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# “Native” Religion in a Severn Ojibwe Community Voices From the Inside, Voices From the Outside

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### Résumé de l'article

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# “Native” Religion in a Severn Ojibwe Community

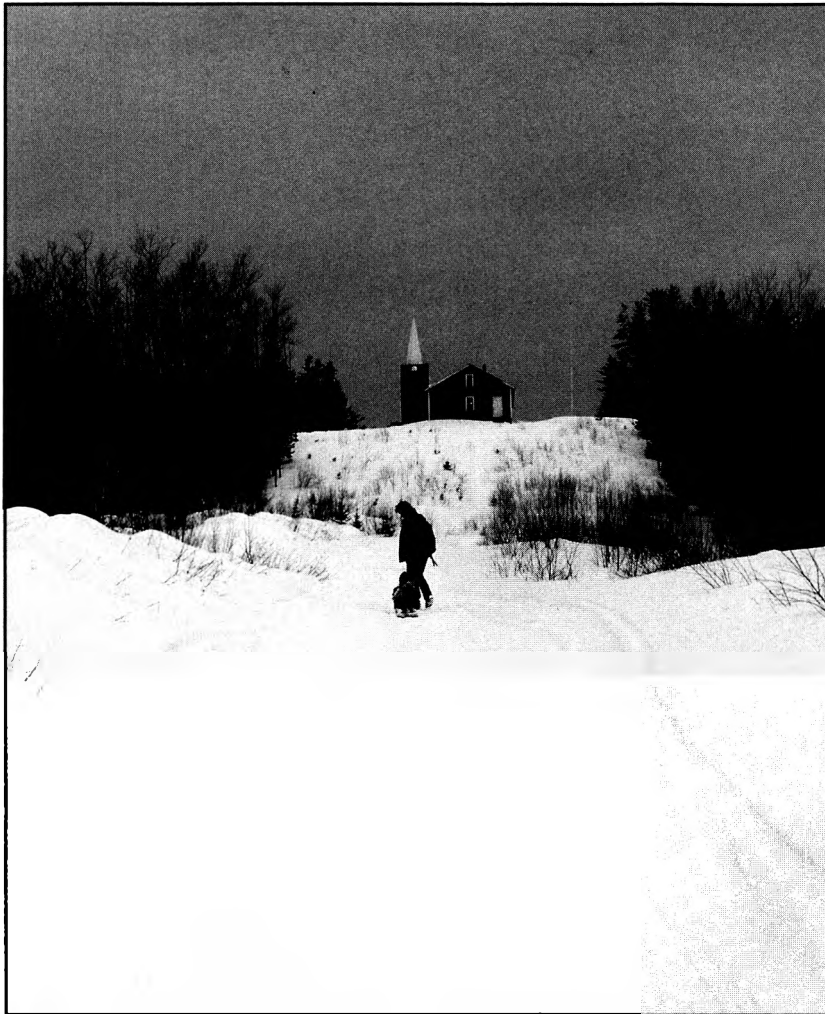
## Voices From the Inside, Voices From the Outside

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The actions and voices of the people of Lynx Lake tell a story of choosing to define themselves as Christians, and declare a long-standing, community-wide commitment to maintain a strong, unified Anglican profile. This study outlines the role of the church in Lynx Lake within its historical context, presents and analyses representative samples of Native-to-Native religious discourse including a sermon and several testimonials, and addresses changing religious views of younger members of the Severn community. Central to the study is a discussion of the use of a discourse-centered approach to ethnographic research.

An enormous cross carved out of the forest cuts through the center of the Lynx Lake<sup>1</sup> village, a Severn Ojibwe community some 150 kilometers north of the nearest road in remote northwestern Ontario. Within the intersecting arms of the cross stand two Anglican church buildings. Of the two-hundred and eighty people resident in Lynx Lake in 1987, there were twenty-eight male church organists, twenty-six female choir members, eight lay readers, one priest, and one archdeacon. The community-owned store, the *only* store in the community, added a two-cent surcharge for each dollar spent to be channelled back into the church coffers. Each of the several community-wide rummage sales, organized and run by local church members, raised several thousand dollars to benefit the church. The local, ten-watt radio broadcasting day opened and closed every day of the week with Anglican prayers and hymn singing. The Sunday radio schedule was completely dedicated to religious broadcasting. Birthday parties, feasts, and band meetings were begun with prayer. Political decisions affecting Native rights were protested by holding special prayer meetings in the church at the top of the hill. Lynx Lake is the site of numerous meetings of Aboriginal Cree and Ojibwe clergy, and the site of a yearly, week-long Bible camp for Severn people from across northern Ontario dedicated to in-depth Bible studies.



*Fig 1. Parishoner on her way to St. Paul's Anglican Church, Lynx Lake, Ontario.*

The actions and voices of the people of Lynx Lake tell a story of choosing to define themselves as Christians and declare a long-standing, community-wide commitment to maintain a strong, unified Anglican profile. In this paper I outline the role of the church in this Severn Ojibwe community in its historical context; present representative samples of naturally-occurring religious discourse from the people of Lynx Lake, including a sermon and several testimonials given at a Native bush camp; and point to changing views of younger members of the Severn community. In addition, I address the use of a discourse-centered approach as an alternative to interview-based ethnographic research.<sup>2</sup>

From the air, the most outstanding feature of the village of Lynx Lake is the cross-shaped clearing. The arms of the cross meet at the apex of an eskar overlooking the small community in the center of a

point jutting out into Lynx Lake. At the heart of the cross stand the two Anglican churches, the older one covered with plywood painted a deep green, and the newer one, built in 1986, covered with bright yellow aluminum siding. The clearing, first cut in 1965, the year that the people moved from Mihshamihkowiish to Lynx Lake, has been carefully maintained for twenty-five years, since the construction of the first church, using both local labor and local funds.

The symbolism of the cross-shaped clearing reflects a commitment to a Christian identity that had begun by the turn of the century, encouraged by the charismatic Anglican religious leader, William Dick, a Native from York Factory (a Cree settlement in the far north east of Manitoba on Hudsons Bay) who settled at Big Trout Lake, the largest of the Severn Ojibwe communities, around 1900 (Rogers 1962:A28). He travelled much of the eastern Severn area during the winter, training local catechists, among them Judas Pipoon, a Native Severn Ojibwe man whose trapline was north-northwest of Lynx Lake. In the days before the families of Mihshamihkowiishshink settled

into community life, while they still lived on widely-separated traplines for most of the year, Judas Pipoon functioned as an itinerant preacher traveling from campsite to campsite preaching and teaching from the Cree Bible. It is only within this historic framework that the role of Christianity and the church in contemporary community life of Lynx Lake can be understood.

This religious tradition has been continued by Judas Pipoon's eldest son, the Venerable William Pipoon.<sup>3</sup> The Venerable Pipoon was the first, and presently only, Native Anglican archdeacon in Ontario, making Lynx Lake the center of activity for the 'Anglican north,' a term used to designate most of the Severn area, which consists of some seventeen different Severn Ojibwe communities. The community of Lynx Lake is unique for its isolationist position toward outside non-Anglican religious activities; no religious representative, individual or group, is welcome in Lynx Lake without official approval

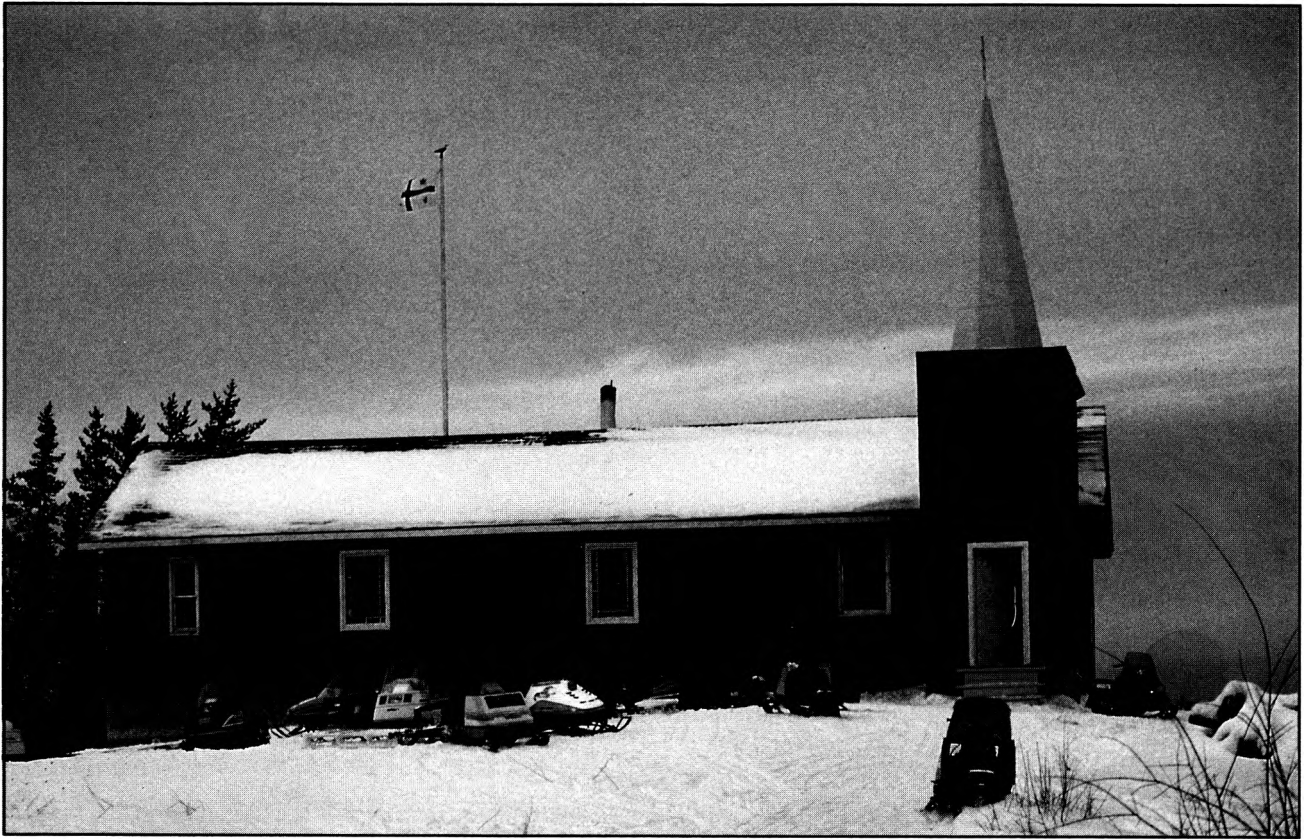


Fig. 2. St. Paul's Church, Lynx Lake, Ontario.

from the local clergy, and those who are allowed to work in the community, for an hour or for a period of months, only do so with the understanding that their concerns are secondary to that of the St. Paul's Anglican church in Lynx Lake. This aggressively self-deterministic attitude is reflected in social, political and economic realms as well. Indeed, as indicated earlier, these institutions are intimately connected with the Lynx Lake church, rendering a division between sacred and secular institutions insignificant.

### UNIQUE RESULTS

Contact between indigenous and outside religions has been studied extensively, especially in Mesoamerica and the US southwest where Spanish Catholicism was actively introduced to a variety of Native populations with unique results in every situation. These studies have often focussed on "syncretism," a term which has almost as many definitions as there are scholars studying religions in contact. Vogt's (1988) useful typology of scholarly treatments of Mesoamerican syncretism distills the various approaches into five essential camps.

- The first type focuses on the end result of syncretism, labelling it "Christo-paganism" (the term is from Madsen), in which "... Indian and Spanish culture are combined, mixed, fused or hybridized...in both form and meaning" (ibid, p. 42). This is a true amalgam of two systems where neither can be reasonably separated from the other.
- The second analysis focuses on the differences between the two systems: here the researcher is concerned with "...[European] elements 'encapsulated into the pre-existing cultural patterns'" (ibid.). The aboriginal system here is a matrix into which Catholic elements are inserted in recognizable, and presumably separable, forms.
- The third type outlined by Vogt appears to be a combination of the first two: "Syncretism is the process in which the forms and meanings of the Indian and the Spanish Catholic religions had so many similarities that the Indians basically became Hispanicized Catholics" (ibid). Like the first type, there is a combination of two systems,

but the overall matrix resembles the introduced religion more than the preexisting system.

- The fourth category is different from the previous ones in that the focus is on Native reactions against an imported religious institution, and the attempts by the Native population to divorce themselves from the non-Native populations espousing the new religion. Studies which focus on resistance especially to missionary religions are common, if not the norm in contemporary Native north American anthropological study.
- The final type of syncretism, the one advocated by Vogt, involves "...a creative and highly selective recombination of symbolic forms and meanings" (ibid, p. 43). This view of syncretism differs from the first (where elements are "fused, mixed, combined, or hybridized") in that only certain elements are combined, elements which vary from culture to culture. Thus, some elements of both religious systems may be left intact, some may be entirely missing, and others purposefully combined and transformed.

