by Lady Dufferin, the Governor-General and members of his party could scarcely overlook the severe limitations which restricted Metlakatla society. When Lord Dufferin asked to hear traditional Tsimshian songs, he was told that such songs were prohibited; the customary gift or symbolic gesture of friendship to the rightful chief of an Indian community was also denied: "[Duncan] successfully threw cold water on the Governor-General bestowing any mark of recognition of the chief."[13] These incidents led to the following comments by a member of the vice-regal party: "He has to conduct his operation in a peculiar way, and it can be easily under-

[9] Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, *My Canadian Journal*, 1872-78 (London: John Murray, 1891), p. 261.

[10] E. C. Moore, *The Spread of Christianity in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1911), p. 305.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Jean Usher, *William Duncan*, p. 71.

[13] Michael Bell, *Painters in a New Land* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973), p. 194.

stood that much of his advice and direction would be thrown away, were there a recognized authority over the Indians other than himself."[14]

The community continued to grow, experiencing a rapid rise in population in the late 1870s; no doubt the economic prosperity evident at the mission and the absence of smallpox made Metlakatla a popular place to settle. Tsimshian attitudes toward Duncan, however, are more difficult to assess. His linguistic fluency and practical skills certainly merited admiration, but his role as magistrate, chief of police and arbiter of all social behaviour must have demanded respect rather than affection.

Nor did the mission's religious activities as co-ordinated by the evangelical Duncan offer any social relief from a lifestyle both controlled and puritanical. The church was the focal point for missionary-led religious observances conducted twice each Sunday, consisting of hymns, prayers, and sermons.[15] Sections of the Bible were translated into Tsimshian for use in scriptural study sessions held in the village school.

This sere social life was in telling contrast to the joyous traditional festivities still maintained by the neighbouring Tsimshian. Historical evidence suggests that at least a few of the Metlakatla natives secretly reverted to the ancestral rites practised openly nearby. One long-standing resident of the mission confessed in 1877 to a two-year relapse into native religion during the period of Duncan's ministry.[16] A precious ceremonial mask was kept hidden by a Tsimshian chief.[17]

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the CMS gradually reduced its emphasis on technical skills and began to introduce the changes consonant with the revival of the sacraments instigated by the Oxford movement.[18] As Metlakatla did not have an ordained minister capable of performing the full liturgical role of the Anglican Church, the CMS ordered the replacement of Duncan by A. J. Hall, a recent theology graduate.[19]

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Jean Usher, *William Duncan*, pp. 75-76.

[16] W. Schutt to CMS, 4 March 1878, Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.* For evidence, see quotation footnoted 59.

[17] Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, *My Canadian Journal* (London: John Murry, 1891), p. 265.

[18] S. L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement* (London: Faith Press Reprints, 1963), pp. 20-30, 113-14.

[19] British missionary activity had grown more conscious of the importance of education at the time. Craftsmen and lower class technicians without formal education were no longer acceptable as missionaries. The world-famous Doctor Livingstone of the London Missionary Society expressed this sentiment when he stated:

Although the above description acknowledges the influence of differing religious traditions on the event, it does little to analyze their interaction. Furthermore, Wellcome overlooked the effect that Duncan's administrative methods and religious laws may have had on the occurrence.

This study seeks to unravel that interaction in the light of Tsimshian traditions and our present-day knowledge of nativist movements:

> Nativist movements . . . begin in the context of Christian colonization, they express a fundamental dissatisfaction with the way Christianity confronts the supernatural. These movements turn to tradition for effective ritual and more penetrating belief.[3]

The mystical phenomenon of 1877 was a convergence of two trends: the pre-colonial Tsimshian cultural development and their Christian colonization at Metlakatla. A detailed account of developments leading up to the excess of religious fervour will illustrate the reversion of the Tsimshian to tradition in a search for a more deeply satisfying ritual and belief.

Prior to the missionary presence on the northwest Pacific coast, the Tsimshian had developed an economically sound society based on hunting, fur trading, and a bountiful harvest of fish year-round.[4] Establishment of a Hudson's Bay trading post at Fort Simpson early in the nineteenth century merely served to increase their existing prosperity.

