

CHURCH STEEPLES

Southern Canada

June 11-14, 2006

Sunday I worshiped at a Baptist church in Sparwood, British Columbia, just before the Alberta border. Their plain, white cross was silhouetted against a deeply treed mountainside.

Monday I stopped in Fort McLeod, Alberta. From the blockhouse of the old fort the Mounties built, I could see Holy Cross Church, built by Catholic missionaries in 1898. The simple cross was backed by thick gray clouds.

Wednesday, I visited Cannington Manor in Saskatchewan, a failed utopian village from the late 1800s. The area is now a historic park, but the Anglican Chapel on the grounds continues to serve an active congregation. Their cross features the circle of unity and was framed by cottonwoods.

Then I camped in Redvers, just before the Manitoba border. Across the street was a gray and white building with a cross-topped spire. A Lutheran church, I discovered when I walked the dog in that direction.

Are these buildings, each topped by a cross, what He died for? Of course not! To claim a church building or a cross is holy is idolatry. True, I stop to thank Him when I see a cross. But I do the same when I see a mountain brook, a delicate flower, a young antelope by the side of the road.

Nonetheless, there's something about a cross on a church, whether a stone edifice or a simple wooden structure. The cross seems to proclaim, in tongues of flame, *Rejoice! He is risen! He bought you with His death and resurrection! He loves you! Rejoice!*

Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.

(Acts 20:28)

