

Iqaluit Ethnography

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Historical Overview

Many Inuit can trace their history back 300 years to when southern fur traders first met with them and began trading supplies for furs. They were once a nomadic people, who hunted birds, seal, caribou, musk oxen, whales and fish. While today, many of the Inuit still rely on hunting and fishing in order to provide food for their families, the nomadic lifestyle of the Inuit ended in the 1950s and they moved to fixed locations. Also during this time, the Canadian government began to require the Inuit children attend government schools. This policy was very controversial among the Inuit as it was seen as an attempt to “make them white.” The controversy and tensions escalated over the schools, as reports quickly surfaced that the children were abused verbally, physically, mentally and sexually. This is particularly significant as the schools were ran by churches and this policy was seen as one of the early means of forced assimilation in Inuit history. This left a legacy of a negative impression among many Inuit toward the God whom these churches claimed to represent. The Inuit are still marginalized in many ways, but they do have many more rights than at other points in their history.

In order to understand the Inuit, their relationship and distinctions with the First Nation peoples must be explained. The two share much common ancestry, but there are geographical and governmental distinctions. The Inuit live in Nunavut, one of the most northern Canadian territories. They are represented in the Canadian government and elect officials to their own legislative assembly. First Nation people, by contrast, live on reservations in assorted Canadian provinces and are not allowed to leave. Additionally, they are not required to obey the laws of the province surrounding them, nor do they have representation within the Canadian government.

Governmental Influence

The Canadian government is developing Nunavut as several companies are interested in mining the uranium that has been discovered in the Arctic region. Iqaluit’s port location makes it a crucial part of this development plan. The government’s desire to develop Iqaluit has resulted in a many government

jobs within the community, providing exorbitant salaries and benefits for some residents. Unfortunately, these opportunities typically prove to result in greater dichotomy between the white and indigenous communities within the town. It seems that the majority of the jobs are given to white people from out of town, while the number of unemployed Inuit remains very high. Whereas the Inuit have very high rates of unemployment and poverty, the Canadian government provides aid and resources for the Inuit people. One government worker explained to the team that the government gives individuals a “Northern Allowance” to those in the region. The allowance is approximately \$12,000 a year and is expected to rise. This is meant to offset the high cost of goods in the region. This has fostered a sense of dependency resulting in a lack of motivation or sense of purpose among the Inuit. These programs take away the Inuit’s sense of usefulness, a loss that contributes to the bleak atmosphere that is so prevalent in Nunavut.

While the Canadian government has legal authority over the community, the community elders also provide guidance. The elders are a group of natives, defined not by election or by mere age, but by the measure of respect they have in the community. The elders’ words carry great authority. While conducting research by visiting the local legislative body, the representative giving the tour explained that there are no political parties in the community. The elder system works in conjunction with the authority of the Canadian government. There are several seats in the Nunavut assembly that are reserved for the elders, so they can observe the proceedings. The elected officials have the official authority that comes with their office and the elders have the unofficial authority that comes with respect and influence in the community.

An Anglo named Siobhan told the team about the governmental process. There are 19 representatives elected to the assembly, although that number fluctuates depending upon the population. They choose one speaker who sits in front, as well as one premier, with two ministries’ representatives as well. The others sit facing each other. There are eight there on the government side and nine MLAs. Most of the business is conducted in Inuktitut, although there are three non-Inuit members. There are no parties; most representatives vote to conscience or for people, depending on the person. The government establishes the position, together first, while the other nine vote for self. However, if those in the government can’t agree then they will all vote separately. Visitors can come and wear headphones. The elders will have seats of honor, but they do not participate. The proceedings are translated into four different languages. All of the members now speak English, but they choose to meet and speak Inuktitut.

Decision-Making & Influence

There are close to 100 elders in Iqaluit. Elders can be men or women and influence community decisions. General decision-making is based on role or specialty, often tied to gender. Women know about plants and medicine so it would be strange for a man to speak to the subject. Men are typically experts in hunting, so when traveling or establishing camp, the man makes all the decisions. Once the camp is set up, the woman takes over the decisions since tending to the home and camp is her specialty. Within this realm, the man defers all authority to her. Larger decisions are always communal and by consensus frequently led by the elders. There is disdain for individuals who try and rise up to lead the community. In the past such people would be killed but today they are generally disregarded. Decision-making is tied to the communal aspect of Inuit culture. It seems there is no one person functioning as chief. The elders meet daily in the legislative building in Iqaluit. Community members can call the office and request a meeting before the elders. It is customary for those going before the elders to bring a meat tray or other food type gift. Given the communal decision-making mindset, encouraging individuals to respond through a traditional gospel “invitation” would be counter to the Inuit culture. Instead, care must be given to speak to the elders and family units to discuss important matters and come to a communal decision. If a missionary were to press the individual decision too much, he would be shunned from the community for being seen as attempting to seek authority and dominate the community.

In addition to the formal and cultural influencers in the community, the team observed many influential individuals at the coffee shop, The Grind ‘N Brew, owned by Brian, who is married to the mayor of Iqaluit. The men in the coffee shop had several discussions with the team and their insights are included throughout the report. The team noted that they were at times hostile toward mention of the Bible and those involved in organized religion within the community. However, it should be noted that they are the movers and shakers of Iqaluit. A man coming in to start a church would be very wise to get to know these men and befriend them. He would have to be very wise to not bias himself with the views of these men in order to present the Gospel to everyone in the community. These are the type of men who can significantly aid a ministry. They could also break a ministry if a man of God did not act wisely in his relations with them. Another means of potential influence is through the radio. Anyone can call in to the community station and most people listen to it throughout the day.

