

“The Work of God upon my Soul”: The Conversion Narrative and After-walk Account in the Early Newfoundland Methodist Community (1765-1774)

S. DAWN BARRETT

Harbour Grace, Friday night, 4 November 1774. Friday night is the regular meeting night for the dozen or so Methodist women of Harbour Grace,¹ the most populous town in Newfoundland, and the commercial, legal and religious centre for the 6,000 winter inhabitants of Conception Bay. But tonight there will not be a regular meeting. Instead, a special meeting has been called, and the women have been joined by the men and friends from outlying villages.² They have a special purpose in mind, for the revivalist Laurence Coughlan, their “prophet sent of God,” whom they have missed intensely since his return to England the autumn before, has written to request that they furnish him with accounts of “the work of God upon your souls.”³

Thirty-year-old Mary Stretton,⁴ leader of the women’s group, had already written her conversion narrative, and may have broken the ice by reading it to the assembled group.⁵ But no one is reticent. These narratives have been told and retold, both before the full congregation and within the weekly class meetings.⁶ One by one ten people rise to give their testimony to God’s grace, while Mary’s husband John, an Irish shop-keeper who is soon to become superintendent of the first Methodist Society in Newfoundland,⁷ acts as scribe.⁸

Laurence Coughlan included these conversion narratives and other letters from his Newfoundland converts in his book, *An Account of the*

Work of God in Newfoundland, North America, which was published in London in 1766. Thus was preserved in print one of the few surviving congregational collections of conversion narratives, a genre which normally belongs to the oral tradition. Also encapsulated within the letters are a form of religious expression peculiar to this group, which I have labelled “after-walk account.”⁹

This paper will locate these forms of religious expression in their historical context, outline briefly the understanding of soteriology expressed by them, and indicate the role each played in the normative self-definition of the early Newfoundland Methodist community.

Historical Background

Laurence Coughlan was converted to Methodism by itinerants who visited his native village of Drummersnave in Ireland in 1753.¹⁰ Two years later he became one of John Wesley’s lay preachers,¹¹ in which capacity he served for the next eight years, preaching in such disparate circuits as Colchester, Newcastle, Whitehaven and London, as well as Ireland.¹² Following a breach with Wesley,¹³ Coughlan became preacher of an Independent Chapel in Bermundsey, Surrey.¹⁴ In 1766, armed with a letter from a Newfoundland merchant and a London banker with connections to the Newfoundland trade,¹⁵ Coughlan approached William Legge, the second Earl of Dartmouth, with whom he had become acquainted during his London ministry. The Earl of Dartmouth was then chairman of the Board of Trade of England and, as such, was responsible for regulating the Newfoundland fishery. Through his influence, Coughlan, on three successive days in April of 1766, was ordained deacon, licensed to the Newfoundland ministry under the Bishop of London and consecrated to the priesthood of the Church of England.¹⁶ Then, accompanied by his wife Anne and daughter Betsey, he set sail within days for Harbour Grace where the inhabitants had already erected a church and had been searching for a minister.¹⁷ The failure of the fishery in the Fall of that year led Coughlan’s parishioners to seek and obtain financial support from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG).¹⁸ This placed Laurence Coughlan in the anomalous position of being at once both Methodist preacher and incumbent of an Anglican parish.

Coughlan’s first three years of ministry in Conception Bay were successful in terms of church attendance, church membership and church

expansion.¹⁹ However, Coughlan was dissatisfied. He needed experiential proof that he was a “true evangelical minister” sent by God.²⁰ This proof came in the winter of 1768-69 when he succeeded in initiating a religious revival which spread from the main population centres of Harbour Grace and neighbouring Carbonear to outlying fishing villages around Conception Bay.²¹

Opposition to the style and content of his preaching by the Anglican mercantocracy of Harbour Grace resulted in personal animosity between Coughlan and the merchants, a dozen of whom sent a petition to the governor requesting his removal.²² Coughlan’s later refusal to baptise infants whose parents or prospective god-parents had been signatories to this petition led to his being recalled by the SPG in 1773.²³ He left behind him a community torn by religious conflict, as Coughlan’s supporters endeavoured to confirm their support of his “born again” theology and revivalist preaching by circulating counter-petitions, and engaging in issues of proprietary rights and church polity.²⁴ Thus the Coughlan era in Conception Bay resulted in a *de facto* separation between Anglicans and Methodists a full two decades before the division occurred in England.

