In 1912 Queen’s University at Kingston, Ontario, separated from the Presbyterian Church of Canada to become a public institution. Queen’s separation from the church would seem to support the contention by a number of Canadian historians of religion that in the Western world, during the nineteenth century, Protestant institutions accommodated their Christian doctrine to realities of modern thought and life and, in doing so, made Christian religion irrelevant in national institutions. Queen’s has been signalled as a specific Canadian institution which accommodated doctrine to the late-nineteenth century cultural context. In examining the process leading to separation in the years 1900 to 1912, therefore, one may expect to find that Queen’s lost much of its religious character and, therefore, its ability to influence society religiously.

Did Queen’s University at Kingston “lose its soul” when it separated from the Presbyterian Church in 1912? Queen’s historians D.D. Calvin, Wilhelmina Gordon, Hilda Neatby, George Rawlyk and Kevin Quinn interpret separation as inevitable for financial rather than religious reasons. Calvin’s statement that “[a]s certainly as the child becomes an adult, so the records of the University prove . . . that separation from the Church had been inevitable from the beginning,” suggests that the connection with the church was not necessary for the university to achieve its aims. That Gordon, daughter of Principal Gordon could, almost thirty years after separation, still describe scornfully as “exaggerated statements” the argument that separation would sweep away Queen’s religious atmosphere.

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and influence indicates that the possibility of religious secularization was not an issue for her. Neatby does not consider theology an issue, though she uses “secularization” as a synonym for “separation.” Rawlyk and Quinn emphasize practical considerations in the separation process but observe that while “the University was now a secular institution . . . it was hardly a godless one.” The 1912 separation was not an admission of the basic incompatibility of secular and sacred worldviews.

This essay agrees with Rawlyk and Quinn that the severing of the connection between the Presbyterian Church and Queen’s University in 1912 did not signal a loss of belief in God. In fact, the separation process itself reflected the religious heritage of the university. The overriding theme in the process leading to separation was the Scottish Presbyterian belief in the church’s association with national life, that is, that Queen’s should indirectly exercise in Canada the kind of influence in national affairs that the Presbyterian Church exercised directly in Scotland. The doctrinal changes that occurred at Queen’s were consistent with and even considered necessary within this context. Although Queen’s stood for a free search for truth, at no time did it consider itself secular. Doctrinal orthodoxy was not a factor in the respective discourses of the administration, faculty, students or graduates or Queen’s from 1900 to 1912. Separation did not require the cessation of religious belief because it was consistent with the religious character of the university.

Queen’s was founded by the Church of Scotland in Canada in 1841. Its founders and their successors patterned their worldview and institutions after those of Scotland. The Scottish Presbyterian Church had two characteristics that are important for this study. First, the church believed that ministerial training should be based on a liberal arts education. The Church of Scotland was renowned for having appropriated the experimental spirit of the Enlightenment without giving up reverence for revelation. Although it contained a tenaciously evangelical constituency, its moderate leadership stood for doctrinal flexibility, in tandem with free enquiry. This freed the Scottish universities to participate in educational reform. While belief in providence continued as the unifying curricular principle, subjects like history, philosophy, and natural science became fields of inquiry separate from theology, with their own specializing professors and faculties.

Second, the Church of Scotland needed a learned ministry partly because it believed in a national church guiding national life. Though the
church had moved from episcopacy to presbyterianism, it remained associated in the Scottish mind with the state. By implication, the university was an essential institution in Scottish national life. The clergy professors were part of the educated ruling elite of Scotland, and they exercised intellectual leadership in culture as well as in their lecture halls. Their close identification with culture demonstrated that the church believed it had responsibility not only for the well-being of individual Scots but also for the Scottish nation. The clergy professors applied their knowledge in the service of the nation not only in training its leaders but also by cooperating with Scottish industrial interests.

When Scottish Presbyterians in Canada felt compelled to establish a university to counter the planned exclusivity of John Strachan’s Anglican institution, they made it clear from the beginning that they were identifying Queen’s with the broader Canadian culture. While Queen’s was officially named Queen’s College, it was conceptualized and referred to as a university. Queen’s taught arts as a prerequisite for theology and was open to adding other faculties as part of the development of the university concept. Queen’s did not require a denominational test for entrance. The national orientation of Queen’s became not only its founding rationale but also its guiding principle.

The importance of the national principle to Queen’s can be seen in the controversy from 1900 to 1912 concerning the separation of Queen’s University from the Presbyterian Church. Actions and arguments on both sides of the debate demonstrated that each believed the university must continue to develop to fulfill its religious mission of leadership in Canadian culture. Those who sought separation did not desire secularization. Separation was the unhappy consequence of inability of the church to pay for the national principle. Those who opposed separation used the possibility of secularization as an argument, but it did not emerge as their key point. Their most consistent concern was whether the church would continue to participate with Queen’s in its influence on civil religion. Both sides embraced the university’s national mission and neither supported secularization. This was true at all levels of the close-knit Queen’s community – the chancellor, principal, board of trustees, council and senate, graduates and students.

The separation of the university and church was initially suggested by George Monro Grant. By the time he became principal of Queen’s in 1877, Grant’s national vision was well-known. As a leading Presbyterian
clergyman, he had campaigned for Confederation and later for the unification of Canadian Presbyterianism into a national church to strengthen the new nation. In his inaugural address in 1877, Grant showed that he understood the university to be a national institution. In 1886, he wrote Queen’s chancellor Sir Sandford Fleming that, “... I found that there was a great work for Queen’s both as regards the Church and Canada.”

