

---

**HISTORICAL PAPERS 2003**  
**Canadian Society**  
**of Church History**

Annual Conference  
Dalhousie University / University of King's College  
28-29 May 2003

Edited by  
Bruce L. Guenther

©Copyright 2003 by the authors and the Canadian Society of Church History

Printed in Canada  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Main entry under title:

Historical Papers

June 2/3 (1988)-  
Annual.

A selection of papers delivered at the Society's annual meeting.

Place of publication varies.

Continues: Proceedings of the Canadian Society of Church History, ISSN 0842-1056.

ISSN 0848-1563

ISBN 0-9696744-0-6 (1993)

1. Church History—Congresses. 2. Canada—Church history—Congresses. I. Canadian Society of Church history.

BR570.C322 fol.

277.1

C90-030319-0

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Papers

Kingston Christians and the Persecution of European Jews During the Nazi Era MARY-ANN SHANTZ	5
The Influence of the Social Gospel in Modern Rural Japan: A Case Study of Howard and Herbert Norman SACHIYO TAKASHIMA	19
Voices United? The House of Commons' Role in the Creation of The United Church of Canada SARA J. KNIGHT	39
Recalling the Salvation Army's Outreach Amongst Finnish-Canadians MIKE ROINILA	65
British-Canadian Myths of Purity and Segregated Schools in Mid-Nineteenth Century Canada West KRISTIN MCLAREN	73
Building a Christian Democracy: George Drew, the Protestant Churches and the Origins of Religious Education in Ontario's Public Schools, 1944-1945 ANTHONY P. MICHEL	87
The Education of Henry Bird Steinhauer, Indigenous Missionary to Western Canada A.A. DEN OTTER	109
Biafra and the Canadian Churches, 1966-1970 PETER BUSH	129

- The Huntingdonian Mission to Nova Scotia, 1782 to 1791:  
A Study in Calvinistic Methodism  
JACK C. WHYTOCK 149

**CSCH President's Address**

- A Usable Past: Church Historians as Engaged Scholars  
Who Serve the Common Good  
DOUGLAS H. SHANTZ 171

***Please Note***

The following papers were presented, but not made available for publication: Lucille Marr ("Spirituality and a Heart for Justice: Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, 1979-2000"); Dan Goodwin ("Maritime Baptist Union, 1905-1906"); Gary Miedema ("Raising Up a Nation: The National Religious Advisory Council of the Canadian Broadcasting Commission, 1938-1975"); Ruth Brouwer ("Margaret Wrong's Africa Journeys, 1929-1948: Beyond the Stereotypes of Lady Missionary and Lady Traveller"); and Russell Prime ("Religious Awakening in Respectable Halifax: A Look at the Creed Family Papers, 1820-1840").

## **Kingston Christians and the Persecution of European Jews During the Nazi Era**

MARY-ANN SHANTZ

---

An historical assessment of the response of Canadian churches to the treatment of the Jews in Nazi Germany is still in its beginning stages. This paper seeks to address the need for a local history approach to the question of the Canadian churches' response to the situation of the Jews in Europe between 1933 and 1945. Specifically, the paper makes use of archival sources to investigate the response of the Kingston Ministerial Association and the Roman Catholic Church in Kingston, Ontario, during this period. It argues that neither the Protestant nor Catholic churches mounted any significant effort on behalf of European Jews.

Robert W. Ross examines what was published in the American Protestant press year by year throughout the twelve years the Nazi regime held power in Germany, and he consistently finds that the press possessed and published information regarding the increasingly horrific fate of European Jews as it unfolded. He argues on this basis that ignorance is not a valid defence for inaction on the part of American Protestants, and accuses them of silence on several accounts, namely: "knowing but not being persuaded; the failure to act in concert; the failure of modest actions; the failure of World War II as 'containing' specific intervention for Jews; and the failure to speak in words of moral indignation, confession, or moral outrage in the face of the death camps."<sup>1</sup> Because of the proximity and close political ties between Canada and the United States, as well as the relationship between a number of Canadian and American Protestant denominations, Ross' work has a significant bearing on the question of what Canadians and Canadian Protestants knew about Nazi Germany's

*Historical Papers 2003: Canadian Society of Church History*

treatment of Jews. Ross reveals that American Protestants, and by extension, Canadian Protestants, cannot argue that they were unaware of the persecution and atrocities committed by the Nazi regime against the European Jews.

The context in which Canadian churches were located during this period includes a tough Canadian immigration policy which prevented Canada from acting as a haven for European Jews during the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>2</sup> Unyielding politicians were motivated by the desire to maintain national unity as well as the electoral vote, in a context in which anti-Semitism revealed itself all too frequently.

Davies and Nefsky are the only historians who have undertaken a comprehensive examination of the Canadian Protestant response.<sup>3</sup> Drawing on official church documents, sermons, and church journals, they offer an assessment of the United Church of Canada, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist (and other Evangelical), Lutheran, Mennonite, and Quaker denominations. They locate varying degrees of outspokenness and action amongst Canadian denominations, identifying the United, Anglican and Baptist clergy and church members as most outspoken, and Lutherans and Salvationists as least outspoken, with regards to the treatment of the Jews in Germany.

The short work of Davies and Nefsky, however, represents just the beginning of a needed examination of the attitudes and actions of Canadian Protestants with regards to immigration, the “Jewish question,” and the Holocaust. Many of the primary sources used by Davies and Nefsky are national denominational publications such as *The Canadian Churchman* and *The New Outlook*. They also devote a great deal of attention to leaders of prominence on a national level such as Claris Silcox and T.T. Shields. While groundbreaking work, Davies’ and Nefsky’s study is very much a general survey, lacking nuance and attention to regional responses. A study of church activities in a local community would provide a valuable counter-balance to this perspective. Second, Davies and Nefsky specifically restricted their study to Protestantism noting that, together with Roman Catholic Quebec, this was the formative influence in Canada at the time.<sup>4</sup> As a result of their experience as cultural outsiders, an examination of religious minority groups could potentially provide a different picture from that of Davies and Nefsky.

This paper undertakes an assessment of what was said and done in one local community through an examination of the minutes of the Kingston Ministerial Association and stories run in the *Canadian*

*Freeman*, a weekly Roman Catholic publication printed in Kingston, Ontario. The Protestant Kingston Ministerial Association minutes from 1933-1949 provide important information on Protestant-Jewish relations in Kingston, and indicate the level of concern Kingston Protestants expressed regarding the situation of the Jews in Europe and what action they did or did not take. The stories that appear in the *Canadian Freeman* provide the perspective of religious outsiders--English Catholics in a primarily Protestant society. For this reason, and because of the great divide on a local level between Protestants and Catholics during this period, the *Freeman* provides an important balance to the Protestant Kingston Ministerial Association minutes in an investigation of the local Kingston response to the treatment of the Jews in Germany throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

The Kingston Ministerial Association (KMA) was an inter-denominational association of local ministers. A membership list appearing at the front of the 1929-1937 minute book, dated January 1936, reveals that the United Church and Anglican denominations comprised the majority of the association each with ministers from seven congregations. Also represented were Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist and Salvation Army churches. Free Methodist and Pentecostal ministers joined the Association in 1938. Two other groups belonging to the association were professors from Queen's Theological College and retired ministers.

Significantly, Rabbi Kellerman appears on the 1936 list, and receives mention in several meetings from 1937 onwards. Rabbis Steindel, Klaperman, Renov and Pimonthel are also present at various meetings. These men were either rabbis at the local Beth Israel synagogue or chaplains for Hillel, the Jewish student association at Queen's University.<sup>5</sup> Rabbi Kellerman was an active participant in the KMA--in 1939 he served on a five-member committee whose purpose was to bring recommendations for services that could be provided to soldiers in training at Kingston. He was asked to close meetings with prayer on occasion and as a long-standing member of the KMA made formal introductions of new rabbis to the association.

What is remarkable about the presence of these local Jewish leaders at the KMA is the fact that membership was otherwise restricted to Protestant ministers. Furthermore, starting in 1942, Rabbi Klaperman was included as a participant in the Morning Devotions broadcast, a daily devotional broadcast on CFRC radio conducted by members of the association.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to the willingness of the KMA to include Rabbi

Klaperman in the broadcast is the opposition by these same ministers to an attempt by the Christian Science church to participate in the devotional broadcast. When the proposal by the Christian Scientists was brought to the executive, it agreed that participation should be confined to “those actively in touch with the Association”; they noted that membership in the association was restricted to ministers and the Secretary of the YMCA, and suggested that the Christian Science minister might present them with a statement of faith.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, the Protestant clergy in the KMA had much greater regard for the local Jewish leaders than they had for leaders of the Christian Science church, a sect whose orthodoxy they found questionable.

The KMA met on a monthly basis from September to June. While more than forty men were listed as members, attendance at meetings was generally fifteen to twenty. Unfortunately the number, and not the names, of members in attendance was recorded, rendering difficult an assessment of the extent of participation by the Kingston rabbis. The association was led by an executive, which was nominated and approved at the end of each year for the following year. The executive held its own meetings in addition to the general meetings, where members addressed issues referred to them by the association, and set the agenda and selected speakers for upcoming KMA meetings. As a rule, a talk was presented at each KMA meeting. Topics included political and social issues, practical topics such as preaching, and theology. The speaker was often a guest--a Queen's professor or an out-of-town clergyman or intellectual. The dynamic Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath of Toronto's Holy Blossom synagogue was a guest speaker for the association on two occasions, in 1934 and 1939.<sup>8</sup>

In the early years of the Nazi regime a number of guest speakers to the KMA addressed related political issues. As early as May 1933, a professor from Queen's German Department spoke on the political and social developments in Germany since the Great War and offered a response to the question, “What is a National Socialist?”<sup>9</sup> The following spring another professor spoke on the Austrian political situation, and the association invited Rabbi Eisendrath to give a public lecture on “Present Conditions in Germany.”<sup>10</sup> In the early 1930s, the KMA took steps to inform its members of the political and social situation in Europe, and its invitation to Rabbi Eisendrath and his subsequent address suggest awareness of, and concern for, the deterioration of conditions for the Jews in Germany at this time.

Following early interest in the Nazi regime no further references to Germany or the treatment of German Jews appear in the minutes of the



KMA until 1938. *Kristallnacht*, which took place from 9-12 November 1938, set in motion a wave of protest rallies across Canada and around the world.<sup>11</sup> The violence unleashed in Germany against Jews and their property revealed the extent of Hitler's antisemitism. In Kingston, 1200 people attended a protest rally and passed a resolution to Prime Minister Mackenzie King condemning the events in Germany.<sup>12</sup> The KMA was involved in the organization of this public rally, which included speeches by the Catholic Archbishop of Kingston, Most Reverend M.J. O'Brien, and Queen's University principal, Dr. R.C. Wallace, as well as by the minister of St. James' Anglican Church and member of the KMA, the Rev. M. McNaughton.

As a result of *Kristallnacht* and the international attention it drew to the conditions for Jews in Germany, the KMA displayed renewed concern for the situation and again sought out speakers that would enable them to be better informed. At the KMA meeting following the rally Rabbi Kellerman thanked the association for the concern expressed on behalf of his people. At this meeting the decision was also made to invite a professor to speak at a special meeting on "The Jew, the Christian and the Future."<sup>13</sup> In 1939, Rabbi Eisendrath again spoke to the KMA, this time on the subject of "The Fight Against Anti-Semitism."<sup>14</sup>

The interest of the KMA in the Jewish people and their plight in Europe was not ongoing, and receives no additional mention in the minutes until 1945. But in 1944, a discussion at a KMA meeting, though it involved no specific mention of European Jews, had bearing on their situation. Miss Hayward, Secretary of the National Committee of Refugees, had sent a request for the assistance of the KMA in holding a public gathering to address the refugee situation. Davies and Nefsky note that the fate of the *St. Louis* had drawn significant media attention in Canada and the United States to the refugee crisis.<sup>15</sup> This ship carrying Jewish refugees was forced to return to Europe because it could find no haven elsewhere, meaning a death sentence for many of its passengers. Despite events such as this the KMA did not jump at the opportunity to assist Miss Hayward. The minutes record that the general feeling was that "the Association should hesitate to sponsor a public meeting as little additional help to the cause of the refugees could be expected."<sup>16</sup> While the KMA nonetheless decided to speak with Miss Hayward at a subsequent meeting, it is evident that they did not collaborate with her on the refugee cause.

Along similar lines, in October 1945, Rabbi J. Renov made a request that the Association issue a statement in favour of unrestricted Jewish immigration to Israel as a solution to “Jewish problems of dispossession and persecution.”<sup>17</sup> In response, a movement was passed expressing great sympathy for the Jewish people and referring Rabbi Renov’s request to the executive. The executive reiterated its sympathy for the situation facing the Jews, but “in view of the many factors involved, deemed itself incompetent to commit itself to any resolution on the matter of immigration into Palestine.”<sup>18</sup> No further mention was made of this matter, nor of Rabbi Renov.

The hesitance of the KMA to speak out on the refugee crisis or the issue of Jewish immigration to Palestine cannot be attributed to a reluctance to involve itself in politics. Many of the concerns of the association were political, such as religious education in schools, stores opening on Sunday, and alcohol being served in pool halls. On several occasions letters on behalf of the KMA were written to the mayor, local government and newspaper, the *Whig Standard*, addressing such issues. Rather, it can be argued that the reluctance demonstrated by the KMA to be a voice for the European Jews and other victims of war arose out of the preoccupation of the KMA with local rather than international concerns. While the KMA was aware of the treatment of the Jews in Europe, and was informed through some noteworthy speakers, it perceived its mandate to relate to the local Kingston context and the direct concerns of the members of the local churches.

The *Canadian Freeman* became Kingston’s official Catholic diocesan paper in 1916 and was printed until 1942 when its name changed to the *Canadian Register*. This paper was continued until 1970.<sup>19</sup> For the purpose of this study, the *Freeman* will be used to refer to the publication generally, but in the case of specific references the name of the paper in which the article appeared will be used. Both the *Freeman* and the *Register* were published in Kingston, and were weekly papers that included news stories, editorials, and spiritual instruction. International material as well as local news items were included.

Because of the volume of material printed during the 1930s and 1940s only specific periods were examined for this study.<sup>20</sup> The first period examined was March through July of 1933, the beginning of Hitler’s persecution of the Jews. The second period was September and October of 1935, the months immediately following the passing of the Nuremberg laws. Third, papers dated July through December of 1938 were

investigated, the period leading up to, and following, *Kristallnacht*. January through May of 1942, the weeks following the Final Solution conference at Wannsee, were examined. Finally, papers from July 1944 through September 1945 were studied, when concentration camps were freed by advancing Allied troops and the full extent of the Holocaust became known.

Four themes recur in the publication throughout these five periods. The Concordat between the Vatican and Nazi Germany received a great deal of attention. Second, significant concern was expressed over persecution of German Catholics, even before official relations between Rome and Nazi Germany began to deteriorate. Third, occasional reports on the persecution of European Jews appear in the paper, sometimes including a note of condemnation for this treatment. Finally, a number of editorial articles related to anti-semitism and rationalizations of the persecution of the Jews appeared from 1933 to 1945.

In April of 1933, the *Freeman* first mentioned talks of a Concordat between the Vatican and Germany. The paper reported that German Vice Chancellor von Papen, an “outstanding Catholic,” visited Rome to discuss an agreement with the Pope. It was stated that the Pope was willing to negotiate as long as the Nazi regime did not seek to overstep its bounds and exert control over the Catholic church in Germany.<sup>21</sup> In June the paper reported that negotiations were nearly complete, and in July 1933 that an agreement had been reached.<sup>22</sup> The article that followed wrote that the pact ensured the freedom of Catholic institutions in Germany and arranged for religious instruction in schools. But by 1938, stories in reference to the Concordat related to German violations of the agreement. One headline declared, “Expulsion of Prelate by Nazis Held Flagrant Violation of Concordat,”<sup>23</sup> and towards the end of the year the *Freeman* reported that the Nazis sought to wipe out the church.<sup>24</sup>

Even as the *Freeman* wrote of the agreement between Germany and the Vatican, stories appeared containing reports of imprisonment and persecution of Catholic clergy and churches. In 1935, graves at a Catholic cemetery were desecrated by Nazis.<sup>25</sup> By 1938 there were several reports of religious restrictions imposed on German clergy.<sup>26</sup> By 1944, the world had received news of Nazi concentration camps, and the *Register* reported that Catholics had been among those imprisoned. An article entitled, “40 British Nuns in Nazi Prison” told of women held at the Liebenau Camp,<sup>27</sup> while in 1945, “Priests Knew Horrors of Dachau Camp” reported that

3,500 Catholic priests had been held in Dachau and subjected to hard labour,<sup>28</sup> and the paper also reported the deaths of Prague clergy.<sup>29</sup>

While the concern of Kingston Catholics for their fellow European Catholics is understandable, what is startling is the lack of mention of the treatment of European Jews. In the publication following *Kristallnacht*, the internment of the German Cardinal made headlines while only one small article reporting the events of *Kristallnacht* was included.<sup>30</sup> An article entitled, "Catholic Sympathy for Jews in Plight Stirs Nazis' Wrath," outlined resulting persecution experienced by Roman Catholics and did not address persecution of the Jewish people.<sup>31</sup> A reporter refuting Hitler's claim that no one in Germany had endured religious persecution did so on the grounds of Catholic persecution and made no mention of the persecution of German Jews.<sup>32</sup> Most difficult to comprehend is that the press reported the internment of Roman Catholics, but failed to report the Holocaust and Jewish imprisonment in concentration camps. While the camps at Majdanek, Buchenwald, and Dachau were mentioned by name, the extermination of the Jews was not reported. The paper wrote that priests held at Dachau were imprisoned with Poles, Czechs, Dutchmen, Belgians, and Frenchman, but the Jewish people received no mention. In fact, no headlines from July 1944 through September 1945 pertained to the Holocaust or the condition of the Jews in Europe following the war.

Nevertheless, reports of sympathy expressed by Catholic clergy regarding the treatment of the Jews and condemnation of their persecution by the Nazis, though sometimes qualified, did appear in the pages of the *Freeman* between 1933 and 1945. As early as 1933, an article reported that Pope Pius XI expressed sympathy for the Jewish people, and stated that the Pope "has publicly offered Mass for the conversion of the Jews, and as the Pope of Peace he has constantly used his influence to protect them against injustice."<sup>33</sup> A call by a Quebec legislator for Canadian Catholics and Jews to join together in protest against treatment of German minorities was recorded in an article entitled "Quebec Legislator, Catholic, Condemns German Jew-Baiting."<sup>34</sup> A 1938 editorial associated Jews with communism, an anti-Semitic slur not uncommon in the *Freeman*, but nonetheless concluded with condemnation of the Nazi treatment of the Jews: "Admitting that the higher-ups in Jewry are a powerful anti-Christian influence, accepting even the oft-repeated charge that they are the inspiration of atheistic communism, there can be no justification for the outlawing of the rank and file of the race."<sup>35</sup> A brief article on *Kristallnacht* argued that such persecution must be opposed by Catholics who

believe that there is “no distinction of Jew and Gentile” before God.<sup>36</sup> This report was followed by the strongest words of condemnation of the Nazi treatment of the Jews to appear in the publication. The headline for a story on the local Kingston rally in protest of *Kristallnacht* declared: “Catholic and Non-Catholic America Deplore Outrages Perpetrated By Official Germany on Jew and Gentile.”<sup>37</sup> Soon after, the *Freeman* declared, “Bishop Cites Catholic Attitude In Opposition to Persecution of Jews,” and called for Catholic, Protestant and Jewish groups to join together in overcoming any form of persecution.<sup>38</sup>

A final theme running throughout the publications of the *Freeman* from 1933 to 1945 is anti-semitism and its source. From July to October of 1938, the *Freeman* ran a twelve-part series entitled, “Why Are the Jews Persecuted?”<sup>39</sup> This series identified anti-semitism as the cornerstone of Nazi policy and exposed the myth of Aryan superiority. It addressed the false blame placed on Jews for problems in Germany and their identification with radical/communist movements. The articles dismantled many such stereotypes held against Jews, describing Judaism as a conservative faith opposed to any kind of totalitarianism. Ultimately, the series argued that anti-semitism was not compatible with Catholicism and called on Catholics to oppose it.<sup>40</sup>

In contrast, an editorial on “Italy and the Jews” expressed some of the exact sentiments refuted in the aforementioned series.<sup>41</sup> The writer responded to an order in Italy that all Jews settled there since the Great War would be required to leave within six months. He stated: “It is noteworthy that while the Jews have been very vociferous in denunciation of Fascism, they have been strangely silent about Communism--a fact which may have influenced the Government of Italy.” The following week the same columnist noted that some took exception to his comments on the Jews. He then affirmed that there are many religious Jews who have no part in “atheistic communism,” but argued that these are not the Jews who “control so much of the world’s wealth and influence.” The more powerful Jews, he wrote, are associated with communism.<sup>42</sup> Another column later that same year reported that after debate at the American Jewish Congress, condemnation of communism was removed from its declaration. The writer argued that this unwillingness to condemn communism served to further align the Jews with communism in the minds of many.<sup>43</sup>

The headlines and stories that appeared in the pages of the *Canadian Freeman* and *Canadian Register* between 1933 and 1945 reveal some important features of the Kingston Catholic press. First, the highest Roman

Catholic leaders, particularly the Pope, were extremely influential in determining the issues that would receive attention, and those that would not, by the Kingston press. Some mention of the Pope is made in the headlines of a large percentage of the publications. What was deemed important by the Pope was of importance to the Catholic community in Kingston, and during the reign of the Nazi regime this was rarely the situation of the European Jews.

Second, the *Freeman* was internationally minded, but even on the international scene the Roman Catholic church and its members held the position of central importance. Much more attention was devoted in the press to the struggles of the German Catholic church than the persecution of the Jews.

Third, a great deal of ambiguity was expressed with regards to Catholic-Jewish relations and anti-semitism. At times, Catholic clergy called for Christians and Jews to join together in opposition to persecution, while on other occasions anti-semitism was rationalized by an association of Jews with communism. Some articles simultaneously condemned German treatment of the Jews and declared the need for Jewish conversion or the affinity of Jews to communism.

As the voice of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Kingston, the *Canadian Freeman* stands in contrast to the Protestant Kingston Ministerial Association. While the KMA was an inter-denominational association that shared concerns on a local level, the Kingston Roman Catholic press was part of the international Roman Catholic Church, with its centre in Rome. The KMA was largely occupied with events affecting the members of its local constituent churches, but the *Freeman* was interested in the concerns of Roman Catholics world-wide.

Furthermore, the KMA was an independent body, and did not fall under the authority of an umbrella organization. In contrast, the *Freeman* was under the local as well as the international Catholic hierarchy, and ultimately the Pope. The KMA experienced no influence comparable to that exerted by the Pope on the Roman Catholic world.

Finally, the ambiguity regarding anti-semitism and Christian-Jewish relations displayed in the *Canadian Freeman* was not present in the minutes of the KMA. Rabbi Eisendrath addressed the association on anti-semitism,<sup>44</sup> and Rabbi Pimonthel spoke on the failure of the Church in its relationship to the Jewish people.<sup>45</sup> Rabbi Steindel gave an informative lecture on Jewish holidays and customs.<sup>46</sup> All of these men were well received, and the association, though not always in agreement, embraced

their words and engaged in fruitful conversation. The columns in the pages of the *Freeman* during this time do not reveal the same degree of willingness to engage the challenges faced by the Jewish people.

Nevertheless, despite the differences observed in the minutes of the Kingston Ministerial Association and the pages of *Canadian Freeman*, they differ little in their response to the persecution of the Jews in Europe. In keeping with the findings of Davies and Nefsky, this paper suggests that the answer is both yes and no to the question, were the churches silent?<sup>47</sup> Through an examination of the minutes of the Protestant KMA and the newspaper for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Kingston this paper contributes a local history of the Canadian Protestant and English Catholic responses to the treatment of the European Jews during the Nazi era. The findings suggest that both the KMA and the *Freeman* at times condemned the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime against the European Jews, and at other times turned a blind eye. But what they never did, apart from the 1938 rally in protest of *Kristallnacht*, was take action. The KMA ministers appeared to enjoy amiable relations with the local Jewish rabbis, but nonetheless remained preoccupied with local concerns rather than the international concerns of their Jewish friends. That the English Roman Catholics in Kingston were religious outsiders like the Canadian and European Jewish people was not reason enough to draw the attention of the Kingston Catholic community away from its Catholic world to the atrocities committed against the Jews. Within the local Kingston community, the KMA and the *Canadian Freeman* presumably exercised a great deal of influence, the one comprised of the ministers of the majority of local Protestant churches, the other read by a significant number of English Catholics. For their own reasons, neither group demonstrated active concern for European Jews during the Nazi regime.

### **Endnotes**

1. Robert W. Ross, *So It Was True: The American Protestant Press and the Nazi Persecution of the Jews* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 294.
2. For a detailed account of Canadian immigration policy see Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1991). Gerald Tulchinsky paints a similar picture in his work, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1998).

3. Alan Davies and F. Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches? Canadian Protestantism and the Jewish Plight during the Nazi Era* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997).
4. Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches?* xi.
5. See M. Koven and G. Ross, *From Strength to Strength* (Kingston, ON: Beth Israel Congregation, 1986).
6. Minutes recorded 19 November 1942, Kingston Ministerial Association (KMA) Papers, Queen's University Archives (QUA).
7. Minutes recorded 27 January 1948, KMA Executive Papers, QUA.
8. For Eisendrath's role at Holy Blossom see Gerald Tulchinsky, "'Justice and Only Justice Thou Shalt Pursue': Considerations on the Social Voice of Canada's Reform Rabbis," in *Religion and Public Life in Canada*, ed. Marguerite Van Die (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 313-328.
9. Minutes recorded 8 May 1933, KMA Papers, QUA.
10. Minutes recorded 19 March 1934, KMA Papers, QUA.
11. Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches?* 15.
12. Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches?* Appendix A.
13. Minutes recorded 21 November 1938, KMA Papers, QUA.
14. Minutes recorded 17 April 1939, KMA Papers, QUA.
15. Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches?* 15.
16. Minutes recorded 10 January 1944, KMA Papers, QUA.
17. Minutes recorded 2 October 1945, KMA Papers, QUA.
18. Minutes recorded 5 November 1945, KMA Papers, QUA.
19. L.J. Flynn, *Built on a Rock: The Story of the Roman Catholic Church in Kingston, 1826-1976* (Kingston, ON: Archdiocese of Kingston, 1976).
20. These periods correspond roughly to those designated by Ross, in *So It Was True*, who examines six periods: 1933, 1934-35, 1936-38, 1939-42, 1943-1944, and 1945.
21. "Hitler Regime Plans Concordat With Rome," *Canadian Freeman*, 13 April 1933, Archdiocese of Kingston Archives (AKA).



22. "Holy Father and Germany Agree on An Important Concordat," *Canadian Freeman*, 13 July 1933, AKA.
23. "Expulsion of Prelate by Nazis Held Flagrant Violation of Concordat," *Canadian Freeman*, 1 September 1938, AKA.
24. "Bares Cunning Nazi Strategy to Wipe Out the Church," *Canadian Freeman*, 17 November 1938, AKA.
25. "Nazis Desecrate Graves," *Canadian Freeman*, 19 September 1935, AKA.
26. "Nazi Effort To Gag Bishops Is Vain As Pastoral Is Read," *Canadian Freeman*, 15 September 1938; and "Cardinal Is Held In "Protective Custody" By Nazis," *Canadian Freeman*, 17 November 1938, AKA.
27. "40 British Nuns in Nazi Prison," *Canadian Register*, 12 August 1944, AKA.
28. "Priests Knew Horrors of Dachau Camp," *Canadian Register*, 5 May 1945, AKA.
29. "Many Prague Clergy Die In Prison Camps," *Canadian Register*, 1 September 1945, AKA.
30. "Civilizations Gangsters," *Canadian Freeman*, 17 November 1938, AKA.
31. "Catholic Sympathy for Jews in Plight Stirs Nazis' Wrath," *Canadian Freeman*, 8 December 1938, AKA.
32. "Proof of Religious Persecution In Germany," *Canadian Freeman*, 9 February 1939, AKA.
33. "The Holy Father and the Jews," *Canadian Freeman*, 13 April 1933, AKA.
34. "Quebec Legislator, Catholic, Condemns German Jew-Baiting," *Canadian Freeman*, 19 September 1935, AKA.
35. "Jews and Communism," *Canadian Freeman*, 14 July 1938, AKA.
36. "Civilizations Gangsters," *Canadian Freeman*, 17 November 1938, AKA.
37. "Catholic and Non-Catholic America Deplore Outrages Perpetrated By Official Germany on Jew and Gentile," *Canadian Freeman*, 24 November 1938, AKA.
38. "Bishop Cites Catholic Attitude In Opposition to Persecution of Jews," *Canadian Freeman*, 8 December 1938, AKA.
39. This series was re-printed in the *Canadian Freeman* from a pamphlet by Joseph Moody.

40. Article of 6 October 1938, "Why Are the Jews Persecuted?" *Canadian Freeman*, AKA.
41. "Italy and the Jews," *Canadian Freeman*, 8 September 1938, AKA.
42. "Italy and the Jews," *Canadian Freeman*, 15 September 1938, AKA.
43. "Jews and Communism," *Canadian Freeman*, 1 December 1938, AKA.
44. Minutes recorded 17 April 1939, KMA Papers, QUA.
45. Minutes recorded 5 December 1949, KMA Papers, QUA.
46. Minutes recorded 5 May 1941, KMA Papers, QUA.
47. Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches?* 128.

## **The Influence of the Social Gospel in Modern Rural Japan: A Case Study of Howard and Herbert Norman and Their Work in Nagano**

SACHIYO TAKASHIMA

---

In this article I will present research about the influences of the social gospel from Canada to Japan through Howard and Herbert Norman and their activities towards the democratization of Japan after World War II. Most previous research about the Normans has focussed on the life and death of Herbert Norman, speculating on whether he was an agent of the Soviet Union while he was a Canadian diplomat. However, I will not discuss whether he was an agent of the Soviet Union because most of the important materials about the death of Herbert Norman and the spy-related materials kept by Canada and United States have not been made public.<sup>1</sup> Another reason why I will not discuss this issue is that I do not have much interest in the matter. This was a hot issue during the latter half of the Cold War era. Herbert Norman was one of the important international political figures during the 1950s. At the time, the question of whether Herbert Norman was an agent of the Soviet Union was important for the security of the western World. One could likely find more evidence of these issues if we learned Russian and accessed declassified files of the Soviet Union. Because the Cold War ended in 1991, their involvement in international politics is less important now.

Instead, I would like to discuss Howard and Herbert's thinking and experiences in their lifetimes. I will introduce one important document that has not been known to researchers both in North America and in Japan for over 60 years even though it surely influenced the Japanese democratization of religion. Finally, I would like to discuss why Howard and Herbert

*Historical Papers 2003: Canadian Society of Church History*

Norman became leftist and how their ideas changed Japan into the democratic country. It is time to reconsider their roles in Japan and North America again.

First, I would like to discuss their backgrounds, then discuss Howard Norman's thesis about the Japanese situation in the 1930s, and finally discuss Howard and Herbert's role in the democratization of Japan after World War II.

### ***Background: Nagano Prefecture before the World War II***

Nagano, located in central Japan, became famous as the host city of the 1998 winter Olympics. A bullet train connects Tokyo to Nagano, a trip that takes only one and a half hours. The area is flourishing due to year-round resorts, the information technology industry, and commercial vegetable farming.

When Howard and Herbert Norman were children, Nagano was remote from Tokyo;<sup>2</sup> it was a mountainous area where it was difficult to grow rice. The silk industry was flourishing in central Nagano; some rich people and foreigners in eastern Japan made their summer residences in Karuizawa. Compared to today, its development was still limited. Nagano at that time was one of the rural and poor areas of Japan. However, Nagano had other characteristics. People in Nagano were enthusiastic about education. Labour and peasant movements flourished in Nagano, and the local newspaper, *Shinano Mainichi Shimbun* (*Shinano Daily*), which was established in 1873, was one of the most liberal newspapers before World War II.<sup>3</sup> Nagano has a famous Buddhist temple, *Zenkoji*, established in 642.<sup>4</sup> Almost all the people in Nagano were believers of *Zenkoji* except for a small number of Christians and new religions. Nagano's atmosphere was naturally fit for the social gospel movement.

Daniel Norman, father of Howard and Herbert, served on the Northern Nagano Circuit (Afterwards District) for over thirty years as a missionary from the Methodist Church of Canada. He was born in Aurora Ontario; he studied Karl Marx and joined the Socialist Club at Victoria College.<sup>5</sup> He was not a communist, but had a passion for social justice. When he came to Japan in 1897, he was appointed to the Central Tabernacle in Tokyo, situated in front of the Imperial University of Tokyo. He disliked urban missions that targeted mainly intellectual people, and asked mission board for permission to relocate to a rural location such as his birthplace. In 1903, the mission board fulfilled his request and assigned

him to Nagano. He served there until his retirement in 1937. Most of his life he devoted his mission to the railway workers, peasants and young people in the Northern Nagano District. He established many churches and mission stations there. His influence was felt throughout most of northern Nagano and was not limited to Christian community. Howard Norman notes that people still remember the life and activities of Daniel Norman, but have forgotten his teachings about Christianity.<sup>6</sup>

It was an age for Japanese democracy before World War II when Howard and Herbert were boys. Japanese call this era the “*Taisho Democracy (1912-25)*” because that was the imperial era. In 1916, Yoshino Sakuzo (1878-1933),<sup>7</sup> Professor of Political Science at the Imperial University of Tokyo and a member of the Congregational Church, wrote several articles about democracy in the monthly periodical, “*Chuo Koron*.”<sup>8</sup> He translated democracy as “*Minpon Shugi (People First Policy)*” to escape the constitutional debate about sovereignty.<sup>9</sup> His introduction of democracy gradually affected Japanese society. Several social gospellers, such as Suzuki Bunji (1885-1946)<sup>10</sup> and Kagawa Toyohiko (1888-1960)<sup>11</sup> entered the Labour movement during 1910s and 1920s. The Japanese opted for universal male suffrage in 1925; under the influence of Suzuki and Yoshino the Social Democratic Party (*Shakai Minshu To*) was established. They elected Abe Iso-o (1865-1949),<sup>12</sup> a member of the Unitarian Church, as the party chair and Katayama Tetsu (1887-1978),<sup>13</sup> a member of the Presbyterian Church, as the chief secretary. They won three seats in the general election of the diet in 1928. Therefore, the Japanese social gospellers, with the cooperation of missionaries in Japan, led the Democracy and Labour movements before World War II.

In addition, from the end of the 1920s, Alfred R. Stone (1902-1954)<sup>14</sup> joined a mission in the Nagano District. Stone was a strong social gospeller, and he established rural improvement groups in Northern Nagano in the 1930s. Stone discussed the Bible with participants, as well as ways to improve the lives of peasants through social reform.

Howard and Herbert Norman grew up in such climate. Their environment as youths in Japan was similar to Anglican missionary children such as Cyril Powles, who grew up in Takada, Niigata. Because Niigata Prefecture was a poor and oppressed area before World War II, Edwin Reischauer, who was also the son of a Presbyterian missionary from the United States, and who later became a Japanologist, had somewhat different experiences as a youth. The Reischauer family resided

in Tokyo and Edwin's father, August K. Reishauer was a professor at Tokyo Women's College.<sup>15</sup> The Reischauer families associated with well-known Japanese of that era. Though Herbert Norman and Edwin Reischauer had different views about Japanese modern history, they had friendships from their youth at Karuizawa, and both of them conducted their Ph.D. research at Harvard University at the same time. They were close friends until Herbert's suicide in 1957. Howard also had a strong relationship with Edwin Reischauer. Howard conducted the wedding of Edwin and Haru Matsukata<sup>16</sup> in 1956.

### ***The Influence of Rural Japan on Howard and Herbert Norman***

Howard Norman was born in 1905 and Herbert was born in 1909. Both of them were born and raised in Nagano, and were strongly influenced by the attitudes of Nagano. Their mother taught Howard and Herbert at home until grade six and afterwards they went to the Canadian Academy at Kobe, a school established by the Canadian Methodist Church. Howard resided in Canada when he went to Victoria College at the University of Toronto in 1923, and Herbert resided in Canada when he suffered tuberculosis and entered the Calgary Sanitarium in 1925. Herbert was shocked to meet non-believers in Calgary and wrote his feelings about it in a letter to his parents.

He turned from being a social dospeller to a Trotskyist during the early 1930s and then converted to Stalinism during his Cambridge days. Before 1925, Herbert lived in a very religious atmosphere, so his letter of 1924 did not mean "Conversion from Christianity to Communism," but meant real surprise. In Nagano, most people, except Christians were believers in Buddhism and frequented the *Zenkoji* Temple. In Kobe, the Methodist Church of Canada established the Canadian Academy, so it had a strong Christian atmosphere. Therefore, 1925 was the first time that Herbert met non-believers. Such experience was quite different from Edwin Reischauer, who resided in Tokyo. Tokyo was already one of the biggest metropolitan centres of the world and it had people with various ideas, including nonbelievers and communists. Reishauer was exposed to communist ideas during his Tokyo time. The Normans did not.

Herbert gradually felt the imperfectness of Christianity and was seeking for real salvation via the social gospel, Trotskyism and Stalinism.<sup>17</sup> However, he never found the answer until his death. After the recovery of his disease, Herbert entered Albert College where Howard

taught and graduated in 1929, he went to Victoria College in the University of Toronto and got a B.A. in Classics, studied at Trinity College in the Cambridge University between 1933-34 and earned a B.A. in history. He earned an M.A. from Harvard University in 1936, and a Ph.D. in history in 1940. His Ph.D. dissertation was called "Japan's Emergence as a Modern State," and was published in North America the same year. Many people read it during the 1940s, and it influenced the postwar policy toward Japan. In 1947, this book was translated into Japanese and published by Iwanami Shoten,<sup>18</sup> an influential publisher for intellectuals in Japan. Many Japanese intellectuals read this book and felt hope for the democratization of Japan under the influence of Herbert Norman.

He also appointed fellow of the Institute of Pacific Relations in New York between 1938-39, and wrote several articles about modern Japan. In 1939, he entered the Department of External Affairs and was sent to Tokyo Legation in the same year. After the Pacific War broke out, he was detained several months and returned to Canada via an exchange boat. He met Tsuru Shigeto in Hawaii and learned that Tsuru had left his books related to communism at Cambridge, Massachusetts. He went there and was accused by the FBI.<sup>19</sup>

Howard had no such encounter in his college days. He followed his father's passion for mission work and social justice. When he was in Victoria, he already become a social gospeller, which had strongly influenced his brother Herbert. In addition, he continued to attend church in Toronto. After graduating from Victoria College, he taught at Albert College until 1929. Afterwards he went to Emmanuel College, studied theology, and became an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada in 1931. He then got a scholarship and went to Westminster College in the Cambridge University between 1931-1932. Howard had already asked Arnup to become a missionary to Japan as early as 1928.

In the summer of 1932, with his new wife Gwen R.P., they sailed to Japan and were appointed to the Kanazawa Orphanage until 1941. He thought Japan was becoming a democratic country and was satisfied where he worked. In 1931 Japan started to invade Manchuria, following the ideas of Ishihara Kanji.<sup>20</sup> The League of Nations strongly protested the actions of Japan. Japan withdrew in 1932. A military revolt occurred and Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi was assassinated in May 1932,<sup>21</sup> and the representative government collapsed. Suddenly the political situation in Japan was very different from the time Howard was a boy. He was eager

to become a missionary, but gradually he became depressed and sometimes wanted to resign from the mission.

In 1938, he got a furlough and went to Union Theological Seminary for his S.T.M. research. At first, Howard wanted to research “Christianity and Marxism,” but he finally wrote about “Japanism” in his S.T.M. thesis. I will introduce his thesis and his influence on post-war religious policy in Japan. Both Howard and Herbert lived in New York City at the end of 1930s. After finishing his work at Union, Howard returned to Kanazawa and continued his work. Nevertheless, his depression continued and finally he resigned his position as a minister. Howard sailed back to Canada in April 1941 and officially resigned from the Japanese Mission in June 1941.

I could point out several reasons why Howard became depressed during the 1930s. First, the Japanese situation in the 1930s had dramatically changed. Japan gradually became a Fascist country; Militarism flourished. Revolts and assassinations of politicians and business executives happened often. Representative government, which started in 1924, ended in 1932 through military revolts and the assassination of the Prime Minister. The atmosphere created by the “*Taisho Democracy*” disappeared. War between Japan and China broke out in 1931 and gradually became a total war. The Japanese Ministry of Education published *Kokutai no Hongi* (The Real Meanings of National Polity) in 1937 in order to introduce young Japanese to the ideology of total war. At last, his father Daniel, who had never been a social gospeller, was put under secret police surveillance from mid-1930s because he was a foreigner and the police thought he must be a secret agent of the United States and the United Kingdom because he could speak Japanese well. Howard and Herbert were shocked by such situations.

The second reason was the situation of Kanazawa. Maeda, the biggest Feudal Governor of Japan, ruled the Province of Kaga (Kanazawa was a capital city) during the Tokugawa Period (1603-1868). After the Meiji Restoration, Maeda became a marquis and resided in Tokyo, but still had a strong influence on the people in Ishikawa Prefecture (which was a merger of Provinces of Kaga and Noto, and Kanazawa is a capital) by sending scholarships to the students in Tokyo. The Nagano Prefecture was formed by several small provinces, run by feudal governors and the lands were under the direct control of Tokugawa government. In Nagano, there was no influential former feudal governor such as Kanazawa. In addition, Kanazawa was one of the centres of militant Buddhism, *Jodo Shinshu*,



which Shinran had established. Members of Johdo Shinshu, led by Ren'nyo, governed the Kanazawa area from 1471 to 1580.<sup>22</sup> The influence of *Jodo Shinshu* remained strong in Kanazawa and it is still one of the most difficult areas for Christian mission in Japan. Howard felt challenged by his mission in Kanazawa. These two reasons depressed Howard, and he decided to resign from the Japan Mission.