Ethnicity & Racism

The Inuit people prefer to be called “Inuit” rather than “Eskimo”. The term “Eskimo” means “eater of raw meat”. It is considered a racial slur, similar to referring to black people as “niggers”. The Christmas song, “Walkin’ in a Winter Wonderland” offends them, because the song mentions Eskimos. One day, as a team member entered a gift shop, three white Canadian women were overheard discussing the Inuit. They claimed that many of the Inuit people break into the houses of others at night, steal carvings and jewelry, and then resell these items on the street for exorbitant prices. They discussed how the Inuit also buy things in stores legitimately and then resell them on the street at ten times the original price. As the team member asked for additional information about this process, the women explained that this practice was most common among the younger generation Inuit. The ladies seemed quite racist and clearly looked down their noses at the Inuit people.

The majority of the people in Iqaluit are Inuit. One individual reported that Anglo speakers make up 40% of the population in Iqaluit, but only about 15% in the villages. While the team was unable to officially quantify this, while walking through the streets the majority of the people were Inuit, rather than Anglo. It certainly does not appear to be an overwhelming majority and there seemed to be a very large percentage of Anglo in Iqaluit. It was also noted by the team that the Inuit and Anglo did not seem to interact with each other on a large scale outside of professional relationships. While many businesses had both Anglo and Inuit workers, the Anglo tended to be in more of a managerial role. This fact would play a major role in any church planting work that will be done in the area. Initially there will be natural obstacles between the Anglo and the Inuit and two separate missions efforts, one among the Inuit and one among the Anglo, would be wise.

On one occasion a team member was in a bank waiting to change some American money and overheard a conversation between an Inuk man and an Anglo woman who was an employee of the bank. The man was attempting to open a bank account and was told by the woman that he needed to make an appointment with her manager in order to open an account. The man asked if he could make an appointment and he was told that the bank manager was busy the rest of the day and could only take an appointment for the following day at three specific times. The man insisted that he meet with the manager on the current day because he would be working the rest of the week. The bank employee pointed to the team member who was present and told the Inuk man that team member had an appointment with the manager and that she was too busy to see him. However, the team member did not have an appointment. After several minutes of arguing the Inuk man finally walked out of the bank visibly frustrated. It seemed that the Anglo bank employee did not try to take care of the Inuk man and

she was “talking down” to him during the entire conversation by speaking to him as an adult would to a child (like an adult would talk to a child).

Cultural Preservation

The Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth (CLAY) is devising a new hands on educational system where elders take young men out on 10-20 day snowmobile trips to show them the old travel routes, how to navigate in the bleakness of the arctic, hunt, and survive. Groups travel hundreds of miles in brutal conditions. The Inuit are always within one generation of losing the ability to travel and live off the land. By the time a boy is 9 years old, he will usually have killed his first caribou. This used to be a rite of passage but is not so significant anymore. Often the first hunts a boy goes on will be part of a “class” from school. The community takes over this process if the boy’s father is gone and will take the boys hunting. By law, Inuit can kill as many caribou as they need without any governmental interference, but white men are required to apply for a permit.

It is often difficult to get traditional foods. One elder indicated he never thought he would live in a time when the Inuit must pay for seal, char, and caribou. This is hurting the Inuit culture. In previous generations, when a man would come off the ice with a load of meat, the community would gather and split everything. Now the man wants money in exchange for the meat. The elder indicated that he believes the spirits are unhappy because the community is no longer sharing and the result will be the spirits providing less and less food.

In general, it seemed that the Inuit children today do not care much about the old ways. They often consider them boring compared to new innovations such as the internet. They do not cling to the traditional and cultural stories. These things taught the cultural forms of tradition, history, and entertainment, so there is a great need to find ways to preserve those aspects of the culture. However, it was also reported that an anthropologist suggested the Inuit return to their traditional ways in order to be happier, but the community was very offended at the suggestion. They see returning to the past as being uncivilized, so must balance the two worlds.

Cultural Naming

The Inuit have a detailed and complex naming system. The name gives the person certain functions in society and creates a network of relationship based on the names of others associated with the individual name. For example, someone may be named after a former elder who has died, so from that point on, the friends of the dead elder become the friends of the child. Children can have up to 6 names. A woman with a man’s name may even take on the role of men and engage in hunting. Someone may

have an in-laws' name or a grandfather's name. In this case, people will treat and talk to you like you are the person whose name you bear.

Language:

One individual explained that the Inuit call outsiders, "Tuanuk". The language of the outsiders is "Tuanuktituk". All of the Anglo and almost all of the Inuit people in Iqaluit spoke English at an advanced level. The Anglo in the area were also heard speaking French. It was also noted that many of the Inuit men and women could be heard speaking what seemed to be Inuktitut. On more than one occasion, Inuit children were heard speaking both English and Inuktitut. One Inuit man who had moved away, but comes back regularly indicated he had chosen to only teach his children English, but now regrets not also teaching them to speak their native language. At one point, two team members encountered an Inuk man on the street and found that he spoke very little English. He mentioned something concerning purchasing rock carvings but did not understand the questions we were asking him. Any of the other Inuit people that we encountered did not seem to have a problem speaking to us in English.

There are two main dialects spoken across Nunavut. Until the 20th century the Inuit languages were unwritten. Missionaries reduced the spoken language to written form, using Romanized letters at first and then later devising a syllabic symbol system. In time, these two forms of writing the language began to take on their own characteristics and two distinct dialects emerged:

Inuktitut (based on symbols) is spoken in the eastern region of Nunavut

Inuinaktun (based on Romanized letters) is spoken in the western region of Nunavut.

The two are dialects, sharing between 70-90% of the vocabulary and can be understood across the Polar Regions. One must be cautious, however, because not all words carry over. For example, the Inuktitut word for "fear" means "happy" in another dialect. There is a resurgence of Inuktitut in the schools. Almost every young person is bi-lingual and English is used in most of the homes. As was previously noted, many Inuit can speak some French as well. One individual reported that there is currently a language protection act under discussion that would require individuals to speak the two Inuit dialects, English, and French in order to have certain jobs.

