

Air Wars: Radio Regulation, Sectarianism and Religious Broadcasting in Canada, 1922-1938

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In the 1920s, radio was the rage in Canada. Whether it was a homemade receiving set made out of batteries and wire or a deluxe tube and battery set purchased from the local hardware store, each year tens of thousands of Canadians paid their dollar license fee and added their names to the growing list of “listeners-in.” When they tuned in, Canadians heard the familiar sounds of their own world and the exotic sounds from places that they may have only known on a map: the screaming rifts of jazz, live from a club in Chicago, the thud of leather on skin from a prize fight in New York, soothing chamber music from a ballroom in Montreal, horse racing from Toronto, or the farm report from a 100 watt station in Saskatoon. Not to be left behind in the rush to own the new technology, Canadian religious groups quickly alighted to the fact that the wireless provided a new pulpit for the propagation of the Word and a new theatre for the masses to participate vicariously in divine services, from the comfort of their homes. Just as print had transformed the face of Christianity four hundred years before, so might the radio usher in a new era of evangelization.

In his recent book on morality, culture, and broadcasting, Robert Fortner has argued that while the Canadian churches regarded radio as “a means to continue a significant cultural presence in smaller towns and cities,”¹ that in the final analysis, “the role of the church as a champion of moral positions in the development of Canadian radio was largely irrelevant.” He adds that, “there was no grand expectation of the medium”

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and “no philosophers in Canada concerned enough to articulate a set of moral values it might fulfill.”² He concludes that the church “was merely another interest group, little different from labour unions, women’s organizations, or farmer’s co-operatives.”³ Fortner’s assumption underlying his analysis is that, in Canada, churches lacked effectiveness in asserting their power over the new medium because there were no constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech or the freedom of the press, and the central government remained cold to a religious presence on the publicly owned radio network.⁴ Without such guarantees embedded in the political and legal culture, churches appeared to be in a more tenuous position in securing airtime in Canada, notably on the CBC.

Fortner’s case, though tempting at first glance, perhaps underestimates the manner in which Canada’s churches negotiated their share of the “air” in the early days of privately-owned radio and the advent of public radio. While there is little doubt that denominational relations in Canadian history could be characterized, at times, by tension, rhetorical jousting, open discrimination, and even violence, the churches also affected significant compromises with one another and the state on such issues as denominational schools, the military chaplaincy, pageantry and processions in the public square, social services, and the regulation of public morality. In the early days of radio, the churches had every opportunity to continue the patterns of past tensions, but in the end affected compromises that would make an important contribution to the presence and peaceful coexistence of religious contributors in Canada’s public broadcast system. Born out of the controversy sparked by the Reverend Morris Zeidman and Father Charles Lanphier in Toronto, in the 1930s, the CBC would pour tremendous energy into its religious department, create regulations specific to religion on the air, and establish a national advisory body, that would effectively assist the Corporation regulate religious programming, while taking the initiative to create new religious programs to be broadcast free of commercials, for the benefit of all Canadians. Such privilege offered to religious groups by the “public broadcaster” provides a significant challenge to the notion that churches were simply just one of many interest groups, appealing to the CBC for a voice on the national airwaves.

Before launching into an analysis of the relationship between radio and the churches in Canada, it is important to establish the uniqueness of Canadian broadcasting in the English-speaking world. From the earliest days of radio Canada struggled between two models of broadcasting. In Britain, the government, through the agencies of the Post Office and the

British Broadcasting Corporation, took control over radio, its regulation, its financing, and its programming. In contrast, in the United States, radio evolved like any other commodity in a free market place; those with means and know how purchased the available technology and began broadcasting after receiving a license from the federal government. Except for the infrequent interference of the federal regulator, the FCC, American AM radio became a popular and highly competitive example of survival of the fittest on the airwaves. In time, two large privately owned networks – NBC and CBS – emerged and dominated broadcasting in the USA. Canadians developed a hybrid between the American and British practices. Between 1922 and 1932, Canada experienced a free market in radio, with licensing and regulation under the authority of the Federal Department of Marine and Fisheries. Only two significant networks emerged, one owned by CN Railways and the other by the CPR, which provided programming exclusive to passengers while passing through cities where their affiliates operated. In the 1930s, the federal government created the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, which assumed the CN network stations, and provided publicly owned commercial-free broadcasting along side the private stations. The CRBC acted as both a provider of programming and as the regulator of all radio, both public and private. This unique “Canadian way” of delivering radio services was critical to the development of religious broadcasting.⁵ While religious programming provided a catalyst for the creation of the CRBC, and its successor the CBC, in 1936, the presence of the government regulator and programmer ensured that religious groups in Canada might share a level playing field and be forced to work co-operatively, civilly, and responsibly, while they provided a diverse range of religious programmes to Canadians who chose to “listen in.” In their responses to the air wars generated by Morris Zeidman and Charles Lanphier, in Toronto, from 1935 to 1938, the CBC created Canada’s first significant radio regulation on religious broadcasts and a unique ecumenical steering committee that would be a force in the development of Canadian radio-television religious programming.