### ***Howard Norman's view to Japanese situation of Shinto and State***

In Japan, Howard communicated with several Japanese labour movement leaders and discussed the matter of Japan in the 1930s. Howard gradually became confident that the social gospel must be adopted in Japan, and that emperor worship, which was mandatory for all Japanese people, prevented the Christianization and democratization of Japan.

At Union Theological Seminary, Howard wrote his S.T.M. thesis about "Japanism." Herbert lived very close at that time and was writing his famous Ph.D. dissertation about "Japan's Emergence." In this dissertation, Herbert wrote about the Meiji Restoration and the establishment of the constitution in 1889; Howard's thesis wrote about the contemporary situation in Japan. They discussed their ideas about Japan in New York, and influenced each other. Mutual influences are apparent when the two theses are compared. Moreover, these theses influenced Japanese democratization after World War II.

Howard's thesis was more practical than academic. It pointed out that Japan became worse through militarism, the emphasis on *Nihon Seishin* (Japanese Spirit),<sup>23</sup> *Bushido* (Japanese Samurai Spirit),<sup>24</sup> and the practice of emperor worship.<sup>25</sup> These features made lives difficult for Japanese Christians and for labour movements. He argued that Japanese Christians must adapt Christianity and "Japanize"<sup>26</sup> it to suit the belief in emperor worship.

Chapters 1-5 were adapted for the "*Shinto Shirei* (Ban of State Shintoism and strict separation of Shintoism and State in Japan)"<sup>27</sup> in December 1945. The thesis was a practical analysis for the Japanese situation. In Chapter 1,<sup>28</sup> Howard defined "Japanism." It include *Kokutai* (National Polity), State Shintoism, *Bushido* (Japanese Samurai Spirit), and Confucianism.

In Chapter 2, "The Setting," he described Japanese modern history from the Tokugawa era to the establishment of the Meiji constitutional system (around 1890s), which mostly came from the analysis of Herbert

Norman. In addition, he described various Japanese lifestyle indicators such as a continuing high birth-rate, the decline of average income, increase of working hours per worker, increase in the number of industrial accidents, increase of death by tuberculosis, increase of exports because of the decline in exchange rates, and the militarization of the Japanese economy. Howard also pointed out that the Japanese could manage to live self-sufficiently if they kept their country peaceful and used their resources without militarization.

In Chapter 3, "Shinto," Howard described Shintoism. He emphasized why state Shinto emerged, and it was defined by the Japanese government not as a religion, "but as a Japanese national ritual." He pointed out that it came from purely political matters. The definition of state Shintoism governed and controlled people's minds in Japan.

In Chapter 4, "Kokutai no Hongi: The Real Meaning of National Polity," Howard introduced the book *Kokutai no Hongi*. It was read by all the primary and secondary school students in 1936 in order to teach them the meaning of national polity. Howard pointed out the real meaning of *Kokutai* related to emperor worship, ancestor worship and Confucianism. Moreover, *Kokutai no Hongi* also pointed out how the Japanese government had adopted and protected Buddhism since the seventh century. The Japanese government wanted Buddhists and other religious believers to cease peace movements and other protests. Alternatively, the Government would not persecute them.

Chapter 5, "Values of Japanism" described the historical change in Japanese values since 1889. Howard pointed out that Japan had her own experience of democracy in history, so if Japan could abolish their militarism and state Shintoism, they could restore their democratic way.

Chapter 6, "The Cultural Psychology of the Japanese," described how the Japanese adopted everything in a Japanized way, such as Buddhism, Confucianism and western culture. In addition, revolts and assassinations for Japanese political and economic high profile officials made them obey the Japanese military. Howard pointed out that these actions came from Japanese chauvinism. Yet, Howard pointed out that the Japanese love beauty, and had religious feelings. Chapter 7, "Utopia in Japan," summarized Chapters 1-6 and described the kind of utopia created by Japanese militarism.

Chapter 8, "The Japanese Church Faces Crisis," talked about the Japanese government's questions to the leaders of Japanese churches inquiring whether Japanese Christians, who officially believe there is only

one God, could still endorse emperor worship. If Japanese Christians denied emperor worship, the Japanese government would persecute churches. Howard predicted persecution for new religions that denied emperor worship. It came true in 1942 for the Holiness Church Groups in United Church of Christ.<sup>29</sup>

Chapter 9, "A New Dynamic Japanese Church," described the Protestant Church Union. Church union was a strong goal among Protestant church leaders during the Meiji Era (1868-1912). Several Church union movements were initiated, but were not accomplished because of the interests of individual denominations and missions. However, it rapidly became true when the Japanese government asked church leaders to cut their ties with their missions. Church leaders had to seek a Church union for the sake of survival without the aid of the mission organizations.

He attached an appendix to explain the Japanese views of *Kami* (God) and deity. As a missionary, the emphasis Howard laid on the latter while the former was difficult for the Japanese churches to explain. Policymakers in Canada and the United States used Chapters 1-5 for drafting religious policies for Japan.

After he finished his S.T.M. work in June 1939, Howard returned to Japan and was reappointed to the Kanazawa Orphanage. His work in Japan, however, continued for only one and half years. Howard became depressed again, and he asked mission board to resign from the ministry, and returned in April 1941 without permission. The mission board finally accepted his resignation from the Japanese mission in June 1941.<sup>30</sup>

It was half a year before the outbreak of the Pacific War and his parents and brother Herbert were still in Japan. Afterwards, Howard was appointed as minister in St. George United Church in Vancouver, which has long been a gateway to Asia. In December 1941, the Pacific War broke out and the Canadian Government decided that Japanese Canadians were suspects as agents of the Japanese army. Thus, the Canadian government confiscated the property of Japanese Canadians. Moreover, the Canadian government sent Japanese Canadians to internment camps in inland British Columbia.

Howard became angry at this decision, and he felt it was a threat to Canadian citizenship and freedom. Therefore, he became a Vice-chairman of the Vancouver Consultive Council for the Study of the Problems of Citizenship.<sup>31</sup> He actively supported the Japanese Canadians and worked on their behalf until 1947.

In addition he became a supporter of the CCF Party. Howard sent a letter to Arnup suggesting that the United Church of Canada officially support the CCF. Arnup refused this idea because he was a supporter of Conservative Party.<sup>32</sup> Under the difficult situation of having his two mother countries, Canada and Japan, at war, Howard became an “active radical.” His efforts influenced his next decision after World War II.

***Reconsidering Howard and Herbert Norman’s Role in Japanese Democratization after World War II.***

Just after the end of World War II, Herbert became an advisor to Douglas McArthur, Chief of the General Headquarters (GHQ) of Occupied Japan. He released political criminals including communists in Japan and conducted a leading role in the political and economic democratization of Japan with American New Dealers such as “*Zaibatsu Kaitai* (Disband of Conglomerates).”<sup>33</sup> Afterwards he went to Washington D.C. and seconded Lester B. Pearson, who at the time was an ambassador to the United States. In August 1946, Herbert became head of the Canadian Legation in Tokyo. Howard was still in Vancouver as a minister and involved in the human rights movement for Japanese Canadians. In 1947, the mission board sent Howard to Japan as a professor at Kwansei Gakuin University, Hyogo. He arrived in Japan on September 1947.<sup>34</sup>

Howard and Herbert felt happy days in 1947. A new constitution was implemented in Japan that May, which officially declared that Japanese sovereignty rests with the people, not the emperor. It specified that Japan should not be a military power, and that Japan abandon the aristocratic system. GHQ ordered freedom of speech, labour movements, social rights and strict separation of religion and state. In April 1947, United Churchman Katayama Tetsu became the first socialist prime minister in Japan under the new constitution; he lasted eight months.

Howard might have felt happy for this situation and he frequently went to Tokyo to visit Herbert. They enjoyed their lives (especially playing tennis) and talks<sup>35</sup> even though travel between Hyogo and Tokyo took thirteen hours.

However, these happy days did not last long. By the end of 1948, GHQ changed its policy toward Japan. “Reverse course” started. It was a backlash by the conservative groups in the United States and Japan for the rapid democratization of Japan. At that time, the coalition government with socialists collapsed due to political scandals,<sup>36</sup> and conservative

coalitions got power again and continued until 1993.<sup>37</sup> The government banned the Japanese Communist Party and the government conducted a “red purge.” Japanese leaders of labour movements wanted to do a general strike, but the GHQ banned it.

Japanese left-wingers felt hopeful that Herbert could ask McArthur to change this policy. However, Herbert himself felt lonely and even had difficulty protecting himself at that time. Howard’s visits to the Tokyo Legation gradually diminished in 1948. He returned to Ottawa in December 1950 having said farewell to his birthplace. Afterwards, the RCMP accused Herbert about his ties to communism.

Under such circumstances, Herbert wrote a book about a philosopher who lived during the Edo period. The title was *Ando Shoeki: A Forgotten Philosopher* (1950).<sup>38</sup> Iwanami Shoten published the Japanese version of this book in two paperback editions, which sold over a million copies. Herbert described Ando as a pioneer for democracy in Japan who denied feudalism and emphasized Japan as a country for farmers and peasants as a first priority. This book became a bestseller in Japan and encouraged further democratization in Japan, and encouraged Japan to be a light for the future as a peaceful, rural country after a devastating war.

*Ando Shoeki* was the last book for Herbert about Japanese studies. Recent Japanese researchers criticize Herbert’s book for being too idealized, as if Ando was a pioneer of Japanese democracy. It was still the middle of the feudal era and Ando lived in the rural area of northeast Japan, so he had little information about democracy at that time. They described Ando as an ecologist,<sup>39</sup> rather than a democrat. These criticisms are accurate, but one should consider the conditions why Herbert saw Ando as a pioneer of democracy.

One answer is Herbert’s difficult situation at that time. Japanese left-wing intellectuals saw Herbert as a guardian for Japanese rapid democratization. Herbert received letters asking him to encourage McArthur to continue the policy for democratization. Herbert therefore wanted to find some Japanese who had their own idea about democracy. In addition, he wanted the Japanese to seek Japanese democratization by themselves.

The other answer is related to Christianity. Herbert did not go to church often. Still Christianity influenced his ideas, especially social gospel ideas. He tried to be a Japanese saviour who could save the Japan as a democratic state. Ando Shoeki was a person who fit Herbert’s ideals for the Japanese.

Herbert left Japan in December 1950, and he did not again write books about Japan. In addition, Howard again felt depressed because of the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. Both wanted peace, but the situation worsened and they felt like they had entered another dark age.

Howard rarely mentioned social concerns after 1950, and pretended to be a “good missionary with a moderate view.” Such pretension might protect him from purges and allowed him to continue his mission work in Japan. This became apparent in the Japanese version of Daniel Norman’s biography, *Nagano no Norman*;<sup>40</sup> Howard did not mention that Daniel studied Karl Marx and had joined a socialist club in his Victoria years. Howard experienced the horrible years of McCarthyism and his beloved young brother Herbert committed suicide in April 1957, which made Howard more cautious in his activities toward social justice in Japan.

In contrast, in Canada, Howard wrote and acted freely and openly confessed he was a social gospeller. Howard wrote “Uchimura Kanzo’s Quest for Salvation,” as his D.D. dissertation (1960)<sup>41</sup> at Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology. He described Uchimura’s life, theology and influences on the Japanese. Uchimura lost his professorship from No. 1 Collegiate (now College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Tokyo). He did not conduct emperor worship and he was finally expelled from the established church in Japan. Recent researchers in Japan have pointed out that such images of Uchimura must have had some exaggerations. However, Howard wanted to describe the importance of freedom of speech and belief in Japan by describing the life of Uchimura in this dissertation. In addition, he wrote the English version of his father’s biography, “Norman of Nagano,” without any consideration of the Japanese situation. I think he wrote and acted upon his real feelings and his continuing social concern in Canada, and he carefully controlled his loneliness and dissatisfaction in Japan without his brother.

### ***Conclusion***

In the conclusion of his biography, *Innocence Is Not Enough*, Roger Bowen, the official biographer of Herbert Norman, focussed on Herbert’s suicide and controversy. I agree with his views in some ways, but I cannot determine whether Herbert was innocent or not. In addition, I added information about people born in Japan, as Howard and Herbert Norman and Edwin Reishauer were influenced by Japanese culture. One could compare missionary sons in China such as James G. Endicott, Robert

McClure and Chester Ronning, who felt like Chinese. Their attitudes and feelings were very sophisticated. Japan's culture influenced Normans and Reishauer, which made them sensitive in their attitudes. Such sensitive feelings made it easier for them to understand the feelings of the Japanese people and they proved to be good informants for North Americans about Japan. In addition, the atmosphere of the *Taisho* Democracy strongly influenced them.

In the 1930s, westerners saw Japan as a militant ultranationalistic and fanatic country under the emperor and they believed that Japan must be taught democracy during the time of occupation in order to change. Information about Japan was very limited; the Japanese war policy was against the law, and they saw massacres, harsh treatment of their prisoners of war, and *Kamikaze*. Under such circumstances, Normans and Reishauer mentioned in their dissertations and their articles that Japan had democracy movements, and they also said that the ultranationalism, fanatic Shintoism and emperor worship in 1930s and 1940s was not a typical attitude for the Japanese. They said that even during such ultranationalistic times some Japanese wanted peace, democracy, and protested extremist ideas. Moreover, they wanted westerners to understand Japanese nature and customs. It might have looked like a defense of the Japanese old system to most westerners. Occupied forces in Japan adopted their suggestions. GHQ banned the Japanese military and navy, state Shintoism and emperor worship, but they maintained Shintoism and the emperor system itself. It was a very mild occupation policy compared to Germany.

If the Normans and Reischauer had not become Japanologists or had not influenced North American policies concerning Japan after World War II, the Japanese occupation policy might have been very different. I think it would have been harsher for high profile Japanese officials at the time of World War II, and occupied forces might have abolished both the emperor system and Shintoism. One cannot measure the influence of the lives and scholarship of the Normans and Reishauer right now, and the young people of Japan did not know their names and their great scholarship. I think it was very critical situation for Japan. Some extreme right-wing Japanese again want to change Japan into an ultra-nationalistic, militant country. They want to re-establish state Shintoism and emperor worship. And the Japanese government and some media are gradually turning this way. The Japanese Ministry of Education and Science made a booklet for students for primary and junior high schools to protect the Japanese spirit and ancestor worships, and their hidden curriculum again

made Japanese people worship the emperor. It was a destruction of the Japanese post-war policy. If Japan turned again to the pre-war situation, Asians and westerners will regret that the Japanese post-war policy was too mild for making Japan a peaceful and democratic country. Therefore, this is a turning point in Japan.

Under such difficult times, one must cooperate to conduct research about the post-war Japanese reforms and their manifestations. In addition, one should consider why knowledgeable Japanologists suggested a mild policy for the occupied forces, and occupied forces adopted this against the public opinions of the world.

One should also consider that the mixture of Canadian Methodist tradition of social concern and the *Taisho* Democracy movements in Japan influenced Howard and Herbert Norman. Both of them had childhood to teenage influences that were carried by Christians in North America and Japan. So I conclude that the dream of complete democratization in Japan, which was carried by the Normans, was under the notion of the “Establishment of the True Kingdom of God in Japan.”

### ***Endnotes***

1. “Death of Herbert Norman in Cairo--Unofficial Letters from Individuals,” RG 25, Vol. 3176, File 27-3-12, Vols 1 & 2, National Archives of Canada. Researchers cannot access many of the important letters related to the death of Herbert Norman, or important phrases have been deleted because of the privacy policies of Canadian law.
2. In 1925 a train between Tokyo and Nagano took eight hours and the telephone system was not reliable. This made it difficult for missionaries and Japanese Christians to communicate regularly. Instead, they gathered in Karuizawa or Nojiri Lake (Northern Nagano) during the summers to discuss important issues.
3. This newspaper played a leading role in the Nagano Prefecture (63% occupancy in 2,200,000 population). Before World War II, Kiryu Yuyu (1873-1941) was a chief editor; he strongly opposed militarism in Japan.
4. *Zenkoji* was one of the oldest Buddhist temples in Japan. They admire *Amida Nyorai*, which came from Korea in 552. This temple has suffered many wars and disasters, however, Edo Shogunate protected and re-established it in 1707 and it became one of the leading Buddhist temples in Japan.



5. W.H.H. Norman, "Norman of Nagano, A Biography of the Rev. Daniel and Mrs. Katherine Norman," unpublished manuscript, 48-49. United Church Archives at the University of Toronto (hereafter UCA).
6. W.H.H. Norman, "Norman of Nagano," 39-40.
7. Sakuzo was born in Miyagi Prefecture in Northeastern Japan. He graduated from the School of Law at the Imperial University of Tokyo with a Ph.D. in Law and Political Science. He taught political history as a faculty member at the Imperial University of Tokyo beginning in 1909. In 1924, he became an advisor for *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, a leading liberal newspaper in Japan. He was baptized in the Congregational Church in Sendai in his collegiate days and a member of the Hongo Congregational Church near the university. Moreover, he was a president of Student Christian Movement at the Imperial University of Tokyo and the president of Imperial University Newspaper (the most distinguished student newspaper in Japan). He made *Shinjinkai* (a student body for democracy movements) in 1918.
8. The paper was established in 1887 by the *Nishi Honganji* (Denomination of the Johdo Shinshu, Buddhism) and remains the oldest monthly in Japan. Before World War II, this magazine and "*Kaizo*" were competitive journals that advocated democracy. The title of the Yoshino's famous article was "*Kensei no Hongi wo Toite sono Yushu no Bi wo Nasu no Michi wo Ronzu* (Discussion of the Real Meaning of Constitution towards the Way to its Final Answer)," January 1916.
9. The constitution of the Great Japan Empire installed in 1889 clearly stated that the emperor had sovereignty. Therefore, if someone uses "Minshu Shugi," right-wing people claim it means people had sovereignty.
10. He was born in Miyagi and taught Yoshino Sakuzo at the Imperial University of Tokyo. He was a member of the Unitarian Church in Japan. He made *Yu-Ai Kai* (Group of Friendship) for the self-improvement of labourers in 1912, which became the first Japanese labour union in 1921. He served as president of this labour groups until 1930. He became a Member of Parliament in 1928 as one of the first Social Democratic Party member and served until 1942.
11. He was born in Kobe, Western Japan. In 1919 he received a Ph.D. in Theology from Princeton University. He was a Presbyterian minister and social worker. In 1920, he wrote "*Shisen wo Koete* (Crossed the Fear of Death)," which became a bestseller in Japan. He was a labour movement leader whose works were translated into English. He became one of the most influential Japanese in the world. After World War II, he became an advisor of the Prince Higashikuni's cabinet in 1945 and an advisor to the Japan Socialist Party in 1945.

12. He was born in Fukuoka, Japan, and was baptized and ordained in the Congregational Church in Kyoto. He graduated from Hartford Theological Seminary and University of Berlin. In 1895, he became a professor at Doshisha College and moved to Tokyo College (later Waseda University) in 1899. He transferred to the Unitarian Church when he moved to Tokyo. He was committed to many labour movements and socialist clubs. In 1932, he became a Member of Parliament with the Social Democratic Party.
13. He was born in Wakayama, Japan, and graduated from the School of Law and Politics at the Imperial University of Tokyo in 1912. He was a member of the Student Christian Movement at the Imperial university of Tokyo, and a member of the Presbyterian Church (later United Church of Christ) in Japan. He became a lawyer and started a lawyers group for poor people. He became a Member of Parliament in 1930. After World War II, he became a party chair and Prime Minister from April 1947 until February 1948.
14. He was a minister of the United Church of Canada. He graduated from the University of Toronto with a B.A. in agriculture and theology. He was sent to Nagano in 1928 and served there until 1941. At that time, he organized rural improvement groups in Northern Nagano. After returning to Japan in 1946, he became president of the Institute for Rural Christianization (later Rural Theological College, Tokyo). He was killed in a shipwreck in Hokkaido during a huge typhoon.
15. The school was established in 1918 by the co-operation of six denominations in United States and Canada (including the Canadian Methodist Church). Nitobe Inazo was the first president and August K. Reischauer was invited as a professor from Meiji Gakuin.
16. Matsutaka Haru is a granddaughter of Matsukata Masayoshi (second Prime Minister of Japan). She went to an American school in Japan because her mother was a member of the Presbyterian Church in Japan. She received a B.A. in United States and returned to Japan in 1937. After World War II, she became a Japan correspondent for the Christian Science *Monitor*. Her autobiography is *Silk and Bushido* (1987).
17. Roger Bowen, *Innocence Is Not Enough* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1986), 38.
18. The company was established by Iwanami Shigeo in 1913 as a second-hand bookstore in Tokyo. Next year, Iwanami published *Kokoro* (Soul) by Natsume Soseki, a Japanese novelist, and became a distinguished publisher. Iwanami Shoten published a series of books about philosophy beginning in 1915, and a variety of paperback world classics from 1927. These series supported young Japanese intellectuals studying liberal arts until 1960s.

19. Bowen, *Innocence Is Not Enough*, 172.
20. He was born in Yamagata, northeastern Japan, and graduated from the University for the Military. In 1928, he sent to Manchuria as an advisor for the commander. Under his beliefs of *Hokkekyo* (Denomination of militant Buddhism established by Nichiren) and his knowledge about the history of war in Europe, he advocated a theory of final war. Under this theory, he started to invade Manchuria in 1931. However, in 1937, when the Japanese military started war with China, he was strongly opposed. This prompted him to move from Manchuria back to Japan. Afterwards he insisted on co-operation between Japan and China. After World War II, he was not accused of being a war criminal; therefore, he went back to Yamagata and opened up farmlands until his death.
21. This was a revolt by the Navy under the influence of militant *Hokkekyo* beliefs. On the evening of 15 May they forced entry into the Prime Minister's Office and assassinated Inukai Tsuyoshi. While the revolt itself was small, its influence was huge. The Japanese military made their commander Saito Makoto the Prime Minister, and a Military court sentenced the people who committed the assassination to five-year imprisonment.
22. In 1471 Ren'nyo formed a mission station at Yoshizaki, Echizen, next door to Kaga. From this mission station Johdo Shinshu established a mission in the Kaga area. At that time, the feudal governor Togashi and other Buddhist denominations resisted this mission. In 1480, farmers and peasants led by Ren'nyo killed the governor and declared self-governance. In 1580, they defeated Odo Nobunaga and their independence ceased.
23. Counter ideology for eesternization in Japan after the Meiji Restoration (1868). They highly emphasized the values and philosophy of eastern cultures, but ignored Asian nationalism. It was strongly influenced by the idea of western nationalism and the monarchy system. During the 1880s, Miyake Setsurei and Shiga Shigetaka advocated such ideology. Based on emperor worship, they idealized Japanese people as a "one legitimate ethnic group from the start of the history." In 1930, it emerged again as a counter ideology of the socialism and nationalism in other Asian countries and territories.
24. *Bushido* started in the seventeenth century after the ceasefire during a civil war in Japan. In Tokugawa Shogunate, it advocated the "meaning of death for their master." *Hagakure* (Hidden by the Leaf) (1716) was one of the best examples of *Bushido* in Japan. After the Meiji Restoration, *Bushido* was neglected, but emerged again during the 1930s to encourage soldiers to die for the emperor.

25. From ancient times, people in Japan have seen the emperor as a “god.” However, original Japanese Shintoism admires almost all the supernatural creatures as “gods,” with the emperor as a “god” among many “gods.” After the establishment of state Shintoism in the late nineteenth century, the emperor became a “superior god” and ruled other gods because he was a successor of the creator of Japan (*Amaterasu* [goddess of the Sun]).
26. The idea of “Japanized Christianity” originally started in the late nineteenth century. Most Japanese Christian leaders were descendants of Bushi; they saw Christianity as a new *Bushido* in Japan. Nevertheless, this current had little influence in the Japanese Christian world because of the strong influence of missionaries. In the 1930s, under the current of Japanism and the expulsion of missionaries, Japanese Christian leaders once more adapted “Japanized Christianity” in order to help their institutions survive. The meaning of “Japanized” was more suitable than during the nineteenth century. It adopted emperor worship in its order of worship.
27. GHQ ordered *Shinto Shirei* in 20 December 1945. This order strictly banned State Shintoism, and every religion was separated from the state. However, Shinto itself was permitted to remain as one of the religions in Japan.
28. W.H.H. Norman, “Introduction,” in “Japanism and Christianity” (S.T.M. thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1939). A copy can be found in 86.007C, Box 3, File 79 & 80, UCA.
29. The United Church of Christ in Japan was established in June 1941 under pressure from the Japanese Government. It included all the Protestant denominations except Jehovah’s Witnesses and some Anglican churches. They adopted 11 divisions depending on the denominations. In February 1942, Japanese secret police arrested and imprisoned most of the ministers of the Holiness groups (divisions 6 and 9) because of their denial of emperor worship. In addition, other Christian leaders in the United Church of Christ in Japan ignored this situation. Some ministers died in prisons. In 1990, executives of the United Church of Christ in Japan officially apologized for their attitude towards the Holiness groups during World War II.
30. Letter from W. H.H. Norman to Jesse Arnup, 23 April 1941; Letter from Jesse Arnup to W.H.H. Norman, 29 April 1941; and Resolution adopted by Board of Foreign Missions, April 1941, 83.014C Box 6 File 118, UCA.
31. “Japanese Canadian Interludes of Evacuation,” 1942, 86.007C, Box 3, File 87; “The Japanese Canadian Situation Today,” January 1947, 86.007C, Box 3, File 89, UCA.
32. Letter from Howard Norman to Jesse Arnup, 13 October 1943; Letter from Jesse Arnup to Howard Norman, 29 October, 83.014C, Box 6, File 136, UCA.

33. Bowen, *Innocence Is Not Enough*, 145-156.
34. Letter from Howard Norman to A.E. Armstrong, 21 August 1947; Letter from Jesse H. Arnup to W.H.H. Norman, 30 September 1947, 83.014C, Box 7, File 160, UCA.
35. Letters from Howard Norman to friends at the Canadian Legation, Tokyo. Dated 17 September, 28 November, 29 November, and 26 December 1947, 86.007C, Box 1, File 20, UCA.
36. Showa Denko sent bribes to Ashida Hitoshi's cabinet in 1947. Ashida and some other cabinet members were later found guilty.
37. Yoshida Shigeru (Democratic Liberal Party) became prime minister in December 1948, and Hatoyama Ichiro (Democratic Party) succeeded him in 1954. Both parties had conservative policies, but competed with each other. In 1955, two conservative parties merged and formed the Liberal Democratic Party, and were in power until July 1993.
38. E. Herbert Norman, trans. Okubo Genji, *Ando Shoeki--Wasurerareta Shishoka* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten [Shinsho]), 1950).
39. Nishimura Shunichi, "Nihon Ecologism no Genryu--Ando Shoeki kara Ewatari Shurei made (The beginnings of the Japanese Ecologists--From Ando Shoeki to Ewatari Shurei) (Tokyo: Nousangyoson Bunka Kyokai, 1992).
40. Norman, *Nagano no Norman* (Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten, 1965).
41. See copy at N6S, UCA.



## Voices United? The House of Commons' role in the Creation of The United Church of Canada

SARA J. KNIGHT

---

*Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis*  
(The times are changed and we are changed in them)<sup>1</sup>

On 5 April 1939 an amendment to the *Act Incorporating the United Church of Canada* (hereinafter the *United Church of Canada Act*) was passed, returning the name “The Presbyterian Church in Canada” to a group of anti-unionists who had maintained the Presbyterian Church after it had officially entered into the United Church of Canada in 1925: this was the culmination of a long battle.<sup>2</sup> The *United Church of Canada Act* was, on its face, a simple piece of legislation submitted as a private members bill to the House of Commons to incorporate three religious bodies: the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist Churches in Canada. It became, however, a debate on the nature of religious freedom in Canada. The relationship between church and state is not as well-defined in Canada as it is in the United States where there is a clear and vigilant separation, or in England where the Church of England is an established church with close state ties.<sup>3</sup> The introduction of the legislation, further complicated by the internal schism dividing the Presbyterian Church in Canada, forced a serious consideration of the role of government in matters of ecclesiastical concern. While historians of religion, both Presbyterian and Methodist, have written about the church union movement from the context of the respective churches, there has been little comment on the legal and legislative struggle beyond a purely chronologi-

*Historical Papers 2003: Canadian Society of Church History*

cal approach.<sup>4</sup> This was not the first piece of legislation incorporating a religious body in Canada: what then made it such a unique experience in Canadian legal history?

James Gardiner, Minister of Highways for Saskatchewan in 1924, wrote to the federal Liberal Minister of Agriculture W.R. Motherwell in January 1924, "I had not thought of comparing the present bill with other religious bills that have gone through the House." He provided a list of similar legislation that had been passed in Saskatchewan, including Acts to incorporate *The House of Jacob (Beth Yakov)* (1915), *The Seventh Day Adventists* (1915), and *The Ursuline Sisters* (1922-23).<sup>5</sup> Nor was church union an innovative concept, following after the earlier unions of Presbyterians in 1875 and Methodists in 1874 and 1884.<sup>6</sup> Legally, the *United Church of Canada Act* was distinct in that it incorporated as Schedule "A" the Basis of Union agreed upon by the three denominations, which set out the doctrine of the church and its articles of faith.<sup>7</sup> This union was interdenominational, and further distinguishing it from previous unions of religious organizations in Canada, a significant minority of Presbyterian Church members did not agree with it. This forced parliament to take a new and different perspective when the *United Church of Canada Act* came before it in May 1924; one that raised serious questions regarding the role of the State in determining ecclesiastical matters. Through a thematic analysis of the House of Commons debates on the proposed legislation, members of parliament attempted to define more clearly the precise relationship between church and state in Canada. Their primary question was to determine the line between assistance and interference, between parliamentary duty and parliament exceeding its jurisdiction?

The union of the Presbyterian Church in 1875 and the Methodist Church unions in 1874 and 1884 were the precursors of the notion of a broader, ecumenical union. The late-nineteenth century saw the development of unified Christian organizations, many of which sprang from the social gospel movement. The temperance movement, YMCA, and various youth organizations were established to "manifest and strengthen Christian unity."<sup>8</sup> Missionary societies from the various churches also began to collaborate. The Methodist General Conference of 1894 formally proposed the idea of federal union of various denominations,<sup>9</sup> and a decade later, in April 1904, committees from the Presbyterian, Congregational, and Methodist Churches initiated formal discussions on the issue.



The reasons advanced to support church union were varied, and reflected values from the spiritual to the pragmatic. For many, disunity was associated with impiety: organic union was their opportunity to “answer Christ’s own prayer ‘that they all may be one.’”<sup>10</sup> The missionary work undertaken by the Presbyterians and Methodists, both at home and abroad, was suffering from a lack of funds and competing agendas. The 1901 census showed significant growth in the number of Roman Catholics in the population,<sup>11</sup> and gave rise to Protestant concerns that if new immigrants arriving in the Canadian west were not greeted by a united Protestant front, they would be lost forever to the ever-larger Roman Catholic Church. By 1923 1,200 pastoral charges had local unions between negotiating churches,<sup>12</sup> most of which were in the west or in rural communities. Economic concerns made union a very attractive proposition: amalgamating institutional infrastructure would make it better and more efficient.<sup>13</sup> Union made it possible for small towns to have at least one viable Protestant church. Regardless of what motivated individuals, the three uniting bodies all agreed “the function of the United Church was to be a holy instrument for the construction of the Kingdom of God on earth.”<sup>14</sup>

While a significant minority of the Presbyterian Church was opposed to organic union as set forth in the Basis of Union first drafted in 1907, there were those who would have been willing for a federal or cooperative union.<sup>15</sup> A key concern for the minority was the loss of the name “The Presbyterian Church in Canada” and the concomitant loss of its distinct identity: they wanted to remain members of the church of their ancestors. The focus of their resistance was the preservation of the existing church. They maintained their conviction that in 1905 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church promised it would not proceed into union without the consent of the entire membership, and the decision made in 1925 was far from unanimous.<sup>16</sup> Major votes on the issue of union had been taken in 1911 and again in 1915, and it was on the strength of the 1915 vote that the Presbyterian Church sought to enter union in 1924. The Presbyterian Church Association was formed to lobby against union and believed that the numbers had changed significantly in their favour in the intervening decade. They argued strenuously for one final vote, which would provide a better picture of the membership’s opinion immediately preceding the tabling of the legislation: the Presbyterian General Assembly refused. In sharp contrast to this campaign to prevent church union in the

Presbyterian community, neither the Methodists nor the Congregationalists had any visible or organized opposition to the movement.<sup>17</sup>

The introduction of legislation to the provincial legislatures and federal parliament was the culmination of a long and exhausting process.<sup>18</sup> In his book *The Legislative Struggle for Church Union*, Gershom Mason, who together with McGregor Young drafted the *United Church of Canada Act*, details the process and strategy surrounding the legislation's passage into law. When they began drafting legislation in 1922, the goal was to create a piece of legislation that provided adequately for the minority, but on the majority's terms. The new body sought federal incorporation to avoid the massive litigation that occurred in the United Kingdom surrounding the "Wee Frees" union case.<sup>19</sup> Because union also involved property and civil rights (under provincial jurisdiction in the *Constitution Act, 1867*), legislation was tabled in all nine provincial legislatures and the federal House of Commons.

The unionists introduced their legislation in Manitoba first because they were more confident of its chance of success in the west.<sup>20</sup> They were correct, with Manitoba advancing the bill as a piece of government legislation rather than as a private members bill. This was followed by the introduction of the bill in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and subsequently the Maritime provinces. There was more dissent in the Maritimes, with the Lieutenant-Governor of Prince Edward Island, McKinnon, refusing royal assent and precipitating a minor constitutional crisis. The legislation also suffered grave difficulties in Ontario, where larger congregations were refusing to enter union. The Unionists were forced to withdraw the bill from the Ontario Private Bills Committee. It was only after it had passed in Ottawa that it was reintroduced in Ontario, and introduced in Quebec and British Columbia.

Section 11 of the *United Church of Canada Act* made provision for the appointment of a commission to resolve equitably the financial and property matters arising out of the union, dealing with assets including the pension fund, Home Mission property and funds, Foreign Mission funds, and college property. Supreme Court of Canada Justice Lyman Duff was made chairman of the nine-person commission, which included two neutral Toronto lawyers, Dyce Saunders and T.P. Galt, and three members from each of the Presbyterian and the new United Church.<sup>21</sup> This commission met from 14 September 1926 to 22 January 1927. In the final report, which binding on both parties as stipulated in s. 11(i) of the *Act*, the Presbyterians were left with 31% (or \$3.26 million) of the assets, including

Knox College in Toronto, Presbyterian College in Montreal, and their respective endowments.<sup>22</sup> The provinces also established commissions with varying success; Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario's were voluntary, and the United Church did not always comply. Litigation also followed, particularly surrounding bequeaths in wills, and "the final property settlement took over fourteen years and caused significant hard feelings."<sup>23</sup>

John McNeill wrote in 1925 that "the purpose of the *United Church of Canada Act* is not to effect Union, but to secure a fair adjustment of property and prevent future litigation."<sup>24</sup> The churches sought state approval for their union on a temporal, not spiritual, level. The British (and hence Canadian) common law had no provision for allowing non-established churches to hold property, other than in trust. The trust on the property incorporates doctrinal principles, which can only be changed in accordance with institutional practices and procedures.<sup>25</sup> This was not a concern for the Methodists and Congregationalists, for they entered into union as corporate bodies. However, the Presbyterian congregations traditionally held their property in individual trusts, and the church now faced losing all of its property to the anti-Union minority. At common law, the minority would inherit the entire wealth of the Presbyterian Church because of the breach of trust by the Unionist majority who were changing their affiliation and attempting to redirect the funds to a purpose other than that for which they were first designated.<sup>26</sup> Legislation was crucial to an effective union of the churches, and parliament was left to determine whether the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church followed the proper procedures that would allow them to keep the church property upon union.

In Canada, the relationship between church and state had never been clearly defined. John Moir states:

Canadians in fact assume the presence of an unwritten separation of church and state, without denying an essential connection between religious principles and national life or the right of the churches to speak out on matters of public importance. This ill-defined--and difficult to define--relationship is peculiarly Canadian.<sup>27</sup>

This unique relationship is largely a product of Canada's evolutionary development. In New France the Roman Catholic Church was clearly the established church,<sup>28</sup> and it has continued to enjoy some level of preferred status since then (including protection under s. 93 of the *Constitution Act*,

1867). In the Maritimes, the Church of England was made the official church by legislative enactment, and in Ontario the Church of England was given priority through the Clergy Reserves until the mid-nineteenth century.

This stands in sharp contrast to the clearly defined relationship that comes out of both the United States and England. The First Amendment of the United States' Constitution states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."<sup>29</sup> Government and religion are explicitly sovereign within their own spheres. England represents the converse, with the Church of England firmly seated as the established church. Canada's intermediate position created more questions than answers on the topic of church union.

Freedom of conscience in religious matters is, however, an uncontroverted principle of church-state relations in Canada. Although this guarantee was codified by s. 2(a) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982, it has always been implicitly recognized in Canada, where the legislatures "permitted religious organizations to enjoy virtually complete self-determination in their affairs, both temporal and spiritual."<sup>30</sup> Churches have also had an indirect (and sometimes direct) influence on the state in helping to establish and maintain a moral order that is based on Christian values. In 1867, and well into the twentieth century, "all were agreed that Canada should be a Christian society whose civil laws and practices should reflect Christian teaching."<sup>31</sup>

It is within this framework that the *United Church of Canada Act* came before the House of Commons in the spring of 1924. The debate was lively, and according to Mr. Lewis (MP Swift Current) "reached a high level, worthy of the best traditions of the church and the honour and dignity of this parliament."<sup>32</sup> The tenor of the conversation mirrored the concerns of a post-World War I Canada, with a focus on democracy and modernity. Reflecting the uncertain role of the government in ecclesiastical affairs, the House was deeply concerned with defining its role in the conflict. Members of parliament were adamant that arrangements be made to accommodate the Presbyterian minority, and were unsure of how to define the "majority" and how to reconcile the notion of "majority rule" with their desire to accommodate the minority. The threat of litigation, which the Leader of the Opposition, Arthur Meighan, believed was being held like a sword over parliament by the Presbyterian minority,<sup>33</sup> brought with it a discussion of the merits of legislation versus litigation: which institution, the courts or the legislatures, had jurisdiction over the conflict?

Was one better equipped than the other to create a solution to the complex problem? Modern themes of nationalism and federalism, the intersection of religion and politics, the equality of women, adequate provision for the minority, and freedom of religion were all put forth. Notions of democracy became entwined with procedural concerns, while modernity was reflected in substantive questions. Above all, there was a sense that union was inevitable, a sign of progress, and that to disagree with it was to be left behind in a different era.

Though the House may have been unsure of its role in church union, it was generally agreed that it had no place in determining any “religious” matters. When the House began discussion of the bill on 24 June Mr. Brown (MP Lisgar) stated:

We are here now as members of parliament to decide whether this legal sanction shall be given; and I say that in my judgment we should ask two questions, and two only: First, has each one of the contracting parties, in the various steps that have been taken in arriving at the conclusion that organic union with the other two is desirable, followed the course that best harmonizes with its constitution and accepted method of procedure? Second, does this bill make a proper provision for the rights of minorities who may not desire to enter into the union?<sup>34</sup>

Taking their cue from the courts, the supporters of the bill established early in the debate that parliament was not in any position to evaluate the wisdom of organic union.<sup>35</sup> Rather, they acknowledged that their job was to ensure procedural safeguards were met.

For supporters of the *United Church of Canada Act*, this piece of legislation was about the corporate freedom of the churches; it was equivalent to any other private members bill seeking the incorporation of an organization, whether religious or economic. Those against the bill characterized it as one that went straight to the heart of church doctrine, while those making legal arguments to support it characterized the legislation as purely procedural. In support of the legislation, Mr. Woods (MP Dufferin) stated:

Parliament is not asked to decide any questions of church doctrine, or church polity or church government. All the United church asks for is the right to legally transact its own business, and it seems to me we have no right to tell it to go to the courts for a decision.<sup>36</sup>

In sharp contrast, Mr. McGiverin (MP Ottawa) stated that, “the questions which are involved in this case are questions of doctrine and faith.”<sup>37</sup> This struggle to characterize the issue before parliament was fundamental.

Those who maintained that this was a purely procedural issue drew parallels with other private member’s bills for incorporation of recognized organizations. The standard of review applied was scrutiny without change; parliament was to ensure the correct procedure was followed and proper provision was made for minorities, but extensive amendments to the bill’s substance were to be avoided. From this perspective, the fact the organizations in question were religious was irrelevant. However, the centrality of religion in the lives of those affected by the passage of the legislation, and to those debating it, inevitably shaped the discussion and the fact that the organizations were churches could not be ignored.

W.R. Motherwell, federal Minister of Agriculture, was responsible for much of the public correspondence regarding the church union legislation. In a letter to a constituent he made it clear that the government did not want to become embroiled in a religious conflict, and explicitly defined what he perceived their role to be:

. . . our parliamentary duties are entirely of a State character and nowise of an ecclesiastical one . . . if any of us have neglected our opportunities to promote this movement in our private-citizen-capacity, then the fault is ours and we should not be attempting to transfer that struggle to the floor of parliament, where only the State side of the question should be considered . . . however, it is amazing how rarely this phase of the question is considered, the average man apparently thinking that the pros and cons of Church Union, as such, a purely ecclesiastical question, should be fought out in parliament.<sup>38</sup>

While the line between doctrine and procedure may have at times in the debate become blurred, there was a principled awareness of needing to maintain that distinction and a concerted effort to do so.