Today, many of the grandparents were those who spoke exclusively Inuktitut, while the parents were made to go to school and learn English. Unfortunately, they typically did not learn English or Inuktitut very well. As such, they are functionally illiterate. In response, their children do not care to learn to read because their parents say there is no point to education. As such, there are now two generations without a firm grasp of any language. The children are being encouraged to stay in school, but the parents

cannot help with the school work because they do not know English. In school, children can choose from studying in English, French, or Inuktitut. However, with Inuktitut they cannot finish high school because the curriculum only goes up to the 6th grade and there is currently not anyone available to help the Inuktitut speaking students transfer to English. It is estimated that there should be curriculum through graduation in the Inuktitut language by 2015.

According to Hugh Lloyd, a 12-year Anglo Iqaluit resident and cultural specialist at the Dept. of Culture, Language, Elders, and Youth, the Inuktitut symbols are loosely based on the Greek alphabet with each letter representing 3-4 sounds. For example, “I” might be the delta, “ah” the delta turned 90 degrees, “oo” turned another 90 and so on.

The following are key points concerning language from interview with Lazarie Otuk, an elder Inuit man working at the Department of Culture, Language, Elders, and Youth:

- Inuktitut is a descriptive language. “Enamel on a coffee cup” is what something is, but an Inuk would never call it that. Things usually are described by function. A seal is “an animal that pops out of the ice for air,” which is all one word in Inuktitut.
- The root words are small and simple and then modifiers are piled on to make the word very long and extremely precise. Interestingly, Anglos think Inuktitut is not precise while the natives feel it is very precise.
- An Inuk has one word for each animal but the shaman has a separate spirit name for it. The shaman uses this secret name to communicate with and have power over the animal and its spirit. Only the shaman knows the spirit language of the animals.
- Everything about the relationship changes if a white man is able to speak Inuktitut. The Inuit will open up, give immense respect, and connect more easily.
- Each Inuit has a special name that the government doesn’t know. They speak to each other using this special name.
- New words for technology, medical terminology, etc... are created by a consensus of elders, often in Iqaluit, and then distributed to other communities. Inuit rarely borrow words from other languages. They prefer to create their own word to describe the object.
- It is taboo to talk to your sibling’s spouse lest you come to desire him or her – similar to the concept in Islam.
- Throat singing is only for entertainment. No message is communicated.
- When singing a song to pass on information it is common for the man to play a song on the drums and the woman will be required to come up with words for it. This cooperation is present in every area of Inuit culture.

- Though most Inuit speak English quite well, it became obvious to the team that any church planted must be done by an Inuktitut speaker. English is still seen as foreign and connected with the white man who exploits the people. The Inuit tremendously respect the few white people who have learned Inuktitut well. It should be noted that there are many grammatical and language learning books in the bookstore above Arctic Venture.

Youth

Currently, only 25% of students graduate from High School. For girls, especially, dropping out to have a baby is almost a rite of passage. Individuals are allowed to be on their own when they are 16, but they cannot get government assistance until they are 18, so they frequently suffer very much during those two years. There is a Nunavut Sivuniksavut program that takes kids to Ottawa to be advocates for Nunavut. While they are there they are able to take classes for extra education and see life beyond Iqaluit in the hopes of instilling dreams and purpose.

Family:

The team also learned that men were once responsible for killing and skinning animals, whereas women stripped the hides and made the clothes. The society is matriarchal in the sense that family names are passed through the mother, and also because the mothers are usually in charge, since the fathers are usually away on hunting trips. Elders are both male and female, and the authority is divided evenly between the men and the women. Women have the authority over household affairs, since that is their sphere, and men have authority over the hunt, since that is their sphere. Most storytellers are women, because they are the ones most often around the children. It should also be noted that it was reported that there are very few homosexual couples in Iqaluit.

Women in Iqaluit lose their virginity very early and are encouraged to have as many children as possible. When they have children by white men, these men sometimes leave them and take the children with them. The attitude among the Inuit women towards losing their children is that it is okay because they can always have other children. This is symptomatic of an overall devaluing of human life that is part of life in Iqaluit. A team member once saw a pregnant woman and asked if she was hoping for a boy or a girl. The woman responded, "I don't care. I'm going to give it up anyway." The team heard that this attitude even extends to selling their babies to people who wish to adopt. Adoption is managed through the Department for Agreements. The child still sees their biological family and knows each other after the adoption. They feel this will allow the child to feel more loved. One individual indicated this is against Canadian law, but that the open adoptions are practiced throughout Nunavut.

Whereas domestic violence in other societies typically involves a man hitting a woman, the exact opposite is true here. Foremen of white construction crews advise their men never to get involved with Inuit women because, “They’re psychotic. They’ll get drunk and beat the bejeezus out of you.” One day, a team member passed a house where an Inuit couple lived, and this sort of violence was apparently taking place. A great fight was going on. The woman was screaming, “I hate you! I hate you!” She was yelling and cursing with great ferocity. One Anglo girl a team member met said that her boyfriend’s ex-girlfriend, who was an Inuit, used to beat him regularly. The team also heard reports of elder abuse as the younger generations now do not respect the older generation as they once did.

Traditionally, the Inuit do not have formal wedding ceremonies. The missionaries who first came to the area began having weddings and the tradition was adopted. Today, most couples are not married in church, but rather have a civil ceremony and then a reception, if they even get married. The team encountered two individuals that told us that common law marriage was very common in Iqaluit. We were told that a person is considered married by common law after they have lived together for a period of one year. The team encountered a government employee named Kenny who was friends with the owner of the coffee shop and shared a great deal about relationships in Iqaluit.

Kenny indicated he had a common law wife and they were about to get married. He had been living with her for about 2 ½ years. He was very open and helpful in discussing common law marriage. He shared that it was a common thing for couples to live together. The tax system treats individuals better if they file taxes as single than it does if they file as married. For this reason a couple can live together and file separately and do better than if they file as married.

Kenny went on to give many reasons as to why it is more probable that a couple would live together in this environment. First, and most obvious, are the tax implications. Secondly, He said the cold weather tends to force people to spend more time inside in a closer proximity to one another. He stated that this tends toward people being together and naturally leads towards common law. It seemed he was trying to nicely state another natural principle that affects those of the opposite sex when they are forced to be inside together. If one could spend time with Kenny he would be of great assistance as a cultural helper because growing up in this area and being Anglo, he spans both cultures.