The Conversion Narrative

The early Methodist community in Conception Bay was formed of individuals who could claim conversion experiences through which they received a personal assurance of faith, experiences which distinguished them from the more conventional Anglican members of the parish. The majority of these conversion experiences were of the emotionally stimulated type identified by Elmer Clark as most likely to occur during religious revivals. Essentially gradual in that no immediate change of attitude is effected, the subject regards some specific moment as the beginning of religious consciousness.²⁵

For the early Newfoundland Methodists, this specific moment was directly related to the revival of 1768-69. Their conversion narratives typically begin with the expression, “When I first heard you preach.” Coughlan’s converts failed to recognize as religious any life events that occurred before his arrival. Also completely missing from their accounts is imagery taken from every-day occupations – from fishing, child-bearing, sailing voyages or wilderness experiences. Neither do the narratives reflect any gender differences. The shared revival experience over-shadows all

else. All express their conversion by highlighting emotional impressions, employing religious clichés and utilizing an allusive Biblical language.

While each narrative in the collection is unique, they follow a set form as each convert passes through the expected stages of awakening and conviction, through justification, to holiness. Awakening was used by Coughlan to refer to an intellectual understanding of one's status as sinner, and the first stirrings of conscience that accompanied this realization. His followers believed that consciousness of corruption could only be accomplished through divine agency, as God, assisted by the power of the Word as preached by Coughlan, opened the eyes of sinners, enabling them to perceive their own wickedness. Once the conscience was awakened, conviction followed. This could happen almost immediately upon awakening, and some narratives barely distinguish between these two stages. For example,

I constantly attended the Means of Grace: but felt not the Power of Religion, till the Lord himself was pleased at Last, to open my Eyes; then the Word came with power to my Heart, and I saw and felt my lost undone condition by Nature, and by Practice; I laboured under these Convictions about twelve months, groaning earnestly to be delivered.²⁶

Others, such as Mary Stretton, clearly distinguished between awakening, when “the Word began to take root,” and conviction, when “the Lord sent his Word with Power, as a two-edged Sword”:

As I constantly attended the Means, the Word began to take Root . . . I was, in a Measure, convinced of Sin; yet I did not see, and feel, my lost and undone State by Nature, till the Spring following; when the Lord sent his Word with Power, as a two-edged Sword, to my Soul: I saw myself wretched, and poor, and blind, and naked; having no Hope, and without God in the World: I saw, and felt, I deserved Eternal Damnation; and was constrained to cry out, Lord, save, or I perish.²⁷

During conviction, guilt was enhanced by fear, as repeated sermons on the wrath of God were heard. Torn between maintaining their present sense of self and responding to their fear of the God at whose hands they deserved nothing but eternal damnation, they entered a phase of extreme

psychological disequilibrium marked by guilt, tears, depression and emotional distress. Believing they could not be justified until this period of suffering had been experienced, Coughlan's followers wallowed in their misery for periods that could last from several days to several years.

I was struck with Surprise to see my fallen Condition; and Anguish filled my Heart, when I saw the Load of Guilt which bowed down my Soul; I cannot express the Pain and Anguish I felt for three Days successively, I could find no enjoyment in any Thing, and, I thought, my Pain and Distress of Soul was as great as if I had felt a Portion of Eternal Torments.²⁸

I saw myself as a lost, sinful Worm, utterly unworthy of Mercy; and many a Tear I shed, and many an aching Heart I had before the God of my Salvation set me at Liberty; about twelve months I groaned under the Lashes of a guilty Conscience and the Terrors of the Law.²⁹

The Truth found a way to my Heart, and I saw and felt my lost Condition by Nature; and my whole Life appeared a Blot; I saw that I had never done one good Action all my long Life; and my Grief was great and sore, that ever I offended a good, an infinitely good God; I laboured under this Distress of Soul for near two Years; during which Time, I sought the Lord earnestly with Tears, Day and Night . . .³⁰

