The story of radio mind: a missionary's journey on Indigenous land

7
Frequencies for Listening

Radio found its way to the northernmost reaches of the Pacific coast in slow waves. First ship-to-shore radio transmission became standard for the shipping industry—including in Prince Rupert harbor—but popular radio broadcasting took longer to emerge. In the early 1920s, home radio sets were still a new technology, limited to amateur enthusiasts and enterprising teenagers who made their own. Just as he was with the camera, Frederick Du Vernet was an early adopter of the radio: he had a store-bought short wave set in his own home by the 1920s. And just as the photograph and the printing press had earlier provoked spiritual desires and utopian dreams, so too did the radio.[1] A machine that enabled someone to hear a voice from afar and to broadcast their own in return extended the story from the mouth past the point of proximity. Carrying voices from a distance tuned to a frequency for listening, the radio was an aural and oral medium perfect for storytelling.

The first ever voice transmission over radio occurred on the shores of Massachusetts on Christmas Eve in 1906, when inventor Reginald Fessenden played "O Holy Night" on his violin and read from the Bible, speaking into the continuous wave radio set that would carry his holiday message out to the ships at sea. Fessenden, like Du Vernet, hailed from the Eastern Townships of Quebec, and was also the son of an Anglican minister; perhaps this goes some way to explaining the Christian sentimentality of his first broadcast. Almost two decades later, on February 11, 1924, the *Prince Rupert Daily News* reported with excitement that the "very latest thing in radio transmission" would be coming to town the next week, when a continuous wave radio set costing $7,000 would be installed at the wireless station on Digby Island, across the bay from the city of Prince Rupert. While it was placed on a hilltop that later became known as "CBC Hill" in celebration of the beloved Canadian public

broadcaster, the radio's arrival on the land was considered newsworthy in itself.[2]

Digby Island had long been hailed as a powerful site of communication across distance and between worlds. As Du Vernet knew well, according to Ts'msyen creation stories, the island was the place where Weeget—or Txeemsim—first brought light to the world. After taking the golden ball of light from the Chief of the Heavens, Weeget landed at the village of Kanagatsiyot. Nisga'a stories relate that Txeemsim wandered down the Nass River as a trickster "full of human failings," but also as a spiritual being who taught the people the Ayuukhl Nisga'a: laws, protocols, and codes of conduct embedded in tales of spirits, animals, and people.[3] Txeemsim was an especially powerful being at the center of stories that told of the connections between spiritual and earthly worlds.

After years of Indigenous peoples of the northwest coast trying to present the laws of their land in a language and medium that the colonizers could understand—sending printed petitions and live delegations to various levels of government, including to Queens and Kings, and hiring lawyers to help them argue their case—the Indian Land Question remained unanswered. Successive waves of federal and provincial land commissions had carved up Indigenous territory into reserves, even though there were still no Indigenous treaties with Canada west of the Rocky Mountains. But the Nisga'a and Ts'msyen continued to use petitions, hoping somebody would listen. In 1917, they sent a joint petition to Prime Minister Borden protesting military conscription, arguing that they were not citizens under the Indian Act, and therefore not part of the democratic process of law-making that could authorize the state's right to conscript them. Haida parents also turned to petitions in the matter of the education of their children; they demanded local schooling for their children, stating clearly how the system of residential schools was a disaster for their children's lives and their own.[4] Du Vernet joined in their appeals, but not enough church and government officials had ears to hear.

The same month that the radio arrived in Prince Rupert, radio mind also made an appearance. According to the *Prince Rupert Daily News*, on February 18, 1924, Archbishop Frederick Du Vernet gave an evening "demonstration of radio mind."[5] A group of about twenty eager young people had gathered after church in the apartment above the newspaper's offices to watch Du Vernet exhibit the power of thought transference. Holding his Chevreul pendulum—this time a key tied to a pencil held above a lettered sheet of paper—the archbishop selected volunteers from the audience to take turns relaxing their

PLATE 1. Frederick Verner, *On Rainy River at Long Sault* (1873). Photograph courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada.

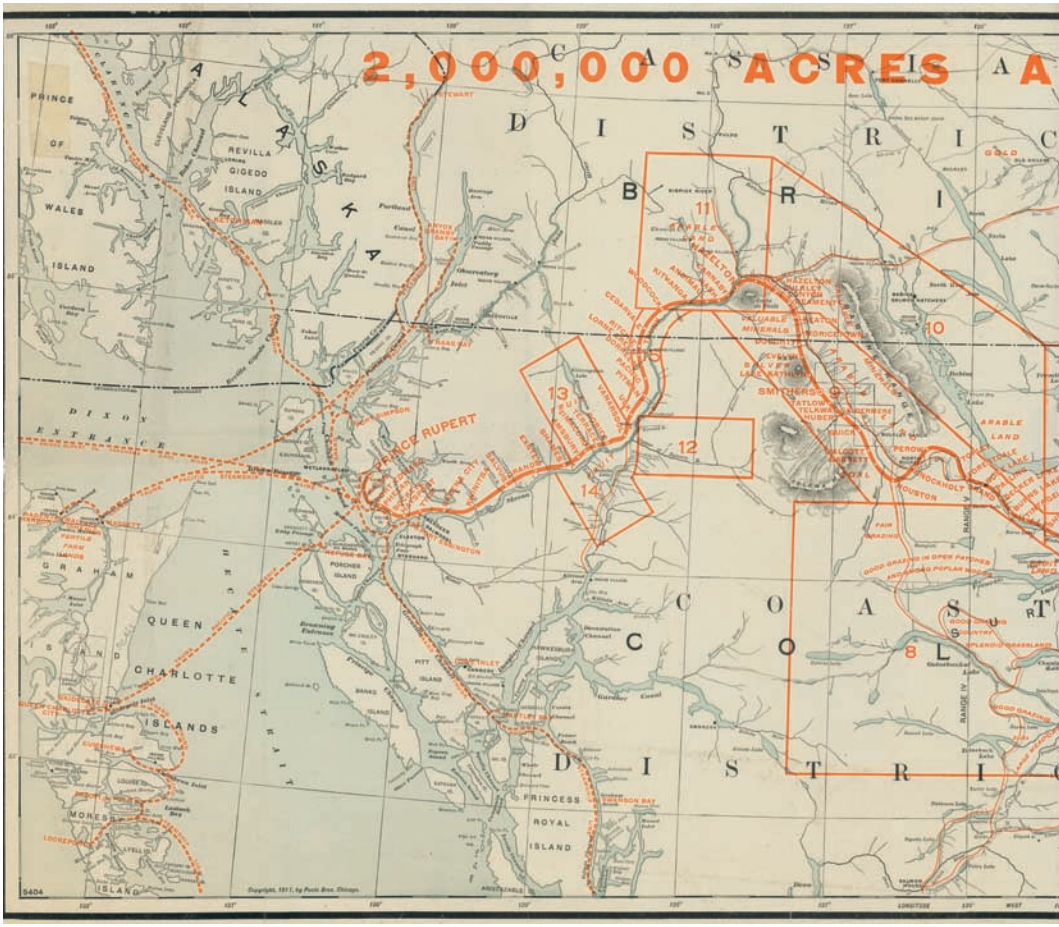
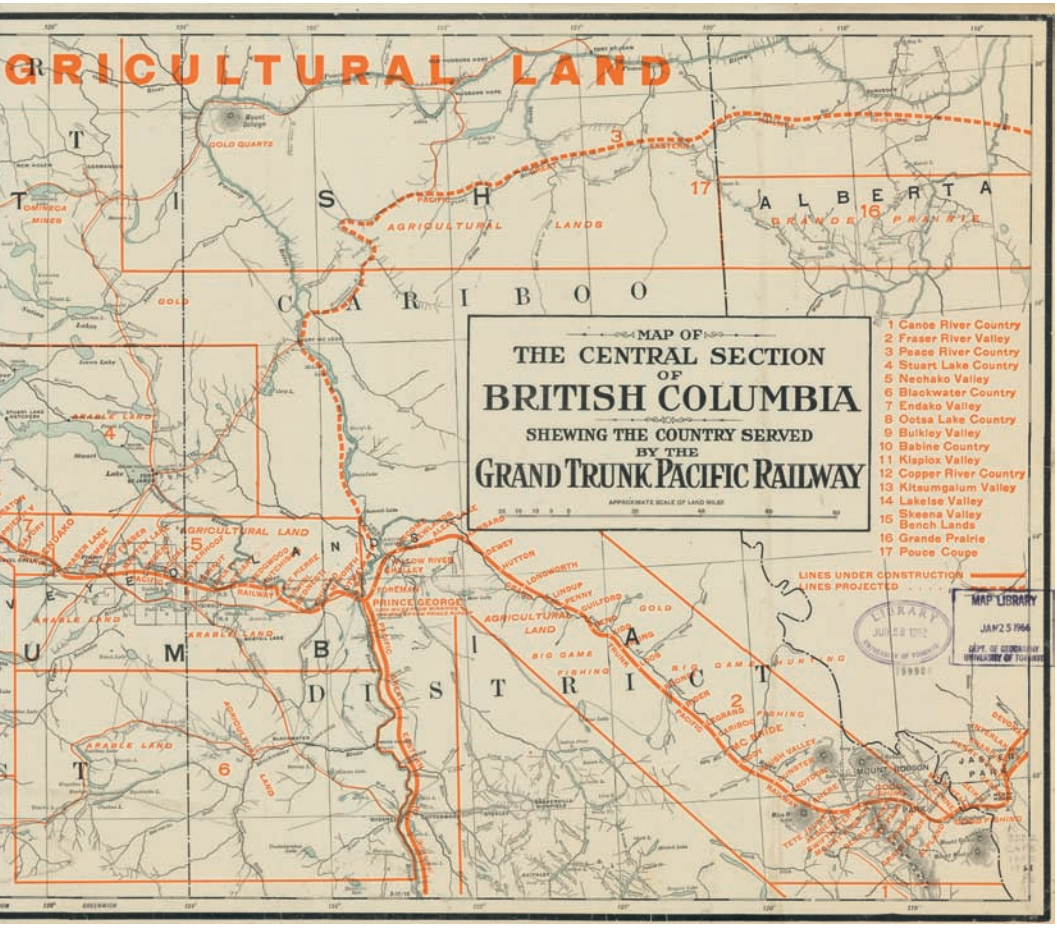
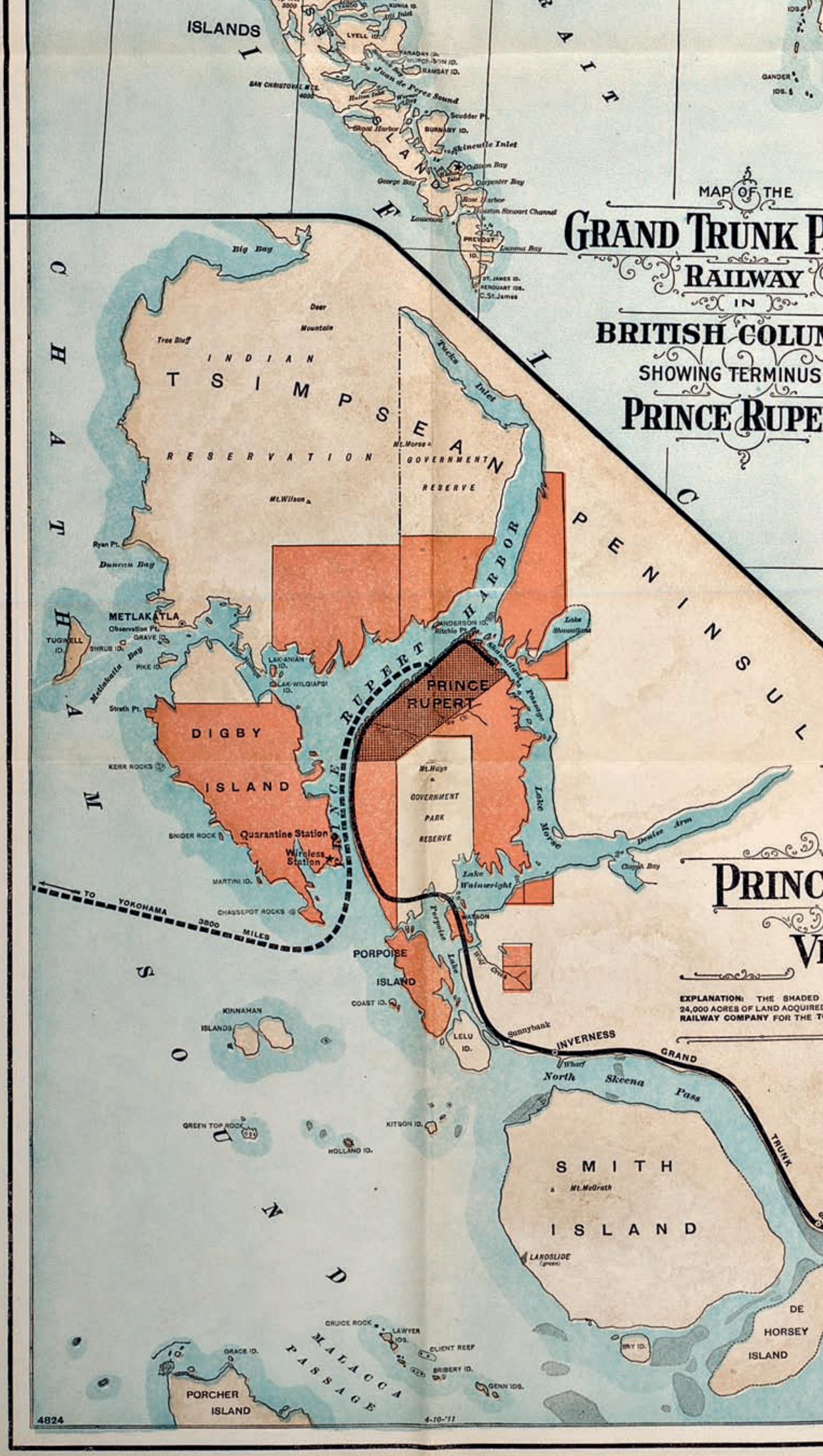