Food

We discovered that the people (including the Inuit) living in Iqaluit do not hunt and fish for the majority of their food. They mostly hunt and fish for recreation and the “country food” is simply used to supplement the food they would get at the local grocery stores in town. Those who hunt do so go on two

or three hunting trips a year to hunt for mostly caribou, seal and rabbit. A team member noticed that several houses had areas behind them for fish to be hung out to dry. However, this was not the main food that the people in the city eat. The guide at the welcome center explained that some people who live in smaller communities hunt and fish for the majority of their food, because there is no grocery store or where food is even more expensive. The food at the stores in Iqaluit seemed to average two to three times the price someone would pay for the same food in the U.S.A.

Suicide

One gentleman who worked for the local government discussed the problem of suicide among the Inuit of Iqaluit. He told the team that the problem is significant in the area. He went on to explain that the government and sociologists have tried to find what is causing the high suicide rates, but he thought no one will be able to figure the out what the real problem is. Another man told the team that he personally knew of 60 people that had committed suicide in the 25 years that he had been living in the city. He said that most of the time people do not give any kind of warning signs that they are about to kill themselves. They seem to be normal one day and then are gone the next. Some possible reasons that he suggested were the overall hopelessness found in the community, the long dark winters, and the bad economic situation of many of the Inuit people.

Inukshuks

The Inuit are famous for making “inukshuks” piles of stones made according to some particular design or pattern. These inukshuks were used for many different purposes. A simple pile of stones, one on top of the other, indicates a landmark. The landmark could be for a place where abundant fish are nearby, or a place where some event has taken place that is important to them. A pile of stones that has a clump of stones at its base is a cache of stored supplies or food to be used on long journeys. A pile of large stones that is as tall as a man and looks sort of like a man is usually a tool used in hunting. Locations with these types of inukshuks indicate an area where many caribou can be found. The caribou are easily spooked, and will stay far away from these markers which look like men from a great distance. The Inuit may use them to guide the herd in the direction they want them to go when hunting them. Other inukshuks look like doorways. These are signposts, telling how to get from one place to another across the trackless tundra. When someone looks directly through one of these inukshuks, another inukshuk will be seen in the far distance. When the person travels to this Inukshuk, another can be seen, and so on, until the person finds their way home.

Miscellaneous

Environment: In summertime, the sun almost never sets in Nunavut. In wintertime, the sun almost never rises. The temperatures range between 50 degrees and negative 60 degrees Fahrenheit. There are no trees here at all. The buildings are supported by stilts, which are drilled into the permafrost. If the weather were to warm up very much, the Permafrost would melt, the houses would sink, and the city would crumble.

Music: Inuit enjoy a wide variety of music, from traditional folk singing to rock and roll.

Drug & Medical Problems: A rampant drug problem exists among the Inuit. The Inuit refer to marijuana as “Mahoochee.” One strong dose of Mahoochee costs \$30. For this reason, one can find anything at all in the way of sexual favors for \$30. Tuberculosis is unusually rampant here, due to the crowded, dirty living conditions of some families. A strain of HIV, unique to this area, also exists among the Inuit. The team also noted signs posted all over town, indicating influenza is a serious problem as well.

Begging: While at least one team member did see one street beggar, another team member noted not seeing any beggars throughout the week. On several occasions team members were approached to buy trinkets or carved stone, but not for money. One Inuk gentleman even approached two team members on separate occasions and indicated he was looking for work.

Housing: The outlying communities are more traditional and live in igloos. Some people live in tents in the summer, even in Iqaluit. Other who come for work live in provided housing and make a significant amount of money.

Unemployment: Unemployment is estimated at 35%.

Animism

Hugh Lloyd, who works with CLAY (and most other white people in town), indicated he does not think the Inuit have retained the animistic roots as much as First Nation people. He said there are shamans in the community but most people don't know who they are and rarely use them. He explained that it may be shameful to be associated with the old ways. However, upon talking with an older Inuit man, a team member gathered the following information concerning animism:

Gruesome or unusual deaths cause restless spirits that live in certain areas. Locals will know where those places are and avoid them but if they move to a new area they don't know where those spirits live and have some fear of the spirits.

An Inuk has one word for an animal but the shaman has another, its spirit name. He uses this secret name to communicate with and have power over the animal and its spirit. Only the shaman knows

the spirit language of the animals. The team member asked what happens to an animal's spirit when it dies and he answered, "That's a tough one" and then went into a story about zoos and cruelty instead of answering the question.

Sometimes a person will develop a 'spirit song' to ward off evil spirits. No one else is allowed to sing the song except the person who created it. You 'catch' an animal, not 'kill' it. No one would ever say they killed an animal; the only things you kill are people. Inuit believe animals work together with the humans and share their spirits and bodies for the sustainment of the human race. No one would ever say, "I'm going to catch a seal today or I'm going to go to Igloolik today." You say, "I am going to try to..." because you don't know if the spirits will cooperate with you. When the Inuit heard a man had walked on the moon it wasn't significant to them, because they had already been there in their spirit.

Mythology

Kiliuk is a hero from Inuit Mythology. As told by the Inuit, his deeds were so great and so numerous that if you were to know even one quarter of what there is to know about him, the mere mention of his name would cause you to be ready for any sort of remarkable tale. Additionally, a statue of a "Qalupilik" (plural, "Qalupilluit) is housed at the local museum. This is one of many creatures who might be classified as the Inuit "Boogey Man". The icy wastelands of this countryside are, according to legend, populated by all manner of evil spirits who wish to do people harm, and who focus their attentions on those who live their lives counter to Inuit teachings, wisdom and values.