The federal/provincial division of powers was another issue around which parliament needed to draw lines. If the function of the *United Church of Canada Act* was “not to effect Union, but to secure a fair adjustment of property and prevent future litigation”<sup>39</sup> why had the new church come to the federal parliament when property and civil right were clearly within the provinces’ jurisdiction?<sup>40</sup> This was a serious concern to the federal parliament, which did not want to further complicate matters

by passing an *ultra vires* statute. Prime Minister Mackenzie King suggested the addition of what became the final section of the *Act*:

s. 29 Inasmuch as questions have arisen and may arise as to the powers of the Parliament of Canada under the *British North America Act* to give legislative effect to the provisions of this Act, it is hereby declared that it is intended by this Act to sanction the provisions therein contained in so far and in so far only as it is competent to the parliament so to do.<sup>41</sup>

The Law and Legislation Subcommittee of the Church Union Committee was equally aware of the possibility of constitutional challenges, and the sections dealing with property were identical in all of the legislation it drafted, federal or provincial. The federal legislation only dealt with congregational property situated outside the provinces, and the federal property commission dealt with general church property and not that which belonged to individual congregations.<sup>42</sup>

The definition of parliament's role as an intervener in ecclesiastical matters and supervisor of a national merger closely tied to provincial property rights was an unresolved undercurrent throughout the debate. However, it was agreed that parliament was, as Mr. Brown had stated at the outset, to determine whether the uniting churches had followed their respective constitutions and procedures in entering into union. For the Congregationalist and Methodist Churches this was essentially a non-issue: there was no visible resistance movement within either denomination and the concurrence of the majority with the proposed merger was assumed. Conversely, there was a very vocal Presbyterian minority who forced a debate that centred on notions of what constituted a "majority" and questioned the notion of "majority rule."

The Unionists and their supporters in parliament maintained that they were following the rules and forms of procedure as proscribed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. This included the use of the *Barrier Act*, which provided safeguards for actions of those interested in changing the law of the church:

s. 119 (1) No proposed law or rule relative to matters of doctrine, discipline, government or worship, shall become a permanent enactment until the same has been submitted to Presbyteries for consideration . . .

(3) If the majority of the Presbyteries of the Church express their approval, the Assembly may pass such proposed law or rule into a standing law of the Church. If a majority of the Presbyteries express disapproval, the Assembly shall reject such proposed law or rule, or again remit it to the Presbyteries.<sup>43</sup>

The process of returning an issue to the presbytery level for confirmation after its approval by the General Assembly bolstered the Unionist's claims of a fair process that allowed church members a chance to voice their opinion.

Parliament faced a significant stumbling block in the claim by the anti-Unionists that the Presbyterian General Assembly had guaranteed a significantly higher level of procedural fairness than the *Barrier Act* provided for in 1912 when it declared "that unless a practical unanimity could be obtained on the part of the whole church they would not consider it advisable to go on with the movement."<sup>44</sup> A more preliminary question raised by the anti-Unionists was whether, regardless of a majority vote, the *Barrier Act* could be applied to a change in church law that amounted, in their view, to the abolition of the Church body.

The American Case of *Watson v. Jones* set the tone for the legal discussion of "majority rule" in the context of a religious institution. In 1871 the United States Supreme Court stated:

All who united themselves to such a body do so with an implied consent to this government, and are bound to submit to it. But it would be a vain consent and would lead to the total subversion of such religious bodies, if any one aggrieved by one of their decisions could appeal to the secular courts and have them reversed.<sup>45</sup>

In law, religious organizations are voluntary, and by joining them a member agrees to submit to their established rules. The Presbyterian minority elicited little sympathy in their claims that previous votes were not legitimate; this controversy had dragged on for two decades without making any internal attempt to change the *Barrier Act*, the method of election of elders, or the General Assembly.<sup>46</sup>

Parliamentarians on both sides of the debate used statistics from the 1911 and 1915 Presbyterian votes in support of their respective positions. Those members opposed to the bill pointed to the small voter turnout for the previous votes on church union. However, this was a weak argument in what was familiar territory to members of the House because of their



participation in Dominion elections. Mr. Lewis (MP Swift Current) responded to the claim that only 51 percent of the eligible Presbyterian membership had voted in 1915 by stating:

But how can we gauge the public opinion on any subject, unless it is by those who have interested themselves sufficiently to make it worth their while to vote? In an election of any kind, whether upon prohibition, the election of a member of parliament, or any other great public question, it is the actual vote that counts, and the governments of our land act accordingly.<sup>47</sup>

The members were confident in their expertise in this matter, and they maintained the requirement of a procedure that resembled the democratic process for Dominion elections as closely as possible.<sup>48</sup>

Section 10 of the *United Church of Canada Act* provided that individual congregations could vote, in the six months before the coming into force of the *Act*, to stay out of the union. The amendment to this section proposed by Mr. Duff (MP Lunenburg), which would have changed the vote from a congregational meeting to a mail-in ballot, demonstrated parliament's desire to utilize a democratic process. Mr. Stork (MP Skeena) succinctly said: "surely such an important matter as this should be decided by the democratic and up-to-date method of expression of opinion, namely, by ballot, and I am strongly in favour of this method."<sup>49</sup> The congregational meeting format was first adopted because it was the traditional method for making important decisions within the church, and Mr. Motherwell (Minister of Agriculture) maintained that in an effort to promote as much church autonomy as possible, parliament should "render unto the church the things that are the churches and unto the state the things that belong to the state. This is a matter entirely for the church."<sup>50</sup>

Those in favour of a vote by ballot submitted that it allowed a wider range of members to vote, including the sick or elderly and those who worked or traveled extensively. Those against a vote by ballot suggested that it would lead to unfair election practices because those delivering the ballots would influence the voters. Mr. MacDonald (MP Pictou) voiced a common concern that the same respect be accorded the church vote as would be a federal election:

If the minority in the Presbyterian church... are to be told when it comes to a question of giving them an opportunity of expressing an

opinion in regard to this matter, that they are not to have the use of the ballot, which every hon. member of this House would insist upon in regard to the most ordinary election that takes place in this country.”<sup>51</sup>

But here he was cut off by Mr. Caldwell (MP Victoria and Carleton) who pointed to the distinction between the proposals: those in favour of ballots wanted them to be mailed in, while government elections required the voter’s presence at the polling station. Democracy was important in determining the will of the majority, but the members of parliament struggled to define precisely what democracy entailed.<sup>52</sup>

In January 1924 the anti-Unionists filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Court of Ontario, seeking a decision on the legality of the union movement and the powers of the Presbyterian General Assembly to pursue organic union. When the legislation was subsequently tabled in the House of Commons without the anti-Unionists making an application for an interlocutory injunction, Arthur Meighan, Leader of the Opposition, accused the dissenters of being “content to hold the sword of litigation over this parliament.”<sup>53</sup> Many members were concerned that by legislating they would remove “the inalienable right of the British subject to appeal for and to obtain justice at the hands of the court.”<sup>54</sup> However, the bill in no way removed any party’s ability to litigate the issue (with the exception of the binding nature of the property commission’s final report). Those who sought to pass the legislation maintained that “we cannot prevent anyone from going to law, but we want to make it humanly certain that nobody can disrupt this union by carrying tedious litigation into our civil courts for pronouncement.”<sup>55</sup> Thus it was a matter of the order of operations: legislation first, litigation second.

This question of litigation before legislation swirled through the debates and solidified on Prime Minister Mackenzie King’s support for an amendment that would have resolved the dispute with a state supported reference to the Supreme Court of Canada. In his opinion:

If parliament refers this matter to the Supreme court for decision, it is simply prescribing the method that by and large has to be taken in all great controversies--that of ultimately referring to arbitration disputes that cannot be otherwise settled.<sup>56</sup>

What King saw as an expeditious compromise, others saw as a serious interference by the state in church autonomy. King volunteered to refer a question to the court (to be determined at government expense) and the

results would have had a serious impact on the bargaining positions of both sides.

Regardless of the outcome in parliament, the Unionists were adamantly opposed to the matter being litigated. They chose legislation in a conscious attempt to avoid the conflict that had occurred in Britain concerning the “Wee Frees” where extensive and divisive litigation was eventually resolved by legislation years later. When the Private Bills Committee had proposed a similar amendment, the Unionists responded:

If parliament thinks that the legislation should not be granted it may refuse it, but it is submitted that it should not place the negotiating churches in a position which for twenty years in all the negotiations for Union they have planned to avoid.<sup>57</sup>

When discussion in parliament shifted to the possibility of a reference, or to allowing litigation before passing the legislation, N.W. Rowell, chairman of the Joint Committee on Church Union, sent a telegram to King:

One of the objects of going to parliament for legislation is to remove all doubt as to legality and to avoid the scandal, turmoil and confusion which resulted from [the Wee Frees] . . . Now it is seriously proposed to overturn the work of twenty years and repeat the folly in Canada and have litigation over the question.<sup>58</sup>

The Unionist factions of the three churches had agreed to legislation over litigation: ultimately that choice was respected, but not without parliament attempting to restructure the union process to better accommodate the Presbyterian minority.

Although the foundation of the debate in the House of Commons was the procedural aspect of union, there were numerous other leitmotifs. The members showed genuine concern with the effects the legislation would have on their constituents, and while religion was technically to be left out of the debate their speeches show that it permeated their consciousness and their perceptions of the issues. Religion was central to society, social ordering, and to people’s personal identity, and this centrality could not help but inform their discussion. The debate was passionate, and reflects the values of the society: an emerging social conscience, a feeling of progress and of modernity.

Concurrent with the concern for how to define the majority was the need to maintain the “fundamental principle of British government that the rights of minorities must be protected.”<sup>59</sup> The provision for minorities *was* one of the two questions Mr. Brown (MP Lisgar) stated was within the purview of the House, and members took it seriously. The Joint Committee on Church Union was also concerned that should the amendments calling for litigation be successful and the case be sent to the courts, “a decision adverse to the minority would mean that the Presbyterian Church in Canada would go into the Union without any provision for the minority, as the minority would then have no rights whatever.”<sup>60</sup>

This progressive notion of minority protection gave voice to parliament’s social conscience. While in this instance the minority seeking protection was actually a significant number of members of a mainstream religious organization, Mr. Macdonald (MP Pictou) prophetically stated: “I ask every fair-minded man here to realize that the rights of minorities must be religiously preserved in this country if we are going to maintain Canada as a happy and united country and if it is ever to realize the future we anticipate for it.”<sup>61</sup> Mr. Herbert Marler (MP St. Lawrence-St. George) gave voice to a minority through a minority when he stated:

... coming as I do from the province of Quebec, I am urged, perhaps, as much if not a little more than others coming from other provinces are urged, as regards the protection of the rights of minorities . . . are we [the House of Commons] not here equally for the purpose of protecting the rights of minorities?<sup>62</sup>

Members of parliament, both supporters and opponents of the bill, were united in a common goal of preserving a legacy for the Presbyterian minority. They did not face any Unionist opposition to this in principle: the only question was how large the legacy would be.

While the bill provided that congregations would be allowed to opt-out of the union and take their property, Labour MP J.S. Woodsworth (MP Centre Winnipeg) went further by suggesting an amendment that would have allowed minorities within individual congregations to have recognition of their general rights in church property.<sup>63</sup> This amendment was defeated on the practical argument that to divide church property at such a minute level would be impossible. However, while the Joint Committee on Church Union wanted to leave a fair legacy with the Presbyterian minority, they believed the bill was already sufficiently generous, as “the

bill as it stands makes much larger protection for a minority than is made by any other similar legislation that we have been able to find.”<sup>64</sup>

Women had been enjoying an increasingly vital role in Protestant churches in the half-century preceding church union, and they were particularly active in ecumenical activities. Church union was an issue of great importance to them, and they voiced their opinion on both sides of the debate. Mr. Duff (MP Lunenburg), an opponent of the bill, stated: “not only are the Methodist women opposed to this union, but we must remember that in Canada to-day there are at least 100,000 women in the Presbyterian church who are not only opposed to union . . . but are determined to carry the fight to the finish.”<sup>65</sup> Female constituents were a consideration, particularly on a “woman’s issue” like religion.

The women of the Presbyterian Church were active lobbyists on the matter, exercising their recently acquired federal franchise. The Women’s League of the Presbyterian Church Association petitioned Cabinet Minister W.R. Motherwell, to voice their concerns:

As women of the Presbyterian Church, unrepresented in our church courts, we have had no opportunity to express our opinion on this legislation now before the Federal House, and we appeal to your sense of justice and fair play, to your British abhorrence of coercion in every form . . . to see that this bill which disregards property rights and coerces the individual in matters of conscience and religion is so amended to permit freedom of conscience to all concerned, with a just and fair division of property which belongs to all alike . . .<sup>66</sup>

These women were active members of their churches, through Women’s Missionary Societies and Ladies’ Aid Societies, and contributed to the spiritual and financial well-being of their congregations. Though there were no female members of the church courts, the rules and forms of procedure did allow that “all members in full communion, male and female, have the right to vote at all congregational meetings, and to them exclusively belongs the right of choosing ministers, elders . . .”<sup>67</sup> Women did exercise the franchise in both the church and federal elections, and parliament was forced to acknowledge their concerns as members of the electorate and pillars of the petitioning churches.

In attempting to define their role in the creation of a new United Church, parliamentarians often invoked the touchstones of religious liberty and freedom of conscience. Canada’s British heritage meant that “under the Union Jack we have every right to enjoy and in fact do enjoy civil and

religious liberty.”<sup>68</sup> Both sides advanced their arguments by invoking these freedoms. The bill’s supporters believed the state should not interfere with the petition brought before the House by three private religious bodies desiring union, while the bill’s opponents argued parliament could not force people into membership in a specific religious organization if they did not want to join.

The Joint Committee on Church Union insisted that fundamental to religious liberty was the right of the churches to interpret their own constitution. Recourse to the civil courts to determine the authority of the Presbyterian General Assembly to join with other churches, as provided for by proposed amendments, “would be an invasion of the liberty of the Church in matters spiritual and might easily enslave the spiritual and intellectual liberty of the church for all time to come.”<sup>69</sup> This concern was clearly articulated by members of the House, who agreed that the separation of church and state in Canada, however ill-defined, did include acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the churches.<sup>70</sup> King, though supportive of a reference question to the Supreme Court, stated, “I would never support interference by the state with the right of any church to determine its own destiny, to shape its own polity, to do what it wishes with respect to its own doctrine.”<sup>71</sup>

Those members of parliament opposed to the bill were assessing religious liberty from the Presbyterian minority perspective, and they faced losing their official church in a state-sanctioned merger. Mr. MacLaren (MP St. John City) succinctly voiced the concerns of many others that “this parliament is not going to dictate to any body of people as to what church they should belong,”<sup>72</sup> that is, Presbyterians becoming United Church. But it was Mr. Duff (MP Lunenburg), chief opponent of the bill, whose masterful oratory highlighted the potential effects:

To have such a great church thus blotted out by act of parliament, and its entire membership, however unwilling, made members of another church and compelled to remain there or go out homeless on the street, their church gone for ever, would be religious coercion unknown in the history of free people . . . would in future, be a menace to the freedom of statesmen and parliaments in their efforts for the well-being of our country.<sup>73</sup>

To reach a definition of parliament’s role in this merger, the members were faced with reconciling these fundamentally differing approaches to religious freedom in Canada.

When the bill was tabled in the House of Commons, it inevitably became a political issue. The magnitude of public interest in the outcome, and the concern the churches had of putting their fate into the hands of those who did not necessarily share the same religious convictions, meant that religion became intertwined with politics. However, the debate did not divide along party lines. Members of Cabinet were explicit in speaking on behalf of their constituents and not the government they represented.<sup>74</sup> The Prime Minister, in response to rumours that he was supporting one position or another and expected the party to follow, stated:

. . . the government itself is very much divided on this question . . . I have not desired that any member of parliament and particularly any member of this side of the House should in this matter vote other than as his conscience and sense of duty and right impel him to vote.<sup>75</sup>

The government had chosen not to table the bill as a government measure, and its introduction as a private member's bill allowed them to maintain their distance from it as a political party.

There were members of the government who expressed concern that there would necessarily be political ramifications for the Liberal Party from this religious decision once it was brought before the House. W.R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture, clearly articulated these concerns when he wrote to the Liberal members of the House:

I fear the Liberal Party, even though the bill is a private one, will be held largely responsible for the preamble of the bill (which contains the principle) not going through as introduced . . . I think we should all carefully ponder over those matters before precipitating a possible maelstrom of litigation and religious strife, equally bad for both Church and State and certainly boding no good to the Liberal cause.<sup>76</sup>

This "confidential" letter was leaked to the newspapers and the content incensed members of the House who believed that this bill had no place in party politics. They were generally successful, at least on the floor of the Commons, in maintaining the distinction.

The national dimension of the union made it more controversial than it may have otherwise been: it deeply affected tens of thousands of people across Canada. The centrality of religion to societal structure meant that any proposal for significant change was bound to raise interest across the country. There were ramifications for all religious denominations, not just

the ones directly involved; the merger realigned religious communities and parliament's approach to this issue set a precedent for any future legal questions about the church-state relationship in Canada. But the religious union promised more than just a religious effect: there was to be a corresponding union of Canadians.<sup>77</sup> Parliamentarians often turned to their British roots during the debate to support their claims of religious freedom and concern for minorities, but they were also interested in establishing a nationalist sentiment within Canada: "we are laying the foundations of one of the greatest countries on earth, that is Canada, and this church union movement is something that will promote the unity of our people."<sup>78</sup> Church union became a way in which parliament could promote Canadian union and exercise its developing sense of nationalism. Canadians were dealing with this issue independently, and although the principles were British, their application was distinctly Canadian.

There were those members of parliament who voiced the sentiments of the Presbyterians who sought not to forget the church of their parents, its traditions and achievements. Their fears, of a world in which "materialism should run rampant and . . . all that has stood for the solidity of institutions and for advancement in Canada shall have disappeared," were grounded in a desire to maintain stability in rapidly changing times.<sup>79</sup> The majority of the members, however, seemed heartily in favour of modernity and progress, of changing to meet the changing times, and of being a part of "possibly one of the most momentous movements which have ever taken place in the Dominion of Canada."<sup>80</sup> Those who supported the status quo were accused of holding back the inevitable tide of progress. The Churches themselves believed that continued growth and development, both spiritual and temporal, depended on their amalgamation into a new unitary organization; many parliamentarians were unwilling to force them to remain forever tied to the past.<sup>81</sup>

The United Church of Canada came into being on 10 June 1925, following twenty-one years of negotiation, and three years of serious legal and political wrangling. It would take another fourteen years before the conflict would finally be resolved, when an amendment to the *United Church of Canada Act* allowed the Presbyterian minority who had stayed out of union to reclaim their formal title of "The Presbyterian Church in Canada." Both sides achieved their goals, though it required time and compromise to do so. By 1992 the United Church of Canada claimed 2,020,000 members, making it the second largest denomination in Canada (after the Roman Catholic Church); the Presbyterian Church in Canada



claimed 245,000 members (placing it sixth overall).<sup>82</sup> The Presbyterian Church feared being legislated out of existence, but they continue to exist into the twenty-first century. The United Church wanted to challenge the Roman Catholic Church and unite Protestants across Canada, and they remain an active voice for social change. The struggle for church union forced all members of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregationalist churches to examine their faith and how they believed it could best be exercised. The extended process may have created a more secure and stable United Church and Presbyterian Church, with members who joined out of conviction, not apathy. One of the Methodist goals in union was the creation of another wave of revivalism, and in a circuitous way that may have been the result.

The legislative debate that surrounded the *United Church of Canada Act* is a window on the Canada of the 1920s, torn between its traditional place in the world and a desire to move forward. The *Hansards* showcase a superior level of debate among the members of parliament, who are not afraid to attack a broad range of issues, both procedural and substantive. On the surface the debate is about the creation of the United Church, but underneath it is about a parliamentary institution attempting to define itself and its boundaries. The relationship between church and state is not clear in Canada, and while the debate does not give definitive conclusions on what level of interference will be tolerated, it probes all of the corners of the argument and provides rough guidelines of where the sovereignties lie and clarifies that there is unquestionably a separation. Members of parliament also went on to address issues that continue to resonate today: the treatment of minorities, the representation of women, the need for religious freedom, and the desire for a united and progressive Canada. The United Church of Canada's hymnbook is *Voices United*: through a cacophony of sound, the House of Commons facilitated its creation.

### ***Endnotes***

1. Mr. Lewis, MP Swift Current, Address to the House of Commons, 26 June 1924.
2. In *The Resistance to Church Union In Canada, 1904-1939* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), N. Keith Clifford extends the conclusion of the church union conflict from the traditional coming into force of the *United Church Act* in 1925 to the final amendment, which laid to rest

one of the most strenuous objections of the dissenters: the loss of the name “The Presbyterian Church in Canada.”

3. For a more in-depth discussion of the separation of church and state in the United States, see *Religion, Politics and The Law: Commentaries and Controversies* (Belmont, CL: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1996). For a brief history of the intimate connection of church and state in Europe, see “A Brief Historical Overview of Theories About the Relationship of Church and State” in M.H. Ogilvie, *Religious Institutions and the Law in Canada* (Scarborough: Thomson Canada Ltd., 1996).
4. For the Methodist perspective on church union, see “Methodism and the Formation of the United Church of Canada” in Neil Semple’s *The Lord’s Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996). Keith Clifford’s *The Resistance to Church Union In Canada* provides a detailed examination of the Presbyterian anti-Unionist movement’s response. Gershom Mason’s *The Legislative Struggle for Church Union* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1956) is a first-person account of the legislative strategy and chronology.
5. W.R. Motherwell Papers, 1924 (Jan-Mar), File 99, Box 6, Law and Legislation, Series II, Church Union Collection 1925, United Church/Victoria University Archives (hereafter UCA).
6. Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion*, 417.
7. *The United Church of Canada Act*, S.C. 1924, c. 100.
8. Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion*, 417.
9. John Thomas McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875-1925* (Toronto: General Board, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1925), 250.
10. Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion*, 423.
11. Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion*, 390.
12. Neil G. Smith, et al., *A Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1966), 83.
13. Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion*, 425.
14. Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion*, 422.
15. Smith, *A Short History*, 77.

16. Smith writes, “In reporting to the general assembly in 1905 the Presbyterian Committee made the following statement: ‘. . . a question so important and far-reaching in its results was not one to be unduly hurried: that a union of the churches, to be real and lasting, must carry the consent of the entire membership, and that no final step could be taken until ample opportunity had been given to consider the whole question in the courts of the various Churches, and by the people generally’” (*A Short History*, 77).
17. Clifford, *The Resistance to Church Union*, 1.
18. For a chronology of church union, see Appendix I.
19. In 1900, the United Presbyterians and the Free Church in Scotland united. The “Wee Frees” were an anti-Unionist minority of the Free Church who were given the entire property of the Free Church in legal action, as they upheld the doctrine of the original trust on the property. This decision was subsequently overturned by legislation that only allotted them a proportional share.
20. Clifford, *The Resistance to Church Union*, 149.
21. David Ricardo Williams, *Duff: A Life in the Law* (Vancouver: UBC Press in association with the Osgoode Society, 1984) 135.
22. Williams, *Duff*, 136.
23. Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion*, 439.
24. McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church*, 259.
25. Ogilvie, *Religious Institutions*, 209.
26. Ogilvie, *Religious Institutions*, 210.
27. Albert J. Mendez, *Church and State in Canada* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1996), 105.
28. In “What is a Church by Law Established?” ((1990) 28 Osgoode Hall L.J. 179 at 235), M.H. Ogilvie defines an established church as “a single church within a country accepted and recognized by the state in its doctrine, worship, and discipline as the truest expression of Christianity within that country . . . [establishment] encumbers that state with the legal duty to protect, preserve and defend that church, if necessary to the exclusion of all others.”
29. Peter and Dennis Stevens Schotten, *Religion, Politics and The Law: Commentaries and Controversies* (Belmont, CL: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1996), 60.

30. M.H. Ogilvie, "The Legal Status of Ecclesiastical Corporations," *Canadian Business Law Journal* 15 (1989): 74- 88.
31. Ogilvie, *Religious Institutions*, 36.
32. *Hansard* (1924), 3716.
33. *Hansard* (1924), 3754.
34. *Hansard* (1924), 3557.
35. The Supreme Court of Canada routinely states that its function is not to evaluate the wisdom of legislation, but only its constitutional validity.
36. *Hansard* (1924), 3576.
37. *Hansard* (1924), 3590.
38. Letter dated 12 April 1924, Box 6, File 100, W.R. Motherwell Papers, 1924 (Apr-May), UCA.
39. McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church*, 259.
40. The *Constitution Act, 1867* gives provinces the exclusive ability to make laws in relation to property and civil rights (s. 92(13)).
41. *United Church of Canada Act*, s. 29.
42. "Is the Bill Constitutional?" Box 9, File 162, UCA. See also s. 8 of the *United Church of Canada Act*, which exempts "any real or personal property belonging to or held by . . . any congregation . . . solely for its own benefit, and in which the denomination to which such congregation belongs has no right or interest" from the property provisions of the *Act*.
43. *Rules and Forms of Procedure: in the Church Courts of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Montreal: The William Drysdale Co'y, 1899).
44. *Hansard* (1924), 3563.
45. 80 U.S. 679 (1871) as found in Alley, Robert S. ed., *The Constitution & Religion: Leading Supreme Court Cases on Church and State* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1999), 541.
46. These sentiments are articulated by Mr. T.H. McConica (MP Battleford) (see *Hansard* [1924], 3737).
47. *Hansard* (1924), 3714.

48. Ironically, the final vote on the bill passed the House of Commons with a vote of 90 in favour and 58 opposed, when there were a total of 235 members in the House at that time (Clifford, *The Resistance to Church Union*, 160).
49. *Hansard* (1924), 3768.
50. *Hansard* (1924), 3815.
51. *Hansard* (1924), 3809.
52. While the amendment requiring a vote by ballot was defeated in the House of Commons, the ballot was accepted in the Senate and appears in the provisions of s. 10 of the final *Act*.
53. *Hansard* (1924), 3754.
54. *Hansard* (1924), 3600 (Mr. Raymond, MP Brantford).
55. *Hansard* (1924), 3605 (Mr. Putnam, MP Colchester).
56. *Hansard* (1924), 3747.
57. "Objections to Amendments," Box 8, File 134, UCA.
58. Box 5, File 85, UCA.
59. *Hansard* (1924), 3594.
60. "Objections to Amendments," File 134, Box 8, UCA.
61. *Hansard* (1924), 3613.
62. *Hansard* (1924), 3572.
63. *Hansard* (1924), 3769.
64. Letter to Edwin Proulx, Esq. MPP L'Original Ontario, File 128, Box 7, Correspondence Re: Legislation 1924 (April 16-30), UCA.
65. *Hansard* (1924), 3569.
66. File 100, Box 6, W.R. Motherwell Papers, 1924(Apr-May), UCA.
67. *Rules and Forms of Procedure* s. 15.
68. *Hansard* (1924), 3722.
69. File 85, Box 5, UCA.
70. *Hansard* (1924), 3715.

71. *Hansard* (1924), 3748.
72. *Hansard* (1924), 3589.
73. *Hansard* (1924), 3570. Mr. Duff also proposed an amendment in the final sitting on the bill to change the name of the new church to the United Church in Canada (“in” rather than the proposed “of”) because he feared the use of “of” would lead people to believe that this was a new national church. This amendment was defeated.
74. *Hansard* (1924), 3607.
75. *Hansard* (1924), 3744.
76. File 100, Box 6, W.R. Motherwell, UCA.
77. National unity was an explicit goal of the new church, which stated in its Basis of Union: “It shall be the policy of The United Church to foster the spirit of unity in the hope that this sentiment of unity may in due time, so far as Canada is concerned, take shape in a Church which may fittingly be described as national.”
78. *Hansard* (1924), 3734.
79. *Hansard* (1924), 3611.
80. *Hansard* (1924), 3571.
81. Arthur Meighan, Leader of the Opposition, best summarized this position when he said, “If we say such thing [that the church cannot modify its doctrine] we merely condemn that church to drift lifelessly on the reefs of time while its children abandon its alter and its creed” (*Hansard* [1924], 3753).
82. Mendez, *Church and State*, 75-77.

---

**Appendix I*****Chronology of Church Union***

- April 1904 Joint Committee on Church Union's first meeting Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Methodist Churches
- Early 1907 Proposed "Basis of Union" published
- 1912 First Presbyterian vote on union; majority in favour
- 1914 Presbyterian Church Association (anti-Union group) formed
- 1916 Presbyterian Church General Assembly votes 406 to 90 in favour of union
- 1917-1921 Negotiations adjourned (primarily because of World War I)
- 25 Jan. 1924 Lawsuit begun by anti-Unionists in Supreme Court of Ontario
- 26 Feb. 1924 Union Bill introduced in Ontario (withdrawn 9 April)
- 13 Mar. 1924 Bill passed third reading in Manitoba
- 11 Apr. 1924 Bill passed third reading in PEI; Lieutenant Governor refused assent (later passed 19 December 1924)
- 12 Apr. 1924 Bill passed third reading in Saskatchewan
- 12 Apr. 1924 Bill passed third reading in Alberta
- 17 Apr. 1924 Bill passed third reading in New Brunswick
- 30 Apr. 1924 Private Bills Committee begins hearings in Ottawa
- 10 May 1924 Bill passed by Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly
- 19 July 1924 *United Church of Canada Act* passed, federal Parliament
- 19 Dec. 1924 Bill assented to in British Columbia legislature

- 14 Apr. 1925 Bill assented to in Ontario legislature
- 10 June 1925 First General Council of United Church of Canada
- 24 Mar. 1926 Bill assented to in Quebec legislature
- 20 May 1926 Newfoundland incorporates the United Church
- Sept. 1926 Federal Property Commission begins meetings
- 5 Apr. 1939 Amendment to the *United Church of Canada Act* passed.  
The name “The Presbyterian Church in Canada” returned to  
anti-Unionist minority.



## **Recalling the Salvation Army's Outreach Amongst Finnish-Canadians**

MIKA ROINILA

---

The work of the Salvation Army around the world is well known. From its birth in England in 1885 where William Booth began this quasi-military outreach of the gospel message, the work of the Army has spread worldwide to make its presence felt in over 135 countries. During the early-1900s, much outreach amongst ethnic minorities occurred, particularly in the United States. With the great waves of immigration following the turn of the century, groups such as the Germans, Russians, and Scandinavians opened Salvation Army corps (churches) throughout the United States.

The beginnings of Finnish Army work is directly tied to the emerging Scandinavian population of the late 1800s. Begun in New York City amongst the Swedes in 1887, the Scandinavian work expanded over the years to include all the settled areas where any Scandinavian was found.<sup>1</sup> While available literature focuses on the Swedish outreach, some Norwegian and Danish corps also emerged. These three Scandinavian nations share similar languages, and it was not uncommon for all three ethnic groups to work alongside each other. The Finnish work, however, was different. Very little is noted in literature, except for a few sentences.<sup>2</sup> From ongoing research into the Finnish work, it has been discovered that the work of the Finnish Salvation Army in America reached its height in 1920-1923 when a total of six active corps were in operation across the Eastern Scandinavian Province of the Salvation Army. These active locations included Ashtabula, OH (1918-1935); Gardiner (1916-1926) and Worcester, MA (1920-1938); Jersey City, NJ (1920-1923); New York

(1918-1925); and Brooklyn, NY (1913-1955). Material uncovered from the Salvation Army's Disposition of Forces records at the National Archives in Arlington, VA also show other locations such as Quincy, MA (1906-1908); Calumet, MI (1908-1909); Hibbing, MN (1909); along with Fitchburg, MA (1916-1918). The best remembered work occurred at the Brooklyn Corps, which remained viable until the mid-1950s. Since then, there has been no Finnish outreach in the United States.

The Finnish work of the Salvation Army in Canada is obviously much smaller compared to the Finnish work that occurred in the United States. However, there was a period in the late 1970s and early 1980s, during which time the Salvation Army was trying to reach Finns as well.

Of the few Finnish officers that have lived and worked in North America, perhaps the best known is Jarl Wahlstrom of Finland, who was appointed the Chief Secretary of Canada and Bermuda in 1972. According to sources, Wahlstrom made a number of visits to local Finnish congregations as well as summer camps, such as Hannajärvi Lutheran Camp near Toronto, Ontario. Once he was invited to speak at a Clan Festival for the Savolaiset at the Agricola Church in Toronto, where he stated "When our forefathers came across the Karelian isthmus to Finland, they came upon a sign along the road that said 'Savo,' and all the literate people headed in that direction."<sup>3</sup> Wahlstrom attended major Salvation Army events that were part of this position, such as the opening of corps buildings.<sup>4</sup> In 1976, Wahlstrom moved back to Finland having been appointed commissioner for the country. Finally, in 1981 he became the General of the International Salvation Army. It must have been interesting for the General to hear shouts of "*Hyvää Päivää, Herra Kenraali*" from the Roinila family as we marched past the grandstand during the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the Salvation Army in Canada held in Winnipeg in 1982. In 1985, I had the opportunity to thank the General during the International Youth Congress held in Macomb, Illinois--in Finnish--for awarding me the gold medal for my role with the Canadian soccer team that had defeated the South Americans in the final game. Wahlstrom remained in charge of the Salvation Army until his retirement in 1986.

While Wahlstrom was a bona fide officer in the Salvation Army and highly ranked, he failed to organize any major attempt to reach the Finnish-Canadians. However, in 1979 a Finnish family began attending the Salvation Army Port Arthur Corps, and after a short while, both Olavi and Orvokki Roinila undertook senior soldiership classes, and were accepted as soldiers by signing the Articles of War on 22 April 1979. A Finnish

Salvation Army missionary from Singapore, Major Kyllikki Vataja, officiated this special meeting, which was attended by a full congregation of more than 150 corps members, friends and interested people. Convinced of the needs amongst the many Finnish people of the city, Olavi Roinila began to organize weekly meetings at the Port Arthur corps location. Visits were made to the local resthomes and boarding homes where the Finnish *War Cry* (*Sotahuuto*) was handed out, along with donuts for the needy. This simple social and spiritual outreach is a trait well-known within the Salvation Army. The meetings in Port Arthur continued briefly until the spring of 1980 when the Roinila family moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba. Here again, Olavi Roinila was able to organize meetings within the Winnipeg Citadel location, which attracted local Winnipeg area Finns. Through misunderstandings and poor communications, this work amongst the needy--especially in Thunder Bay--eventually failed and the vision for this work faded. During this period of activity, contacts were established with the Salvation Army in Finland, along with the newly appointed General Jarl Wahlstrom, but support from these sources was minimal at best, composed of the *Sotahuuto* magazines along with a single Finnish Army songbook.

The following document better describes the attempt at Salvation Army outreach among the Finns of Thunder Bay. It is a translation of an unpublished Finnish manuscript written by Olavi Roinila, compiled as the family memoir in *Roinilat--Meikäläiset Maailmalla*, which provides details of the brief history of the Finnish Salvation Army in Canada, and how this outreach met its untimely end.

Obviously we were wrong in many things, but that was to be expected. We had never been involved in the work of the Salvation Army. Where would we have ever learned about it? Should these English-speakers not have understood our situation so as to try to help us through our short-comings? But no, we were not helped or taught much! By myself I made a mistake in operating the photocopy machine, and the Lieutenant was quick to admonish and complain to a higher ranked Major, as to say "See what he is now doing." In response, the Major only murmured to himself, and must have thought that it was none of his concern.

The biggest blunder, really, that made us think that perhaps we were not welcome into the Salvation Army's sphere, occurred, when the Thunder Bay cable television invited all the Finnish congregations to attend a panel discussion. The Finnish Army also received an

invitation, and the invitation was obviously sent to the corps address. There, our friendly Lieutenant took the letter and with another officer went to attend the meeting, which was held in the Finnish language. The panel discussion dealt with assigning broadcasting possibilities for the different congregations throughout the year, but the officers who attended didn't understand a word! One of the attending pastors wondered "Where are the Roinila's, they were the ones who were invited!" But our valued officer didn't even notify us about this event! We only heard about the meeting through contacts after-the-fact. When we thus saw that the situation began to border on the ridiculous, we saw no possibilities for successful work with the Finns. We had no money to rent facilities, musical instruments, we had nothing. That was the sole reason why we tried to associate with the local corps and work alongside with them. They had everything. I sent letters to Finland and to the newly appointed General with information on our developments and first-hand accounts of what was happening, to no avail. We received vague responses, in which it was hoped that "things will work out." Our Lieutenant then took matters into his own hands by informing the Divisional Commander, that we were somehow "difficult." Even though we had collected over \$600 into their offering plates. One older woman, for example, donated \$100 in support of our work, which still ended up going to the English-language work. We never saw any of the money, and nobody ever spoke of this either.

So this is how things began to change. A letter was received from the Divisional Commander, encouraging us to discontinue our work among the Finns of Thunder Bay. It was suggested that we should receive more training, since reports were that we were not completely familiar with it. This was an official letter, with its official seals and formal politeness. For when the Salvation Army begins to be official and formal, it is literally so. From what I have seen of the Canadian Salvation Army as an observer from the side, I can honestly say, that a piece of paper is more important in its hierarchy than a living person. It is sad to write this, but I have personally experienced and lived through this, seen how things and events are handled, how some thing that are wanted are not allowed to go through, so that "well has the founder William Booth taken his lessons from the military, as the only difference is that some preach, others kill"--but sometimes words can kill as well! It is of no consolation to know that a year following these events, the Lieutenant of the Corps was ordered to another position in another city, where he resigned from his work with the

Salvation Army. We later heard that the Lieutenant had become “tired” of the work.

By this time I had slowly begun to give up my choirs. You see, I thought it would look better for a “believer,” that I didn’t get involved in secular interests. I ended women’s choir “Oras” and the children’s choir “Peipposet,” simply explaining that I was too busy, tired, my life view had changed, now that I was saved and so on. I thus ended my beloved hobbies, that I had in all my moves tried to lead and organize.<sup>5</sup> And then the Finnish Army work ended, and what did I have to show for it? Absolutely nothing, only a cross, bitter, and bad feeling. Fortunately, the family remained together and did not fall apart at the seams. We love each other, try to blow into the “same coal,” but I must admit that there have been times when my wife did not always want to understand me. These were trying times, especially under the guidance of the Army, when my wife would become irritable and I would become agitated. Otherwise we have been a happy couple, and the family has been together. For that I thank God.

Then, one of my friends in Thunder Bay said to me: “Well, don’t you now believe, what the congregations are all about? Do you still feel like beginning again? Why don’t you just take a spoon into your right hand and begin feeding yourself properly. You don’t need a congregation, you can be in touch with God without a congregation. Isn’t a direct contact always much better?” he asked. “Contact with your God is important to you, not just others. Why do you then look for others who become the middlemen between you and God. You have a Bible, read, and learn from it what God is saying to you. And if you can’t read, learn, it is high time for you to learn the ABC’s of life, and not just keep hitting your head against the wall.” This is how he “preached” to me. I listened and listened. He was correct in some ways, and incorrect in others. Take from that what is good, discard the rest, and find the golden path in the middle. I have looked, tried, experienced, and found many wrong roads, while many teachings and beliefs have been found to be long lasting and true. This brought to mind an appropriate saying that goes like this: “If you want to live life sad--look at people, if disappointed--look at other believers, if a winner--look only at Jesus!?”

In thinking about the past, the attitudes and feelings, I now have a melancholy feeling. I feel that the kind of work the Salvation Army does, was definitely needed amongst the Finnish people. Hopefully someone else will have that same vision, and a desire to do some Christian social work, have foresight and faith, to be able to work

within the many difficulties that such work entails, but still continues on. I have often thought about the Finnish General, who served for four years in Canada as Chief Secretary, and after his return to Finland, and why he did not begin to lead and order something to be done towards the Finnish needs among Finnish immigrants? Did he encourage any Finnish officer to take up work among the Finns, especially since he had seen the need among the Finns. Didn't anyone in Finland, once they read about the start of this work in the Finnish *War Cry*, make any contact with me? Did anyone see it as a calling to come to Canada and work with the Finns? No, not one. This is what I have often thought about. And I have begun to understand. Perhaps they know how difficult it is to work 'under the wings' of someone? The English-speakers own their own meeting halls and control all that happen within them, and this is understandable. But if there is the will and foresight within the Salvation Army of Finland, they could build their own hall, and easily send their own worker, or workers, to manage it.

From the bottom of my heart, I wish that the leaders in the Salvation Army of Finland understand the importance of this work, the usefulness, the need, the blessings of this work, work that would not be fruitless. This work would yield blessings to the worker, but more importantly, it would help the many local Finns that others very seldom help. I believe that God would bless such work thousand-fold. Even though God apparently did not bless our attempts at starting such an outreach among the Finns, perhaps the situation would be different with others. I would not be bitter, hurt, or jealous, if I heard that someone had begun work among the Finns. Rather, I would thank God for his blessings.<sup>6</sup>

The Roinila family relocated to Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1983, where Mr. and Mrs. Roinila became the eventual custodians of the well-renowned Winnipeg Citadel Corps, located in downtown Winnipeg. Once again, a vision for reaching people and an opportunity to present the gospel message to the local Finns was brought forward by Mr. Roinila. Having received permission from the Corps Officer as well as the Divisional Commander for the Manitoba and NW Ontario Division, the Roinila family once again established Sunday afternoon meetings for the Finnish community. The participation was less numerous, and after several months, the desire and support from the administrative elements of the Salvation Army led to dissolution of the vision. By 1984, personal difficulties and misunderstandings led to the closing of this chapter of any

attempts by the Salvation Army to extend outreach towards the Finnish population of Canada. In 1986, Mr. and Mrs. Roinila returned to Finland, where after attempts of working as an envoy at a Finnish Corps on the Arctic Circle, and working a few years as a case worker with the Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center, Mr. Roinila was forced to retire due to failing health. Earlier heart attacks, high blood pressure and stress led to an early retirement. Today, Mr. and Mrs. Roinila reside in Tampere, Finland.