From the time it was first developed, wireless radio transmission became an electronic pulpit for inspirational programming and for the use of churches. As early as 1906, when inventor Reginald Fessenden sent the first voice radio broadcast from Brant Rock, Massachusetts, to the ships of the United Fruit Company, it is alleged that his selections were primarily Christmas hymns, including his own violin rendition of “O’ Holy Night.”⁶ When commercial radio licenses were first issued by the

Canadian Department of Marine and Fisheries, in 1922-1923, religious programming began to appear in a variety of forms. In the 1920s, when Canadian radio was in private hands, churches were offered free time broadcasts of their religious services, live from their places of worship. The precedent was set in February 1923, when CKCK in Regina, set up the first remote Sunday broadcast from Carmichael Presbyterian Church.⁷

Other churches co-operated with local radio stations, offering their facilities for concerts, organ recitals, choral performances, and educational lectures.⁸ Several churches were eager to lend their ministers and priests to local stations for the broadcasts of sermons, usually on Sunday evenings, with some of the most noted preachers including Protestant William Aberhart on CFCN Calgary, Anglican Canon JE Ward in Toronto, and Father FR Wood in Winnipeg. Several denominations went so far as to build their own stations and purchase their own broadcast licenses including, the First Congregational and later United Church in Vancouver (CKFC),⁹ the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Edmonton (CHMA),¹⁰ and the Wesleyans in St. John's (VOWR).¹¹ Phantom licenses, which allowed independent stations to use the facilities of another station for broadcasting, were issued to St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto (CKSM), Jarvis Street Baptist Church Toronto (CJBC),¹² and the International Bible Students Association (Jehovah's Witnesses), who operated stations in Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Toronto. These phantom licenses were designed specifically for religious and non-commercial broadcaster and, in the case of churches, were intended for use only on Sundays.¹³ If Canadians preferred, however, and many did, they could listen in to broadcasts from American stations, whose strong signal strength often bombarded the Canadian airwaves at night. Canadians had their choice of numerous Protestant preachers or the controversial broadcasts of Father Charles Coughlin, who transmitted his political and social talks from WJR, a CBS affiliate in Detroit.¹⁴

Although sacred music, church services, devotional hours, and Sunday evening preaching from all denominations became common fare on Canadian radio in the 1920s, there was little scandal, controversy, or complaint about broadcasts to the Department of Marine and Fisheries, Radio Division, the regulator of the airwaves in Canada. In 1927, this relative calm was shattered when there was significant public protest about broadcasts made by the stations owned by the IBSA, or Jehovah's Witnesses. The details of this controversy have been recounted elsewhere and will not be presented at length here (although it may be time for a

thorough re-examination of the facts of the case).¹⁵ Suffice it to say that, while in Toronto for an ISBA convention in 1927, Judge Joseph F. Rutherford, the head of the Witnesses, made derogatory remarks about the Catholic and mainstream Protestant churches during a speech to his followers; the speech was covered live on local radio.¹⁶ Many members of the listening public, regardless of denomination, were unimpressed. Nor were listeners in Saskatchewan enamoured with the Witnesses when IBSA station CHUC allowed J.J. Maloney, Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan to make speeches over their frequency. Similarly, some listeners in Toronto were outraged when local phantom ISBA station, CKCX, cut into the shared CFRB 580 frequency just as the Reverend William A. Cameron, one of Toronto's most gifted and popular Baptist preachers, was reaching the climax of his Sunday night sermon from Loews Theatre.¹⁷ By 1928, letters of criticism of the IBSA stations from Vancouver, Toronto, Saskatoon, and Edmonton led to Fisheries Minister, P.J. Arthur Cardin, to refuse license renewal to all the Witness' stations;¹⁸ other religious stations were permitted to remain on the air.

While Cardin was within his rights to refuse arbitrarily the renewals under the terms of the regulations for radio and in his capacity as Minister of Marine and Fisheries, his decision did not sit well with either opposition politicians or some clergy.¹⁹ In the rather heated debate that took place in the House of Commons, 31 May to 1 June 1928, most speakers expressed no sympathy for the views of the Jehovah's Witnesses, but they were deeply troubled that the religious views of one group would be "censored" by the government, while other groups, seemingly to in the Minister of Marine's favour, were untouched. In a very well articulated address to the House of Commons, J.S. Woodsworth, appeared to speak for many of his colleagues in the House when he said:

Now I am not a member of the Bible Student's Association. It does seem to me that a great deal of their theology is particularly grotesque. But I should like to ask, when did we appoint a minister of this government as censor of religious opinions? All down through history religious bodies have criticized other religious bodies. I think the great Roman Catholic church has sometimes spoken very harshly concerning heretics; I think the Anglican church in its Athanasian Creed utters some very strong things against those who do not believe in that creed. I think the Westminster Confession contains some very strong words against people who do not accept that particular creed; and I have heard evangelists telling people generally where they will

go unless they believe the doctrines being preached to them. But when did we say that any of these bodies were to be silenced because other citizens did not agree with them? It is stated that the Bible Students condemn other religious bodies. Of course that is true of nearly all religious bodies. Why should we penalize the Bible Students simply because they follow in the footsteps of other bodies? . . . If Bible Students are to be put out of business because they condemn alike Catholics and Protestants, I do not see why the *Sentinel* and *The Catholic Register* should not be suppressed.²⁰

Woodsworth and his colleagues appeared to see radio in the same light as the existing print media, where ideas were balanced and censorship was generally unnecessary. What appeared not to be mentioned was that this new technology was not completely voluntary; depending on the strength of signal, number of competing broadcasters in a region, and the quality of radio receiving sets themselves, stations like the IBSA ones might be the only ones received in an area, and there were no alternatives in a given timeslot. In print media, where available, if the consumer rejected the ideas offered by one newspaper, there were many others readily available. Nevertheless, the politicians, supported by letters and petitions from the public, seemed to wish for a more level playing field when it came to the ideas and controversy generated by religion on the radio.²¹