The Qalupilluit, specifically, are monsters that live by the sea, near the shore, and typically beneath the ice. Their feet and hands are webbed, like ducks. They have claws like birds and a large pouch is on their backs, built right into their skin. They have scaly, bumpy skin and smell like sulfur. Legend is that they claw their way through the ice and grab disobedient children who wander away from the group and onto the ice by themselves. The children are then put into their pouches and carried away forever. Sometimes, the qalupilik jump out of the water near the beach and grab children who are there alone. Their motives for doing this involve using the child for their own amusement, then eventually eating the child. The legend goes on to explain that when the sea becomes wavy or steam begins to rise from the surface, a qalupilik might be hiding there. The myth continues that when you hear the sound of cracking ice, or a knocking sound beneath the ice, you should run! They are coming for you!

The qalupilik is certainly not the only mythological creature with legends surrounding it. Another such creature is the qumalukaki. It consists of a smiling head with arms and legs attached. It is immensely strong, capable of lifting a walrus. The legend is that an individual must never laugh or even

smile at one of these creatures, or the individual will never be able to stop laughing ever again. Inuit mythology also tells of the Amautalik (plural, Amautalluit). Another “Boogeyman”, somewhat similar to the Qalupilik, the Amautalik is an earth spirit whose physical manifestation is that of an enormous, ugly, foul-smelling, incredibly strong, leather-skinned woman. They carry pouches on their backs made of walrus skin, or sometimes made of an amalgam of rotting driftwood and seaweed. The Amautalluit are more feared than any other earth spirit. They are very strong, very fast and absolutely silent, but also incredibly stupid. They hunt disobedient children who wander too far from their village or spend time unaccompanied by adults. It is said that very few survive amautilik attacks, but those who do usually manage to do so by calling on the wisdom or magic of the elders. This typically involves either outsmarting the Amautalik, following the advice of one’s parents, or using a magic trinket (such as an amulet) made by an Inuit shaman.

Sedna is a sea goddess who is the most feared of all spirits in Inuit mythology. She has power over all the animals of the polar regions and no one can catch anything without her permission. Legend is that she becomes frustrated whenever she gets her hair tangled and takes out her wrath on humans by not letting them catch anything. Legend continues that the village shamen then go to her in the spirit realm and comb the knots out of her hair to calm her down so that the hunters are able to hunt again.

Another monster of Inuit mythology is the Tuutarjuk, a spirit of string games. String games are played with a loop of string, placed between the fingers. With practice, this loop of string can be twisted and pulled so as to make all sorts of different shapes and figures. In a string game, one player makes a shape with his/her string and the other player must quickly copy the first player. If the second player can do it, then the second player makes a new string figure and the first player must match it. This goes back and forth until someone misses. The one who doesn’t miss is the winner.

Legend is that the Tuutarjuk can smell arrogance like a fragrant aroma, and loves to eat prideful children who think they are too good at string games. The Tuutarjuk corners the child when it is alone and forces the child to play a string game with it. If the child wins, the Tuutarjuk will leave him alone, but the child almost never wins. The Tuutarjuk will eat the child if he loses. The Tuutarjuk’s only weakness is that it is easily startled. If you see one of these, make lots of noise to frighten it away. But if you want to avoid seeing these altogether, don’t be arrogant!

A team member saw a statue at one of the city intersections that depicted a huge pair of hands that were carved out of stone and were grasping for a bird. It may very well be that this is a visual representation of the folk tale of the amautilik. At the climax of this story, a magic bird frees 3 children

from the amautalik's clutches and the amautalik then spends hours trying to catch the bird. This same team member met an Inuit man named "Sammy," who agreed to tell the team member some stories. He shared how he had heard that long ago the world was much colder than it is now and that a tribe of giants (the "Inukpasugjuit") lived at the same time as the Inuit. These giants were so large that they could hold a man in their hand. He shared how he did not know what happened to the giants. When asked about the Inuit idea of how the world came into being, he did not know that either. He said that he had never heard of anyone seeing an Amautalik, but he had read about them in books. He volunteered, however, that he believed the Qalupilik to still exist. He said that he met a woman by the dockside who said that she had seen one, passing under her nets while she was fishing. "Sammy" was the second person encountered by the team who still believed in the superstitions. It should be noted that another superstition causes them to believe that cats are evil omens. If we are to send missionaries to the Inuit, the missionaries should not own a cat.

In addition to the aforementioned mythological creatures, the following is a list of mythological creatures which were learned about after visiting the Department of Culture, Language, Elders, and Youth (or CLEY, for short):

Inukpasugjuit: The inukpasugjuit were the northern giants of old. The males were less common and less is known about them than females, because nearly everybody who has encountered one has been killed. Females are fond of capturing humans and bothering them for their own amusement. It is said that if you see one of these creatures, you should crouch down, do not move, and hope they do not see you.

Tuniit (or Tunirjuat): The tuniit is a type of person who lived in the north before the Inuit. They were peaceful and kept to themselves, if left alone. If they were provoked, they could prove to be extremely deadly opponents. They were as tall as a normal person, but unusually thick-bodied and incredibly strong. They spoke a language called "kutak" (baby talk). These people are thought to still exist. The legend teaches that if you talk with a tuniit, you should speak slowly, and do not use big words.

Mahaha the Tickler- This demon is humanoid in appearance. He is thin and sinewy, with skin that is blue in color and cold to the touch. He has white, piercing eyes and long, stringy hair. He runs around barefoot and almost naked, but the cold does not bother him. He has long, bony fingers and long, sharp nails. He is stronger than any human and so stealthy that the only way to detect his approach is by the uncontrollable giggling he emits as he approaches. The legend

teaches that Mahaha is easily fooled, so if you are cornered by him, you should ask if he will have one last drink with you from a nearby river. Then when he kneels down to drink, shove him in the water.

Kukilingiattiaq (or **Aggainaq**) - This is a giant, three-fingered claw hand that can reach out of any surface (wood, stone, earth, ice, water, snow, whatever) and grab children who are in the process of stealing something. It then holds them there until someone comes and catches them in the act. Although the hand looks evil, it is really only an arbiter of justice. No one need fear anything from this creature except getting caught (literally).