This long-standing economic well-being was reflected in the evolution of a complex social pattern, in which the potlatch was the chief element. In each village, during the late autumn months following the storage of the season's catch, great religious ceremonies were held. Festivities, consisting of feasting, singing, dancing and parading, were initiated by the visitation of the Tsimshian God Spirit to the settlement.[5]

This awesome event was formalized in a traditional ceremony possessed of great social and religious significance, for the rites served as an initiation into the adult world for Tsimshian youth. Each candidate was required to undergo a period of fasting and isolation before the elders summoned the Spirit, whose presence in the community was signalled by a curious whistling sound. Great excitement and jubilation would mark the climax of the event and surrounding villages were urged to rejoice in

[3] J. W. Fernandez, "African Religious Movements — Types and Dynamics," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 2 (1964): 540.

[4] Jean Usher, *William Duncan of Metlakatla* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1974), p. 34.

[5] V. E. Garfield, *Tsimshian Clan and Society* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1939), p. 297.

the spiritual presence and partake in the celebrations.[6] It is important to note that most aspects of the Tsimshian spirit visitation ceremony came to the fore during the mystical revelations experienced at Metlakatla during the late summer of 1877.

Christian colonization of the Metlakatla Tsimshian began in 1862, with the establishment of an Anglican mission in the area. CMS activity among the Tsimshian had begun even earlier, in 1857, when lay-missionary William Duncan was sent to Fort Simpson on the northwest Pacific coast.[7]

Originally founded in Britain by evangelical Anglican laymen and clergy in 1799, the CMS later became an official body of the Church in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The main religious and social aims of the CMS for most of that century were to induce indigenous races to abandon their cultures and adopt the economic, social and political mores of the puritanical European Christian society. Set goals were to be achieved by the selection and employment of laymen equally competent in trades and theology. Certainly, early CMS missionaries invested their teaching of European technical skills and patterns of social behaviour with a fervour equal to that apparent in the dissemination of Christian beliefs and literacy.[8] The company of lay tradesmen was supervised and directed by a missionary leader, usually an ordained clergyman.

After two decades of dedicated work by Duncan and his skilled company, the Skeena River mission became widely regarded within Canada and abroad as a model Indian community. Its importance as such was tacitly acknowledged by a vice-regal visit in 1876 by Lord and Lady Dufferin. The wife of the Governor-General was strongly impressed by the industry, growth and cleanliness exhibited by the 800-strong Tsimshian community:

> Metlakatla is one of the most successful of the Indian missions. It is entirely the work of a Mr. Duncan who when he came here found the Indians in a most savage condition.
>
> He has Christianized and civilized them; he has not only taught them their Religion, and the three "R's", but has shown them how to build, taught them how to handle trade, to make soup, to sing.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 298-304.

[7] Jean Usher, *William Duncan*, pp. 40-50.

[8] Max Warren, *Social History and the Christian Mission* (London: SCM Press, 1967), pp. 27-44; "The Selection and Training of Missionaries in the Early 19th Century," in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1970), vol. 6, p. 132.

The new minister arrived at Metlakatla on 6 August 1877, and immediately found himself in ideological conflict with the evangelical Duncan.[20] Perhaps somewhat annoyed at the prospect of delivering the leadership into the hands of a neophyte, Duncan departed earlier than expected for Victoria: "I felt it was my duty to go to Fort Rupert to open a mission there and at once took steps with this arrangement in view hoping to be able to wind up my work here [Metlakatla] by occasional visits."[21] W. Schutt, a schoolteacher and lay-missionary who frequently deputized for Duncan in the past, remained at the mission to aid and advise Hall.

Unfortunately Hall was young, idealistic and ambitious: fame to equal Duncan's was a long-term goal.

> Ever since I left San Francisco I heard frequent testimony borne of his work . . . all admire him . . . I do desire to go forth to join him, joyfully, trustfully — praying that his mantle may rest on me — yea — is it presumptuous to ask that a greater portion of blessing may rest on my work?[22]

This excess of zeal[23] was also partly founded on a firm belief in the efficacy of his personal pleas to the Almighty. On the voyage from San Francisco to Victoria gale-force winds had "rocked and cracked" the ship. Hall had "prayed earnestly" for deliverance and had, he felt, been

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> It is a mistake to think that any pious person may do for a missionary. One of the founders of the London Missionary Society thought that 'a good man who would read his bible, and make a wheelbarrow, was abundantly qualified.' This is a mistake. Missionaries ought to be highly qualified in every aspect. Good education, good sense, and good temper are indispensable. If Christians sent out poor ignorant fools, they act on the penny wise, and pound foolish plan.
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> Max Warren, *Social History*, p. 68.