The above is a personal biography of an outreach that was attempted among Finnish-Canadians by a well-read, untrained layman, who saw a need and had a desire to meet that need. In recalling the occurrences, with and without its short-comings, the account is a valuable addition to our understanding of religious work among ethnic minorities. My work on the Finnish Salvation Army outreach within the United States received its impetus from my own experiences in Canada and my help with my parent's outreach, and it is my wish that future documentation of the Finnish Salvation Army outreach will recognize this small input among the Finnish work that existed elsewhere in the United States in the early 1900s.

### ***Endnotes***

1. William A. Johnson, *O Boundless Salvation: The Story of the Scandinavian Salvation Army in the United States* (New York: The Salvation Army Literary Department, 1988).
2. K.A. Walden, *Återblick Over Frälsningsarmens Skandinaviska Arbete I Amerika, 1887-1933* (Chicago, 1933); Herbert A. Wisbey, Jr. *Soldiers Without Swords: A History of the Salvation Army in the United States* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1956); and Johnson, *O Boundless Salvation*.
3. Kyllikki Korhonen, 17 September 2001, Correspondence from Summerland, BC.
4. *Mississauga Temple, The Salvation Army, official opening and dedication by Colonel Jarl Wahlstrom* (8 October 1974).
5. The Roinila family has lived in Australia (1967-1970), Sweden (1970), as well as Finland and Canada. Olavi Roinila received his education from Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, and his love for music led to his founding of numerous choirs among the Finnish ethnic communities abroad. He has played violin in symphony orchestras and most recently has organized choral and orchestral concert tours from Finland to the United States.

6. Mika Roinila, ed., *Roinilat – Meikäläiset Maailmalla* (Portland: Muse Press, 1990).



## **British-Canadian Myths of Purity and Segregated Schools in Mid-Nineteenth Century Canada West**

KRISTIN MCLAREN

---

In the mid-nineteenth century, British settlers in Canada West adopted British cosmologies to order their world. According to the British version of the myth of divine providence, God had placed the Anglo-Saxon people at the top of the racial, social, political, and moral order and their divine mission was to rule over the so-called inferior races of the world and spread God's dominion over the earth.<sup>1</sup> Canadians of British heritage believed that as part of the empire, Canada had a significant role to play in making the earth "the garden of the Lord."<sup>2</sup>

This paper will examine the practice of school segregation in Canada West--a practice that emerged when notions of the superior, chosen British race came into conflict with ideals of a moral and egalitarian empire in the context of a diverse Canadian society. This conflict and the contradiction between moral ideals and discriminatory practice were not generally acknowledged by the British immigrant population and came to be masked by discourses of purity. British cosmologies describing the British as a chosen race and their empire as a moral and egalitarian exemplar to the world had originally emerged out of the context of purported homogeneity in the British homeland and sanctioned colonial situations in which British administrators had little interaction with the people they governed. In Canada, however, the exotic "others" (Native Americans, Asians and Africans) lived in close proximity to British settlers and a diversity of people interacted in the creation of this British colony. This form of human encounter directly challenged British myths;

*Historical Papers 2003: Canadian Society of Church History*

in response, British immigrants to Canada developed a new discourse that allowed them to maintain their ideals of British purity while relegating those who were not considered white to the peripheries of society.<sup>3</sup>

Although the British constitution and laws applied in Canada West purported to allow equal treatment for all, racialized blacks<sup>4</sup> were denied equal access to education in the province. The exclusion of these children from public education was an illegal but widespread practice in Canada West. Guardians of the education system tolerated such discriminatory practices, ignoring the contradiction with British egalitarian and moral ideals.

The very myths that allowed the British in Canada to assert their moral superiority and egalitarian tendencies also allowed for the exclusion of those who were not considered to be of the white British race from full participation in British-Canadian society. The presence of these racialized others was perceived as a threat to British-Canadian identity, rooted in myths that solidified attachment to empire and British race, and so, they were denied acceptance as equal British citizens in this Canadian province. In the Victorian era, notions of Britain and empire took on a religious significance for the people who oriented their existence around myths that God had ordained this nation to rise above worldly existence and to spread His dominion over the earth. The British empire represented divine order in this world. As Charles H. Long has noted, “the beginnings of all things within the culture are modelled on the pattern of [the cosmogonic] myth.”<sup>5</sup> British actions in the world thus aimed to mimic the divine model and recreate it in history.

It was considered the Christian duty of the British people to spread their influence to the so-called “weaker races” through the civilizing powers of the morally superior British empire. In 1850, the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* reported that England’s “high position amidst the nations of the earth is a providential dispensation.”<sup>6</sup> According to the *North American Review*, Britain’s “flag wherever it has advanced has benefited the country over which it floats; and has carried with it civilization, the Christian religion, order, justice and prosperity.”<sup>7</sup> The perpetuation of “English laws and English principles of government” was seen to be “essential to the freedom of mankind.”<sup>8</sup> The empire was seen to be timeless in nature, in that it would live on eternally through the Christian nations it founded and nurtured.<sup>9</sup> In this way, the empire was sacred to the British people in that it was likened to the arm of God on earth and was seen to transcend history.

According to British myths, the Anglo-Saxon race was the “natural colonizer”<sup>10</sup> of the world and the “greatest governing race.”<sup>11</sup> The British people were chosen by God to carry out His mission in the world; thus, it followed that they were also protected and privileged by Him. The placement of the Anglo-Saxons at the top of the racial hierarchy was given sacred significance in this way, as it was in accordance with God’s divine plan.

The empire, which represented transcendent reality to many British immigrants to Canada, shaped their sense of meaning and identity in this so-called “outpost of the British race.”<sup>12</sup> The actions and experiences of these people in Canada West were fashioned by their mythical understandings of the racial and moral superiority of the British people and their empire.

During the mid-nineteenth century, Upper Canada strongly asserted its loyalty to the British empire. British immigrants and their Canadian-born children held onto a sense of identity derived from a different time and place and attempted to refashion their new home in such a way as to mimic the land they left behind.<sup>13</sup> Egerton Ryerson, editor of the *Christian Guardian*, insisted that loyalty to Britain was “of the highest spiritual and eternal advantage to thousands in Upper Canada.” He equated support and respect for the British government with Christian duty, as its beneficent laws and equitable administration stemmed “from the authority of God.”<sup>14</sup> Loyalty to Britain, according to Ryerson, was based upon “Scripture, justice, and humanity,” and would “sacrifice life itself in the maintenance of British supremacy.”<sup>15</sup>

British settlers believed that Canada, as part of the British empire, was a moral example to all nations on earth. The abolition of slavery was seen as a moral victory for the empire over the United States, and the fact that thousands of fugitive slaves fled to Canada to live in freedom reinforced this notion of moral superiority. According to the *London Free Press*, Canadians sympathized with “the suffering and moral degradation of the unfortunate African in the neighbouring Republic,”<sup>16</sup> but at the same time they asserted that they did not want blacks to attend the same schools as their children. Many opposed the settlement of black people in or near their communities while at the same time asserting, like Alexander McCrae (a vocal opponent to black settlement near Chatham), that “every member of the human family is entitled to certain rights and privileges, and nowhere on earth, are they better secured, enjoyed, or more highly valued, than in Canada.”<sup>17</sup> Malcolm Cameron, Member of Parliament and

an important advocate for segregated schools, asserted that all men were “free and equal” under the British constitution. He claimed to have “ever advocated the perfect equality of all mankind, and the right of all to every civil and religious privilege without regard to creed or color.”<sup>18</sup> However, it would seem that equality did not apply when people of different colour moved into McCrae’s neighbourhood or attended school with Cameron’s children. In 1849, Cameron proposed a bill in the legislature providing for segregated schools.

After the passage of the American Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, Canada West’s black population increased exponentially as thousands of fugitive slaves and free black people arrived via the underground railroad. By the mid-1850s the black population numbered between 20,000 and 40,000 and was mostly dispersed among the French and British populations in the southwestern and Niagara peninsulas of Canada West.<sup>19</sup> By 1854, blacks made up 20 to 30 percent of the populations of Chatham, Colchester and Amherstburg, while constituting only about two percent of Toronto’s total population and a negligible proportion of the population east of the city.<sup>20</sup>

By 1861 an estimated 40 percent of Canada West’s black population was reported to have been born in the province,<sup>21</sup> and they asserted their rights to equal participation in Canadian institutions. Although many Canadian blacks were proud British subjects, and appealed to the government to live up to its British ideals by treating all subjects equally, they were prevented from participating on equal terms with other Canadians. Blacks in Canada, although British subjects, were not considered to be part of the British race and were classified, like the people of Africa and the West Indies, as an inferior race, destined to be governed, “protected and elevated by England.”<sup>22</sup> It was taken as a given in the nineteenth century that they could never be on a par with their racial superiors. Attempts by black British subjects to assert the rights guaranteed to them by British laws, and ordained by the myth of the British Empire’s moral superiority, were seen to be nefarious and threatened the racial hierarchy that was ordained by another myth, that of white British racial superiority.

Egerton Ryerson, the influential superintendent of education for Canada West since 1844, expressed his desire to make Canada West “the brightest gem in the crown of Her Britannic Majesty.”<sup>23</sup> He aimed to “devise and develop a system of sound universal education [based] on Christian principles, imbued with a spirit of affectionate loyalty to the

Throne and attachment to the unity of the Empire.”<sup>24</sup> According to Ryerson, the school system would be “the indirect but powerful instrument of British Constitutional Government.”<sup>25</sup>

The emerging education system was to be “universal, practical and religious” with an emphasis on training the next generation of morally responsible citizens of the empire.<sup>26</sup> Schools taught British and Christian values and disseminated the myth of providence. Although Ryerson’s common school system purported to offer education to all children in Canada West without discrimination, the system was devised to teach the next generation of racialized white children and those who were not included in this group were never allowed to benefit equally from the system.

Efforts to segregate black students were blatantly against the laws in force prior to 1850. The School Act of 1843 clearly states: “it shall not be lawful for such Trustees, or for the Chief, or other, Superintendent of Common Schools, or for any Teacher to exclude from any Common School or from the benefit of education therein, the children of any class or description of persons resident within the School district to which such common school may belong.”<sup>27</sup> Although all Canadian children had the same legal right to attend common schools, in practice, blacks in many parts of Canada West were excluded from these schools and denied their right to education. In accordance with myths of racial superiority, the idea that black and white children should be compelled to associate in the same classroom was repugnant to most white Canadians at the time. Equally as repugnant was the idea that the children of the so-called “inferior African race” should be provided with the same kind of education that was provided to white children. But perhaps a more important motivating factor for exclusion was that the presence of blacks in the same schools as British-descended children conflicted with images of Canada as a white British society. Black children were prevented from interacting with whites, thus allowing for the perpetuation of ideals of purity.

The Department of Education received several appeals to intervene against segregation, and in response superintendent Egerton Ryerson admitted that exclusion was “at variance with the letter and spirit of the law, and . . . with the principles and spirit of British Institutions, which deprive no human being of any benefit . . . on account of the colour of his skin.”<sup>28</sup> However, Ryerson continued to tolerate illegal discrimination in the schools, claiming there was nothing he could do to stop it, as “the caste of colour . . . is stronger than the law.”<sup>29</sup>

Some of the strongest opposition to integration came from the white citizens in and around Chatham where the presence of blacks threatened ideals of white racial purity and black children were perceived as a negative influence to white morality. In 1849, the citizens of this town expressed their strong opposition to the settlement of what McCrae called a “horde of ignorant slaves”<sup>30</sup> in the nearby township of Raleigh. He argued that “the presence of the Negro among [whites] is an annoyance,” and “amalgamation, its necessary and hideous attendant, is an evil which requires to be checked.”<sup>31</sup> Edwin Larwill, local school commissioner, politician and editor of the *Chatham Journal*, went even further with his expressions of opposition to racial integration. According to Larwill, “amalgamation is as disgusting to the eye, as it is immoral in its tendencies and all good men will discountenance it.”<sup>32</sup> Northeast of Chatham, white parents refused to allow black children into their schools because they feared that “the children of the coloured people” were “in respect to morals and habits . . . worse trained than the white children,” and that their own children “might suffer from the effects of bad example.”<sup>33</sup> Parents in Amherstburg, an important underground railroad terminus in the extreme southwest portion of the province, would have “sooner . . . cut their children’s heads off and throw[n] them into the road side ditch” than send their children to school with “niggers.”<sup>34</sup> Black children were presented as dangerous, and as potential polluters of white British purity.

By 1850, the Council of Public Instruction had changed education laws to accommodate racist tendencies. The School Act of 1850 includes a provision for the establishment of separate schools based on race. Section nineteen reads:

It shall be the duty of the Municipal Council [or] the Board of School Trustees, on the application, in writing, of twelve, or more, resident heads of families, to authorize the establishment of one, or more, Separate schools for Protestants, Roman Catholics, or Coloured people.<sup>35</sup>

Ryerson inserted this clause “with extreme pain and regret.” He argued that because “the prejudices and feelings of the people are stronger than law,” the provision for separate racial schools had to be introduced for the protection of black children.<sup>36</sup>

Despite claims that the new law would protect blacks, vague regulations on education were open to various interpretations by white trustees, and black students’ interests were usually overshadowed by those

of the white population. Few black parents requested separate schools in accordance with the 1850 law; however, municipal trustees often used their powers under another clause of the School Act to enforce segregation upon an unwilling black population so that public schools would reflect the illusion of racial purity in the province.<sup>37</sup> Unwritten rules allowed for the perpetuation of segregation while claims to moral and egalitarian principles were justified by Ryerson's efforts to ensure that "nothing insidious be admitted into the Statute book."<sup>38</sup>

In many towns, black children were simply denied any benefit of education, even when their parents' tax money went to support common schools. In towns where the people were said to have "a strong old-fashioned English hatred of oppression,"<sup>39</sup> black children were refused admission outright to common schools. If a black child attempted to attend, the white students were often taken out of school by their parents, or teachers dismissed their classes.<sup>40</sup> In other towns, segregated schools were inaccessible to many black children at distances of up to fifteen miles from their homes.

Attempts by blacks to assert their rights to attend common schools were seen as "evil," and threatening to "the harmony in school matters."<sup>41</sup> Several trustees complained to Ryerson that "schools have been broken up"<sup>42</sup> because black children were "forcing themselves into the same schools with the white children."<sup>43</sup> They expressed fears that "African barbarism" might "triumph over Anglo-Saxon civilization."<sup>44</sup>

Numerous petitions to the Education office argued that segregated schools were "contrary to . . . the fundamental principles of British common law."<sup>45</sup> Black parents and community leaders appealed to education administrators' "sense of justice and judgment,"<sup>46</sup> demanding that they live up to their British-Canadian egalitarian ideals and allow for equal access to education.<sup>47</sup> Ryerson's intervention in these cases was minimal; he usually asserted that he sympathized with the parents' appeals, and advised them to take their grievances to court, a costly and time-consuming process that most parents could not afford.

The vast majority of schools attended by black children were severely under-funded and of poor quality. Several schools were likened to chicken "coops"<sup>48</sup> or "pig pens"<sup>49</sup> for the black students. According to American observer Benjamin Drew, many segregated schools were "comfortless and repulsive," lacking a blackboard, chairs, ink, and used readers that were "miserably tattered and worn-out."<sup>50</sup>

These under-funded schools welcomed a diversity of Canadian children, regardless of heritage. Schools opened by or for black communities in several towns opened their doors to white children who had no other options of education themselves or whose parents saw that the quality of education, provided by some well-educated missionary teachers, was in a few cases of a better caliber than was available to them.<sup>51</sup>

The willingness of blacks to accept others in their schools is evidence of the fact that they had come to terms with the heterogeneous nature of Canadian society. In this way, they accepted the refashioning of human identity that becoming Canadian entailed. In contrast to this, white authorities showed a strong propensity towards segregation and, thus, a reluctance to adapt to their newly plural Canadian surroundings.

While popular Canadian sentiment was purportedly in favour of equal rights for all, association between black and white people was commonly seen to be “immoral,” “disgusting,”<sup>52</sup> “hideous” and “evil.”<sup>53</sup> Segregation in education was the norm, as was the exclusion of blacks, among others, from most aspects of white society. As Canadians of British heritage rigidly held onto an established sense of identity in the face of a changing environment, they also adhered to a language about cultural purity that coloured their encounters with those who were not considered to be of British stock. Integration with these people was perceived as a threat to British purity and to the very identity of British immigrants to Canada.

The image of Canada as an extension of the British Empire perpetuated colonial attitudes in North America where the nature of human encounter was completely different than in most other British colonies. In colonial situations where the myth of the chosen British race had generally been applied, the so-called “weaker races” were exotic strangers in far-off lands governed at arm’s length by British administrators. This was not the situation in Canada where white British settlers shared the same space and interacted on a daily basis with people who did not conform to the racial ideal.

At the same time as British settlers encountered human diversity on an unprecedented scale in North America, they developed a discourse of purity that presented Canada West as a transplanted British province on the Western side of the Atlantic and British immigrants to Canada as untouched by their new surroundings. This discourse allowed for the inhuman treatment of certain British subjects who were perceived to be a threat to British identity in Canada. These people, seen to be of the weaker



racism, were excluded from British-Canadian national discourse and relegated to the peripheries of Canadian society.

The parallel mythologies of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority and the moral and egalitarian British empire came into conflict over the issue of black education in Canada. Yet, this conflict was not generally acknowledged and discourses of purity ensured that these myths would remain deeply entrenched in spite of Canadian demographic reality.

### **Endnotes**

1. I would like to thank Andrew Bryant, Robert Choquette, Matthew Fulkerson, Jennifer Reid and Tim Stanley for their helpful input as I prepared this paper.
2. John Strachan; cited in William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 5.
3. Jennifer Reid, "'A Society Made by History': The Mythic Source of Identity in Canada," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 27 (1997): 1-19.
4. I employ the term "black" to refer to American immigrants of African heritage and their Canadian-born children. Many of these people were of mixed descent and were identified as "Negroes," "coloured" people, "blacks," or "Africans" in nineteenth-century Canada West. The term "white" will refer, in the case of this paper, to immigrants of British heritage and their Canadian-born children. On racialization see Timothy J. Stanley, "Why I Killed Canadian History: Towards an Anti-Racist History in Canada," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 33, No. 65 (May 2000): 95-103.
5. Charles H. Long, *Alpha: The Myths of Creation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1963), 30.
6. Cited in Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 111.
7. Cited in Robert A. Huttenback, *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies 1830-1910* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 14.
8. Cited in Huttenback, *Racism and Empire*, 16.
9. William Wilberforce, "The Conditions of Missionary Success" (1850); cited in John Wolffe, ed., *Religion in Victorian Britain, Volume V Culture and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 306-307.

10. S.W. Baker; cited in Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes*, 148.
11. Joseph Chamberlain; cited in Huttenback, *Racism and Empire*, 15-16.
12. Huttenback, *Racism and Empire*, 26.
13. Towns and landmarks were given English names; counties in the Western peninsula of Canada West such as Essex, Kent and Middlesex were all named after counties in the British homeland, and the River Thames ran west from London. According to Donald Simpson, the village of Sandwich, later absorbed into Windsor, was said to have a very English appearance, with its pear trees, English-style public buildings and gardens aside many homes (Donald Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario from Early Times to 1870" [Ph.D. diss., University of Western Ontario, 1971], 593).
14. J.G. Hodgins, ed., "*The Story of My Life*," by the late Rev. Egerton Ryerson D.D., LL.D. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1883), 40-41.
15. Hodgins, "*The Story of My Life*," 373.
16. *London Free Press*, 22 July 1861.
17. McCrae, "Address to the Inhabitants of Canada," recorded proceedings of "A Public Meeting Being held in Chatham" *Chatham Chronicle*, November 1849.
18. "Correspondence between the Hon. Malcolm Cameron and the colored stock holders of the Elgin Association," 21 February 1850, Heritage Room, Chatham-Kent Black Historical Society.
19. In 1852, the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada estimated that the black population of Canada West was 30,000; cited in Benjamin Drew, *A Northside View of Slavery. The Refugee: or the Narrative of Fugitive Slaves in Canada. Related by Themselves, with an Account of the History and Condition of the Colored Population of Upper Canada* (1856; Toronto: Coles, 1972), v. In 1855, Samuel Ringgold Ward suggested that there were between 35,000 and 40,000 blacks in the province (see *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro: His Anti-Slavery Labours in the United States, Canada and England* [London: Paternoster Row, 1855], 154). Recently, Michael Wayne has argued that the population has been overestimated and was likely between 22,500 and 23,000 in 1861 ("The Black Population of Canada West on the Eve of the American Civil War: A Reassessment Based on the Manuscript Census of 1861," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 28, No. 56 [November 1995]: 470). With the exception of the Elgin settlement, segregated settlements were largely unsuccessful and attracted few settlers (see William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, *Black Utopia: Negro Communal Experiments in America* [Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963], 49, 65, 92).

20. According to Benjamin Drew, the peak population of blacks in Toronto was 1,000 out of a total population of 47,000 in 1854. In Amherstburg there were approximately 400-500 blacks out of a total population of 2,000; in Colchester, 450 blacks out of a total population of 1,500; and in Chatham, 800 out of a total population of 4,000 (*A North-side View of Slavery. The Refugee: or, The Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada. Related by themselves, with an account of the history and condition of the colored population of Upper Canada* [Boston: J.P. Jewett, 1856], 94, 234, 348, 367).
21. See Michael Wayne for an analysis of 1861 census data ("The Black Population of Canada West," 473).
22. *The Times* (London), 4 November 1864; cited in Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race*, 78.
23. Hodgins, *Story of My Life*," 349.
24. Address to Lord Dufferin; cited in J. George Hodgins, *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, from the Passing of the Constitutional Act of 1791, to the Close of Reverend Doctor Ryerson's Administration of the Education Department in 1876. Volume XXIV: 1872* (Toronto: Warwick and Rutter, 1908), 70.
25. Cited in Clara Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969), 99.
26. "Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada, 1846," in Hodgins, *Documentary History, Vol. VI: 1846* (1899), 146-147.
27. "An Act for the Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada," Section 44, Clause 7, in Hodgins, *Documentary History, Vol. IV: 1841-1843* (1897), 258.
28. Ryerson to Isaac Rice et al., 5 March 1846, Vol. 3, Ontario Department of Education, Outgoing Correspondence (hereafter Outgoing Education Correspondence), RG 2-8, Archives of Ontario.
29. Ryerson to W.H. Draper, 12 April 1847, 12, J. George Hodgins Fonds, F 1207, Archives of Ontario.
30. McCrae, "Address to the Inhabitants of Canada," recorded proceedings of "A Public Meeting Being held in Chatham," *Chatham Chronicle*, November 1849.
31. McCrae also argued that when the British empire abolished slavery, it proved itself as a moral example to all nations on earth ("Address to the Inhabitants of Canada," recorded proceedings of "A Public Meeting Being held in

- Chatham,” *Chatham Chronicle*, November 1849).
32. Cited in Simpson, “Negroes in Ontario,” 335.
  33. Re. Dennis Hill v. the School Trustees of Camden and Zone, *Upper Canada Queen’s Bench Reports*, 11: 578.
  34. Isaac Rice et al. to Egerton Ryerson; cited in Hodgins, *Documentary History*, Vol. VI: 1846, 294.
  35. J. George Hodgins, *Historical and Other Papers and Documents Illustrative of the Educational System of Ontario, 1853-1868* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1911), 213.
  36. Egerton Ryerson, “Explanation of the Provisions of a Proposed School Bill of 1849” in Hodgins, *Documentary History*, Vol. VIII: 1848-49 (1901), 91.
  37. Section XXIV, clause IV of the School Act asserts that the Board of Trustees have unlimited power “to determine the number, sites, kind and description of schools which shall be established and maintained” in their cities and towns. Thus, even if black parents did not request a separate school, municipal trustees could set up and manage a segregated public school in order to prevent black children from attending the schools set up for white children (*Statutes of Upper Canada*, 13 and 14 Victoria, Cap. 48 [1850], 1264). Ryerson often encouraged trustees to open these segregated schools (Ryerson to George Duck, 7 April 1852, Vol. 6; Ryerson to James S. Currie, 16 June 1857, Vol. 19, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Archives of Ontario).
  38. Ryerson to W.H. Draper, 12 April 1847, 12, J. George Hodgins Fonds, F 1207, Archives of Ontario.
  39. Simpson, “Negroes in Ontario,” 597-98.
  40. Samuel Atkin (Malden) to Ryerson, 29 December 1856, Vol. 21; Henry Brent (Sandwich) et al. to Ryerson, 9 March 1858, Vol. 23; and Duncan Campbell (Harwich) to Ryerson, 14 March 1862, Vol. 27, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Archives of Ontario.
  41. George Duck (Chatham) to Ryerson, 7 March 1852, Vol. 12, Incoming Education Correspondence, Archives of Ontario.
  42. John Cowan (Sandwich) to Rev. McNab, 15 October 1845, Vol. 4; and James Douglas (West Flamboro) to Ryerson, 3 February 1856, Vol. 20, Incoming Education Correspondence, Archives of Ontario.
  43. Harrow and Colchester South Township School Area Board, *A Story of Public Schools in Colchester South Township* (Harrow: School Board, 1966), 11.

44. Philip Smith to Ryerson, 1 August 1854, Vol. 18, Incoming Education Correspondence, RG 2-12, Archives of Ontario.
45. H.F. Douglass, "The Duties of Colored Man in Canada," *Provincial Freeman*, 28 March 1857.
46. Henry Brent et al. (Sandwich) to Ryerson, 9 March 1858, Vol. 23, Incoming Education Correspondence, Archives of Ontario.
47. Jones et al. to Ryerson, 2 March 1859, Vol. 26; Peter B. Smith (Dresden) to Hodgins, 29 June 1856, Vol. 20; Henry Brent et al. to Ryerson, 9 March 1858, Vol. 23; Jefferson Lightfoot (West Flamboro) to Ryerson, 5 October 1858, Vol. 25; and Clayborn Harris (Windsor) to William Horton, 16 February 1859, Vol. 26, Incoming Education Correspondence, Archives of Ontario.
48. Clayborn Harris to William Horton, 16 February 1859, Vol. 26, Incoming Education Correspondence, Archives of Ontario.
49. Jefferson Lightfoot to Ryerson, 5 October 1858, Vol. 25, Incoming Education Correspondence, Archives of Ontario.
50. Drew, *A North-Side View of Slavery*. Schools for blacks in Amherstburg and Colchester received grants from the Education Department's Poor School Fund after petitions to Ryerson (Ryerson to James Kevill, 13 March 1857, Vol. 19; and Ryerson to F.G. Elliot, 3 December 1857, Vol. 21, Outgoing Education Correspondence, RG 2-8, Archives of Ontario).
51. According to Mary Bibb of Windsor, seven of the forty-six students in her class were white (Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario," 645). Because the quality of instruction at William King's mission school in Raleigh was far superior to that of schools in neighbouring Chatham, by 1851 almost all the students from Chatham's common school joined the blacks in Buxton ("Schools in Canada," *Voice of the Fugitive*, 18 July 1852; and Ullman, *Look to the North Star*, 148-49). Robin W. Winks points to a similar situation in Brantford where the level of instruction at the black school was superior to that at the white school. White students began to enroll here until the two schools were eventually integrated (*The Blacks in Canada: A History* [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1971], 367). Segregated schools for blacks imposed by Colchester trustees accepted white students and eventually many of them served a majority of white children (Harrow and Colchester South Township School Area Board, *A Story of Public Schools*, 12).
52. Simpson, "Negroes in Ontario," 335.
53. McCrae, "Address to the Inhabitants of Canada."



## **Building a Christian Democracy: George Drew, the Protestant Churches and the Origins of Religious Education in Ontario's Public Schools, 1944-1945<sup>1</sup>**

ANTHONY P. MICHEL

---

In February of 1944, the first throne speech of George Drew's Tory government announced the introduction of religious education in all Ontario public schools. Because religious education had been exempt from the official programme of studies since 1844, the announcement caught many Ontarians by surprise. There was a vocal, but limited, protest during the 1944-1945 school year, but public criticism faded away after the Progressive Conservatives were re-elected in 1945. When the course once again became the centre of an intense controversy during the late 1950s and early 1960s, it was widely believed that the policy had been established by religious education advocates. An unpublished Doctor of Pedagogy thesis by W.D.E. Matthews, written in the 1940s, argued that the policy was the fruit of a "spontaneous movement" promoting religious education as a solution to the problems of modernization.<sup>2</sup> This view was echoed in *The Development of Education in Canada*, written by educator C.E. Phillips. Phillips, who later actively campaigned against the religious education program, wrote that "clergy and zealous laymen of the Protestant churches" had great success during World War II in introducing religion into the schools.<sup>3</sup>

A close look at this episode shows that the relations between church and state were quite complex. By tracing the unfolding policy, from its inception in early 1944 to the controversy of 1945, four key findings emerge. First, there were groups and individuals, especially amongst the Protestant clergy, who could be termed "religious education promoters"

*Historical Papers 2003: Canadian Society of Church History*

who were actively trying to introduce Bible study into the schools. Second, the change in policy, however, can be attributed almost entirely to the efforts of the Premier and Education Minister, George Drew. Drew was not directed by a strong and influential church, but rather, he gave to the public school those duties which he felt that the churches were no longer capable of fulfilling. Third, representatives of the major Protestant churches did not initiate change, but responded to it. They originally viewed Drew's plan as a threat, but later defended it. Fourth, both the government and the churches publically encouraged the mutually desirable illusion of a partnership between church and state on this matter.

### ***The Religious Education Promoters***

In the 1920s and 1930s, the term "religious education" meant Protestant instruction, normally implying Sunday school. Concern over a low attendance in the 1930s<sup>4</sup> coincided with the establishment of systematic training programs, religious education councils and expanded of programs such as "vacation religious education" and "weekday religious education" classes.<sup>5</sup> Warnings were raised about the large numbers of "unchurched children"<sup>6</sup> who were receiving no religious education. The churches were well aware that their own sustainability depended upon reaching this group but clergymen were just as likely to express their concerns in terms of the negative impact religious illiteracy would have on Canadian society. This reflected Ontario's nineteenth-century religious culture in which the needs of the Protestant churches and society as a whole seemed inseparable. Church and state had distinct roles, but the churches believed they were bound to society by both public duties and public privileges, even if it was sometimes challenging to negotiate these from what William Westfall has called "private sites."<sup>7</sup> Consequently, religious education was presented as necessary both for church membership and the good of society. Sometimes the social context was "juvenile delinquency," but religious education was also justified as a means of saving "democracy" and "civilization" from the threat of "paganism."

Many public figures, including clergymen, asserted that western democracy was based on Christianity, so religious education buttressed Christian democracy in the face of challenges from Soviet communism and German Nazism. A *Globe and Mail* editorial in 1942 praised the work of religious education promoters in North America. The editor noted that



“war brings home to the people--especially those who may have become slipshod in the discharge of religious duties--realization that . . . man needs the more permanent anchorage Christianity promises and provides.” The solution lay in “organized effort by zealous Christians” and requires “the support of all who treasure the principles being assailed by world paganism.”<sup>8</sup> One leader of the Christian Education Advance movement lamented that there were as many outside the Sunday schools as inside them. “Christian education can quicken the soul of our nation,” he claimed,

and build strong character and high purpose into the life of our Dominion. Teach a generation to worship blood and soil and you have a ruthless totalitarian State. Teach a generation of youth the Christian way of life and you can have a nation of free people, capable of making democracy succeed. Christian education takes the policeman off the street corner and puts him in the heart.<sup>9</sup>

Speakers at the United Church General Council in 1942 proclaimed that “democracy is Christianity’s gift to the world” and “the actions of Hitler in Germany should make us realize how important it is for religious education to be given to our boys and girls.”<sup>10</sup>

Many religious education promoters saw the public schools as the solution. Since 1844, religious instruction had been limited to after-school hours, except for opening exercises and daily Bible readings. In 1937 the Department of Education’s Programme of Studies was revised, stating that “the schools of Ontario exist for the purpose of preparing children to live in a democratic society which bases its way of life upon the Christian ideal,” but religious education remained an out-of-school activity. The Toronto Anglican Synod called for the “inclusion of Christian religious teaching in the curriculum of the public schools of Ontario” as early as the spring of 1936.<sup>11</sup> By 1941, the Synod was debating the hesitancy of some Toronto school officials to grant the clergy access to the schools. One speaker cited statistics showing that “there is a great discrepancy between the number of boys and girls who go to Sunday schools and those who go to public schools. We therefore must press and face the men in high places to give us the religious education in public schools that we desire.”<sup>12</sup> The same year, the United Church moderator Rev. A.S. Tuttle said that “democracy will be preserved by a strong church and a strong military” and after the war Canada would need religious education in the public schools.<sup>13</sup>

The most prominent advocate of religious education in the schools was the Inter-Church Committee on Weekday Religious Education (ICC), which actively developed curriculum and met with government officials and teachers' groups.<sup>14</sup> The ICC traced its origins to a 1922 conference at which church delegates designed a book of morning Bible readings for the Department of Education.<sup>15</sup> The committee was formally established at another ICC conference in 1936 to design curriculum for clergy giving after-school instruction.<sup>16</sup> The Rev. E.R. McLean served as the committee's long-time secretary. As their teaching work gained momentum,<sup>17</sup> they met in 1938 with Education Minister Duncan McArthur to inform him of their "desire to increase the religious element in public school education" and found him to be receptive to their message.<sup>18</sup>

A new avenue of action emerged when, in 1941, the ICC learned that the Fort William school board was giving religious instruction to all of its students. Because religious instruction was only permitted outside of school hours, the board had agreed to start the school day at 9:30 a.m. on Mondays and Fridays instead of 9:00 a.m. The students, who were not aware of this change, "came at the same hour on the specified day and were given religious instruction by a clergyman for the half-hour prior to the legal opening time," explained McLean, noting that since the school was technically not open yet, this procedure was still "in accordance with the Regulations."<sup>19</sup> This departure from the spirit of the regulations, if not from the letter, was taken without informing the parents. Board members and clergymen considered the program a success because there were "no objections from the Public."<sup>20</sup> The practice was soon copied in places such as Peterborough, Niagara Falls and many rural areas. Commonly, the Gideon Society provided Bibles for the students. The Fort William model, as it became known, was working so well that soon there were not enough clergy to meet the demand.

In the spring of 1943, McLean wrote to the Chief Inspector of Schools, Dr. V.K. Greer, asking that regulations be amended to allow church-approved laypeople to teach religion.<sup>21</sup> Although Mitch Hepburn's Liberal government fell to Drew's Progressive Conservatives that summer, Greer drew up new regulations in consultation with McLean<sup>22</sup> and sent them to Drew in the fall, explaining that they were "minor amendments" requested by "members of the Clergy."<sup>23</sup> Drew approved them and left for England. When Greer sent McLean a copy of the new Order in Council "making the changes asked for by" the ICC,<sup>24</sup> McLean had every reason

to believe he had an excellent relationship with the Department of Education.

***Col. George Drew***

Drew first rose to national prominence with two publications celebrating Canada's role in the Great War.<sup>25</sup> His subsequent public writings and speeches emphasized the importance of "the British connection," the dangers of socialism and communism and Canada's proud military heritage. In 1938 he claimed that "unless democracy survives in the British Empire, democracy will not survive in the world. The best way to preserve peace and democracy is to stand loyally under the British flag as one great people, believing in the preservation of Christian democracy."<sup>26</sup> The current war only highlighted the need, in Drew's mind, for an educational system that could instill the proper character needed to preserve western civilization.

Two and a half years before becoming Premier, in a speech called "Canada's Fate Depends on Youth," he asked the members of the Hamilton Kiwanis Club to consider the days ahead, beyond the war.

The fate of Canada and of our Empire depends on the education of our youth. They will be our rulers tomorrow. Let us teach them how to govern in the democratic way. Let us teach them that our system of democracy is simply Christian civilization interpreted in terms of practical government. While our young men are fighting to preserve democracy by force of arms on the field of battle we should be fighting to preserve Christian civilization at home by teaching in our homes, our churches, and our schools a militant faith in British democracy as a system of government.<sup>27</sup>

Drew did not, however, assume that religion was the sole responsibility of the churches. In another wartime speech he challenged his audience to:

... face this problem with courage and frankness. No layman should have any hesitation about discussing it. Religion is either the guide of conduct and supreme discipline of mankind or it is just another cultural subject to be grouped with literature, history, philosophy, or art. We either believe in the religious foundation of our democracy or we do not. If we do, then the teaching of religion should not be the duty of our churches alone, but should be a vigorous part of our

system of public education. I believe that the theory that religious instruction is something outside of the realm of ordinary education is a very dangerous fallacy indeed. I think the gulf between education and religion is largely responsible for the confusion which undoubtedly exists in the minds of many Canadians about the basic principles of democracy.<sup>28</sup>

Shortly after his election, George Drew told the people of his hometown in Guelph that

our civilization which is based upon the people's rule of themselves has a Christian basis, and must succeed or fail in the degree to which it recognizes the Christian principles which were the source of its laws. Those Christian principles are not reserved for our churches. They are part of our daily life.<sup>29</sup>

While Ryerson and Baldwin might have been content to keep religious instruction out of the schools, knowing that children would receive such an education elsewhere, Drew doubted parents and churches could adequately fulfill this role. He considered it necessary, especially under such times of national trial, for the state to assume such duties.

While by no means universal, Drew's language did resonate with many Ontarians at the time. Religion in the schools was promoted by teacher's groups. Newspapers printed letters calling for religion in the schools to deal with the problem of "indifferent Protestants"<sup>30</sup> and inadequate Sunday schools.<sup>31</sup> Drew's policy, however, was directly inspired by educational reforms in Britain. Throughout the war he made regular flights to England to meet with Canadian troops and government officials. R.A. Butler, the President of the Board of Education in England, released a White Paper on Educational Reconstruction in July of 1943 that placed a strong emphasis on religious education. In December of that year, Drew met with Butler to discuss education reforms in Britain and Ontario,<sup>32</sup> and in hindsight, informed partisans on both sides of the controversy later conceded that Drew was probably influenced by Butler.<sup>33</sup> Drew later acknowledged this quite plainly in a 1965 letter to a religious education supporter.<sup>34</sup> As with so many other things, it appeared that Britain was Drew's educational exemplar.

*A New Policy for Ontario*

By early February, Drew had begun to draft his Throne Speech.<sup>35</sup> McLean and other members of the ICC met with him to express their gratitude for the recently approved Order in Council,<sup>36</sup> which would help the ICC expand its Fort William model. The ICC delegation was encouraged and “found the Premier entirely sympathetic with our purposes.”<sup>37</sup> Drew failed to tell them that he was preparing a more comprehensive strategy that would make the new regulations redundant. On 22 February 1944, the first paragraph of the new government’s Speech from the Throne announced the introduction of religious education in the public schools as one of several means to train citizens:

Increasing emphasis will be placed upon the development of character. Religious education will be offered in public and secondary schools. Cadet training under school control, will become part of the regular programmes. Physical and health education will be extended. The duties of citizenship and the significance of the Canadian institutions will be given a more important place in the school curriculum. Schools will be encouraged to establish types of internal organization calculated to develop a co-operative spirit and the habit of assuming responsibilities.<sup>38</sup>

McLean later wrote that “the policy of the Minister came as something of a surprise to the Inter-Church Committee and was received with something less than rejoicing.”<sup>39</sup> He immediately contacted the Department of Education and three days after the speech, an ICC delegation met with newly-appointed Chief Director of Education, J.G. Althouse to present a memorandum expressing their concerns. They claimed for “the Church” the responsibility “for the teaching of religion,” they insisted that “the Church must always have a voice” in the selection of curriculum, and they asked that all teachers of religion be “willing, competent and acceptable to the Church.”<sup>40</sup> They claimed the right to control religious education, but Althouse informed them that a course would be designed by the Department and taught by regular school teachers.<sup>41</sup> If the ICC was surprised by this turn of events, so were other Ontarians.

A *Toronto Star* editorial identified religious education as the most controversial part of the Throne Speech and claimed that “just the mention of such a thing has brought forth protests in some quarters.”<sup>42</sup> To the

*London Free Press* the topic was clearly a “hot potato.”<sup>43</sup> Letters to the editor expressed a range of views. Rev. Gordon Domm, a United Church minister and friend of Drew’s, wrote to tell him about a church panel discussion that drew over 200 people. He warned the Premier that while some participants had been concerned about the separation between church and state, most were worried about whose “brand of Protestantism is to be taught?” He suggested the teaching of ethics; “let us admit that really it isn’t religion we are teaching--but principles common to quite a number of religions, Protestant, R.C., Jewish, as well as any number of Protestant strands in our midst?”<sup>44</sup> Drew wrote to assure Domm that the course would teach only those things in which “there is complete agreement between the Protestant churches.”<sup>45</sup> When one individual suggested a course teaching about all religion, Drew wrote back saying that the course “could best be described as Bible Study, but the name Religious Education was used because this has been used regularly to apply to such a course and is the term used in the British Isles.”<sup>46</sup> A concerned letter from Rabbi Feinberg of Holy Blossom Temple prompted an internal memo between Drew and Althouse, which concluded that “this Government is committed to the support of Christianity.”<sup>47</sup> That the course was “frankly Christian in tone”<sup>48</sup> was not an oversight, an example of cultural blindness, but an intentional choice among several options.

