

What the Church can do for
the missionary among the Indians
By Guest H. Walker
I can answer only as it applies
to the North West-Pacific ~~tribes~~
though doubtless it applies in a
general way to all the American Indians
Even one hundred years ago while
the blessed light of the Gospel
was shining along the Atlantic
shores of North America, the Pacific
Coast was shrouded in heathenish darkness.
The first dawn of light evidently was
in 1794-6 when Lewis & Clark made
their famous visit to the Oregon Territory,
when these overland explorers reached
the Nez Perce Indians in the eastern part
of said territory, they told them of
what the Indians aptly named, "The White
mans God, and the white mans Book of Heaven"

These so interested them that they wanted to learn more about his religion.

They received the promise of Lewis and Clark that religious teachers would be sent out to them.

After the fur traders came about 1811 some of them instructed the Indians further of the true God, so that previous to the arrival of missionaries in 1836, the Cayuses had learned to assemble on the Sabbath for worship.

Anxious to get the Bible, other traders and trappers had sold them cards telling them they were the Bible, but the Indians

concluded that men who could get drunk and kill each other, did not love the true God.

Captain Bonneville, one of the early Oregon explorers, states that among the most pleasant scenes in his life he spent in 1832

among the Nez Percés, while teaching them Christianity in answer to their earnest questions.

Their desire for instruction became so great that in 1832 a deputation of five Nez Perce young braves made their way across the trackless plains to St. Louis. They found Captain Clark the old settler then Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the whole Northwest, and made known their wants to him, but he did not make the facts public. It is said he was a Catholic and if so, of course did not want the Protestants to get the start of his organization. These Indians having waited until they were wearied, one of them is said to have uttered a plaint, which was heard by a Christian man, and thus made known was answered by two missionary Societies, that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

then made up of Congregational,
Presbyterian, the Dutch and the Associate
Reformed Churches.

In June 1833 Rev Jason Lee of Canada
was ordained in New England and
appointed by the Board of ~~Foreign~~
the M^C Church to superintend the
missions in Oregon.

In March 1834 he with his nephew
Daniel Lee and two lay members
Cyrus Shepherd and P L Edwards
crossed the continent, the journey across
the plains being on horseback.

These men were aided by the expedition
of Captain Nathaniel Wyeth who was
intending to engage in the fur trade
in Oregon. The four missionaries began
their work in the Willamette Valley.

In 1835 The American Board sent out
Dr Marcus Whitman & wife, and Rev H H Spalding
and wife, who also crossed the plains on horseback.

Dr Whitman started the work among the Cayuses at Wawilit-pu (place of pye grass) and Rev Spalding among the Nez Perces at Lapwai, on the Clearwater river.

Mrs Whitman and Mrs Spalding were the first white women to cross the ~~Plains~~

In 1838. My father Rev Elkanah Walker and mother Mary R Walker, Rev Cushing Eells and wife, Rev A B Smith and wife and Mr W H Gray and wife all of the American Board also crossed the plains on horse back. Dec 7, 1838 I was born at Dr Whitmans. Spring of 1839 Messers Walker & Eells established a mission among the Spokane Indians at Tshim-akain (place of a spring) where they worked until the Whitman massacre of Nov 29 1847, broke up all Protestant missionary work east of the Cascade Mountains.

In the mean time reinforcements for the Methodist missions arrived from ~~time to time~~ ^{over} and the work progressed in all the western territory.

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Since those early years there has been a
marvelous change of conditions
Desert wilds have been transformed beneath
the magic touch of Christian civilization
and made to blossom as the rose.

Most of our Indians have been ~~to~~
adopt the habits of our civilization
and, moreover, have accepted the
Gospel teachings.