[20] Hall arrived at Metlakatla on 6 August 1877, and immediately found himself in a difficult situation. The first question he was asked by Duncan was the latest news from Duncan's friend Bishop Cridge, of which Hall knew little since he had had little to do with the Episcopal Bishop while he was in Victoria. Duncan, quickly realizing that Hall was not an evangelical, attempted to alter Hall's views of Bishops Cridge and Hills:

> Every man in the field except myself has received great kindness and sympathy from Bishop Cridge and his people while Bishop Hills has done nothing to help. I must tell you that I feel my position a very, very difficult one, and I never realized it so much till I landed.
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> See F. A. Peake, *The Anglican Church in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959), pp. 79-84 and A. J. Hall to Mr. Wright, 16 July 1877, Victoria, British Columbia, *C.M.S.P.*

[21] W. Duncan to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia, *C.M.S.P.*

[22] A. J. Hall to Mr. Wright, 16 July 1877; Victoria, British Columbia, *C.M.S.P.*

[23] Bishop Bompas to CMS, 29 January 1878; Victoria, British Columbia, *C.M.S.P.*

answered by a calm the following morning.[24] Bishop N. C. Bompas, a visitor to the mission, was quick to notice the execessive vanity: "he . . . appears rather lifted up at being put forward prominently on a sudden."[25]

Given the dictates of CMS policy and his own impetuosity, it was not long before young Hall found fault with the mission. Particularly distressing was the fact that no religious services had been held during the five days Hall and Duncan were both resident at Metlakatla: "It thus happened that I never saw him [Duncan] conduct a service before he went away."[26] A resident of the Haida mission on the northwest Pacific coast and a Duncan convert described Hall's compensatory methods: a total of four services conducted on the first Sunday after the former leader's departure, the last being scheduled at the request of a single person.

> Rev. Hall . . . departed from the ordinary rules and regulations of the first Sunday after his arrival. After all services were over, at the request of one man, he had the Bell ringing again and assembled the people for the fourth service so that it must have been midnight when they were dismissed.[27]

The converts at Metlakatla were judged by the new leader to be "not sufficiently under the power of the Gospel"; consequently, he sought to heighten their awareness by "raising a revival among them."[28] When the experienced Schutt attempted to offer advice concerning planning for the program of spiritual revival, Hall, by spurning the lay-missionary, proved himself "impetuous, hasty, and not easily led."[29]

Hall favoured introduction of the spirit of Christ into the assemblage by means of highly charged and emotional revivalist sermons, rather than a controlled and considered implementation of change. Accordingly, when the sermons laboured over for three hours[30] were delivered, they were preached in "boisterous tones," couched in "impudent phrases," and accompanied by gesticulations.[31] These "very passionate addresses" certainly affected Shutt, who "could scarcely retain his seat"[32] while

[24] A. J. Hall to Mr. Wright, 16 July 1977; Victoria, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[25] Bishop Bompas to CMS, 29 January 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[26] A. J. Hall to CMS, 6 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[27] Collison to CMS, 24 January 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.* Collison had worked with Duncan at Metlakatla for a few years until 1876.

[28] Bishop Bompas to CMS, 29 January 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] A. J. Hall to CMS, 6 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[31] Bishop Bompas to CMS, 29 January 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia, *C.M.S.P.*

[32] W. Duncan to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia, *C.M.S.P.*

listening. Complete understanding of Hall's message by the Tsimshian was assured through simultaneous translation; the only portion of the service conducted wholly in English was the celebration of the Eucharist, an innovation ordered by the CMS. Hall proudly wrote to his superiors: "... the work of God is being glorified even as it is with you."[33]

Religious activity outside the church and school was encouraged by the new minister, in order to remove what he felt were unnecessary restrictions on faith. "Hall told the people in one of his evening sermons ... they might go and pray in the bush." Natives were allowed "to hold meetings for prayer and readings among themselves."[34]

Less visible changes occurred as a consequence of the shift in leadership at Metlakatla. As Hall was not a linguist, he was forced to call upon the natives, and particularly the village elders, for assistance: "Owing to my ignorance of the language, the energies of the natives were especially called for."[35] Gradually, the total control espoused by Duncan slipped away, as the Tsimshian were conceded a greater role in religious matters at the mission. The influential elders began to conduct their own prayer meetings on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, unattended by unmarried Tsimshian youth who much preferred a romantic interlude, spiced by violation of Duncan's moral laws. Too late, Hall admitted that he "knew little of the language, and placed too much confidence in those who presided."[36]

