

Kincolith, B.C.: Leadership Continuity in a Native Christian Village, 1867-1887¹

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Abstract: Through an adaptive strategy which began with an invitation to Anglican missionaries and extended through accepting Christianity, serving on the village "missionary council," and holding elected office under the Indian Advancement Act, traditional chiefs of the Nishga Indians maintained the continuity of their leadership after the founding of the native Christian village of Kincolith, B.C.

Résumé: Grâce à une stratégie d'adaptation qui s'amorçât par une invitation aux missionnaires anglicans et se poursuivît par l'acceptation de la christianité, une participation au "conseil missionnaire", et l'occupation d'un poste élu sous l'Acte pour l'Avancement des Indiens (Indian Advancement Act), les chefs Nishga traditionnels purent conserver leurs fonctions de chef même après la fondation du village indigène chrétien de Kincolith en Colombie Britannique.

Key words: Nishga, Anglican missionaries, native government, leadership continuity.

INTRODUCTION

The Nishga Indians, a Tsimshian-speaking people on the Nass River in British Columbia, came into contact with Anglican missionaries in the early 1860s, and by the late 1880s possessed an elected council and chief under the terms of the Indian Advancement Act of 1884. This study brings into focus the Nishga figures who played important leadership roles from 1867 to 1887, the period which took them from autonomy to Canadian government control. In those years a small colony of young families drawn primarily from the upriver villages of Quinwoch/Ankida (and to a lesser extent Gitwilsilth) resettled at Kincolith on the estuary of the Nass River in order to found a Christian village. There in 1887 the Kincoliths came under the Indian Advancement Act.

The story of Anglican and Methodist missions to the Nishga, and more generally to the Tsimshian, has been told frequently (Collison 1915, Crosby 1914, Halcombe 1877, Moeran 1923, Pierce 1933, Ridley 1903, Wellcome 1887). William Duncan was the pioneer and model Protestant missionary.¹ The Christian village he and Coastal Tsimshians formed at Metlakatla in 1862 influenced Anglican and Methodist work for decades. In the accounts by and about the missions the Indian Christians appear as subsidiary figures. Their conversion is sometimes

expressed in terms of their change from ferocity to docility, from colorful "savagery" to bland "civilization." Nevertheless, at Kincolith, founded by missionaries Robert Doolan and Robert Tomlinson, along with Cowcaelth (Philip Latimer) and other young Nishga families, the role of native figures is discernible and the continuity of their leadership apparent.

Power in the period preceding the arrival of missionaries had been held by Nishga crest and clan leaders. These were men whose family descent and position were maintained or enhanced by potlatches marking the matrilineal passage of privilege and status along the generations. All four Tsimshian phratries were represented among the Nishga, but not necessarily at a single village. The crest animals of these phratries were Wolf, Eagle, Raven, and Killer Whale. The dominant crests at Ankida were Wolf and Eagle and at Quinwoch, Eagle and Killer Whale.

Individuals who took up leadership at Kincolith under the Indian Act in the 1880s can be shown to have been part of the traditional leadership structure as early as the 1860s, when their names first appear in European records. Their political authority was drastically changed but the presence of these people as leaders, and the fact that they or their kinfolk were among the pioneers at Kincolith, demonstrates the continuity of leadership from the

past. They were the same people who had held power before: there was no sharp discontinuity in this aspect of Nishga life. During the two decades of transition, the same persons continued to remain prominent and to hold positions in the leadership structure whether aboriginal or European-imposed. The Indians themselves carried their society past the shoals and rapids of this transition.

QUINWOCH

The Nishga took the initiative in asking for missionaries to come among them. In the early 1860s chiefs Kinsada and Kadounaha from Ankida invited William Duncan to visit their village. Duncan was then a young lay missionary of the Church Missionary Society who had begun his work in 1857 among the Tsimshian at Fort Simpson. This Hudson's Bay Company post had been located briefly (1831-34) in Nishga territory at the mouth of the Nass River, but was removed to a permanent location on the Tsimshian Peninsula in 1834. The Nishga continued to visit Fort Simpson at its new site, and observed the work of Duncan as liaison between Europeans and Indians there. When Duncan and his converts moved to Metlakatla in 1862, Nishga visited the new Christian village. In May 1864 a Fort Simpson man brought seven young Nishga men to Metlakatla so they could see the life there and return to tell about it. Duncan wrote a passage of scripture on paper for them to take back (Halcombe 1877:190). The Nishga determined to secure a missionary for themselves, and when Duncan visited them at their invitation, he promised to send one.

The first missionary to be regularly stationed on the Nass River, Robert R.A. Doolan, posted himself in 1864 at Quinwoch/Ankida. These were a pair of Nishga villages: Ankida was the residence of the two chiefs, Kinsada and Kadounaha (both Wolf crest), who had been instrumental in Duncan's visits to the Nass River. For the next twenty years the Nishga and the Anglican missionaries of the Church Missionary Society were engaged in an enterprise of fluctuating interest and enthusiasm. Throughout this period the Nishga continued to act as if they were free to accept or reject the ministrations of the missionaries. Their selective acceptance of first Anglican and later Methodist missionaries suggests that they found their contacts with missions useful.