PLATE 2. *Map of the Central Section of British Columbia: Shewing the County Served by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway* (Chicago: Poole Brothers, 1911). Photograph courtesy of the Map and Data Library, University of Toronto (G3572.C4 P3 1000 1911 B-2 Rare).


GRICULTURAL LAND
MAP OF
THE CENTRAL SECTION
OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA
SHEWING THE COUNTRY SERVED
BY THE
GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC RAILWAY
1 Canoe River Country
2 Fraser River Valley
3 Peace River Country
4 Stuart Lake Country
5 Nechako Valley
6 Blackwater Country
7 Endako Valley
8 Ootsa Lake Country
9 Bulkley Valley
10 Babine Country
11 Kispiox Valley
12 Copper River Country
13 Kitsumgalum Valley
14 Lakelse Valley
15 Skeena Valley Bench Lands
16 Grande Prairie
17 Pouce Coupe
LINES UNDER CONSTRUCTION
LINES PROJECTED
ALBERTA
GRANDE PRAIRIE
CARIBOO
PRINCE GEORGE
AGRICULTURAL LAND
ARABLE LAND
MAP LIBRARY
JAN 25 1966


MAP OF THE
RAILWAY
IN
SHOWING TERMINUS
EXPLANATION:
ISLANDS
Juan de Perez Sound
Skincuttle Inlet
Houston Stewart Channel
ST. JAMES ID.
C.St.James
Big Bay
Deer Mountain
Tree Bluff
INDIAN
TSIMPSEAN
RESERVATION
Mt.Morse
GOVERNMENT
RESERVE
Mt.Wilson
Tucks Inlet
PENINSULA
Ryan Pt.
Duncan Bay
METLAKATLA
Observation Pt.
GRAVE ID.
TUGWELL ID.
SHRUB ID.
PIKE ID.
Metlakatla Bay
Strath Pt.
HARBOR
ANDERSON ID.
Ritchie Pt.
Lake Shawatlans
LAK-ANIAN ID.
LAK-WILGIAPSI ID.
RUPERT
PRINCE RUPERT
DIGBY ISLAND
KERR ROCKS
SNIDER ROCK
Quarantine Station
Wireless Station
MARTINI ID.
CHASSEPOT ROCKS
Mt.Hays
GOVERNMENT PARK RESERVE
Lake Morse
Denise Arm
Lake Wainwright
TO YOKOHAMA 3800 MILES
PORPOISE ISLAND
Porpoise Lake
WATSON ID.
COAST ID.
KINNAHAN ISLANDS
LELU ID.
Sunnybank
INVERNESS
Wharf
GRAND
North Skeena Pass
TRUNK
GREEN TOP ROCK
KITSON ID.
HOLLAND ID.
SMITH ISLAND
Mt.McGrath
LANDSLIDE (green)
DE HORSEY ISLAND
LAWYER IDS.
CLIENT REEF
BRIBERY ID.
GENN IDS.
GRACE ID.
MALACCA PASSAGE
PORCHER ISLAND
4824
4-10-'11

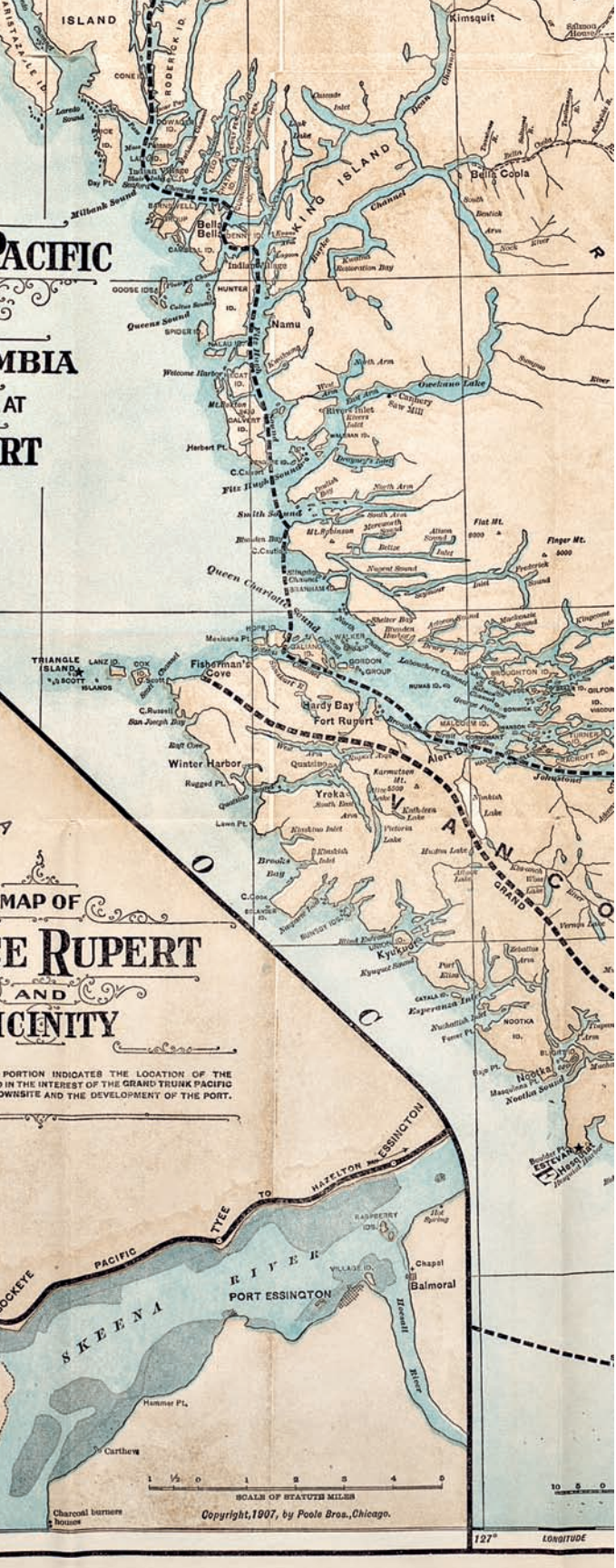


PLATE 3. *Map of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in British Columbia Showing Terminus at Prince Rupert Harbor* and *Map of Prince Rupert and Vicinity* (Poole Brothers, 1907). From *Prince Rupert, British Columbia: The Pacific Coast Terminus of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway* (Montreal: Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company, 1911). Photograph courtesy of Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

PLATE 4. Wedding couple (ca. 1910s?). Lantern slide. Photograph courtesy of the Diocese of Caledonia Archives.

PLATE 5. Indian Land Committee, Aiyansh (ca. 1910?). The man on the far right is likely Andrew Mercer. Lantern slide. Photograph courtesy of the Diocese of Caledonia Archives.

readily than lucidity. The two are, however, not opposed; both are probably true and real telepathy should be considered as a particular and common mode of lucidity. It may be remarked that nearly, if not quite always, when a percipient is asked a question the answer is known to the questioner. When it is unknown it is almost certainly known to someone else, and the telepathic theory might be pushed so far as to say, "If the percipient has read 'Marguerite' in a letter that B. has not opened, she could certainly not read in B.'s mind a word it did not contain; but there is another person—Marguerite herself—whose thought has been read, and not the word written in the letter."

Some go even further. As there are facts known to no living person, but known to B., now dead, this can still be explained by telepathy—the thought of B., deceased, has been transmitted to the percipient.

These wire-drawn explanations show amply that we know absolutely nothing of the means whereby cryptesthetic cognitions reach the mind.

The question whether there is telepathy (transmission of human thought) or lucidity (cognizance of an external fact) is specially applicable to the very frequent cases of monitions at the moment of death.

I will take an instance that might have been invented for illustration, though it is real. A. sees in his sleep on a certain night the apparition of his friend B., pale as a corpse. A. writes down the name in his diary, adding "God forbid." At that very moment B. was killed while out hunting on the other side of the world.

Again the same two hypotheses arise: Did A. perceive an external event, or did the dying thought of B. traverse the intervening space and impress A.?