While Vogt's distinctions among the types of syncretism are over-simplified, they do demonstrate the broad spectrum of issues involved in studies of syncretism, many of which will be addressed below.

In earlier and most contemporary anthropological studies of Native North American communities outside of the American southwest, only aspects of Native American religion considered Aboriginal ("traditional") were considered legitimate foci of study.<sup>4</sup> As Gill (1987) points out, anthropologists and researchers in religious studies have, until recently, rigidly divided the study of religions of non-western peoples: anthropologists study Native, local religion and researchers in religious studies focus on the major world religions. Gill's observation that "(e)ven today very few students of religion acknowledge anything in Native American cultures as religion except Christianity" (1987:8) is precisely the converse of the situation for anthropologists.

The Severn religious situation is unique among Ojibwe groups across Canada in large part due to indigenous (Cree) missionization efforts. In more southerly Ojibwe regions where wild rice and sugar maple trees abound, entire bands formed seasonal aggregations, and in many places, large numbers of people could live in relatively close proximity for at least half the year. Such aggregation allowed for more complex social organization, including, at least

in post-contact times, the creation of the multi-leveled Midewiwin religious societies. The Severn Ojibwe situation was historically very different because the resources in the Severn area allowed little aggregation: the major food sources were seasonally available animals and fish which, except for about a month of each year during fish runs, could support only a small family group within a very large area. Thus, the Severn people were semi-nomadic within their own trapping areas and until recently, overwhelmingly non-aggregating. Traditional religious specialization was minimal: the occasional shaman was necessarily also a full-time hunter and trapper.

Most of the southern Ojibwe groups have lived within a White cultural matrix at least since the turn of the century where missionization was accomplished by White religious leaders, by the school system and, in some cases, by the government (Vecsey 1983:6). Many of the southern Ojibwe people have maintained an antagonism toward Euro-Canadian/American institutions, viewing them as at least potentially threatening to Native culture. The Severn Ojibwe people, on the other hand, have remained insulated from extensive White contact, although Euro-Canadian policies, programs beginning with the Hudsons Bay Company, have caused many social and economic changes. Despite such changes, many of which are considered by the Native population to have improved the quality of life in the Severn area, Severn Ojibwe people have not felt the physical threat of an overwhelming White population. When these people were missionized, the discourse came from the mouths of fellow Natives. Because Christianity was brought into the Severn area initially by Swampy Crees from the Hudsons Bay region, the Christian discourse had already undergone transformation from a Euro-Canadian Anglicanism to a more indigenous Anglicanism before it reached the Severn people. The form of the initial transformation has been lost in memory, but the broad acceptance of this more or less indigenized Christianity attests to a more compelling mission effort in northern Ontario than was evident in southern Ontario and Minnesota. The historical differences in contact and missionization between the Severn Ojibwe and other Ojibwe groups remain critical.

Rogers (1962) presented a compartmentalized view of the contact between Christianity and the Native religion in his writing on the Weagamow Ojibwe. In the final chapter of his monograph, "The Round Lake Ojibwa," Rogers concludes that:

The most evident, if not the most profound, changes have taken place in the economic life of the people. Social organization has undergone certain changes, perhaps fewer in number, but no less important. Religion *has been perhaps least affected except from a superficial point of view.* (Italics mine, p. E2)

While it is true that the economic life of the people was profoundly changed—these people, like the people of Lynx Lake moved from an economy based primarily on hunting and trapping to a cash economy within a span of some fifteen to thirty years—just such changes allowed for a strengthening of Christianity through the extended social contact of village life. Rogers' summation of the superficiality of the religious changes in Weagamow was followed four pages later by a quite different statement:

The Round Lake Ojibwa have come to accept Christianity and in most cases are firmly convinced that they are true Christians, in the sense that they adhere to the doctrines of the church. They have abandoned their former religious practices and attend church faithfully, even conducting services at home. Yet, for all this, the people are not Christians in the Euro-Canadian meaning of the word. (p. E6)

In this statement, Rogers reveals a major problem faced by outsiders studying Severn religious practices: Christianity is defined as a strictly Euro-Canadian phenomenon, and as such, its influence must necessarily be superficial in this area where direct Euro-Canadian religious modelling is so minimal. However, according to Rogers, and consistent with the Lynx Lake data, the people define themselves as Christian, conduct Christian rituals, and have abandoned earlier religious activities. Later in this paper several religious discourses from Lynx Lake will provide some insights into the forms of Christian beliefs these people currently hold.

The Bible was translated into Cree in the 1860s and has been used by Severn Ojibwe people since the end of the 1800s.<sup>5</sup> This document has remained the major resource for Christian teaching and understanding among both the Cree and Severn peoples. As Rogers reports, the Anglican church structure came in with the initial missionization through William Dick, and it is this structure that Rogers equates with Euro-Canadian Christianity. However, in May 1988, a young Native woman, an active church worker in Lynx Lake, pointed out to me that the Euro-Canadian bishop of the Anglican Keewatin Diocese to which the churches in Weagamow and

Lynx Lake belong, changed his style of worship when travelling in the Severn Ojibwe communities to a much more restrained and conservative manner which reflects the Severn mode. Thus, even within the Anglican religious tradition and hierarchy, Severn Ojibwe forms are acknowledged as uniquely Native and different from the matrix Euro-Canadian religious expression.

Rogers continues:

In large measure [the Round Lake Ojibwe] have retained their former beliefs and have interpreted Christianity in terms of these. Nevertheless, the ability to secure religious power has been weakened, and an individual can no longer effectively protect himself from the harm directed against him by those in other communities. Only the native preachers have, in general, acquired sufficient power to protect themselves. The result is that individuals still believe in and fear witchcraft but can no longer effectively retaliate. Furthermore, where Christianity comes into conflict with their old beliefs, the people are thrown into a state of confusion, and find it difficult if not impossible to resolve the conflict. (E6.)

In Lynx Lake in the 1980s, there was little evidence of the conflicts and confusion reported by Rogers. Indeed, as we will see in the following explanation of the state of cosmology spontaneously provided by an elder during a two-hour storytelling session in his home, Christianity has provided a paradigm which has not forced a repudiation of a traditional world view.

## FAITH AND POWER

The storytelling session from which the following excerpt is taken was held in the home of the late Anapat Memekwe in December 1987. Anapat was considered the best storyteller in the community, and it was to him that I was constantly guided to collect the old stories, the ones which could only be told on winter nights when the lakes had frozen over solidly and the land lay under a mantle of snow. This was one of three, two-hour storytelling sessions that Anapat graciously allowed that December. Anapat died the following spring.<sup>6</sup> The text presented here is a metanarrative statement about cosmology which was interwoven within a story about an ancient *wiintikoo*. Anapat explained a bit later in the session that there were three very different types of *wiintikoo* and that this was the oldest and probably most dangerous type.

The selection begins with an explanation that *long ago* young children by the age of three or four were placed upon an island with no provisions for several days so that they might be approached by a guardian spirit which would protect them from the myriad “evil beings” which were on the earth. Anapat contrasts this state with the present where “as far back as we can remember ... there were none of [the evil beings] around.” He credits the change to “the Savior” (Jesus) who “killed them off when he came...” Nearer the end of this section, Anapat explains that these creatures will return (“come out”) during the “difficult times” (at the end of the world), but that people who are religious and pray will not be bothered by them. Note both the predominant theme of how difficult life was prior to the religious changes and

the perception that these changes had occurred prior to Anapat’s lifetime, hence, prior to 1913.

While the selection presented was an uninterrupted stretch of discourse, it has been removed from the two-hour storytelling context here because of space considerations. The side-by-side Ojibwe and English paragraph format was chosen to underscore that this is prosaic Ojibwe discourse. For the same reason, the translation is quite literal, reminding the reader that the speaker is Severn Ojibwe. The paragraphs were divided at junctures marked either by the discourse particle (a)*mii* (That’s it...) or by a temporal particle. On the few occasions when these particles do not mark a new paragraph, topical cohesion takes precedence over the presence of the particle.

*Pimaatisi piko. Iniwaniwan tahsh mihshiin kekon, okii... okii-kitimaakenimikon aha awaashihsh, eh-kohpaatisic. Ekaa onci kekon eh-tapinawihshiink kekonenini miina ke... ke-onci-akwaniic kaawin kekonenini. Okiih-kitimaakinaakon kekonenini. Mistahi kekonenini okiih-kitimaakinaakon, mistahi kekon okiih-pawaataan. Okiih-kihkentaan kahki... kekonenini ke-ishi... ke-ishi... ke-ishi-pamihoc. Miina ke-ishi... ke-kanawenimikoc. Okii-naashkaakon kekonenini. Okiih-kanawenimikon kekonenini, ci-kihkentank ahaweti awaashihsh kaa-kii... kaa-nanaantawi-kihkentank kekonenini.*

*Mii hi kaa-kih-tootawaakaniwic weshkac anihshini. Ikiweniwak kaa... kaa-ayaawaac maci-ayahaak. Kaawin kiinawint kikii... kikii... kaawin kiinawint noonkom isihsehinoon. Weshkac kii-miihshinwaa awiya okii-pi-okii-nihshiwanaacihikowin kiishpin ekaa kihkenimaac naanta e-maacaac, pane eh-kihkenimocin. Eh... okii... okii-otihsikoon, okii-nawihanikoon. Kaawin okiih-kihkenimaahsiin. Mii tahsh iko tepwe e-kii-nihshowinaacihikoc inwaniwan awiyan, kaa-kih... kaa-kii-naashkaakoc iniwaniwan. Mii hi kaa-ishi-ayaac.*

*Ahawe tahshiin mihtahi kekon kaa-kih-kihkentank, kaawiniin okii-tootaakohsiin, okihkenimaan iko, aasha pehshonhc kaa-pi-naasihkaakoc kaa-wii-otihsikoc. Kiishpin hiwe e-ishi-ayaac, hiwe kaa-kih... kaa-kih-tootawaakaniwic weshkac awaashihsh, wiipac ci-peshiko-ayaac wiinehta. Wiinehta piko kiyaaam ci... ci-antawi-ayaac mihshiino-tipihkaa niikate. Naanta, naanta ci-maaciwinaakaniwic. Naanta ci-maacihonaakaniwic minihtikonk. Minihtikonk ci-ishi-nakatahwaakaniwic. Kekoon ci-nanaantawi-kihkentank. Kekoon ci-kitimaakenimikoc. Mii kaah-toocikaatek weshkac.*

[The child] just lives. He<sup>7</sup> was empowered by many things, because he was pitiable. He was empowered by something. He was blessed by many things, and he had visions of many things. He knew how to look after himself. And what will look after him. He was approached by something. He was taken care of by something (as a guardian), so that [the child] would know what he was seeking to know.

That’s what was done to children of long ago. Those evil being were there. That’s not how it is with us now. Often, long ago, [a person] was destroyed, if he were not aware of [an evil being], perhaps when he went out [to look for food, etc.], and [the evil ones] knew of him. [The human] was encountered by them, he was tracked by them. He wasn’t aware of them. Oh, indeed, that person was destroyed by them, when he was encountered by them. That’s the way it was.

And to the one who knew a lot [i.e., to the one who had a lot of power], they couldn’t do anything to him, he was aware of [the evil ones], when they were close to encountering him, when they wanted to come upon him. If he were [vulnerable] like that, what was done to the child of long ago, [was] that he should be alone by himself early on, that he should go and be alone in the wilderness for many nights. To be taken away, perhaps to be left alone on an island. To be left on an island. In order to come to know something. To be empowered/blessed by something. That’s what was done long ago.