Following William Duncan's response to the Nishga invitation, Robert Doolan, the man chosen to

fulfill their request for a missionary, found during his residence of 1864-1867 that some young people were ready to accept and follow the teachings and changes he called for. Followers were drawn from the younger men among the traditional leadership element such as Cowdaeg (nephew of Kadounaha) and Cowwaikik (kinsman of Kadounaha). Although some chiefs resisted him, such as Kadounaha's brother Claytha (Wolf crest of Gitwinsilth, but influential at Quinwoch/Ankida), the overall attitude among this class and generation was cautious acceptance and a willingness to "wait and see." Doolan's kindness and medical aid to the sick and dying won him sympathy from the elite even when they did not wish to become adherents of his new way.²

Doolan's first baptism was of Tacomash (Samuel Walker), the nephew of Agweelakkah, a chief at Gitwinsilth, who had received Duncan. Doolan nursed Tacomash in his home during the last few weeks of the young man's life. He also amputated toes from the foot of Cowdaeg, frostbitten in the Boxing Day canoe accident which drowned the young man's kinsman, Kadounaha; Doolan later received thanks from Cowdaeg's parents for this aid.

Despite his poor grasp of their language (a dialect of Tsimshian), Doolan found that the Nishga objected to having a young Tsimshian convert from Metlakatla as preacher on Sunday morning rather than the missionary himself. He received suggestions from the people about how to improve his command of the language. These encouragements outweighed the opposition and resistance of others.

In his second year Doolan had become much more personally involved with the people and more aware of their individual and group activities. Persons who had formerly been resistant or even threatening were coming to church and/or to school. One of his strongest opponents, Claytha (Klaydach), saw fit to visit him and promise to desist from work on Sunday. Doolan regarded Claytha as the most powerful of the Nishga chiefs. Later the same chief felt obliged to explain his actions to Doolan and to ask to be prayed for. Doolan did not recognize these responses as forms of adaptation or synthesis; but some of the changes he sought were beginning to occur. The more drastic changes he hoped for apparently made him insensitive to the changes he actually wrought.

School and church attendance was consistently higher than in the first year. This made the missionary optimistic and hopeful. Doolan's journals record the changes he observed: people no longer

came to school painted, and some people (or their children) attended as a way of thanking him for some help given. European clothes were more often worn, and people explained their absence from church or school as due to not having European clothes to wear. Several chiefs promised to stop giving away property and holding feasts, and skepticism was noted among some individuals about traditional beliefs and customs. At the same time community pressure on prospective converts continued. Failure to fulfill traditional obligations was a major criticism of converts and prospective converts. Whiskey drinking was a source of concern to Doolan. Resentments and suspicions felt toward the missionary, and whites generally, were frequently expressed when persons were intoxicated.

By the end of his second winter in the Nass Valley, Doolan's relations with the people were generally good. The resistance of which he made so much was probably more a matter of selective acceptance than of deliberate opposition in most cases. His influence with some of the chiefly families was established. The native culture was still intact and vital though undergoing an increasingly intensified impact from outside sources. Partly because of his links to Duncan and the trading advantages he offered, Doolan had prestige and influence on his side, if not power. His was not a coercive force, however, but an avenue for voluntary change. Doolan's Quinwoch differed from Duncan's Fort Simpson and Metlakatla. It was neither a trading post settlement nor a gathering of self-selected converts and prospective converts living under rules of the missionary. It was a native village, a community directly contiguous with its past, despite outside influences. Doolan was an invited guest with something to offer his hosts.

At the end of Doolan's second tour on the Nass in spring 1866 the Church Missionary Society decided that the Northwest Coast mission work was over-extended; Doolan consequently returned to Metlakatla to assist Duncan. Quinwoch people, especially Cowcaelth of Gitwinsilth who had moved to Quinwoch, were encouraged to continue their interest, however. Doolan's intention was to visit the communities as an outpost of the main mission of Metlakatla. This withdrawal was accompanied by hopes that another mission could be started in one of the villages upriver from Quinwoch. It was also expected that converts and prospective converts would move to Metlakatla, the centre for evangelizing the Tsimshian. Doolan told headquarters in London that the time working among the Nishga

had been worthwhile both for the people and himself, and that he was beginning to have some influence for good:

My stay amongst them has been most beneficial for myself, as I have learnt more of the dense darkness and superstition of the heathen than could ever have been learnt here, and also learnt some little of the working of the heathen mind.³

In the spring of 1867 Doolan accompanied Metlakatlans to the mouth of the Nass River to fish. There he noted Christians camped separately from non-Christians. When he went upriver to visit Quinwoch, Doolan found Cowcaelth, one of his first followers, still enthusiastic about becoming a Christian, but his wife unwilling to move to Metlakatla. Cowcaelth was given special instruction in Bible texts. Doolan visited the sick and dispensed medicines while evangelizing. Cowdaeg, who had been nursed by Doolan after the boating accident, and his wife also studied Bible texts, though he had been guilty of backsliding (gambling), after Doolan had left the village.