Under Grant’s leadership, Queen’s resisted Ontario’s plan to consolidate all of Ontario’s universities under the University of Toronto. Queen’s strengthened its medical school and established a School of Mining. Its theological and arts professors appropriated contemporary applications of scientific method to biblical scholarship in the same spirit the moderate Presbyterians of Scotland had shown during the Enlightenment.

The willingness of Queen’s to accommodate new thinking kept it in a position to exercise cultural leadership, but the monetary demands of development were onerous. Realization of the national vision required an aggressive growth policy. In the late-nineteenth century, Canadian colleges aspiring to become universities faced major costs. Specialization and professionalization brought more students and the need for more faculty, more sophisticated equipment, and more buildings. To maintain its status as a national university, with the same credibility as the University of Toronto and McGill University, Queen’s could not go into a maintenance or a cut-back position. Hence the university was under constant financial pressure.

The funding arrangements Grant that devised were complicated and difficult. In 1875, the united Presbyterian Church permitted Queen’s to raise an endowment for the arts faculty. Individual churches within Queen’s fundraising district were asked to pay the expenses of the theological faculty. Medicine and the School of Mining were supported by the Ontario government. The use of government funds accorded with the national ideal. Since the Scottish university was the necessary partner of the state in cultural and economic development, it could expect state assistance. By setting up its science faculties as required for access to public funds, Queen’s applied this philosophy in the context of Canada.

To gain access to government funds for arts and end the convoluted arrangements between the various faculties, Grant, reasoning that the university would remain Christian and maintain its Christian national role,
Elsie Watts

proposed that the university be chartered as a public institution and the theological faculty as a denominational college. The 1901 Presbyterian General Assembly approved resolutions passed by the university trustees, senate, council, graduates, alumni, and benefactors, that:

(1). . . Queen’s University should be undenominational, and should be in a larger degree than at present, directly representative of the graduates and friends of the University; (2) that the Faculty of Theology should be under the management of a Board distinct from the Governing Body of the University.

The Assembly appointed a committee to work out the details with the Queen’s trustees. All parties expected that the 1902 Assembly would finalize Grant’s proposal.

One month before the Assembly of 1902, Grant died. At the Assembly, opposition to the separation that Grant had kept in check by force of personality and achievements appeared. Queen’s solicitor and trustee, George M. Macdonnell, whose service to the church and to Queen’s had spanned that of Grant, presented the board report. Macdonnell would have been familiar with the national principle, having been so long a part of shaping the university. He “drew special attention to the course of legislation proposed, and traced the history of the institution . . . showing that the proposed changes [were] in line with the past history of the University.” However, the Assembly favoured a motion to study the matter further.

The Queen’s Quarterly jubilantly promised that the “future development of the University will naturally bring increasing honour to the Church under whose maternal care it has grown from helpless infancy to self-responsible manhood.” It also speculated that the search for a principal might surmount narrow professional and denominational restrictions. Several trustees and faculty, however, especially wanted a man sympathetic to the claims of the denomination. The board decided that Daniel Miner Gordon, whose career as a leading Presbyterian clergyman and member of the Queen’s board paralleled Grant’s, would not break the traditions of the university.

Gordon believed that his appointment as principal had been made on the understanding that he would carry through Grant’s national vision and the separation from the church that its financial requirements necessitated. To the university council he declared: “. . . (T)he aims and ideals
of a university must be national . . . I think we may claim that this has always been the ideal of Queen’s . . .\textsuperscript{23}

Gordon presented to the 1903 Assembly a separation recommendation, endorsed by the trustees, university council, faculty, and a committee of the Assembly.\textsuperscript{24} To Queen’s surprise, a wealthy lay member persuaded the Assembly that the church could raise the funds necessary to maintain the traditional connection.\textsuperscript{25} The Assembly decided to support a new endowment campaign for the arts faculty.\textsuperscript{26} The lay member promised to endow a chair.\textsuperscript{27} Gordon, however, remained unsure the church would provide the necessary funds.\textsuperscript{28}

The opponents to separation who submitted articles to the Queen’s press did not raise secularization as an argument. In the \textit{Queen’s Quarterly}, Samuel Dyde voiced his opinion that the Assembly vote showed the church wanted to participate in Queen’s national vision:

\begin{quote}
In framing the bill the aim of the trustees had avowedly been to make the college as national in its forms of government as it had long been in spirit. So far as can be gathered from the tone of the Assembly, if to nationalize the college meant to enlarge its work and extend its influence, the question was simply whether this movement shall go on under or outside the church. And the Assembly desired that the church as a whole ought to have some of the honour and accept some of the responsibility.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

Dyde’s opinion was significant. He was professor of moral philosophy, the curriculum designed to integrate Christian faith and knowledge.\textsuperscript{30}

Another important opponent of separation, The Rev. Dr. James Campbell, argued in the \textit{Queen’s University Journal} that separation might mean provincialization rather than nationalization, an unacceptable restriction of Queen’s mission.\textsuperscript{31} Campbell was more concerned about Queen’s fulfilling its national mission than with the possible secularizing effect of separation.

During 1904, the general lines of the separation controversy became clear. No one within Queen’s appeared willing to compromise its cultural mission, despite its financial burden. Some, believing that the church would not provide sufficient funds, continued to see separation as a necessity. Some, like Principal Gordon and probably the majority of the Queen’s community, would retain the connection if the church could raise
the funds. Others, like Dyde, Campbell, and now G.M. Macdonnell, hoped to retain the university’s identification with the church. They did what they could to encourage the church to establish the connection financially.