Tarriaksuit (the shadow people): These people live in a world like ours, but beyond our senses. They are almost never seen, but can sometimes be heard. When you hear the sound of footsteps, talking, or laughing, but see no one, the tarriaksuit are one possible explanation. When they are seen or their presence is sensed, they immediately disappear into the ground and vanish. Some Inuit have actually crossed over into the shadow world where the tarriaksuit live, but few have ever returned.

Ijirait: These demons are land spirits and elusive shape shifters. They can take the form of any arctic creature, including a human. Regardless of what form they take, they always have blood-red eyes, which is the only thing that gives them away in their various forms. Mirages surround them, so when a mountain or island on the horizon looks bigger or closer than it really is, an Ijirait might be near. In most stories, they are evil and malicious. They use their shape shifting ability to get close to their victims (usually lone travelers), then kill them. Some elders maintain that these spirits are actually widely misunderstood message-bearers. After encountering an Ijirait (if you survive), you are sure to experience memory loss, gradually forgetting that the experience ever took place. So if you encounter one, be sure to tell as many people as possible, before you forget.

While touring the visitor's center, a team member was able to learn the Inuit creation myth. According to legend, in the beginning, there was only Raven and the falling snowflakes. Raven sailed through the universe that stretched endlessly around him. Once, Raven caught some snowflakes on his wings. The snowflakes trickled down to his wingtip and made a little snowball. With a great sweep of his wing, Raven hurled the snowball through the air. Raven landed on the great snowball and called it earth. Once, Raven kicked away snow from the earth and saw red clay. He rolled the clay into little balls that became seeds. One seed grew into a plant that grew and jiggled until man came out. Raven plucked

some of his feathers and made man a parka. He made animals out of clay so that man would have food to eat.

Organized Religion

While one individual encountered by the team indicated that the Inuit find it funny for two churches to compete over adherents, there are several churches in Iqaluit doing that to varying degrees. The individual explained that some Inuit think it is funny that churches would fight over their souls. The town currently has a Roman Catholic Church, a Pentecostal Church, a Baha'i Church, a Seventh Day Adventist congregation (6 individuals), and an Anglican Church. At least one individual indicated that most of the participants in these churches are foreigners.

A team member visited the local Roman Catholic Church on multiple occasions. This seemed to be the only church in town with services available for French speaking residents. The priest was on vacation, but since the church was undergoing remodeling, the team member was able to look around the inside. The team member was able to gather a lot of information about their worship habits by simply looking around the sanctuary. Few, if any, signs of syncretism were observed. Instead, it looked like a typical Catholic Church. There were the Stations of the Cross, a statue of the blessed virgin, a crucifix and what appeared to be standard liturgies behind each pew. There was only one thing in this church that seemed unusual. Drawn on the front of the pulpit was a picture of a cup, with two people kneeling in prayer on either side of it. These people were wearing snowsuits. The team member did not take this to be evidence of pagan influence.

There is a Pentecostal church in Iqaluit that has been in the town for around twenty years. Unfortunately, the team was only able to attain limited information about it as the minister was away on vacation (at the same time as the Catholic Priest). There are Sunday and Wednesday services at the church. Beyond this, we were only able to discover what we heard in the form of rumors throughout the community. The men who meet and chat at the local Grind 'N Brew Coffee Shop say that this minister has been practicing in Nunavut for the past 12 years, and has performed zero baptisms, zero weddings, and only one funeral. When these men were asked why they thought this was, their enigmatic reply was, "Because he's a chicken." The owner of the coffee shop told the team that the minister at the Pentecostal church was a good friend of his and that he was a "good guy;" He said that the pastor wasn't "much of a theologian."

David and Pat are two leaders of the Baha'i Church in Iqaluit. They are two of the nine leaders of a total of 15-20 members of this church. Their faith has been undiluted by shamanism, or any other faith.

They say that the Inuit rejected Baha'i out of hand at first, but now accept the church as one of the many churches to be found in Iqaluit. There have been few converts, though. They have a service every Wednesday night and a healing prayer service every Wednesday evening.

It is the opinion of David and Pat that the elders now reject the old shamanistic religion in favor of Christianity. David says that hostility towards the forced government schooling in the past has not driven the Inuit away from Christ, as it has with the southern Canadian First-Nation peoples. The Baha'i threat here seems very small, and their denomination does not seem to be rapidly growing. But their leaders are extremely winsome, generous, kind and thoughtful people. Our team member noted that if not for the Holy Spirit, he might have been converted myself.

The community also has a Mormon Church that is run by Elder Bradley and Elder Hess. At the time of our research, their phone number was 979-1229. A team member also encountered a Seventh Day Adventist named Bill. Bill told me that there are two Seventh Day Adventist families in Iqaluit. Bill seemed uninterested in converting anyone else to his faith, and it didn't seem that others were interested in it, either. Bill invited the team member to his house to have dinner with his family and their friends. The group of 6 made up the entire population of Seventh Day Adventists in Iqaluit.

Bill's family and friends were some of the nicest people in the city. They respected the team member as a person and as a Baptist. They were very friendly and hospitable. They asked him to pray over the food before they ate, and they had group prayer before the team member left. They wished him and the whole group success, though they did not know that I was here for missionary purposes. The same team member encountered a woman named Anita, who is one of the 10 Jehovah's Witnesses in Iqaluit. The Jehovah's Witnesses represent a greater threat to a new church plant than the Seventh Day Adventists. Their numbers are small, but they are interested in spreading their faith. When Anita was asked whether she was a missionary, she said that one might say she was an untrained, informal missionary. The team was able to discover that she has had at least 1 convert, in the relatively short time that she has been in the community.

The same team member who met with the Seventh Day Adventists and the Jehovah's Witness also had an appointment to meet with James, the priest who manages Anglican affairs in Iqaluit. The team member was late, but the priest was even later. When the team member arrived, he encountered his secretary, who was locked out of the building. She did not have a key because the previous secretary was a thief and this made James unwilling to give a key to anyone else.