On returning to the fishing camp Doolan was very disappointed that Chief Kinsada, who had invited Duncan to the Nass and been his host, was drinking and that his health was endangered. From Doolan's point of view Kinsada's relations had been erratic. Sometimes he appeared to be developing an interest in the new religion and then again he would do something to discourage and contradict this appearance.

Cowcaelth's conversion continued to be of major concern. He had endured some ridicule, being called a "slave" for his attachment to Doolan. In an hierarchical society which kept slaves, this was powerful insult. As a carpenter he had been a maker of ceremonial paraphernalia for chiefs. He continued to use his skills by making desks and other furnishings for school and church. In the spring of 1867 Cowcaelth was baptized and became Philip Latimer. He was to become a lifelong Christian evangelist and leader in his own right.

Doolan noted that Claytha and others were potlatching that summer, with Nishga, Tsimshian and Tagish (a Tlingit affiliate) as participants. As a result of pressures by Claytha, his own kinsman Cowwaikik, another of Doolan's young prospects, had drawn somewhat away from the missionary. He and his wife came to Doolan, promising to reform.

KINCOLITH

In mid-May, 1867, Doolan returned to Metlakatla, where a new combination of events was soon to take place, leading to a re-opening of the Nass mission under another missionary and at a new location. The Reverend Robert Tomlinson, a deacon trained in medicine at Trinity College, Dublin, arrived in late May. Doolan and Tomlinson left for the Nass in early June and preparations began to remove all interested persons to a new mission site, Kincolith (Place of Skulls), near the earlier Hudson's Bay Company fort site, a place where conflict had often taken place between raiding Haida and the Nishga (Collison 1915:272). Two large rafts were made to float possessions down the river. Legend has it that the intended site was missed due to currents in the river and the place chosen was where the rafts came to rest by providential intervention.

Cowcaelth (Philip Latimer) and his family were in the first party to settle at Kincolith. Cowdaeg, crippled by the loss of toes from frost-bite, indicated his interest in moving to Kincolith. Many people came to visit in the early weeks to see how the new little community was faring. Villagers began immediately to construct housing at the new site. The missionary directed the work, though the Indians were skilled woodworkers. Conjugal family dwellings, of uniform design, were the preferred form of residence, though temporary housing in compartmented larger dwellings was acceptable. A sawmill was necessary in order to provide milled lumber for houses, church and other buildings. The alternative was to buy milled lumber and have it shipped to Kincolith. Streets, sidewalks, fences and other physical attributes of a Euro-Canadian (or English) village were added over the years.

Elders came to see how their young people were surviving and what the life was like in the new missionary-directed Christian village. Much of the traditional life continued, though housing, clothing, education and worship and ceremonies were different. The old religious-ceremonial life was forbidden, but the economic base of fishing continued. Latimer conducted prayer services and advised prospective Christians at the settlement. He was particularly valuable for his ability to communicate with the older people, who though not at Kincolith, were still to be evangelized from there. Doolan never did speak Nishga with confidence and Tomlinson, who later became adept in it, was only beginning to learn.

In August Doolan returned to England because of the death of his step-father. The mission/Christian village of Kincolith then passed under the direction of Robert Tomlinson. Tomlinson, inspired by David Livingstone, wished to emphasize the medical work at Kincolith. He began to build a small hospital and hoped to attract settlers to the village from patients and their families drawn from the adjacent hinterland. To encourage this he made regular tours of Nishga and Tsimshian villages, evangelizing and giving medical aid. Kincolith had an attractiveness for some because it was a medical center. Nishga from upriver and Tsimshian and interior peoples came for treatment after Robert Tomlinson began his medical practice in 1867. His three room hospital was opened in 1871. In this way some non-Nishga were added to the community. These included Tsetsauts, who had been employed as hunters by Chief Mountain, and Kitwancool Tsimshians. Tomlinson became well-known and well-liked among the various villages, but his decade at Kincolith did not result in more than a few non-Nishga moving there, despite the hope of the missionary that evangelization in the hinterland would bring them.

Baptismal records indicate that most of the residents in Tomlinson's period were drawn from Quinwoch and Ankida, and were young families.⁴ Essentially it was a relocation of a portion of the population of Quinwoch/Ankida, though some were from other places, mostly other Nishga villages. The population of Kincolith by the end of the first few weeks was about fifty and this had grown to sixty by 1870. The village failed to grow very much after the first few years of modest increase. Tomlinson secured from the government of British Columbia a tract of land as a reserve for the Kincolith settlers.

Garfield's comment on Tsimshian village-founding may give some hint of how the resettlement was seen by the Nishga. When a new village was founded, the custom was for chiefs of the mother village to appoint representatives from among their heirs to become chiefs, or for a few senior chiefs to go to the new village, leaving successor chiefs at the mother village. In this way senior chiefs were in authority at least in the early period of the creation of a new village (Garfield and Wingert 1966:34). Kincolith's founding seems to have incorporated both of these techniques, the former characterizing the period 1867-1877 and the latter the period after 1877. The village site was traditionally selected by the founders, and afterwards relatives and friends owing allegiance to the

founders and their clans and phratries joined them. Other settlers also came who were from different clans and phratries (*ibid.*:33).