*Mii tahsh kaa-kii-onci- mii tahsh kaa-kii-onci- kihkentamowaac anihshaa hiweni, awanenan kaa-wii... kaa-wii-naasihkaakowaac, e-maci... ci-maci- tootaakowaac ci-nihsikowaac, okiih- kihkenimaawaan piko. Ekwa wiin haweti kaa-ishi- ayaac, kaawiniin, mii piko tepwe e-nihsikoc, kaa- otihsikoc, kaawiniin iko eh-kiishikaanik ootoihsikohsiin, paanima kaa-nipaaniwank, paanima ekaa ci-kihkenimaac. Mii hi kaah- tootamowaac. Kaawiniin eh-kiishikaanik otoonci- naasihkaakohsiin iniweniwan maci-ayahaan kaa- wii-nihsikoc. Paanima eh-tipihkaanik, paanima e- nipaac, ekaa ci-kihkenimikoc*

*Mii kaa-ishiwepahk weshkac. Mitoni kii-aaniman, mitoni kiih-aaniman ihiwe. Noonkom itahshiin kiinawint kaa-pi-ahko-kihkentamank kaawin wiihkaa awiya onci-nihshowinaac, kaawin awiya onci-ayaahsiwan, ikiweniwak, kaawin awiya onci-ayaahsiwak. Kekonen tahsh onci-ishiwepahk. Ahaweti opimaacihwe kaa-tipaacimaakaniwac, ahpin kaa-kii-piishaac, amii ahpan kaa-kii... kaa-kii- nahinintwaa, ekaa omaa ci-ayaawaac iki maci- ayahaak. Ikiweniwak kaa-mihkoshkaacihaawaac anihshininiwan kaa-wii-nihsaawaac, kaawin ahpin kaa-ayaahsiwak imaa wakitahkamik. Naanta kiih- tootawaawak. Mii hi kaa-ishwepahk.*

*Mii tahsh hi kaa-kii... kaa-kii... kwayahk kaa-kii-pa- pimaatisic awiya, kwayahk kiih-pa-pimaatisi awiya. Kaawin kekoon otoonci-mikoshkaacihikohsiin, kaawin kekoon otoonci-wanaahikohsiin. Kaawin kekoon otoonci-nanihtentamihikohsiin, kekoon kekoon otoonci-wanaahikon eh-papaami-ayaac, naanta e-ishaac, eh-papaamohsec, miina kinwesh e-inentic, kaawin naanta ishi-ayaahsiin. Anihsh kaawin awiyan ayaahsiwan iniweniwan kaa-pi... kaa-kakwe-mikoshkaacihikowaac.*

*Howe tahshiin hiwe eh-pi-aanimahk weshkac, kaawin iko ahpin awiya, eshkam iko ahpin kii-onci- nehpitenti awiya, ahpin kaa-mihkaakoc iniweniwan kaa-wii-nihsikoc amii piko e-kii-nihsikoc. Ohowe kaa-papaami-ayaac waahsa kaa-papaami-ayaac awiya kaa-pa-peshikoc, mii hiwe kaa-ishi-ayaa... kaa-ishiwepahk. Kaawin kii-wentahsinoon weshkac weti eh-pi-oshki-ayaak, naahpic kii-mihshiinowak awiyak kaa-wii-nihsaawaac anihshininiwan. Kaa- wiih-amwaawaac hsa piko, otamwaawaan hsa piko anihshininiwan. Anihshininiwan hsa piko otamwaawaan. Maawac kii-mihshiinowak.*

*Kaawin tahshiin noonkom ahpan kii-ishiwepan keniin kaa-pi-ahko-kihkentamaan. Kaawin ahpin aashay ishiwepahsinoon. Kaawin awiya ikiweniwak, maci-ayahaak. Kaawin ahpin aasha awiyak. Noonkom..., weshkac, paanima tahsh, mii tahsh ahko eh-ihkitonaaniwank paanima miinawaa ci- ani-moohkiiwaac ikiweniwak. Ani-pehshinaakwahk kekoon, kahkina kekoon ani-aanimahk, ta-ni- mihshiinowak ikiweniwak. Kii-ihkitonaaniwan.*

And that's how they knew, if someone were approaching them, [if they were going] to be done harm by [the evil ones], to be killed by them, they were aware of them. And someone who's not like that, he was indeed killed by them, when he was come upon by them. He wasn't come upon by them during the day, but later, when everybody was sleeping, later, when he wouldn't apprehend them. That's what they did. He wasn't approached by these evil spirits during the day, when they wanted to kill him. Later, at night, later, when he was asleep, [they would approach him] so that he wouldn't apprehend them.

That's what happened long ago. It was really hard, that was really hard. But now, as far back as we can remember, nobody was around who destroyed [people], there were none of them around. So why this [change] has happened: the Saviour, who is told about, who came, that's when those evil beings were killed off, so that they won't be here. Those evil beings who troubled and killed people, they were not around anymore there on the face of the earth. Perhaps something was done to them. That's what happened.

So then that's when people lived peacefully, people lived peacefully. Nothing troubled them, nothing distracted them. Nothing bothered/ troubled him, nothing distracted him as he went around, even when he was away for long periods of time, nothing happened to him. Because there was no one around trying to trouble him.

But long ago, it was hard, sometimes, [people] just never returned. When one was found by something who wanted to kill him, he's gone for good. When someone was going around alone, long ago [when] he was going around a long distance, that's what happened. It wasn't easy long ago, when the earth was new, there were really many beings that wanted to kill humans. When they wanted to eat people, they ate people. They ate people. Oh, they were incredibly numerous.

But today this doesn't happen, as far back as I can remember. It doesn't happen anymore. There aren't any of them, of the evil beings. There aren't any of them. And it is said that later they'll come out [again]. When it [the end] is near, when everything begins to be difficult, they will be very numerous. That's what was said.



*Mii tahsh kaa-onci... hiwe tahsh kii-ihkitowak ahaweti kaa-ayamihewaatisic kaawiniin iniweniwan oka-pimenimaahsiin. Mii tahsh kakwe-ayamihcikeyok, kakwe-ayamihaayok kaa-oncii-ikoyank. Kaawin iniweniwan oka-pimenimaahsiin iniweniwan kaa... ayamihawin kaa-kiih-kishkaakonic, ahawe maci-ayahaa. Miinawaa ahpin ani-moohkiiwaac, kii-ihkitowak kihci-ayaahaak. Kaawin oka-kihkenimaahsiin iniweniwan. Kaawin naanta oka-kiih-tootawaan iniweniwan. Iniweniwan kaa-kishkaakoc minokekoon. Miina kaa-kishkaakoc ayamihawin. Kaawin iniweniwan oka... oka-pimenimaahsiin kii-ihkitowak weshkac kihci-ayaahaak.*

*Mii maawiin tepwe ke-ishiwepahk. Hiwe kakwe-, keniin, nikii-ikoo ci-kakwe... ci-kakwe-maamitonentamaan ayamihawin. Keniin nikii-ikoo. Kahkina awiya inaakaniwi, "Kakwe-ayamihciken. Kakwe-ayamihciken. Kakwe-tootan ihiwe kaa-minwaahshink," miina, "Kakwe-saakihik kitootem," kitikoomin. "Kaawin maci-ishi kitootem," kitikoomin. "Kaawin maci-ishi piko awiya." Mihsawaac pahkaani-ayahaak, mihsawaac ekaa e-wiici-wiyyaahsemac, peshikwan kakwe-saakihik, kitikoomin.*

Throughout this explanation, Anapat had no difficulty in reconciling Christianity and traditional Severn cosmology. It is important to keep in mind that the above explanation was not provided by a member of the religious hierarchy, rather, it was volunteered by an elder whose expertise was in telling traditional stories and who was speaking in that capacity. An important factor in this revised world view is that the traditional elements have apparently been reconciled within Christian eschatology rather than the other way around. This is no thin veneer of Christianity laid over an older system: the changes represent a basic restructuring of an older world view within a new framework.

This brings up the issue of alternate systems within the Lynx Lake community. The only person known to have direct contact with an older spirituality is one elderly woman who years ago married into the Lynx Lake group. This woman was a self-declared "bear-walker," a person who takes on the form of an animal, in this case a bear, and is able to travel great distances in that form. The woman had gotten the power, "a thing that lives inside of her," from her husband's father many years before.<sup>8</sup> This woman had considered it to be a positive force until recently when her grandson became a habitual and serious solvent abuser, constantly threatening harm to himself through word and deed. The older woman

And they said, that, as for the one who's religious, they won't bother him. So, try to be prayerful! Try to pray!, that's why we are told this. He [the evil being] won't bother the one who has religion. When they come out again, that's what the elders of long ago said. He [the evil being] won't know him [the religious person]. He won't be able to do anything to him. The one who has good deeds. And who has religion. He won't bother this person, so said the elders of long ago.

Perhaps this will really happen. I was also told myself to try and remember [to have] religion. I myself was told. Everyone is told, "try to pray. Try to do what is right. And try to love your friend/relative/neighbor." It is told to us. "Don't say bad things about your friend/neighbor," we are told. "Don't say bad things about anyone!" Even strangers, even the one who is not of your race, try to love them just the same.

attributed her grandson's problems directly to the presence of the power within her.

The community view of this power was overwhelmingly negative and fearful. Where in Lynx Lake grandparents are loved (if not revered) and seen as the vessels of immense amounts of wisdom and knowledge, this woman's grandchildren were afraid to spend the night in her home. In some cases, the grandchildren actively avoided the woman and her home—a situation considered by many to be very sad as these young adults would not have the advantages of the grandparents' knowledge. The members of that one family were instructed never to shoot a bear, because it was the bear which gave her its power. The woman herself faithfully attended the local church and participated in all the associated activities. Thus, while there is some evidence of pre-Christian beliefs, these are evaluated by the community as negative—now even by the holder of the power herself, not on the basis of being anti-Christian, but because that power is ruining one of the woman's kin.

It should be noted here, that no anthropologist has previously reported a woman with power in the northern areas, nor has bear-walking been reported among the Severn Ojibwe. This may be an isolated incident, but it may also reflect problems in ethno-

graphic methodology. The reports about the bear-walking came from the woman herself over the community radio station, demonstrating that Native-to-Native discourse is crucial for discovering what is real and important to people.

The religious situation in Lynx Lake is different from many Native American situations of Mesoamerica in which Christianity (Catholicism) has been incorporated into the existing cosmology. The difference between the situation in Lynx Lake and that in southern Ojibwe, as in Mesoamerica, may in part be related to the comparative simplicity of the traditional Severn religious system. There were few ritual elements in traditional Severn religious life, far fewer even than those reported for the Cree populations located north and east of the Severn Ojibwe (Speck 1935). The many rituals associated with Anglican and Roman Catholic Christianity, including the unique syllabic<sup>9</sup> literary traditions which came with Christianity into the Severn regions, seem to have been critical elements in the degree of acceptance of this system.

One must not discount the many social and material benefits associated with Christianity in the Severn area. With Christianity came a new body of knowledge available to whomever would invest the energy to learn it. Among the Ojibwe, knowledge is power—one of the reasons that elders are considered powerful is that with the years one accrues knowledge. Through knowledge, one obtains power over the spiritual and material world, as indicated in Anapat's discourse above. ("The child was empowered by many things, because he was pitiable... He had *visions of many things*. He *knew* how to look after himself, and what will look after him.... He was taken care by something (as a guardian), so *that he would know what he was seeking to know*." Two paragraphs later: "And *to the one who knew a lot* (i.e., had lots of power), they couldn't do anything to him, *he was aware of them*...") Christian knowledge also leads to power, a situation which is evident today. In 1982, the archdeacon's son, then a young man of twenty, related how he had been offered a bag of cookies to pray to God for the successful hunt of a man twice his age. The son was approached because of the acknowledged spiritual power of the father; such power extends to the family members. Another sign of Christian power is dreaming about game prior to killing it. In one case, the same young man dreamed that several moose on a trail offered themselves to him. When he killed the moose, he took it as a sign

from God that his impending marriage was sanctioned by God; the moose were used for his wedding feast.

Another less mystical but equally real way in which power in the church leads to material gain is in the amount of goods sent into the community from Euro-Canadian churches in southern Ontario who send literally hundreds of large garbage bags filled with clothes and linens into the community. These goods are addressed to one or another of the church leaders—all of whom are offspring of Judas Pipoon. These goods are ultimately sold at community-wide rummage sales, but prior to the community sales, private viewings and sales are held for close friends and family members—a situation similar that in U.S. communities where an upper- or upper-middle-class Junior League rummage sale is held yearly, with exclusive, private pre-benefit sales, ostensibly to get more money for the cause, but in actuality, allowing a socially elite group access to the pick of the goods.

Other benefits granted to the active Christian worker include extensive travel across northern Ontario to attend clergy and lay meetings at the church's expense. The churches in the Severn area have promoted intercommunity networks, networks which are further reinforced by intercommunity marriages. These networks are realized by phone calls and travel between communities. The travel is expensive, each trip costing several hundred dollars. However, when on church business, the cost of the airfare is minimized as mission planes are put at the disposal of the communities. Thus, a close connection with the church allows for much more individual travel. The travel between communities confers prestige upon the traveller, and thus allows the clergy members travelling to increase their power and prestige across the northern communities with each trip. In fact during the period covered in this paper, the Venerable Pipoon was also on a Native communications society board in deference to his prestige across the Severn area.