Descriptions of conviction predominate in the narratives. In an attempt to wrest meaning from the experience of guilt, the sufferers saw it as God-directed, and this attributed a positive value to the suffering. It was anxiously anticipated, and most converts could point to the precise moment when their conviction began and ended. Since they believed God is not found in ordinary experience, the convicted sinners had to experience a deeper and more profound suffering than they had ever known before. This was heroic suffering, glorified because it was *in imitatione Christi*. Through it the passion of Christ was self-appropriated. Just as the passion is followed by the resurrection and the ascension, the convicted sinners expected that their suffering would be followed by justification and holiness. No one remained forever undelivered, for God is merciful; salvation was not for the elect but for all who were awakened and convicted of sin.

From their suffering arose the existential question, "What must I do

to be saved?” Rejecting works as a path to salvation, they could do nothing but rely on the grace of God. But meanwhile, there were means of grace that could be used – prayer, Scripture reading, attendance at class meetings, listening to sermons, taking part in the Lord’s Supper. Friends prayed for them, as did Coughlan and his wife. Delivery inevitably took place while they were participating in one of these means of grace. This moment of deliverance, termed justification, was understood as the moment when the righteousness of Christ was imputed to sinners, who became “restored to the favour of God.”

From a world view in which they yearned to become recipients of the grace of God, Coughlan’s converts interpreted their decision to surrender as a movement of God, an act of his free grace. They described the moment of justification in the following ways:

It pleased the Lord to shine upon my Soul.³¹

The Lord heard my Prayer, and set my Soul at Liberty.³²

The Lord broke in upon my Soul with these Words: “Fear not, only believe.”³³

This text came with Power to my Heart, “I will put my spirit within you.” I was enabled to lay hold on the Lord Jesus, and praise the God of my Salvation.³⁴

The redeemed sinner was expected to list evidence illustrating the change of status. Typically five items of evidence were considered sufficient. For Coughlan’s converts, whose whole understanding of the conversion process had an emotional emphasis, these evidences of grace were primarily affective. J.J. received a dispersion of all his fears, he was given the power to believe, his Heart was lifted up, he was enabled to cleave closer and closer to God and he received the patience to endure affliction.³⁵ C.A. received relief from the heavy load that bowed her down, happiness which made her feel her night had been turned into day and her hell into heaven, strength to fight the good fight, Jesus was now precious to her soul and in every affliction her spirits were lifted.³⁶ J.S. was confounded by the sudden change in his soul, he found himself full of love, his pains and anguish were removed, he was willing to die and be received into the

blessed arms of Jesus, and he felt that his sins were pardoned.³⁷

Among Coughlan's converts the pardoning of sins did not enjoy as prominent a role as the change of mood. Also, while there is evidence that moral change took place after conversion,³⁸ the narrators themselves did not testify to it. This was a very real departure from the teachings of John Wesley, for whom the conversion experience was ethical and spiritual rather than emotional.³⁹

Following the "flow of joy" which marked the euphoria of justification there frequently came a mood of intense despair. Coughlan taught his followers to interpret this as an attack of the devil who seeks to be avenged for what he has lost.

I rejoiced thus in the Lord, about a Week; and then the Enemy came in as a Flood, and persuaded me, that I was deceived, that all was a Delusion, and that I had not received Pardon, or Consolation, as yet. Six Weeks, the Enemy thus blinded my Eyes, oppressed my Spirits, and overwhelmed me in Distress: Oh! what Anguish of Spirit was I in, until the Lord Jesus again delivered me.⁴⁰

I had some Doubts of my Acceptance; the Enemy would have persuaded me, that all was a Delusion; and my Lord hid his lovely Face from me: Oh! what did I suffer in the Absence of my Lord; no Tongue can express the Anguish of Soul I endured, while he concealed himself from me: However, he did not leave me long comfortless; he came to my Deliverance, dispersed these Clouds, and all my Doubts vanished.⁴¹

For several of the converts this phase abruptly ended with a second great dispensation of grace in which they received full assurance.⁴² However, most did not include this period of doubt and reassurance in their conversion narratives. Their experience ended with a statement of praise to God for what he had done. In their understanding, the story of the doubts that arose after justification were not part of the conversion experience *per se*. They belonged instead to the after-walk account.