I do not venture to decide between these hypotheses, both of which seem to me equally mysterious, but I infer a faculty of cognition outside the order of normal faculties. I think it best to keep within the limits of rigid science, and to say—At certain times the mind can take cognizance of realities which neither our senses, our insight, nor our reasoning permit of our knowing. This is not an explanation, but it leaves the door open to any future explanation. Human thought is one among the realities thus made known, but this is not a necessary condition; the reality alone is sufficient, without its having passed through a human mind.

PLATE 6. Du Vernet's marginalia. From Charles Richet, *Thirty Years of Psychical Research* (1923). Photograph courtesy of the Diocese of Caledonia Archives.

minds and then sending a word, letter by letter, to his own serene mind. The key successfully bobbed above the correct letter every time, the newspaper reported, causing a wave of concern for the youthful audience: "The effect of this was very apparent for, when it became clear that all our thoughts were broadcasted like a radio message and had an effect on the thoughts and actions of others it became doubly important that the thoughts should be of the right kind." For the young people, to confess their sins had once required words, but now the archbishop could (slowly) read their minds.

Nevertheless, the archbishop's young audience was fascinated, according to the newspaper: "So interested were they that after the talk the young people gathered around His Grace and questioned him more closely in regard to many points that had not been quite clear and also as to the possible relationship between thought transference and spiritualism." In 1924, the *Prince Rupert Daily News* published many articles about radio, celebrating it for its practical uses and speculating about radio's more imaginative possibilities. The newspaper also noted, in its coverage of the February 1924 demonstration, that while the older people of Prince Rupert largely ignored the "great truth" proven by Du Vernet's scientific demonstrations of radio mind, he had many admirers from afar: "He received many letters from all over the continent in regard to the matter and wherever he went people were keen to ask questions and look for demonstrations." He had ready answers to their questions, answers he authorized with reference to both science and the spirit.

Meeting Radio Mind

I first met Frederick Herbert Du Vernet in a castle high on a hilltop overlooking the Schwabian Alps in southern Germany. I was on my sabbatical year at the University of Tübingen, working in a room with a view of the Neckar River. This was the very room where in 1869 Friedrich Miescher discovered a chemical in white blood cells that he called the nuclein—a find that set the stage for the later discovery of DNA as the key to the story of every human being's genetic past and present.

As I sat at my desk, paging through photocopies of the Anglican *Canadian Churchman* that I had lugged with me all the way from Toronto for a book I was writing on Christianity and healing, I came across a tantalizing headline in the edition from November 23, 1922: "Reality in Religion." The article, written by Archbishop Du Vernet, a man I had never heard of before, began with a metaphor drawn from media: "The gramophone disks of old religious

phrases are still being used because of their familiar music, but we are anxiously waiting for new records which will better express our inmost convictions." Those old disks, Du Vernet said, were filled with the "barren metaphysics of theology," an overly philosophizing way of thinking that had held sway over a vital "spiritual religion" for far too long. For Du Vernet, spiritual religion was an energetic form of Christianity that looked not to "dead doctrine" for its proof, but to Christ's imperative to love God and one's neighbor. Thankfully, in his view, "the outlook for spiritual religion was never brighter than it is today because the highest thinking of the age tends to identify ultimate reality with spiritual energy." He was, in short, a cosmic optimist.

Looking further, I found another article from August 30, 1923, that also turned to media to generate spiritual reflection: "The Psychology of the Motion Picture." Here, Du Vernet pondered the psychological implications of the new medium of the moving picture: "What will be the effect upon the rising generation of habitually watching the pantomime of life rather than plunging into the reality of life itself?" In the early age of cinema, the consequences of a life lived virtually were already causing worry among the older generation. The church, Du Vernet advised, would do well to learn from the psychology of the motion picture, by focusing less on the *will* and instead appealing to the *imagination*. Citing the apostle Paul's "profound truth" regarding the need to fill one's thoughts with true, pure, and gracious things, Du Vernet urged the church to take seriously the imaginative power of suggestion whether in movie theaters or church services.[6]

An issue from the next month, dated September 13, 1923, did not disappoint. There, I found an article entitled "Divine Healing" in which the archbishop introduced his idea of "radio mind," by which he meant the telepathic transference of a thought from one person's conscious mind to the subconscious mind of another. The most potent form of radio mind was rooted in a belief in God, according to Du Vernet: "This is the most powerful suggestion known to modern science because it brings the subconscious mind into touch with the Infinite so that the late[n]t energy of the soul is quickened into 'newness of life.'" Citing again the apostle Paul and the authority of science, Du Vernet heralded radio mind as a tool that could not only heal but also clear away the "mists of prejudice and superstition." Radio mind achieved its clarifying power through harnessing vibrations moving through the air.

The excitement continued. For the November 1 issue, Du Vernet contributed an article with the intriguing title "Telepathic Testimonies." The editors placed the article beside another piece very critical of Christian Science, a religion that also extols a form of distant healing through mental effort.[7] In

"Telepathic Testimonies," Du Vernet cast himself as a scientist reporting on his experiments in radio mind and shared several corroborating testimonies sent to him by his readers. The testimonies ranged from the trivial to the tragic: clergymen whose wives were able to communicate with them telepathically, succeeding in getting them to phone home or to pick up needed groceries; mothers who vividly saw the deaths of their soldier sons at the front, at the very time that their sons were killed. These testimonies, Du Vernet contended, were added proof that "thought radiation" was neither superstitious nor magical, a fact that his experiments had demonstrated: "The vast majority of people are slaves to the thought that the same body cannot be in two different places at the same time, but this law applies only to a material body, and mind energy is a spiritual entity, where it acts there it is, regardless of distance in space." I paged through further issues hoping to find more of Du Vernet, but it was late in the day and I had to return to my baby who needed me in the flesh, so our first meeting came to an end.

Radio mind! Who was this man and what was he doing writing with such wild optimism about the spiritual effects of new media in the *Canadian Churchman*, the relatively staid and conservative national newspaper of Canadian Anglicans? Though I hadn't discovered anything quite akin to the beginnings of DNA, I felt a thrill of discovery—I had found a mystic of mediation at the highest echelons of the Anglican Church. Combining his excitement over the innovations of radio technology with what psychology was newly revealing about the complexity of human consciousness, Du Vernet saw himself as opening up a new spiritual frequency for all. As he told his diocesan synod in 1923: "Psychology as the science of human behaviour as dependent upon human mind is furnishing the Church with a scientific method of relating spiritual truths to the lives of men, women, and children, according to their age, sex, and race. Religion can now become a reality to all sorts and conditions of people, where before it was generally supposed that only the favoured few of a mystical temperament could ever become the saints of God."[8] Not simply a vertical path of prayer from petitioner to God, radio mind was a vision of mystical communication at once collective and unconscious.

Though most psychologists today likely would not recognize Du Vernet as a participant in the history of their discipline, in the early twentieth century the lines between spiritual and psychological exploration were not so firmly set. They were bound by one word—psyche—that had roots in both the apostle Paul's views of human nature and the science of the mind. As a scaling up of telepathy on a cosmic scale, radio mind riffed on the work

of Frederick Myers and William James and, by extension, the ideas of Sigmund Freud. All engaged with the Society for Psychical Research, these three early psychologists each worked with narratives and testimonies of patients or "case studies" as their pathway to understanding the psyche.[9]

Now banished to the realm of the paranormal, psychic research in the early twentieth century was a viable—albeit risky—line of scientific investigation. Frederick Du Vernet claimed his own stake in the field by way of a theory of mediation that was mystical and muscular, spiritual and scientific. As Roger Luckhurst has shown, psychologists and psychic researchers based in London drew heavily on testimony from the "imperial margin"—stories of the uncanny or supernatural that came from British colonies in India or Africa. Du Vernet joined this tradition of colonial testimony within the history of psychology.[10]

When I returned to the *Canadian Churchman* the next day, I had to read nearly a year's worth of issues before I found "The Psychology of Resting," a short piece printed August 21, 1924, in which Du Vernet appealed to readers to cultivate the benefits of a "restful mind" in a rushing age. With motorcars and flying machines speeding up the pace of life, Du Vernet argued, "the vital energy of our race is not able to keep up with the mechanical progress of our age." Recommending a daily half hour of "systematic muscular relaxation," Du Vernet urged his readers to "drop the idea of rest deep into the subconscious mind." With the muscles and the mind at rest, he advised the relaxed Christian to then call on the Lord to "claim the promise of perfect peace." In closing, he cited not Paul, but the American Quaker poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier: "Take from our souls the strain and stress, And let our ordered lives confess, The beauty of Thy peace."[11]

An Anglican clergyman so openly advocating the techniques of what might in other contexts be called mental science or New Thought was not entirely original. Other clerics, such as Episcopalian Elwood Worcester of the Boston-based Emmanuel Movement, had also experimented with psychotherapeutic healing techniques paired with Christian practices. Fears of the consequences of rapid technological change in both transportation and telecommunications exercised many people's minds at the time.[12] But an archbishop from the upper reaches of the Pacific northwest who testified with such verve and confidence to his own discovery (and christening) of a form of mystical communication he called radio mind struck me as delightfully unexpected, and even bizarre.

After the August 1924 article, the trail stopped. Several issues of the *Canadian Churchman* later, I read that Archbishop Du Vernet had died of a stroke on October 22, 1924, after several months of being bedridden with

high blood pressure and an enlarged heart. I found myself saddened to learn of his death; radio mind had caught my imagination and would not let go.

A Late-Style Archbishop

Du Vernet came to radio mind as he entered his "late style," to use a term Edward Said deployed to think about musicians and writers at the end of their lives. Said sought to understand how creative artists, late in life, develop "new idioms," often by breaking from their communities of practice in "a sort of deliberately unproductive productiveness going *against*. . . ." Said saw late style as a kind of "exile" or alienation that opened a path for men and women with deep experience of the world—people who in an Indigenous context would be called elders—to lead others to see the world in a new way.[13]

Du Vernet was a man growing old, confronting mortality. He was living a constrained life of bed rest after years of vigorous travel around his diocese on foot and by canoe, steamer, dogsled, and, eventually, train and motorcar. But he had not lost his energy for conversion via testimony. In an article he wrote for the *Vancouver Province* in 1923, he proudly relayed a story of having convinced a "university professor" of the power of "inter-mental action," adding: "My desire is to have as many people as possible, by my method, convince themselves of the fact and then make an intelligent and beneficial use of the power of mental radiation." His idiom of radio mind was a new testimony of the spirit that was a "going against" orthodox Anglican views of Jesus Christ as "the one Mediator" to God.[14]

Under doctor's orders, Du Vernet had been forced to miss the 1920 Lambeth Conference, a worldwide gathering of Anglican bishops held in England usually once a decade under the leadership of the archbishop of Canterbury. The conference of 1920 was a busy one, out of which emerged resolutions encouraging missionaries in the colonies to give "the widest freedom to indigenous workers" to grow the church according to their own "national character," while acknowledging that sometimes this might entail establishing racially segregated churches. The bishops agreed that women should be given more roles and responsibilities in church work and should be paid fairly; they also forbade the use of "unnatural" means of contraception. Attempting to both encourage and curtail social change, the bishops were at cross-purposes on many issues.[15]

The bishops of the Lambeth Conference of 1920 also had sharp words for those Anglicans engaged in psychical research and those experimenting with Spiritualism, Christian Science, and Theosophy. While the bishops

were "prepared to expect and welcome new light from psychical research upon the powers and processes of the spirit of man," they were adamant that Christians must believe in the incarnated Christ—God become man—as the real pathway to spiritual truth. They urged Anglicans not to be misled by untested hypotheses about psychic research: "Such scientific researches have confessedly not reached an advanced stage, and we are supported by the best psychologists in warning our people against accepting as final theories which further knowledge may disprove, and still more against the indiscriminate and undisciplined exercise of psychic powers, and the habit of recourse to seances, 'seers', and mediums." Grouping together Theosophy and psychic research as a misbegotten quest for false knowledge, the bishops declared these views to be "irreconcilable with the Christian faith as to the person and mission of Christ and with the missionary claim and duty of the Christian religion as the message of God to all mankind."[16] For an archbishop supervising missions in the far reaches of Canada to be won over to psychic research would have shocked the men gathered at Lambeth.