Another aspect of power which is facilitated by connection with the church is the power associated with good public speakers. The church provides many opportunities to demonstrate public oratory, both a symbol and vehicle of power and prestige. The power is reinforced in multiple settings—at the radio station, at community feasts, in the church, indeed, at almost every public gathering. Given the

nature of the Anglican service, which centers around the written liturgy, priests, deacons and lay readers are usually the literacy experts in the community as well, putting not just the spoken word, but also the written word within the domain of the church. Very often, the literacy experts of the church are given positions teaching Native literacy in the schools, a prestigious position with good monetary benefits. Many benefits have been realized by a move to Christianity, but, while the institution of the Christian church facilitates the acquisition of power by individuals, the extent of the power is still a matter of individual initiative and is recognized as a gift from God.

## PERSONAL DECISIONS

The move toward a Native Christian lifestyle has not just been made on the community level; it is also considered a very personal decision as the next two texts will attest. Both texts were testimonials given on September 3, 1987 on the final day of the Anglican Bible camp held at Mihshamihkowiishsh, the third camp of its type held in that summer. The Bible camps are held each year in and around different northern communities and are run by Native church workers for the Native Severn community. Indeed, the only Euro-Canadian involvement was that of airplane pilots who ferried people from many of the seventeen northern communities into Lynx Lake where they were then transported to and across the northern part of Mihshamihkowiishsh lake. All teaching was in Ojibwe<sup>10</sup> by Native people; designated note-takers produced syllabic outlines of the proceedings on two foot by three foot pieces of butcher paper. People had spent the last week camping together and attending Bible classes during much of the day. These camps were (and continue to be) as

*Amii iwe. Pankii naanta keniin ninka-ihkit ohomaa kaa-isihsek ci-ka-ihkitoyaan. E-minwentamaan kiyaapic kaa-isihsek e-waapaminakok miina e-wiiciwinakok. E-kakwe-kashkihtoowaan keniin kapeyahii omaa ci-ayaayaan, ohomaa kaa-kihkinoohamaatinaaniwank. Kaawiniin iko kapeyahii ohomaa e-nipaayaan kaa-itamaan.*

*Ekwa tahsh mii eshi-nanaahkomiyaaan kaa-isihsek kiyaapic e-waapaminakok. Kaawiniin piko miina e-mino-ayaayaan, homaa kaa-ayaayaan.*

much a celebration of a traditional lifestyle associated with life in the bush as they were a chance to learn. Throughout the large campsite of approximately thirty tents were groups of women preparing *nooh-kahikan* (smoked and dried fish shredded into a powder), *aanahkonaa* (bannock), beaver, water fowl, and other bush foods.

The meetings were held in a newly-constructed plywood chapel at the center of the campsite. Inside the chapel were two rows of long benches and tables: speakers sat or stood at a head table facing the rest of the group. The talks were amplified, so each speaker held the microphone when on stage. On the table in front of many members of the Native audience, predominantly middle-aged and older, were battery-powered cassette recorders used so that the lessons could be listened to and shared repeatedly back home. The syllabic note-takers had papered the walls of the chapel with their outlines of the week's meetings.<sup>11</sup> This was the context within which the next two testimonials occurred.

This first speech was given by Dorcas, a forty-year old lay reader in the Lynx Lake church, one of the note-takers for the camp. An important feature of this discourse, and indeed of all the many religious discourses recorded during my fieldwork, is that there is no mention of discarding old beliefs, nor is there mention of adopting Euro-Canadian (*wemih-tikooshi*, "Whiteman") religious practices. Rather, the focus is on personal commitment to service to *kaa-Tipencikec* (lit. "the one who owns," the most commonly used term for God). Dorcas, a lay reader in the local church, stood at the front chapel holding the microphone as she gave her address. The text is again presented in a prose format, roughly divided into paragraphs at junctures marked by the discourse particles *(a)mii* ("That is...") and the particles *ekwa (t)hsh(iin)* ("and so").

That's it. Maybe I'll say a few things here, too, as it's my turn to speak. I'm happy to have the opportunity to see you again and to be with you. I'm trying to be here all the time myself, here at the studies. I don't mean to say that I have been sleeping over [=camping] here, though.

So it is that I'm thankful for the opportunity to see you again. Although I have not been really feeling well while I've been here.

Ekwa tahsh iko ninkakwe-tootaan ci-kakwe-naasihkamaan kihkinoohamaakewin, aasha kaanoontamaan e-paahkitinikaatek. Ahpii keniin kaa-kii-paahkitinamaan nimpimaatisiwin, piko ci-kakwe-tootamaan aasha kaa-ishi-nantamikowaan kekoon ci-kakwe-tootamaan. Kaawin miina wiikkaa ninkaakwiinawi-ihkitohsiin kekoon eshianoonikowaan ci-tootamaan. Piko ninkakwe-tootaan. Cikemaa aasha ninkihkentaan e-kii-pakitinitisoayaan ihmama keniin ayamihaawinink ci-ishi-anohkiyaan.

Ekwa tahshiin iko kaawiniin piko ehta pi-tootamaan keniin nipimaatisiwin. Entahso-kiishikaak hsha wiin iko keniin nimpaa-pankihshin. Ekwa tahshiin iko kaawiniin iko eshi-pakiciyaan. Nintishi-kakwe-anohkii hsa piko ihmama keniin kaa-kii-ishikanoonikooyaan peshikwaa e-kiishikaak kici-anohkiyaan.

Mii hsha eshi-nanaahkomak kaa-Tipencikec peshikwaa e-kiishikaanik e-kii-kanoonihshic ohomaa ayamahaawinink ci-anohkiyaan. (cough)

Ekwa tahsh ohowe kaa-wiik-animootamaan wahawe Coowiin. Mayaam piko mooshak nintoonci-wiitanohkiimaa ohowe kaa-kihkinoohamaakaaniwahk. Ekwa tahshiin iko nistam wiin iko keniin kaa-ni-maacii-piintikeyaan kihkinoohamaakewinink, mii wiin iko kaa-inapiyaan keniin e-pimi-ishkoonoowiyaan e-nantohtamaan miina e-kakwe-kaahcitinikeyaan.

Ekwa ahpin kaa-kii-ishkwaa-onakamikooyaan miina masinahikanenhs kaa-kii-miinikoyaan. Amii ahpin ekwa kaa-kii-maatanohkiyaan. Kaawin hshiin iko niin e-inentamaan hiwe ci-tootamaan. Ekwa tahsh okoweniwak tiikhans kaa-kii-naakanowaac ayamihe wiikimaashihshak mooshak ninkii-nantomikook ci-wiitanohkiimakwaa piko kekoon ishi... ci-ishi-wiicihakwaa.

kwa tahsh nistam naahpic ninkii-aanimentaana ihwe niin eh-kanoonihshiwaac ci-wiitanohkiimakwaa. Piko kekoon ci-ishi-waawicihakwaa.

Ekwa tahsh piinihsh kaawin naanta nintoonci-inentansiin niwiiciiwaakan howe ninkii-onapimin e-kii-aani-mootamaank miina e-kii-inak. "Aan enentaman owe okoweniwak kaa-wiitanohkiimakwaa tiikanhs [deacons]?" ninkii-inaapan

Ekwa tahsh ninkii-ikopan. "Kaawiniin naanta nintinentahsiin. Mii hsha piko eh-kohseyan miin ehko-kashkitooyaan kekoon kici-kakwe-waawicihatwaa ikiweniwak kaa-nantawenimihkwaa ci-wiitanohkiimatwaa," ninkii-ikopan. "Cikemaa aasha kiki-pakitinin ihmama ayamihaawinink ci-ishi-anokiyaan. Niin ekaa e-kashkitooyaan kici-kiihtootaman kiin kaa-ishi-kashkihtooyan.

And so I'm trying to go to the studies; I listened when [the teachings] are opened up. At that time I too laid down my life, trying to do something right when I am being asked to do it. And I try not to make excuses when I am asked to do something. I just try to do it. For sure I know that I, too, surrendered myself to do religious work there.

Even so, I'm not fulfilling what is expected of me. Every day I fall [short of this goal]. But I haven't given up yet. Regardless, I try to work where I was called one day to work.

So I thank the Lord for the day that he called me to work in religion. (cough)

And I will discuss this man, Joel. I always work side-by-side with him during the teaching sessions. So when I first started attending the studies, it [worked out] that I sat there as I was learning, listening and trying to catch on.

And when I was appointed I was given a little Bible. That's when I started working. I didn't *decide* to do [the appointment]. So it was the deacons who were told, they also called me over to work with them, just to assist them in various ways.

And at first I really found it difficult when they called me to work with them, just to help out with various tasks.

But at last, I didn't mind: my husband and I sat down and discussed it and I told him, "What do you think about my working with the deacons," I said to him.

So then he said to me, "I really don't mind. So you try your hardest and do whatever you can to help those who want you to work with them," he said to me. "I certainly have surrendered you there to work in church service. I couldn't attempt to keep you from doing what you are able to do."

*Ekwa tahsh mii hsha eshi-nanaahkomak kaa-  
Tipencikec keniin ihimaa kici-kii-onci-  
shawenimihshic ihiwe nimpimaatisiwinink e-kii-  
pakitinamaan ci-wiitanohkiimatwaa otayamihaa."*

*Amii ihiwe kaa-kii-inihshihpan. A miihsh kaawin  
wiihkaa kaakwiinawentamowin nintayaahsiin ahpin  
ihiwe ahkonaak kaa-kii-inihshihpan eh-kohseyaan  
piko ninkakwe-wiitanohkiimaak kekonini kaa-ishi-  
kanoonihshiwaac ci-ishi-wiitanohkiimakwaa.*

*Ekwa tahsh howe Coowin kaa-apic amii howe  
mayaam mooshak e-wiitanohkiimak. Ekwa tahsh  
naahpic aaniman ohowe anohkiwin kaa-  
tootamaank kaa-waapamihshiiyaank onoweniwan  
masinahikanaan kaa-akootekin eh-akootooyaank.*

*Ekwa miina eshkam isihse niin eh-tootamaan  
naanta piko mohsha e-kakwe-naakahtooyaan  
iniweniwan ci-masinaahtehsitooyaan kekonenan  
kaa-kihkinoohamaakaaniwahk. Ekwa tahsh wiin eh-  
ani-masinahankin.*

*Ekwa tahshiin niwiiciwaakan kiishpin eh-piishaac  
ohomaa kihkinoohamaatoowinink, a mii hsha eshi-  
wiicihikoyaank howe toohkaan inanoohkiwin  
iniweniwan kekonan eh-kakwe-  
payahtenaakohtooyaan kekonenan kaa-  
kihkinoohamaakaaniwahk.*

*A mii tahsh esihseyaank ohowe kaa-  
inanoohkiyaank. Kaawin wiihkaa tipinawe ninkii-  
otaahpinansiimin niinawint ci-kii-  
onasinahikehtamaasiyaank, miina ci-kii-  
kanawentamaan ikweniwan ihkitowinan kaa-  
kihkinoohamaakaaniwahk. Cikemaa ninkakwe-  
wiicitoomin owe ishkoonoowin miina oshkac  
awiya kaa-piishaac naahpic nanehsitaamii kici-kiih-  
ani-kaahcitanankin oniweniwan ihkitowinan. Mii hsh  
oniweniwan kaa-onci-kakwe-oshihtooyaan  
awiyak ci-kii-ani-onci-kakwe-kaahcitanamowaac  
iniweniwan kihkinoohamaakewinan kaa-  
pakitinikaatekin.*

*Mii hsha howe ekwa tahsh iko aaniman shiiniko  
owe kaa-ishi-waapamihshiiyaank eh-tootamaank  
eh-ani-otaahpinamaank awiya kaa-  
kihkinoohamaakec otihkitowinan. Piko ehta miina  
ci-kii-ishsek pankii awiya ci-kii-nihsitohtank ihiwe  
kihci-masinahikan kaa-ihkitomakahk. A mii ehta  
ihimaa eshi-wenihsek oniweniwan mayaam kici-kii-  
ani-ishipiihikeyaan kaa-ishi-  
kihkinoohamaakaaniwahk.*

*Ekwa hsh amii hi eshi-nanaahkomak kaa-  
Tipencikec kiyaapic payahtakenimowin kaa-  
miinikoyahk noonkom kaa-kiishikaak. Miina  
nintoonci-nanaahkomaa keniin tipinawe  
nimpimaatisiwinink kiyaapic e-miinihshic kici-  
nanaantanowak noonkom kaa-kiishikaanik.*

"And so I thank God that He will bless me also in my life as I allow you to work with the Christians." That is what he told me.

And so it is that I haven't had a worry since [my husband] told me to try my best in trying to assist with whatever they tell me to do with them.

And Joel who is sitting there is the one that I always work with. This work that we are doing is really hard; you see our sheets [of notes] hung up.

And sometimes it happens that I do them myself or I try to show them in full view, to project the things that are being taught. And he writes them.

And whenever my husband comes to the teaching sessions, he helps us with this type of work, trying to show clearly what is being taught.