The After-walk Account

The telling of a conversion narrative marks a decision to project oneself as a convert, and, as such, anticipates a reality not yet existent since

the consolidation of the new self-understanding into patterns of every-day living is yet to come. Growth is intermittent as old habits compete with the new self-concept. For those converts who were stimulated by the emotions of the revival to proclaim themselves justified, complete conversion or the attainment of “holiness” was dependant upon attendance in the class meetings. Through these weekly meetings the integration of the new ideals into the personality was completed. The after-walk accounts give evidence of this process of personality change. The converts referred to them as “the Dealings of God with my soul,”⁴³ as “relating to you what Jesus has done, and is yet doing, for my soul,”⁴⁴ or as “when I review my After-Walk.”⁴⁵

Ten examples of the after-walk account are embedded within the letters contained in Coughlan’s book. Two are undated; the others have different dates ranging from 19 October to 4 November 1774. In addition, the form without its opening and closing formulae is found in a letter written by John Stretton two years later.⁴⁶ Eleven individuals from various communities writing letters on different dates would not have used the same form in their letters unless the genre were very familiar to them. The writings, therefore, depict what must have been a regular way of expressing oneself during the weekly class meetings of the early Newfoundland Methodists.⁴⁷

The typical after-walk account is very short, taking only a minute or two to narrate. It begins with a statement of praise to God and ends with a prayer request. The body of the account contains a listing of the spiritual weaknesses of the convert, although the tone is overwhelmingly hopeful. Every weakness either has already been amended by the grace of God, or is an occasion for prayer. In this way, the after-walk account serves as a personal gauge of holiness. When all weaknesses have succumbed to grace, holiness will have been attained.

Prayer was an essential part of the after-walk account. Not only does each narration end with a prayer request, but some also add the narrator’s own prayer for the group, or for Coughlan. This indicates that in a class meeting the sharing of each after-walk account would normally be followed by prayer.

I will now examine in more detail a typical after-walk account, that of Clement Noel.⁴⁸ He begins, as do all the others, with a statement of praise: “Glory be to our blessed and dear Redeemer, who is always more ready to hear, than poor sinners are to pray.”

The body of Clement Noel’s after-walk account contains a listing of

three failings. In the first of these he is troubled with fears that he will be “overcome by the hands of Saul,” a reference to 1 Samuel 27:1. In the pericope which contains the expression, David has crept into the cave where his enemy Saul is sleeping and has stolen his spear. Recognizing that David has had the opportunity to kill him, and refrained from doing so, Saul blesses him. But David still believes that one day he will perish at the hands of Saul. What Clement Noel is expressing in the allusive shorthand typical of the religious language used by Coughlan’s converts is the feeling that, although outwardly he has been blessed through God’s grace, inwardly he still fears that he may perish at God’s hands in the Day of Judgement. Then he amends his fear, declaring, “when I look to the Lord I know his grace is sufficient for me, and I am able to rejoice.”

Next follows a second failing, the deceitfulness of his own heart, which Clement Noel describes as his worst enemy. This is a recognition that even though his faculties have been influenced by the grace of God, they are yet imperfect. He is justified but not yet made holy. He discovers that in the realization itself there is a blessing.

Then he testifies to the third of his weaknesses: “the nearer I live to God, the more temptations I find.” Clement Noel is slowly learning to integrate new habits into his personality. Many of his old habits are considered sinful by Methodist standards and he is making a conscious effort to eliminate them. Still he is tempted to fall into old ways. He echoes a thought expressed in Romans 7:14-25: “. . . when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.” In this pericope, Paul speaks of the value of the Law in helping him realize that nothing good dwells within his own flesh, recognizes his inability to overcome this sinfulness and looks to Jesus Christ to deliver him.⁴⁹ Clement Noel, too, looks to Jesus rather than his own will-power to find a way to withstand the temptations.

In the closing formula of his after-walk account Clement Noel petitions, “pray for me, that I may not be cast away.” This practice of ending an after-walk account with a prayer request indicates that during a class meeting the narration of each account was followed by a period of prayer for the narrator.