In most aspects of village life Metlakatla was the model and example. Rules of conduct were firmly fixed and adherence was required for villagers. A village council was formed under the direction of the missionary to enforce the rules and ensure an orderly society according to missionary standards. Chiefs at Kincolith later complained that they preferred the missionary council government to that introduced under the Indian Advancement Act. The latter made them less powerful and gave them less authority.

Tomlinson's view of the Nishga and of his purposes as a missionary can be seen from his letter to the British Columbia Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works thanking him for the reserve granted:

The C.M.S. (Church Missionary Society) sends forth its labourers to teach not only the distinctive doctrines of Christianity but also the practice of it and to further in every way the civilization and moral improvement of the natives. To overthrow dark superstition and plant instead Christian truth to change the natives from ignorant, blood-thirsty, cruel savages into quiet useful subjects of our Gracious Queen has been the object held out to those who the Society sends forth as its agents. . . . You have had an opportunity yourself of judging the progress made.⁵

Something of the ambivalence of his rhetoric may be seen in the fact that two years earlier, after only one year among the Nishga, he remarked that he felt almost like one of the Natives.

Tomlinson insisted that no arms be kept at Kincolith and raiding parties were obliged to give up their guns while visiting the village. This strong stand probably convinced some to settle at the village. The rivalry and conflict, sometimes resulting in murder, between Nishga and coastal Tsimshian, noted by Doolan, continued to exist during Tomlinson's tour at Kincolith. Traditionally both peoples fished at the Nass mouth and friction occurred there. Tensions, sometimes resulting in violent conflict, continued to exist between Nishga and coastal Tsimshian. In the 1880s disputes between Nishga and Tsimshian about the use of the land at the Nass River fishing grounds, upriver from Kincolith, resulted in acts of vandalism. Fences and gardens were destroyed. Missionaries and government collaborated to suppress and prevent this violence.

Latimer, who had been on the first of the two rafts to land at the site for Kincolith, was the only Indian baptized at the time of the relocation. He was thirty-three years old. Latimer became Tomlinson's chief assistant and his status in the community is perhaps seen by his being named as godfather to the newly baptized and as witness to marriages. Among the earliest baptisms of Kincolith residents was that of Mary Latimer, wife of Philip Latimer. But the Latimers were from the upriver village of Gitwinsilth. Wahlee of Ankida, who had been criticized as being too much of a white man because of his attachment to Doolan, was baptized on November 7, 1869, as John Barton, aged twenty-five. Wahlee (Wachlee)/Barton had proposed to build a house in Quinwoch near Doolan. He also came under the influence of Cowcaelth/Latimer who seems to have been the earliest and most ardent of the young men who were attracted to Doolan's ministry.

With the exception of Mary Latimer, all of the first seven baptized from Kincolith, in November 1869, were from Ankida. They included Cowwaikik and his wife, who became William and Sarah Smith. He was aged thirty and she about thirty-four. Smith had joined the community about two weeks after the first arrivals. He was a healer, medicine man, in the community and a kinsman of both Kadounaha (one of the chiefs who first invited Duncan to the Nass) and Claytha. He later turned against native healers, denounced them as frauds, and sold his healing paraphernalia to Robert Cunningham, Doolan's assistant at Ankida. Doolan recorded that Cowwaikik gave a potlatch in October, 1865. As early as March, 1866, he told Doolan he was tired of attending feasts and would attend no more. He apparently felt sophisticated enough about Christian denominations to try to explain the difference between Anglicans and Roman Catholics to Claytha.

On October 29, 1871, there were another fifteen adult baptisms at Kincolith, five males and ten females. These were performed by Tomlinson's father-in-law the Reverend Charles Woods. None of these names seem to correspond to individuals mentioned by Doolan, but with one or two exceptions all were from Quinwoch and Ankida. They were mostly younger than thirty years old. Most were husband and wife, or wives or kinswomen of previously baptized males.

Through Tomlinson's incumbency at Kincolith the adult baptisms are predominantly from former residents of Quinwoch and Ankida, though several

from Gitlakdamiks also came and presumably stayed after being baptized. The total growth was not great and may have contributed to Tomlinson's wish to relocate and begin a new Christian village. In 1875 a young Ankida man, Takonits, was baptized as Frederick Allen, aged 28. He became an active Christian evangelist like Latimer and a lay teacher in other villages. He also acted as a spokesman for the Kincolith Nishga in an important conference about land and reserve allotments in 1887.

The missionaries' accounts give no hint of the survival of traditional marriage patterns and of crest traditions. Later studies indicate that these traditions survived into the twentieth century (Sapir 1915, 1920; Barbeau 1950; Halpin 1973). Class relationships and matrilineal descent apparently also survived the relocation of the Quinwoch/Ankida people. This was important for the continuity of the significant kinship aspects of the society. Equally important perhaps was the adhesion of young men of chiefly families to Kincolith from its earliest creation.

The economy of the people continued to centre around the traditional seasonal fishing and gathering activities. At the Nass fishery each spring when the eulachon ran Christian and non-Christian Nishga and Tsimshian gathered by the hundreds as they had always done. The missionaries built churches at the fishing grounds and schools were conducted there for the children. The winter villages were emptied during the fishing season.