The House of Commons came to no particular resolution to the virtual censorship of the Witnesses other than to support Cardin's calling of a Royal Commission to investigate all of Canadian Radio. Cardin hoped that this commission could recommend procedures and regulations regarding more controversial broadcasting and the manner in which religion would be handled on the nation's airwaves. Although, it was religious controversy that had sparked the creation of the Aird Commission, in 1928, the finished report, one year later, described the relationship between broadcasting and religion in only a general way. The commissioners emphasized the importance of Canadian content on Canadian radio, while envisioning radio as a potential agent for national unity. They recommended the creation of a national publicly-funded network akin to that of the BBC.²² When it was time to discuss religion they simply recommended that:

The representative bodies . . . advise upon the question of programs . . . to deal with religious services, and it would be for them to decide

whatever might be deemed expedient in this respect. We would emphasize, however, the importance of applying some regulations which would prohibit statements of a controversial nature and debar a speaker making an attack upon the leaders or doctrine of another religion.²³

Despite this aspiration that the nation's religious groups would work in tandem with a new publicly-owned radio network, there was no such clause in the legislation that created the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, in 1932, nor its successor the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in 1936. Only Section 90 of the CRBC's Broadcast "Rules and Regulations" (1933) prohibited "defamatory statements with regards to individuals or institutions," which presumably included religion.²⁴ This lacuna had implications for both the new public network and the private stations, which were subject to the regulatory and licensing decisions of the CRBC and, later, the CBC. When Judge Rutherford of the Jehovah's Witnesses reappeared on several private stations, he could only be controlled by the Commission's provision that his scripts were to be vetted in advance by the CBRC.²⁵ When the Witnesses refused to submit to this censorship, they removed themselves from the Canadian airwaves, although it was made clear that the question of controversial religious radio had not been answered by the changes effected by the government from 1929 to 1933. Ironically, if Canadians wanted to continue to hear Rutherford, they needed only tune in to the available American stations carrying his sermons, uncensored.

The blind spot in Canadian radio regulations with regard to religion would soon be exposed, in 1936, shortly after the creation of the CBC. The new Board of Governors and the CBC's General Manager, Major Gladstone Murray, could not ignore the issue when the tempest emerged in southern Ontario, Canada's largest radio market, where the majority of Canada's nearly 800,000 radio sets were licensed.²⁶ The eye of the storm was Toronto, where there were three licensed private commercial stations (CFRB, CKNC, CKCL), one CBC-owned station (CRCT, later CBL), and the possibility of receiving signals from numerous American stations. Most religious groups had a champion on the air: Canon J.E. Ward for the Anglicans, T.T. Shields and W.E. Cameron for the Baptists, Morris Zeidman for the Presbyterians, Father Charles Lanphier for Roman Catholics, and Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath of Holy Blossom Temple, for the Reformed Jews. Morris Zeidman, a convert from Judaism, was a graduate of Knox College, founder of the Scott Mission, member of the Presbyte-

rian Mission Board, Treasurer of the Protestant Alliance of Ontario, and Deputy Grand Chaplain of the Loyal Orange Lodge of Canada West. His program, "The Protestant Study Hour," was heard every Sunday evening on CFRB, one of Toronto's most powerful transmitters. In 1935, Zeidman claimed (with some exaggeration) that his program regularly could claim an audience of 250,000 listeners, including thousands of Orangemen.²⁷ His arch-nemesis was Charles Lanphier, a thirty-five year old diocesan priest who had been broadcasting on radio for nearly a decade, and had already been fired from the Toronto Star station, CFCA, in 1926 for making controversial remarks. Lanphier first broadcast his "Catholic Hour," on phantom station CKSM and then on the CBC-owned CRCT (later CBL). The program, sponsored by the Radio League of St. Michael's, was transmitted live from St. Michael's Cathedral, and consisted of a broadcast of Sunday Mass followed by a weekly news and review program.²⁸ At its height in the late 1930s, it has been estimated that Lanphier drew between 400,000 and 800,000 listeners of the Trans-Canada CBC Network.²⁹ Together, he and Zeidman would create sufficient stir to force the CBC to come to grips with the religious broadcast policy and programming.

The first round of the Lanphier-Zeidman affair took place in 1936-1937 against the backdrop of the Ontario Government's concessions to share corporation tax revenues with Catholic separate schools. Under the plan, Catholic schools, which historically had little or no access to corporate and business tax revenue for school, would now share these revenues with public schools, based on a formula worked out by the Ministry of Education.³⁰ This "special privilege" for Catholics was new grist for Zeidman's mill, which had already been turning out criticism of the Catholic Church and support for government suppression of the Church in Mexico.³¹ At that time, CFRB had threatened to suspend his broadcasting privileges because of the controversial tone and content of some of his programs; such provocations only produced acrimonious counter attacks from the local Orange Lodges, who blamed Catholic lobbyists.³² In retaliation to CFRB's threats, Zeidman appealed to have equal air time with Lanphier of the publicly-owned CRCT, claiming that it was inappropriate that a "Roman Catholic is allowed to spread propaganda and sometimes in insulting terms . . . and a Jew representing his faith, is allowed to emanate his propaganda," but a Protestant, who is part of the majority in Toronto and Ontario cannot speak on the public broadcaster.³³ In response, the chairman of the CRBC had told him that Protestants were already well taken care of on CRCT, with its broadcasts of the York Bible

Class, and the “Vesper Hour,” conducted by Canon Henry D Martin from Winnipeg.³⁴ His rejection at the hands of the government station, made Zeidman even more determined as he continued broadcasts on both CFRB and eventually at rival CKCL.