The remainder of Clement Noel’s letter contains personal words to Coughlan indicating how much he is missed, a request to Coughlan to pray for him and one more expression of his present state (“it is a rough and thorny road that we are walking in”) which indicates how much they are missing Coughlan. “But”, he states with conviction, “I know that the Lord

will deliver us out of all our troubles here below.” The form of the after-walk has become so much a part of his religious expression that he naturally falls into the pattern of expecting that every dilemma has a hopeful solution in the form of supernatural assistance.

The Role of the Conversion Narrative and After-walk Account

Since the willingness to confess one’s faith declares its presence, the telling of a conversion narrative during a meeting established the neophyte’s change of status from sinner to redeemed. The telling also had a cathartic effect for the narrator. This was shared by the converted listeners who relived their own experiences during the narration. Then, by comparison with the group experience, the experience of the individual was verified. The anxiety and insecurity of the conviction phase was overcome by the acceptance of the convert’s new status by the group. This re-affirmed a new sense of self, and led to the emergence of a new social persona. It also satisfied needs for acceptance and inclusion, basic needs for uprooted individuals living in the fluid and rapidly-changing society of mid-eighteenth century Conception Bay.

The practice of weekly sharing of after-walk accounts forced the converts to be perpetually cognizant of their spiritual condition, to pay daily attention to their impressions of the work of God upon their souls and to be vigilant in recognizing their own weaknesses. The form taught them to look ever to Jesus for strength to overcome their moral and spiritual weaknesses, and held out the expectation that, through the grace of God, imparted holiness as well as imputed holiness could be attained.

Used in a weekly meeting, this genre was very effective in drawing the group together into a close fellowship. As one person expressed his or her failings, the others would empathize. They were conscious of similar faults in themselves. This unified the group in a fellowship of shared experience. Yet the form itself taught that every weakness is an occasion for hope. It drew the converts, who through their ability to relate a narrative of conversion have attained the status of holiness, towards the expression of this holiness in their lives.

Through following the giving of each account by prayer for the convert, the individual was immersed in group fellowship. Through mutual exhortation, the faith of each individual was strengthened. Through the disapproval of worldly diversions, contact with outsiders was kept to a

minimum and the group became a bulwark against the scorn of the unconverted. The members became so close to each other that they were welcomed into each other's most intimate moments, even the moment of death, when they would gather around the bed to sing hymns and pray.⁵⁰

Conclusion

During his seven years in Newfoundland, Laurence Coughlan was simultaneously an Anglican parish clergyman and the pastor of a gathered church within his own parish. Within a year of his departure, the two groups had differentiated into Anglican and Methodist. Methodists were distinguished from the majority by their definition of religion as an individual and subjective response to God's grace reflected in a personal spiritual transformation which was expressed as a conversion narrative. The weekly class meetings with their sharing of after-walk accounts were the means by which these individuals were bonded into a close fellowship. Their loyalty to their ostracized religious leader, whose ardent preaching had stimulated their conversion, formed the basis on which religious differentiation was completed. The roots laid down during the Coughlan years created for Newfoundland Methodism a distinctive soteriology and a religious ethos that remains unique.

Endnotes

1. "I still continue to meet the women, according to your desire . . . We meet, as usual, on Fridays at Mrs. Martins" (M.S. to Laurence Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 31 October 1774, in Laurence Coughlan, *An Account of the Work of God in Newfoundland, North America* [London: W. Gilbert, 1776], 74-75).
2. A dozen people can be positively identified as having been present on this occasion. There may have been more, but it is unlikely that the number exceeded thirty, which was the number of members active in the Methodist society formed within that year. "We have joined ourselves into a society, and have drawn up rules as like Mr. Wesley's as we could, consistent with local circumstances; our number about thirty, who I believe are sincere in heart" (John Stretton to Eliza Bennis, Harbour Grace, 14 November 1775, in Eliza Bennis, *Christian Correspondence: being a collection of letters written by the late Rev. John Wesley, and several Methodist preachers, in connection with him, to the late Mrs. Eliza Bennis, with her answers, chiefly explaining and enforcing the doctrine of sanctification; now first published from the*

originals [Philadelphia: B. Graves for T. Bennis, 1809], 210-211).