The secretary, Rebecca, was very talkative. She seemed unusually intelligent, but not particularly religious. She had a habit of laughing at the team member for reasons that were unclear. When James finally arrived an hour late, he seemed extremely distracted and his eyes had a far-away look. He looked like a man who had been chewed up by something and spit out. He seemed empty and utterly spent. Rebecca says that she, too, has noticed that he always has that look about him, but that she did not wish to pry into his personal life, so had not asked what was wrong.

James explained that there are six weekly Anglican services in the city, held in two different locations. Five of the services are held on Sunday, and one of them is on Tuesday evening. The Tuesday service is a prayer meeting. There are three services in one place on Sunday- one in English and two in Inuktitut. There are two services at the other location on Sunday- one in English and one in Inuktitut. James reported that the total attendance for all of these services at both locations is 500. James explained that the first Anglican Church in the Arctic was in the neighboring town of Apex. The first Anglican missionaries taught Christianity to the natives through songs and hymns. The elders learned hymns, many that were five or six verses long, and passed them on to the younger generation. Later, the Inuktitut New Testament was translated. The Anglican Church is almost finished translating the Inuktitut Old Testament.

James continued by explaining that there are approximately 6,000 adherents to the Anglican faith in Iqaluit. About five people are baptized every month. These baptisms include some adults, but consist almost exclusively of infants. The Anglicans here are what is considered “low church”. However, they are unusually conservative, as compared to other Anglicans. Also, according to James, they are very pious, and allow their religion to permeate every part of their lives. However, given that by the numbers James reported, 5,500 of the 6,000 alleged Anglicans do not attend church, making James’ claim of piety unlikely.

James told a story of how some Jehovah’s Witnesses once came to his house, trying to spread their faith. He invited them inside and did his best to show them their error. Based on his treatment of the team member, it seems likely that he was tactless in his interaction with the Jehovah’s Witnesses. They left in a huff. Later, he received a phone call from the prison. Some prisoners wanted to know if the Anglicans were the same thing as the Jehovah’s Witnesses. He explained that they were not, and that the Jehovah’s Witnesses were in error. James was later visited by the police. They said that the Jehovah’s Witnesses had been complaining that James was preaching against them in his church services. The police also explained that the Jehovah’s Witnesses were complaining that he had been interfering with

their attempts to witness at the local prison. James explained that he had done neither of these things, so the police left him alone. Upon later investigation, James learned that the police had no right to call on him for these alleged offenses. However, the situation does raise the question of potential persecution against those who may start a new mission.

The Anglican Church sponsors a food bank and thrift store on their church property, which is just about to open. The church is also in the process of rebuilding an igloo-shaped cathedral that burned down a number of years ago. James says this burning was the result of arson. The person responsible was arrested and spent 4 years in prison. The arsonist was a member of a satanic cult. This same man confessed to breaking and entering, which occurred a few days prior to the fire. While he was in the house, he drew pentagrams and other satanic symbols on the walls.

When asked whether there were other Satanists in the community, James indicated there certainly were. He said he had often been called upon to sprinkle holy water and drive out evil spirits from people's homes. He explained that in every such house, a devil-worshipper was found to be a former resident. James says that some of the people of his church experience dreams and visions, during which evil spirits tempt them. They also have visions during which they encounter guardian angels. James approves of this latter type of experience, and frowned on the team member for not doing the same. At last, the team member explained who he was and why he was in the town. This was a mistake. Right away, it was apparent that there was a problem.

James responded to the recognition of our team's research and ministry purposes, "Why do you want to send missionaries up here?" he asked. "Everyone here is already a Christian!" What followed was a 45-minute open mockery of everything related to the Baptist faith. It was full of insults and accusations, and included the phrases, "without faith," "spiritually blind," "those who have the Spirit can see through it" (in reference to the doctrine of the atonement), "arrogance", "pride", and that Baptists rely too heavily on the Bible.

He asked the team member if he believed that the Anglicans were not saved. Not knowing exactly what the Anglicans believed, the team member responded by giving a very basic explanation of what one must do to be saved. He responded by mocking the team member's belief in the atonement. Towards the end of our conversation, the team member asked him what he believed to be necessary for salvation. He said he did not know. When pressed as to what he would say if asked, "What must I do to be saved?" He said he would respond to come to his 9:45 Sunday service, watch carefully, and ask questions about anything that was not understood.

James is the man in charge of the largest religious group in this city. However, he gives off every appearance of being an unbeliever. The team member who met with him believes him to be an enthusiastic enemy of anything hoped to be accomplished in Iqaluit. His approval of visions involving “guardian angels” is very suspicious. The team member with whom he met came away from the meeting believing that the devil may be using him to encourage his congregation to have dealings with demonic beings in disguise. Not only does he claim to drive out evil spirits from houses where devil worshippers have once lived, he also claims to perform this action in houses where Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, and even Baptists have witnessed to the residents. In short, it seems that James has, both literally and figuratively, taken on the role of the shaman to the community. Whether he knows it or not, it seems he is the devil’s tool. The good news is that James will be moving away from the area soon and he will be replaced, hopefully with a Christian.

It should be noted that other team members received feedback on the Anglican Church from two other individuals. Stephen at the visitor’s center did not offer any information beyond what James reported, but did seem to indicate fondness toward the church. Additionally, Penina, an Inuit woman indicated she attends the Anglican Church regularly, but that no one else in her family wants to go. She attends the Inuktitut service and indicated it was mostly older people who go to the church. She said they pray, sing, read psalms, and shake hands. It seemed that she most goes out of respect and habit.

Receptiveness & Key Contacts

While we were not in Iqaluit with the sole purpose of sharing the gospel with as many people as possible, some markers delineating the receptivity of the gospel among the Inuit were identified. After discovering that the team consisted of Baptist seminary students who were studying the city, one man in the coffee shop immediately took an offensive posture. He told the team that the Bible could not be trusted because it had been translated from the original language to another language and another language to the point that the Bible did not say what it originally was meant to say. He gave the team a short lesson on translation, explaining that one word in one language may mean something completely different in another language. He did allow the team to respond to his objections and walked out the door before we could even attempt to answer his objections. The other men who were sitting around hearing this conversation were also non-believers. However, they listened as a team member explained that the offended man’s objections were not good evidence that the Bible was untrustworthy.