By February 1904, a commission of the Presbyterian General Assembly reported that the presbyteries favoured retaining the connection of the church to the university but held that a national university should not be supported by the church alone. Gordon already had begun trying to raise large sums of money from private benefactors. Money for higher education from the Carnegie Foundation was an important lure because universities which met its terms, like Toronto and McGill, had an advantage in development over universities which did not. However, Gordon was advised by Dr. James Douglas, a Queen’s graduate, trustee, and wealthy New York businessman, that Andrew Carnegie “has a very bitter aversion to all ecclesiastical establishments and . . . will not endow a college that is allied in any way to one of the Churches.”

Driven by the need to keep Queen’s competitive with McGill and the University of Toronto, Gordon could not resist the possibilities offered by the Carnegie money. Toronto and McGill were well aware of Queen’s national ambition. Queen’s constant promotion of its national vision and entitlement to government grants irritated Toronto’s pride and purse. In early 1904, President James Loudon and Chancellor Nathanael Burwash of Toronto published an expose of Queen’s creative financing. Loudon and Burwash sat on a special committee of the Ontario Board of Education which determined that Ontario teachers must be certified through the University of Toronto. Understanding this as a strategy to discredit the popular Queen’s teacher-training program, Gordon began a campaign for a faculty of education at Queen’s.

Since the main argument that Loudon, Burwash and others could use against Queen’s access to government funding was its denominational tie to the Presbyterian Church, its administrators emphasized the nonsectarian nature of the institution. That Queen’s equated its nonsectarianism with the culture of English Canada is apparent in the literature of Queen’s from the first paragraph statement of the 1841 Charter, that “the establishment of a college . . . would greatly conduce to the welfare of our said province.” On the basis of its nonsectarian policy, Queen’s argued that the institution was reflective of the people of Canada and therefore its service to the nation should be legitimized by public recognition.

At the General Assembly in June, the Queen’s board reported that
“(t)he very growth and expansion of the University have caused additional outlay, while the revenue has not grown in proportion . . . Hence, the finances of the year show a considerable deficit.”  

The Assembly persisted with the endowment campaign. It set the target figure at $500,000, to be fully paid by 31 December 1907, and freed Gordon from his teaching duties to go out and stump for it. Gordon emphasized Queen’s national mission clearly in selling the endowment campaign. He told the presbyteries that “[t]o assist Queen’s would be to aid the higher interests alike of the Church and of the country.”

In 1904, the link between separation and secularization appeared for the first time. Professor John Macnaughton expressed relief that separation had not occurred, for “(t)he separation of Theology from the general body of culture and science is unwholesome on both sides, tending to emasculate Theology and to maim culture.” Yet Gordon did not receive evidence from the church that Macnaughton’s argument was compelling. To the lay member who had stalled the separation process in 1902 Gordon wrote: “The general interest in her welfare that might be looked for in view of Queen’s agreeing to continue her Church connection has been much less than we anticipated.”

The Queen’s University Journal, meanwhile, advertised that students could subscribe to the endowment campaign on the instalment plan.

The 1905 Assembly granted Queen’s a full-time fundraiser for the endowment campaign. After the Assembly, however, given the overriding importance of the national vision, Gordon still seemed ambivalent about whether the connection between Queen’s and the church would endure:

The development of Queen’s has been along national lines, with the ideal of national service, and with the breadth of outlook and purpose befitting a national university. Those who advocated her separation from the Church argued that this development would be more secure if all Church connection were severed. It is gratifying, however, to see that the Presbyterian Church, which is itself so truly national in its aims and efforts . . . has no desire to check this national development of Queen’s . . . What should be the connection between the Churches and the University system of our country is by no means clear . . . The Churches and the universities should be at one in their aim to lift the people above the more material and commercial spirit . . .
Freed from his fundraising responsibilities, Gordon turned his attention back to the developmental needs of the university. Despite its untenable financial situation, Queen’s did not slacken its competitive stance. The university continued to pursue a faculty of education and approved a new building for the biological sciences.

By January 1906 it was clear that, even with the services of a fundraiser, the endowment campaign was not going well. Gordon thought that “[i]n view of the large service rendered to the country Queen’s might well claim the generous aid of many outside the Presbyterian Church.” As matters stood, “. . . we receive comparatively few subscriptions from any except Presbyterian sources, save only from Queen’s graduates, all of whom irrespective of Church connection, are singularly loyal to their Alma Mater.” The Queen’s University Journal also noted that: “(w)herever (our own graduates and Alumni) live and work, Queen’s is honoured and the movement for Endowment gathers strength much more quickly.” The university began to focus more attention on alumni. The board already had drafted legislation adding five trustees elected by the graduates. Now the council appointed a committee to prepare a proposal for strengthening the relations of the council with the various alumni associations.

Gordon continued to explore the possibility of access to Carnegie Foundation funds. He asked James Maclennan, supreme court judge and chairman of the Queen’s board, for a legal interpretation of whether the denominational requirement of a Presbyterian majority on the board disqualified Queen’s for consideration. Maclennan’s opinion was that Queen’s was not eligible. Chancellor Fleming suggested that Queen’s offer Carnegie an honorary degree. The degree was bestowed, though Carnegie did not appear to receive it. Gordon then sent the Foundation a formal application for $200,000 to be applied to the arts endowment.

The application was refused. The administration renewed the application. In December 1906 Gordon announced that Carnegie had offered to give $100,000 for the endowment campaign after it had reached its $500,000 goal. In the meantime, Carnegie would provide pensions for three retiring professors. Gordon responded to a tactful inquiry from the president of the Baptist Acadia University as to why Queen’s as a denominational institution qualified for Carnegie funds with the clarification that Queen’s did not qualify. Carnegie had made a private gift, as a favour to his friend, Chancellor Fleming. To queries from an already retired Queen’s professor as to whether he might receive a pension,
Gordon replied that there would be no pensions for other Queen’s professors, working or retired.60 This reply inflicted a hurt which united the faculty, which routinely coped with heavy teaching loads, poor working conditions, inadequate equipment, and non-competitive remuneration, in favour of separation.