In 1936, Zeidman weighed in heavily against the extension of business tax to Catholic schools, and when he claimed that there had been Catholic pressure to force him off the air, he engineered the creation of the Protestant Radio League, to ensure that he had both a lobby group and source of revenue for his program.³⁵ The controversy swirling about Zeidman’s broadcasts became more electric in November and December, 1936, when a by-election in East Hastings, near Belleville, Ontario, proved to be a testing ground for only one issue: corporate tax support for Catholic separate schools. Zeidman was primed and ready to denounce the Catholic Church, separate school privileges, and the Liberal government in the period leading up to the election.³⁶ Gladstone Murray, the recently appointed General Manager of the CBC, was deluged with mail. Catholic letter writers denounced Zeidman for his “venomous way against Catholics” while Protestant correspondents upheld him as a champion of free speech and promoter of a true Protestant biblical message.³⁷ Although CFRB had decided to request Zeidman’s scripts in advance of broadcasts, as had Murray at the CBC, on 7 December 1936, CFRB threatened to pull Zeidman from the air, citing Regulation 90, prohibiting abusive language towards institutions and individuals, and for his overtly political broadcast the previous week.³⁸ Zeidman was incensed that Protestants stood by as Catholics, whom he felt had become unrepentant supporters of fascism and its leaders – Mussolini, Franco, and Hitler – were clearly a menace to Canada, both theologically and politically.

For the CBC, Zeidman’s comments constituted unacceptable behaviour on the air. In the midst of the controversy, Murray announced that he intended to “Stop the Air War on Religion” in Canada. In an effort to ensure that “sermons and religious talks” conformed to constructive and positive expositions of doctrine and not include attacks on the religious beliefs of others,³⁹ Murray helped to create radio regulation specific to religious broadcasting. On 23 December 1936, the CBC revealed Regulation 7c, which simply stated that no broadcast may contain “abusive comment on race, religion, or creed.”⁴⁰ The regulation would take effect immediately and would be the measure by which Zeidman and others would have their scripts examined, and if not in conformity, banned from the air. The CBC was quick to indicate that there was no intent in the

regulation to dictate or censor the religious content of broadcasts, other than to prevent abuse. Regulation 7c would continue to serve as a yardstick of decency for religious broadcasts, surviving decades of regulation revision for both radio and television.⁴¹ The regulation had been inspired by the on-air comments of Zeidman and, to a lesser extent, Lanphier.

In a month, the threat to act upon Regulation 7c became a reality, as a result of two of Zeidman's programs, of which Murray commented that he did not think "broadcasts of this nature, be permitted."⁴² The final straw involved a program by Zeidman on Christ as mediator, when he said: "In heathen religions, there are found hierarchies of priests, witch-doctors and magicians who act as intermediaries between the people and their deity," which constituted a thinly veiled denigration of the Catholic ministerial priesthood.⁴³ A second controversial broadcast had been scheduled for the following week, which included condemnation of Catholic views towards birth control and an indictment of Catholic propagandizing the world through its missions: "There is no other sect or denomination," claimed Zeidman, "that contracts so much time on the radio as the Church of Rome."⁴⁴ He chided Protestants for being too passive and timid in their use of the new media, and he urged them to be less "lukewarm" and less "broadminded" in their approach to the world. According to Zeidman, Protestants had lost the martyr's zeal of such models as Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, and Huss, all of whom were prepared to die for the faith. Zeidman was taken off the air until he conformed to the new regulation. The CBC action prompted a heated outcry from Ontario Orangemen and caused Zeidman to issue a flurry of telegrams to Prime Minister MacKenzie King and others.

Although Lanphier had escaped formal censure, his Sunday broadcasts on CRCT had not escaped the notice of the federal government's watchdogs of broadcasting. He used his broadcasts, he claimed, to defend himself and the Church against Zeidman's attacks, which proved only supplementary to his advocacy for separate Catholic schools and his castigation of Canadians, generally, for being too soft on communism. Like his nemesis Zeidman, Lanphier recognized the radio as a powerful agent of evangelization:

God then gave mankind the printing press, and later steam; then electricity; then the telephone; then wireless; now the radio; and each in turn has been used for the extension of the Kingdom. But it does

positively appear that the greatest of them all is the last, the radio . . . the living voice is far more potential and effective by far than the printed stereotype. The radio is undoubtedly the weapon of the future. In fact we are not exaggerating when we say it is the greatest weapon today. The pen may be and is mightier than the sword; but today we must add a new slogan to take the place of the old. It is "the radio is mightier than the pen."⁴⁵

Lanphier had not lost sight of these comments over the ten years he had spent in broadcasting, with all the energy and adventurousness that his youthfulness supplied him. He had escaped his first major encounter with Zeidman without reprimand from the regulator. In late 1937 and early 1938, however, Regulation 7c would be applied more broadly, and he would not be so fortunate.

In mid-1937, the air wars in southern Ontario temporarily subsided. Zeidman, still smarting from his temporary prohibition earlier in the year, ceased his association with CFRB, and signed on with CKCL, a private station owned by Gooderham and Worts distillery and one, Zeidman claimed, had a stronger signal and wider audience. Harry Sedgewick, Zeidman's former station manager at CFRB, could comment privately to the CBC that he was finally rid of his "headache."⁴⁶ As for Lanphier, he continuously tried to distance himself from Zeidman, particularly when the two were compared in unfavourable terms by the press or by politicians. In April, for instance, during the course of a debate in the House of Commons, C.D. Howe, the Minister of Transportation, and the Privy Councillor ultimately responsible for radio broadcasting in Canada, compared Lanphier and Zeidman as examples of how the biggest problems and challenges created in Canadian radio were those that came as the result of religion.⁴⁷ For his part Lanphier publicly denounced the association with Zeidman, claiming that he was merely responding to the defamation of the Church by non-Catholic commentators.