We were able to share the gospel with one Inuk man named Atsaina. He was a man who the team had encountered on several occasions as we walked around in the city. We invited him to have coffee in

one of the local shops and without any prompting he told us that when he dies he “will go the heaven because [his] name is Levi.” He also told us that his grandfather had passed on to him the ability to read minds. When we started to share the gospel with him he seemed open and listened attentively but was very confused about Scripture. He said that he knew that “Jesus was our Savior,” that “He saves us from our sins,” and that “God is white.” He insisted that he knew that God was white, perhaps he thought because we were Anglo we thought that God is white. We explained to him that God does not have a skin color and that Jesus was God the Son and while he was here on earth he more than likely had darker skin closer to the shade of the Inuit people. We then made a clear presentation of the gospel and Atsiana answered the questions that we asked him. We gave him a tract and he told us that he would think about the things that we told him and that he would read his Bible and the tract that we gave him. He told us that he had a Bible in his home and that he reads it about once every six months.

A team member also noted that in the store Arctic Ventures, there were copies of the New Testament and Psalms in Inuktitut. There was also a DVD of “The Life of Jesus” in Inuktitut. From the small amount of time we had to observe the people, it seems that the Anglo people of Iqaluit have more of a postmodern worldview toward the gospel and the Inuit people have a confused, syncretized view. This reinforces the need for two separate missions efforts, at least initially, with one among the Inuit and one among the Anglo.

In a place called the “Fantasy Palace Coffee Bar, Tanning Salon and Flower Shop,” a team member met the establishment’s operator, Christine. She is a white woman, 60 years old, Welsh by birth, and Canadian by citizenship. She moved to Nunavut about 1 year ago. The company that owns the Fantasy Palace, through the use of tremendous incentives, brought her to Iqaluit. Her housing and food is paid for, the company pays \$30 toward her phone bill each month, and the government gives her a tax credit of \$8 a day simply for existing in Nunavut. All of these benefits are apart from her salary. Christine is a possible gateway person, as she is clearly very well known and very well loved. Her influence seems to be most felt among white college students, but older people, as well as some of the Inuit also love her. The team member who visited with Christine was very encouraged by the interaction. She was very kind and showed kindness and benevolence to many persons. The team member noted that Christine may be a “person of peace,” as is sometimes mentioned in church planting. After being told what the team’s mission was, she reacted approvingly, and even directed the team member to someone who she thought could help. This person was Helen, a Lutheran who worked in the adjacent flower shop. Helen holds a

Bible study with her friends every Tuesday night. She explained that she attends the Pentecostal church for its music and the Anglican Church for its preaching.

When Christine and the team member discussed politics, the topic of partial-birth abortion arose. After hearing an explanation of what a partial-birth abortion was, Christine recoiled in horror and stifled a tear. When the team member left her a generous tip, she was very displeased and returned three-fourths of it. At one point, the team member and Christine passed a homeless man on the street. She gave him 2 dollars for a cup of coffee and went on to explain that she only gave money to a few select homeless people. She shared how some will get 2 dollars from 15 different people, and then use the resulting 30 dollars to buy mahoochee (marijuana). Ultimately, Christine proved to be generous, yet wise. Christine was baptized in the Anglican Church, but did not believe James' claims of six thousand Anglicans in the area or that everyone is a Christian. She believes there to be a need for missions work here. Though baptized in the Anglican Church, Christine sheepishly admitted that she has not attended church for some time.

As has previously been mentioned, at the Grind 'N Brew coffee shop, the team met the owner, Brian. Brian is a gateway person. He is in business around the year and has been since 2001. He is white, and his wife who is the mayor, is Inuit. His coffee shop is a community center for gossiping and hanging out. The team member also met a man in a small café who was coach of the Iqaluit Judo society. He said that his Judo society had more than 80 members, and that 2 of them were nationally ranked. These two finished second and third in the Canadian Judo National Tournament, which was recently held.

Church Planting Recommendations

The Inuit people are very guarded with newcomers. This is probably due to the lifestyle to which they are being accustomed. During our five days with the Inuit people there were very few casual conversations. They seem to be focused on their daily routine and not very interested in talking with strangers on the street. The introduction of the large number of Canadian nationals into the city of Iqaluit has caused a significant amount of racial tension between the two groups and is equally prevalent from both sides. One person in the community indicated he had to fight every other day in school as a result of these tensions, so it is very common and ongoing.

After concluding our research time in Iqaluit, the team recommends that two separate churches be planted. Given the cultural distinctions, the team feels it is essential to not initially require that the Inuit and Anglo attend the same congregation. Additionally, the team recommends the churches initially be started in homes. As individuals become believers, the missionary can then identify and train a potential

leader for each group. It should be the ultimate goal to combine the two works into one. However, this may in reality never occur. The best possible scenario may be for the two churches to function as sister congregations. It should be noted that both groups are very secularized and have a lot of animosity toward organized religion. Any true work in this area is going to be very long in materializing and the man who undertakes it should be prepared for that event. It should also be noted that in order to reach the Inuit, the individual reaching them really must speak their language.

Key Contacts

Brian- Anglo owner of the coffee shop The Grind 'N Brew, married to the mayor who is an Inuk

Christine- Anglo Manager of Fantasy Palace Coffee Bar, Tanning Salon and Flower Shop

Kenny- Anglo Government worker and friend of Brian who grew up with the Inuit

Ed- Minister of Education for Nunavut

Brian- Curator of the local museum

Stephen- Employee at the Visitor Center

James- Priest of the Anglican Church

Lazarus-an Inuk, older gentleman

Siobhan Moss-Anglo- Research officer in the legislative assembly

Alex-a First Nations man of the Cree tribe, who is the head of the health department

Penina-An older Inuk lady

Bill- Seventh Day Adventist who is very helpful and kind