The greater freedom of movement and assembly, the unprecedented delegation of authority and the frustration experienced during the previous winter of social and religious boredom combined to engender a typically guilt-ridden response to the revivalist approach.[37] "An elder declared that truths of the Bible had so touched his heart that now for the first time, he treated his wife kindly."[38] "A woman sent a message [to the effect that] ... for two years she had been drawn away from God's path by the mockery of her people, but that she again felt the presence of Christ."[39] Hall's teachings were even credited with a cure for

[33] A. J. Hall to CMS, 6 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[34] F. Duncan to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] An aroused awareness of Christian beliefs, a feeling of guilt and a behavioural change to rectify supposedly evil ways are characteristics associated with religious revivals. See B. D. Dickson, *And They All Sang Halleluiah* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1974), pp. 60-70.

[38] W. Schutt to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[39] *Ibid.*

an evil temper, and the missionary became an object for the supplication of sobbing sinners and depressed penitents.[40]

Voluntary prayer meetings were held frequently in late September; the close of the fishing season had left the Tsimshian ample time to focus on religious issues:

> Shortly after the commencement of Mr. Hall's preaching some two or three men began to show signs of the Holy Spirit striving in them . . . They met together in one of the houses for prayers and study of scriptures. One Sunday evening, these young men with a few others remained behind after Services for a prayer meeting conducted by themselves. These meetings continued and grew larger.[41]

Permission was granted for a male "meeting for prayer and readings."[42] The women also secured approval for a series of religious sessions in the church vestry. As the frequency of the meetings increased, Hall sought to share the supervisory burden with hand-picked elders.

This move proved unwise when those selected allowed the religious content of the meeting to deviate from the previously accepted Christian path: "Dreams were related, and any person was allowed to speak."[43] Hall and Schutt remained blissfully unaware of this development; Schutt was unable to attend all the meetings, while the missionary did not understand the Tsimshian language to a degree adequate to sense the shift in direction. Hall failed to see that his control of the mission was further weakened when the Tsimshian began holding religious meetings without any supervision at all, in response to his urgings for an extension of their religious activities beyond the confines of Sunday church services.

The emergence of traditional Tsimshian beliefs and customs during the spiritual revival apparently began during a clandestine meeting one Sunday night early in October. "The old superstitious feelings began to show themselves"[44] when sounds in an empty church were translated into a spiritual visitation:

> The event which however seemed to have set it all quite adrift arose from five men who entered the church after midnight. These five stated they heard a murmuring sound from the rear of the communion table. Thinking it was someone at prayer — they prayed. After which they struck a match

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] A. J. Hall to CMS, 6 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[43] W. Duncan to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[44] *Ibid.*

to see who it was but not being able to find anyone, and thus they ran through the village declaring that the Spirit of God had visited the Church and that the voice that they heard was His voice.[45]

Although the manifestation was not in the form of accepted whistling, it occurred at a strategic time on the Tsimshian religious calendar, for spirit visitations always occurred late at night during the last months of autumn or early winter.

When word of the visitation spread throughout the community, several hundred Indians gathered at the church to mark its arrival:

They rushed out in a state of great excitement, and rewoke the whole village. Soon several hundred people, in the early morning, were assembled in the Church singing, and praying while another group of men was singing outside.[46]

Once Hall and Schutt were notified of the events at the church, they immediately attempted to put an end to the celebration. The Tsimshian were evicted from the building and told to return to their homes: "Outside they went, but only to parade the village singing,"[47] faithful to traditional customs.