And that's how it goes in this job. We couldn't ever presume to write for ourselves. And as for keeping those speeches that were taught., we are truly trying to help this study [where] when a person first attends he is not used to it, to catch onto these words. That's why we try to make it so that the people can try to catch onto those lessons that are offered.

And so it is that this is what you see us doing as we record the words of the one who is teaching. And so it just happens that one should understand what the Bible says. That is the place where it is easy to really write down correctly these things that are being taught.

And so it is that I thank God again for the peace of mind that he gives us today. And I also thank him that he has extended my life that I can search for him today.

*Ekwa tahsh ami hiwe niin minikohk. Ekwa tahsh  
Coowiin kewiin ohomaa wii-ayamiipan,  
taapishkooc iko e-wii-aanimootamaankipan.*

*Mii hsha ihiwe niin minikohk. Ekwa tahsh kaana  
kiinihtam.*

The testimonial was followed by light applause, as were all those given on this afternoon.

This talk was one of the longer of the closing testimonials, but despite its length was not atypical in content. A topical outline provides an overview of many themes covered in the afternoon session; topics which are repeated in many of the following religious discourses as well:

- I. Greeting
- II. Problems
- III. Call to religious work
  - A. General call
  - B. Confirmation from husband
  - C. Confirmation of accepting call
- IV. Job outline
- V. Thanks to God
  - A. For peace of mind
  - B. For health (extended life)
  - C. For opportunity to increase knowledge of God
- VI. Closure
- VII. Coda

*"Waaciye," kitininaawaa ohomaa. Noonkom piko  
nimpi... noonkom piko nimpimii... nimpimishakaa.  
Inikohk esihsek ci-pi-maacayaan kekishep piko  
nintanawii-pi-onci-maacanaapan ahawe tahsh  
pinimaa e-kiih-kanawaapancikehtamawankic  
ahaweti kaa-kiih-kiiwec kihcii-ahaa, ihiweni kaa-ishi-  
aw... kaa-ishi... e-waa-wiicihankic oti piko. Paanima  
piko e-maacac e-wii-pooni-  
kanawaapancikehtamawankic weti kaa-onci-  
kanawaapancikehtamawankic weti taawinink kaa-  
ayaac.*

*Ekwa tahsh ahpan niinehta ahpan nimpimaacaa.  
Kaawin ahpan Samyool kiih-pi-maacahsii. Ekaa  
tepwe e-mino-ayaac. Kaa-ishi-ayaac tawiin iko.*

*Ekwa tahsh (pause) ... Amii hi keniin naahpic  
enanaahkomiyaan ohowe ahpin kaa-ni-kii-ishihsek  
kimaawacihitiwiniwaa. Ekwa keniin naahpic e-  
yaa... e-kii-ayihkamenimoyaan e-kii-kakwe-  
wiicihtwaayaan ohomaa howe mekwaac kaa-  
anohkaacikaatek ohowe ohomaa ke-tashi-  
maawacihitiyek. Mihshinwaa keniinawint ninkii-pi-  
ishaamin keniin kiyaapic eh-ayaayaampaan, eh-  
anohkiyaampaan, ikweniwak ikhwewak kaa-  
anohkiwaac. Keniin e-kiih-pi-waa-wiicihtwaayaan  
ohomaa. Ekwa miina kaawin iko kekaat ninkii-*

So that's enough me. And Joel here wanted to speak, as has been discussed.

That's all for me. It's your turn.

The greetings, closure and coda are typical of all public discourses, but the structures found in II-V are associated almost exclusively with religious discourse.

(Note that the following discourse includes most of these categories.)

The next speech presented here was given by Kerena, wife of a priest. In this text she echoes several of the themes mentioned above, particularly that in choosing the Christian life, one experiences many hardships ("much difficulty comes to Christians who work for the Lord") but that despite "unavoidable" problems, including severe physical ailments and even death of loved ones, such a choice is good.

Indeed, the difficulties appear to validate the level of Christian commitment to this Native gathering by demonstrating the target of the hardships worthy of the attention of opposing spiritual forces. Again the format is prosaic, divided into paragraphs on the basis of the particles noted earlier.

Greetings, I say to you all that are here. Just now, by means of..., I just got in by means of...paddling here by canoe. Time has finally permitted me to come. I have been planning all morning to come but someone initially delayed us as we were looking after the arrangements for an elder to go home... [we were] just giving him assistance. Later when he left, we stopped attending to him there where we had been helping him in the village where he was.

And so it was only then that I left for here. Simon didn't come here because he is really not well— [it's] the same old thing.

And so (pause) it is that I am really thankful as this meeting is coming to an end. And I am really ... I was persevering to try and help here during this time here, while the [planning] was being done for you to get here. Many times we came here, including me when I still had the ability to work along with those ladies that are working. I came to help here, also. But I couldn't help much, I think. We are taking care of my grandchild that you all see there. We can't take her as we wish because of her [medical] condition.

wiicihtwaahsiin nin... nint... nintinentaan, hi haaweti  
noosihs kaa-waapamaayek kaa-  
kanawenamaayaank. Ekaa waanihtak e-kii-maa-  
maaciwinaayaank kaye ihiwe kaa-ishinaakosic.

Ekwa tahshiin iko shaakooc noonkom  
nimpimaaciwinaah, ci-waapankec ishkwaaayaac e-  
inenimak. Naahpic iko wiih-otootemimaan  
awiyen. Kahkina piko awiyen taapishkooc eh-  
saakihaac ahko nintinenimaa.

Mohsha hi kaawin iko kekoon nintayaahsiin.  
Kaawin iko ninihtaa-ayamihsii naahpic, ohoweti  
wiiniko kekoon kaa-ishpentaakwahk ci-ihkitoyaan.  
Nintishi-ayaa piko.

Ekwa tahsh naahpic e-nanaahkomiyaan ohomaa  
kaa-waapaminakok nintootemak ohomaa miina  
kiihtwaam kaa-pi-ishaayek. Mihshiinwaa kaa-  
waapaminakok maawacihitiwinink. Ekwa wiiniko  
eshkam e-ishi-... eshi-maamitenentamank. E-... eshi-  
noontamank naanta kitooteminaanak mekwaac  
aanimisiw... aanimisiwin kaa-ayaawaac. Miina  
eshkam mooshak iko kitishi-mihkaamin mekwaac  
kaa-maawacihitiahk eshkam kitooteminaan eh-pi-  
wiintamawaakaniwic naahpic ihiweni ahpin kaa-  
wanihaawaac ootootemiwaan. Ekwa miina,  
noonkom miina ahpin onaako kaa-kii-  
maacaawaac ninkii-noontaan naahpic eh-  
aanimisiwaac ohomaa kaa-kii-tipihkaanik kaa-kii-  
ayaawaac. Ninkii-mohci-maamitonentaaan e-kiih-  
pi-wiintamaakowaampaan keniin. (pause)

Ekwa tahshiin iko oncita tahshiin iko e-ishsek ihiwe  
kaa-pa-pimaatisinaaniwank. Mistahi aanimisiwin  
eh-ayaamakahk ihiwe mekwaac kaye kaa-  
toocikaatek minwaacimowin kaa-antohcikaatek.  
Oncita wiiniko hi isihse. Naahpic aanimisiwin ci-  
ayaawaac ikweniwak otayamihaak kaa-  
anohkiihtawaawaac kaa-Tipehcikenic.

Mii keniin mooshak eshi-mihkamaan owe kaa-  
inanohkiiyaank ahaweti kaa-wiiciyaamak.  
Naahpic aanimisiwin eshkam e-mooshihtooyaank  
ihimaa nipimaatisiwinaank. Shaakooc ninka-i...  
ninkakwe-tootaan iwe ci-kakwe-niikaanentamaan  
keniinawint kaa-inanohkiiyaank. Mihshiin iko eshi-...  
eshi-wiintamawinakok. Naahpic e-minwentamaan  
ohomaa kaa-pi-ishaayek kahkina piko ohomaa  
kaa-pi-antohkamek minwaacimowin.

Ekwa miina keniinawint ohomaa mooshak  
maawacihitinaaniwan kaa-ishitaayaank. Weti  
wiiniko ninkapehshiwinaank kehciwaak.

Ekwa miina naahpic e-ciihkentamowaac ohomaa  
kaa-ayaawaac oshkaatihsak eh-paa-pi-ishaawaac  
ohomaa. Miina kaa-pimoonaawaaci iniweniwan  
kaa-paa-pi-ishaaninci kaye. Ekwa miina ohomaa  
piko kaa-ayaanici.

Even so, I'm taking her now to witness the end [of  
this event], as I thought how she is very friendly with  
people. Just anyone. I think she loves about  
everybody.

I don't have anything else to say. I'm not very good  
at talking about something that is important. That is  
how I am.

So, I am really thankful to see you all, my friends,  
here once again while you [are gathered] here.  
Many times I've seen you at meetings, and  
sometimes... we all think about it. When we hear  
our friends, perhaps, during difficult... their times of  
difficulties. [In reference to some people having to  
leave because of the death of a relative.] And  
frequently we find ourselves during the meeting  
being informed that someone has lost a relative.  
And again, now again, there are those that just left  
yesterday that were having trials last night, those  
ones who were here. I, too, [felt remorse] when I  
was told. (pause)

And so it is that this happens during our lifetime.  
There is much difficulty during times when the  
gospel is being listened to [actively]. It is  
unavoidable that it happens. Much difficulty comes  
to Christians who work for the Lord.

That is how I always find it when we are working,  
[me and] this person that I am living with [=my  
husband]. We have often experienced real  
hardships in our lives. But we ... we always try to  
make first in our lives this work of ours. There is a  
lot... I tell you. I am *really* glad you all came here to  
listen to the gospel.

And then we are always meeting here in our area.  
Right here in our settlement.

And the the very giving people that are living here  
[at Lynx Lake] are willing to come here [to the  
camp at Mihshamihkowiish]. And they have been  
transporting those who have come here. And the  
locals, too.

*Ekwa miina weti kaa-pimipisohtamaakewaac  
naahpic e-ciihkentamowaac e-ishi-nawakwaa.  
Ohomaa kaa-ayaawaac kaye. Mohsha ihi.*

*Mii hsha hiwe minikohk ke-ihkitoyaan, wahawe kaa-  
kii-kakitoc tipinawe ahawe kekaat  
niwiicinihtaawikimaakan. Ekwa tahsh kekoon kaa-  
inihshic wiipac ninkakwe-tootam(w)aan ohoweni  
otanohkiiwinink. Mohsha hi minikohk  
kiwaaciyeminaawaa kahkina ohomaa kaa-  
ayaayek. Miinawaa maawin ka-waapaminaawaa  
weti en-onaakohshink pi-taa-takohshiniyek.*

*Mii iwe. Waaciye.*

The humorous statements made at the beginning and ending of the discourse (“I just now got in by means of...paddling by canoe” and “The person that spoke is almost my relative. And whenever she tells me to do something, I try to do it right away”) signalling a confident speaker, were greeted by laughter. Both Dorcas and Kerena’s speeches were given above in their entirety.

A comparison of these naturally-occurring, public discourses with Vecsey’s (1983) analysis of Ojibwe religion is quite striking. Vecsey’s work, focussed on southern Ojibwe groups, gives a very different picture. In the following excerpt from his section on the evaluation of Ojibwe conversions, Vecsey argues that contemporary Ojibwe religious expressions are at best superficial, and hold little meaning for Native people, a view that is at least partially consistent with the “Christo-pagan” fusion model of syncretism. A closer approximation of Vecsey’s model is that as traditional Ojibwe religions came in contact with Christianity, the traditional religion was first eradicated and then a new system (either Christianity or another new religion such as the Midewiwin) put into place in the vacuum. His contention is that only traditional (pre-contact) religion is or has been truly efficacious and meaningful for Ojibwe people.

In [the place of traditional religion], some Ojibwas have turned to Christianity, Midewiwin, and other religious innovations in order to maintain their existence. But none of the religious movements has brought back abundant game; none has improved Ojibwa health. None has demonstrated the lasting strength of the traditional manitos or initiated a lasting interest in new objects of religion. Despite vestiges of their traditional religion, traces of recent religious developments, sporadic participation in Christianity and a recent renewal of interest in their past, most Ojibwas remain alienated from the traditional sources of their existence.

And those drivers over there [across the lake at Lynx Lake] really appear to me to be willing to [drive]. And those who are here as well.

That’s it. That’s all I’ll say. The person that spoke is almost my own relative. And whenever she tells me to do something, I try to do it right away. That’s it, I greet all of you who are here. Maybe I’ll see you again in the evening when you arrive [in Lynx Lake].

That’s all. Waaciye.