In March, 1878, after ten years of Kincolith's existence, four major chiefs were baptized on the same day. The conversion and relocation of these men suggests that they had judged the community to be viable, and had determined to play a part there. The four chiefs, at least three of whom were in frequent contact with Doolan, were baptized during the famous visit to Metlakatla by Bishop William C. Bompas, of Athabaska. They were Claytha (Klaydach) baptized Paul Klaydach (aged 55), Qwockshow (Wolf crest of Ankida) baptized Robert Qwockshow (aged 65), Kinsada (of Ankida) baptized George Kinsada (aged 45) and Neeyah baptized Samuel Seymour (aged 30).

It is perhaps significant that chiefs at Lakkalsap were inviting Methodists to open a mission at their village in 1877 and that at Gitlakdamiks two chiefs were baptized into the Anglican Church in 1877 and 1879. They were Caik who became Daniel Lester (aged 60) and Tgaganlakhatqu who became Abraham Wright (aged 45), (both Wolf crest of Gitlakdamiks). The traditional leadership of the

Nishga had largely accepted the Anglican or Methodist connections by the end of the decade.⁸

Kincolith did not grow rapidly as Metlakatla had in its early years. Tomlinson was becoming restless and thinking of beginning a new mission among the Tsimshian on the upper Skeena River, where he visited on his regular evangelizing and healing tours. If Tomlinson was aware of the chiefly position of some of the newest adherents he did not comment. He was deeply occupied with the disputes between William Duncan, whom he greatly admired, and Dean Edward Cridge of Victoria on the one hand and Bishop Hills on the other. The intensity of conflict between Duncan and the Church of England was exacerbated when William Ridley came to Metlakatla as Bishop of Caledonia in 1878/79.

In 1878 Tomlinson left Kincolith and relocated on the upper Skeena River, though he returned from time to time to give medical treatment and to visit the fishing grounds each spring near the Nass mouth. He maintained close ties with the Kincoliths and was highly regarded by them despite his paternalistic rule there.⁹ Later some of the people considered removing to Metlakatla to remain under the Tomlinson/Duncan influence. Continuing to keep an eye on conditions at Kincolith, Tomlinson wrote to C.M.S. executive in 1879 denigrating the work of the new incumbent, Henry Schutt, a Yorkshire schoolteacher sent to replace him. The village was, in Tomlinson's view the gateway to inland missionary expansion and as such should be under the guidance of strong, competent hands. Only in this way could it fulfill its role and produce native Christian leadership for the whole area. The conflict between Tomlinson and Schutt resulted in a loss of respect for the missionaries by some Kincoliths.¹⁰

The adherence of Quockshow, Klaydach, Kinsada and Seymour in 1878 proved to be most timely. The next six years (1878-84) saw a definite weakening of missionary leadership. Three short and troubled incumbencies followed Tomlinson's. Schutt was first, followed by a Tsimshian-Scots protege of Duncan, David Leask. Leask had no status in the traditional society. He was in his late twenties and would not have suited the chiefs of the Nishga. Bishop Ridley reported in March, 1880, that Kincolith was in a state of retrogression, a period of reduced zeal.¹¹ There was no strong missionary presence. Tomlinson, Ridley thought, bore some of the blame because of his overemphasis on industries and accounts. To correct this situation an ordained priest was sent in 1882, the Reverend

Thomas Dunn. Dunn's wife's health proved to be a constant concern and drain of his attention. He reported that dissatisfaction at Kincolith had led to threat of defection to the Methodist missionary newly arrived (1877) at Lakkalsap. He found the people to be partisans of Tomlinson and Duncan, and was obliged to overcome suspicion and discontent. Dunn asserted that in his opinion there was great ignorance and immorality among the people, and declared the level of religious instruction and religious devotion to be below what he had been led to expect.

At about the same time that Kincolith was experiencing this crisis it was undergoing new European influences. In 1881 the first salmon cannery was built in the south shore of the Nass about 20 kilometres from the mouth. This created new job opportunities and more challenges to the missionaries to check what they regarded as undesirable influences. William H. Collison, then at Metlakatla, suggested that a cannery be built there to forestall potential exploitation and a detrimental atmosphere. Metlakatla had its own cannery by 1882.

In 1883 Bishop Ridley reported to C.M.S. headquarters in London that Tomlinson was inviting Kincoliths to work in the cannery at Metlakatla to draw them away from Kincolith. He was reported to have sold some of the buildings at Kincolith and to be trying to sell the hospital in 1882. The introduction of canneries in the 1880's accompanied other forms of employment in industry, commerce, construction and mining. These drew people away from the Christian villages. The missionary/pastor tried unsuccessfully to prevent or to reduce these influences.

In March, 1883, the first confirmation of candidates at Kincolith was administered by Bishop Ridley. Previously candidates had travelled to Metlakatla for confirmation. The Indians asked to be shown in the Bible where this sacrament was called for. Having their request fulfilled, they consulted among themselves and agreed to make no more objection.