The ICC was torn between a desire to support a government plan that had the potential of reaching all children, and the need to maintain control over religious education. In a detailed memorandum dated 4 April 1944, they gave their qualified approval, spelling out their preference for a Canadian-designed curriculum and church input into teacher approval. They asked the Minister to move with caution and to maintain the “worthy traditions and helpful co-operation, which now exist between the Church and the Public School.”<sup>49</sup> A similar reluctance was expressed in several quarters. The editor of the *United Church Observer* said that factual knowledge was not really a Christian education, but “half a loaf is better than no bread at all.” At the same time, he favoured church control over course materials and teacher training.<sup>50</sup> The two largest Lutheran Synods at first did not approve the ICC memorandum, but later consented, even though the government’s plan was not “an ideal and perfect solution.”<sup>51</sup> Rev. Canon R. A. Hiliz, told the Anglican London Synod in May that even if the details are “not just as we like it” it “is surely better to have the facts of Scripture known in our young people.” He claimed that “the Christian churches have been pounding for years at the doors of the Government to

have religion taught in the schools, and now some by their expressions of nervousness, seem to be getting cold feet.”<sup>52</sup> At the Toronto Synod, Archbishop Owen told Anglicans not be hasty to criticize the idea, but rather express “thankfulness that the Government is concerned with the religious aspects of education.”<sup>53</sup>

But only one week after the ICC memorandum had been sent, Althouse publically revealed the details of the course that would consist of two thirty-minute periods a week taught by the regular teachers. He explained that exemptions would be available for boards, teachers or students who requested them and spoke in a general sense about the curriculum, which he said had been developed from the experiences of the other Canadian provinces, Great Britain and with “the cooperation of the clergy” who helped in the “shaping” of the course.<sup>54</sup> While Althouse praised the work of the ICC in public, committee members became increasingly concerned that they were being marginalised by Department officials. A letter was sent directly to Drew to state that the Church

should have some measure of control over what is taught in the name of religion in the public schools. If the State assumes full control over this department of life and looks to the Church only for passive acquiescence in its policies or hasty decisions, it may possibly in future introduce measures in religious education unacceptable to the Church. This would lead to friction. Thus it is important for the representatives of the Church to study carefully and to endorse the textbooks before the same are put into use; also to have the right to nominate or endorse the teachers of religion in the schools.<sup>55</sup>

The ICC did little to change Drew’s mind. He wanted the program implemented swiftly, “otherwise opposition might develop.”<sup>56</sup> Over the summer, a departmental committee chose a British syllabus and mailed copies out to clergymen for their approval while Althouse prepared a new Order in Council to revise the regulations.

As it became obvious to the ICC that the government was proceeding with its plan, regardless of the “requirements” and “recommendations” laid out in various memoranda, the committee adjusted to the changing political realities and assumed new roles. All summer, Matthews reported, members “gave unsparingly of their time in correcting and revising” the teacher’s guide books.<sup>57</sup> Some books were ready for that September, but selected clergy were sent new packages every month until the grade six

book had been published in 1945. Despite these labours, the final revisions were done by Mr. Rivers from the Department, and some questioned whether much had been changed at all, save the replacement of words like “greengrocer” and “lift” with Canadian equivalents.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, the books were published with a prefatory note that gave the impression that the church was instrumental in the design of the curriculum.<sup>59</sup>

### *A Public Controversy*

The imported British guide books were primarily chosen because they could be used immediately and when school began in the fall of 1944, they generated immediate criticism. One critic later said the guide books were “sentimental mush-mush written by maudlin women.”<sup>60</sup> A group of Presbyterian elders reported that the stories were full of “imaginative embellishment,” dialogue with “no scriptural foundation,” “fabricated stories about Jesus,” “fairy stories,” and “unscriptural and unevangelical religious and moral principles.”<sup>61</sup> One of the first public critics was the Rev. Dr. A.C. Cochrane, a Presbyterian Minister from Port Credit. The *Toronto Star* printed the text of his sermon decrying the “State-imposed synthetic religion” outlined in the guidebooks as “a weird mixture of idealism, humanism, naturalism and pietism . . . Whatever it is, it is certainly not Christianity, but a mass of false doctrine which the government is going to propagate at the taxpayers’ expense by means of teachers of any faith or no faith at all.” Cochrane said that it was “bad enough when the government invades the realm of religion, but infinitely worse when the religion that the government proposes to teach is grossly un-Christian and un-Scriptural.” The course, he concluded “violates religious liberty.”<sup>62</sup>

The fears of an expanding state were also articulated by Rev. Crawford Jamieson, who first drafted a letter to the Premier on 8 May 1944, on behalf of the Dresden Ministerial Association. The letter, with the signature of sixteen clergymen, claimed that Drew’s policy was “contrary to the Word of God and to the subordinate Standards of our Churches,” and “its effect would be to make religious instruction a function of the State.”<sup>63</sup> Jamieson claimed Drew was exceeding “the duties authorized by God for the civil authorities.” He enclosed a list of Bible references and quotations from the confessional statements of the United, Anglican, Pentecostal, Baptist and Presbyterian Churches that delineated separate roles of the clergy and the civil magistrates. Throughout the summer and fall, Jamieson’s letter circulated in rural districts and signed copies were



mailed to Drew's office. Althouse instructed a Department official to write to Jamieson and assure him that the department was not trying "to supplant the clergy," but only "to do whatever can be done in school situations which the clergy have not been able to meet because of the large numbers of schools and children concerned" [sic].<sup>64</sup> Jamieson continued to criticize the Drew plan, in a pamphlet called *Religious Education in the Public Schools*<sup>65</sup> and other publications.<sup>66</sup>

At the United Church of Canada's General Council in September, 1944, the church's Board of Christian Education presented a report that was highly critical of the government's plan, calling it "a very radical proposal bordering closely on state control of religion" and infringing upon "the rights and responsibilities of the Church as the teacher of religion." But in the discussions that followed the report, "the opinion was voiced that this was no time to discourage civil authorities after the church had been trying for some time to get religious education in secular schools" and the board was instructed to reword its report.<sup>67</sup> The Council closed commending the Ontario government for its "willingness to take responsibility in the field of religious education," but suggesting that in the future collaboration between the churches and Department of Education "should extend to the preparation of curricula and textbooks and training of teachers."<sup>68</sup> An article in the *United Church Observer* described this revised report as favouring "a co-operative method whereby teachers and clergy would each have a part."<sup>69</sup>

Cochrane's attacks on religious "Drewism"<sup>70</sup> intensified when, together with a Mrs. Helen Infeld, he helped to form a group called the Association for Religious Liberty (ARL), made up of clergymen, academics, Jewish leaders and laypeople who advocated the separation of church and state.<sup>71</sup> Almost immediately they were tagged by Drew as "communist-inspired."<sup>72</sup> At their first public meeting, a spokesperson criticized the course, which "far from helping the church, is a great enemy to the church and to Christianity." One man who attended told a reporter the Drew plan contained "the first seeds of fascism" and thought "the people of Ontario have been too docile in accepting this."<sup>73</sup> In response, Drew made public statements defending the course. He denied that teachers were abusing their new duties and he assured the public that the course guides "closely follow textbooks in use in England for some time" and were approved "by representatives of the church bodies, which have for some years been interested in this subject."<sup>74</sup> Cochrane was swift to reply, criticizing the Minister's "usual colonial instinct," in considering all

things from England to be “manna from heaven.” He challenged Drew’s assertions that the public was “generally satisfied” and even if it was, said Cochrane, a mere majority opinion did not justify the Minister’s “excursions into the realms of priestcraft,” transgressing “doctrinal standards” of the Bible and “trampling upon the religious liberties of minorities.” The ARL, he said, would “renew the battle for the principles of religious equality and of non-sectarian schools so hardly won a century ago by men like George Brown, William Lyon Mackenzie and Egerton Ryerson.”<sup>75</sup>

If the ARL was the most vocal government critic in this “heated controversy,”<sup>76</sup> then the most consistent and respected critic was Rabbi Abraham Feinberg. The role Feinberg and the Jewish community played in the unfolding of the religious education controversies is beyond the scope of this paper, but his perspective on the state and the Protestant churches is worth noting. He considered the Drew plan an imbalance between church and state that resulted from an attitude of weakness, “defeatism and desperation” on the part of the churches who “welcome the partnership of the State, which will discharge part of their work.” In such an “alliance between a mighty political unit and a church magnifying its own weakness” the state would “absorb” and “dominate” the church, “especially in an historic period which has seen the rise of political centralization over all the earth.”<sup>77</sup> He rejected the frequent references to pagan Germany, saying that religious education existed in schools there before the war, it did little to tame future S.S. members and when Hitler came to power, he converted institutionalized religious education classes to Nazi pagan classes.<sup>78</sup>

In response to such “efforts apparently being made to marshal organized opposition”<sup>79</sup> various Anglican and United Church bodies published proclamations and resolutions supportive of the government.<sup>80</sup> An editorial in *Canadian Churchman* said that “Premier Drew has faced this subject as no other Premier” in the country and those who appreciate “this gesture” should voice their support: “The Sunday School of today does not attract all the children. They are required by law to attend the Day School. Premier Drew is to be congratulated on his attempt to solve the problem. I would be sorry if, by contentious argument, we should chill his effort.”<sup>81</sup> But this plea to avoid contention came just as the controversy was about to take on a partisan dimension. On 7 March 1945 Liberal leader Mitch Hepburn introduced the following sub-amendment to a CCF non-confidence motion before the legislature:

This House further regrets that the government has reversed our traditional policy of non-sectarian public schools by introducing a program of religious education which has caused disunity among large sections of our people, and has thereby violated the cherished democratic right of each to worship according to his conscience, free from interference by the state.<sup>82</sup>

The very next day, the ARL published a quarter-page advertisement in the Toronto newspapers entitled, "Religious Freedom at Stake." It endorsed Hepburn's sub-amendment and called upon "all citizens who cherish freedom of religious conscience" to ask their MPPs to preserve "the basic rights of democratic citizenship."<sup>83</sup> The text was also delivered to the desks of all members of the legislature. After an all-night emergency meeting, the ICC produced a response entitled "Religious Liberty Upheld," which was sent the next day to all members of the legislature and every ministerial association in the province. It appeared in Toronto newspapers on 12 March. In the face of a challenge from Hepburn, the ARL and others, the ICC stepped forward as activists and apologists for a course they had once resisted.

In the days leading up to the non-confidence motion, the debate intensified with more ads and letters in the newspapers. In mid-March, it was the sermon topic of choice across Toronto.<sup>84</sup> The campaign against religious education in the schools "fills one with deep concern for the future of democracy," wrote Rev. F. H. Wilkinson in an opinion piece rich with the language of Anglo-Saxon Christian democracy. It would be tragic, said Wilkinson, if Canadians, having finally "emerged from the stalemate of sectarian difference," should be misdirected by "a vocal minority" with complaints about "theoretical freedom" based on an "antiquated theological controversy" of church-state separation.<sup>85</sup> In this charged atmosphere, the ARL had a tense meeting with Drew, who accused them of plotting with Hepburn to defeat his government. He dismissed all the arguments Cochrane put forward and challenged Infeld's right to to "take a public stand" because she was a recent immigrant from the United States. Religion was a "flammable material," Drew warned them, and "people who get hot on this subject reach for every weapon they can pick off the mantelpiece."<sup>86</sup>

On the 23 March 1945, Drew welcomed the non-confidence motion. If the government fell, it would be on the main CCF motion and he was eager to face the electorate again. If the Liberal sub-amendment against

religious education also passed, and his opponents were on record as being “against religion,” all the better. Over the course of the year, Drew had found it useful to deflect criticisms to the ICC, saying the books were prepared “with the co-operation of the Inter-Church Committee”<sup>87</sup> and he began his remarks in the legislature by again mentioning that the ICC had amended and approved the curriculum and was now “asking that it be maintained.”<sup>88</sup> Religious education, he said, was “part of the training of character of the citizens of tomorrow.” He quoted Winston Churchill, saying that “religion has been a rock in the life of the British people on which they have placed their cares. This fundamental element must never be taken from our schools . . . As long as I am Prime Minister it will remain.”<sup>89</sup> In the end the Liberal sub-amendment condemning religious education failed because the CCF caucus split their vote.<sup>90</sup> But the government fell on the main motion and an election date was set for June.

During the election campaign, there were appeals from both supporters<sup>91</sup> and opponents<sup>92</sup> to avoid politicizing the debate, although both sides continued to voice their opinions on the matter.<sup>93</sup> Most mainstream Protestant churches affirmed their support of the policy,<sup>94</sup> although some Presbyterian and Baptist churches remained opposed<sup>95</sup> and the ARL continued to hold public meetings.<sup>96</sup> But religious education did not become a “political football”<sup>97</sup> during the campaign and Drew was returned to office with a strong majority. After the election, the issue fell off the public agenda.<sup>98</sup> The ARL faded away, the Canadian Jewish Congress was the only group resisting the program and the ICC changed its name to the Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education in the Schools. When the Hope Royal Commission on Education published its report in 1950, it concluded that Drew’s course “has met with general acceptance”<sup>99</sup> and that the current regulations “seem to be eminently satisfactory.”<sup>100</sup> Because Ontario was “based upon Christianity,” the report explained, “the ideal society and the ideal citizen are portrayed in the teachings and life of Jesus.” It challenged the churches to help homes and the schools “in the common task of educating our youth for citizenship in a Christian democracy.”<sup>101</sup>

As the protests faded, so too did the Department of Education’s concerns with the program. Promised curriculum revisions and teacher training were never provided, and the course took on a variety of shapes throughout the province. After more than a decade of such uneven implementation and apparent consensus (or indifference), the program came under scrutiny once again in the late 1950s. While the nature of the

debate was quite different, the impression persisted that the policy of 1944 was in some way the result of influential churches.

### ***Conclusion***

With this outline of the main events of the 1944-1945 controversy, four major findings emerge. First, it can be said that there was a “movement” or an emergent discourse among religious education promoters. Clergymen of this type, like many in the nineteenth century, assumed that the Protestant churches had both duties and privileges as the moral stewards of Ontario society. In the inter-war period, they articulated the need for increased religious education to preserve “our Christian democracy.” Their language expressed the anxieties many churchmen felt about their roles in a rapidly changing world. These religious education promoters were ecumenical in spirit, hopeful that inter-church cooperation would allow for great progress in this area. This “movement” helped provide a fertile ground for the religious education course.

Second, years before George Drew encountered the ICC, he had expressed the opinion that Protestant Christianity should be taught in the public schools. The religious education policy did not come about because of a spontaneous social movement or an influential church lobby, but rather because Premier Drew took the initiative to compensate for a perceived weakness in the churches and their Sunday schools. Like the clerical religious education promoters, Drew was reacting to changes in society which he identified as threats to democracy. Christianity was part of the British cultural fabric he wished to conserve and religious education was one of several means to build proper citizens. For these reasons Drew expanded the traditional sphere of public schools and emulated British reforms to compensate for weak Ontario churches.

Third, the Inter-Church Committee did not play a role in shaping the religious education course, but rather did their best to try to respond to Drew’s actions. Before Drew was Premier, the Inter-Church Committee had moved confidently from a Bible reading list, to a syllabus for visiting clergy, to the expanding Fort William model. When the Drew policy superseded the nascent activities of the churches in this field, the ICC quietly protested in meetings and memoranda, to no avail. Faced with the choice between accepting and rejecting what they considered an imperfect initiative, they were deferential and pragmatic, settling for half a loaf. The ICC was bound on one side by these political realities, and on the other

side by a public persona loathe to admit that Protestantism was a private religion, off-limits to the state. If Protestantism had a privileged place in Ontario's public culture, how could they criticize its teaching in the public schools?

Fourth, although all policy initiative rested with the government, both sides presented the public with an illusion of partnership. While the power to enact regulations lay with the state, the cultural authority that came with an ICC endorsement legitimized government innovation. For their part, why did the churches publically defend what they had once resisted? The churches did not wish to acknowledge their limited influence. Their talk of partnership represented a cherished ideal which was based more on a faded hope than a recent experience.

While this episode may appear to reflect a resurgence of church influence in Ontario, it is better seen as a realignment of public roles in a period of cultural transition. As Ontario's Victorian era came to an end in the 1940s, Drew tried to buttress it with religious education, prompting church fears of state encroachment. Both the ARL and the ICC expressed such concerns, using different means. By clinging to the old ideals of church-state partnership, was mainstream Protestantism, to quote Rabbi Feinberg, a "church magnifying its own weakness?" To what extent did Protestantism still maintain a privileged position in the culture? These were difficult questions, raised but not directly addressed, in the religious education controversy of 1944 and 1945.

### ***Endnotes***

1. This paper is based on both my "Faith in Pluralism: A History of the Religious Education Controversy in Ontario's Public Schools, 1944-1969" (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 2001), and additional research.
2. W.D.E. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education" (Doctor of Pedagogy Thesis, University of Toronto, 1950), 215.
3. C.E. Phillips, *The Development of Education in Canada* (Toronto: Gage, 1957), 328.
4. *Globe and Mail*, 7 May 1941; 10 September 1942.
5. *Globe and Mail*, 3 April 1937, 10.
6. *Globe and Mail*, 24 May 1945, 6.

7. William Westfall "Constructing Public Religions at Private Sites: The Anglican Church in the Shadow of Disestablishment," in *Religion and Public Life in Canada : Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Marguerite Van Die (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 2001), 23-49.
8. *Globe and Mail*, 21 February 1942, 6.
9. *Globe and Mail*, 10 September 1942, 7.
10. *Globe and Mail*, 14 September 1942, 8.
11. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education," 175.
12. *Globe and Mail*, 7 May 1941, 5.
13. *Globe and Mail*, 6 June 1941, 9
14. The ICC worked closely with the Ontario Education Association.
15. E.R. McLean, *Religion in Ontario Schools: Based on the Minutes of the Inter-Church Committee on Religious Education in Schools, 1922-1965* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1965)
16. McLean, *Religion in Ontario Schools*, 13.
17. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education," 175.
18. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education," 176.
19. McLean, *Religion in Ontario Schools*, 15.
20. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education," 178. Phillips says these "devious arrangements . . . were made with a minimum of publicity" (*The Development of Education in Canada*, 330).
21. McLean to Greer, 31 March 1943, 25, 2.726, Box 262, RG 2-43 2-935, Provincial Archives of Ontario (hereafter PAO)
22. Regulations annotated by Greer, 7 October 1943, 23-24, 2.726, Box 262, RG 2-43 2-935, POA.
23. Greer to Major Cowles, 8 December 1943, 22. 2.726, Box 262, RG 2-43 2-935, POA.
24. Greer to Drew, 5 February 1944, 15-17, 2.726, Box 262, RG 2-43 2-935, POA.

25. George Drew, *Canada in the Great War* (Toronto: Maclean's, 1928); and George Drew, *The Truth about the War* (Toronto: Maclean's, 1928).
26. *Globe Magazine* 13 July 1957, 3.
27. Canada's Fate Depends on Youth, MG 32 C3 300.78, National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC).
28. Collected Speeches, MG 32 C3 301.96, NAC.
29. October speeches, MG 32 3b 304 147, NAC.
30. *Globe and Mail*, 1 September 1942, 6.
31. *Globe and Mail*, 25 May 1942, 12.
32. England Trip, MG 32 C3 304.156; CBC Radio 7 January 1944, MG 32 3b 304.156, NAC; and *Canadian Register*, 15 January 1944.
33. In 1957 Phillips speculated that Drew "was moved by strong attachment to Great Britain to graft on the Ontario school system the religious instruction required by legislation of 1944 in England" (*The Development of Education in Canada*, 330). McLean ventured that it would be "probably correct to conclude" Drew was influenced by the Butler Act (*Religion in Ontario Schools*, 22).
34. Drew to Ross, 7 September 1965, Education 1929 1962-69, MG 32 C3 409, NAC.
35. Miss Saunderson File, MG 32 C3 177.31, NAC.
36. Order in Council, RG 2-43 2-935, 262, 2.726, PAO.
37. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education," 186.
38. *Newspaper Hansard*, 23 Feb 1944.
39. McLean, *Religion in Ontario Schools*, 23.
40. McLean 3 April 1944, RG 2-43 DM-3 259 3.23, PAO.
41. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education," 188.
42. *Toronto Star*, 26 February 1944, 6.
43. *London Free Press*, 7 March 1944, 1.
44. Domm to Drew (undated), MG 32 C3 176.7, NAC.



45. Drew to Domm, 9 March 1944, MG 32 C3 176.7, NAC.
46. Drew to Plewman, 11 February 1946, MG 32 C3 177.24, NAC.
47. Althouse to Drew, 9 August 1944, RG 2-43 M-1 259 1.1, PAO.
48. Althouse to Drew, 16 March 1945, MG 32 C3 176.2, 16 March 1945.
49. McLean 3 April 1944, RG 2-43 DM-3 259 3.23, POA.
50. *United Church Observer*, 1 May 1944.
51. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education," 208-209.
52. *Globe and Mail*, 17 May 1944, 22.
53. *Globe and Mail*, 31 May 1944, 4.
54. *Globe and Mail*, 11 April 1944, 1.
55. McLean to Drew, 7 July 1944, RG 2-43 CD-2 259 2.10, PAO.
56. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education," 192.
57. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education," 192-193.
58. McLean, *Religion in Ontario Schools*, 30. Drew conceded this point in private correspondence, saying the books were adapted "to make them suitable to some of our own particular colloquialisms, but on the whole there is no fundamental change" (Drew to Plewman, 11 February 1946, MG 32 C3 177.24, NAC).
59. Each book contained a prefatory note saying "Revised by the Religious Education Committee of the Department of Education of Ontario, and reviewed by the Inter-Church Committee on Week Day Religious Education." Originally, the government had intended to say that the books were "Revised by a Canadian interdenominational Editorial Board, assisted by an advisory committee of practical teachers, for use in the schools of the Province of Ontario," but McLean insisted that it be changed (McLean to Rivers, 12 October 1944, RG 2-43 CD-2 259 2.08, PAO).
60. *Globe and Mail*, 12 June 1946, 5.
61. Cited in *A Brief on Religious Education in the Schools* (Toronto: Association for Religious Liberty, 1945).

62. *Toronto Star*, 11 September 1944, 8.
63. Jamieson to Drew, 8 May 1944, RG 2-43 3-195 265 1.79, PAO.
64. Rivers to Jamieson, 27 November 1944, RG 2-43 3-195 265 1.79, PAO.
65. Matthews, "History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education," 207.
66. McLean, *Religion in Ontario Schools*, 42.
67. *Globe and Mail*, 11 September 1944, 8.
68. *Globe and Mail*, 15 September 1944, 18.
69. *United Church Observer*, 1 October 1944, 16.
70. *Toronto Star*, 17 February 1945, 6.
71. *Toronto Star*, 19 January 1945, 16.
72. Abraham L. Feinberg, *Storm the Gates of Jericho* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1964), 298. See also his sermon of 18 February 1945, *Religious Instruction in the Public Schools! The Ontario Plan—Good or Bad?* (Toronto: Association for Religious Liberty, 1945).
73. *Toronto Star*, 6 February 1945.
74. *Globe and Mail*, 7 February 1945, 4.
75. *Globe and Mail*, 10 February 1945, 6.
76. *Globe and Mail*, 24 February 1945, 8.
77. Abraham L. Feinberg, "Religious Instruction in the Public Schools," *Canadian School Journal* (June 1945). Item found in MG 31 F9 2.13, NAC.
78. Feinberg, *Religious Instruction in the Public Schools*, 7.
79. *Canadian Churchman*, 5 April 1945, 219.
80. *Canadian Churchman*, 22 March 1945, 137.
81. *Canadian Churchman*, 15 March 1945, 152.
82. *Globe and Mail*, 8 March 1945, 2.
83. McLean, *Religion in Ontario Schools*, 33.
84. *Globe and Mail*, 12 March 1945, 4.

85. *Globe and Mail*, 12 March 1945, 6.
86. Minutes of Meeting with ARL, 17 March 1945, MG 32 C3 177.27, NAC.
87. Althouse to Drew, 16 March 1945, MG 32 C3 176.2, NAC.
88. *Globe and Mail*, 23 March 1945, 1-2.
89. *Toronto Star*, 23 March 1945, 1, 4.
90. Feinberg said that the CCF split was intentional, having “decided in caucus to effect a neat straddle” to avoid being embroiled in this issue during the upcoming campaign (*Storm the Gates of Jericho*, 298).
91. *Canadian Churchman*, 5 April 1945, 219.
92. *Toronto Star*, 12 April 1945, B1; and *Globe and Mail*, 5 May 1945, 4.
93. *Globe and Mail*, 18 May 1945, 4; 24 May 1945, 6; and 1 June 1945, 6.
94. *Globe and Mail*, 23 April 1945, 19; *Canadian Churchman*, 10 May 1945, 301; and *Canadian Churchman*, 24 May 1945, 323.
95. Matthews, “History of the Religious Factor in Ontario Elementary Education,” 206-208.
96. *Globe and Mail*, 5 May 1945, 4.
97. *Toronto Star*, 23 March 1945, 4; and 5 May 1945, 29.
98. Matthews later told the Mackay Committee that when he began his research into the debate in 1943 “it was a burning question” but by the time he had completed the thesis in 1949, “there was such little interest that it was not worth publishing the work” (Committee Minutes 27 January 1967, RG 2-170 vol. 8, PAO).
99. Royal Commission on Education in Ontario, Hon. Justice J.A. Hope, Chairman, *Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario* (Toronto: Baptist Johnston, 1950), 125.
100. Hope, *Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario*, 126.
101. Hope, *Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario*, 163.



## **The Education of Henry Bird Steinhauer, Indigenous Missionary in Western Canada**

A.A. DEN OTTER

---

In May 1869, Henry Steinhauer, a Wesleyan Methodist missionary in western Canada reported to the *Wesleyan Missionary Notices* that at his mission in Whitefish Lake (about 130 kilometres northeast of Fort Edmonton), “the Spirit of God moves in the dark and chaotic mind of the Indian” to bring about their conversion to Christianity. Continuing in similar vein, Steinhauer noted that he was making such good progress in settling a migratory people that he presided over a Christian village with little houses and gardens and perhaps a cow tethered in the front yard. “And the poor children,” he added, “once so destitute, are now clothed, washed, and combed, and highly delighted with the day-school.” What a wonderful contrast, he enthused, with the days when the “highest ambition [of his charges] was to kill each other and to kill the buffalo.”<sup>1</sup>

These words, typical of the *Notices*, would have led the uninformed reader to assume Steinhauer was one of the British or Canadian-born Caucasian missionaries whom the Methodists supported in the Northwest. Nothing would have been further from the truth for, although born in Ontario, Henry Steinhauer was a full-blooded Ojibwa, who had arrived in what was then Rupert’s Land twenty-eight years previous. He had come, so he reminisced, by birch bark canoe “and for months” had not seen “a pale-face . . . save at the Hudson’s Bay Company’s posts.” How could it be that an aboriginal person could describe the time before his arrival in the Northwest as the “dark days” and a fellow native as a “naked savage, who trusted to the conjuror and to his medicine-bag for tomorrow?”

One factor in this remarkable report, in which Steinhauer clearly distanced himself from his native cohorts, corresponds in part to what Mary Louise Pratt observed in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Indigenous people, Pratt argued, often appropriated the language and values of the European imperialists who imposed foreign cultural traditions on them.<sup>2</sup> These autoethnographic texts were not, she continued, authentic expressions of a new aboriginal culture, but were designed to impress the metropolitan audience and to gain an entry into its society. Undoubtedly, as a convert to Christianity, Steinhauer sought the approbation of those born and raised in that faith; nevertheless, his wording comprised more complex determinants and was authentically his.

Like most of his contemporaries, Steinhauer was writing with an eye on gratifying the supporters of missions in western Canada. The *Notices* were part of a relatively elaborate publicity network whose primary purpose was fund-raising. Collectively, the periodicals published by various missionary societies created the stereotype of a monolithic, aboriginal people who were miserable in their supposedly savage, heathen, and nomadic state as opposed to Euro-American Christians who were disciplined, settled farmers--or as the mission press put it--civilized agriculturalists.<sup>3</sup> Steinhauer's language expressly reflected that perception. The financial status of his mission at Whitefish Lake was tenuous at best and to secure support from central Canadian churchgoers he had to demonstrate some success in lifting his indigenous fellows out of a perceived miserable existence. Moreover, he had to couch this description in the religious phraseology of nineteenth-century evangelical Christianity in general and Wesleyan Methodism in particular.<sup>4</sup>

Another possible factor in Steinhauer's attitude may have been an ethnic difference. Born an Ojibwa, he ministered most of his life among the Cree people. As Laura Peers has demonstrated, although Ojibwa and Cree bands intermingled and often shared encampments, the Cree thought that the Ojibwa believed themselves to be more spiritual in character and to have stronger supernatural powers than other tribes.<sup>5</sup> This feeling of sacred superiority, Peers suggests, created an invisible barrier between the two people and, therefore, may have contributed to Steinhauer rhetorically distancing himself from his pastoral charges.

While tribal rivalries, missionary rhetoric, and a desire to assimilate himself into Euro-Canadian society may have been part of Steinhauer's outlook, the primary influence on his intellectual and spiritual life was his conversion to Christianity, the subsequent isolation from his people, as

well as the education he received in the Methodist schools of Canada West. Moreover, when he wrote these words in 1869, he was nearly fifty years old, and had worked and lived among Canadian Methodists for over forty years. Educated by them, he had absorbed the idiom of their religion and much of their culture. Although he had shed the trappings of his aboriginal heritage slowly, by the last decades of his life he appears to have absorbed the essence of European culture, especially its religious component. Although his words did not articulate an indigenous ethic, they were an authentic expression of his own personal value system.

Born sometime between 1818 and 1820 near Lake Simcoe in Upper Canada, Shahwahnegezhik, as he was originally named, spent the first decade of his life among his people, who tried as best they could to maintain their traditional hunter-gathering subsistence in face of growing numbers of Euro-Canadian settlers.<sup>6</sup> Parents, grandparents, and elders taught him the hunting, fishing, and other skills needed to survive in the North American environment. They also instructed him in the essentials of Ojibwa culture, especially its religious underpinnings. Shahwahnegezhik appeared destined to grow up like hundreds of his fellow Ojibwas.

Before he reached puberty, however, Shahwahnegezhik had a life-altering experience. One day, attracted by the sound of children chanting, he approached a Methodist schoolhouse and lingered in the open door, captivated by the sight of students reading from books. The teacher, a missionary, invited him in and thus launched Steinhauer's career.<sup>7</sup> The record is not clear as to when he had the religious conversion experience central to Methodism, but in 1828 Shahwahnegezhik was baptized in a mass ceremony.<sup>8</sup> From this point on, he began to shed his Ojibwa identity and slowly, but relentlessly adopted a Euro-Canadian way of life.

The transformation of his personal identity, although radical, likely was not traumatic. In the first place, Shahwahnegezhik was relatively young and his personality still malleable. Moreover, his peoples had a generations-long experience with Euro-North American and thus the new way of life would not have been entirely unfamiliar to him, his parents, or his elders. More significantly, his initial attraction to the newcomers was entirely pragmatic. Even at his young age, he recognized the importance and power of literacy and it was his desire to learn to read that drew him to the school. Once he entered the classroom, he would not have found the religious concepts, initially taught to him in elementary form, entirely foreign. His Ojibwa ancestors believed in a Supreme Being and a world

filled with spirits, some good and some malevolent. They too believed in life after death. In fact, Shahwahnegezhik's grandfather taught him about a prosperous place with an abundance of game, fish, sugar, roots, and berries, which only those who had lived brave and virtuous lives would enter. His people's notion of an afterlife and their profound spirituality, with its visions, fasting, prayer, and emotional sacramental ceremonies that often led to ecstasy, prepared him for the teachings of Methodism. He felt that Christianity embodied many of the same basic values as that of his ancestors.<sup>9</sup> Driven mainly by the desire to acquire the power of the written word, Shahwahnegezhik gradually accepted the religious doctrines that were integral to the Methodist curriculum.

Once the eight or ten-year old Shahwahnegezhik had committed himself to Wesleyan Methodism, the church assumed responsibility for his education. Likely, the mission school he had shyly approached was located on Grape Island in Lake Ontario, near Belleville. Established in 1827, Grape Island was a hamlet of nearly two dozen neatly whitewashed log cabins, a chapel, a schoolhouse, and a variety of village shops as well as a hospital. Its founder, United States born Rev. William Case, imposed upon its inhabitants a rigorous daily seventeen-hour regimen of work, meals, prayers, and devotions. Despite their hard work, the missionary and his charges had limited success as they could not overcome the limitations of the island's cramped size nor the need to travel to neighbouring islands to tend their crops and cattle.<sup>10</sup>

Next to the chapel, the school house was the most important structure on Grape Island. Education was central to Methodism and, while its primary purpose was moralistic, that is, to learn to worship God and love humanity, it also had a strong practical theme. Not only was material success in life a noble goal, Methodists, as members of a minority, dissenting faith had a strong sense for justice, equality, and political reform. One of its chief leaders, Egerton Ryerson, fought relentlessly for a system of non-sectarian, public, universal education, designed not solely for spiritual advancement, but also for pragmatic purposes.<sup>11</sup> Seeing promise in young Shahwahnegezhik, William Case undertook to teach him the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic as well as some elementary artisan skills such as gardening, carpentry, and construction. Within four years, the child, born into a hunter-gathering economy, had learned the rudiments of a settled agricultural society.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the strict discipline that paralleled the mission's regimen, the mission school did adopt some of the educational principles of Johann



Heinrich Pestalozzi who thought that education, begun the day a child was born, should continue inside and outside the classroom. Because Pestalozzi taught that children learned through their senses rather than by abstraction, he suggested teachers must cultivate students' sensory skills through observation and communication, by guiding them through manageable steps from the simple to the complex, and by avoiding rote memorization. Children learn best, he explained, by means of visual and tactile aids. They should, for example, study vegetation, animals and insects by direct observation.<sup>13</sup> Pestalozzi appealed especially to the Wesleyan Methodist's moral objectives of education. Although they would have rejected his Jean Jacques Rousseau inspired belief that babies were born innocent and pure, they embraced his assumption that children were constantly bombarded by evil, corrupting forces. They needed, therefore, to be taught faith in God, as the best moral defence against temptation.<sup>14</sup>

While teachers at the Grape Island school adopted some of Pestalozzi's pedagogical ideas, particularly that children needed constant discipline to fight evil, corrupting spirits, they clung dogmatically to the belief in strict discipline. The principle that the child needed corporal punishment in order to tame the evil tendencies of the human will and to establish uniformity of behaviour and discipline in the class room, was common not only on Grape Island, but also elsewhere in Upper Canada, the United States, and Great Britain.<sup>15</sup> Rooted in the Bible and deeply embedded in the early nineteenth-century Christian psyche, parents and educators often employed severe physical punishment to instill in children a sense of honour and responsibility as well as devotion to duty.<sup>16</sup> At Grape Island, bells and whistles regulated the student's activities and, following contemporary practices, corporal punishment was common and harsh. Consequently, Shahwahnegezhik experienced, or at best witnessed, the methods that Methodist missionaries employed to transform supposedly undisciplined children, attached to their native heritage, into supposedly obedient students, receptive to European culture.<sup>17</sup>

By moving into the Methodist community, Shahwahnegezhik also absorbed its religious milieu. By embracing Christianity, he also accepted the doctrine of one transcendent God, who did not dwell in either plants or animals, and of the salvation of his soul not solely by good conduct, but by abstractly receiving Jesus Christ as his personal saviour. He learned these basic principles through rote memorization of Scripture texts, catechism lessons, and hymns. Very influential in this regard were the catechism and hymns of Isaac Watts. Although an eighteenth-century

dissenting clergyman, Watts' work was still popular in the early nineteenth century. His hymns, initially published in 1715 for the moral improvement of children, had been reissued well over 500 times with more than 6 million copies printed. In keeping with the ethos of the time, the hymns touched on positive aspects of praise and worship, but most often deliberately frightened children by emphasizing the horror of eternal punishment for continued bad behaviour like lying, quarrelling, swearing, idleness, and disobedience. Direct, and written in simple blunt language, the songs were sung so often that they were imprinted on the minds of the students.

Song XI is typical of the genre. Like the vast majority of his hymns, Watts painted the stark reality of eternal damnation and pointed to pious behaviour as the only means of avoiding it:

There is beyond the sky  
A heaven of joy and love,  
And holy children when they die  
Go to that world above.

There is a dreadful hell,  
And everlasting pains;  
There sinners must with devils dwell  
In darkness, fire, and chains.

Can such a wretch as I  
Escape this cursed end?  
And may I hope whene'er I die  
I shall to heaven ascend?

Then I will read and pray,  
While I have life and breath;  
Lest I should be cut off today  
And sent to eternal death.<sup>18</sup>

Victorian children were from birth exposed to this stark dichotomy of eternal reward and punishment as parents and teacher used not only Watt's hymns, but also his catechism as the foundation of Christian education. The second set, for example, written for those from eight to twelve years of age, contained a catalogue of sins including swearing, cursing, lying, scoffing, gluttony, drunkenness, and quarrelling. With

evangelical fervour, it encouraged a mindset of industry, piety, obedience, honesty, sobriety, and politeness.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the hymns and catechism, teachers and ministers used exhortations, admonitions, and sermons to inculcate good behaviour. Undoubtedly harsh, and not necessarily effective, their overriding and usually genuine concern was the eternal welfare of the child's soul.

Several educators had a great influence on Shahwahnegezhik. Perhaps the most influential was Rev. William Case. While at Grape Island, Shahwahnegezhik lived in the home of the missionary. The two developed a deep relationship of mutual respect, the latter becoming like a father for the former.<sup>20</sup> Case, physically diminutive, was very personable and charismatic. A persuasive preacher and mellifluous singer, tender and deeply religious, he served superbly as a model of Wesleyan Christianity. Sensitive to the importance of cultural differences and language, his school was bilingual, opening to its graduates the opportunity to become translators. Moreover, he had an abiding faith in the intellectual abilities of native children, encouraging both genders to become teachers or, alternatively, for boys to train as preachers and girls as homemakers. Seeing in Shahwahnegezhik a promising student and potential translator, Case enrolled him in New York's Cazenovia Seminary in 1832 to study classical languages in preparation for a career in translation.

Case may have been responsible for the renaming of Shahwahnegezhik to Henry Bird Steinhauer, possibly in honour of a wealthy Philadelphia businessman who underwrote the youth's education. Whatever the origin of the new name, Steinhauer, assumed it slowly; he continued to use his birth name for another twenty years, albeit gradually less and less frequently. By adopting his new name gradually, he demonstrated that neither the conversion from the ancestral to Christian religion, nor the shift from an aboriginal to an European culture was neither instantaneous nor complete but incremental and a life-long process.<sup>21</sup>

William Case also exposed Steinhauer to a life-affecting experience. In the late winter of 1829, he took him and several other children on a fund-raising tour along the eastern seaboard. Regularly singing and speaking for large audiences, at times numbering more than 1,000, the small group of five boys and two girls, aged eight to fourteen, aroused the sympathy of the crowds. It was a heady experience for Steinhauer and must have affected him deeply.<sup>22</sup> Exposed for the first time to large cities, and what must have seemed to him unheard of wealth and luxury, he

would have come to understand the power of the newcomer society. Clearly, he was living in a revolutionary time for the First Nations as almost nightly, he heard Case belittle his heritage and former religion and hail Christianity embedded in a supposedly superior culture.

Another person who had an effect on Steinhauer was Peter Jones, a convert to Christianity whose mother was Ojibwa and father European. An ordained Methodist missionary, Jones believed his former native spirituality to be false and also felt that the aboriginal hunter-gatherer economy would soon give way to a settled agricultural society. Relentlessly, he preached that the only way for his people to survive the new order would be to adopt the ways of the newcomers.<sup>23</sup> His tireless efforts to assimilate the Mississauga into Upper Canadian society earned him considerable resentment among the adult population. When he tried, for example, to persuade his council to put children to work on the mission farm in order to prepare them for the rigours of work and to instill in them a sense of duty and virtue, two significant groups balked. Most strongly opposed were the traditionalists, who resented any erosion of ancestral customs and who believed Jones was going too far in transforming the mission into a rural British village. Less defiant were those who were willing to remain Christians, but wanted to practice a number of traditional feasts within the new faith. Although not in the majority, the two groups working together to block Jones' most extreme policies.<sup>24</sup>

The critics especially resented Jones' authoritarian European-driven pedagogy. They agreed, in keeping with their native child-rearing principles, that no one, not even parents, should command a child to do anything. They also deplored Jones' drive to teach the children only in English.<sup>25</sup> Ojibwa was still the working language of the Credit mission, but he believed that this hindered the desired erosion of traditional ways. Learning, speaking, and writing only in the English language would, he believed, facilitate a more rapid integration into English society.<sup>26</sup> Jones was convinced only a few of the adults at the Credit Mission would adopt European habits. He, therefore, concentrated his efforts on the children, imposing a totally European curriculum on the mission school. In 1835, he unsuccessfully moved that "all the children be placed entirely under the charge and management of the teachers and missionaries: so that their parents shall have no control over them."<sup>27</sup> Obviously, Jones recognized that parents and grandparents taught their children traditional cultural values. Committed to training his charges to compete effectively with their

white peers, Jones wanted as much as possible to erase Mississauga culture.