The loss has carried serious ramifications for the Ojibwas in their daily lives. Their religion was concerned with such vital issues as survival and ethics, and it provided them with a sense of coherency, meaning, and security. Now gone, it has taken with it the Ojibwas’ firm grasp on life. Economic hardship, political impotence, environmental imbalances, and other tangible factors have helped produce the contemporary Ojibwa malaise, but in large part it also derives from their religious alienation.

Traditional Ojibwas viewed essential matters, those concerning health, subsistence, social organization and leadership, ultimately from a religious perspective. Today that perspective has been demolished, and the Ojibwas appear disoriented, having found no suitable replacement. (6)

While this view may reflect the situation among more southern Ojibwe groups, it has also been assumed to hold true for the Severn Ojibwe people as well. An important issue is raised here in the methodology of studying the religious worldview of other cultures. Much anthropological methodology has focused on directed interviews in which a researcher guides the interview. The researcher comes into the situation with a hypothesis which he/she intends to prove or disprove, thus delineating the area for study independently of the people being studied. The Native participants who opt to help the anthropologist tend to be those who are comfortable with that situation: among the Ojibwe, the people often chosen as primary sources or translators of information are those who have had the most contact with Euro-Canadians or Americans and who have a vested interest in being brokers of cultural information, which necessarily entails a strong traditionalist framework if the researcher seems to be leaning in that direction. This accommodation of perceived interests also applies to representatives of other western institutions besides academia, including



governmental and religious workers. This problem is similar to that discussed by Paredes (1977) in his critique of anthropologists studying border Mexican-Americans.

Lakoff and Johnson's (1982) discussion of the myth of *objectivism* appears closely related to traditional approaches which proceed by means of an *a priori* (universal, etic, objective) framework imposed upon cultures, often entailing value judgements on the efficacy and import of different aspects of another's culture. In Lakoff and Johnson's words:

In a culture where the myth of objectivism is very much alive and truth is always absolute truth, the people who get to impose their metaphors on the culture get to define what we consider to be true—absolutely and objectively true. (160)

Thus, for many researchers, any religious activities recognized as post-contact, and more importantly, non-indigenous, are superficial at best and anthropologically uninteresting.

Recently scholars have attempted to address this dilemma by making the dialogic nature of the research endeavor more transparent (Marcus and Fischer 1986; Clifford 1988). These scholars admit the primacy of the anthropologist in the ethnographic product derived from the discourse between anthropologist and informant. This reaction to the fallacy of the omniscient anthropologist is a step forward in understanding the problems of ethnographic research outside of one's own culture, but the approach unnecessarily limits the scope of the study. This newer approach which recognizes the objectivism fallacy, at least as it applies to other cultures, turns inward and concludes that since the only system that we can truly understand is our own, then we should focus on how knowing another's culture reflects on an understanding of our own.<sup>13</sup> While this may be valid, it is severely and unnecessarily self-limiting in that it assumes that the interview is primary in ethnographic research. The problem with this view may be illustrated using linguistic research methodology. What constitutes the language of the Ojibwe (or any group) is that language used by Native speakers and not that elicited by even the best sentence grammarian. However, because a linguist is capable of eliciting sentences and even texts, this in no way precludes the collection of naturally-occurring discourse. The latter is much more difficult to obtain, to be sure, but rather than accepting this limitation,

a linguist concerned with getting at the essence of the Ojibwe language would take the effort to creatively discover means to collect natural discourse. The study of elicited material is, indeed, interesting and can be useful, but it is a far different task from studying language as it is used in natural contexts—even when the linguist is concerned with exclusively sentence level phenomena. In the same way, the anthropological study of naturally-occurring discourse is critical even when the research concerns appear to be accessible by interview.

In returning to the question of how to conduct ethnographic research that will not turn the people studied into subjects of the anthropologist (pun intended), the study of Native-centered, as opposed to anthropologist-centered, discourse is critical. Since discourse is the arena in which much of a community's culture is substantiated, reinforced, negotiated and changed, the collection of discourse is the collection of culture. This is not to make the claim that there is a causal relationship between language and culture, but that there is a significant, discoverable relationship obtaining between discourse and culture. A discourse-centered approach, in which the discourse being studied is that of cultural insider directed to another cultural insider, that is, naturally-occurring discourse, provides an excellent basis for learning about the creation, enactment and emergence of cultural systems with minimal interference from an outside researcher. The voices of those studied speak independently of the anthropologist, and indeed, can speak for themselves long after the anthropologist's voice is made hollow by the vicissitudes of theory.

Thus, the discourses presented here are offered as unique but representative tokens of religious talk in Lynx Lake. It is from such naturally-occurring data that we can discover many of the core attitudes about social institutions. In developing such data, the traditional anthropological methodology of interviewing comes after the data collection, during the translation process, at a time when the Native discourse is front and center. The questions elicited here revolve around the Native-to-Native discourse: the discourse provides the domain covered, a real as opposed to hypothetical situation to discuss, and a context which is understandable to an insider. This is a far less threatening methodology for a Native consultant, and one that goes a long way to minimize imposition of the anthropologist's agenda.

## SHARING THE VISION

The final sample of religious discourse included in this paper is a sermon given by the Reverend Simon Pipoon on November 22, 1987 during the morning service at St. Paul's Anglican church in Lynx Lake. This sermon is uncharacteristically brief, truncated so that the church leaders could get out of church in time to bid farewell to the visiting (Anglican) Native priests and deacons from the Severn area who had convened for a meeting in Lynx Lake, as is noted within the text. Again, notice how consistently the theme of "perseverance in the face of difficulties coming to those committed to God" is carried through yet another genre of religious discourse. This is the unifying theme of all the texts provided in this paper, and indeed, is a central theme of most public and much private religious discourse. The sermon is provided in its entirety.

*Noonkom kaa-kishepaayaak waaciye kahkina  
kitininaawaa. Ohomaa kaa-pi... kaa-pi-wiici-  
piintikeminakok ohomaa ayamihewikamikonk.*

*Ekwa noonkom kaa-kishepaayaak kaa-  
piintikeyanak. Acina ehta isihse ci-  
naanoontakosiyaan. Ikweniwak ohomaa  
ayamihewikamaak kaa-pi-ishaawaac kaawin  
piintikehsiwak. Ekwa aasha wiipac ta-maacaawak.  
Ekwa aatiht awiyak oka-wii-nohsa-waapmaawaan.  
Miina aasha ci-noochihicahsek tipahikan, ci-pi-  
naasihkawaakaniwaac okoweniwak  
ayamihewikamaak kaa-wiik-kiiwewaac. (Pause)*

*Kaa-kiih-amihtooyahk, kaa-kiih-  
kanawaapantamahk okiskentaakohkewin Sent  
Cwaan (Saint John), kaa-ishinikaatek niwin  
maatinamaakan, kaa-kii-kanawaapantamahk.  
Pankii, pankii kanake naanta nika-ishikaataan.  
Ahawe Cwaan okiskentaakohkewin kaa-*

*Mekwaac ihiwe eh-ka-kiishikaak kiih-aaniman  
awiya kaa-ayamihewaatisoc ci-kii-ayamihcikec.*

*Mekwaac ihiwe kaa-inaacimoc Cwaan,  
okiskentaakohkewin kaa-masinahahk mitoni kiih-  
aaniman, awiya kaa-ayamihewaatisic. Kii-  
ishihse hsa piko, kiishpin awiya waapamaakaniwic  
ayamihcikec, naanta piko ci-nihsaakaniwic.  
Ehpiihci noonkom tahshiiin, kii-aamentaakwahk e-  
wii-ayamihcikewin kaye waahkaahikanink, kaye  
kitaaymihewikamikonk. Kaawin kekoon, (pause)  
kaaw... ke-onci-aanimentaaman.*

*E-kii-inaatisic ahawe kihci-okimaa, Siisan (Caesar)  
kihci-okimaa, rooman (Roman) kaa-kii-apic. E-kii-  
ishihcikec eh-aanimaninik kekoon e-kii-ishi-  
pakitinahk okihci-okimaawininink.*

Again, I have provided a prosaic format. In this discourse, the particles tend to be cohesive (*ekwa* "and" and *miina*, "and" are the most common): there are many more changes in actors and events than in a typical narrative discourse and it is these changes that are reflected in the paragraph structure. The actors are juxtaposed because of shared experiences which create the topical cohesion found within the sermon, as outlined following the text. The sermon was intoned: that is, it was spoken with a projecting voice (as if the loudspeaker microphone perched on the pulpit in front of the Reverend Pipoon had not been present) in an extremely slow and measured tempo. Indeed, while all Native Anglican preachers that I heard used a similar style, the Reverend Pipoon is remarkable for his clarity due to his extremely slow tempo. A "religious speech" phonological style shift described elsewhere (Valentine 1990) is particularly evident in this text and has been noted in the Ojibwe column by underlined spaces where a nasal is expected.

This morning I say "greetings (waaciye)" to all of you here with whom I have come to church. And this morning as we are coming here to church, there is only a little time for me to talk. The priests that have come here are not coming to church, (as) they will be leaving very soon now. And some people will want to see them off. The hour is also coming for these priests who are going home to be picked up here.

What we read, what we looked at, it is called the Revelation of Saint John, chapter four, that we looked at, I will say just a little bit about it. It was John who wrote the revelation.

During that day, it was hard for someone who was a Christian to pray.

During that time, as John told in the revelation, it was really difficult for someone who was a Christian. It happened that if someone were seen praying he might be killed. (Right now, so far, things are peaceful. When you want to pray, in your home as well as in your church, there is nothing for you to worry about.)

That was how that ruler, Caesar who ruled over the Romans, was. He was such that in his kingdom he made it hard for (Christians) by putting things in their way.

Ahawe Cwaan mekwaac e-kakiihkimiwec. (Pause)  
 Kiih-antawi-pakitinaakaniwi naawic kihcikamiik.  
 Minihtikwaapihkonk e-kii-antawi-pakitnaakaniwic  
 ahawe Cwaan. Ekwa kiyaapic ci-isihsenik ci-  
 kakiihkimiwec piko ci-peshikoc minihtikwaapihkonk,  
 Paatimas (Patmos) kaa-ishinihkaatek  
 minishtikwaapik. Mii himaa kaa-kii-pakitinikoc kihci-  
 okimaawan, ekaa kiyaapic ci-aacimaac. (Pause)  
 Kraistan (Christ), miina ominwaacimowin Ciisahs  
 (Jesus).

Mintoni aanimentaakwanitok, naawic kihcikamiik  
 eh-tahkayaak, kohtaataakwahk. Eh-pehsikoc  
 Cwaan minihtikwaapikok kii-inentamotok  
 kehcinaac nipeshik. Kii-inentaakwan ihiwe  
 minihtikwaapihk taapiskooc kipahotoowikamik kaa-  
 inentaakwak. Taapiskooc eh-kipahonc (pause)  
 Peshikwaa isihsenik ihimaa mekwaac eh-ayaac  
 minihtikwaapikonk, mekwaac eh-  
 ayamihewikiishikaanink okii-waapantaan ahawe  
 Cwaan. Kii-ishi-ayaa ahawe Cwaan, taapiskooc e-  
 nipaac, taapiskooc awiwa kaawin entank.  
 Mekwaac eh-aymihewikiishikaak. Mekwaac kaa-  
 Tipencikec okiishikaam, Ahcaahkonk ninkii-ayaa,  
 ihkito ahawe Cwaan. (Pause)

Okii-waapantaan ishinamowinini ihimaa  
 minihtikwaapikonk mekwaac eh-  
 ayamihewikiishikaak. Eshkam kii-ishi-ayaa ahkiink  
 pimaatisic anihshinini, naanta eh-nipaac, naanta  
 kaye e-wanentak. Ahpii e-koshkoshkaac owii\_taan  
 mamahtawaapihshinowin e-kii-waapanta\_k  
 ihiweni kaa-kii-ishi-ayaac. Okii-wiintaan, owiintaan  
 anihshinini, e-waapantank kaa-ahcaahkowank  
 kihci-kiishikonk kaa-onci-makahk. (Pause) A mii  
 howe too? kaa-kii-ishi-ayaac Cwaan, kaa-  
 noontamahk noonkom kaa-kishepaayaak. Ihkito  
 Cwaan kaa-ponihsek, Ninkii-waapantaan eh-  
 paahkintekootek ishkwantem. Kihci-kiishiko\_k nkii-  
 waapantaan, ihkito. (pause)

Ekwa ihiwe nistam ihkitowin kaa-noontamaan,  
 taapiskooc awiwa eh-kanoonihshic taapiskooc  
 pootaacikan, eh-inihshic awiwa ihiwe kaa-kii-  
 waapantamaan, ihkito piishaan! ka-waapantahin  
 kehcinaac ke-ni-ayinkihk, mwestahs inikohk.  
 (Pause) Ekwa Cwaan ihkito, Shemaak ahcaahkonk  
 ninkii-ayaa. (Pause) Apiwin, kihci-apiwin kii-onastew  
 kihci-kiishiko\_k.