When Dunn left Kincolith because of his wife's health, some of the Christians there invited Tomlinson to return. As a result of a study of the Northwest Coast missions conducted by Dunn and the Reverend A.J. Hall in 1883, it was decided to send W.H. Collison to Kincolith; he took up the post in 1884. He was coolly received and was asked to oppose the Bishop and to promise to stay for life. It took him several months to overcome suspicion as

the new incumbent linked to the Bishop, who was the foe of Tomlinson.

The Kincolith residents retained their contacts with their kinfolk and erstwhile fellow villagers. Their contacts with the Coastal Tsimshian were perhaps increased by the central role of Metlakatla for Anglican missions on the North Pacific Coast. Travel to the senior community was frequent. After Tomlinson's departure from Kincolith encouragement was given to the people by Tomlinson to relocate at Metlakatla.

Kincolith was also in contact with whites in the area and travelling to the interior. It was a convenient jumping off place for traveling up the Nass. This made regulation of visitors essential in order to control their impact on the villages. Efforts were made to introduce Nishga ceremonial life into Kincolith, but missionary control restricted the behaviour of Indians and whites in the village. Nevertheless, the safety and peace of the village made it attractive to some.

Collison, to counteract appeals for some form of traditional ceremony (unspecified by him), introduced ceremonies agreeable to Anglican usages and channelled winter activities into church-centered events. Public life of the village was centered on educating and accustoming the people to the new way. Potlatching, native healing and secret society activities were prohibited. Nevertheless potlatchlike activities continued and gravestone monument raising provided a means for illustrating wealth and status. Chief Robert Qwockshow was said to have instructed his family and heirs to erect four stone monuments for his grave and spare no expense.

During the years 1878-84 the chiefs appear to have been able to assert a new influence. Encouraged by Collison, they had become the political leaders of Kincolith by the mid-1880s. Their influence was matched by that of Latimer and Allen in the religious sphere. They apparently saw the desirability of coming under of provisions of the Indian Advancement Act (of 1884). In 1886 the leaders petitioned the Indian Affairs administration to secure this new status. By this means an apprenticeship in parliamentary government was intended to be created. Chief and councillors were elected.

The Nishga asked for this new form of leadership in their community as a means of reducing conflicts and tension and improving their relations with the growing authority of government. This approach fitted in with the advice they were getting from Collison. Collison by his work thus smoothed the rough places within the village as a mission commu-

nity, and between Nishga and federal government. The impact of Duncan's dispute with his bishop and with the federal government's Indian administration had spread to the Nishga, through Tomlinson's support for Duncan, on the one hand, and Collison's adherence to the bishop and cooperation with the Department of Indian Affairs on the other. Industry and Indian administration were beginning to compete with the missionaries in function. The missionaries' ministry had to change.

Collison's incumbency coincided with the emergence of the chiefs and of the important public issue of land claims and reserve allotment. Collison was not a "political" figure as were Duncan and Tomlinson. He used his influence in the village and with the authorities outside. Still, he encouraged native leadership, including the creation of Chief and Councillors under the Indian Advancement Act. The hiatus of missionary leadership after Tomlinson and the emphasis of Collison on his pastoral and evangelizing role helped to create the atmosphere in which chiefly political leadership, clothed in the new forms of Indian administration, went hand in hand with the spiritual authority represented by Latimer, Allen and Collison.

In 1886 and again in 1887 Qwockshow and Kinsada as well as Paul Klaydach (son of Klaydach), Seymour and others were leading figures in Kincolith dealings with government. Qwockshow, Klaydach the elder, Kinsada and Seymour (Neyah) were identified by Doolan as chiefs and had been baptized en masse by the visiting Bishop Bompas in 1878. In September 1887 the provincial government created a commission "to enquire into the state and conditions of the Indians of the Northwest Coast of British Columbia." Twenty leading villagers petitioned Ottawa in 1886 to facilitate Kincolith's coming under the Indian Advancement Act.¹² The following year chiefs and others petitioned for more reserve land and more choice of sites. Over one hundred signatures were placed on the petition. When the two land commissioners, C.F. Cornwall and J.P. Planta, arrived at Kincolith on 15 October, 1887, to inquire about the wishes of the people they consulted with chiefs Kinsada, Seymour and others. Presenting the Kincolith case on behalf of the chiefs and people was Frederick Allen. Kinsada and Seymour had advised Reserve Commissioner Judge Peter O'Reilly on his earlier visit, but O'Reilly, Allen asserted, had been hasty and incomplete in the reserve assignments he made. O'Reilly had not been responsive to Kincolith requests. Perhaps not realizing the full consequences of the reserve assignments the Kincoliths had not

formulated their land needs and desires as clearly for O'Reilly as they did for Cornwall and Planta.¹³

In order to gain their objectives, the inhabitants of Kincolith found that collaboration with the government could assist them, at a time when other Nishga and Tsimshian were resisting the authority of the Department of Indian Affairs. Fort Simpson Tsimshian and Lakkalsap/Greenville Nishga had land claims which conflicted with those of Kincolith.