Whether or not Du Vernet's attendance at the Lambeth Conference would have made a difference to his late style, or to the bishops' resolutions on psychic research, it is likely that a lecture on spiritual radio would not have been well received. The city of Victoria, however, was another matter. Du Vernet first delivered his theory of radio mind as a series of lectures at St. Saviour's Church in Victoria, and the *Canadian Churchman* articles were then published between 1920 and 1924. During this same period, he published frequent articles in the *Montreal Daily Star*, the *Vancouver Province*, and the *Prince Rupert Daily News*, many of which were posthumously republished in 1927 as *Out of a Scribe's Treasure: Brief Essays in Practical Religious Thinking*.[17]

Many of his newspaper writings dealt explicitly with political topics ranging from income inequality to social justice, and in these articles, he bemoaned the "three mountain peaks" of capitalism: "excessive inequality in the distribution of wealth"; "insecurity of labour in employment"; and "exclusion of labour from any control in industry." He prophesied: "Sooner or later [these peaks] will dominate the landscape of the world." Du Vernet increasingly took up a radio mind–style socialism in his writings: "Since this life of God in the souls of men flows from one and the same source, it follows of necessity that wherever there is true religion it will tend to bind men of all classes, races, and nations together as ministering members of the one great family of God."[18] Urging universal harmony at once mystical and political, he hoped that telepathy would lead to sympathy, justice, and understanding around the world. Just how it would do so, he never quite spelled out.

Du Vernet's writings resound with themes articulated by social justice and human rights activists today: "Social justice requires to render to each man according to his capacity and to each capacity according to its work; but this does not lessen the equal right of all men, worthy or unworthy, to the opportunity to live a life worth living." He argued that new immigrants must be protected from the "tyranny of the majority" through both constitutional and spiritual means. And he championed not only a minimum wage but also maximum limits on interest: "If social control of the minimum wage of the worker is possible, social control of the maximum rate of interest for the investor is equally feasible." He also wrote about schools as the "gymnasium of democracy" where children should learn to play fair, to work together, to stand up to bullies, and to care for each other's welfare.[19]

To understand Du Vernet's late-style mix of spiritual politics and scientific experiment, and to tell this climactic chapter in the story of radio mind, the radio itself provides a fitting metaphor. Three different frequencies coursed through the last decade of Du Vernet's life, with more and less static, interference, and clarity. On one frequency, he was oriented by a growing commitment to unity across diversity. He worked hard to overcome divisions between high church and low church Anglicans and went even further to argue that all Protestant churches in Canada should unite. He urged wealthy capitalists to respond fairly to the valid concerns of the working class, and he questioned racialized hierarchies of "Indian" and "white." On the second frequency, he came to attune himself to psychic science through his experiments with spiritual radio and his voracious reading of philosophers of the mind, including Henri Bergson and William James.

The third frequency carried messages that Du Vernet had learned from listening to Indigenous parents opposed to sending their children to residential schools. He did not write about parents' concerns in his newspaper editorials, but instead channeled their objections in letters he wrote to church and government officials in Ottawa and Toronto. Sometimes this included presenting Indigenous parents' petitions for the opening of local boarding schools for their children, as in the case of Haida parents at Massett. Growing increasingly alarmed that his appeals went unheard, or even ignored, Du Vernet deplored the greed and "evils" of a residential school system that continued to grow in scale, wrenching more and more children from their parents and their land in order to both "civilize" and "Christianize" them. Adjusting the dial between these three frequencies reveals the intensity, inconsistency, and failure of radio mind as a tool of healing in the midst of the piercing violence of family annihilation, cultural genocide, and church and state deceit that was the residential school system.

The Frequency of Unity

Frederick Du Vernet never wanted to be an archbishop. At the same synod in Prince Rupert in 1909 during which he argued for a formal treaty for the Indigenous peoples of the northwest coast, Du Vernet dismissed as ridiculous the idea of instituting an archbishop for British Columbia. Addressing the ten male missionaries, the eleven "lady missionaries," and the five members of the laity gathered in Prince Rupert, he argued: "We do not need a third legislative body with power to enact coercive canons under the rule of an unnecessary Archbishop presiding with ludicrous dignity over an Upper House with two or three bishops."[20] Within six years, however, his fellow bishops elected him as the metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia, making him the Lord Archbishop of Caledonia (fig. 51). He accepted the role, but refused to sign his name as "Archbishop" and avoided the naming practices that would dub him "Frederick Caledonia." Nevertheless, people regularly called him by the honorific title of "Archbishop" or "Your Grace."

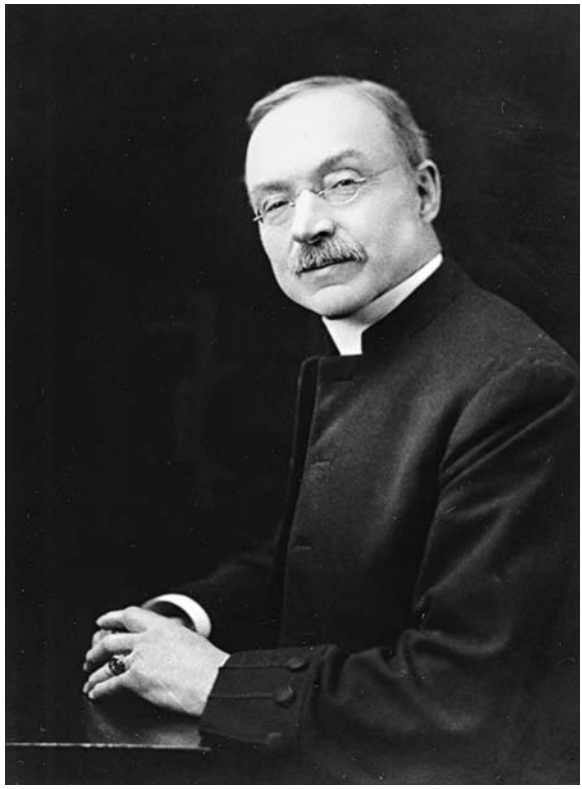


FIGURE 51. The Most Reverend F. H. Du Vernet, Archbishop of Caledonia (ca. 1915). Photograph courtesy of The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada (P7805-2).

After a lifetime of building bridges within his church, and having the regard of his peers as an eloquent speaker who was full of grace, Du Vernet was a sensible choice for the first metropolitan of the new Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia. Realigned to better fit with provincial and territorial boundaries, Caledonia and its sister dioceses now lodged more seamlessly into the map of Canada. Du Vernet considered this rationalizing of the diocesan maps to be a good thing, so that Anglicans could collectively have some stronger effect on provincial laws related to "vital problems" such as "land tenure, mining claims, liquor licenses, school matters, hospital boards, women's rights, marriage regulations, divorce courts, etc."[21] After his consecration as archbishop in 1915, Du Vernet continued to work toward soothing breaches among his fellow Anglicans and sorting out the relationship between his church and the state.

The secret to unity across theological divides of "churchmanship," according to Du Vernet, was the "frank recognition of these differences." Before coming to British Columbia, he had already unified the various Canadian Anglican missionary societies into the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, with its headquarters in Toronto. And he was in the middle of trying to unite—without suppressing—competing Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic seminaries into what would eventually become the Vancouver School of Theology. Alarmed in 1909 by the possibility that the Anglican seminary in Vancouver would only include high church views, which were more popular in the south of the province, Du Vernet rooted Anglican liturgical differences in the land: "We have no intention of allowing others to force upon us an extreme type of churchmanship which is not suited to the sturdy unconventional North, which loves the ritual of the snow-capped mountains, the music of the waterfalls, and all the freshness and freedom of pioneer life. We should be false to the sacred charge that God has given us to add our contribution of a simple, earnest, spiritual type of religion to the common life of the Church if we chose 'compromise for the sake of peace' instead of 'comprehension for the sake of truth.'"[22] Du Vernet insisted that unity did not mean that spiritual differences would be erased, and he used the land as his witness.

Both versions of Anglican churchmanship established their own theological colleges in Vancouver—the Evangelical Latimer Hall and the high church St. Mark's. Combined as two teaching colleges within the Anglican Theological College in 1912, they maintained their different identities under the presidency of Du Vernet, who led from afar in Prince Rupert. For example, in a 1913 issue of the *North British Columbia News*, CMS Secretary Henry Elliott Fox, a canon of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, wrote glowingly of the con-

tributions that the Evangelical Latimer Hall could make to a highly gendered Christian unity within British Columbia: "It is a fine type of Christianity which is being developed out there. Men are manly and women womanly. Christians are broad-minded enough to regard the denominational differences which at home we set up as barbed-wire barriers, rather as varying uniforms in the one great Army of the one great Commander-in-Chief. The main danger in a new country is from the race for wealth, the rush after speculative schemes, the absorbing stimulus and the strain of competing secularities." Du Vernet shared Fox's fears that competing secularities—in the form of real estate speculation, liquor, and greed—were greater challenges than liturgical divides.[23]

Du Vernet's approach to resolving deep theological divisions by recognizing them and moving on was reminiscent of his earlier conciliatory approach to the enmity between the Wycliffe and Trinity Colleges in Toronto. In 1920, after countless letters and several time-consuming trips up and down the coast, Du Vernet succeeded in establishing a fully unified Anglican Theological College in Vancouver. Though based in Prince Rupert, he served as the president of the college until his death, a testament to his ability to bridge divides even from a distance. Du Vernet was especially delighted that the new school would eventually be built in the heart of the new Point Grey campus of the University of British Columbia, signaling its strong connection to secular higher education. Known as the "University Endowment Lands," since they were gifted to the university by the government, this location too was Indigenous land, whether or not Du Vernet knew it. The Vancouver Theological College was built on unceded Musqueam territory, a place still called Elk̲sn in the Coast Salish language.[24]

Du Vernet's commitment to unify people—to bring them together across common purposes, and not to divide them over differences—well qualified him as a leader in a church that was itself divided over ritual preferences, political convictions, and land. Some Anglicans were deeply committed to high church modes of smells and bells in their liturgies, while others insisted on the plainest of Communions to better become one with Jesus. Some Anglicans were among the wealthiest elites in the Dominion and wanted to maintain the status quo, while others argued for the state to play more of a role in repairing the yawning gap between the rich and the poor at a time of growing labor strife. Some Anglicans thought it was time to stop drawing lines between "white work" and "Indian work," while others thought that the color line was not only necessary but also natural. As the church increasingly focused on the "sacred enterprise" of residential schools as a priority for the Indian work, many lay Anglicans likely remained ignorant of the fact that

their fellow church members, including Nisga'a, Haida, and Ts'msyen Christians, were petitioning the government to acknowledge their sovereign rights to their land and to keep their children close to home.[25]

Spiritual Conditions

Du Vernet was a spiritual pioneer in many senses, including as a mystic of mediation and as a settler who claimed Indigenous land. Writing in the *North British Columbia News* in 1917, he mused, "Environment has its effect on church life. In a new, wild country like this, traditional churchgoing has lost its power." His traveling schedule intensified once he extended his "spiritual jurisdiction" to the region of the Peace River in northeastern British Columbia, as when he opened a church in Pouce Coupe in 1915. Distraught by what he saw to be rampant land speculation in the Peace River Valley, Du Vernet did not comment on ongoing conflicts over Indigenous sovereignty in this region, which was part of the Treaty 8 territory of Athapaskan-speaking Indigenous nations.[26] He knew from his long journeys along the coast and into the inland valleys that what he called spiritual religion would not be expressed through a weekly piety of traditional Sunday churchgoing. Unlike Indigenous peoples, the dispersed settlers had few stories embedded in the land to give them spiritual guidance, and they had little in the way of religious community, save for a wandering bishop who dropped by every so often.