While Fleming and Gordon courted Carnegie and his Foundation, the board and council were deeply involved in the ongoing struggle for public funds. The council struck a committee to convince Ontario legislators that Queen’s was as entitled to funding as the University of Toronto. Macdonnell and Dyde agreed to serve on the committee.61 Gordon wrote Premier Whitney, arguing that Queen’s was not a denominational college because the church did not elect the Queen’s trustees (the board was self-perpetuating) and the graduates had representatives on the board.62 Early in 1907 Whitney promised more aid for technical education,63 but his government “wished it to be clearly understood that any grant would be only ‘by way of aid’ for (Queen’s) was not a government school.”64

Again, Queen’s turned to giving its graduates more power to affect the direction of the university. A board committee recommended that the university council be developed to allow graduates to vote on the affairs of the university.65 The board deferred the recommendation but directed the administration to distribute the university’s annual report to the Assembly to all graduates.66 Clearly, in its interest in expansion, Queen’s was moving away from its connection with the church.

Queen’s administrators, however, did not want disunity over separation to jeopardize the possibility of the completion of the endowment campaign. While they told the 1907 Assembly that the endowment receipts still were disappointing, they did not reopen the issue of constitutional changes in either the trustee or joint commission report.67

As the slow work of canvassing the church went on,68 the task of strengthening broad support of the university continued. The university finance and estate committee recommended that Gordon use the university’s annual alumni conference to organize the graduates in support of government assistance for Queen’s.69 The trustees voted to give local alumni associations the right to elect representatives to the council though this would weigh the trustee/faculty and alumni ratio in favour of the latter.70 The council resolved that “a more organized effort should be made to carry on the campaign of education, not only among our own graduates,
but among the people of the province of Ontario generally and the members of the Legislature, with the object of creating public sentiment in favour of Queen’s.”

In January 1908 Queen’s circulated to all graduates a broadsheet on behalf of the endowment fund. The broadsheet implicitly demonstrated Queen’s national ambition. Since 1902 Queen’s had added, on average, one building a year, hired new professors, opened a faculty of education, and doubled its student body. The broadsheet described the nonsectarian composition of the student body as “...a good example of the practical Christian union, covering the ground ‘From Ocean to Ocean’. . .”

In 1908 Queen’s continued to stress an active religious life as central to good citizenship. Religious influence was woven through the fabric of the university, through the presence of the theological faculty, the principal arranging Sunday afternoon services and teaching general Bible classes, faculty participating in religious activities, and the Queen’s University Journal routinely reporting the meetings of such campus groups as the YMCA, YWCA and Queen’s University Missionary Association.

Gordon made it clear that Queen’s did not stand for an either/or choice between philosophy and theology, and that its search for knowledge of God through science was consistent with its church tradition:

> With increasing knowledge we may be required to restate some doctrines today just as was the case with our fathers... but the firm grasp of the essentials of faith, such as the Person and Work of Christ, and the present guidance of the Holy Spirit, may enable us to move with freedom and without fear.

It was not theological disagreement or lack of affection for Presbyterianism which was moving Queen’s toward separation from the church. It was that the church was not providing the funding necessary to maintain a national university.

In the same year, the festering issue of inadequate remuneration pushed the faculty to explore the possibility of seeking Carnegie funding for themselves. In February, James Cappon, dean of the arts faculty, paid an investigative visit to the New York headquarters of the Foundation. Cappon learned that McGill University was already on the Carnegie list of beneficiaries and the University of Toronto was about to be added. On his return, Cappon asked the Queen’s senate to prepare a memorial to the
trustees, “praying them to take into favourable consideration the question of the admission of the University to the benefits of the Carnegie Fund.”

The next day, Gordon reported these developments to Chancellor Fleming in Ottawa:

Yesterday afternoon we had a somewhat animated meeting of Senate, discussing the whole question of memorializing the Trustees to consider the whole question of the possible relation of Queen’s to the Carnegie Pension Foundation. The serious feature is that it opens up the whole question of severing the connection of the University and the Church . . . The latest report . . . decided beyond all question that the University must be formally and legally separate from the Church if it is to enjoy any of the benefits of the Pension Fund.

On March 16, after defeating an amendment by Professors Dyde and J.L. Morison objecting to the role the possibility of Carnegie funds was playing in the separation controversy, the senate adopted a memorial to the board of trustees that:

. . . (i) in their opinion it is quite practicable to make such alteration in Queen’s Constitution as will bring the University under the benefits of the Carnegie Foundation, and that this may be done without essential disturbance of either the relation the Theological Hall has to the University or anything that is natural and vital in the relation which now exists between the University and the Presbyterian Church.

The chief administrators of the university expressed concerned that the memorial would endanger the endowment campaign, which was within $90,000 of the amount needed for Carnegie’s contribution. To Trustee Rev. D.R. Drummond, who wished to postpone the pension issue, Gordon replied that the Carnegie list of beneficiaries might soon be closed. Macdonnell gave Fleming a letter from Rev. Watts of Halton County, warning that if the issue of constitutional changes was revived, his parish no longer would subscribe to the endowment fund. Fleming sent it to Gordon and Maclennan, insisting that the professors’ cause should be given “the fullest consideration. It is due to the University itself that we should take means to retain and attract the best of professors.” Maclennan, wary that Queen’s might not only lose potential donations but also
Presbyterian political advantage, asked Gordon if he thought the university should be made a government institution with an affiliated theological college, noting that Fleming had made a similar suggestion to Macdonnell. Even the *Queen’s University Journal* came out in support of this solution. Macdonnell and others, however, determined to back the eventual success of the endowment campaign. Unable to come to a harmonious solution, the Queen’s board asked the 1908 Assembly for advice.