Ekota awiwa kii-api kihci-apiwinink, ihkito. Ahawe  
 kaa-apic-kii-inaapaminaakosi taapiskooc caahs...  
 caaspin (Jasper) ahsinii miina sartiysis (Sardis).  
 Waaskaa maaka kihci-apiwinihk piihsimeyaapii kii-  
 ayaaw eh-inaapaminaakwahk, taapiskooc  
 emelaat (Emerald). (Pause) Mitoni maamaahkaac  
 ninkii-ishinaan, ihkito Cwaan. Kihci-apiwin nkii-  
 waapantaan e-onastek kihci-kiishiko\_k. Ahawe  
 kaa-apic mitoni maamahkaasonaakosi. (pause)  
 Taapiskooc caaspin ahsinii. (Pause) Mitoni  
 maamahkaasinaakosi ahawe kaa-apic kihci-  
 apiwinink. (Pause)

While John was preaching, he was taken way out  
 into the sea to a rocky island. That John was taken  
 out to be left there so that it would no longer be  
 possible for him to preach—just for him to be alone  
 on that rocky island. The rocky island was called  
 Patmos. That is where the king put him so that he  
 would not tell about Christ and the gospel of Jesus.

It must feel difficult (to be) far out in the sea, cold  
 and dangerous. All alone on the rocky island, John  
 must have thought "I am truly alone." That rocky  
 island must have seemed just like a jail. That is was it  
 felt like, like he was jailed. Once it happened, while  
 he was there on that rocky island, John saw an  
 amazing vision. John saw something supernatural.  
 John was just like he was sleeping, just like someone  
 unconscious. On Sunday, on the day of the Lord. "I  
 was in the spirit," says John.

He saw a vision there on the rocky island on a  
 Sunday. Sometimes it happens to a person living on  
 earth, perhaps while he's sleeping, perhaps while  
 he is unconscious. When he awoke, he told that he  
 saw an amazing revelation while he was in that  
 state. He told, he tells that he sees something  
 spiritual that came from heaven. This is what  
 happened to John, what we heard this morning.  
 John says, when it was over, "I saw a door that was  
 left open. I saw heaven," he says.

"And that first word that I heard was like someone  
 was calling to me, just like a trumpet. Someone that  
 I saw said to me, he says, 'Come here! I'll show you  
 what will certainly come to be before (it  
 happens).'" And John says, "Right away I was in the  
 spirit. A chair, a throne was set up in heaven."

"Behold, someone was sitting on the throne," he  
 says. "That one who was sitting appeared to be just  
 like Jasper stone and Sardis. Then around the  
 throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald.  
 What I saw was truly amazing," says John. "The  
 throne I saw that was set up in heaven, the one  
 sitting (in it) looked truly wonderful. Like the gem  
 Jasper. The one sitting on the throne looks  
 absolutely amazing."

Cwaan awanenan ini kaa-kii-waapamaac, awanenan ini kaa-kii-waapamaac kihci-apiwinink.

Mitoni kaa-kii-maamahkaasinawaac, kihci-kiishiko\_k. Amii hawe Kishe-manitoo, amii wanini Kishe-manitoo, kaa-kii-waapamaac kihci-kiishikonk kaa-apinic kihci-apiwinink, kaakike. Ekaa wiikkaa kaa-waapamaayahk wiiyaahsipimaatsiwin kaa-kikishkamahk noonkom kaa-kiishikaak. Mitoni maamahkaasinaakosi.

Aishaaya (Isaiah) okiskwehikew, ninkotaahso-maatinamaakan kaa-ihkitoc. Eh-ihkitoc Aishaaya, ahpii kaa-kii-pooni-pimaatsic Aishaaya okiskwehikew, Ninkii-waapamaa kaa-Tipencikec eh-apic kihci-apiwinink kihci-kiishikonk, ihkito Aishaaya. Mitoni maamahkaac e-kii-ishinamaan, ihkito Aishaaya. Miina ninkii-waapamaaw kihci-okiishikowak, kihci-kiishiko\_k kaa-atoshkawawaa. Kishe-manitooowa, kaakike miina kaakike.

(pause) Eh-ihkitowaac, ihkito Aishaaya, ikiweniwak kihci-oskiishikowak, kaawin wiikkaa opoonihitoonaawaa e-ihkitowaac, kanaatsiw, kanaatsiw, kanaatsiw kaa-Tipencikec misiwesiwhkaatsic. Misiwe ahkiink shaakishkine okikentaakosiwin, ahawe kaa-Tipencikec, ihkito Aishaaya. (Pause)

Mitoni eh-kanaatsic ahawe kaa-waapamak, ihkito Aishaaya. (Pause)

Amii hi kaa-inenimitisowaan ihkito Aishaaya, ahpii kaa-waapamak kaa-Tipencikec, kihci-kiishikonk. Amii ahpan e-nihshoowanaatsiyaan. Amii ahpan e-nihshoowanaatsiyaan. (Pause) Aishaaya ihkito ohowe kaa-onci-nishoowanaatsiyaan cikemaa ekaa eh-payehkiseyaan nitoonink. Miina e-wiici-ayamiimakwaa, kaa-ishi-ayamiimakanik otooniwaa ekaa eh-payehkahk mitoon e-ishi-ayamiimakahk miina e-otaawiniyaan ikiweniwak anihshininiwak kaa-ishi-pimaatsiwaac, ekaa pishihshik kwanta kekon. Kaa-ani-mootamakaninik otooniwaa. Amii owe ahpin kaa-nihshoowanaacihikowaan. (Pause)

Cwaan ihkito, Nkii-waapamaa kaa-Tipencikec eh-apic kihci-apiwinink. Ninkii-waapamaa ikiweniwak kihci-kiishikonk, kaa-ayaawaac, e-waapiskohowaac, waapiski..., waapiskikishkaacikanan e-kikishkamowaac. Miina oshaawishooniyaan, oshaawishooniyaaw kihci-okimaawastotinan, e-kikishkahke(waac) ikiweniwak kaa-ayaawaac otiskawaayek okihci-apiwinink Kishe-mantioo.

(Long pause) Pwaan (Paul) ahpii ishkwaaayaac kaa-ayamihaac otooskiniikiimo Timohtiiwa (Timothy) ihkito ahawe Pwaal, ninkishipishkaan nakwe-cishkasiwewin, ninkii-nootinike, mino-nootinikewin ayaank waamisin otinaan Timohtiiwan. Aasha wiipac nka-pooni-pimaatis. Niwaapantaan kihci-kiishiko\_k ihkito Pwaal. Nitahtamaakoo kihci-okimaawastohtin ekaa ke-nihshoowanaatahk, kaakike miina kaakike. (Pause)

Who was it that John saw? Who was it that he saw on the throne? He was really amazing to him in heaven. It is God. It is He, God, that he saw who was sitting on the throne in heaven for ever and ever. The One we have never seen in the flesh (ly forms) that we are wearing today. He looks truly awesome.

In the sixth chapter of Isaiah the prophet, Isaiah (spoke, lit. said). Isaiah says, "When the prophet Isaiah died, 'I saw the Lord sitting on a throne in heaven,' Isaiah says. 'What I saw is really amazing,' says Isaiah. 'And I saw angels in heaven serving God forever and ever.

They are saying,' says Isaiah, 'those angels, they never stop saying "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord almighty. The earth is full of his glory, (the glory) of the Lord,"' says Isaiah.

"That one I saw was truly holy," Isaiah says.

"This is what I thought about myself," says Isaiah, "when I saw the Lord in Heaven. Surely I will be destroyed. Surely I will be destroyed." Isaiah says, "This is the reason I will be destroyed: indeed, my mouth is unclean, for I talk with those whose mouths are unclean, the way the unclean mouth talks, about my home, the way those people live. And always their mouths speak of nothing important. This is what is destroying me."

John says, "I saw the Lord sitting on the throne. I saw those in heaven who are there dressed in white, who are wearing white clothes. And they are wearing golden crowns, those ones who are there in front of the throne of God."

When he talked for the last time to his young man Timothy, Paul says "I have come to an end. They are trying to sacrifice me. I fought the good fight. Be careful," he says to Timothy. "Soon I will die. I saw heaven," says Paul. "A crown has been set aside for me that will never perish, for ever and ever."

Mii tahsh ohowe toowihkaan Cwaan kaa-kii-waapantank kihci-kiishiko\_k. Cwaan kaa-kii-waapamaac (pause) iniweniwan kaa-apinic kihci-apiwinink. Ninkii-waapamaac, Cwaan ihkito, kihci-okiishikoowak naaninkotaahso e-tahsininikin omiinkwanaawa miina oshkiinshikowa waaskaa, e-o... kii-oshkii\_shikowak waaskaa miina pihcaayek. Kaawin aaste ayaahsiwak eh-kiishikaanik miina eh-tipihkaanik eh-ihkitowaac, Kanaatisiw, kanaatisiw, kanaatisiw kaa-Tipencikec misiwesiwikaatisic kaa-ayaac miina ke-ayaac. (Pause)

Mayaam peshikwan e-ihkitoc Cwaan okiskentaakohkewin noonkom kaa-kanawaapantamahk, taapiskooc Aishaaya okiskiwehikew kaa-kii-ishi-waapanta\_k ishinamowin, kihci-kiishiko\_k. Mayaam peshikwan e-ihkitoc Cwaan, Kihci-okiishikowak ninkii-waapamaac, ihkito Cwaan. Mooshak e-ihkitowaac ihimaa otiskawaayek kihci-apiwinink, Kanaatisiw, kanaatisiw, kanaatisiw kaa-Tipencikec misiwesiwikaatisic. Oko kaa-waapamikwaa okiishikowak kaawin wihkaa ?aastene. Kaawin wihkaa anwehshinook eh-kiishikaanik miina eh-tipahkanik e-ihkitowaac oho ihkitowin.

Mii himaa minikohk ke-ayamihtoowaan, noonkom kaa-kiishikaak, ayamihewikiishikaa. Okii-pahkaan ankitaan kaa-Tipencikec, ayamihe-kiishika. (Pause) Tahsin kekoon, kaa-noohitamahk kihci-masinahikan, ayamihe-kiishikaak okii-ishi-pakitinaan kaa-Tipe\_cikec. Mitaahso-onahshowewin kaa-kii-miinawaaniwank, e-ayamihekiishikaak, kii-ocihcihse e-kii-miinawaaniwank. Kaa-kanaatisic ahcaahk e-kii-takohshink e-ayamihe-kiishikaanik. Cwaan e-kii-waapantank ishinamoowin, e-ayamihe-kiishikaa. (Pause)

Kekiinawint kipakohsentaakosimin kaa-pimaatisiyahk miina ayamihe-kiishikaa kihci-nantonamahk kaa-ahcaahkowak, ci-nantaw-wapantamahk, miina ci-kakwe-mihkamahk. Ihiwe ahcaahk kaa-ahcaahkowak ekaa wihkaac kenihshoowanaatahk, Kishe-manitoo otoo... otihkitowin.

Ekwa miina kaa-pimaatisiyahk ayamihewipimaatisiwin e-omaamintonentamahk, kaawin... kaawin kika-wencihsihsiin. Kii-ayamiwak kihci-ihkwek (unintelligible) e-kiih-aanimomaawaac kaa-oshki-maatanohkiininc ayamihewikamiko\_k oshkinihkewak. Kii-wiintamaakonaanak eh-aanimak ayamihewianohkiiwin tepwe aaniman, (pause) kaawin wentahsinoon. (Pause) Aanimisiwinink awiya oka-onci-waapantaan manitoo e-ishi-nantawenimikoc, ahawe otayamihewipimaatis, otayamihewiotanohkii. Taapiskooc Cwaan ohoweni kaa-kii-waapanta\_k okiskentaakohkewin kaa-masinaha\_k, kawaatakenimowinink, okii-onci-waapantaan ishinamoowin kaa-wiintamaakoyahk, ohomaa omasinhanink ahawe Cwaan.

Manitoo kika-wii-shawenimikowaa maamaw.

This is just like what John saw in heaven. John saw that one who is sitting on the throne. "I saw angels," John says, "that had six wings and eyes all around. They had eyes around and within. Day and night they never stop saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord almighty who was and will (forever) be.'"

John says exactly the same (thing) in Revelation where we are looking now. (It was) just like the vision the prophet Isaiah saw in heaven. John says exactly the same (thing). "I saw angels," says John. "As they are there in front of the throne they are always saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord almighty.' These angels that I saw never rest; day and night they say this phrase."