3. Many of the correspondents made reference to the request received from Coughlan. For example, "Agreeable to your Desire, I send you an Account of my Conversion, which is as follows: . . ." (J.J. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 105); "You already know my former Experience, yet, in compliance with your Desire, I will again repeat it to you: . . ." (J.S. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 124). They were aware that their accounts were to be made public: "I here send you my Experience, and, I hope, the Account will prove a Blessing to many" (M.M. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 99).
4. Born Mary Parsons, she was the self-educated daughter of an early settler family. Her obituary, which appeared in *The Newfoundlander* on 27 January 1831, identifies her as a leading Methodist and adds that "she acquired an astonishing fund of general, but more particularly of religious, information, of which she has with justice been termed a 'living library'."
5. Her conversion narrative, dated 31 October 1774, is more detailed and expresses the theology of John Wesley more closely than any of the others. It has the appearance of being carefully thought through. Her letter also contains news of the community, mentioning by name those who are considered backsliders, another indication that hers was a written rather than a verbal account.
6. Coughlan, 9.
7. ". . . it was reduced to this alternative, either for me to undertake the superintendence, or see the Society decay" (John Stretton to Eliza Bennis, Harbour Grace, 8 November 1776, in Bennis, 216).
8. Stretton indicates at the end of two of the conversion narratives that he has been the recorder (Coughlan, 90, 94). It can be presumed that he recorded all ten of the accounts that are dated 4 November 1774.
9. I have derived the nomenclature from the expression "when I review my After-Walk" used by E.T., one of the converts (E.T. to Coughlan, n.d., in Coughlan, 110). I have not found examples of the genre outside the early Newfoundland Methodist material.
10. C.H. Crookshank, *History of Methodism in Ireland*, Vol. 1, *Wesley and His Times* (Belfast: R.S. Allen, Son and Allen, 1885), 100, 107. Drummersnave is presently known as Drumsna.
11. Coughlan was received on trial at a period when four of the ten itinerants in Ireland were incapacitated by illness (Crookshank, 1:104-107).

12. Coughlan travelled with John Murlin from Dublin to London to attend the Conference in 1757 (John Telford, *Wesley's Veterans. Lives of Early Methodist Preachers Told by Themselves*, 8 vols. [Salem, Ohio: Schmul Publishers, Rare Reprint Specialists], 2:161). There he was received as a full preacher and appointed to Colchester. Wesley's journal entry for 28 November 1758 gives some details of his Colchester period (John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed., 14 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986], 2:462). In August of 1758 he attended the Conference at Bristol, where he received appointments for the ensuing year to Newcastle and London (*Minutes of the Methodist Conferences*, Vol. I. [London: John Mason, 1862]). He was in Whitehaven in 1759 (John Wesley to Matthew Lowes, 6 March 1759, in *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. Sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford*, 8 vols., ed. John Telford [London: Epworth Press, 1960 (1931)], 4:56ff). The Bristol Conference of 1760 reappointed him to Ireland (Crookshank, 1:148ff). He returned to London sometime before 1762.
13. Luke Tyerman believes the cause of this breach to be Coughlan's illicit ordination by Erasmus, an expatriate Greek bishop (*The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, Founder of the Methodists*, 3 vols. [New York: Burt Franklin, 1973 (1872)], 3:25). See also, John Wesley to the Printer of *St. James Chronicle*, 10 February 1765, in Telford, 4:290. In a letter to Coughlan, Wesley indicates doctrinal differences and associates his name with that of Thomas Maxfield, the leader of the London enthusiasts whom Wesley repudiated in 1763 (The journal of John Wesley, 27 August 1768, in Wesley, 3:340-342). Wesley indicated in a letter to John Stretton that the two were finally reconciled when Coughlan was on his death-bed (Wesley to Stretton, 25 February 1785, in Telford, 7:260-261).
14. "Late Eighteenth Century Dissent in Surrey," *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* 17, No. 4 (November 1955): 128-135, as quoted by Hans Rollmann, "Laurence Coughlan and the Origins of Methodism in Newfoundland," in *The Contribution of Methodism to Atlantic Canada*, eds. Charles H.H. Scobie and John Webster Grant (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).
15. George Davis and George Welch to the Earl of Dartmouth, 16 April 1766, Fulham Papers, Lambeth Palace, London. A transcript was obtained courtesy of Dr. Hans Rollmann.
16. The Earl of Dartmouth's role was acknowledged by Coughlan who wrote, ". . . it was under your Lordship's Patronage I first came here. In short I may safely say you were the only instrument under God of getting me ordained and so of coming to this place" (Coughlan to the Earl of Dartmouth, Harbour