Both sides arrived at the Assembly in June ready for a showdown. The Assembly diffused the controversy by appointing a committee of Gordon and Cappon for and Macdonnell and Dyde against, and directing them to come back to the Assembly with a recommendation. The result appeared to endorse separation. The committee recommended that the Queen’s board be empowered to act in the best interests of the university, making provision for the theological faculty in a manner acceptable to the church.

The discussion of the committee’s recommendation was heated. Macdonnell argued that:

> All that 90% of Queen’s men wanted was that the church should continue to stay with Queen’s . . . [T]hey had in Queen’s the Scottish type of national university, not a denominational university, but a Scottish national university with the Scottish Canadian notion behind it.

Secularization entered the discussion as one argument among many. A speaker expressed concern that Queen’s might cease to be a moral force in the nation. Speakers for separation argued that the Presbyterian character of the university would not change because “(h)istory and sentiment forbade it.” One speaker reminded the Assembly, the church could not pay for the national vision of its university:

> [The issue was being discussed] [a]s if the Assembly had a holiday in sight and was tripping along, led by a brass band . . . The financial needs of Queen’s were getting greater. The church said they could not shoulder them . . . [Queen’s] simply asked the assembly to give her a larger scope in the greater work of national education. (Applause).

The discussion ended with the Assembly rejecting the committee’s recommendation. By a vote of 67 to 53, the Assembly stood behind the endow-
ment campaign. It asked Queen’s to consider offering pensions itself.\textsuperscript{91}

Cappon concluded bitterly that the Assembly, dominated by non-Queen’s men, did not care about the university’s interests.\textsuperscript{92} Gordon continued to promote Queen’s as a national university.\textsuperscript{93} In October, the faculty again chose to ask the trustees to “renew the application to the General Assembly for certain changes in the Constitution to Queen’s University.”\textsuperscript{94} Only three professors dissented. The board decided, by a vote of sixteen to three, to send the second senate memorial to the 1909 Assembly, with the opinion that “the altered conditions with which the University has had to deal in these latter times call for the removal of the denominational disabilities in the charter of the University.”\textsuperscript{95}

Gordon turned once more to the university’s broad constituency. He prepared a circular to the endowment subscribers, graduates, and ministers of the Presbyterian Church, “making it possible for them to change the destination of their contribution if they think they were led to subscribe under any false pretences . . .”\textsuperscript{96} With the circular, the graduates received a statement requesting that they indicate whether they agreed with the board resolution asking for removal of the denominational disabilities.\textsuperscript{97} At the same time, Gordon explored with Fleming and Maclellan how Queen’s might free itself from the denominational disabilities while re-emphasizing the importance of the theological faculty.\textsuperscript{98} The least complicated solution seemed to be the affiliation of a private theological college to a public Queen’s.\textsuperscript{99} After receiving resolutions from the university council, the School of Mining and the medical faculty, the Queen’s board petitioned the 1909 Assembly for removal of the denominational restrictions through constitutional change.\textsuperscript{100}

Gordon told the 1909 Assembly that “either the church must assume responsibility for the maintenance in a way she has never done before, or accede to the request of the Trustees . . .”\textsuperscript{101} Gordon promised that the proposed change was not separation but a “readjustment of the relations between the church and the university in such a way that the vital and spiritual connection would still be fully maintained.” Macdonnell and Dyde, along with James Campbell, put forward a miscellany of opposing arguments, one of which was that the strength of Queen’s national mission was her association with the church.\textsuperscript{102} In 1909, however, more speakers argued on behalf of separation. Their arguments included the contention that Presbyterians had always been opposed to denominationalism in education. “[D]enominational universities mean a divided Canada.”\textsuperscript{103}
Separatists also argued that the legal bond was not the real bond that held the university and church together. The Assembly passed the Queen’s motion and appointed a commission to cooperate with the Queen’s board in regard to the constitution.

Some delegates voted for the motion because it referred the consideration of the question to an Assembly commission. The trustees’ first task after the Assembly, then, was to delineate its proposed constitutional changes for the Assembly representatives. The trustees agreed that the corporators of the university, previously the members of the Presbyterian General Assembly, now should be the benefactors and graduates. Macdonnell and the Rev. Dr. Wardrope lost their motions to have trustees selected by the Assembly. Significantly, no trustees known for opposition to separation were appointed to the trustee committee to confer with the commission.

The January 1910 Queen’s Quarterly gave Macdonell and Dyde the opportunity to put their case before the Queen’s community. Macdonell and Dyde identified the Carnegie fund as the motivation for separation. They argued that salary “comparisons are an offence,” and not grounds for a change in constitution. Constitutional change should be in keeping with Queen’s history and traditions. “The Church has . . . given her her distinctive character, built her up on the Scottish traditions and ideals, on the model of the Scottish universities, made her thus national in spirit from the beginning and left her free to grow along those broad lines.” The crux of the whole matter was how to preserve this vital relationship.

In the same issue, Cappon replied to Macdonell and Dyde’s arguments. He argued that professors and their widows needed to be properly remunerated. Cappon reminded Macdonell that, in 1902, he had presented Grant’s scheme for separation to the Assembly with the reassurance that it was in keeping with the past history of the university and unlikely to change the character of Queen’s. Theological students would participate in university life as before. Cappon repeatedly expressed frustration that a minority was lengthening the constitutional debate, though its negative effects on the future of the university were apparent. “Adjournments, re-adjournments, pleas for further consideration, for ‘a resolution that can be made unanimous,’ (as if you could get any unanimity between the majority and G.M. Macdonell that was not a mere pretence).”