In most cases it was a long, weary and
a seemingly hopeless task, to effect the change.
A perfect intoxication for strong drink "fire
water" in Indian parlance, was one great
obstacle. This is happily now well removed
for the Old Oregon Territory is now ^{all} under
prohibition, and the States are helping the
Government in its long time policy of forbidding
sales of liquor to Indians. Still happier will
be the day when the U. S. enacts National
prohibition, and its prohibition extends to all classes.
Oregon has the most far reaching laws of all
the States against sale and use of spirituous
liquors, and the clarion note "dry as a bone" ^{the hills} resounds from _{the hills}

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For all the grand advancement in
Indian missionary work, there is yet
much to discourage the missionary
but not to the extent of the earlier efforts,
When my father and Mother & Rev Ellis &
wife left the Spokane mission in Spring
of 1848, there had not been
after 9 years of labor. Later however the
seed sown bore a rich harvest—

The great hope of today is among the younger
generations, who are not so fully saturated
with the superstitions and practices belonging
thereto among the old Indians.

It is quite impossible to entirely eradicate
this same, especially that of belief in their
Indian "medicine men"

During my sojourn of 15 years at the Warm
Springs Agency, during all of which I took
an earnest interest in the Christian work,
though a Congregationalist by early teaching
and affiliation, we found this dread of Indian
doctors the hardest thing to contend against.
When Captain John Smith, who was

Mr B Indian Agent for 18 years, took charge spring of 1865. he found the Indians practicing polygamy.

At his earnest persuasion mainly, they gave up their plural wives.

After I went there in Aug 1877, I went with Agent Smith to visit the Warm Springs proper, who were in their winter's camp along the Warm Springs river.

He told them if they would go up to the Simnasho valley and fence in a common field he would issue them half of the annual Government supplies as agricultural implements ect.

They consented, and as Agency Clerk I saw that the promise was carried out.

This settlement started a move for a Boarding school, the lumber for which was hauled 12 miles by the Indians free of charge.

These Indians had a practice after burying a warrior to shoot down his favorite horse over the grave, evidently for him to have a steed in the happy hunting grounds.

We persuaded them to abandon this

Oh! There are so many points of disadvantage
A missionary to be successful should
love the work, even though so difficult
and discouraging among Indians.

He should have his mind made up to
stay in the work a long time, for the
work is so different than an ~~average~~

Of all the workers sent to
the Rev. R. W. M. Bude & wife I believe rendered
the longest continuous service, he taking
charge in the fall of 1854. He had two
stations to supply, one at the Agency one
at Simnasho, 20 miles north.

I often assisted him, especially ⁱⁿ going to Simnasho
The Church should urge the Government to
if possible send Christian teachers ^{only} for its
well equipped Indian Schools.

Provide plenty of funds not only enough to
pay the missionaries salaries, but to help
the old and feeble Indians who are often
considered as "in the way."

Some of the whites are bad enough, so the
Indian cannot well be blamed.

Above all things give earnest prayers for
God's blessing upon the Indian mission fields.
Remember the promise "They that sow in tears shall reap ^{in joy}

In closing will say that nearly all if not all Indian tribes believe in a hereafter, a condition that they are wont to describe as their "happy hunting grounds". In the burial of their dead it was the practice to bury with them articles of value they had possessed in life, and hang upon a pole set over the grave, some cooking utensils etc., evidently having in mind a future life where they would be used.

Among the Warm Springs tribe proper, when a warrior was buried his horse was killed over his master's grave, evidently to furnish him a steed in the happy hunting grounds mentioned above.

It can be seen from this how difficult was the missionary work among them. Of all the workers sent there Rev. W. M. Brides & wife rendered the longest service, he taking charge in the fall of 1884. He had two stations to supply

The one at the Agency, the other among
the Warm Springs at Simnasho 20
miles north of the Agency. They left their
impression upon all the tribes among whom
they labored. Under Mr. Prides oversight
a parsonage was built at the Agency
and the church built by Agent Smith
fully completed and furnished.

During the winter of 1878-79 Doac accompanied
Captain Smith in a visit to the Warm Springs
at their usual winter camp by the Warm
Springs river, where were located the Hot Springs
& 8 miles north of the Agency. Agent Smith
assured them that if they would go up to the
Simnasho (Thornbush) valley and start farming
by fencing in the valley 2 miles long and one
half a mile wide, thus having a common field
he would ^{see} that they received their share of
the supplies furnished by the Government
as plows, wagons, harness, &c. &c.

They complied with his request, and
from this started a government-Indian
Boarding School