The "lonely" settlers whom he visited on his travels through the diocese welcomed Du Vernet as a pragmatic pastor. In the words of a local newspaper, Du Vernet's "spiritual ministration calls for much pioneering effort. The Bishop, however, is ready at all times to sling a pack on his back, and cheerfully tramp to any portion of his district where no other means of transportation is available." The writer was particularly impressed by his skill with a hammer: "When occasion offers the Bishop can show that he is no mean carpenter, as during his brief stay at Chilco, he made a temporary lectern, a prayer desk, and communion table, for the new church out of rough lumber."[27] Du Vernet ministered through a vocation of presence, literally trying to tramp the land into an Anglican diocese by way of his own footsteps.

Du Vernet's journeys on Indigenous land gave a spiritual sanction to colonial settlement; his support for formal treaties between the Dominion government and Indigenous peoples did not mean that he questioned "pioneering" or the agricultural transformation of the land. His colonial vision had markedly socialist tones, as in a letter to a newspaper back in eastern Canada

in which he urged public spending on better roads and increased taxes to curb speculation and to benefit the spiritual welfare of settlers:

> Gathering these people together, we had the first service they had had since their arrival there three years ago. See the crime of the speculator! No school for these people! No church! Because the very best of land all round them which might have dozens of families living on it, is held by some selfish, greedy land-grabber who has done nothing whatever for the country's good. A rich man in Vancouver, a widow in Nova Scotia are holding this region back. I have heard the bitter cry of these settlers. I have seen the rich soil waiting for the plough. God intended this land for production, not for speculation.[28]

Hearing in one ear the bitter cry of the settlers who wanted schools for their children, Du Vernet heard in the other one similar anguished petitions from Indigenous parents. At a certain frequency, he understood that both these cries were related to the underlying fact of colonial dispossession and capitalist speculation. But he never quite put the two together.

Unity in the midst of diversity was a theme that carried over into Du Vernet's public role as a city leader, which included serving as the president of the ministerial association that brought together clergy from Prince Rupert's Christian churches. On the occasion of the death of King Edward in 1910, Du Vernet gave a speech before a gathering in Prince Rupert: "We have met together with representatives of all races and nationalities in our midst; all creeds and all churches, all classes rich and poor, young and old. The meeting is for one common purpose; to pay our tribute of respect to the late King Edward and to lay the wreath of immortelles of Prince Rupert upon the royal coffin." Du Vernet may have been accurate in enumerating the diversity of people gathered to recognize the King's death, which judging from photographs of the time included Indigenous participants. For example, one depicts an Empire Day celebration in 1911 featuring an audience that included the finely uniformed Nisga'a brass band. Another marks the visit of the Duke of Connaught in 1912 for which a contingent from Metlakatla erected an arch decorated with cedar boughs (figs. 52–53).[29]

Around the same time, Du Vernet also weighed in on the working lives of the residents of the new city. Writing to the *Prince Rupert Empire* in support of early closing laws for shops and especially for bars, Du Vernet reflected: "While I am an individualist to a certain degree I am enough of a socialist to say to myself, 'It is my duty to sacrifice my personal liberty in such a trifling matter as this in order that I may give others a chance.' We want our young men and young women working in shops and stores to have a little of the

FIGURE 52. Indian Band, Empire Day celebrations, Prince Rupert (1911). Photograph courtesy of the Prince Rupert City and Regional Archives (LP984-29-1759-392).

FIGURE 53. Metlakatla's "Arch of Welcome" for the visit of the Duke of Connaught to Prince Rupert (1912). Photograph courtesy of the Prince Rupert City and Regional Archives (Phylis Bowman Collection, P985-29-2397).

personal freedom which we value so highly. We want them to have the long summer evenings free to enjoy themselves in a healthy manner, instead of cooped up in a store." He was not a bishop with his nose buried in a Bible, or with his eyes on a plum promotion back east. He listened to the people around him and intervened in public affairs by writing letters to editors and officials, giving speeches, and, eventually, publishing articles in newspapers across the country. For example, at a meeting of the Prince Rupert Ministerial Association on January 13, 1913, "Bishop Du Vernet gave a short address, noting the gradual improvement in Spiritual Conditions in spite of lack of Moral Sense, Irreverence, Indifference, there were signs of hope in the rounding up of separate units, and we are on the eve of a great movement and the Building up of a great city." His optimism for the slow improvement of spiritual conditions came despite his ongoing frustration with illegal liquor sales in hotels and with problems of "white slaves," likely a reference to white women sex workers in the city.[30]

In the last years of his life, working on radio mind must have been a welcome distraction from the demands of his day job. Because of his illness, he was no longer able to travel to Toronto for the General Synod and the annual meeting of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (MSCC). These meetings had given him the chance to appeal in person to his colleagues for financial support and to impress upon them his strong views about everything from temperance to residential schools. Asking by letter for bits and pieces to cover the costs of his far-flung missions, Du Vernet was faced with the impossible task of accounting for the budgets of the "Indian work" and the "white work" down to the penny. He confessed to be at a loss, especially in places like Hazelton, where the time of "mingling" between settlers and Indigenous Christians had continued. Even the Cathedral Church of St. Andrew's featured Sundays when Indigenous Christians ran the services, music and all, with Haida chief Alfred Adams and Nisga'a chief Paul Mercer both giving sermons.[31]

Writing on April 23, 1924, to Canon Sydney Gould, the general secretary of the MSCC and also a Wycliffe-trained missionary, Du Vernet explained, "I am recovering from a somewhat severe illness and am scarcely fit yet to grapple with Statistics but I am endeavouring to get the Indian Estimate Sheet to you by May 1st. As to the White Work Statement for 3 years, this involves a vast amount of work. It is almost impossible in some of our missions to divide White and Indian contributions, for example in Hazelton the congregation giving through the Offertory Collections place their money in the same plate—no distinction between White and Indian." It was just as difficult for him to racially account for the salaries of the ministers in the diocese, since

they too went back and forth between settler and Indigenous churches based on the rhythms of seasonal work in the canneries. His daughter, Alice, began to serve as his secretary and traveling companion, helping him with the overwhelming task of collating the statistics. But he knew quite well that even their combined efforts to account for race were an illusory performance of precision.[32]

Du Vernet also continued to grapple with the problem of not having enough ordained clergy to go around. In the same letter, he noted, "Several Indian missions are crying out for a resident ordained clergyman. I keep things going by promising to do my best for them, and sending them a clergyman for a season, removing him for White Work when they leave their village for the canneries." With a rising note of desperation in his letters to church leaders in Toronto, Du Vernet was a man feeling the stress of watching over the land and people his church had placed under his spiritual jurisdiction.

That the archbishop was required to quantify his spiritual work through classifications of race and records of cash flow was evidence that the story of missionary labors was increasingly mediated through the dehumanizing tool of colonial accounting.[33] The earlier stories of savage heathens, which had been dehumanizing in their own manner, had given way to ledger books by which residential schools for Indigenous children came to seem both Christian and profitable to many church leaders. From Du Vernet's perspective as a man who had traveled, in the flesh, to all the places he described in his letters and articles, unity was a movement that he could encourage but not control.

The Frequency of the Spirit

In the midst of his earthly efforts to unify his church and city, Du Vernet scaled up his search for unity to a cosmic plane. He turned not to legislation or church lobbying but to scientific experiment to find a spiritual current that would bind together across distance people, spirits, and the energy of love. In a chatty letter published in 1921 in *Across the Rockies*, and directed to Mrs. Satow, an English supporter of the Diocese of Caledonia, Du Vernet described himself thus: "I am feeling better, but the Doctor says I am a cracked cup, good for some years of service, but can stand no strain. This means no more tramps with a pack on my back. As I was a great walker and found this the best way of getting over a pioneer country in certain spots it is a [trial] to be told, 'Your life must be more circumscribed.'"[34] Constrained by his body's fragility, he turned ever more avidly to the exploration of psychic research.

In his bedridden hours, Du Vernet poured over his library of books, reading works by Henri Bergson, William James, Charles Richet, George Coe, and Josiah Royce, along with other (now) lesser-known philosophers of mind and psychic researchers. Luckily for me, he wrote, underlined, and drew on the pages of many of his books, leaving behind a record of his engagement with these authors. Du Vernet's marginalia reveal an active reader who "argue[d] with the text" and who clearly perceived himself to be part of a broader psychological conversation.[35] That a missionary-bishop in the northwest corner of the American continent felt that he was part of the discipline of psychology shows that this new science of the mind spoke to theologically oriented readers, often in a particularly gripping manner.

Many early twentieth-century psychologists were deeply involved with psychic research and made liberal use of the concept of the spirit.[36] They understood spirit to be channeled through the matter of the body and the mind, and sometimes even through the elements of the earth. In crafting his own late-style blend of matter, mind, and spirit, Du Vernet depended on these more legitimate scientists to ground his claims for radio mind as a technique for healing both bodies and societies. Ironically, perhaps, reading "orthodox" scientists who had taken a psychic turn gave him the tools to develop a spirituality that was increasing "unorthodox" in Anglican terms.