When the Assembly commission accepted Queen’s recommenda-
tions concerning the constitutional changes and made its report to the Queen’s board, Macdonnell continued to advance his position. He made a series of counter motions designed to keep the church within the governing structure of the university. In the end, however, a majority of the board approved every clause in the commission’s report.

Despite the commission’s recommendations and their endorsement by the trustees, Gordon wrote Fleming that he expected a “serious engagement” at the annual Assembly in Halifax. Gordon may have been heartened somewhat by a letter from Professor J.L. Morison, received just before the Assembly:

You know that I formed one of the original very small minority on the Senate who opposed separation. Informal reorganization of our university, the bringing of peace and unity once more. the fitting of our college to take a perfectly national position in the education of Canada, and the placing of Queen’s in a position from which she may claim government support as a right, such government support as in Britain, the state deems it right to give to every truly national university – all these things force me to abandon any desire for opposition that might remain, and to fall in line with the majority.

However, the Assembly proved as stormy as anticipated. The Assembly tabled the matter for a year and directed the Queen’s board and those opposing separation to reach unanimity on the matter.

In keeping with the direction of the Assembly, Gordon asked Macdonnell and Douglas, the current board chair, to reach agreement regarding Presbyterian representation in Queen’s administrative structure. At this point, Macdonnell’s support began melting away. For example, Dyde accepted a position in Alberta. But the board did not expect that full unanimity would be achieved.

The board distributed a new opinion survey, asking trustees and faculty not to try to influence the answers of the graduates. Seven graduates managed to precede the survey with a circular, asking for a decisive vote.

An University which is doing national work must be nationalized. To say that to put the University under a Board of Trustees who would be mainly elected by the graduates would be to destroy the spirit of mingled enthusiasm for truth and religious reverence which
has hitherto characterized her graduates, is at once a contradiction in terms and a causeless insult . . . That outlook will not be destroyed by the abolition of a legal fiction.\textsuperscript{120}

The deans of all the faculties except theology also issued a circular urging a decisive vote.\textsuperscript{121} N.F. Dupuis, dean of the School of Mining, replied to Gordon’s rebuke with a copy of the circular and the offer of his resignation if his views were to be repressed.\textsuperscript{122}

The graduates voted overwhelmingly in favour of separation. Gordon thought he could approach the 1911 Assembly with the asked-for unanimity, since Macdonnell had promised to abide by the results of the vote.\textsuperscript{123} He observed, however, that Macdonnell seemed anxious to escape the results of the vote.\textsuperscript{124} Gordon no longer felt disposed to try to conciliate. When Macdonnell attempted to delay resolution by withholding his unanimity, the board ignored him and went ahead.\textsuperscript{125} The 1911 Assembly passed the proposed constitutional changes and appointed a new commission to work with the trustees in preparing the necessary constitutional legislation for presentation to parliament.\textsuperscript{126} The board accepted Macdonnell’s resignation as a trustee and as solicitor of the university.\textsuperscript{127} The bills submitted to parliament in February 1912 were based on the legislation prepared in 1903. The bill making Queen’s University a public institution came into law on 11 March 1912. The bill creating Queen’s Theological College passed the House on 1 April 1912.\textsuperscript{128} Macdonnell went on to chair the board of the theological college. Queen’s University integrated its faculties and continued its development with the reliable base of government funding. Queen’s canvassed the endowment subscribers and found them to be satisfied with the use of their donations.\textsuperscript{129} Gordon made numerous applications and visits to the Carnegie Foundation on behalf of undenominational Queen’s in the succeeding years, but Queen’s was not placed on its list before it closed.\textsuperscript{130}

Now that separation had occurred, Queen’s would have to deliver on its contention that its inherent religious nature had not changed during a process that was, on the surface at least, an obvious secularization. Gordon had assured the Canadian Club in Ottawa, on October 1911, that the Queen’s of 1911 was essentially the same Queen’s it had been in 1900.

The university does not stand for the training of men to make money . . . The university stands for the highest ideals for the individual man
and the nation... What shall it profit a man or a nation if he gain the whole commercial world and lose his own higher and truer life? That is what the university stands for.\textsuperscript{131}

In Canada, a national cultural mission could be achieved only through separation of church and state; that is, through separation of church and education:

The old idea of the Church that religion and education should go together was and is perfectly correct, and while we deny the right of Church control in this or any other function of the State, yet if our citizens are to be of the proper stamp, more adequate provision must be made for their moral and religious life. Not by the Church’s control of the State, but by the Church’s co-operation with the State, can the Church today best fulfil its function in regard to education.\textsuperscript{132}

The theological college was housed on the university campus and its students and staff participated fully in the university activities.\textsuperscript{133} The principal and faculty still led Bible classes and participated in Christian organizations on campus.\textsuperscript{134} As late as 1942, principals of Queen’s made the arrangements for university mission events.\textsuperscript{135}

The history of the decade-long controversy surrounding Queen’s which ended in the separation of the university from the Presbyterian Church does not strongly support the idea that separation was the culmination of a religious accommodation of Queen’s that made Protestantism irrelevant to Canadian life. The consistency of the university with its Church of Scotland founding tradition was striking. Even its separation in 1912 was consistent with its understanding that its mission was religious. Queen’s interpreted its mission culturally, aiming to develop Christians whose lives would influence the nation. While the content it gave Christian terms often was not traditional, Queen’s saw itself as attempting to achieve out a vital Christianity for its time. In 1912 Queen’s did not regard religion as something to be compartmentalized or as increasingly irrelevant, but was willing to make the practical adjustment necessary to enable it to prevent those perceptions.