In 1833, Steinhauer interrupted his studies to teach at Jones' Credit Mission School. Although his tenure there was short, Jones' aims must have influenced Steinhauer. While he accepted the older missionary's goals, he rejected his methods. To be sure, in his later career, he too wanted to train his charges to become farmers and to speak English, but he worked diligently on translating the gospel and usually preached in the native tongue. Although he never explicitly articulated his personal missiology, Steinhauer's writings implicitly suggest that he never fully denounced his Native heritage. To him the primary objective was always the creation of a Christian faith community. So he used familiar Ojibwa expressions and idioms to explain Judeo-Christian theology. Spiritual goals were, to him, more much more important than temporal achievements. Moreover, he enjoyed the outdoors and later, when stationed at Norway House, accompanied his charges on the customary autumn goose hunt whenever he could. As late as 1881, he wrote, "Often when engaged in secular labor [sic], the want of food was felt. The larder being empty, if in summer go into bush, pick a few berries for his dinner, or take his gun and shoot a partridge or a rabbit." Switching immediately to the spiritual, he continued,

and thus the missionary went on, at the same time not neglecting to keep the old gospel musket in trim, ready for use at every opportunity. The game of this kind that could be reached was at first shy and wild, and far down in the valley and dark wilderness; but by-and-by groans were heard, and sobs, with cries of great pain; then it was known the old musket had taken effect. As the aim at first was to kill, now the object was to heal and make alive. If the case of the humble worker has been reached by the skill of the Great Physician, so can these dark and benighted ones. Then the "shout of a king" was in our camp. This was the first indication of the coming day upon the darkness of this people.<sup>28</sup>

Steinhauer's express labelling of his own people as "dark and benighted" referred first of all to their ignorance of the Christian gospel, but also pointed to their lack of basic skills such as reading and arithmetic and no knowledge of contemporary European learning. Thus when still at the Credit Mission, he and other teachers taught their charges an entirely new science. Thunder was not the great eagle flapping its wings nor was

the world an island.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, he and the others deliberately demonstrated that hunting, fishing, and gathering was no longer an acceptable economic basis for society and had to be replaced by agriculture. Along with that came a whole new perspective on nature--one that taught that the forest had to be removed and the land cultivated into productive fields.<sup>30</sup>

The third person who influenced Steinhauer's education was Egerton Ryerson, the noted Methodist minister and educator. In 1836, when the Wesleyan Methodist conference perceived a need for more translators, Ryerson enrolled Steinhauer in the Upper Canada Academy, which had just opened at Coburg. The coeducational Academy, largely inspired by Ryerson, intended to provide secondary education to Methodist and other students. Supposedly non-sectarian because it did not teach systematic theology, it offered a broad classical college education in which students would "be faithfully instructed in the various branches of human learning, which the present state of society renders essentially necessary, in order to respectability and usefulness."<sup>31</sup> More important than these temporal objectives, however, was the college's spiritual aim to train youth "in the knowledge and obedience of God." While Steinhauer increased his understanding of the classics, he was also exposed to a general infusion of a Protestant and biblical milieu.<sup>32</sup>

While the Academy emphasized mathematics and classical literature, it also strengthened Steinhauer's grasp of English grammar, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. In addition, he studied French, Logic, Rhetoric, History, and natural philosophy. In Latin, he read *Roman History*, *Caesar's Commentaries* and Horace, and in Greek, *Jacob's Greek Reader*, *Idylls of Moscus*, and *Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles*. At the 1838 annual public examination, Steinhauer read a segment in Latin, supposedly "with ease, fluency and appropriate emphasis."<sup>33</sup> He also spoke "On the Diffusion of Wisdom and Religion." The oration "delineated in an interesting manner the signs of the times," wrote the *Christian Guardian*, and it "averted to the bloodless conquests of revealed truth and closed with a glowing anticipation of its approaching universal triumph."<sup>34</sup>

After graduating from Upper Canada Academy, Steinhauer taught for one year at the Alderville Mission.<sup>35</sup> In the early summer of 1840, the Wesleyan Methodist Conference sent him to Rupert's Land, a mission field that the British Wesleyan Missionary Society was opening at the request of the Hudson's Bay Company. He was to assist Reverend William Mason, a British-born missionary at Lac la Pluie as interpreter, translator, and schoolmaster. The two did not make much headway in their mandate

and in 1844, James Evans, the field's supervisor requested Steinhauer to come to Norway House, located at the northern tip of Lake Manitoba.<sup>36</sup> At this well-established mission, he worked mainly as Bible translator and schoolmaster.<sup>37</sup> In 1850, he was transferred to Jackson Bay Station, near Oxford House, which was located over 200 kilometres from Norway House on the Hayes River. Here he experienced considerable difficulty with the Hudson's Bay Company postmaster, who opposed the mission as a perceived threat to the fur trade. Steinhauer also had to cope with poor agricultural land and failed fisheries, suffering extreme hunger and misery. He was greatly relieved when John Ryerson, the brother of Egerton and president of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, invited him to come along on a publicity trip in England for the 1854-55 winter.<sup>38</sup> On his return to Canada, the Canadian conference ordained him into the ministry of the Methodist Church. He was posted to Lac la Biche [in northeastern Alberta], but facing stiff competition from Roman Catholic missionaries, he moved southward in 1858 to Whitefish Lake where the land was arable and the fish plentiful. Within years, he and his converts had built a small village surrounded by cultivated fields. Although never entirely independent from the nearby buffalo herds and fishery, the Whitefish mission was relatively successful. Steinhauer tended the community until his death in 1884.

Steinhauer built his missionary career on what he had learned in the Upper Canadian and New York school systems. Like all the privileged young men of the time, he emerged a Victorian gentleman--at least in demeanour if not in social status--displaying the virtues inculcated in all British and Canadian school boys of the time--politeness, disinterestedness, and above all the ability to use one's time usefully and productively. Moreover, he was an accomplished speaker armed with a strong command of the classical languages and the techniques of rhetoric, logic, and dialectics.

Steinhauer differed from his classmates in that he was weaned from the aboriginal understanding of nature and religion. He had been born into a society of ecological time and religion. The primary means of communication among his peoples was oral and their basic social values were continuity, tradition, and a sense of place. Time was measured by the changing seasons--mainly the heat of summer and the cold of winter--and by passing generations as well as cataclysmic events. Seasons also dictated the timing of religious ceremonies because the people experienced an intimate connection between the real and sacred worlds. The knowledge

and secrets that explained the natural and spiritual worlds were passed by word of mouth from person to person and from generation to generation. All that changed dramatically when, as Shahwahnegezhik, he stood quietly in the doorway of the Grape Island school house and moved through the intersection of two cultures to what Gerald Friesen has labelled, an oral-traditional to a textual-settler society.<sup>39</sup>

Even as a pre-teenager, Steinhauer understood that literacy was at the heart of Euro-Canadian society. Books not only recorded dreams and wisdom more accurately and enduringly than word of mouth, but they duplicated exactly what had been recorded, a feat that only the greatest of shamans could accomplish. For Steinhauer, as for many native people, the Christian missionaries were more powerful than the indigenous priests because their Bible contained direct references to the deity. Moreover, they were willing to share the printed word with all who appeared receptive to Christianity and thus permit them to obtain for themselves the tangible, preserved, and apparently constant truth. "Literacy and Christianity constituted a powerful challenge to aboriginal cultures," Friesen writes, "and were wielded like weapons within them."<sup>40</sup>

To be sure, Steinhauer recognized the power of the religion of the book and used it to his advantage. If as a youth, he had only dimly and naively perceived the nexus of literacy, language, religion, power, and empire, he understood it clearly when he graduated from the Academy. He consciously rejected a faith that was energized by many spirits immanent in the environment and embraced one that served a monotheistic God, transcendent from nature. He did so willingly, even eagerly, because he saw the religion of the book as superior to his own and its God as authoritative. The imported religion, based on literacy, he felt had made its followers powerful and ready to control the continent.

Steinhauer's educators had made him aware of the enormous might of the British empire and had linked that power directly to its religious basis. How often had he lustily and voluntarily intoned the words written in Watt's hymn book--"Praise for Birth and Education in a Christian Land."?

'Tis to thy sovereign grace I owe  
That I was born on British ground;  
Where streams of heavenly mercy flow,  
And words of sweet salvation sound.



How do I pity those that dwell  
Where ignorance and darkness reign,  
They know no heaven, they fear no hell,  
Those endless joys, those endless pains.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps those words by which his contemporaries had so bluntly connected Christianity with the supposed superiority of British culture, may have jarred when he sang it for the first time, but repeated use assured him that he had become a member of a select community within a powerful empire.

Closely associated with this influential new religion, so he learned, was a whole new system of knowledge. Geography, for example, provided insight into cultures other than his own; astronomy furnished a new cosmology. Moreover, he no longer viewed nature like his aboriginal ancestors. The forest had become a wilderness. Writing to a prominent British Wesleyan, he fondly recalled his trip to England, and “though buried in this waste howling desert,” he remembered its landscape, especially the impressive bustling cityscape of London.<sup>42</sup> Although his reference to the Old Testament reflected a similar hyperbole, the expression suggested that he no longer considered the pristine forest and plains of Rupert’s Land a homeland.<sup>43</sup> He often asked British and Canadian Methodists to pray for the advancement of the gospel and for “the salvation of thousands in this benighted land!”<sup>44</sup>

While Steinhauer’s discourse reflected commonly held nineteenth-century perceptions, it also indicated an alienation from his ancestral people. In his 1867 report, he noted that his devoted and zealous congregation gave him “much consolation in my lonely toils among them.”<sup>45</sup> On one level this statement signalled his isolation from other missionaries and the church. “Separated far away from the fellowship and kindly counsel of maturer Christians,” he noted in the *Christian Guardian*, “I often feel keenly the loneliness of my position in this far-off land.”<sup>46</sup> But the suggestion that he was lonely, while working among First Nations people, also alludes to a certain aloofness from both unconverted and converted natives. Rhetorically, he believed that his uneducated, indigenous peers, although Christian, were inferior to himself. In one instance, he observed that he hoped the gospel would prevail “throughout the length and breadth of this dark land.” And, he added, “The heathen around us are looking with astonishment at the transition of their brethren of the White Fish Lake from a wretched degradation to our improved, happy condition, clothed

and in their right minds; raised, in some small degree, in the scale of being.”<sup>47</sup> He implicitly echoed in this statement a generally held European belief that humanity progressed in stages from savage to civilized; and, he expressly articulated his assumption that, while the Christianized Natives of Whitefish Lake had taken one step towards civilization, they had not yet reached his level of maturity.<sup>48</sup> Obviously, Steinhauer, who seemingly had absorbed current assumptions in anthropology and Linnaean Science, believed that North American Natives had to adopt completely the economics and science, as well as religion, of the European settlers.

Properly educated, however, aboriginal men were, he thought, well suited for missionary work. He argued passionately that the church should employ Indigenous mission workers as much as possible. Only a native, he suggested, could fully understand the nature, habits, and way of Aboriginal life. “A foreigner, either as Missionary or otherwise, will never take so well with the native of this country, let him be ever so good and kind to them,” he asserted, “there is always distrust on the part of the native to the foreigner, from the fact that the native has been so long downtrodden by the white man.”<sup>49</sup> Clearly, the bitter lessons of race relations in America had made a deep impression on Steinhauer and he understood the devastating impact European settlers could have on native peoples unless they were literate and educated.

Central to Steinhauer’s work at Whitefish Lake was the belief, inherited from William Case and Peter Jones, that the natives of Rupert Land’s could survive the impending onslaught of European colonists only by becoming like them, that is, settled cultivators of the land. He believed that they, too, had to transform with axe and plow the vast, open plains, and the forests that fringed them, into agricultural fields and villages, towns and cities. He no longer appreciated the incredibly complex, dynamic territorial ecologies that for centuries had sustained a comparatively small human population with a wealth of animals and plants; he accepted the assumption that only cultivated fields could support the impending enormous increase in people.<sup>50</sup>

However much he considered agriculture and settlement central to the survival of the natives of Rupert’s Land, he was most concerned with the salvation of their souls. In all his formal education, and later in his own private studies, the central message always focussed on eternal life. Although troubled about the material welfare of North America’s aboriginal people, he worried immeasurably more about their spiritual health. As a missionary, he may have unwittingly served the purposes of

imperial expansionists, but that was only a secondary corollary to his evangelistic mandate. Steinhauer, like his Methodist, Anglican, and Roman Catholic contemporaries took Christ's injunction, to bring the gospel to all the world, literally. Formal learning as well as informal experience and observation had taught him that central message. Like his peers, he placed the humanitarian or spiritual mandate well above the secular or economic objective.<sup>51</sup>

By sharing with his fellow missionaries the assumption that spiritual and material objectives went hand in hand, Steinhauer reflected well the lessons his teachers had imparted to him. He understood that Christianity was an integral part of British culture, or as his instructors put it, civilization. Steinhauer's reports to his fellow Methodists were no less authentic than those of his Euro-Canadian colleagues. In all his communications, he clearly articulated his personal faith. To be sure, his voice was no longer that of North America's non-Christian First Nations. Instead it was the word of an indigenous person who had voluntarily chosen a literary culture and its written faith over his voiced heritage and oral religion. If he had been unduly influenced by his teachers and his books, so had all his Methodist peers.

### ***Endnotes***

1. *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1 May 1869.
2. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 7.
3. C.L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched, & Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians in Canada and the United States, 1820-1900* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), 1-16. See also Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992).
4. Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 53-70; and Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994).
5. Laura Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada, 1780 to 1870* (St Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1994), 25-26, 45-46.

6. Isaac Kholisile Mabindisa, "The Praying Man: The Life and Times of Henry Bird Steinhauer" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 1984). Mabindisa's dissertation is the most comprehensive biography of Steinhauer. An admirer of Steinhauer's fortitude and sincerity, he lambasts the Hudson's Bay Company for its obstructionist policies in Rupert's Land and chides the Missionary Society for keeping the native-born missionary in relatively obscure positions. In the end, Mabindisa concludes that Steinhauer formed a valuable buffer between the native peoples of western Canada and the encroaching settlers, preparing the former for the latter's lifestyle. Not surprisingly, the brief account of Krystyna Z. Sieciechowicz, "Henry Bird Steinhauer," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 11: 848, is a relatively dispassionate version that does not evaluate the role of aboriginal preachers in Rupert's Land. The name Shahwanegezhick may have meant southern sky while Bird, his middle name, may have been a mistranslation from the Ojibwa words meaning fastest boat or big sail (see, Mabindisa, "Praying Man," 73-74).
7. *Christian Guardian*, 10 May 1854.
8. Mabindisa, "Praying Man," 73.
9. Benjamin Slight, *Indian Researches or Facts Concerning North American Indians* (Montreal: Miller, 1844), 88-90. Slight, a Wesleyan Methodist missionary who described the customs, manners, and traditions of Upper Canada's natives, viewed their religious ceremonies sympathetically and on at least one occasion drew instructive parallels. Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) provides an account of Jones' childhood that can be applied to Steinhauer. Incidentally, Smith's thesis argues that Jones, by converting to Christianity, was able to save some of his own people the Mississauga from extinction by settling them on farms. Steinhauer held many of Jones' ideas. Catherine Stoehr, "Kahkewaquonaby (Peter Jones) and the Great Spirit (Jesus)," Unpublished Paper, Canadian Historical Association, 2002, suggests that Jones built his Methodist doctrines on the kernel beliefs of his Aboriginal ancestors. See also, Michael D. McNally, *Ojibwe Singers: Hymns, Grief, and a Native Culture in Motion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
10. Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 119-21; and Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, 121.
11. Semple, *The Lord's Dominion*, 239-420.
12. Mabindisa, "Praying Man," 77-80.

13. George Boas, *The Cult of Childhood* (London: Warburg Institute, 1966), 36-41; Richard Grivil, "'Knowledge not purchased with the loss of Power': Wordsworth, Pestalozzi, and 'The Spots of Time,'" *European Romantic Review* 8 (1997): 233-34, 239; William J. Reese, "The Origins of Progressive Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 41 (2001) 1-24; and, Clem Adelman, "'Over Two Years, What did Froebel say to Pestalozzi?'" *History of Education* 29 (2000): 104- 107.
14. Boas, *Cult of Childhood*, 36-41.
15. Donald R. Raichle, "School Discipline and Corporal Punishment: An American Retrospect" in Heather Berkeley, Chad Gaffield, and W. Gordon West, eds., *Children's Rights: Legal and Educational Issues* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1978), 108-120.
16. Alice Miller, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence*, trans. Hildegarde and Hunter Hannum (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1983), 3-91, takes an extreme position calling nineteenth-century discipline "poisonous pedagogy." The use of strong physical and psychological measures, Miller argues, resulted in the suppression of emotion and any sort of self-will in children. Priscilla Robertson, "Home as a Nest: Middle Class Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Europe," in Lloyd deMause, ed. *The History of Childhood* (New York: The Psychohistory Press, 1974), 407-408, 421, disagrees suggesting that educators were interested more in changing rather than replacing personalities. References to physical punishment are common in the Bible. Proverbs 13: 24, "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him," and Proverbs 29: 15, "The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother." The Bible repeatedly refers to God physically punishing those who disobey his injunctions.
17. Peter Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians; with Special Reference to their Conversion to Christianity* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 67, 277.
18. Isaac Watts, *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 225-226.
19. Isaac Watts, *The Second Set of Catechisms and Prayers or Some Helps to the Religion of Children* (London: J. Buckland and T. Longman, 1768).
20. While Steinhauer only occasionally referred to his mother and rarely visited her, he never mentions his father.

21. McNally, *Ojibwe Singers*, contends that religion is more than a system of belief, but a practice is useful for its insight into the notion of conversion as a process that may never be completed.
22. Mabindisa, "Praying Man," 83-87; and Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 115.
23. Jones, *History of the Ojebway*; and Smith, *Sacred Feathers*.
24. Smith, "*Sacred Feathers*," 154-160.
25. Smith, "*Sacred Feathers*," 157-159.
26. Ironically, George Copway, was another Mississauga preacher, but in contrast to Jones he held a romantic view of Ojibwa culture. I am indebted to Robin Jarvis Brownlie who persuasively argued this point in a paper at the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association at Dalhousie University in May 2003. Copway also valued English instruction, but for more sophisticated reasons than Jones. He believed that knowledge of English provided an entry to the riches of English literature (G. Copway, *The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibwa Nation* [Boston: Benjamin B. Mussey and Co., 1851], 245-246).
27. Peter Jones, "Memorandum, Thoughts on Indian Schools, delivered at Toronto - February 1835," Sermons and Addresses, Peter Jones Collection, Victoria University Library.
28. *Missionary Outlook* I, Mo. 7, July 1881, 74
29. *Christian Guardian*, 10 April 1830.
30. Frieda Knobloch, *The Culture of Wilderness: Agriculture as Colonization in the American West* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).
31. *Minutes of the Annual Conference*, 1830, 38, Methodist Episcopal Church.
32. Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 241-245.
33. *Christian Guardian*, 9 May 1838.
34. *Christian Guardian*, 9 May 1838.
35. Steinhauer interrupted his studies at the Academy in 1837 for one year to help Case reestablish the faltering Grape Island mission at Alderville. Within years, Alderville became the first Canadian Methodist residential school.

36. Steinhauer to Evans, 19 December 1840; Jacobs to Alder, 23 May 1844; Mason to Secretaries, 20 August 1844; and Jacobs to Alder, 20 August 1844, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Collection, United Church of Canada, Victoria University Archives (hereafter cited as UCCA). See also, Peers, *Ojibwa of Western Canada*.
37. Mason to Fathers, 22 December 1845; and Mason to Fathers, 29 August 1850, UCCA.
38. Steinhauer to Mason, 25 June, 5, 21 and 22 July 1851, 25 June 1852; and, extracts from Mason's Journal, 1852-3, 29 April 1853, UCCA. Thomas H.B. Symons, "John Ryerson," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), X: 638; and Mabindisa, "The Praying Man," 371-400.
39. Gerald Friesen, *Citizens and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication, and Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). See also Peers, *Ojibwa of Western Canada*.
40. Friesen, *Citizen and Nation*, 46.
41. Watts, *Divine Songs*, 215-216.
42. Steinhauer to Hoole, 29 December 1859, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Collection, UCCA.
43. See for example, Deuteronomy 8:15, 32:50, and Isaiah 5:6-7, 5:3. For a fuller exposition on western Canadian missionaries and the wilderness see my, "'The wilderness will rejoice and blossom like the crocus:' Bishop David Anderson's Perceptions of Wilderness and Civilization in Rupert's Land," *Historical Papers: Canadian Society of Church History* (2001): 81-100.
44. *Annual Report*, 1866-67, xiv. Missionary Society, Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Canada.
45. *Annual Report*, 1866-67, xiv, Missionary Society, Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Canada.
46. *Christian Guardian*, 3 April 1867.
47. *Annual Report*, 1866-67, xiv, Missionary Society, Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Canada.
48. John G. Burke, "The Wild Man's Pedigree," in Edward Dudley and Maximilian E. Novak, eds. *The Wild Man Within: An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972).

49. *Annual Report*, 1874, xx, Missionary Society, Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Canada.
50. Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999) provocatively suggests that environmental conditions permitted Europeans to adopt agriculture centuries before native North Americans and subsequently acquire the technology and political organization that assisted them in the conquest of the New World.
51. For three randomly selected examples see: *Christian Guardian*, 10 May 1854; *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 1 May 1869; *The Missionary Outlook*, 3 April 1883. In an extended argument, John Ryerson, *Hudson's Bay; or, a Missionary Tour* (Toronto: G.R. Sanderson, 1855), 124-125 makes the same point, noting at one point that "the souls of the Indians are of infinitely more value than their furs."



## **Biafra and the Canadian Churches, 1966-1970**

PETER BUSH

---

Much of the history of Africa has been written from a single perspective. Africa, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, is the recipient of the action. Actions initiated first by the slavers, then the colonizing nations, and more recently the commercial and industrial influences of the North. The First World is the subject of the sentence, while Africa remains the object. Little of African history has intentionally sought to turn that sentence around to make Africa the subject of the sentence and the First World the object upon which Africa has exercised influence and caused change. This paper suggests that Africa changed the Canadian church in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> This change was due not only to immigrants, like the Ghanians, coming to Canada, but was also the result of African events that influenced the thinking and action of Canadian churches. A rehearsal of some of the ways African issues have changed the Canadian church will act as proof of this point. The development of the Canadian Food Grains Bank, though not only a response to African food needs, was driven in part by events taking place in Africa. World Vision's 30-Hour Famine transforms thousands of Canadian young people into advocates for the people of Africa and other people of the South. The Inter-Church Coalition on Africa has played a significant role both inside and outside the church. Church voices speaking at shareholders' meetings, were first heard as the churches, along with others, demanded corporations and public institutions exercise ethical responsibility in relationship to the apartheid regime in South Africa. The furor, in the 1970s, around the World Council of Churches' funding of the African National Congress, taught church leaders

the limits to which their constituency would let them go, a lesson learned through their interests in Africa.

This paper is limited to looking at a single African event that changed the Canadian church: the Nigerian civil war, alternatively known as the Biafran crisis.<sup>2</sup> Further limiting the scope of the paper is its only tangential interest in the aid effort inside the enclave in Eastern Nigeria. The paper is far more interested in asking how the views and actions of Canadian church leaders and church members were affected by the events taking place half a world away. A final limitation is the focus on Protestant church responses, making only passing reference to the Roman Catholic Church. The Presbyterian Church in Canada was the only Canadian denomination to have missionaries in Nigeria at the time of the conflict, therefore Canadian Presbyterians were at the center of the action in Canada as churches responded to the crisis. Naturally Presbyterians will play a prominent role in the story that follows. The Canadian Presbyterians had come to Nigeria in 1954 through a series of joint endeavours with the Church of Scotland who had had missionaries in Nigeria since the 1800s, with Mary Slessor's name being one of the more recognizable.

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious federation. The north is predominantly Hausa/Fulani and Muslim. The eastern part, with its oil reserves, is predominantly Ibo (Igbo) and Christian. Western Nigeria is largely Yoruba, while the central part of the country, where Lagos is located, is a mixture of ethnicities. Eastern Nigeria (Biafra) was in the 1960s, next to South Africa, the most Christianized part of the continent; both Presbyterian and Catholic missionaries had been active in the area for over a century, using education as a primary mission strategy. The majority of Nigeria's doctors, lawyers, teachers, civil servants, and published writers in the 1960s were Ibo. The positions of influence Ibo held throughout Nigeria, including in the northern Hausa/Fulani lands created tensions. Additionally, the discovery of oil in eastern Nigeria in 1958 and the economic development that accompanied it, caused some to believe that the Ibo were benefiting unfairly from the wealth that was beginning to come to Nigeria. Beginning in January 1966, a series of military coups ended with General Yakubu Gowon, a Christian from a minority ethnic group, as the military leader of Federal Nigeria. During this upheaval a number of massacres of Ibos occurred in northern Nigeria, even as Ibos sought to flee to the east and safety they were killed. As well, Hausas living in eastern Nigeria were killed. Gowon and the Federal Military Government sought to develop a constitutional framework to hold

Nigeria together. Their centralized approach was consistently rejected by Lieutenant-Colonel Chukuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria. On 30 May 1967 Biafra declared independence and a civil war began.

Biafra understood itself to be a Christian country, with a God-given destiny to be independent. This is clear from the war songs of the time. The lyrics to “We are Biafrans” were:

We are Biafrans Fighting for our nation  
In the name of Jesus We shall conquer  
Biafra win! Biafra!  
We are Biafrans Fighting for our freedom  
In the name of Jesus We shall conquer  
Biafra win! Biafra!  
We are Biafrans Marching to the war front  
In the Name of Jesus We shall vanquish  
Biafra win! Biafra!<sup>3</sup>

Biafra’s freedom was part of the will of God, and Ojukwu, “our beloved Moses,” would lead the nation, a David,” against the “Goliath” of Federal Nigeria. Given this religious commitment, the actions of the British government in assisting to arm the Federal Military Government were incomprehensible to those inside Biafra.<sup>4</sup> “How,” they argued, “could one Christian nation like Great Britain, not support the freedom of another Christian nation, Biafra?”<sup>5</sup>

Canadian Presbyterians were not the only Canadians with close connections to Nigeria. Parliamentarians from Ottawa had deep and varied connections with political leaders and senior civil servants in Nigeria. Mitchell Sharp, Minister of External Affairs, commented, in a small fit of hyperbole, to the Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs, “I would venture to say that Canada has closer relations with Nigeria than with any other country in the world except Britain. As far as Nigeria is concerned, we are in a sense the second most important country to the United Kingdom itself.”<sup>6</sup> Canadians were aware of what was happening in Nigeria, and a number had personal connections with Nigerians.

The Rev. E.H. Johnson, Secretary for Overseas Missions, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, appeared before the Standing Committee on External Affairs on 14 March 1968 as an expert witness. A frequent

visitor to Nigeria, Johnson was familiar with political, educational, and religious leaders there. In fact, since June 1967 Johnson and, recently returned Presbyterian missionary, The Rev. Walter McLean, had been warning the External Affairs Department in Ottawa that civil war was brewing in Nigeria. Not until late 1967 did External Affairs take the warnings seriously. From then until early 1968, Johnson and MacLean were in weekly contact with personnel at External Affairs.<sup>7</sup>

Johnson, in his testimony, noted General Gowon was influenced by three groups that exercised “a fair amount of power.” The “northern emirs, that is, the Muslim rulers of the northern states,” Johnson believed were the most influential group.<sup>8</sup> But when asked by a committee member, “Are we right or wrong in assuming that there is a religious connotation to this civil war?” Johnson replied, “There are some that would try to suggest this is a holy war of Islam against Christianity; I would reject that view.”<sup>9</sup> Johnson during his testimony in both March and October 1968 never called Biafra a Christian nation, carefully pointing out the role of Christians on both sides of the conflict. Had Johnson misinterpreted Biafra’s self-understanding as a Christian nation? That seems unlikely. Rather, Johnson seeing that Gowon was a Christian, that two-thirds of the Federal Government cabinet was Christian, and that a majority of the Nigerian army was Christian, found it impossible to call it a religious war. With Christians prominent on both sides of the battlelines, with The Presbyterian Church in Canada having contact with leaders on both sides; Johnson believed he and the Canadian churches must remain neutral on the question of Biafran independence, being even-handed in its relationship with both the Federal Military Government and the Biafran government. As well, The Presbyterian Church in Canada still had missionaries in Lagos who were working with Nigerian Christians, many of whom opposed the secession of Biafra.

In his March 1968 appearance before the Standing Committee Johnson reported on observations gained during his January trip to Biafra and Lagos. The war, he argued, was a forgotten war overshadowed by the Middle East crisis and the Vietnam War. As well, the Nigerian federal government’s assertion that this was an internal matter, forced a number of international players, including the United Nations, to the sidelines. Finally, the blockade that existed around Biafra, was not only a munitions and food blockade, it was also an information blockade. Few journalists were getting in and out of Biafra. Johnson described the situation in Biafra as it stood in January 1968, “These people are carrying on and, in spite of

the war, they have managed to grow enough food. Apart from the tremendous problems they have of imports from outside they should be able to carry on in terms of normal food supplies.”<sup>10</sup> Johnson was not overly worried about food and medical supplies getting into Biafra, he was focussed on finding a way to end the war. Thus Johnson had, since returning from Africa, concentrated his “time particularly in talking to people that have the opportunity to form public opinion and to initiate the policy decisions that will lead to constructive actions.”<sup>11</sup>

By August 1968, the story had changed. The food crisis in Biafra was acute. An estimated 6,000 people, primarily children, were dying daily in Biafra. There were predictions the death rate would rise to 10,000 a day by November. Children were not getting enough protein, and were suffering from kwashiorkor. And suddenly the world was now watching in fascinated horror. When British journalist, Frederick Forsyth, told the Biafra story in June 1968 the world was ready to listen. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had been trying to find ways to get food aid into Biafra, but had run into roadblocks on all sides. The Nigerians wanted to inspect all trucks before they crossed from federal Nigeria into Biafra to ensure that only food, and no arms, were on the vehicles. The Biafran government worried that if they opened up their defences to allow trucks to bring in food aid, the Nigerian army would follow right behind, slipping through the Biafran defences. Therefore trucking the aid was no option. The Red Cross sought to fly food aid into Biafra, but the Nigerian federal government controlled the air space and threatened to shoot down any planes seeking to land inside Biafra. On 5 June 1968, the Nigerians shot down a Red Cross plane in broad daylight.

This halted daytime flights into Biafra; and night flights were impossible. Only Hank Warton and his pilots had the code for the beacon of the Uli airport. They were the only ones who could find the airport in the dark and make the exciting landing with any degree of certainty. Warton was not sharing this crucial information with anyone. An entrepreneur, Warton would fly anything, anywhere for the right price. His planes went into Uli loaded with munitions, food, and people. Given this state of affairs it seemed impossible for anyone, including the ICRC, to mount an airlift of food.

As the situation became increasingly desperate inside Biafra, E. H. Johnson again visited in August 1968. The air blockade was in effect, but a Swedish pilot Count Gustav von Rosen with a load of food aid broke the blockade in a daring flight into and out of the Uli airport. Johnson was on

the flight out of Biafra. In a dramatic moment, Johnson upstaged a Red Cross official, at an ICRC press conference, who was maintaining that the air blockade made it impossible to get food into Biafra. Johnson was living proof that it was possible to fly in and out of Biafra. Far more important than Johnson's witness to the breaking of the blockade, was that the Biafrans had given Johnson the Uli landing codes.

The political landscape now changed; from now on Johnson and The Presbyterian Church in Canada stopped seeking a diplomatic resolution to the conflict, and focussed on feeding the hungry. Canadian Presbyterian missionaries inside Biafra took on roles managing food distribution, and ensuring that medical dispensary and vaccination programs functioned. An interesting combination of players were involved in these projects inside Biafra with Alex Zeidman of the Scott Mission in Toronto being among them. Zeidman commented, "Having returned from service in Biafra I am excited by the way the church has rallied to the challenge presented to it and how Christians the world over have witnessed to their faith in the relief operations in that war-torn part of Africa."<sup>12</sup> Zeidman brought a passionate evangelical faith to the task. Ron McGraw, another Canadian Presbyterian, was widely quoted for his condemnation of the Nigerian government.

The shift in focus was evident in October 1968, as Johnson testified before a Parliamentary Committee. He concluded his forty-minute statement with the rhetorical question, "What is our Canadian role in this?" His answer was two-fold. First, it was "of great importance that we bring relief to both sides in this conflict. In many ways Biafra has the greatest need because it has been blockaded . . . If food is not brought in from outside it is simply not available."<sup>13</sup> Supplying food to the people of Biafra should become "a major part of our Canadian concern." Johnson hoped that the Canadian Forces would provide Hercules planes to increase the quantity of food being delivered nightly. Second, Canada had a role to play in fact-finding. Johnson called for a Canadian-led team to visit the conflicted region to gather information without assigning blame. This was a shift from March. Diplomacy and political manoeuvring were set aside, the need was for food instantly. Johnson was also far less hopeful about the possibilities of a peaceful solution to the conflict. He sought remain neutral on the question of Biafra's political goals, but his pre-occupation with the crushing food needs of Biafra, meant that he was regarded as pro-Biafran. No longer was External Affairs being asked to use their "good offices" to encourage a diplomatic solution to the war. The goal was to get

the Canadian government directly involved in responding to the humanitarian crisis.<sup>14</sup>

Two other things had happened since Johnson had spoken to the Committee in March. First, there had been a change in Prime Minister, with Pierre Trudeau succeeding Lester Pearson. Trudeau did not seem particularly concerned about Biafra. When asked about Biafra during the summer of 1968, Trudeau had shrugged his shoulders, asking, "Where is Biafra?" The second change was that two Members of Parliament, Andrew Brewin and David MacDonald, had visited Biafra in early October 1968. Brewin, a New Democrat and an Anglican, represented a Toronto riding. David MacDonald, a United Church minister, was a Conservative representing a Prince Edward Island constituency. Both had been delegates at the World Council of Churches meeting in New Dehli, there they had made the acquaintance of E.H. Johnson. Brewin and MacDonald later wrote a book about Canada's involvement with the Biafran tragedy.<sup>15</sup>

Canadian politicians and church leaders believed they could push for food aid for the starving in Biafra and remain honest brokers between the two parties in the conflict. But Christians, both ex-patriot and Nigerian, living on the Federal side of the frontlines, were not so sure of the churches' neutrality in this conflict. Dorothy Roberts clearly expressed her concerns to Johnson in August 1968,

. . . the word mission, missionary, church, or anything that smells of it is definitely in bad taste to the point where we do absolutely nothing unless it is through the Nigerian Red Cross. This is foci enough--we have gotten the message--if we want to stay so that our people know their church has not deserted them when they needed help we will do this.<sup>16</sup>

Roberts was concerned that Canadian Presbyterian relief efforts were focussed on getting aid into Biafra. Aid was needed in areas the federal forces were occupying, areas which were formerly Biafra and peopled by Christian refugees. The very public criticism Canadian Presbyterian missionaries in Biafra, like Ron McGraw and Colin MacDonald, directed against federal Nigeria had devastating impacts for Nigerian Presbyterians in the occupied areas. Roberts asserted Nigerian troops viewed these criticism as being the voice of all Presbyterians. Therefore Presbyterians were regarded as enemies of the Nigerian federal government. As well, Nigerian Christians were very aware of the coverage the war was getting

in the world press. Roberts wanted the *Presbyterian Record* to be far more careful in its coverage of the conflict. She asked that “the *Record* read not Biafra only but at least Nigeria/Biafra.” Roberts bluntly described the attitude she perceived among Canadian Presbyterians, “To hell with the Efik-Ibibio side of our church which was at least half if not two-third of its membership, as long as we don’t offend the Biafrans, seems to be the motto.”<sup>17</sup>

Stung by this criticism, Johnson maintained that he and the church as a whole were being balanced. He wrote,

I am a little disturbed by Dorothy’s thought that the thinking of our Church or of our Board is oriented only to the other side . . . It has been suggested that our policy is determined by church friends on the Biafra side. May I assure you that this thought is entirely mistaken. We feel that we have a very great obligation to support church friends there in the midst of the terrible suffering which has come upon them and we feel equally that we have a responsibility to work with our church friends in Federal Nigeria with particular concern for those who are in the areas which have recently come under federal control and have suffered the ravages of war.<sup>18</sup>

Johnson believed he was a neutral player, able to carry on dialogues with delegations from both sides of Nigerian Civil War, and describing a “very good conversation” he had with Mr. Sanusi, the Nigerian High Commissioner in Ottawa. Johnson was naive about how the church would be perceived. He failed to recognize that by choosing to intervene at all, meant that one side or the other would regard this as taking sides. Johnson was slow to grasp that words spoken and printed in Canada did have an impact in Nigeria. He believed that the Canadian churches could remain above the political fray, holding a neutral position. There was a touch of paternalistic hubris to this belief.

An interview with David MacDonald, following his 36-hour visit to Biafra, was published in *United Church Observer*, entitled, “I call it Genocide.” Referring to a fact-finding team sent to Nigeria by the Canadian External Affairs Department, MacDonald said, “The team went to Nigeria at the Nigerian government’s invitation, and they saw what the government wanted them to see. They say the charge of genocide isn’t warranted. I say it is. Certainly the Biafrans believe that the Nigerian government wants to exterminate them.”<sup>19</sup> L.M. Beckham, a Canadian and head of anaesthesia at University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria, after



praising Trudeau's "proper politic policy" wrote a word of warning in a later issue of the *Observer*, "Canadians should remember that in developing countries most projects are controlled by the government . . . Consequently, when anyone, no matter how far removed from the government, speaks [their] mind, it is accepted as Canadian policy."<sup>20</sup> Clearly E.H. Johnson was not the only one facing the challenge of being thought to be an official spokesperson rather than a well-informed private commentator.

In the summer of 1968, a coalition of Canadian groups came together with the goal of getting food aid into Biafra. The Nigeria/Biafra Relief Fund of Canada was a combination of Christian groups, aid agencies, and concerned citizens.<sup>21</sup> They hoped to convince the federal government, which had planes, to second some of their resources to the food and medicine airlift. In late October the government did in fact send a Hercules aircraft and crew to Fernando Po, an island about thirty minutes flying time from the Nigerian coast, to join the ICRC air lift. The Hercules flew only eight missions into Biafra, before the Canadian government withdrew it. The expressed reason was that the Port Harcourt airport had been captured by the Nigerians, and the Uli airport, which was simply a strip of highway with the trees around it removed, was unable to handle the Hercules. Therefore, the government argued there was no purpose to be served in keeping planes at Fernando Po. At the same time, the Nigerian federal government was pressuring the Canadian government to withdraw the Hercules. The presence of Canadian government planes, the Nigerians argued was a *de facto* recognition of Biafra as an independent state. The Nigerians maintained that the Biafra-Nigerians conflict was an internal Nigerian matter and therefore the Canadian government, nor any other government should become involved in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. The Biafra lobby group based in Canada was convinced this pressure got through to the Canadian government, and the Canadians backed down. In any case, the withdrawal of the Hercules was a major blow to Canadians hoping to get aid into Biafra.

Through the summer of 1968 a group of European churches, primarily Scandinavian and German, put together a coalition of churches and agencies to form Joint Church Aid. JCA was affectionately called Jesus Christ Air by the air crews. JCA flew out of the Portugese island of Sao Tome, approximately an hour's flight time due south of the Nigerian coast. Caritas Internationalis, the Catholic Relief agency, had been flying food out of Sao Tome since May. This second airlift was controversial and, in the eyes of the Nigerians, illegal according to international law.

Since the flights were going into Uli without Federal government sanction, and since the food was being flown in by Hank Warton's team, which also flew in arms for the Biafrans, the planes were legitimate military targets. This made day time flights into Biafra originating in Sao Tome dangerous, and night flights into Biafra were only possible for those who had the landing codes of the Uli airport. As noted above, in August 1968, Johnson was given the landing codes. Now Caritas and JCA and other aid groups could fly their own planes into Uli at night without dealing with Hank Warton. The whole complexion of the Biafran situation changed. The churches did not need to wait on the slow pace of negotiations between the ICRC and the Nigerian Federal Government, they could start their own airlift.

Embarrassed by the Canadian government's withdrawal of the Hercules, a number of concerned Canadians were casting around for a way to respond to the growing crisis. Jack Grant, a Jewish businessman, came to E.H. Johnson in November 1968 with a proposal. If the Canadian government would not fly aid into Biafra, what was to stop Canadians concerned about the issue from buying a plane and flying aid into Biafra. Johnson pulled in The Rev. Eoin S. Mackay of Rosedale Presbyterian Church, one of the wealthier and more mission-minded congregations in Toronto, to chair this new venture. Oxfam Canada was also a lead player. The group worked feverishly through the holiday season, meeting 23 and 27 December and 2 January.<sup>22</sup> The group called itself Canairelief. Another shift had taken place. Those closest to the Biafran crisis were no longer willing to wait for the Canadian government. The time for pressure tactics was over, it was time to act.

The challenges in operating Canairelief were enormous. A plane had to be found, and crewed to operate half a world away. That meant finding the necessary financial resources to mount such an operation for the initial three months. This required a focussed publicity campaign. Finally, Canairelief needed to deal with the criticism that would inevitably be part of this endeavour.

Through Nordair a plane was acquired, and so was a crew. A Flight Operations director was brought on board. Eventually, Nordair was contracted to handle all flight operations on the five planes Canairelief operated. Canairelief flew L-1049H Super Constellations. The "Connies" could carry twenty tons of food and medicine each flight. They rarely carried more than seventeen tons of aid; extra fuel was needed for the routine circling of the Uli airport caused by the stacking of planes. The

Canairelief Connies had the largest capacity of any of the planes in JCA. The airlift into Biafra still stands as the largest non-military airlift in world history.

To face the fund-raising challenge, the executive committee brought in a public relations expert, Ardel McKenna, to develop a comprehensive campaign for Canairelief. A series of print ads ran in local newspapers and news magazines. One dramatic full page magazine ad was black on the top two-thirds of the page with the words, in white, "WHO CARES." Across the bottom of the page red "BIAFRA" appeared, with blood dripping from the letters. Superimposed on the blood in small block letters were the words, "Every night Canairelief feeds almost one million people one small meal. One flight costs \$4200.00. \$15.00 feeds one thousand people. We need your help." The ad included the address and phone number of the Canairelief Toronto office.<sup>23</sup> A four-fold legal size brochure was widely distributed, inviting readers to "Be part of Canada's First Air Relief Service." Contending that "Men, women, and children--a race of human beings--face death and extermination" Canadians were urged to make a difference. "Take one airplane . . . a brave crew . . . add a mountain of faith . . . and YOU! What do we have?--a team--a team called 'CANAIRELIEF.'"<sup>24</sup> Included in the fund-raising campaign were table place-mats that could be used at church events promoting Canairelief. The powder blue place-mats depicted a Canairelief Super-Constellation in flight in dark blue, with the words "Constellation of Compassion." On the place-mat were the stylized double fish of the Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service section of the World Council of Churches.<sup>25</sup> In addition to print material there were scripts for radio interviews. The scripts worked two ways. They gave interviewees answers to questions they might be asked. The questions provided interviewers, who often had little knowledge of Biafra, with a framework for their interviews.