Grace, 25 October 1772, Dartmouth Originals, MG 23, A1/2: 2497). See also, The Earl of Dartmouth to the Bishop of London, 18 April 1766, Fulham Papers, Lambeth Palace, London.

17. The church, which was built of materials shipped from Boston, was nearly complete by the summer of 1764 (Edward Langman to SPG Secretary, St. John's, 6 November 1764, SPG Papers B.6/161).
18. Petition of the Inhabitants of Harbour Grace, Carbonear & Parts Adjacent in the Bay of Conception, Newfoundland to the SPG, 30 October 1766, SPG Papers B.6/166. The SPG was chartered in 1701 by King William III "for the Receiving, Managing and Disposing of the Charity of such Persons as would be induced to extend their Charity towards the Maintenance of a Learned and Orthodox Clergy, and the making of such other Provision as might be necessary for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts . . ." (*SPG Journal* 17:209-210, SPG Papers A/153).
19. S. Dawn Barrett, "Revivalism and the Origins of Newfoundland Methodism: 1766-1774" (M.A. Thesis, Memorial University, 1993), 82-86.
20. Coughlan, 8.
21. Coughlan, 9-19. The response was notably zealous at Blackhead, a village eighteen miles by water from Carbonear; within a fortnight its dozen families erected a church capable of holding 400 people.
22. Petition of Hugh Roberts to Governor John Byron, in Warwick Smith, "An Address on Rev. Laurence Coughlan, 20 March 1742, from the Records of the Harbour Grace Court House," unpublished paper available at the Newfoundland Room, Arts and Culture Centre Library, St. John's. Byron forwarded the petitions to his Surrogate, Willam Parker, with orders to investigate and report (*Colonial Record Books*, entry for 2 October 1771, GN2/1A 5:2, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador [PANL]). As a result of the investigation, Byron relieved Coughlan of his duties as magistrate but he was not asked to leave Newfoundland as the merchants had requested (John Byron to Coughlan, *Panther*, St. John's, 25 October 1771. *Colonial Record Book*, GN2/1A 5:5-6, PANL). See also Coughlan, 10.
23. Deposition of Mary Martin, 26 May 1772 and deposition of John Alcock, 26 May 1772 (SPG Papers A-170 C/Nfld/1/59). See also Minutes of the General Meetings of the SPG, 15 January 1773 and 17 December 1773.
24. Difficulties in obtaining possession of the house and chapels were documented by James Balfour, Coughlan's Anglican successor, in a series of letters to the SPG (see especially his letters of 9 November 1775 [SPG Papers

- B.6/203], 3 December 1776 [SPG Papers B.6/208] and 2 December 1779 [Papers B.6/215]). Orders by the Anglican Governor Edwards preventing Methodist preachers or anyone not commissioned by Balfour from using the chapels at Carbonear and Blackhead were later rescinded by his successor Governor John Campbell, son of a Scots Presbyterian minister (Hans Rollmann, "Religious Enfranchisement and Roman Catholics in Eighteenth Century Newfoundland," *Religion and Identity, the Experience of Irish and Scottish Catholics in Atlantic Canada*, eds. Terrence Murphy and Cyril J. Byrne [St. John's: Jespersen Press, 1987], 40, 44).
25. Elmer T. Clarke, *The Psychology of Religious Awakening* (New York: Macmillan, 1929).
 26. C.K. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 107-108.
 27. M.S. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 31 October 1774, in Coughlan, 71-72.
 28. J.S. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 124-125.
 29. M.P. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 95-96.
 30. M.M. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 98-99.
 31. M.M. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 99.
 32. James Noseworthy to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 88.
 33. M.P. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 96.
 34. N.S. to Coughlan, Bear's Cove, 28 October 1774, in Coughlan, 135.
 35. J.J. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 105.
 36. C.A. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 113-114.
 37. J.S. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 125.
 38. Coughlan wrote concerning the inhabitants, ". . . before they received the Gospel, they spent much of their Time in Rioting and Drunkenness; but when the Word took place in their Hearts, many of them not only got out of Debt, but also had to spare" (Coughlan, 15). "Since my coming to the Bay, Drunkenness and Swearing with Sabbath-breaking is very much done away" (Coughlan to SPG Secretary, Harbour Grace, 12 October 1769, SPG Papers B.6/179).