As I combed for evidence of these psychological influences upon Du Vernet's own psychic research, I came to think of searching in an archive as akin to the action of a diviner's rod, also known as the practice of dowsing. When I first stood in front of the Archbishop Du Vernet Caledonia Diocesan Library, two glass-fronted cases of dusty books in the basement that houses the archives of the Anglican Diocese of Caledonia, I ran my eyes along the bookshelves and came across Charles Richet's 1923 book *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*. Richet, a Nobel Prize winner in medicine, president of the Society for Psychical Research in 1905, and the man who coined the word "ectoplasm," had this to say about the divining rod: "The history of the divining rod is pertinent to our subject. For, if natural forces (underground water and metals) exercise an unknown action upon the subconscious mind, there must be unknown vibrations that awaken cryptesthetic sensibility; and we are brought back to the metaphysic that deals with the unknown vibrations of things." For Richet, "cryptesthesia" meant a "hidden sensibility" by which humans perceived things without knowing how they did so. Sometimes taking the form of telepathy, or "mental transmission" from one mind to another without speech, cryptesthesia was at the center of Richet's theory of the mind.[37]

The divining rod operates not by trickery or fraud, according to Richet,

nor is it the effect of magic. Instead, the divining rod is an instrument by which the human subconscious and nervous system can feel the effects of the mysterious geophysical forces that Richet called "rhabdic force," or the "force that emanates from metals, sheets of water, and metallic salts." Coming from deep within the land and waters to shape human practice, rhabdic force would one day be explicable by scientific means, insisted Richet. The force of the land and water, for Richet, was paired with the power of memory, which he called "pantomnesia." Reading Richet's book, Du Vernet underlined this neologism and part of its definition: "we do not absolutely forget anything once it has been impressed on our senses." In searching for language to explain his theories of the human mind, Richet did not accept the terms "supernatural" or "spiritual." Instead, he used the term "metaphysic," as Du Vernet noted, to describe phenomena caused by the "intervention of either an extraneous power, or of an unknown faculty of the human mind." Du Vernet managed to lay his hands on Richet's 1923 book quite quickly and proceeded to read it critically through the lens of his own theory of radio mind (plate 6). He also evaluated Richet, mostly unfavorably, against the writings of Henri Bergson, a philosopher who also served as president of the Society for Psychical Research, in 1913, the same year Richet won his Nobel Prize.[38]

Throughout the margins of Richet's book, Du Vernet castigated his "wrong theory of mind energy" as if it showed a lack of metaphysical courage for being unwilling to utter the word "spiritual." For example, Richet wrote, "Wireless telegraphy has shown us that messages can be transmitted through space; it is therefore possible that by analogous but invisible mechanism to which our instruments and senses are insensitive, the brain may be affected without being able to perceive anything either of the transmitter or the receiver." In keeping with his own choice of technological analogy for the mysteries of mental transmission, Du Vernet wrote in the margin: "Why not radio mind?" He both concurred with and critiqued Richet's conclusions, marking up the text with his red pencil: "Experiments on normal persons indicate both telepathy and lucidity, and both are probable, however feeble and imperfect they may be. It follows that the thought of one man is mysteriously linked to that of others. We are not isolated, but are in some obscure connection with our fellows. . . . Is it permissible to compare this collective emotion to the mental transmission observable in the experiments detailed above?" In the margin, Du Vernet staked his claim: "My article expressing the same written long before this book was published F.H.D."[39] With the disquiet of a writer fearing that his writing has been plagiarized, or at least that his thoughts have been scooped, Du Vernet used marginalia to attest to his own discoveries.

As I searched the bookcases that housed what had been Du Vernet's library, which I had not even known existed before venturing to Prince Rupert, I felt what Richet might have called rhabdic force: I had a hunch, or even a compelling sense, that Henri Bergson's book *Mind-Energy* had to be there somewhere. As usual when one is looking for something, I couldn't find it on the first attempt. But once I said with certainty that I knew it had to be there, what did I see? A faded copy of *Mind-Energy*, its interior heavily annotated by Du Vernet's red pencil. I gave a cry of joy and knew my long journey had been richly rewarded.

The volunteer archivist helping me and my research assistants was at once puzzled and amused by the excitement we displayed for the bookshelves, which he did not consider to really be part of the archive. When we found not only Bergson and Richet but also William James's *The Principles of Psychology* (both volumes), George Coe's *The Psychology of Religion*, Josiah Royce's *The Philosophy of Loyalty* and *The Problem of Christianity*, and several collections on prayer, socialism, education, and labor rights, we became even more animated. I realize, of course, that my searching for *Mind-Energy* in Du Vernet's library did not make it appear; it would have lain there whether or not I had made the journey. But I might have entirely ignored the bookshelf had I not been interested in tracing these scholarly influences on Du Vernet as he developed his own curious metaphysics of radio mind. Du Vernet's annotation just within the front cover of *Mind-Energy* summed up his view: "The destiny of matter is to become the manifestation of spirit. A regulative ideal."

We set out to photograph every annotation in Du Vernet's hand, as if his red pencil marks and hand-drawn pointing finger could reveal him to us. In our excitement, we were similar to many recent historians of North American "spirituality," who thrill over drawing unexpected lines of influence as they trace the contours of spirituality and politics in the twentieth century, focusing on lineages and intersections that are unusual and even suppressed.[40] Finding Henri Bergson on the shelf was the thread that unraveled the mystery of radio mind for me.

Du Vernet was profoundly shaped by his reading of *Mind-Energy*, the 1920 English translation of *L'Energie Spirituelle*. Across the copious marginalia that he left in his books, Henri Bergson and mind energy are consistent themes. Within many of the books in his library that were published between 1855 and 1923, including works by Charles Richet, Noah Porter, George Coe, Seth Pringle-Pattison, and Josiah Royce, Du Vernet wrote marginalia related to Bergson's *Mind-Energy*. Since his copy of *Mind-Energy* was published in 1920, this means that he likely read or reread these other books sometime between 1920 and 1924. Book historian Heather Jackson, in her reading of the margi-

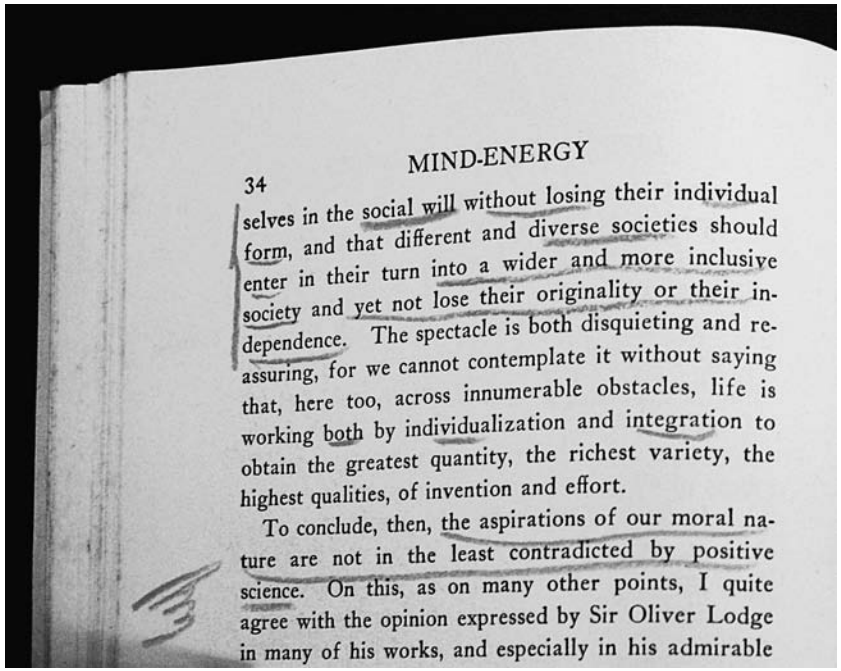


FIGURE 54. Du Vernet's marginalia. From Henri Bergson, *Mind-Energy* (1920). Courtesy of the Diocese of Caledonia Archives.

nalia of T. H. White, another man fascinated with psychology (and especially Freud), aptly characterized the intimate and analytical traces he left behind in the margins of his books: "The record of a dip into the contents of his unconscious mind, it acted at the same time as a vindication of his faith in Freud."[41] Throughout his marginalia, Du Vernet vindicated Bergson's theories in part by confidently associating radio mind and mind energy as companion projects bound by their commitment to morality and science (fig. 54).

Bergson was a French philosopher drawn to questions of memory, time, and matter, and who worked in conversation with scientists and scientific theories of his day. In his earlier work *Creative Evolution*, he introduced the concept of élan vital—or life force—arguing that a quasi-mystical element pushed forward the creativity and change endemic to human evolution. Du Vernet read *Creative Evolution*, but perhaps from a borrowed book, as he took copious notes on the text in the back pages of his copy of *Mind-Energy*. Thanks to these books and others, Bergson is credited with reviving the philosophy of vitalism, which argued that "living phenomena" could not be fully explained by mechanistic sciences. He insisted that "the 'vital principle' might indeed not explain much, but it is at least a sort of label affixed to our ignorance, so

as to remind us of this occasionally, while mechanism invites us to ignore that ignorance."[42] Through a kind of epistemological humility, Bergson sought to make space for mysticism—and eventually for his understanding of God—in a scientific worldview.

Bergson has enjoyed a renaissance among scholars in recent years, perhaps because his vitalism fits well with the "new materialism," a theoretical movement that infuses the material, including the land, with an agency not unlike that found in Indigenous cosmologies. In a rereading of Bergson, Matthew Scherer considers Bergson through the lens of questions of "church and state," "modern secularism," and "conversion." Scherer roots his argument in Bergson's focus on the "force of life" as it is manifested in a continual cycle of creativity and novelty that is always infused with "layers of the past," which Bergson framed by the concept of "duration." He argues that Bergson challenges the view of conversion as a sharp break with the past: "Where the authorized image of conversion posits a stark choice and transition from old to new, from 'religious' to 'secular' for example, Bergson suggests that the new emerges continuously from the old, and that the old presses into and coexists within the new as the source of novelty, that the interaction between the distinct layers of a crystalline structure is more fundamental than their separation."[43] Scherer's hopeful Bergsonian revision of conversion as a transition that honors the past is sharply tested in the case of missionaries desiring to convert the "heathen" or the colonial state seeking to civilize—through dispossession—the "Indian." The very fact, however, that many Indigenous people embraced aspects of Christianity at the same time that they reasserted their sovereignty since time immemorial suggests the merits of understanding life as an ongoing process of duration, change, and creativity in which the past remains.

Du Vernet was not reading Bergson to develop a theory of secularism and conversion, or to better understand his own ongoing worries about the relation of church and state. He read Bergson through *Mind-Energy*, one of Bergson's most popular books. *Mind-Energy* curiously goes unmentioned (or unmentionable?) in many serious scholarly treatments of Bergson, perhaps because of the way in which it distinctly popularized psychic interests. Bergson, a French Jew with an abiding interest in Christianity, shared with Du Vernet a combination of mystical enthusiasm and pragmatic public action; he wrote with care about both psychic research and the League of Nations. One of his more accessible books, perhaps because most of the chapters were originally lectures delivered orally, *Mind-Energy* included Bergson's ruminations on telepathy, dreams, the soul, and what would now be called cognitive science.[44]

Consistent with his argument that vitalism was a science-friendly approach to morality, memory, and the spiritual, Bergson charged science with the task of taking intuition seriously: "How could there be disharmony between our intuitions and our science, how especially could our science make us renounce our intuitions, if these intuitions are something like instinct,—an instinct conscious, refined, spiritualized,—and if instinct is still nearer life than intellect and science?" Armed with Bergson's spiritual energy, Du Vernet turned to his bookshelf, well stocked with a remarkably wide-ranging set of philosophical, psychological, and theological texts. For example, he rallied Bergson to argue against philosopher Josiah Royce, in the margins of Royce's *The Problem of Christianity*. Royce claimed: "Direct telepathy, if it ever occurs at all, is a rare and . . . a wholly negligible fact." Du Vernet's red pencil countered in the margin: "Fully established. Basic notion of Mind Energy." Royce had read Bergson, or at least knew of his ideas through reading William James's *A Pluralistic Universe*, published in 1909.[45] According to Du Vernet, however, Royce had not read Bergson correctly.