As 10 January 1969 approached, when the first Canairelief plane was to leave, there were furious negotiations with the *Toronto Star* to second a reporter to the endeavour. Peter Worthington was to fly out, to report regularly on what was taking place. Canairelief was to provide transportation to and from Sao Tome and in and out of Biafra, the rest of the expenses would be the *Star's* responsibility. The arrangement fell apart at the last minute. Worthington thought he had exclusive access for three months, something Canairelief was not prepared to offer.

The publicity and fund-raising plan was very intentional. The leadership of Canairelief was very direct about its objectives, aggressively

going after its goals. Despite the miscommunication with the *Star*, the Canairelief team was media savvy; by mid-February 1969, they have been able to get major news stories into a number of Toronto papers.

The press was sympathetic towards Canairelief. The *Toronto Star* of 21 February 1969 was typical of the media's view,

The barrenness of the Prime Minister's concern and that of External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp is being laid bare for the Canadian people. A small group of church leaders, having asked Ottawa for help and been refused, have gone ahead on their own and made an impressive contribution to saving lives in the Nigerian-Biafran tragedy.<sup>26</sup>

The editorial took direct aim at Prime Minister Trudeau, "Last summer asked about the crisis in Biafra, he [Trudeau] shrugged, "Where's Biafra?" If he still doesn't know, let him ask the churchmen."<sup>27</sup> The majority of the media were on the side of the churches, and regarded the Federal Government's inaction inhumane.

Johnson was no longer afraid to take on the government publicly. When asked by the *Globe and Mail*, "What is Ottawa's current thinking about aid to Biafra?" Johnson was unequivocal, "Ottawa has never changed its mind. It wants to take a neutral stand, so it has confined its aid to the International Red Cross. Actually, I think the church groups of Sao Tome have proved by now that theirs is the most effective way of getting supplies through."<sup>28</sup> Johnson no longer had any expectations that the government would ever respond, the time for neutrality was gone, it was time to feed the hungry, an act that was more important than the fine points of diplomacy.

Just because Johnson was convinced the exciting night flights into the Uli airport were the way to respond to the crisis, did not mean that other Canadian churches agreed. The Anglican Church was wary of Canairelief. The General Secretary, Archdeacon E.S. Light, stated, "I think it would be irresponsible to get behind something which will fall flat on its face in a couple of weeks."<sup>29</sup> Anglicans, while concerned about the plight of the children of Biafra, wanted more information about Canairelief before making an official commitment. The United Church of Canada held a similar position. The *Observer* noted that while The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Oxfam had purchased a plane to fly "relief supplies" into Biafra, neither the United Church and the Anglican Church were formally

involved. Both churches had sent money through the World Council of Churches, which provided “relief to both sides.”<sup>30</sup>

The Canairelief operation was an adventure in every sense of the word. Decisions were made not on the basis of funds in the bank, but on the basis of what would best meet the goal of feeding the people of Biafra. Flying into the Uli airport was an adventure. The presence of “Intruders” (Nigerian Federal Government fighters and bombers) meant relief planes could only land at night, with a minimum of light. The first flight out of Sao Tome each night was scheduled to arrive over the Nigerian coast after dark. Twenty minutes before making landfall, all external lights and cabin lights were extinguished. The only light allowed was the captain’s penlight flashlight to read maps. Thirty minutes more flying brought the plane over the Uli beacon. If it was the first flight of the night and there were no intruders, it would land. If there were intruders or the runway was occupied, the flight joined the other planes circling south-east of the airport, until the Uli control tower told the crew to land. It was not until the plane was at an altitude of 1,000 feet, that the pilot would ask the control tower to turn on the runway lights and would turn on the plane’s lights. As soon as a plane had landed and the engines were reversed, the control tower was radioed to turn off the runway lights. The plane taxied to the unloading area, where a minimum amount of light was used. The goal was to have the last flight of the night back over the Atlantic before dawn. On a good night, Uli airport could handle thirty flights, with some planes making two trips a night.<sup>31</sup>

On the night of 3 August 1969, Canairelief plane CF-NAJ crashed in its final approach to Uli airport killing all on board. There were no “intruders” in the air space over Uli; rather it is likely with no lights on the ground Captain Donald Merriam miscalculated where he was, flying into a ridge fifteen kilometers north of the Uli airport. Merriam, an experienced pilot, had seen action in World War II. The death of the four-member Canadian crew (Merriam, First Officer Raymond Levesque, Flight Engineer Vincent Wakeling, and Loadmaster Gary Libbus) was front page news in the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*.<sup>32</sup> The *Globe and Mail* eulogized the crew:

Heroism has different degrees of nobility, but surely at the top of the scale must be that of those who venture into great danger, not to serve nationalism, but the cause of those too weak to serve themselves . . . They knew the risks they took. They took them because they put the

suffering of a brave and independent people above their own safety. Canadians can show pride in their sacrifice only by keeping the rest of Canairelief's planes filled and flying.<sup>33</sup>

The risks inherent in the operation were worth it since a higher good was being served. The crash, while tragic, further advanced the profile of Canairelief across Canada.

Canadians had a growing concern for Biafra as 1969 came to a close. Hugh McCullum, the editor of the Anglican *Canadian Churchman*, visited Biafra that fall and upon returning to Canada wrote powerful articles about his experiences. These articles, appearing in the *Churchman* and the *United Church Observer*, moved the Anglican Church in Canada from critical observer into supporter of Canairelief.<sup>34</sup> The increased public pressure pushed External Affairs to action. On 9 January 1970 the department announced an additional \$2.5 million would be put into Biafran aid, \$500,000 going to Canairelief.

With surprising suddenness the war was over on 12 January 1970. Biafran resistance completely collapsed, and Okujwu and his closest aides flew to Gabon and went into exile. Two to three days before the collapse, many ex-patriot aid workers inside Biafra, sensed that the end was near, and flew out on the JCA flights returning empty to Sao Tome. Joint Church Aid, with its contacts inside the former Biafra, offered to continue flying food aid into Biafra for the Nigerian government to distribute. Their offer was turned down. The adventure was over.

During the twenty-month airlift, 85,000 tons of food and medicine were flown into Biafra. The ICRC had flown in some 21,000 tons, while the coalition flying out of Sao Tome had taken nearly 60,000 tons of food and medicine into the blockaded territory. Canairelief planes had flown a total of 677 flights into Biafra, 13% of all relief flights out of Sao Tome. Given the size of the Connies, they had taken in about 20% of all the food aid.<sup>35</sup> The thirteen-month adventure had cost \$3.25 million, two-thirds of which had been raised by Canadian organizations. The other third came from other relief agencies buying load capacity of Canairelief flights. The funds the Canadian government announced three days before the end of the war were never given to Canairelief. The government argued that the funds had been earmarked for future Canairelief operations, operations which never took place. Nonetheless, the organization had never gone to the bank to borrow funds, because "money was provided by daily miracles."<sup>36</sup>

As the situation in Biafra became increasingly grave, and as a growing number of Canadians told eye-witness accounts of the events taking place in Biafra, church leaders and other Canadians were no longer able to sit back and wait. The development of Canairelief became a model for concerned Canadians to address substantial international concerns outside of direct Canadian government action. Seeing a situation that demanded action, concerned Canadians took action, building a coalition of like-minded individuals. This coalition shared only one commonality, a desire to feed the hungry in Biafra. Coalition building around a single cause became a model for future action. A similar approach was used in the development of Joint Church Aid; those prepared to act, regardless of the niceties of international law and diplomatic protocol worked together. It was a coalition for a particular time and place, the next situation would be responded to by a new coalition with a new set of players involved. Not all the players in the Nigeria/Biafra Relief Fund nor in Canairelief were Christians or even involved in the relief effort for religious reasons. The language used by the coalition partners was not faith language; instead they used the language of humanitarian need. This was the language used in publicity about Canairelief; it was also the language key figures such as E.H. Johnson used in addressing political groups such as the Standing Committee on External Affairs.

It is noteworthy that the key players in the relief effort were from Ireland, Canada, and various Scandinavian countries. It is true that Irish and Canadian missionaries were on the ground in Biafra, but the citizens of these countries were also in a position economically to help. The governments in these country were not major world powers who had to worry about their citizens involvement in Biafra throwing balances of power out of kilter. The coalition partners believed that because they were non-government organizations, whose sole goal was to feed the hungry, their help would be welcomed by all parties, including the Nigerians. JCA was shocked to discover that they were *persona non grata* in Nigeria following the end of the war. Not only was their help not needed, it was not wanted. The Canadian missionaries and church leaders learned that the way they saw themselves, and the way they were perceived by the world at large, were two very different things. The distinction that Canadian church leaders saw between personal speech and action on the one hand, and official speech and action on the other hand, was not a distinction that the Nigerians recognized. The churches involved with JCA learned that they were seen as political players by both sides in the conflict regardless

of how much the churches insisted they were not supporting one side over the other.

The Biafran conflict gave the Canadian church a new way to understand its mission. Ntieyong Akpan, Head of the Civil Service of Eastern Nigeria during the Biafran crisis, wrote in his account of the Nigerian Civil War,

the Christian church has often in the past been charged with indifference in their mission to humanity, particularly in areas of human suffering. If, as a result of the Nigerian civil war, a precedent has been set for Christian courage and conviction then not just Christianity but the world it is supposed to serve have stood to gain for the future.<sup>37</sup>

The mainline church in Canada, which had been struggling to understand its mission role in the world, suddenly found a way to re-formulate that mission in terms acceptable to an increasingly multi-cultural Canada and in a world that was becoming ever more accepting of a wide variety of faith commitments. The church could find a new mission in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and healing the sick. Canadian churches could bravely step on to the international stage as non-governmental organizations who had learned to live their faith by speaking the language of humanitarian need.

### ***Endnotes***

1. Robert Wright, *A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1991) notes responses to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935, arguably the first African event to galvanize Canadian church action (216-217).
2. Laurie S. Wiseberg, "Christian Churches and the Nigerian Civil War," *Journal of African Studies* 2, No. 3 (Fall 1975): 297-332 uses a social science approach to examine how the churches changed government policy. Another voice that needs to be heard is Alex deWaal, *Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa* (Indianapolis: James Currey and Indiana University Press, 1998) who argues, "One episode in modern times stands out as a formative experience in contemporary humanitarianism: Biafra. An entire generation of NGO relief workers was moulded by Biafra, and several agencies were either born from the relief operation or forever changed by it. Biafra is totemic for contemporary relief: it was an unsurpassed effort in terms



of logistical achievement and sheer physical courage. But Biafra is also a taboo: the ethical issues that it raises have still to be faced" (72-73). Supporting deWaal's contention is the fact that Marjorie Ross, a Canadian Presbyterian who lived and worked in Lagos during the Biafran crisis, wrote an article "Setting the Table for all God's People: Canadian Churches and Development," in *Canadian Churches and Foreign Policy*, ed. Bonnie Greene (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1990) never mentioning Biafra. Nor does any other writer in the book. It is remarkable that Biafra would not be discussed in a book exploring Canadian church responses to foreign policy issues.

3. J.O.J. Nwachukwu-Agbada, "Lore from Friction: Praise and Protest in Biafran War Songs," *Anthropos* 91, 4-6 (1996): 527. This was one of many songs that made explicit Biafra's fight for freedom as a Christian struggle.
4. Andrew F. Walls, "Religion and the press in 'the Enclave' in the Nigerian Civil War," School of Oriental and African Studies, Unpublished paper, 1973.
5. One of the novels about the Biafran crisis is Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn: A Novel of the Biafran War* (London: Fontana Books, 1976). Ike writes: "Even the BBC was compelled to carry the first-hand account of the Presbyterian clergyman from Canada who was eyewitness to the senseless bombing of the Mary Slessor Hospital by the vandals" (190).
6. Quoted in Andrew Brewin and David MacDonald, *Canada and the Biafran Tragedy* (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, Publishers, 1970), 37. Sharp must have momentarily forgotten about the Canadian-American relationship, if could describe the Nigerian connection as Canada's second strongest international relationship.
7. Donald Barry, "Interest Groups in the Canadian Foreign Policy Formulation Process: The Case of Biafra," (M.A. Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1970), 33. See also Barry, "Interest Groups and the Foreign Policy Process: The Case of Biafra," *Pressure Group Behaviour in Canadian Politics*, ed. A. Paul Pross (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd, 1975), 117-147. Barry argues for two distinct phases in the lobbying efforts. In the period June 1967 to June 1968, the focus was lobbying relevant government decision makers. In July to December 1968, the focus shifted to mobilizing the public to action. For the churches involved with Canairelief there was a third period, November 1968 to January 1970, when the decision had been made to just do it.
8. *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, Standing Committee on External Affairs, 14 March 1968, 350.
9. *Minutes*, External Affairs Committee, 14 March 1968, 367.

10. *Minutes*, External Affairs Committee, 14 March 1968, 348.
11. *Minutes*, External Affairs Committee, 14 March 1968, 345.
12. "You helped me feed the Biafrans," *The Presbyterian Record*, June 1969, 8.
13. *Minutes*, External Affairs Committee, 15 October 1968, 199. (By October 1968 Brewin and Macdonald had been to Biafra, and were on the External Affairs Committee.)
14. *Minutes*, External Affairs Committee, 15 October 1968, 192-200.
15. Brewin and McDonald, *Canada and the Biafran Tragedy*, passim.
16. Dorothy Roberts to E. H. Johnson, 8 August 1968, File A-v-23, E.H. Johnson Papers, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives (hereafter PCCA ).
17. Roberts to Rodger Talbot, 8 August 1968, File A-v-23, Johnson Papers, PCCA.
18. Johnson to Earle and Dorothy Roberts, 17 September 1968, File A-v-23, Johnson Papers, PCCA.
19. Interview with David MacDonald, "I Call it Genocide," *United Church Observer*, 1 November 1969, 29.
20. L.M. Beckham, "Backtalk on Visit to Biafra," *United Church Observer*, 15 March 1969, 36.
21. Minutes, Nigeria/Biafra Relief Fund of Canada, 15 July 1968, 5, File A-iii-41, Johnson Papers, PCCA.
22. Minutes, Executive Committee, Canairelief, 23, 27 December 1968 and 2 January 1969, File A-iii-6, E.H. Johnson Papers, PCCA.
23. File: A-iii-14, Johnson Papers, PCCA.
24. File: A-iii-15, Johnson Papers, PCCA.
25. File: A-iii-13, Johnson Papers, PCCA.
26. *Toronto Star*, 21 February 1969.
27. *Toronto Star*, 21 February 1969.
28. *Globe and Mail*, 19 February 1969.
29. *Canadian Churchman*, January 1969, 6.
30. *The United Church Observer*, 1 February 1969, 33-34.

31. Hugh G. Lloyd, Mona L. Mollerup, Carl A. Bratved, *The Nordchurchaid Airlift to Biafra: 1968-1970: An Operations Report* (Copenhagen: Folkekirkens Nodhjaelp, 1972), 124, 128.
32. *Globe and Mail*, 5 August 1969, 1; and *Toronto Star*, 5 August 1969, 1.
33. *Globe and Mail*, editorial, 5 August 1969.
34. Hugh McCullum, "Biafra: An Obituary," *United Church Observer*, 15 February 1970, 12-15.
35. Michael I. Draper, *Shadows: Airlift and Airwar in Biafra and Nigeria, 1967-1970* (Aldershot, Great Britain: Hikoki Publications Ltd., 1999), 276-277.
36. Financial Statement, Canairelief, File A-iii-7, Johnson Papers, PCCA. In 2002 figures, this would be a \$15 million operation. It never had more than a couple of weeks funds on hand.
37. Ntiyong U. Akpan, *The Struggle for Secession, 1966-1970: A Personal Account of the Nigerian Civil War* (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1972), 162.



## **The Huntingdonian Mission to Nova Scotia, 1782-1791: A Study in Calvinistic Methodism<sup>1</sup>**

JACK C. WHYTOCK

---

Historical studies on Calvinistic Methodism in eighteenth-century Canada are rare, as the focus has generally been on Wesleyan Methodism. This paper will focus primarily on Calvinistic Methodism as it relates to eighteenth-century Nova Scotia. Because it is the first of four such studies on Calvinistic Methodism in Canada I must begin a step back in order to give attention to the two chief figures in Calvinistic Methodism--George Whitefield and Selina the Countess of Huntingdon--and to make the necessary connections to Nova Scotia. I begin by asking the questions "Is there a relationship between George Whitefield and Nova Scotia" and "What of the connection between Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon and Nova Scotia"?

We know that Whitefield prayed for troops going to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia to fight what many viewed as a Protestant versus Papist battle at Louisbourg.<sup>2</sup> We also know that Whitefield twice proposed a preaching tour further North into Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, Quebec, and Montreal, yet died not seeing his dream become a reality.<sup>3</sup> Rather, the focus here between Whitefield and Nova Scotia lies elsewhere. The second question posed above concerns the identity of this "Mother of Israel." She was Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, born Lady Selina Shirley, the daughter of an Earl and a relative of George Washington. Selina had married the Earl of Huntingdon, hence acquiring the title, Countess of Huntingdon, yet "a Mother of Israel" was the name Whitefield applied to her.

I begin with an overview of biographical details on George Whitefield and Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon before developing

more fully the matter of connections to Nova Scotia and Calvinistic Methodism. This will led to the two Calvinistic Methodists missionaries in Nova Scotia in the eighteenth century, William Furrage and John Marrant.

### ***George Whitefield, Eighteenth-Century Evangelist***

George Whitefield was born in Gloucester, England in 1714 and attended the famous Crypt School which to this day has one of its houses named in his honour.<sup>4</sup> He then went to Pembroke College, Oxford as a student servant. While at Oxford, Whitefield became associated with “The Holy Club,” a group of about a dozen, which included the Wesley brothers, John and Charles. The group received several nicknames, one being “Methodists,” and was known for strenuous self-discipline on the part of its members and rigorous study (all the lectures were based upon the Greek New Testament and logical disputations were the pattern for all exercises).<sup>5</sup> The Holy Club was not evangelical but, if anything, High Church Anglican and it did not bring spiritual peace to its members. For George Whitefield it was through the reading of Henry Scougal’s small book, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* that he was aroused to seek after salvation with untold earnestness. Coming close to utter mental and bodily collapse, Whitefield was converted at Oxford and cast his soul on the mercy of God through Jesus Christ; that is, he experienced the “new birth.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1736 Whitefield was ordained a Deacon in Gloucester and in 1738 he set forth on his first trip to America. The most significant accomplishment of this trip was the establishment of an orphanage in Georgia called Bethesda (House of Mercy). This was a home where destitute children received food and shelter, schooling and biblical instruction. Bethesda functioned as “its own Academy.” The Bethesda Orphanage was dear to Whitefield’s heart for the next forty years. In his will he turned Bethesda over to Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon, and she attempted to oversee it despite the difficult period of the 1770s and 1780s and the struggles for American Independence.<sup>7</sup>

Whitefield’s ministry can be summarized as a wide-ranging itinerant preacher having an appeal not just to the lower classes such as coal miners, but also to aristocrats in the circle of the Countess of Huntingdon. He must be viewed as the “father” of eighteenth-century open-air preaching, which was also pursued by the Wesleys. His ministry has been characterized as

“transdenominational” because he freely ministered amongst New England Dissenters, Baptists, Episcopalians, and Church of Scotland congregations.

In the early 1740s a theological rift developed between John Wesley and George Whitefield centring around three doctrines: the doctrine of predestination, Christian perfection and limited atonement. Whitefield was a Calvinist, whereas John Wesley was an Arminian. In 1742 Whitefield presided over the first (conference) meeting of the Calvinistic Methodists in England and in 1743 he attended the first meeting of the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales at Caerphilly. In 1748 Whitefield became a Chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon, thus securing her patronage. By this time the Countess had identified herself with the Calvinistic Methodists. As indicated above, Whitefield died in Newburyport, in 1770, where he was buried in the First Presbyterian Church.

#### ***“A Mother of Israel”: Selina, Countess of Huntingdon***

In the last ten years there has been a remarkable interest and resurgence in studies on Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon. Note in particular the three recent books by Edwin Welch, Boyd Schlenker and Faith Cook and the reprint of the massive two-volume set *The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon* by A.C.H. Seymour.<sup>8</sup>

Selina was born into an aristocratic, although much impoverished, home, the Shirleys. In many ways she had a rather sad family life. In all likelihood she spent some of her childhood in Ireland. We know very little about her childhood and youth.<sup>9</sup> One childhood incident recorded in a recent British thesis describes Selina at age nine having a life-influencing experience as she witnessed a funeral procession. She followed the procession to the grave then discovered it was the corpse of a girl of her own age. “She listened intently to the solemn service and was deeply moved . . . with a sad heart and wet eyes, she fervently prayed that, when God should be pleased to take her away, he would deliver her from all her fears and give her a happy departure.”<sup>10</sup>

In 1728 Selina Shirley married Theophilus Hastings, the Earl of Huntingdon, thus becoming known ever after as Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. She was increasingly attracted to evangelical teaching and, likely sometime in 1738 during an extended illness, it is believed she was “converted” as she “cast herself wholly upon Christ for life and salvation and she was filled with peace and joy . . .”<sup>11</sup> This was under a combination of Methodist and Moravian influences, but it was not long before she

rejected the growing “Quietism” in Moravianism at this time, thus siding with John Wesley’s Methodism. Some of the nobility found her “religious enthusiasm” unacceptable and urged her husband to control her conduct. The Earl sent her to see the Bishop of Gloucester and he found her not to be an inarticulate enthusiast. The Bishop disparaged over recently ordaining George Whitefield, to which the Countess of Huntingdon responded: “My Lord, mark my words; when you are on your dying bed, that will be one of the few ordinations you will reflect upon with complacence.”<sup>12</sup>

Thus began in 1738 over fifty years of engaging in living the Christian life and spreading the gospel. Her life was very full, challenging the nobility, establishing a college, building chapels, sending forth preachers and missionaries, and helping the poor. It has been calculated that she gave £100,000 to Christian work. When one studies the English and Welsh evangelical leaders of the eighteenth-century Dissenters, Methodists and Anglicans, it is worthwhile to study their relationship with the Countess of Huntingdon. The list reads like a “who’s who” of the eighteenth-century evangelical movement: John and Charles Wesley, John Fletcher, George Whitefield, William Romaine, Henry Venn, John Berridge, Howell Harris, Daniel Rowlands, Philip Doddridge and Andrew Gifford each in some way had a connection to the Countess of Huntingdon. The Roman Catholic John Henry Newman summarized her life as follows:

She devoted herself, her means, her time, her thoughts to the cause of Christ. She did not spend her money on herself; she did not allow the homage paid to her rank to remain with herself; she passed these on, and offered them up to Him from whom her gifts came . . .<sup>13</sup>

For most of her life the Countess remained within the Church of England fanning revival within it. By 1748 she had parted company with the Wesleys over the same basic doctrinal matters that separated Whitefield from the Wesleys. Thus she became aligned more with Calvinistic Methodism and in 1783, eight years before her death, the Secession occurred from the Church of England and as a result her own Dissenting body known as the Countess of Huntingdon, Connexion was established. The Connexion adopted its own doctrinal standards, The Fifteen Articles of Faith. These standards were a modification and collation of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Shorter Catechism and the Thirty-



Nine Articles of the Church of England and reflect a Calvinistic Methodist theology.<sup>14</sup>

Prior to the 1783 Secession, the Countess was able to appoint chaplains in towns and cities as a peeress. She took full advantage of the privilege and thus through her chapels and chaplains she was able to conduct ministries in the leading summer resorts of the nobility such as Bath. Likewise, itinerant ministries amongst the lower classes and small centres received her support.

Critical to this end was the obtaining of a supply of preachers. The need arose for a training college for which plans commenced in 1765. In 1768 such a college was established at Trevecca in South Wales. Trevecca College was brought into existence in 1768 when six students were expelled from Oxford University for being “Enthusiasts who talked of inspiration, regeneration and drawing nigh to God.” Rev. George Whitefield opened the College at Trevecca on the 24 August 1768. The curriculum was a combination of arts classes and theology classes, together with a strong stress on itinerant preaching. There were likely between twelve and twenty-four students per year and all students were fully provided for by the Countess who served as the chief patron. Others such as Lady Chesterfield, King George’s daughter, also provided some funding. The character of the college was clearly evangelical and Calvinistic as reflected in the Fifteen Articles, the Countess’ correspondence with John Brown of Haddington, and her own theological position. Yet there was a certain transdenominational character to the college whereby “students may be ordained in the Established Church or other Churches of Christ.”<sup>15</sup>

Selina, Countess of Huntingdon stood in an utterly unique position in the evangelical fold of the eighteenth century. Her influence was immense and reached areas not just in England, Wales and America, but also in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Selina’s last letter was written to the imminent Calvinistic Methodist leader of Wales, Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala and in it she wrote: “I am weak and low and immersed in the great business of preparing missions for the South Seas and the Indian Nations in America. I wish to die immersed in my dear and blessed Master’s business . . .”<sup>16</sup> This brief quotation describes her vision and determination and shows the broad range of the evangelical movement of the eighteenth century. I turn now specifically to Nova Scotia to see the connection with this “nursing Mother of Israel” and George Whitefield.

***William Furmage (Liverpool, Halifax)***

Very little is known about William Furmage's life or work, and specifically, his labours for Calvinistic Methodism in Halifax. Secondary sources appear either to make assertions and conclusions without clear evidence or to contradict themselves. Potkay and Burr state that John Marrant "was accompanied on his voyage to Nova Scotia by a fellow black Huntingdonian, William Furmage."<sup>17</sup> Yet Marrant did not arrive in Nova Scotia until 20 November 1785 whereas a letter exists dated 9 May 1785 from Rev. Furmage in Halifax to the Countess. Also, Marrant was not ordained at Bath until 15 May 1785. Thus, Marrant and Furmage did not sail together for Nova Scotia, and this makes Furmage the first of four Huntingdonian missionaries to Nova Scotia/New Brunswick.

But what about this second statement, concerning Furmage as "a fellow black Huntingdonian"? Two secondary sources make such a statement, one being Potkay and Burr, and the other Bridglal Pachai.<sup>18</sup> The recent biographies of the Countess do not draw this conclusion; this calls into question the news story "Ordination of the First Colored Minister in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion" printed in *The Harbinger* in 1856, which was a story about John Marrant.<sup>19</sup> Either Marrant was not the first black ordained in the Connexion, or Furmage was never ordained, yet this does not appear to be the case from the internal evidence in the letters. For example, Furmage gives evidence of theological terminology and signs his letters to the Countess "V.D.M.," which was commonly used by ordained ministers and may freely be translated "Minister of the Divine Word." Further, with Furmage's identity a recent reference has been made to his Anglicanism.<sup>20</sup> To date I see no evidence of this fact unless he belonged to the Church of England prior to the Secession to form the Countess of Huntingdon, Connexion. To date proof has not been forthcoming on this question of Furmage's background. My conclusion is that Furmage was white and arrived in advance of Marrant, perhaps as early as 1782. T. Watson Smith in his monumental work *History of the Methodist Church* states that William Furmage, a Calvinistic Methodist went to Liverpool, Nova Scotia in the Autumn of 1783 where he "occupied the pulpit of 'Old Zion' until the following spring [1784]," when the opposition of the New Lights obliged him to return to Halifax.<sup>21</sup> However, John Wesley's letter written from London to William Black in Nova Scotia is dated 26 February 1783 and includes a reference to Black's comments not only about Alline, the antinomian mystic, but also about "Lady

Huntingdon's Preacher" who could "do as much hurt as he [Alline]."<sup>22</sup> Thus who else could this Calvinistic preacher be other than William Furmage who was still at that time in Halifax prior to going to Liverpool. This raises the date of Furmage's arrival in Nova Scotia to at least February 1783, but more likely 1782. Smith goes on to say that Furmage remained in Halifax until his death, where he was buried at the gate of the old burying ground "where all who passed in and out might walk over it." Eventually his stone was removed as an obstruction at the gate. He was known to be very short yet "something of an orator."<sup>23</sup> I conclude that Furmage was in Halifax in 1782 and involved in ministry there, then he went to Liverpool in 1783. In spring 1784 he returned to Halifax.

It appears that Furmage was "stated supply" at the Congregationalist meeting house in Liverpool for a minimum of six months. Betts does not list him as one of the ministers, rather from 1783 to 1791 there is a gap with no minister listed. This was clearly a difficult period in this congregation's history as they also had the visit from Henry Alline in 1781, and in 1783 from William Black. It appears that the majority of the congregation were satisfied with William Furmage and they were pleased with his "credentials," yet shortly after the congregation divided with part going New Light and part into the Methodist fold, and some remaining Old Light and others Baptist.<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that one of the Countess' missionaries to New Brunswick, Rev. John James, also began his labours with a Congregational church at Sheffield/Maugerville. Furmage's ministry at this old Puritan New England church transplanted to Liverpool, Nova Scotia no doubt was not radically distinct from his theology as a Calvinistic Methodist in the George Whitefield tradition. Both groups were paedobaptists, experimental Calvinists, but not "radical" New Lights, hence the conflict for Furmage with one party in Liverpool.

What else can be gleaned from William Furmage's ministry? The best sources I have found to-date have been his three letters to the Countess preserved in the Cheshunt Archives, Cambridge. One can recreate something of his Halifax ministry for Calvinistic Methodism. Furmage was clear on his theological position--he rejected Arminianism or universal atonement theories which he saw as coming out of New England, but curiously makes no direct mention of Wesley. He supported the Countess' Secession from the Church of England and the Halifax Society also supported this as he records in his 3 December 1785 letter. In Halifax he kept very busy with the "Society," namely the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, plus preaching at the poor house and to the orphans and

to the many “poor negroes here.” It does not appear, however, that the “Society” was primarily a black chapel in Halifax, unlike Birchtown. There were at least thirty-nine members in the Halifax Chapel and they used the Countess’ hymnal and Society tickets. The three letters also reveal that he was delighted with the arrival of a second missionary sent out by the Countess to Nova Scotia. The letter reveals mutual respect between the two ministers and Furmage was willing to have Marrant preach in Halifax at the Chapel. The letter gives no hint at efforts to develop a denominational structure for association meetings. This is not surprising given the context of the mid-1780s. I still have a series of questions to answer: when did the Calvinist Methodist Chapel disband in Halifax? Where did they hold their meetings? And who were the thirty-nine members? Was Furmage married while living in Liverpool or Halifax?<sup>25</sup>

#### ***John Marrant and Black Calvinistic Methodism***

I now begin with the identity of the second Calvinistic Methodist missionary sent to Nova Scotia--John Marrant. Here the complex web of transatlantic connections is most fascinating.

In 1769 George Whitefield was conducting what was to be his last southern preaching tour in Charleston, South Carolina. Two black youths appeared at the meeting house where Whitefield was preaching, and these youths had a stated purpose in view, namely, to disrupt the meeting and create enough noise to drown out Whitefield’s preaching. The one black youth was John Marrant who had brought with him his French horn to aid in the disturbance. The other black youth remains nameless. Marrant was born in New York as a free black, attended school in St. Augustine, Florida, and was trained in music in Charleston where he received lessons in violin, French horn and dance.<sup>26</sup> Neither he, his mother, nor his siblings were Christians in 1769 when John attended Whitefield’s preaching in the Charleston meeting house. Marrant was caught by Whitefield’s sermon text and never did create the intended disturbance. Whitefield met with Marrant after the service in the vestry and said “Jesus Christ has Got Thee at Last.”<sup>27</sup> Marrant remained under deep spiritual conviction and was visited by a Baptist minister because Whitefield had already left for his journey north. Less than three weeks following Whitefield’s sermon, when Marrant left Charleston, Marrant clearly affirmed that he was a converted man and that the Lord had used George Whitefield in his conversion.

George Whitefield died less than one year later and never knew what was to occur subsequently in Marrant's life. The preaching of Whitefield in the south was freely addressed to blacks and whites--"I have freely offered the Lord Jesus to them . . ." and the eunuch was "a negro like yourselves."<sup>28</sup>

After his conversion John Marrant went to visit his mother, who lived 84 miles away from Charleston. The visit did not go well. He left and came amongst the Cherokee Indians and escaped execution by them; in an interesting turn of events Marrant became a missionary to the Cherokee, thus making him the first black missionary to the American Indians. He lived amongst the Cherokees for two years and several were converted.<sup>29</sup> At the outbreak of the American Revolution he was pressed into the British Navy and was discharged in England where he came to work for a cotton merchant in London. While in London he joined a Countess of Huntingdon Chapel thus commencing a relationship with Whitefield's patroness. It was entirely logical for Marrant to join the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion in London due to the common link with Whitefield.

In 1784 John Marrant received a letter from his Black Loyalist brother in Nova Scotia, describing the need for Christian knowledge amongst the Black Loyalists. This letter sparked an interest with the Countess of Huntingdon and led to Marrant's ordination on 15 May 1785 at Vineyard's Chapel, Bath, England as a missionary to Nova Scotia for the Countess of Huntingdon, Connexion. It also should be noted that another letter had been sent from Nova Scotia to England to secure preachers for the Black Loyalists. Wesley was told this by Thomas Barry concerning Birchtown and its needs.<sup>30</sup> Thus both strands of Methodism were being informed of the need. Marrant described it in his published narrative this way:

During this time I saw my call to the ministry fuller and clearer; had a feeling concern for the salvation of my countrymen: I carried them constantly in the arms of prayer . . . and had continual sorrow in my heart for my brethren, for my kinsmen, according to the flesh\_\_I wrote a letter to my brother, who returned me an answer, in which he prayed some ministers would come and preach to them, and desired me to shew it to the minister whom I attended. I used to exercise my gifts on a Monday evening in prayer and exhortation and was approved of, and ordained at Bath. Her Ladyship having seen the letter from my brother in Nova Scotia, thought Providence called me

there: To which place I am now bound, and expect to sail in a few days.

I have now only to entreat the earnest prayers of all my kind Christian friends, that I may be carried safe there; kept humble, made faithful, and successful; that strangers may hear of and run to Christ; that Indian tribes may stretch out their hands to God; that the black nations may be made white in the blood of the Lamb; that vast multitudes of Hard tongues and a strange speech, may learn the language of Canaan, and sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb; and we all with fervent Hearts, and willing tongues, sing hallelujah: the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of God, and of his Christ, Amen and Amen.

FINIS.<sup>31</sup>

The full title of the *Narrative* is *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black (now going to preach the gospel in Nova Scotia). Born in New York, in North America. Taken down from his own Relation, arranged, corrected, and Published By the Rev. Mr. Aldridge.* The *Narrative* has gone through more than fifty printings from the first London edition of 1785! To unravel simply the editions and printings of Marrant's *Narrative* is a feat in itself.<sup>32</sup> It was printed in London, Dublin, Halifax, Leeds, York, Brighton, Carmarthen, Caerdydd, Yarmouth, Manchester and now more recently in Boston, Nendelm (in Liechtenstein), Knoxville and New York, for more scholarly purposes. The *Narrative* appears to have evolved from its first purpose as a promotional of the Countess' sending out a missionary to Nova Scotia to a greater emphasis that this was a tremendous story about an Indian captivity narrative. The title page of the Halifax edition of 1812 makes this very clear as it drops portions of the original title and adds several new lines “. . . being at last taken by an Indian hunter among the Cherokees, where he was condemned to die, with an account of the conversion of the King of the Cherokees and His Daughter.”<sup>33</sup> Some London reviews of the *Narrative* found it to be “miraculous” and likely embellished, yet it sold well, including a Welch translation. Rev. Aldridge was not the only person to be told the narrative, as Lady Anne Erskine (an intimate of Selina and a Trustee upon her death) had also heard it directly from Marrant and there was a poem published in Bath at the time just prior to his ordination that was based upon Marrant's story. The original context was clearly in

preparation for his ordination and going forth as a missionary to Nova Scotia.<sup>34</sup>

Concerning Marrant's time in Britain one must ask, did he study at the Countess' College in Wales--Trevecca College? The student lists for Trevecca College do not record John Marrant as having ever studied there. However, there were actually four Huntingdonian missionaries to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in the 1780s and one should take note that all four names are absent from such lists.<sup>35</sup> Despite this absence, the two missionaries to New Brunswick definitely studied at Trevecca and there are hints that the two to Nova Scotia also did.<sup>36</sup> I believe the missionary letter from Furnage to the Countess speaks of an intimacy with the "college brethren" leading to the possibility that the writer may have spent time there. Since Trevecca class lists from 1768 to 1791 are very unreliable, and since the course tended to be very short (often only "one year," plus much itinerant preaching), it is highly probable that Marrant passed through Trevecca College at some point while in Britain and under the Countess' influence, as some secondary sources assert.

John Marrant's ministry centered around Birchtown where a Huntingdon Chapel of forty families was formed. It appears that Marrant was reacquainted with old friends and family in Birchtown so the core group for his new Calvinistic Methodist Chapel was not necessarily initially by conversion.<sup>37</sup> Yet he did not limit his ministry to the black community of Birchtown. He also preached to the Micmacs and to other black settlements in Nova Scotia and upon a more limited number of occasions to white congregations. The nature of Marrant's itinerant ministry needs fuller expansion now that Marrant's *Journal* is once again available.<sup>38</sup> Marrant experienced strife with Wesleyan Methodists on several occasions. The Wesleyan Methodist Philip Marchinton wrote a letter to the blacks of Shelburne and Birchtown "warning them of the dire errors of Marrant's teachings." In 1786 Moses Wilkinson, a black Wesleyan Methodist, sold government supplies that Marrant understood were to be for his Huntingdonian people and finally Wilkinson tried to prevent Marrant from using the Birchtown meetinghouse so that Freeborn Garrettson could use it. Potkay and Burr summarize Marrant's Birchtown ministry as follows:

Despite this opposition, Marrant built a chapel in Birchtown, ordained two black men, Cato Perkins and William Ash, as preachers, taught over one hundred children in the Birchtown school, preached four

times a week, and answered other towns' demands for spiritual ministering. Exhausted with this schedule, Marrant relinquished charge of the school by late November of 1786 and focussed on his route of itinerant preaching.<sup>39</sup>

Marrant went to Boston in January 1788 where he was associated with Prince Hall and the Black Masons, but returned to Nova Scotia to marry Elizabeth Herries. Others think he was already married to Mellia. There is some confusion about this. While in Boston Marrant became a member of the Freemason Lodge in March 1789; on 24 June 1789 he delivered a sermon to the Lodge members. This sermon was subsequently published and it is believed by some that the sermon by Marrant was greatly edited by Prince Hall for publication.<sup>40</sup> While in Boston, Marrant preached to both whites and blacks and worked as a schoolteacher.<sup>41</sup> A question that many raise is "why is a Calvinistic Methodist minister joining a masonic lodge?" Generally, evangelicals have not associated with freemasonry. George Whitefield was a close friend to one of America's leading freemasons—Benjamin Franklin. There is no evidence Whitefield spoke out against the Lodge. Also, Marrant joined a black lodge, one which had originated with blacks who had served with the 38<sup>th</sup> British Foot Infantry in 1775. These blacks were organized as African Lodge on 3 July 1776; in March 1784 they petitioned the Grand Lodge of England for a charter to organize a regular masonic lodge. Such a charter was granted in September 1784. This lodge under Hall's leadership championed equal rights and education for Boston's blacks.<sup>42</sup> It is only natural that Marrant was drawn to it and in reality it was only an extension of what he had done in Birchtown, Nova Scotia.

Marrant was a champion for the black Loyalists in Nova Scotia, appalled at the terrible conditions he often found. In 1789 John Marrant returned to London, England where he ministered at the Countess of Huntingdon Chapel, Islington and two years later died and was buried in that chapel's cemetery.<sup>43</sup>

The logical question to ask is what became of the Huntingdonian Chapel in Birchtown, Nova Scotia? Marrant's successors were Cato Perkins and William Ash, but this congregation left en masse for Sierra Leone. The promise of land in Nova Scotia did not materialize and when the Sierra Leone Company was formed under such leaders as William Wilberforce and Granville Sharp, the black Nova Scotian Huntingdonians accepted the Company's offer to found a settlement in Africa for freed



slaves. Thus, in January 1792 almost 1,200 black Loyalists left Halifax harbour for Sierra Leone. On board those ships were three groupings of Christians--Wesleyan Methodists, Baptists and Huntingdonians. Before sailing for Sierra Leone, religious leaders were each appointed captains to keep order on the ship.<sup>44</sup> When they disembarked in Freetown, the people were led ashore singing the hymn by William Hammond, found in *A Select Collection of Hymns to be universally sung in all the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel*:

Awake, and sing the song  
Of Moses and the Lamb;  
Wake every heart and every tongue  
To praise the Saviour's Name.

