

## Unit 10: Video 2 Transcript

**Q3: What was the appeal of Methodism for the Anishinaabe?**

A: The appeal of Methodism amongst the Anishinaabe, I, and others, Donald Smith in particular, have studied this extensively. Methodism came about at a time when the Anishinaabe people were experiencing increasing European encroachment on their traditional lands around Lake Ontario. They were also experiencing a fair amount of disease, so they were seeing their numbers being decimated. And Methodism, I think because of its emphasis on individual transformation and then group transformation, seemed to have had quite a lot of appeal.

So, for example, something like temperance, you know foreswearing alcohol, seemed to be a way of introducing control back into a community that felt it was losing control. Certainly there were Indigenous traditionalist revivalist movements that had also argued for temperance, so the Methodists and Europeans weren't the only ones. But I think Methodism offered a chance for transformation at a time when the world seemed to be changing very rapidly and not always for the best. So I think that's, you know, that's a great deal of the appeal.

And what I see, I don't know if it's—I wouldn't say that it's specific to Methodism, but what I see amongst the Anishinaabe people is a use of Methodism in some ways that's more syncretic than perhaps we've thought of in Christianity. You know, incorporating various images, various symbols that came from Anishinaabe culture into Methodism as well. So it's partly a way of regaining control, but it's also, I think, partly a way of maintaining things that were already part of people's practices, part of people's world views. Now certainly there were other changes too. Peter Jones, for example, argued for changes in gender relations. A more, and particularly around childrearing, a more authoritarian perspective on childrearing than the Anishinaabe had ever had, including the use of corporal punishment with children which not everyone agreed with. And there certainly were divisions and distinctions amongst even the Mississauga themselves. There were times when Jones, I think, went a bit too far for some of his contemporaries and some of his fellow Anishinaabe. And it also offered some kind of hope too at

a time when, again, people were feeling lost. People were feeling that some of their old ways were beginning to become undermined.