The animating principle of all parties in the separation controversy was the cultural mission of Queen’s. All agreed that the church’s involvement with Queen’s was important to its mission. To the majority, the
legal bond between the university and the Presbyterian Church had come to hinder the mission’s fulfilment. They believed that the church tradition was inherent in the nature of Queen’s and would endure. To the minority, the national vision was Presbyterian and should be associated with the Presbyterian Church. They were being asked to give up something they revered, the direct alliance of education and Presbyterianism in culture.

What occurred at Queen’s in 1912 was not secularization but the reordering of the manner in which the religious educational mission would be expressed. In the context of the early-twentieth century, the soul of Queen’s could not depend on theology as the centre of the curriculum. With specialization and professionalization, maintaining a nationally recognized institution lay beyond the ability of a church constituency which contained competing loyalties. Queen’s chose to work within a modern cultural context, severing its ties with the church in order to secure the public funding necessary to maintain its vision. Queen’s retained its reverence for theology in its formal and informal relations with the theological college, and consciously endeavoured to keep the Christian spirit at the forefront through academic and co-curricular programs. Separation of Queen’s University from the Presbyterian Church did not result in the secularization of Queen’s, according to its religious tradition, in 1912 and for some time to come.

Endnotes

1. Canadian histories which argue this thesis include Ramsay Cook, The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1985); and David B. Marshall, Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940 (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1992).


3. D.D. Calvin, Queen’s University at Kingston (Kingston: The Trustees of the University, 1941), 149-50.


8. “. . . [W]e do further will . . . that the said college shall be deemed and taken to be a University; and that the Students in the said College shall have liberty and faculty in taking the degrees of Bachelor, Master and Doctor in the several Arts and faculties . . .” (“Royal Charter of Queen’s College,” 16 October 1841, Queen’s University Archives [hereafter QUA] 3706-2/6-Vol. I).

9. “. . . [N]o religious test or qualification shall be required . . . save only for all persons admitted . . . to any degree in Divinity . . .” (“Royal Charter of Queen’s College,” 1841, QUA.)


11. Calvin, *Queen’s University*, 92-93.

12. Grant to Fleming, 17 March 1886 (Fleming Papers), quoted in Neatby, *Queen’s University*, 225. Just before his death, Grant reminisced, “. . . I had always contended that it was a waste for Nova Scotia to spend on half a dozen small colleges the little it gave for higher education, instead of concentrating its efforts, so as to have an institution fit to compete with McGill, Toronto or Harvard. I also believed that the highest University ideal was not government by a denomination but self-government, and that on Boards only public and educational interests should be represented. But clearly Ontario needed more than one university . . . and Queen’s, from its location, traditions, and freedom from denominational control seemed particularly suited to be the second, and of all the more value to the province because of its distinctiveness of type”
Elsie Watts

(G.M. Grant, “Thanksgiving and Retrospect,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 9, No. 3 [January 1902]: 229).

13. In Scottish Calvinism the national ideal is religious in character. There is no division between the sacred and secular because this world is taken to be God’s world. Everything that is and everything one does is related to God. Natural and moral truth can be pursued scientifically in the confidence that anything learned is being learned about God. From this point of view, national life is religious life.

14. It is unlikely that the alumnae were consulted as they did not enjoy voting privileges in student affairs at this time.


17. The minutes of the University Council in 1901 indicate that the members expected that Queen’s would become a public university and receive government funding. They appointed a committee “to approach other universities with a view to considering a uniform matriculation for the universities of Ontario and Quebec at least.” When told that the planned gymnasium would cost approximately $7000, they resolved to “aim at a . . . building costing not less than ‘10,000.”’ Meanwhile, the trustees continued their creative financing by transferring a professor of physics to the School of Mining for salary purposes, keeping his faculty status within the university unchanged. Further assistance appeared imminent as the Ontario government agreed to establish a School of Mining.


22. Calvin, *Queen’s University*, 140.
24. “Draft Bill to Enact Constitutional Changes in Queen’s University,” 23 March 1903, QUA 1023-3-22.
25. John Charlton was a well-to-do Ontario lumberman and member of parliament. His appeal appeared to be sentimental rather than theological.
26. “Minutes of General Assembly,” 1903, in Minutes of General Assembly 1900-1907, QUA.
30. In fact, the previous year, Dyde had argued in the Queen’s Journal that: “Many colleges . . . founded by religious bodies have, to their credit, become independent. Nor can it be argued that a college must be secular and irreligious, when it becomes unsectarian; it is possible to preserve, even to deepen, religious life by dropping denominational peculiarities” (“The University Question,” reprinted in Queen’s University Journal 31, No. 3 [23 November 1903]: 41).
32. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 11 February 1904, QUA; and “Statement of Proceedings Affecting the Relation of Queen’s University to the Church,” undated, QUA 1023-3-24.
34. “Queen’s University and the University Question,” pamphlet, QUA 1023-3-17.
36. Royal Charter of Queen’s College,” 1841, QUA.

38. “Meeting of the General Assembly’s Committee in Co-operation with the Trustees of Queen’s University,” 1 September 1904, QUA 1023-3-24.


40. “Professor Macnaughton’ Inaugural Speech,” *Queen’s University Journal* 32, No. 3 (16 November 1904): 83.


43. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 27 April 1905, QUA; and “Minutes of General Assembly,” 1905, in *Minutes of General Assembly 1900-1907*, QUA.

44. D.M. Gordon, “The General Assembly and Queen’s University,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 13, No. 1 (July 1905): 70.

45. “Editorial Notes,” *Queen’s University Journal* 33, No. 2 (3 November 1905): 64.

46. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 18 September 1905, QUA.


49. The trustees were informed in September that parliament had passed the bill (“Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 11 September 1906, QUA).

50. “Minutes of University Council,” 24 April 1906, QUA.