Collison's advice to accept Indian administration and come under the Indian Advancement Act was much appreciated by the federal Indian Administration and encouraged them to be well disposed toward the Kincoliths. Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, I.W. Powell, predicted the Kincoliths would be a model and example to other Northwest Coast bands. Indian agent Charles Todd (appointed in 1887) observed, "These Kincolith Indians are among the most civilized of the Indians in British Columbia."¹⁴ On 25 April 1888 Indian agent Todd established a band council at Kincolith under the Indian Advancement Act terms, and George Kinsada became the chief councillor.

Bishop Ridley gave his opinion that Collison had "quenched the sparks of rebellion" and predicted greater influence for Kincolith as others saw the advantages to be gained from cooperation with government. In June 1888 the Kincoliths exhibited their confidence when they wrote to C.M.S. headquarters calling for Collison to return to Kincolith at the conclusion of his furlough. Rumours were circulating that he would be sent to Metlakatla instead. Allen had informed the Rev. Charles B. Nash, Collison's furlough replacement at Kincolith, of these rumours in early 1888. Nash suggested in a letter of February 6, 1888, that if Collison did not return the people might break off as they had done the previous year at Metlakatla.¹⁵ Kincoliths thought the Bishop had changed personnel too often and had worked to remove Collison: they opposed this in a letter of June 30, 1888, signed by Chief George Kinsada.¹⁶ By late June, 1889, Collison and his family were resettled in Kincolith. His return was followed by an upsurge in religious excitement at the village. A period of revival and conversion saw the adherence to the Anglicans of Chief Mountain of Lakkalsap who had been baptized previously by a Methodist. There was talk at Lakkalsap about joining the Anglicans after the departure in 1890 of the Methodist missionary, A.E. Green.

By the end of the 1880s an era was over. Kincolith had passed through its period of vigorous

Duncan-like leadership under Tomlinson. It had survived the six years of short term missions after Tomlinson's departure and had recovered the leadership of traditional chiefs to supplement that of the religious teachers, Latimer and Allen. Collison's approach was well-suited to the reemergence of Nishga leadership within the community. His personality favored an emphasis on the spiritual and religious side of the work, though he used political and official ties to aid the social and economic life of the community. Indian Affairs was eager to displace missionary political authority. Collison's efforts to bring Kincolith into peaceful conjunction with Ottawa strengthened the Kincoliths' stand on land claims vis-a-vis other Nishga and the Tsimshians. It provided them with tutoring in dealing with government and made federal Indian administration well disposed toward Kincolith. The way was opened for Nishga leadership in secular (political) affairs.

At the same time that native leadership was growing in the political and public affairs spheres, it was also expanding in the sphere of religious leadership. In the protest to insure Collison's return to Kincolith (1888) the new native political leadership was brought to bear in the religious sphere in a way reminiscent of the Nishga initiative, of Kinsada and Kadounaga, in asking missionaries to come to the Nass.

Religious services at Kincolith were held in a small temporary church until 1891 when Christ Church was completed. In 1893 the church and most of the village were destroyed by fire. A general rebuilding was immediately begun. The fire seemed to have given a new vitality to the community. Contributors to the building fund included several men who were from the traditional leadership and were also leaders in the public life of Kincolith, those who had asked for an elected Council under the Indian Advancement Act and who had been elected to the band council. They were some of the same people who were the village fathers consulted by the federal-provincial investigators of Nishga reserve land demands.

CONCLUSION

Several men identified by Doolan as chiefs at Quinwoch and Ankida in the mid-1860s were chiefs and councillors at Kincolith in the late 1880s when that village came under the Indian Advancement Act. Among Doolan's earliest converts were young men and their wives who were of leadership families: kinsmen of chiefs of Quinwoch, Ankida and

Gitwinsilth. These included Cowwaikik/William Smith (kinsman of Kadounaha and Klaydach) and Tacomash/Samuel Walker (nephew of Agweellakka of Gitwinsilth). Another figure who was linked to chiefs through his profession as carver was Cowcaelth/Philip Latimer of Gitwinsilth who became Doolan's second convert at Quinwoch and a lifetime Christian leader at Kincolith. He was a strong supporter of both Tomlinson and Collison. Latimer became captain of the Church Army unit instituted by Collison in the early 1890s and remained such until his death on Easter Sunday, 1899.

The late 1870s and the 1880s saw adherence to the Anglicans not only at Kincolith, but at Aiyansh, and to the Methodists at Lakkalsap of some of the most prestigious chiefs on the Nass. (The last of these in the late nineteenth century was Chief Sqaten/Skoten of Gitlakdamiks of the Wolf crest. He was baptized Easter, 1899, on the same day Philip Latimer died.)

The Nishga founders of Kincolith were the younger relations of chiefs remaining at Quinwoch and Ankida, perhaps especially the latter. By joining the Anglicans they presumably hoped to better their economic condition, including better prices for furs, hides, fish and oil, and to buy store goods for cheaper prices. William Duncan at Metlakatla had demonstrated this possibility. Doolan and Cunningham had engaged in trading. Chiefs, especially of the Wolf crest on the Nass, were aggressive traders. McCullagh, at Aiyansh said that business men and traders were the first to convert.

Missionaries brought advantages in the form of liaison with Europeans and English language skills. They could write letters of reference and of introduction. They had the power of warships behind them to ensure peace and protection. They could manipulate the power of whites to the advantage of the Nishga community. In sum, the missionary could be an adjunct of the power of the chiefs.