Ironically it was Zeidman who would mount a similar defensive argument in the autumn, when the air wars broke out again. In October, Lanphier used the second portion of his CBC "The Catholic Hour," in which he related the news of the world from a Catholic perspective, in polemical fashion not heard previously in his broadcasts. Citing the reports of two British foreign correspondents, Lanphier took aim at what he claimed was the bias and misinformation inherent in the Canadian media when reporting on events in the Spanish Civil War, and insinuating it was the communists and their sympathizers in Canada who lay at the heart of

the manipulation of the facts:

Never in the history of journalism of this 20th century, the great war included, have the reading public been the victims of so much outright propaganda, so much falsehood, so much complete distortion and so much suppression of truth and the facts as they have regarding this Spanish conflict.⁴⁸

His questioning of what he considered to be a media bias in favour of the Loyalists flew in the face of the overwhelming sympathy of North Americans to the Spanish Government's struggle against Franco's Nationalist insurrectionists. While Lanphier appeared out of step with the majority of Canadians in his sympathies with Franco and his enmity of the Communists, who backed the Loyalists, he was in keeping with comments made by other radio priests at that time: C.J. Foran in Edmonton, Charles Coughlin in Detroit, and Monsignor Fulton Sheen in New York. All of these commentators brought to the air their fear of communism, its sympathizers within the political cultures of Canada and the United States, and the potential destructive effect communism would have on churches and religious life, if the persecution of the Church in Spain was any evidence.⁴⁹

By November Toronto's airwaves experienced full scale warfare between Lanphier and his highly politicized newscasts, on the one side, and Zeidman with his anti-Catholic comments and his proclamations that Catholic leaders were in collaboration with the world's fascists, on the other. Meanwhile, Gladstone Murray, General Manager at the CBC, requested transcripts from each of the offenders, in order to monitor their broadcasts in the light of Regulation 7c, the "child" of the first air war. When each minister proved too incendiary, the CBC banned both from the air.⁵⁰ This now created a new assault – petitions and letters of protest to the CBC from loyal Catholic and Protestant listeners, each deriding the other's champion, while defending their own.⁵¹ Typically, the pro-Zeidman faction was led by the Loyal Orange Lodge, the Ladies Orange Benevolent Association, the *Toronto Telegram*, the Social Service Council, and individual Presbyterian parishes in southern Ontario.⁵² In general, these groups and individuals decried the government's censorship of what they held to be Christian truths, the defence against the propagandizing by the "papist" Lanphier, and the alleged Catholic pressure on the CBC to suppress free speech.⁵³ By contrast, the pro-Lanphier faction included the Holy Name Society Union, the Catholic Women's League, the *Catholic*

Register, the Canadian Convent Alumni, St. Jerome's College, parishes from across the Diocese of Hamilton and *Saturday Night* magazine.⁵⁴ The latter, a secular publication based in Toronto, but with a national distribution, supported the Catholic contention that Lanphier and Zeidman could not be compared either in terms of the content of their broadcasts or the tone and intent of their programs:

The case of the Rev. Morris Zeidman, who was put off the air at the same time as Father Lanphier, does not excite us at all, for our limited acquaintance with his broadcasts has suggested that they were often calculated not only to arouse violent disagreement but to go much further—to offend the deeply held religious feelings of large numbers of those within reach of his airwaves. This quality of offending legitimate susceptibilities we have not found in Father Lanphier's broadcasts, and we do not think that he can be charged with it.⁵⁵

The view of *Saturday Night's* editor seemed to reflect the attitudes of CBC executives, who conceded that the remarks of each radio personality were different, but peace on the air could only be preserved with the enforcement of Regulation 7c with regards to Zeidman, and the de-politicization of Lanphier's "News and Reviews in Religion."⁵⁶

As the petitions and letters of protest poured into the CBC's head offices in Toronto in November and December 1937, Gladstone Murray and CBC Chairman Leonard Brockington attempted to reach a compromise acceptable to all parties.⁵⁷ Both Zeidman and Lanphier had the opportunity to meet with the CBC Board Chair and General Manager in Toronto in late November to state their cases in defence of their actions and hear the CBC's counterproposals.⁵⁸ When these meetings failed to resolve the issue of controversial broadcasts, the CBC contacted the authorities to which each man would report in each church. With Lanphier this proved to be relatively easy, with Brockington seeking to have Archbishop James C. McGuigan function as a safeguard against any more "on air" transgressions by his priest. For his part, McGuigan agreed to supervise the broadcasts carefully and vet the scripts of the "Catholic Hour" in advance of each broadcast, which included making certain that no political statements were made about communism or fascism with the context of a religious broadcast.⁵⁹ With Lanphier subject to the scrutiny and authority of his bishop, the Catholic part of the crisis appeared solved. Zeidman's pacification was much more difficult to obtain. His broadcasts were made independently of any official structures within the Presbyterian

Church. When Murray asked the Presbyterian Mission Board, of which Zeidman was a member, to supervise the minister's broadcasts, it refused on grounds that Zeidman's radio work did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Board.⁶⁰ Zeidman had suggested that he would submit to the authority of the Protestant Radio League, but the CBC was uncertain about the League's impartiality, and its effectiveness as a supervisor and monitor of potential controversy. In the end, Zeidman was permitted to return to the air under the following conditions: "[that] the content of the broadcast is to be restricted to items of purely ecclesiastical nature, there being no politics, national or international, or advocacy of controversial theories in economics . . . that the regulation prohibiting 'abusive comment on race, religion or creed' with be strictly observed."⁶¹ Zeidman consented to the terms and was permitted to return to the air for an experimental period.⁶² By February 1938, the air wars were officially over; Lanphier soon returned to his "Catholic Hour" on CBC Toronto and the Trans-Canada Network, while Zeidman moved his program to CKOC in Hamilton.⁶³