This is all I will read today, on Sunday. Today is Sunday. The Lord set aside Sunday. All the things that we hear in the Bible. It was on a Sunday that the Lord gave out the ten commandments. Sunday was the time they were given out. The Holy Spirit arrived on a Sunday. John saw a vision on a Sunday.

We, too, who are living, are wanted to listen for something spiritual on a Sunday—to hunt it down and to try to find that something that is spiritual, something that will not be destroyed: God's word.

And also for us who are living, when we are thinking about Christian living, it will not be easy (on you). The elder ladies talked about those who are just starting to work in the church, (about) the young women. They told us that Christian work is hard, truly hard. It is not easy. Through difficulty someone will see what God wants (from) him/her, that Christian, that church worker. Just like what John saw, what he wrote in revelation, in suffering he saw a vision that he tells us here in this book, that John.

May God bless you all.

The line about “the elder ladies [who] talked about those who are just starting to work in the church, (about) the young women,” referred to a couple of the elder members of the senior choir who addressed the difficulties and benefits of becoming junior choir members, a move which is interpreted in Lynx Lake as a commitment to a strong Christian life.<sup>14</sup>

The content and rhetorical structuring of the sermon provides some interesting insights into Severn argumentation: what constitutes evidence? The structure of the preceding sermon is as follows:

- I. Greetings (announcement)
- II. Sermon introduction
- III. Intro to St. John’s life
- IV. St. John’s exile (Includes heavy evaluation section)
- V. St. John’s vision
  - A. Rhetorical questions: Who was it that John saw? etc.<sup>15</sup>
  - B. St. John’s vision of God
- VI. The Prophet Isaiah’s vision
  - A. Vision
  - B. Problem which caused vision: people speaking idly
- VII. St. John’s vision
- VIII. St. Paul’s vision
- IX. Visions compared and equated
- X. Importance of Sundays (including evidence)
- XI. Admonition to Audience
 

“We, too, who are living, are wanted to listen for something spiritual on a Sunday—to hunt it down and to try to find that something that is spiritual, something that will not be destroyed: God’s word.”
- XII. Warning of difficulties
- XIII. Coda

Notice that this sermon pivots around the visions of three Biblical characters. The visions were of God and of a heaven in which the persecution and difficulty of the present world play no part. The emphasis on visions as compelling evidence is consistent with an older world view in which visions were sought out to help humans deal with the physical and spiritual world. This has been syncretized into the matrix: visions are still a primary legitimating device to this day. Indeed, it was through a miraculous vision that the archdeacon first had his calling to the Christian ministry.

While these religious texts are but a subset of the religious discourses heard in Lynx Lake, the samples chosen are representative. As such, the overwhelming evidence of the discourse is that the people of Lynx Lake have adopted a Native Christian world view which accommodates, and perhaps reframes, an older cosmology.

## CHANGES EMERGING

Although Christianity has become firmly established in the Severn area through the last one hundred or so years, changes are beginning to occur among the some of the younger generations. In a *Wawatay News* article (May 1989: Vol. 16, No. 5) a young Aboriginal person from Webequie, Ontario, a dialectally-transitional Severn community, calls for a combination of Christian and Native religions. This request signals a change in the means of defining ethnicity: here a young man (or perhaps a group of young adults) is turning to sources outside the home community to define identity. Many people define “Native” aspects of religion based on the external standard that “Christianity cannot be Native” so that Aboriginal people who adopt Christianity are not considered to be worshipping in a Native manner. These people then look to what they consider a more pristine religious state and declare that this is the “true religion” for the Native people. Now it may be true in many, if not most, Ojibwe situations that Christianity is but a “thin veneer” spread over an older system, but in Lynx Lake, as well as many other Severn communities,<sup>16</sup> Christianity is, and has been, considered an integral part of community life. Indeed, to be Anglican in Lynx Lake is to be a Native.

The young man’s request for a new amalgam of Christianity and Native religion is a sign that the folklorization of ethnicity has just begun for the northern Ojibwe. In southern Ojibwe communities, where contact with the White matrix society has been longstanding, there is a tendency to define Nativeness *vis a vis* the “other.” That is, if something is “White” then it is necessarily “not-Indian” and vice versa. Vogt would align this reaction with his fourth category of syncretism. In the north, where there is been relatively little (and generally recent) contact with Whites, the Native peoples define themselves internally. In a situation such as this it is moot to ask if one element or another is “White” or even “borrowed.” If the people are using it, the item is being used “Natively.” The question asked by the people of Lynx Lake “is X

useful to us?" not "will the use of X compromise our identities as Native people?"

The folklorization of ethnicity is a process by which a group chooses a corpus of symbols with which and by which they define themselves. Language has typically held high symbolic value in the definition of ethnicity, but as Native American languages slowly fade into memory, the symbols chosen are often in the area of religion. Some of the religious symbols which have been adopted by many Aboriginal groups include drums and drumming, peace pipes, sweet grass, and certain dances. The fact that they have been introduced, in many cases very recently, from other, unrelated groups, seems to have bothered neither the academic nor the Native community, as indeed it should not.

However, in communities where there is no need for overt symbols, where ethnicity is doxa, the use, adaptation and adoption of outside resources, including linguistic codes, religious systems, and material technology are seen as no threat to group identity. This is the situation for most Severn people, or has been until the present inundation of outside influences, most important of which has been contact with other Natives who feel a real threat to their ethnic identities and who have begun to plant seeds of ethnic insecurity. Thus, the concern with "White" versus "Native" religious styles is a recent development arising from the group of people who have had the most contact with the matrix societies which makes such dichotomies. The layers of irony run deep here: a people who define themselves as Native have adopted as a central part of their social lives a religious system associated with White, western society and have redefined the system as Native. However, the same White, western society, (particularly the academic community, in attempting to become "more sensitive to Native needs") has defined Nativeness on the basis of being "not White" and have created often artificial boundaries between what is White and what is Native. These boundaries have in turn been taught to educated Native people, who are beginning to adopt this White viewpoint and now must redefine themselves on the basis of this new dogma taught from the outside. Furthermore, they feel that they must teach such a dogma to other Native people who have as yet seen no threat to their Aboriginal identities. For most people in Lynx Lake, to be Native is to be Anglican, but suddenly, to be Anglican is to be not-Native. But to turn from the Church of England to a "Native religion" would be

denying a central focus of the Native identity in the community. This wind of change signals a broader trend toward external definitions of self which indicates the insulation from the matrix society is quickly fading.

The tension between being Anglican and being Native seems to be a problem only for the youth. The wife of a past chief of Lynx Lake had travelled with him on several occasions to chiefs' meetings outside the Severn area. Most of these meetings were begun with sweetgrass and pipe ceremonies. Her daughter laughingly reported to me that her mother wondered why these people never "thanked God" at the beginning of these meetings like the people from the Severn area did. All that those people ever did, according to the mother, was to "smoke and beat on drums." This late-middle aged woman, who spoke no English, who dressed in traditional garb of a brightly-colored skirt over pants with her head covered by a scarf, who had spent much of her life living and working on a trapline, who lived in one of the most remote Indian villages in Canada, understood the "traditional" religious observances performed by predominantly English-speaking Natives at chiefs' meetings as mere displays of smoke and noise which ignored the spiritual importance of the gathering.

In conclusion, the Ojibwe continue to be very numerous people—evidenced in many ethnographic descriptions (Casagrande 1952; Densmore 1929; Hallowell 1934, 1936, 1939 and 1942; Jenness 1935; Landes 1968(1937); and E. Rogers 1962 among others). In Lynx Lake, Christianity has become the primary religious paradigm through which the spiritual world is addressed, due in no small part to the efforts of two generations of strong, local leadership. Religious discourse in Lynx Lake is free from concerns about "living like Whitemen," "turning from the old ways," or any of the other reactionary themes that might be expected given the presentations of religion in the area by outside researchers. Lynx Lake has been designated by scholars and religious agencies in northwest Ontario as the heart of the "Anglican North" and is known as a community which allows only one church so that its spiritual and social unity might not be broken. Through representative discourses, we hear the voices of a people committed to a strong Christian worldview not expected of those whose Native identity is so firmly established. Hearing this raises questions about how well we can listen without attending to Native-to-Native discussions such as those analyzed here.

## NOTES

1. Some names of communities and people have been changed for this paper.
2. Research in the community of Lynx Lake was carried out over a period of two years in 1981-1983, 1987 and 1988. Funding for research in 1987 and 1988 came from the National Science Foundation and from the Wenner-Gren Foundation. I wish to thank Joel Sherzer, Greg Urban and Randolph Valentine for helpful criticisms of early drafts of this paper. In addition, I thank my anonymous reviewers for their comments on this version of the paper. Margaret Seguin's excellent editorial suggestions were particularly valuable in the final stages of writing.
3. The only two titles in the community consistently used are "the Venerable" Pipoon which refers to the archdeacon, the Venerable William Pipoon and "the Reverend" Pipoon which refers to his brother, the Reverend Simon Pipoon, a priest. In less formal situations, among members of the community, these two men are known respectively as William and Simon, but befitting the formal nature of written materials, I have used the titles.
4. A notable exception to this overwhelming trend is Basso's (1970) account of the Cibecue Apache in which both Native and Christian traditions are systematically, and impartially, analyzed.
5. This dated translation is quite literal, in many places awkward, and in some places inaccurate. Despite this, it has high symbolic value in both Cree and Severn Ojibwe society.
6. A large gravestone, the only one in the Lynx Lake cemetery, was erected over Anapat Memenkwe's grave testifying to his honored position as an elder who embodied the spirit of the community.
7. The pronominal morphemes in Ojibwe do not distinguish between masculine and feminine.
8. The father-in-law came from an area southeast of the Lynx Lake region which borders the Lac Seul dialect and cultural region. Bearwalking has been noted in more southerly groups of Ojibwe, especially among the Ojibwe on Manitoulin Island. Because there has been no evidence for this type of spiritual activity in the Severn area, it seems probable that this represents a more southerly tradition which has been imported.
9. In the Severn area, the languages are written using Cree syllabics, a syllable-based orthography created by James Evans in the mid 1800s.
10. The language is more typically called "Cree" or "Oji-Cree" in the community. It is in deference to academic terminology that I use the name Ojibwe, or Severn Ojibwe here.
11. The syllabic notes hung on the walls of the chapel apparently represent a pedagogical tradition, if the picture of the Reverend William Dick found in Rhodes and Todd (1981:61) is representative. In this picture, taken between 1883 and 1917, the Reverend Dick stands at the altar of the Big Trout Lake Anglican church: hanging behind him are large sheets on which religious texts have been printed in syllabics. The image portrayed in this photograph is striking: without the dates given one would not be able to tell whether this picture had been taken in the 1880s or in the 1980s.
12. For example, Vecsey interprets the Midewiwin as only minimally efficacious, because it represents a response to the pressures of colonialism (1983:6).
13. This is essentially the same methodological paradox underlying Chomsky's linguistic research paradigm which suggests that since language is innate, all languages will share a large core and that the study of any particular language and indeed, any particular speaker, will equally reveal the core. But, it is only those very familiar with a language (perhaps ultimately only native speakers) who are capable of making the subtle judgements of grammaticality required for more refined aspects of the grammatical model and for distinguishing errors of performance due to factors such as fatigue from the structures (competence) underlying those.
14. The exhortations given by the senior choir members are not included here out of space considerations.
15. Interesting formal features of this text include some degree of nasal cluster simplification marked within the text by underlined blanks in the Ojibwe sections, and the use of rhetorical questions. The rhetorical questions, "*Cwaan awanenan ini kaa-kii-waapamaac, awanenan ini kaa-kii-waapamaac kihci-apiwink*" (Who was it that John saw? Who was it that he saw on the throne?), used by the Rev. Simon Pipoon are highly marked in several ways. First, the use of the noun *Cwaan* (John) prior to the interrogative pronoun *awanenan* is extremely unusual, and, in fact, is not found in any other data that I have collected. Second, the question is repeated, the second question adding slightly more information ("on the throne") to the first. Finally, the use of a question in a formal, public and monologic setting makes this a rhetorical question, a device rarely found outside formal, English settings. This device may have been learned in one of the priest schools that are held for native peoples. In this case we can be sure that the Rev. Pipoon learned it from another Ojibwe or Cree-speaking person as he does not speak English.
16. For the purposes of this paper, I have restricted the Native discourses to those provided by members of the Lynx Lake community. Two other Severn com-



munities are particularly noted for the strength of their commitment to the Anglican church; another two are well-known for their work in and with the Catholic church. Lynx Lake may be on the end of the "Christian commitment" continuum, but they are not qualitatively different from other Severn Ojibwe communities. The larger communities, such as Big Trout Lake, with the largest Euro-Canadian populations and with the heaviest Euro-Canadian contact tend to be on the other end of the continuum.

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