A holiday was declared by the elders in spite of Hall's attempts to quell the nativist outbreak: "As the people had grown into a tremendous state of excitement, all work being suspended, Mr. Hall and myself [Schutt] took steps to suppress it."[48] Interference with the notification and invitation of surrounding missions was to no avail: "about sixty men and six canoes left the village to carry the delision [news] to the villages around."[49]

Schutt's efforts to aid Hall in the reassertion of authority met with hostility: "To such a pitch had the fanaticism arisen that Mr. Schutt states that he several times felt afraid for his life."[50] The event had taken on its own momentum, gaining credence through the involvement of six elders in the celebrations: "The ten elders had been ignored as a body during the movement . . . Ultimately four of them had gone astray — two somewhat to blame while four had remained sober and steadfast."[51]

[45] W. Duncan to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[46] W. Schutt to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] W. Duncan to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia, *C.M.S.P.*

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *Ibid.*

A religious frenzy infected the populace, and soon further mystical experiences were reported:

> During the absence of the six canoes a party of young girls who had been roaming the bush all night announced early in the morning they had discovered the cross of Jesus. Crowds at once pushed off to see the wonder, and a procession ensued headed by a young man carrying the said cross which proved to be nothing but a branch of a tree, with the intention of setting it up on the church.[52]

The cross-carrying ceremony ended abruptly when Hall boldly confronted the group: "Mr. Hall met the procession and snatched the wood from the man and threw it away."[53]

This decisive action was followed up by a policed suspension of all meetings in the community,[54] and a severe lecture on the foolishness of the outbreak. Again, Hall was unsuccessful in his attempts to gain control; the nocturnal religious activity of the Tsimshian continued unabated. Emotions reached a fever pitch in Metlakatla when the native party sent to Fort Simpson returned with accounts of additional spiritual experiences:

> This party had worked themselves up to such a frenzy at Fort Simpson (giving out that they had seen Angels there) that they frequented the appearances of being possessed, and one of the Native teachers set about to exorcise them in the name of Jesus.[55]

The matter was further complicated when the Indians were encouraged in the assertion of their revelations by a Wesleyan minister at Fort Simpson, who declared the supernatural incident the work of the Lord.[56]

News of the supernatural activities at Metlakatla soon spread down the coast from Fort Simpson to Victoria, where a newspaper reported that "angels were seen at Metlakatla."[57] Duncan, who was still in Victoria, read the story and immediately decided to return. Upon his arrival, he "found the state of things far worse than the report represented,"[58] and immediately assumed the leadership. Hall quietly sur-

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] W. Schutt to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] W. Duncan to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[57] Bishop Bompas to CMS, 29 January 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

[58] W. Duncan to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia; *C.M.S.P.*

rendered the administrative role to Duncan, who relegated him to a minor place in the mission.

The revival-triggered nativist movement was on the wane within the week. In order to prevent further disruption, the following orders were issued: the interrogation of all those deeply involved in the incident, the prohibition of secret meetings, and the enforcement of prior secular and religious laws.[59] Duncan's commands were obeyed.

Thus an immediate consequence of the revival and nativist movement on Metlakatla was to restore Duncan to the helm of the mission. It was Hall, rather than Duncan, who was eventually sent to found the Fort Rupert mission since it was felt that "his best sphere of work will be in conflict with heathenism."[60] Indeed, Hall did achieve a measure of his ambition through the establishment of a widely publicized school at Alert Bay, B.C.

The affair also intensified friction between Duncan and the management of the CMS. Duncan believed the CMS directors guilty of a serious error in judgment; no doubt they, in turn, questioned the former leader's failure to train Hall due to his precipitate departure from the mission. The conflict between the two finally came to a head in the early 1880s when the Metlakatla Tsimshian were split into two groups. Duncan and his loyal followers established a second Metlakatla in Alaska[61] which became, like the first, an economically prosperous and puritanical community. Interestingly, the less repressive original village declined.

The affair of 1877 can properly be understood only in its colonial context, as a reaction to the "cultural imperialism" represented by Duncan's system. The pre-colonial Tsimshian had developed their own stimulating and completely natural religious traditions which the CMS, in the person of Duncan, strove to repress and replace with a more structured worship and technical way of life. The impact of the emotional and highly charged revivalism espoused by Hall on the tightly controlled native community produced a spontaneous religious movement of mixed Christian and native rites. What emerged, if only for a biref moment, was a true synthesis of two religious traditions: the Tsimshian ritual of spirit visitation inlaid with Christian symbols.

[59] When Duncan returned, some of the Tsimshian were still believing in the visitation, so he strove to convince them otherwise. W. Duncan to CMS, 4 March 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia, *C.M.S.P.*

[60] Bishop Bompas to CMS, 29 January 1878; Metlakatla, British Columbia, *C.M.S.P.*

[61] William Beynon, "The Tsimshian of Metlakatla, Alaska," *American Anthropologist* XLIII (1941): 83-88.