The first air war had given rise to Regulation 7c, and the second also produced a significant milestone in the history of religious broadcasting in Canada. In August 1938, Gladstone Murray created the National Religious Advisory Council for the CBC. Focused on religious programming in the English language, the Council would meet monthly in Toronto, and be composed of two representatives each from the major denominations in Canada, based upon the size of each according to the Census.⁶⁴ The CBC would appoint the director of the Religious Programming Department as the liaison between the NRAC and the Corporation. The first meeting of the NRAC, in September 1938, consisted of two Anglican clergy, of whom Canon J.E. Ward was named chair of the Council, two United Church ministers, of whom J.R. Mutchmore became secretary of the Council, two Presbyterians, one Baptist, and two Catholic priests. Interestingly, one of the two priests named to the Council was none other than Charles Lanphier, who served as a popular member of the group until just before his death in 1960. Although the inaugural Council did not represent smaller denominations directly, the founding members promised that they would take into consideration the views of smaller groups and, in time, the Council was expanded to include Lutheran and Jewish representation.⁶⁵

The Council was responsible for reviewing applications for religious programs to be aired on a "free-time" basis for the CBC, monitor the regulations regarding religious programs, and supervise the division of air

time on Sundays for broadcasts from all denominations in all regions.⁶⁶ In time, the NRAC was producing two major religious initiatives on Sunday afternoons: “The Catholic Hour” for twenty consecutive weeks, followed by the corresponding Protestant Hour or Devotional Hour, which shared the same timeslot for another twenty weeks, and the Protestant “Church of the Air,” which ran later on Sunday afternoons from October to May.⁶⁷ Each series broadcasts from different parts of Canada each week, using the facilities of the local CBC station or an affiliate; programs like the Catholic Hour, for instance might run five consecutive weeks from one location – Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, or Vancouver – and then another for the next bundle of five week programs. “Church of the Air” and the “Devotional Hour” would alternate between the major denominations and the Salvation Army, Lutherans, Reform and Orthodox Jews, or Christian Science, and move from region to region. According to CBC Executive W.O. Finlay:

The aim of the Council is to provide a source of worship of the highest possible character and value in which all can participate. Inasmuch as these broadcasts will originate in succession from six broadcasting stations of the C.B.C. reaching from Vancouver to Halifax, they will bring within reach of homes throughout the entire Dominion the voice and message of outstanding preachers of all denominations and music from our finest choirs. It is felt that by none will this opportunity be more keenly welcomed than by those in lonely rural sections of our Dominion.⁶⁸

The NRAC was meticulous in its attempts to strike a denominational balance of the English-language airwaves, while ensuring that Regulation 7c was respected. Even when Lanphier himself got into hot water for his political adlibs and diversions into anti-Nazi and anti-Communist commentary, in 1939, his membership on the NRAC did not stop him from being barred from broadcasting in late 1938 and early 1939.⁶⁹ The NRAC was one safeguard in ensuring that the air wars would be a thing of the past.

The creation of the National Religious Advisory Council and the threat of Regulation 7c did not end, once and for all, intemperate and controversial religious broadcasts, but it contributed to a building of consensus regarding how to do religious radio programming at the CBC. While Fortner is quite correct that religious groups provided no distinctive moral philosophy for the use of the radio in Canada, one would be hard

pressed to find any original Canadian religious thinkers or Canadian philosophers of media at that time. Marshall McLuhan's moment was still thirty years into the future. What Canadian churches managed in the 1930s, however, was something typically Canadian – a practical solution that would enhance the peace, order and good governance of radio. Amidst the distinctive melange of public and private broadcasting under one roof, and amidst the great potential for a sectarian explosion at any time, broadcasters and churchmen reached a compromise that acknowledged the importance of religion to Canadians, while making assurances that the national airwaves would be characterized by toleration and peaceful coexistence between the Christian churches themselves, and between Christians and other faith groups, specifically Jews. Far from treating Canada's religious groups as just "one more interest group," the CBC maintained a religion department, offered religious groups supervision over their own programming, and perhaps most importantly, an imaginative outlet in which to create their own programs and broadcast them for free.⁷⁰ Although English Canada's religious programming would pale in comparison to the time allotted to entertainment, news and current affairs, sports, and music, the free-time religious broadcasts on CBC would become a mainstay of Sunday radio and television programming until the early 1970s. Private stations would still provide time to sponsored religious groups, both local programs and those packaged in the United States, but these too would be subject to Regulation 7c. The air wars of the 1930s had given birth to the orderly and ecumenical management of religion on the radio thereafter.

Endnotes

1. Robert S. Fortner, *Radio, Morality and Culture in Britain, Canada and the United States, 1919-1945* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 159.
2. Fortner, *Radio, Morality, and Culture*, 178.
3. Fortner, *Radio, Morality, and Culture*, 163.
4. Fortner, *Radio, Morality, and Culture*, 159.
5. Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada* (Toronto: Lorimer, 2000), 39-40; Albert A Shea, *Broadcasting the Canadian Way* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1963), 104-106; and Margaret Prang, "The Origins of Public Broadcasting in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 46 (March 1965): 1-31.