52. James Maclennan to Daniel M. Gordon, 5 April 1906, QUA 1023-1-8.

53. “Minutes of Senate,” 21 April 1906, QUA.


56. Daniel M. Gordon to Andrew Carnegie, 28 November 1906, QUA 1023-1-12.
60. R.M.W. Kennedy to Daniel M. Gordon, 5 January 1907, QUA 1023-1-14; N.B. Hamm to Daniel M. Gordon, January 1907, QUA 1023-1-14; and Daniel M. Gordon to R.M.W. Kennedy, 7 January 1907, QUA 1023-1-14.
61. “Minutes of University Council,” 24 April 1906, QUA.
64. “The Visit of the Legislative Assembly,” Queen’s University Journal 34, No. 8 (15 February 1907): 306-07.
65. “Minutes of University Council,” 23 April 1907, QUA.
66. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 25 April 1907, QUA.
67. “Report of the Board of Trustees,” 1907; and “Report of the Committee Appointed by the General Assembly to Co-operate with the Trustees’s of Queen’s University in Securing Additional Endowment for the University,” 1907, in Minutes of General Assembly 1900-1907, QUA.
68. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 16 October 1907, QUA; and “The Endowment Number,” Queen’s University Journal 35, No. 2 (5 November 1907): 64-65.
69. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 16 October 1907, QUA.
70. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” 17 October 1907, QUA.
71. “Minutes of University Council,” 11 November 1907, QUA.
73. Daniel M. Gordon to Annie B. Rankin, 9 February 1906, QUA 1023-1-8; “Minutes of Senate,” 7 April 1908, QUA; and Daniel M. Gordon to Chancellor McKay, 15 January 1906, QUA 1023-1-8.

75. Daniel M. Gordon to Alexander Henderson, 13 January 1908, QUA 1023-1-17.

76. While Gordon’s correspondence shows that Queen’s broad theological stance alienated some traditionalist ministers and congregations, the majority in the church held a similar stance. By 1908, the movement for the union of the Presbyterian Church with the Methodist and Congregationalist churches, which required doctrinal moderation to succeed, was well underway. (For an example of a negative congregational response, see R.G. McBeth to Daniel M. Gordon, 27 December 1905, QUA 1023-1-5.)

77. “Minutes of Senate,” 10 March 1908, QUA.

78. Daniel M. Gordon to Sandford Fleming, 11 March 1908, QUA 1023-1-17.

79. The amendment observed that “the seriousness of the situation is increased by the working, actual and probable, of the Carnegie Foundation” (“Minutes of Senate,” 12 March 1908, QUA).

80. “Minutes of Senate,” 12 March 1908, QUA.

81. D.R. Drummond to Daniel M. Gordon, 23 March 1908, QUA 1023-1-17.

82. Daniel M. Gordon to D.R. Drummond, 25 March 1908, QUA 1023-1-17.

83. Sandford Fleming to Daniel M. Gordon, 31 March 1908, QUA 1023-1-17.

84. James Maclennan to Daniel M. Gordon, 2 April 1908, QUA 1023-1-18.


86. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 30 April 1908, QUA.

87. My main source for the Assembly is the detailed report made by James Cappon to the Queen’s community (“The Case of Queen’s Before the Assembly,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 16, No. 1 [July-August-September 1908]: 98-115).


89. Cappon, “The Case of Queen’s,” 111.

90. Cappon, “The Case of Queen’s,” 111.
91. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 14 October 1908, QUA.
92. Cappon, “Case of Queen’s,” 114.
93. James Douglas to Daniel M. Gordon, 16 June 1908; and Daniel M. Gordon to James Douglas, 29 August 1908, QUA 1023-.
94. “Minutes of Senate,” 8 October 1908, QUA.
95. Daniel M. Gordon to J. Roberts Allen, 17 October 1908, QUA 1023-1-23.
98. James Maclennan and Sandford Fleming to Staff at Queen’s, 1 December 1908, QUA 1023-1-24.
100. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 28 April 1909, QUA.
107. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 5 October 1909, QUA.
109. Macdonnell and Dyde, “Queen’s and Her Future,” 223.
110. James Cappon, “The Constitutional Relation of Queen’s University to the Church,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 17, No. 3 (January-February-March 1910): 192.

111. Cappon, “The Constitutional Relation of Queen’s University to the Church,” 211.

112. “Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 26 April 1910, QUA.


117. "Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 19 October 1910, QUA.

118. "Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 16 November 1910, QUA.

119. "Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 16 November 1910, QUA.


122. N.F. Dupuis to Daniel M. Gordon, 3 January 1910, QUA 1023-1-26.


125. "Minutes of University Council,” 25 April 1911, QUA.

126. "Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 13 June 1911, QUA.

127. "Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 18 October 1911, QUA.

128. "An Act to Incorporate Queen’s Theological College,” 1 April 1912, QUA 1023-3-22.

129. "Minutes of Board of Trustees,” 21 May 1912, QUA.
130. "Minutes of Board of Trustees," 21 May 1912, QUA; Daniel M. Gordon to Henry S. Pritchett, 3 December 1912, QUA 1023-1-26; and 28 May 1913, QUA 1023-1-26; 13 February 1915, QUA 1023-1-26. Gordon was awarded a pension by the Carnegie Pension Fund in 1916 (Daniel M. Gordon to Henry S. Pritchett, 19 June 1916, QUA 1023-1-26).

131. “Canadian Club Luncheon No. 1,” 7 October 1911, QUA, 1023-5-110.


133. Rawlyk and Quinn, Redeemed of the Lord, 15.


135. Principal Wallace to S.M. Gilmour, 6 November 1942, QUA-Principal’s Files-Box 16.