Mind-Energy had a pragmatic bent to its mysticism that Du Vernet shared, as it sought to clarify how "energy" could change, or heal, the world. Bergson argued that élan vital could pass between bodies, through "healing by suggestion or . . . by the influence of mind on mind." Du Vernet's marginalia in Charles Richet's *Thirty Years of Psychical Research* concurred, citing the authority of his own tests with the Chevreul pendulum: "My experiments prove that the conscious mind energy of one person can penetrate the subconscious mind of another person and produce nervous effects with muscular reactions."[46] To argue that mind energy affected the muscles was a bold testimony that sought to fulfill the destiny of matter by spiritualizing it, using the rhetoric and affect of science.

Once he had read Bergson, Du Vernet's writing became fully saturated with spiritual energy. No longer filtering his arguments primarily through biblical metaphors, he turned increasingly to what he took to be scientific examples and authority as foil for his testimony. With high hopes that the German method of historical criticism would reveal the history of the Bible and its composition, Du Vernet also embraced the philosophical school of pragmatism: "The philosophy of common-sense leads us to make much of the testimony of experience." Like Bergson, he remained cautiously critical of science, and held a privileged space for that which science could not explain: "Spiritual energy, whether it be in the form of vital energy, mental energy, or personal energy, cannot be cut up into little pieces and measured, even with the most minute index, or weighed, even with the most delicate balance." At the same time, he also accused dogmatic Christian theology of a tendency

to cut up what was, for him, truly spiritual: "In the name of common-sense why should practical people be forced to hold intellectually, on threat of excommunication, some hair-splitting theological definition which does not produce the slightest effect upon character and life?"[47] Du Vernet was in the throes of a late-style critique of all the forces of inequality, ineptitude, and pettiness that he could name.

Du Vernet was also reading William James, the philosopher and psychologist who would become a founding figure in the academic study of religion. He was particularly interested in James's ideas of the brain as physical matter and of the soul as a unity across brains, marking this sentence in his copy of volume 1 of *The Principles of Psychology*: "The soul would be thus a medium upon which . . . the manifold brain-processes combine their effects." Taking the medium of the soul even further, James noted cautiously that the "phenomena of thought transference, mesmeric influence and spirit control . . . are being alleged nowadays on better authority than ever before." Du Vernet bypassed the caution, underlining "thought transference" and adding in the margins "the interpenetrations of minds."[48]

Scaling up the soul, Du Vernet also marked James's conjecture about the possibility of a world soul, drawing a pointing hand next to this sentence: "I find the notion of some sort of an anima mundi thinking in all of us to be a more promising hypothesis in spite of all its difficulties, than that of a lot of absolutely individual souls." After this cosmic speculation, James changed direction quite abruptly, noting that the word "soul" was not appropriately scientific, so after more than three hundred pages, he would no longer use it. Nevertheless, he encouraged his reader to "feel free to believe" as he could neither prove nor disprove the existence of the soul, an admission that Du Vernet studiously underlined.[49] For Du Vernet, the anima mundi eventually led to God, but a God who no longer quite resembled the Evangelical Father-God of his youth.

Du Vernet also tackled the second volume of James's *Principles of Psychology*, penciling in "Mind Energy" beside a passage where James conceded that hypnosis confirms the probability of "emanations" proceeding from human minds. Where James and Bergson might waver on whether the concept of the soul implies the existence of a god, Du Vernet was convinced, frequently equating the "universe" with "God." Though I have no evidence that Du Vernet read James's Gifford Lectures published as the *Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1912, my guess is that he did. For James, the evidence of religious experience was rooted in testimony and storytelling.[50] For Du Vernet, testimony from experience became increasingly useful and prominent as he explored the possibilities of radio mind.

To bolster his convictions about the soul and the spirit, Du Vernet turned to another Gifford Lecturer, the philosopher and self-described rational theist Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, a scholar of Hegel and Kant. Taking his pencil to Pringle-Pattison's essay in an edited collection entitled *The Spirit: The Relation of God and Man, Considered from the Standpoint of Recent Philosophy and Science*, Du Vernet noted his call for human beings to strive to live with a "nature attuned to the divine." Defining the spirit as "the illuminative presence of God operative in every soul which He has created," Pringle-Pattison stressed the "naturalness" of spiritual illumination.[51] The crossing of the domains of the natural and the spiritual was the ground of radio mind.

Du Vernet noticed how another essay in the volume, entitled "God in Action" and written by Lily Dougall, seconded this natural bent: "The hypothesis of this essay is that God is all-powerful to produce good in His own way by educating, not by compelling, living spirits that each have their own degree of freedom; by using the organising power of life as His instrument, not by overriding nature." One of the rare female authors on Du Vernet's bookshelf, Dougall was a Canadian-born writer who ran a liberal Anglican salon from her home in England. Du Vernet marked up her essay carefully, noting her discussion of Frederick Myers's distinction between the subconscious and conscious mind and her assertion that Christianity needed to embrace psychology, lest it repeat the mistakes of earlier church responses to scientific discoveries: "No astronomical discovery is of as much importance to the world as any really forward step in the knowledge of the human mind; but the ecclesiastical mind, as such, often appears even more averse to the psychological knowledge of to-day than it was to the astronomy of the Renaissance."[52] Perhaps in direct response to the Lambeth bishops so opposed to psychic research, Dougall's essay was very much on the same page as Du Vernet.

Dougall and Du Vernet drew on the rhetoric of a scientific spirit not only to defend psychic research against the Lambeth bishops but also as a response to holiness and Pentecostal spiritual currents that were growing inside and outside of their church. For example, Dougall handily reinterpreted a holiness-inspired story told by the evangelist Dwight Moody about the power of prayer into evidence for telepathy. Similarly, Du Vernet's red pencil marks concurred with another article in *The Spirit*, written by C. A. Anderson Scott, a professor of New Testament at Cambridge University, in which Scott sought to historicize the events of Pentecost as described in the book of Acts in order to challenge the Pentecostal view of the spirit. Where Pentecostals understood that the Holy Spirit descended in a flaming blaze to bestow gifts of healing and speaking in tongues upon the apostles, Scott downplayed these gifts to

foreground the description in Acts in which the faithful "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need" (Acts 2:45 [KJV]). Scott mused: "Judging by the analogy of Pentecost, we should have to be prepared also for consequences that might be described as revolutionary, whether in thought or in organisation. The Spirit is sovereign where He dwells, though His witness to the individual has always to be checked by His witness to the community. Even the doctrine of private property went up in that flame."[53] This very Anglican balance between the individual and the community is one that Du Vernet articulated often, at the same time that he lived with the knowledge that the doctrine of private property was contested not only by the sovereign spirit but also by the Indian Land Committee.

Du Vernet's marginalia reveal that he was reading as a Christian socialist open to scientific discovery and yet committed to the possibilities of the spirit. These books, which must have traveled quickly from their origins in London and New York to his Pacific coast home, were utterly necessary to his development as a mystic of mediation. Reading narratives of discovery that were more akin to meditations on the human spiritual condition than to lab reports based on empirical observations, Du Vernet followed their example. Literalizing telepathy through the letters of the Chevreul pendulum, he labored to document the reality of radio mind not via charts and statistics but by testimony and story.

Family Matters

In addition to signaling the universality of the human family, radio mind was also a personal family affair for Du Vernet. As he wrote in "The Law of Harmony" in the *Montreal Daily Star* on February 3, 1923: "The best recorded examples of spontaneous thought transference, in contrast to scientific experiments, are between mother and son, husband and wife, also between two brothers, two sisters, two intimate friends, or two lovers." Alice was critical to the success of their shared scientific experiments. In a piece called "Inter-Mental Action" printed in the *Vancouver Province* on January 26, 1923, Du Vernet wrote, "When receiving [thought transference] on one occasion a hundred miles away from my daughter I could tell the exact moment when her mind energy penetrated my subconscious mind by a slight swerving of the pendulum as it swung on the 'start' index." Father and daughter were mystics of mediation together (fig. 55).

On another occasion, Frederick reported in the same article, he and Alice had prearranged a time for a radio mind transmission while he was far from

FIGURE 55. Frederick and Alice Du Vernet at the Anglican Diocese of Caledonia Synod (1909) (detail of fig. 43). William H. Collison is standing at left. Photograph courtesy of the Diocese of Caledonia Archives.

home. When distracted by unexpected visitors, Alice forgot their appointment but received the transmission via her subconscious nonetheless: "When she suddenly became conscious of her oversight this gave her a mental shock so that she was in a highly sensitive state when she held the pendulum in her hand. As the subconscious mind never forgets the slightest detail the memory of my message impinged upon her nervous system and directed aright the swinging pendulum." Alice's ability to store up a message to receive it after the fact brought Frederick to a new declaration that radio mind was constrained neither by time nor space:

> After a critical survey of all the experimental data which I have carefully gathered I feel justified in announcing that there is now scientific proof of the stu-

> pendous fact that inter-mental action is independent of space and time. The bearing of this profound truth upon health and happiness, inspiration and fellowship, prayer and prophecy, peace and good-will must be evident to all deep thinkers. The past lives in us. The future overshadows us. We both influence others and are influenced by them regardless of distance. Millions of minds are inter-acting. We are in touch with the Infinite for the Mind of God is independent of both space and time.

Sending him newspapers, hiking with him in the mountains, helping him with his letters, validating his experiments, Alice was not only a spiritual medium but also a co-laborer in the field of spiritual energy. They likely needed each other's support; one newspaper article briefly mentions the possibility that Du Vernet's experiments with a pendulum could attract "ridicule," and it must have happened more than once.[54]

Alice made another cameo appearance in an essay Du Vernet called "The Principle of Publicity," in which he argued for the moral and psychological value of transparency and disclosure. Advising his readers of the virtue of sharing stories that told of the everyday or weighed on one's conscience, he drew an example from what must have been his own experience as a father: "In after years when the grown-up daughter sits by the side of the parent's bed and tells of the evening party, there is still the beautiful application of this vital principle."[55] Turning the "principle of publicity" into a moral imperative for everyone, children, politicians, and bankers alike, Du Vernet believed in the therapeutic and political power of a story shared side by side.