6. Sandy Stewart, *From Coast to Coast: A Personal History of Radio in Canada* (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1985), 9.
7. T.J. Allard, *Straight Up: Private Broadcasting in Canada, 1918-1958* (Ottawa: The Communications Foundation, 1979), 22.
8. Program Report, CKUA, Edmonton, University of Alberta, 15 June 1928 (broadcasts from St. Stephen's United Church College and St. Joseph's Catholic College), file 6206-176, vol. 154, RG 97, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa; and Broadcast Schedule, October 1, 1928 to June 30, 1929, "Affiliated Colleges Program," Mondays, 8:20pm., CKUA Papers, University of Alberta Archives, Edmonton.
9. C.P. Edwards to E.J. Haughton, Division Superintendent, BC, 23 August 1924 and Memo To Minister, 3 October 1930, file 6206-144, v.1, vol. 605, Ministry of Transport Fonds, RG 12, LAC.
10. R Ainslie, Radio Inspector, to Director, Radio Branch, 11 October 1929, file 6206-132, vol.152, RG 97, LAC.
11. *Encyclopaedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 1 (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, 1981): 270.
12. C.P. Edwards, Director of Radio Branch to S.J. Ellis, Inspector, 27 September 1927, f.209-32-97, vol. 493, Marine Branch, RG 42, LAC.
13. Alexander Johnston to TT Shields, 6 December 1924, file 209-32-97, vol. 493, Marine Branch, RG 42, LAC.
14. *Globe*, 13 January 1936; and Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 23.
15. James Penton, *The Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada: Champions of Freedom and Worship* (Toronto, ON: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), 94-110. Almost every history of broadcasting in Canada makes mention of the case, although Penton's is the most thorough and helpful account, despite his underlying assumption of a Catholic conspiracy between Minister Arthur Cardin and Deputy Minister and Radio Director, Alexander Johnston (J. Macklem to Director of Radio [Johnston], 2 July 1926, Unpublished Sessional Paper, page 112, file 254, vol. 184, Parliamentary Papers, RG 14, LAC).
16. *Toronto Star*, 21 July 1927, Unpublished Sessional Paper, pages 74-6, file 254, vol. 184, Parliamentary Papers, RG 14, LAC.
17. Managing Editor of the *Toronto Star*, John R Bone to CP Edwards, 12 April 1924, file 209-32-97, vol. 493, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, RG 42, LAC.

18. SJ Ellis to Director, 29 June 1927, file 209-32-97, vol. 493, RG 42; PR Millner, Whitby, to Director, 1926, page 105, file 254, vol.184, RG 14; T.H. Whitelaw, Medical Health Office, Edmonton, to Director, 23 November 1926, pages 101-2, file 254, vol.184, RG 14 and page 35; and Greater Vancouver Radio Association to Minister of Marine and Fisheries, 2 February 1928, page 35, file 254, vol.184, RG 14; file 32-1012, vol.493, RG 42 contains petitions and letters of protest regarding the IBSA stations. Many Saskatoon letter writers wanted the alternative to “jazz” offered by CHUC (Prang, “Origins,” 45).
19. J Macklem, Inspector for Saskatchewan, to CP Edwards, 17 April 1928, file 209-32-101, pt 1, vol. 493, RG 42; and *Hansard*, Debates of the House of Commons, 18 Geo V 1928, volume 3, 12 April 1928, 1951-2.
20. *Hansard*, 31 May 1928, 3619-20.
21. Mr Irvine, *Hansard*, 31 May 1928, 36345-6.
22. Roger Bird, ed., *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting*, “Aird Commission Report” (Ottawa: Carlton University Press, 1988), 42, 48, and 50.
23. Bird, *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting*, 50.
24. “CRBC Rules and Regulations, 15 April 1933,” in *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting*, 130.
25. House of Commons Debates, 21 April 1933, *Hansard*, 23-4 Geo V, 1933, vol V, 1932-3.
26. William Malone, *Broadcast Regulation in Canada: A Legislative History* (n.p.; private, 1962), 3; and Mary Vipond, *Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting, 1922-1932* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), 39.
27. *Globe*, 2 August 1935.
28. *Catholic Register*, 13 July and 2 November 1933.
29. Fortner, *Radio, Morality, and Culture*, 175.
30. Peter Meehan, “The East Hastings By-election of 1936 and the Ontario Separate School Tax Question,” *CCHA Historical Studies* 68 (2002): 105-132.
31. Harry Sedgewick, CFRB, to Hector Charlesworth, CRBC, 30 October 1935, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 9, vol. 40, RG 41, LAC; and Charlesworth to Sedgewick, 1 November 1935, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 9, vol. 40, RG 41.