39. Wesley wrote, concerning his Aldersgate experience, "But it was not long before the enemy suggested, 'This cannot be faith, for where is thy joy?' Then I was taught that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation: But that, as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them according to the counsels of his own will" (Wesley's journal, 15 May 1738, in Wesley, 1:103). See also, Gregory S. Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections: His Views on Experience and Emotion and their Role in christian Life and Theology* (Methuen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989); and Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1989).
40. M.P. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 96.
41. J.M. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 116-117.
42. J.M. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 117; M.P. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 95-96; and J.P. to Coughlan, Harbour Grace, 4 November 1774, in Coughlan, 102-103.
43. J.F. to Coughlan, Carbonear, 19 October 1774, in Coughlan, 145.
44. M.F. to Coughlan, 20 October 1774, in Coughlan, 157.
45. E.T. to Coughlan, n.d., in Coughlan, 110.
46. John Stretton to Eliza Bennis, Harbour Grace, 8 November 1776, in Bennis, 215.
47. No other extant examples have been discovered thus far. It does not necessarily follow that this form was peculiar to the early Newfoundland Methodists. This may be the only incidence where the after-walk account, normally transmitted orally, was committed to writing.
48. C.N. to Coughlan, Freshwater, 27 October 1774, in Coughlan, 127-128. The complete text of the letter may be found in Appendix I.
49. Zwingli's statement of evangelical doctrine interprets the passage thus: "In Paul's view we perceive and experience our own weakness and impotence. If, however, no one can come to God unless he has no blemish, according to Psalm 15:1-3, and we cannot be without blemish, it then follows that we must despair of ourselves of being able to come to God. Here the grace of God that is shown to us in Christ will reveal itself" (Huldrych Zwingli, "A Short Christian Instruction," [1523], reprinted in *Huldrych Zwingli: Writings*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. E.J. Furcha [Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications,

1984], 2:54).

50. Thomas Pottle, whom Coughlan appointed lay preacher in Carbonear, noted in describing his attendance at a death scene “Several of our Women Friends were with us . . .” (T.P. to Coughlan, Carbonear, 28 July 1772, in Coughlan, 50).

Appendix I: Clement Noel's After-walk

Fresh-Water, October 27, 1774.

My Dear and Honoured Father,

I, Your poor weak Child, now acquaint you with my Life, which, blessed be God, is pretty well at this present Time; for this Day, I have been very happy, as I was in the Woods. Glory be to our blessed and dear Redeemer, who is always more ready to hear, than poor Sinners are ready to pray. My dear Reverend Sir, I am, at Times, troubled with Fears and Doubts, that I shall be overcome by the Hands of Saul; but when I look unto the Lord, I know, that his Grace is sufficient for me, and I am enabled to rejoice. My dear Father, the greatest Enemy I have is my deceitful Heart; but, O my dear Sir, what a Blessing it is that we know it! One Thing I know, that the nearer I live to God, the more Temptations I find; but, for ever blessed be his holy Name, he finds a Way for me to withstand them; but, O dear Sir, pray for me, that I may not be cast away: I remember the Charge which you gave me, to meet you at the Right-hand of the Majesty on high, which Words many Times prove a great Blessing to my poor Soul, to believe, that we shall meet in the Spirit, as there is no Likelihood of our meeting in the Flesh. Oh! my dear Sir, I often perceive the Want of your Company; but, I hope, you will grant me my Desire, which is, that you will pray for me, that I may hold out to the End; for it is a rough and thorny Road that we are walking in; but, I know, that the Lord will deliver us out of all our Troubles here below.

I am,
Your poor unworthy Child,

C—N—.