Though his wife, Stella, does not appear in his stories of radio mind, his son, Horace, played a compelling role in one telepathic testimony. Far from home in a Vancouver hospital, Horace lay close to death. In Du Vernet's telling, he prayed for his son, knowing with "scientific certainty that, regardless of the distance, my mind energy was penetrating his subconscious mind as he lay in the hospital very weak and highly susceptible to mental influence." Horace recovered, and later recounted to his father that at the deepest point of his illness, a thought compelled him: "'I must live for the sake of my wife and children.' This auto-suggestion, stimulated from afar, dropped into his subconscious mind, and there revived the latent energy of his soul."[56] Convinced that the energy of the soul was a physical medium that could be aroused by the spirit, Du Vernet continually painted radio mind as a force for good. What might happen should a spurned lover or an angry parent abuse the power of radio mind to hurt those people who were particularly "susceptible" to mind energy was not something he considered in print.

Colonial Spirituality

The concept of spirituality, like that of religion, has always been deeply intertwined with colonialism. Regardless of what champions of spirituality over against religion might claim, it is just as institutionalized and historically embedded as the category of religion. What are the destructive and productive effects of the word "spirituality," and what has been done in its name? How does the very word amplify the power of the English language itself, while also providing space for the critique of that power?

As an English word used in early anthropological writings, "spirit" often brought along with it the non-English words that it stood in for: *mana*, *Geist*, *esprit*, *manitu*, *orenda*, *chi*, *prana*. Or the Ts'msyen word *halaayt*, which can mean "spiritual power," "shaman," or "shaman's dance."[57] Scholars have often chosen to use these words, especially *mana*, without translation in English, which raises the question, are these "subaltern" terms that have been appropriated, or are these terms so powerful that no translation can do them justice?

One of the earliest scholars in the anthropological tradition, Edward Tylor, devoted considerable thought to the question of the "spirit" and the "spiritual." In his classic 1871 text *Primitive Culture* (which I did not find on Du Vernet's bookshelf), Tylor provided a vast compendium of the spirit and its appearances around the globe. He argued that even the educated elite in late nineteenth-century Europe and North America were not immune to the spirit, as evidenced by their enthusiasm for Spiritualist mediums who served as channels for the living to speak to the dead. Taking a satirical approach, Tylor asserted that "the world is again swarming with intelligent and powerful disembodied spiritual beings, whose direct action on thought and matter is again confidently asserted as in those times and countries where physical science had not as yet so far succeeded in extruding these spirits and their influences from the system of nature."[58] Tylor would likely have included Du Vernet among the crowd of the spiritually excited, despite Du Vernet's claims to have "scientifically" proven the power of radio mind over physical matter.

Tylor did not entirely let off the hook those scientifically enlightened beings who had successfully extruded the spirit. In Tylor's evolutionary view, the word "spirit" tied the "thought of the savage to its hereditary successor, the thought of the philosopher. Barbaric philosophy retains as real what civilized language has reduced to simile."[59] Putting aside for a moment the racist evolutionism in Tylor's language, we see that his point was one of similari-

ties: the philosopher, despite his enlightenment, could not let go of the spirit. Du Vernet, as a missionary and a self-declared scientist, did not consign the spirit to simile. His insistence on the reality of the spirit would place him with the "savages" in Tylor's evolutionary terms—those who were unable or unwilling to extract the spirits from nature.

The Frequency of Listening

The rhabdic force of finding Bergson on the bookshelf and my subsequent communing with Du Vernet through his marginalia give me pause. How does my luck in finding written links to James, Bergson, and Royce allow me to put my Pacific philosopher-mystic in an orbit much headier and historically prominent than his literally parochial colleagues? What stories did I miss—or not find—on the shelves of the bookcases or in the carefully stored file boxes of the archives? The most difficult stories to find are those that relate how Du Vernet's spiritual imagination was shaped by his relationships with Ojibwe, Ts'msyen, Nisga'a, Haida, and other Indigenous peoples. What effects did their spiritual conditions and practices of spiritual communication have on radio mind?

Finding his library relatively intact, thanks to the care and foresight of his wife, Stella, was a great gift to my research. The books allowed me to develop a rich sense of what Du Vernet meant when he referred to the "highest thinking of the age." This text-based historical research, however, does little to reveal the lines of influence of the Ts'msyen, Nisga'a, and Haida people who played a prominent role in Frederick Du Vernet's work and life. He spent twenty years trying to convert them to Christianity and encouraging white settlement in the region. At the same time, he tried to thwart the disastrous trend of residential schools. In light of this, might his late-in-life radio mind experiments with his own homemade divining rod, the Chevreul pendulum, be a mode of turning matter into spirit that had its parallels in the Ts'msyen concept of halaayt? Overlapping with the English words "spirit power," "shaman," "priest," and "seer," halaayt was a means by which a human being could hold spiritual power through engaging with the natural world.[60] If spiritual energy, as Du Vernet understood it, was truly universal, did halaayt also access it in a way that he could recognize and even accept?

In the last four years of his life, when he wasn't thinking about and experimenting on radio mind, Du Vernet was overwhelmed by the state of his diocese and province. One of the issues that troubled him the most was the rise of "boarding schools" for Indigenous children. What became known as "res-

idential schools," these were places to which Indigenous children were often forcibly taken by police, where they were not allowed to speak their own languages, and where because of unsanitary conditions, lack of food, violence, and despair, they often grew ill or died. Residential schools were one of the most lethal forms of an alliance between church and state in the history of Canada (and the United States, as reading Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* reveals). Paid for by the state, while staffed and operated by Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and United churches, residential schools were a "national crime."[61]

From his early years in Prince Rupert, Du Vernet was a harsh critic of the system of "Indian education" and tried to convince his colleagues in Toronto to support a plan for day schools, which would not remove children from their families. He knew well that the issue of residential schools was related to the Indian Land Question and that the fortunes of the church were tied to both. At the same time that the British-based missionary societies were slowly withdrawing their funds, Indigenous Christians were giving less to church offerings and more to support lawyers assisting with the land movement.[62] In the wake of these financial pressures, the churches saw a way to attract government funding through the per capita system whereby they were paid per child in attendance at their schools.

Already in a 1908 letter to CMS Secretary Baring Baring-Gould in London, Du Vernet emphasized the different responsibilities of government and church as they related to schooling and the government purchase of Indigenous land: "These schools are Government Schools. The INDIANS are wards of the Dominion Government. In return for lands surrendered the Dom. Gov. undertakes to educate the Indian children. At first the Missionary Societies were doing this as far as they could, but by degrees the Government came forward erecting School Buildings, paying Grants. But these grants have been too small to do the work effectually. The per capita system has led to many evils." Consistently pointing to the health dangers of the schools, which packed in as many children as possible under the incentives of the per capita model, Du Vernet noted that among the evils of the system were the frequent deaths of children from tuberculosis in the ill-equipped schools, including at the Anglican Metlakatla Industrial School, which had closed by 1908.[63]

Du Vernet likely learned of the evils of the per capita model not only from observing the Metlakatla school and hearing from Indigenous parents but also from reading Dr. Peter Bryce's scathing 1907 report on the state of residential schools in Canada. The chief medical officer for the Department of Indian Affairs (and brother of the Presbyterian minister who had excavated a Rainy River mound), Bryce's report clarified the evils of the per capita sys-

tem in great detail. A few of his Anglican colleagues joined with Du Vernet in protesting the schools, but the bishops from dioceses where the income from residential schools propped up their budgets won the day.[64]

While critical of residential schools, Du Vernet did believe in high school and industrial school education for "advanced" Indigenous students. He also believed that the church had something "spiritual" to teach to Indigenous children: "We ask only for the privilege of imparting religious instruction to our Indian children. The Government is responsible for their secular education." Clearly worried that Baring-Gould was not getting the message, he spoke plainly, directly tying the money that the government had received for selling surrendered Indigenous lands to money it should be spending on education: "It is a mistake for the Missionary Societies to go on relieving the Government of the work it is bound to do. The sale of Indian lands has brought in millions of dollars. I sometimes wonder if the C.M.S. Secretaries ever see the Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs."[65] With such a frank rebuff to CMS Secretary Baring-Gould, Du Vernet showed that four years into his episcopate, the issue of Indigenous education was already alarming him.

Despite Du Vernet's assertion that the Dominion government was obliged to pay for Indigenous day schools out of the monies it had received from selling land supposedly surrendered by Indigenous peoples, he knew the matter was not so simple. As James McCullagh wrote of the situation in Aiyansh in the *North British Columbia News* in April 1913, "The Indians have rejected the offer of the Indian Department to erect a day school, on the ground that the acceptance of these benefits would prejudice their case *re* Indian Land Question. They take the stand that a full and complete settlement should be arrived at before receiving these benefits, and that, by their acceptance of them in the past they tacitly acknowledged a satisfactory settlement which had never been made." Without a government-funded school, Paul Mercer, a Nisga'a man active in the church and with the printing press, took it upon himself to teach the children of Aiyansh in his grandfather's house.[66]

Perhaps with Paul Mercer as an inspiration, Du Vernet rooted his clear separation between duties of the state and those of the church in part in a conviction that Indigenous Christians should become self-sufficient, as he wrote in a letter to his Toronto colleague Canon Gould: "The Indian work has got into a rut and it must be lifted out of this rut. The C.M.S. made a great mistake in doing too much for the Indians. Let the M.S.C.C. adopt a new and vigorous policy, leaving to the Government what the Government is responsible for, and insisting upon the spiritual side of the work with a wise method of making the Indians depend more upon themselves."[67] Du Vernet's strict

division between spiritual work and government responsibility was also informed by his awareness that Indigenous parents had their own stake in the matter of their children's education.

In 1921, at the urging of Haida parents who wanted a local boarding school at Massett that their children could attend when they were away for fishing seasons, Du Vernet sent a letter, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Anglican Synod of the Diocese of Caledonia, to ask the MSCC to establish two boarding schools. The committee's letter stated that the Indigenous peoples of the diocese "belong to five different tribes, and that strong prejudices exist between them, and moreover the long distances between Settlements, and also differences of Climatic conditions are such, that we believe that their educational interests would be best cared for by the establishment of two Boarding Schools." The MSCC declined to support this plan. In 1922, Du Vernet once again supported a "co-operative plan," backed by all four Indian agents in the diocese, which would see the government establish one boarding school at Prince Rupert, which the churches would not administer. Instead, each church would supply Christian education for students in their denominations. The MSCC, by then fully committed to a program of strictly Anglican residential schools paid for with government support, did not support this plan either.[68] At this point, Du Vernet seemed to be losing heart, both literally and in spirit.

Forced to curtail his travel around the diocese because of his illness, he grew increasingly reflective—and angry—about the approach of both church and government to Indigenous education. In November 1922, the same month he published "Reality in Religion" in the *Canadian Churchman*, Du Vernet wrote a letter to Thomas B. R. Westgate, the acting secretary of the MSCC and a fellow Wycliffe graduate, recalling the development of his views on Indian education:

> High up officials in the Indian Department when here said openly that as long as the Indian Department can get the Churches to take the responsibility of education of the Indian children the Dep[a]rtment is only too glad. To use the exact words "It is a matter of economy." Eighteen years ago when I came to this Diocese, I adopted the attitude that the Indian Department was solely responsible for the education of the Indian children and the Churches for their spiritual teaching. By degrees the Department accepted my position. . . . The Indian Day Schools in this Diocese are doing most efficient work, and it is not costing the Anglican Church a single dollar. The Bishop still can recommend a teacher, but the teacher is appointed by the Government.