32. Cecil Armstrong, Junior Deputy Grand Master, Grand Orange Lodge of Ontario West to Hector Charlesworth, Chairman, CRBC, 14 November 1935, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 9, vol. 40, RG 41.
33. Zeidman to Charlesworth, 4 December 1935, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 9, vol. 40, RG 41.
34. Charlesworth to Zeidman, 9 December 1935, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 9, vol. 40, RG 41.
35. *Globe*, 4 and 11 March 1936.
36. Protestant Radio League Broadcast, Sunday, 29 November 1936, 1:30-1:45 pm., file 2-2-8-2, pt. 9, vol. 40, RG 41.
37. Miss K Hughes to Hector Charlesworth, 19 April 1936, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 9, vol. 40, RG 41, provides one interesting Catholic epistle amidst a sheaf of letters for and against Zeidman.
38. Sedgewick to Murray, 7 December 1936, file 2-2-8-2, vol. 41, RG 41.
39. *Globe and Mail*, 23 December 1936.
40. Acting Secretary M Landry to All Broadcasting Stations in Canada, 23 December 1936, file 9-10, vol. 146, RG 41.
41. Notes for the Guidance of Speakers in Religious Programs, 28 January 1941, file 11-23-2, pt. 2, vol. 223, RG 41; CBC Acts and By-Laws, 1 July 1948, file 1-1-1, vol. 32A, RG 41; and Maurice Goudreault, Supervisor, Station Relations, Quebec, Memorandum to Director of Station Relations and Chairman, 2 March 1951, file 9-10, vol. 146, RG 41.
42. H Sedgewick to Murray, 10 December 1936, written in the margins, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 9, vol. 40, RG 41.
43. Transcript of M Zeidman, 10 January 1937, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 4, vol. 40, RG 41.
44. Protestant Radio League Broadcast, Transcript, 1937, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 9, vol. 41, RG 41.
45. *Catholic Register*, 2 November 1933.
46. Zeidman was exaggerating the potency of the CKCL signal. CFRB transmitted at 10,000 watts whereas CKCL was a mere 500 watt station. When the CBC assumed control of CRCT, later CBL, its transmitting output was raised to 50,000 as was the most powerful station in Canada (<http://www.broadcasting-history.ca/index3.html>).
47. *Globe and Mail*, 7 April 1937; and *Hansard*, 6 April 1937, 2657-9.

48. Newscast and Review in Religion (Transcript), 31 October 1937, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 1, vol. 40, RG 41.
49. Radio Broadcast Transcripts, CJ Foran Papers, Archives of the Archdiocese of Edmonton, Edmonton, Alberta; Thomas C. Reeves, *America's Bishop: The Life and Times of Fulton J. Sheen* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2001), 103; and Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 110-12.
50. Gladstone Murray to EA Pickering, Secretary to the Prime Minister, 29 December 1937, 205834-7, William Lyon MacKenzie King Papers, C-3728, MG 26j, LAC; and WO Finlay to Murray, 6 November 1937, file 2-2-8-2, pt.2, vol. 40, RG 41.
51. Telegram, Murray to George A. Taggart, Station Manager CRCT, 8 November 1937, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 10, vol. 41, RG 41; and Charles Jennings to Taggart, 9 November 1937, file 2-2-8-2, pt.2, vol. 40, RG 41.
52. *Telegram*, 8 and 9 November 1937; Collection of Letters of Protest, file 2-2-8-2, pt.10, vol. 41, RG 41.
53. *Telegram*, 10 and 15 November 1937.
54. File filled with letters and a formatted petition from several dozen parishes in the Diocese of Hamilton, file 2-2-8-2, pt.2, vol 40, RG 41; and *Catholic Register*, 18 November 1937.
55. Archbishop James McGuigan to King, 20 December 1937, cited in King Papers, C-3727, MG 26j. A reprinting of the feature was found in *CR* 25 November 1937.
56. Leonard W Brocklington, Chairman of the CBC Board of Governors, to McGuigan, 3 January 1938, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 10, vol. 41, RG 41.
57. CBC Memo, SS Brown to Murray, 6 January 1938, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 10, vol. 41, RG 41. The memo indicated that the CBC had received two hundred sixty three pieces of correspondence of which one hundred ninety-five favoured Lanphier, twenty-four favoured Zeidman, and forty-four constituted petitions with "wording almost identical."
58. Testimony of Father Charles Lanphier, 23 November 1937, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 2, vol. 40, RG 41.
59. Leonard W. Brocklington, Chairman of the CBC Board of Governors, to McGuigan, 3 January 1938, file 2-2-8-2, vol. 41, RG 41; and McGuigan to Lanphier, 2 January 1939, McGuigan Papers, SU03.29, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto (ARCAT), Toronto. Here McGuigan

reminds Lanphier of what he agreed a year before.

60. Murray to EA Pickering, 25 January 1938, King Papers; and JW MacNamara to Murray, 8 December 1937, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 10, vol. 41, RG 41.
61. Murray to Zeidman, 5 January 1938, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 10, vol. 41, RG 41.
62. Murray to RB Bennett, 25 January 1938, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 10, vol. 41, RG 41; and *Catholic Register*, 20 January 1938.
63. Memo, Murray to CBC Board of Governors, 25 January 1938, and Gordon Anderson, Station Director, CKOC to Murray, 27 January 1938, file 2-2-8-2, pt. 10, vol. 41, RG 41.
64. *Catholic Register*, 4 August 1938.
65. Memo from CR Delafield, Program Division, 15 February 1939, file 1-23, pt. 2, vol. 223, RG 41.
66. Reverend JE Ward to Msgr. Edward Michael Brennan, 24 November 1939, file 1-23, pt. 2, vol. 223, RG 41.
67. Meeting Minutes, 15 September 1938, file 1-23, pt. 2, vol. 223, RG 41.
68. Memo WO Finlay, CBC, 28 December 1938, file 1-23, pt. 2, vol. 223, RG 41.
69. ARCAT, McGuigan Papers, SU03.28b, Murray to Lanphier, 4 November 1938, McGuigan Papers, SU03.28b, ARCAT and McGuigan to Lanphier, 2 January 1939, McGuigan Papers, SU03.29; McGuigan Press Release, McGuigan Papers, SU03.31; and *Catholic Register*, 12 January 1939.
70. MemoF 19 January 1939 indicated that religious programs were among the CBC's most popular, file 1-23, vol. 223, RG 41.