After a decade (1867-77) the strong hand of Tomlinson was gradually lifted. Even during his tenure he was often absent and relied on such native figures as Latimer, who held an important role. A period of short tenures and indecisive leadership by the missionaries offered inducements for chiefs to adhere after a period of observation and consideration.

By 1887, three years after Collison's tenure began, the chiefs were firmly ensconced in leadership roles in Kincolith. There they were not subject to downgrading as at Metlakatla and the loss of a

chief's role was not demanded. On the contrary, the elected council under the Indian Advancement Act provided scope for a new political role there. Peace and safety at a site famous for violent clashes with the Haida vividly illustrated the advantages of adherence. But Kincolith was also much closer to the Nass fishery than were Quinwoch/Ankida and so was attractive for that reason too. Chiefs, who controlled natural resources, may have gained a competitive edge by their physical proximity to the fishing stations.

In the 1880s by retaining its ties with the Church Missionary Society and accepting the new form of the federal Indian Affairs Administration Kincolith gained for itself a favoured position. This was accomplished by the combined efforts of Collison and the traditional leadership who had taken up residence at Kincolith. In 1904 the Nishga (temporarily) became unanimously Anglican.

W.H. Collison, missionary/pastor at Kincolith (1884-1920), encouraged the smooth integration of Kincolith into the Indian administration at a time when Nishga and Tsimshian were especially upset over the threat they perceived to their land and status as subjects of the federal government under Indian Agents and the Indian Act. When traditional Nishga leadership became elected leaders, their adaptive strategy was consistent with their earlier strategy of inviting the missionaries to the Nass to assist them in coping more effectively with the European presence. The temporal and spiritual spheres within Kincolith were brought into closest collaboration by Nishga self-assertion. By this means the external and internal interests of Kincolith were enhanced and continued.

NOTES

1. Duncan's mission work has been written about often. The most recent study is that of Jean Usher. Duncan's accomplishments were lauded and held up as a model. Leaders of church and state praised the transformation of the coastal Tsimshian at Melakatl. In 1880s, however, Duncan ran afoul of church and state, and in 1887 he and the vast majority of the Metlakatlangs emigrated to Alaska.
2. R.R.A. Doolan Journals, November 1864-June 1867, in Church Missionary Society Records, Microfilm Reel A 105.
3. R.R. Doolan to Henry Venn, July 6, 1866. CMS/A105. For a fuller treatment of Doolan's first tour on the Nass, see E. Palmer Patterson II (1981).
4. Anglican Church of Canada, National Archives, Toronto. Diocese of Caledonia, Records on Microfilm, Reel 1, Baptisms, Marriages, Burial and Service Registers. The Baptismal Register of Kincolith (Item # 9) contains the traditional names, baptismal names, villages and baptism dates of the earliest converts, beginning May, 1867, before the village was settled. The original register is preserved in the Diocesan Archives, Prince Rupert, B.C.
5. Robert Tomlinson to Joseph Trutch, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works, January 25, 1870. CMS/A106. See Binns (1967:243) for information on original choice of the place for Hudson's Bay Company Fort.
6. Diocese of Caledonia, records on microfilm. Baptismal Register, Item 9, 1864-1909.
7. R.R.A. Doolan Journal, January 17 and February 9, 1866.
8. On August 5, 1888, Indian Agent Charles Todd wrote I.W. Powell, British Columbia Superintendent of Indians, objecting to the powers of Village Councils created by the missionaries. The Councils made absurd laws, and should not be permitted, although Indians were happy with the arrangement, as were the missionaries who "managed" the councils, Todd opined. Indian Affairs, Black Series. RG10, Vol. 3747, Item 50772.
9. See Victoria British Colonist, March 23, 1872 for an example of Tomlinson's "rule" and the antagonism it engendered among whites he excluded from Kincolith.
10. Robert Tomlinson to C.M.S., Annual Letter, February 7, 1879. CMS/A106.
11. Bishop William Ridley to C.M.S., November 1, 1879. CMS/A106.
12. Kincolith signed a petition (1886) to come under the Indian Advancement Act (1884). First 7 names are:
Robert Qukshu
George Kinsada
Adam Qushkine
Paul Klaitok
Samuel Seymour
Thomas Wilson
Moses Bailey
13. Report of NWC Commission (1888), pp. 427-429. Testimony of F. Allen and A. Gurney. The Chiefs meeting Cornwall and Planta were:
George Kinsada
Adam Kishi
Moses (Bailey?)
Paul Kledach
Samuel Seymour
Other principal men
Report of Commission-N.W. Coast Indians, October 17, 1887, p. 425.
14. Canada, Parliament. Sessional Papers, 1889, no. 6, pp. 201-202.

15. Charles Nash to C.C. Fenn (C.M.S. Secretary), February 6, 1888. CMS/A123. Allen, Nash wrote Fenn, was a devoted servant of the C.M.S., and it was he who told Nash that if Collison did not return, the people did not wish the C.M.S. to return, but would look after themselves.
16. Kincolith Christians to C.M.S., June 30, 1888. CMS/A123.
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