Ye pilgrims on the road  
To Zion's city, sing;  
Rejoice ye in the Lamb of God,  
In Christ, the eternal King.<sup>45</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This paper has highlighted the trail of connections between Whitefield's ministry in Charleston, South Carolina, Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon and Nova Scotia; one connection came through a connexion minister, and one through supporting a black Calvinistic Methodist preacher of the Huntingdonian Connexion, sent to Nova Scotia in 1785. Though the actual story in Nova Scotia is brief, only a few years (10) in the second half of the eighteenth century, it is important. It involved some of the most significant leaders of the Great Awakening, including those involved in great Clapham Sect philanthropic enterprise in Sierra Leone. It took place during major political events such as the American Revolution, and the settlement of loyalists in Nova Scotia. It involves the story of the Christian Church and one small branch, the Huntingdonians, who still continue to have churches and schools today at the beginning of the twenty-first century in Sierra Leone. Perhaps Andrew Walls offers an interesting perspective on all of this:

There is something symbolic in the fact that the first church in tropical Africa in modern times was not a missionary Creation at all. It arrived ready-made, a body of people of African birth or descent who had

come to faith in Christ as plantation slaves or as soldiers in the British army during the American war of Independence, or as farmers or squatters in Nova Scotia after it.<sup>46</sup>

They also highlight the nature of eighteenth century evangelicalism as a transatlantic movement--Marrant was converted under Whitefield in South Carolina, was a member of a Countess of Huntingdon Chapel, London, the patroness who was highly influenced by Whitefield and sent Marrant to Nova Scotia as a missionary. Theologically this small band of missionaries sent out by the Countess were Calvinistic Methodists, a virtually forgotten group in the history of the church in Canada. This is also an amazing study in both the role of patronesses in Methodism of the eighteenth century and of the theological debates of that day.

### ***Endnotes***

1. I want to express my thanks to Margaret Staplehurst, Archivist of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion and to Dr. Janet Tollington, Director of the Cheshunt Foundation, Westminster College, Cambridge for so freely answering my enquiries and allowing me access to the resources in their care for this paper. I am also appreciative of Dr. Richard Virr's (Montreal) kindness in reading this paper and offering many helpful comments.
2. Arnold A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield* (Westchester: Crossway, 1979), 2: 201-203.
3. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 2: 432-433, 497, 503.
4. Alister McGrath, *To Know and Serve God: A Biography of James I. Packer* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1997), 7, 18, 21.
5. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1: 66-70.
6. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1: 76-77.
7. Boyd Stanley Schlenker, "'To Convert the Poor People in America': The Bethesda Orphanage and the Thwarted Zeal of the Countess of Huntingdon," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 78, No. 2 (1994): 225-256.
8. See my review article, "The Countess of Huntingdon--Recent Studies," *Banner of Truth* 429 (June 1999): 24-27; Edwin Welch, *Spiritual Pilgrim A Reassessment of the Life of the Countess of Huntingdon* (Llandybie, Wales: University of Wales Press, 1995); Boyd Stanley Schlenker, *Queen of the Methodists: The Countess of Huntingdon and the Eighteenth-Century Crisis*

*of Faith and Society* (Durham: Durham Academic Press, 1997); Faith Cook, *Selina Countess of Huntingdon Her Pivotal Role in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Evangelical Awakening* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2001); and A.C.H. Seymour, *The Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*, 2 vols. (Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: Tentmaker, 2000).

9. Schlenther, *Queen of the Methodists*, 5-6.
10. Kenneth Morey, "The Theological Position of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion" (B.A. Theology Thesis, Council for National Academic Awards, 1990), 3.
11. Morey, "The Theological Position of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion," 4; and John R. Tyson, "Lady Huntingdon's Reformation," *Church History* 64 (1995): 582.
12. Thomas Haweis, *Succinct History*; cited in Morey, "The Theological Position of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion," 5.
13. S.E. Boyd Smith, "The Effective Countess: Lady Huntingdon and the 1780 edition of A Select Collection of Hymns," *The Hymn* 44 No. 3 (1993): 32.
14. Gilbert W. Kirby, *The Elect Lady* (Rushden, Northants: The Trustees of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, 1972; rev. ed., 1990), 77-82. See Morey, "The Theological Position of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion," 39-48 for the best study of the composition of the Fifteen Articles. For an analysis of John Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon theological controversy see James E. Hull, "The Controversy Between John Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon: Its Origin, Development and consequences" (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1959).
15. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Significance of Trevecca College 1768-91* (London: Epworth Press, 1969), 3-8, 21; Geoffrey Thomas, "Trevecca College and the Countess of Huntingdon," *Banner of Truth* 61(1968): 5-14; H. McLachlan, *English Education Under the Test Acts: Being the History of the Non-Conformist Academics 1662-1820* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931), 14; Robert MacKenzie, *John Brown of Haddington* (London: Banner of Truth, 1964), 158ff; Dorothy Eugina Sherman Brown, "Evangelicals and Education in Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Study of Trevecca College, 1768-1792" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1992).
16. James Hull, "The Controversy Between John Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon," 70.

17. "John Marrant," in *Black Atlantic Writers of the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 68. Unfortunately other secondary sources also make this assumption. See Elizabeth Currie Grant, "The Development of Krio Christianity in Sierra Leone 1792-1861" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Edinburgh, 1993), 72.
18. Bridglal Pachai, *Peoples of the Maritimes Blacks* (Halifax: Nimbus, 1997), 17.
19. See Welch, *Spiritual Pilgrim*, 205; and Cook, *Selina*, 400, 440. Cook omits Furmage completely.
20. Pachai, *Blacks*, 17.
21. T. Watson Smith, *History of the Methodist Church within the territories embraced in the late conference of Eastern British America* (Halifax: Methodist Book Room, 1877), 174. Smith only makes one reference to John "Morant" in volume I (162). The name receives a different spelling and is not included in the index. Likewise, Smith spells Furmage as "Firmage."
22. Matthew Richey, *A Memoir of the Late William Black* (Halifax: William Cunnabell, 1839), 99.
23. Smith, *History of the Methodist Church*, 158, 174.
24. E. Arthur Betts, *Congregational Churches in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick 1749-1925* (Hansport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1985), 39, 165-166. Unfortunately, Ian F. MacKinnon's, *Settlements and Churches in Nova Scotia 1749-1776* (Montreal: Walker Press, 1930), 74 does not deal with Furmage's ministry in Liverpool.
25. Included as an Appendix is a full transcription of Furmage's letters in order for Canadian readers to learn more about the Countess' mission to Nova Scotia (for the original copies see Cheshunt College Foundation, Cambridge, Correspondence of Countess of Huntingdon, A3/12, No. 13, 14, and 15).
26. James W. St G. Walker, "John Marrant," in *Dictionary Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 4: 514-516.
27. John Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black, Now Going to Preach the Gospel in Nova Scotia*, ed. W. Aldridge (London: Gilbert & Plummer, 1785), 9-13.
28. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, 1: 495-509.
29. Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings*, 20-35.

30. E. Arthur Betts, *Bishop Black and His Preachers* (Sackville: Tribune Press, 1976), 19.
31. Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings*, 39-40.
32. "John Marrant," in *Black Atlantic Writers of the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), 71-72. Here the editors attempt to sort out this tangle of printings.
33. John Marrant, *A Narrative of the Life of John Marrant . . .* (J. Nicholson: Halifax, 1812).
34. "John Marrant," in *Black Atlantic Writers*, 68.
35. S.C. Orchard, *Cheshunt College: A Record of the College Founded by Selina, Dowager Countess of Huntingdon at Trevecca in 1768, moved to Cheshunt in 1792, and to Cambridge in 1905* (n.p.: The Governors of Cheshunt College, 1968), 20-23; Geoffrey F. Nutall, "The Students of Trevecca College: 1768-1791," *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, II(1968), 249-277; and Kenneth B. Stone, "The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion" in *Christian Words* (December 1966), 4. Stone writes with certainty that Trevecca students were ministering in Nova Scotia.
36. John Bradford, *An Address to the Inhabitants of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, in North America, occasioned by the Mission of Two Ministers, John James, and Charles William Milton, sent out by the Countess of Huntingdon, from her College in South Wales, to preach the Glad Tidings of Salvation by Jesus Christ to lost sinners* (London: Hughes and Walsh, 1788), i.
37. Potkay and Burr, *Black Atlantic Writers*, 69.
38. Joanna Brooks and John Saillant, eds., "*Face Zion Forward*": *First Writers of the Black Atlantic, 1785-1798* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 94-160. It is not my purpose in this paper to analyse fully the *Journal* but will make summary statements and leave this to a more detailed study.
39. Potkay and Burr, *Black Atlantic Writers*, 69.
40. Potkay and Burr, *Black Atlantic Writers*, 74, 106-118.
41. Potkay and Burr, *Black Atlantic Writers*, 70.
42. Oral interview with Dr. Charles Roberts on "Military Lodges and Black Lodges," 16 March 2003; and "A Brief History of Prince Hall Freemasonry in Massachusetts," [www.princehall.org](http://www.princehall.org) (accessed 19 March 2003).

43. Walker, "John Marrant," 515; and Grant, "The Development of Krio Christianity in Sierra Leona 1792-1861," 71-72, 80.
44. Christopher Fyfe, "The Countess of Huntingdon Connexion in Nineteenth Century Sierra Leone," *Sierra Leone Bulletin Religion* 4, No.2 (July 1962): 53-61; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 31-34; Andrew F. Walls, "A Christian Experiment: The Early Sierra Leone Colony," in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. G.J. Cuming (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 107-110; J.B. Elliott, *Lady Huntingdon's Connexion in Sierra Leone* (London: Society for the Spread of the Gospel at Home and Abroad, 1851), ix-x, 13-14, 18; and Adams Archibald, "The Story of the Deportation of Negroes from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone," *Nova Scotia History Society* 7 (1871): 129-154.
45. John Julian, *A Dictionary of Hymnology* (London: John Murray, 1892), 483; and William Hammond, "Awake and Sing the Song," *Christian Hymns* (Bryntirion, Bridgend, Wales: Evangelical Movement of Wales, 1977), No. 659. Several writers have wrongly attributed this hymn to Isaac Watts (see Grant, "The Development of Krio Christianity in Sierra Leona 1792-1861," 80).
46. Andrew F. Walls, *The Significance of Christianity in Africa* (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland- St. Colm's Education Centre and College, 1989), 5.

**Appendix I**

**Letter #1**

**Rev. William Furmage, N.S. to Countess of Huntingdon**

Outside: The Honourable Countess of Huntingdon of Huntingdon  
College near Hay, Brecon S. Wales

Hon'd Madam

Pardon me in troubling your Ladyship with a few lines, retaining a grateful sense of your favours bestowed upon your unworthy Servant, glory be to the Great God, that the Redeemer Orders all things well; I am persuaded that nothing can afford you more pleasure than to hear the Kingdom of Christ is advancing and raising itself above the Kingdom of Darkness.

I have the pleasure to acquaint your Ladyship that the Lord has not left himself without witness in the dark parts of Nova Scotia and though I am unworthy, I thank the Great Lord of all Things that my Poor Petitions does pass through the Golden Senser, Being Perfumed with the sweet odours of the merits of a crucified Jesus--many can set to their seal that [the] Lord has revealed Himself to many souls and can now rejoice--But my greatest sorrow is that I can do no more for Him, who has done and suffered so much for me.

Honourable Madam how much are you indebted to Divine Grace that the Lord has been pleased to apoint you over a number of those happy few to whom it is given to know the mysteries of God.

I preach three times every week, meet Society once, Preach at the Poor house, and to the Orphans. Beside preaching every Lord's Day--New England at present is much in confusion having the doctrines of Arminianism and Universalism much propagated and confessed--the Lord has pleased to work upon the minds of many poor Negroes here--I could be happy to hear from Your Ladyship that thereby, whilst you are supporting the cause of Christ in Europe, you may refresh my Soul by a line, which, Honourable Madam, if you would but think me worthy, it would be esteemed as an honour conferred on one though unworthy.

Yet Your Ladyships, Servant at Command  
Wm. Furmage, V.D.M.

Nova Scotia  
May 9th, 1785

P.S. Your Ladyship may direct for me at Captain R. Willis, Mill St., Rother-smithe(?) London--Next opportunity God willing I shall write many more particulars.

**Letter #2**

**Rev. Wm. Furnage, N.S. to Countess of Huntingdon**

Outside: The Honourable Countess of Huntingdon  
Spa Fields, London

Honourable Madam,

Yours I received with a more than usual joy, especially when I found the cause of God flourishing in England and Wales, it afforded me an unspeakable satisfaction that you thought me an object worthy of our notice--but to add to my gay no sooner had perused yours with earnest thanksgiving on your behalf.

But I was surprised of the arrival of my dear Brother Marrant who continued to preach with me a fortnight and last Lord's Day he sailed for Birch Town--the small Society I have joins me in the Secession and they say they have reason to thank the Lord that I ever (though accidentally) came hither. Since my last two more are wrought upon of which is rejoicing in the pardoning love of Jesus--many flock to hear the simple truths of the Gospel.

The Little Society in close Connection which consist of 39 besides others stand [unopposed?], all of which unanimously join in fervent prayer for the increase of our Connection which appellation we have took up always to distinguish ourselves--the lips of the swearer, lyer, and whoremongers etc.--are now turned into prayer and praise, Families who lived without prayer are now becoming praying families all of which acknowledge your mindfulness of them and in return they ever are bound to pray begging your Ladyship to accept of their Christian love--One thing amongst many others we are at lost for and that is we have but one of your Lady's Hymn Books which I have, and I could earnestly wish if it be in your power to send me out some as the Society and the publick in General would be glad to have them universally sung. Likewise some Society ticketts and if you will be so condescending as to send me a few--your Ladyship may direct them to the care of Mr. Pickering, Mulberry Gardens Chapel who will convey them to my friends.

I hope you are still rolling all your concerns upon him who has amidst our manifold distresses and cares appeared for you--Dear Mr. Marrant joins me in my address to you and cordial love to all dear Brethren in the Connection--as



soon I hear from Birch Town I shall embrace the very first opportunity of writing in the mean while.

Beg an interest in your prayers and a continued correspondence is the earnest request.

Of Your Ladyship's unworthy  
Servant at Command  
William Furnage V.D.M.

Halifax, Nova Scotia  
3 Dec. 1785

P.S. Your Ladyship please to direct for me at Halifax, Nova Scotia, To the care of Capt. R. Furnage near Mill Strains (or Stains) Southwork, London

***Letter #3***

**Wm. Furnage, N.S. to Countess of Huntingdon**

Outside: The Honourable Countess of Huntingdon  
Hay, South Wales

Honourable Lady,

Yours I received with an unexpressible gay and satisfaction. Especially when I found one coming to be a helper in God's Vineyard to maintain the pure truths of the System of Divinity which I an unworthy dead dog have endeavoured to support. Scarcely had I read of our Ladyship's letter with much thankfulness--but so to my abundant consolation I received intelligence of the arrival of my dear Brother Marrant who preached Friday 11<sup>th</sup> with much satisfaction.

Thanks be unto the Holy Redeemer of man's salvation that his work seems to prosper amidst the many oppositions of his Kingdom.

I have many agreeable accounts to relate which I trust will in my next letter be very acceptable--My cordial and respectful love to your Ladyships companion Lady A[nne Erskine] and likewise to my much esteemed friends the Rev. Mr. W[ills] and Mr. T[aylor] may the Lord bless them and Crown their faithful undertakings with a Divine blessing--Blessed be to the Name of

the Holy child Jesus that we do not secede from the truth, tho from the corrupt errors of the antichristian world—my kind love with my Brother Marrant to all our Dear Brethren in College not forgetting Dear Mr. Phillip's hoping that none of them will ever lay any false or bastard foundations but boldly to maintain the truths as it is in Jesus Christ. I must confine myself as the vessel is to sail this very Sabbath. But more of things relative to the progress of religion in my next \_\_\_\_\_ my Dear Brother Marrant joins me in wishing you all spiritual blessings in heavenly places through our dear Redeemer.

I am Your Ladyship's  
Devoted Servant (First to God)  
William Furmage, V.D.M.

Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Nov. 12th, 1786

## CSCH Presidential Address 2003

### **A Usable Past: Church Historians as Engaged Scholars Who Serve the Common Good**

DOUGLAS H. SHANTZ

---

In her October 2002 Killam lecture, “Building a Civil Society: A New Role for the Human Sciences,” Dr. Martha Piper, President of the University of British Columbia, cited a study put out by the Brookings Institution that shows that “in order to have an innovative economy, you must first have a civil society, one that is tolerant, culturally diverse and humane, that in turn provides the stimulus for creativity and innovation.”<sup>1</sup> We cannot produce a truly civil society, argued Piper, without “the deep, extensive knowledge” that comes from research in the humanities and social sciences, scholarship that enables us to better understand ourselves, that helps define our Canadian identity, that guides public policy:

. . . poetry, and philosophy, and history, and all of the other human sciences, are critical to our ability as individuals to reflect on our mores, values and heritage . . . From the study of past civilizations and the history of ideas . . . we derive a sense of value and tradition, and of our own place in the continuum of human history.<sup>2</sup>

She concluded by calling for undergraduate programs in the humanities and social sciences in Canadian universities to address social values and issues of civic responsibility; she also called for the government to improve SSHRC research funding.

*Historical Papers 2003: Canadian Society of Church History*

Dr. Piper's words have struck a chord with many in Canadian academia, especially the part about increased funding! My purpose in this paper is to consider her call for scholars in the humanities and social sciences, notably history, to fill the role of public intellectuals who nurture community life. I especially want to reflect upon the implications of this call for those of us who practise church history, and the role our discipline can play in helping Christians, churches and Canadians generally to reflect upon our religious values, heritage and freedom. As church historians our discipline is somewhat unique within the historical profession for the ready-made audience that we have in the churches, one that, in my experience, is often ready and willing to benefit from our research insights. The challenge for us is to make the connection.

This discussion has a special interest for me. Four years ago I assumed the Chair of Christian Thought at the University of Calgary. Besides the normal duties of teaching and research, the chair is expected to act as a bridge from the academy to the community. Each year I organize academic lectures and events, usually held in Calgary churches, in which leading Christian scholars bring their expertise to bear on issues of interest to the Christian community.<sup>3</sup> In preparing and delivering some of these lectures myself, I have been forced to consider how my academic work might serve a larger audience than just fellow historians.<sup>4</sup>

Today I begin with some recent observations by historians on the matter of our role and function in society. I will highlight the exemplary work of four church historians whose scholarship addresses both academic and popular audiences, and performs both scholarly and socially useful functions. I will consider especially how four contemporary historians are contributing to a larger public conversation and are serving the common good, and will argue that as engaged scholars church historians have much to offer a non-academic audience. We can play a liberating role in providing Christians with self-understanding and responsible choice, in critiquing "myth-making" and the abuse of history, and in contributing to a discussion of contemporary issues in our society. In these ways our discipline addresses Piper's call for scholars to help individuals better understand themselves, and to help define our collective Canadian identity and even shape public policy.

***I. Recent Reflections on the Civic Role of the Humanities and Social Sciences, especially History***

**1. William J. Bouwsma**

Reflection on their social role is not new for historians. William J. Bouwsma entitled his 1990 collected essays, *A Usable Past*, and explained the choice of title with this observation:

History is not the private preserve of professional historians, just as divinity, law, and medicine do not “belong” to clergymen, lawyers, and physicians. Like other professional groups, historians are properly the servants of a public that needs historical perspective to understand itself and its values, and perhaps also to acknowledge its limitations and its guilt. Historians have an obligation, I believe, to meet public needs of this kind.<sup>5</sup>

Bouwsma appealed to Nietzsche and Goethe and their conviction that history must serve the “life and action” of society. History has a social function, such as providing “explanations of events.”<sup>6</sup>

As a young man Bouwsma discovered a personal aspect to the usefulness of historical study. He decided that the inner confusion he wrestled with as the child of second-generation Dutch Calvinist immigrants might be reduced if he knew “where the various pieces of intellectual baggage [he] carried about had come from.” He would sort these out “according to their origins,” and decide which he was committed to and which to discard. Like psychoanalysis, history could identify the “inconvenient legacies” of the past and liberate the conscious mind from them<sup>7</sup>

Bouwsma has spent much of his career doing a similar thing in his writing and teaching, trying to “sort out” the various elements and impulses in Western culture. He has found it helpful to consider the European past in terms of polarities, contradictions, and “ideal types,” noting for example the classical and biblical “strains” in our culture, or the enlightenment and Christian streams within it. By seeking out these historical antitheses, we are able to become more conscious of ourselves and our world, and to make informed choices.<sup>8</sup> In summary, one sees that for Bouwsma the social function of the historian includes providing a popular audience with self-understanding as a basis for informed choice.

## 2. Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob

In their book, *Telling the Truth about History*, Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob observe, “rarely has history been such a subject of controversy” as it is in our world today. Events such as the dismantling of the Berlin wall, growing multiculturalism in North America, and of course the events of 9-11, invite a host of historical questions and a rewriting of historical accounts. “History and historical evidence are crucial to a people’s sense of identity.” In such times one must ask, what are the “purposes and responsibilities” of history?<sup>9</sup> The authors criticize the profession for a reluctance to consider such questions.

Professional historians have been so successfully socialized by demands to publish that we have little time or inclination to participate in general debates about the meaning of our work. Questions about the relevance of scientific models to the search for historical truth or the role of history in shaping national identity . . . are often dismissed by historians as irrelevant to their work, which they define as researching in archives and writing scholarly books and articles.<sup>10</sup>

Appleby, Hunt and Jacob present a bold claim for the important role that the historical profession can and should play in our society: “What historians do best is to make connections with the past in order to illuminate the problems of the present and the potential of the future.” Historians can shed light on a “complex array of questions about the human experience.”<sup>11</sup> In summary, for these three authors the social function of history includes helping define our collective identity, illuminating present experience and contemporary issues, as well as liberating us from intrusive authorities and outworn beliefs.

## 3. Eric Hobsbawm

Eric Hobsbawm, long-time professor of history at Birkbeck College, University of London, brings a Marxist perspective to the discipline.<sup>12</sup> Hobsbawm laments that history has often played a key role in glorifying nationalist, ethnic and religious fundamentalist ideologies. This abuse of the past places historians in a situation of great social responsibility.

The past is an essential element, perhaps *the* essential element, in these ideologies. If there is no suitable past, it can always be invented.

Indeed, in the nature of things there is usually no entirely suitable past, because the phenomenon these ideologies claim to justify is not ancient or eternal but historically novel. This applies to both religious fundamentalism in its current versions and to contemporary nationalism. The past legitimizes. The past gives a more glorious background to a present that doesn't have much to celebrate . . . In this situation historians find themselves in the unexpected role of political actors. I used to think that the profession of history, unlike that of, say, nuclear physics, could at least do no harm. Now I know it can. Our studies can turn into bomb factories . . .<sup>13</sup>

Hobsbawm identified a two-fold response that historians must bring in this situation. "We have a responsibility to historical facts in general, and for criticizing the politico-ideological abuse of history" by ideologies and fundamentalisms.<sup>14</sup> Historians must oppose all efforts to "replace history by myth and invention," and rise above the passions of "identity politics."<sup>15</sup> In summary, the social function of historians, according to Hobsbawm, is to critique the abuse of history by faithfully representing the collective memory of the past in our society,<sup>16</sup> and providing perspective, "removing the blindfolds" that obscure the vision of contemporary society.<sup>17</sup>

#### **4. Margaret Miles**

Margaret Miles, professor of historical theology at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA, entitled her 1999 AAR Presidential Address, "Becoming Answerable for What We See."<sup>18</sup> This title aptly summarizes the point she wants to make. She calls on all scholars of religion to integrate critical scholarship and passionate engagement. Miles suggests that scholars of religion, in this case of Christianity, have at least three audiences to whom they are responsible: the public sphere, the churches, and the university disciplines. While scholars may vary in their public of emphasis, Miles calls on historians to be more ready to address the wider world. We should contribute, for example, to conversations in our culture about social and ethical issues and national policy.

In relation to faith communities, scholarship has a prophetic imperative to "challenge, unsettle, and discomfit religious people as well as to affirm and educate."<sup>19</sup> "As historians we can identify the concrete social, political and institutional circumstances in which doctrinal and practical decisions were made as a basis for asking whether those

decisions need to be revised in our [new] circumstances.”<sup>20</sup> Our academic work can also serve faith communities by studying religion for pitfalls as well as for insights.

In a religiously plural society religious studies [including the history of Christianity or church history] still bears the traditional responsibility of representing religion as providing accessible and fruitful proposals for living a richly human life. But it also has responsibility for critical scrutiny of the social effects of religious beliefs and practices . . . Their *effects*, not merely their intentions, must be acknowledged and examined.<sup>21</sup>

Miles recalls the liberating experience of realizing that “the oppressive fundamentalism of my childhood could not simply be labelled ‘Christianity.’” “Demonstrating the ability to be self-critical and to acknowledge the abuses perpetrated by some forms of religion can attract as many thinking people as will be turned off and turned away.”<sup>22</sup> In summary, Miles challenges church historians to consider how our critical historical work can challenge and educate the church, revealing the abusive effects of religion and liberating believers from its oppressive forms, such as fundamentalism. We should be ready to contribute our training in analytical and critical thinking “to public discussions on issues central to the common good.”<sup>23</sup>

These scholars challenge historians to serve a larger audience and the common good in several ways: by identifying the influence of past legacies as an aid to self-understanding, by revealing the negative personal and social effects of religious beliefs and practices, by liberating believers from oppressive forms of religion, by preserving collective memory and shaping a positive collective identity, by critiquing myth-making and abuse of history in service to religious and political ideologies, by illuminating public discussion of contemporary issues and problems, and, finally, by freeing believers from intrusive authorities.

## ***II. Four Church Historians Who Address Both Academic and Non-Academic Audiences, and Serve the Common Good***

I will now examine four contemporary church historians who as engaged scholars address both academic and popular audiences, and demonstrate a readiness to serve a non-academic public. These four include: Mark Noll who speaks to American evangelicals; Craig Atwood



who speaks to American Moravians' Marguerite Van Die who speaks to current Canadian policy issues; and Arnold Snyder who speaks to Canadian Mennonites. Some of these people may be well known to some of you; together they illustrate the way in which scholars in various fields of church history are seeking to serve the common good.

For each of these scholars I will identify and discuss briefly: (1) their two audiences, i.e., their academic and social-ecclesiastical settings; (2) their academic field of scholarship; (3) their popular scholarly efforts to reach a non-academic audience; and (4) and how they have played a "liberating role" in providing believers today with self-understanding and responsible choice, in revealing the negative effects of religious beliefs and practices, in critiquing myth-making, and in contributing to discussion of contemporary issues.

### **1. Mark Noll's Complex Audience in Writing about Evangelical Identity and American Religion**

Mark Noll is McManis Professor of Christian Thought and professor of history at Wheaton College, a leading evangelical liberal arts college in Illinois. Noll has enjoyed a prolific career in the academy as an historian in the field of American religion, specifically evangelical religion. Noll's career is also noteworthy for the way he has consistently sought to address issues facing evangelical Christians today by writing sometimes biting "tracts for the times." As an "observer of evangelicalism," Noll is a fine example of a scholar writing for a dual audience.

Noll's numerous scholarly books include: *Christians in the American Revolution* (1977); *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship and the Bible in America* (1986); *Princeton and the Republic, 1798-1822* (1989); *Religion and American Politics from the Colonial Period to the 1980s* (1990); *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (1992); *God and Mammon: Protestants, Money and the Market, 1790-1860* (2001); and most recently, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (2002).

*America's God* was the focus of a panel discussion at the American Society of Church History in Chicago last January (2003), where it received high praise from his colleagues in the field. The book has clearly positioned him as the premier interpreter of American religion in our day. Noll argues in this work that between 1740 and 1790 a surprising synthesis took place in American thought; a synthesis of evangelicalism, republican-

ism and common sense “was created from the crucible of the revolution.” Patterns of thought “almost inconceivable in Europe” became commonplace because of American circumstances, “particularly the circumstance of war.”<sup>24</sup>

In noting Noll’s popular scholarly efforts, one begins not with a publication, but with an organization. In 1983 Noll established the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals (ISAE), whose stated aim is “to deepen evangelicals’ understanding of themselves and enrich others’ assessment of evangelicals’ historical significance and contemporary role.” Four times a year the Institute publishes the *Evangelical Studies Bulletin*, as well as awarding grants to young evangelical scholars and sponsoring academic conferences that expose a larger public to scholarly debate. The ISAE serves as an impressive link between the academy and the evangelical world, keeping that world in touch with the latest scholarship on the movement, and serving to revise the collective evangelical historical identity. Throughout his career Noll has played this bridging role between the academy and the community of believers.

Probably Noll’s best-known work is *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (1994), where he argued that “fidelity to Jesus Christ demands from evangelicals a more responsible intellectual existence than we have practised throughout much of our history.”<sup>25</sup> Noll frankly stated that the book “is not a thoroughly intellectual volume”; “it is rather a historical meditation in which sermonizing and the making of hypotheses vie with more ordinary exposition.” This is a book for a popular audience, written more to incite than inform.<sup>26</sup> Noll’s book illumines various dimensions of this scandal and explains why American evangelicals experience such intellectual poverty. Noll focussed on evangelicals and politics, and evangelicals and science as two areas that have suffered “not so much for evangelical anti-intellectualism as for the wrong kind of intellectual attention.”<sup>27</sup> Noll’s purpose was to affirm the “ultimate significance” of the life of the mind, to inspire evangelical scholars and academic institutions to “work at it,” realizing that “an alteration of attitudes is the key to promoting a Christian life of the mind.”<sup>28</sup>

*The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* reveals the negative effects of religious beliefs and practices in fundamentalism today, and provides today’s believers with self-understanding and responsible choice. Noll observed that American evangelicals “are not exemplary for their thinking, and they have not been so for several generations.” He attributed this situation to American fundamentalism, dispensational premillennialism,

the Higher Life movement, and Pentecostalism, movements that arose in response to the “religious crises” of the nineteenth century, but together “were a disaster for the life of the mind.” They encouraged a pragmatic, activist approach to life that resulted in simplistic answers to such questions as the politics of the middle-east, and biological evolution.<sup>29</sup>

Noll demonstrated how enlightened nineteenth-century conservative scholars looked to science to “solve difficulties contained in Scripture.”<sup>30</sup> Charles Hodge represented a broad cross-section of evangelical leaders in his day with his advice on ways of “letting science inform the study of Scripture.” Together these evangelicals achieved impressive results in their thinking about science and religion.<sup>31</sup> This respect for the conclusions of the day’s “best science” is evident in James McCosh and B.B. Warfield of Princeton who affirmed evolution “within the boundaries of historic Christian doctrines.”<sup>32</sup> This readiness to learn from the best science has been lost in the creation science of modern day evangelicals.

Creation science has damaged evangelicalism by making it much more difficult to think clearly about human origins, the age of the earth, and mechanisms of geological or biological change. But it has done more profound damage by undermining the ability to look at the world God has made and to understand what we see when we do look.<sup>33</sup>

Creationists are guilty of pushing science-religion negotiations “toward the brink of battle.”

Noll has critiqued the posture of current evangelicals in relation to modern science and politics, and shown that their tradition contains other possibilities. In revealing the negative effects of creationist beliefs and practices, and by editing and republishing works by Hodge and Warfield that deal with scientific issues, Noll provides evangelical believers today with an enriched self-understanding and an alternative worldview in approaching contemporary issues.

## **2. Craig Atwood’s Complex Audience in Writing about Moravian Identity and Ethics**

Craig Atwood is a young Moravian scholar who lives comfortably in both the academic and non-academic worlds. His scholarly work contributes in impressive ways to the field of Moravian history, especially the story of Moravian life in America. From 1997 to 2002 he was

Professor of Religion at Salem College, Winston-Salem, NC. In 2002 Atwood was appointed Theologian in Residence at Moravian Church, Winston-Salem. In this role he not only pursues academic research and writing in the field of Moravian history, but teaches Moravian history and theology to lay persons.

In 1995 Atwood completed his Ph.D. dissertation at Princeton Seminary.<sup>34</sup> He has written a survey textbook of church history, *Always Reforming: The History of Christianity Since 1300* (2001). Atwood edited a collection of Zinzendorf's sermons, *Zinzendorf's Pennsylvania Sermons*, tr. Julie Weber (2001), and edited a festschrift volume entitled, *The Distinctiveness of Moravian Culture* (2003).

Atwood's dissertation pointed to the scholarly neglect of Moravian history in America.

Much of the writing on American colonial history and culture, especially religion, tells a story of immigration from the British Isles and the influence of English-speaking Protestant churches on America . . . But there are other stories, voices, and influences that should be considered, particularly the story of the 100,000 German speakers who came to the American colonies, especially Pennsylvania.<sup>35</sup>

Only recently has the city of Bethlehem, PA begun to receive the attention it deserves from scholars who work in colonial history and American religious history.<sup>36</sup> In contrast to historical and sociological studies that have examined Bethlehem's unique social structure, demographics and economy, Atwood's concern was "the heart and soul of the community," namely, Zinzendorf's theology and its impact upon the community's structure and rituals.<sup>37</sup>

[Zinzendorf's] blood and wounds theology, with all of its graphic descriptions of the torture and abuse of Jesus and its eroticisation of his wounds, served to help the residents of Bethlehem sublimate community-destroying impulses. Christ became their scapegoat, not just theologically, but sociologically and psychologically as well. As long as Zinzendorf remained the creative source and inspiration for the *Brüdergemeinde*, the communal enterprise thrived. Bethlehem needed the paradoxical imagery of the wounded Saviour-God in order to deal with the contradictions of living in heaven on earth.<sup>38</sup>

Atwood's study argued that "the adoration of the wounds of Christ was essential to the success of the Bethlehem communal system."<sup>39</sup>

As Theologian in Residence at Moravian Church, Winston-Salem, Atwood's popular scholarship includes teaching Moravian history and theology to lay persons, and writing study guides for Moravians on their history and thought. He holds workshops for clergy, provides white papers for his church denomination on pressing theological matters, and trains the guides of Old Salem in aspects of Moravian history, thought and culture to prepare them to act as interpreters of the Moravian heritage to visiting tourists. Atwood has contributed study guides for use in the Moravian church on such issues as "Why a Doctrinal Statement in the Moravian Church?" and "A Moravian Understanding of Jesus as Saviour." He has written a commentary, including discussion questions, on "The Moravian Covenant for Christian Living," part of the Book of Order of the Moravian Church in America.

Atwood's liberating role in serving the common good lies in providing Moravians with greater understanding of their heritage, and in addressing contemporary issues that Moravians face. At a clergy retreat in February of this year, Atwood led his fellow clergy in a discussion of "The Ground of the Unity," the Moravian doctrinal statement, reflecting on its historical context, and how it can continue to serve as "a living and vital document rather than an historical relic."<sup>40</sup> Atwood showed how the Moravian church is different from confessional churches that have a single confession that defines them over against other churches. The Moravians reflect a German Pietist view that is suspicious of confessionalism and doctrinal rigidity and values experience over doctrinal statements.<sup>41</sup> Atwood spoke of the Unity Synod of 1957 in Germany and the postwar ecumenical context in which that took place. "The Ground of the Unity" document was influenced by the holocaust and the need to fight racism; it was influenced by the Barmen Declaration and its assertion of the church's autonomy over against the state; it was influenced by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his affirmation of the world and religions outside of the church; and it was influenced by Karl Barth and his affirmation that "in Christ the world is already reconciled to God and all people, no matter what religion, are saved."<sup>42</sup> This statement, Atwood suggested, can aid the church today in addressing ethical issues and in standing against forces of greed, violence, opposition and hatred.

In response to some criticism of the church in the local media, Atwood recently applied the Ground of Unity to the issues of homosexual-

ity and same-sex marriage in an Op-Ed piece for the local newspaper in Winston-Salem. He began the piece, "Since I serve as Theologian in Residence at Home Moravian Church, perhaps I can clarify some things about the Moravian Church's teaching on certain controversial issues where there has been more heat than light."<sup>43</sup> Here one sees the church historian as "engaged scholar." Atwood cited the Ground of Unity in explaining that Moravians were obligated to "strive to remove violence and hatred" from their lives and the world. While the church does not presently perform marriages for same gender couples, "we continually examine our doctrine as our understanding of Scripture deepens." As for homosexuals and salvation, Moravians believe that "Christ has redeemed us with the whole of humanity."

Atwood has played a liberating role in providing Moravians with greater understanding of their heritage, and in seeking to address contemporary ethical issues that Moravians face.

### **3. Marguerite Van Die's Complex Audience in Writing about Christian Participation in Public Life**

Marguerite Van Die is Associate Professor of History of Christianity at Queen's Theological College and Associate Professor of History at Queen's University, Kingston. Her academic field of research is nineteenth-century North American Protestantism, "with a special interest in the interaction between socio-economic change, gender and religion."<sup>44</sup> Her current research projects focus on evangelical family life in Victorian Canada, 1835-1880, and religion and public life in the nineteenth century. Van Die is committed to using her scholarship to promote discussions related to public policy and the common good in Canada today.

Van Die has published *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918* (1989), and has edited three other books, *From Heaven Down to Earth: A Century of Chancellor's Lectures at Queen's Theological College* (1991), *Rethinking Church, State and Modernity: Canada Between Europe and the United States*, co-edited with David Lyon (2000), and *Religion and Public Life in Canada: Comparative and Historical Perspectives* (2001). She contributed six articles to the new *Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature*, ed. Gerald Hallowell (2002).

Van Die served as co-director of the Queen's University Project on Religion and Politics in Canada and the United States, a project funded by

the Pew Charitable Trusts to investigate the place of religion in Canadian public life, to examine “from a variety of critical perspectives the ways institutions and individuals have sought over time to bring religious faith to bear upon the public sphere at local, regional and national levels.” Following American political theorists, the project defined “public” as “the civic realm, a sphere of life connected to, yet distinct from, the private and semi-public worlds of the home and the religious community.” The public sphere in a liberal society is where its citizens “debate, deliberate, and engage in collective democratic will formation.”<sup>45</sup>

Van Die’s scholarly work reaches outside the academic community. The series of conferences on religion and public life in Canada hosted at Queen’s University had more than an academic impact; they provided a setting for a non-academic audience, including business and media people, to hear Canadian scholars address issues of great importance to all faiths in Canada. These events, and the book that grew out of them, have potential to impact the thinking of political, civic and religious leaders in Canada.

More recently, in September 2002, Van Die addressed a capacity crowd at Scarboro United Church in Calgary on the subject, “The End of Christian Canada: Past Perspectives, Present Opportunities for Faith and Public Life.” She used the occasion to speak to Calgarians as an historian who has something to say on the following questions: What as Canadians is our heritage of faith and public life? Is religious faith a private matter or can it have a meaningful voice in the public life of a pluralistic society? What are the challenges and opportunities faced by faith groups today in making a contribution to public life in Canada?

As a Canadian historian, Van Die has played a part in promoting discussion of a pressing contemporary issue in Canadian society, namely, how Canada’s religious pluralism can become “a social asset.” She observed that as Canadians, “we have done relatively little reflection on such basic issues as the nature of democracy, public morality and civic virtue.”<sup>46</sup> But this is starting to change: “This groping towards a country which welcomes a lively religious pluralism in public life rather than seeking to privatize religion is happening on many fronts.”<sup>47</sup> Van Die herself has helped to advance discussion among Canadians of the contribution religion can make in practical ways to public policy.

In her public presentation in Calgary, Van Die showed the significant change in religion’s place in Canada that came about “very quickly” in the 1960s and 1970s as both Protestant and Catholic faiths lost their

social hegemony, culminating in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. But she rejected the notion that in a secular society religion should be forced out of the public realm. Religion continues to have a necessary role in our “secular,” pluralist society.

The exercise of freedom inevitably erodes moral communal traditions and ultimately threatens the essential humanity of the individual. This happens if people are only seen as rights-bearers, and as individuals whose worth can be entirely enumerated and quantified. Religious traditions insist that people are also social by nature, and that there is ultimately a transcendent element to human dignity, which in most religions is directly connected to a divine Source. To flourish, an individual and a society need both faith and freedom . . .<sup>48</sup>

Van Die envisioned a Canada where religious pluralism is recognized as a positive element in a healthy secular state, and faith is valued “as an important contributor to a robust public life.”<sup>49</sup> Canada’s religions have a voice that needs to be heard in Canadian public life in advancing the common good.

Specifically, religious faiths in Canada provide a “counter-cultural voice” that contributes “an important dimension to public policy.” The prophetic tradition, such an important part of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, has been evident as religious groups have lobbied federal and provincial governments on matters of social justice.<sup>50</sup> The religious traditions need to speak with a clear, united voice on such issues as poverty, homelessness, the environment, and education. Van Die challenged all religious groups with the task of identifying the core beliefs of their faith tradition, to discover what their faith says about the meaning of life, and then to translate this into public policy.<sup>51</sup>

Van Die’s last word to her Calgary audience was one of affirmation of religion in public life: “As an historian, I am convinced that faith in its many forms is an inexhaustibly rich resource to help people live together.”<sup>52</sup> “In a religiously pluralistic Canada, faith can help us formulate public policies and shape a society which honours the wisdom of the past and which recognizes the infinite worth of each individual, of nature and of all of life as God-given.” Every generation must face the task afresh of expressing the implications of their beliefs “in ways that enhance the common good.”<sup>53</sup>

Van Die has played a liberating role in helping shape a Canadian sense of identity through reminding us of our heritage of faith and public



life, and in speaking to a pressing issue in Canadian life, the contribution of faith to public life in a pluralistic society. She has served the common good in Canada through advancing discussion among Canadians of the contribution religion can make in practical ways to public policy.

#### **4. Arnold Snyder's Complex Audience in Writing about Mennonite Identity**

Since 1985 Arnold Snyder has been Professor of History at Conrad Grebel College at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. He identifies himself as a Mennonite church historian; his main fields of academic research relate to sixteenth-century Anabaptist history and thought, and issues of spirituality and peace. The son of missionary parents in Latin America, and a practising Mennonite, Snyder has done much of his writing in service to both Liberation Theology communities in Latin America and Mennonite communities in North America.

Snyder's Ph.D. dissertation at McMaster University offered new background and a new interpretation to the life of Michael Sattler, the former Benedictine prior who was arrested and executed shortly after composing the first Anabaptist confession of faith, the *Schleitheim Articles* of February 1527. Snyder has published four books aimed at an academic audience including: *The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler* (1984); *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (1995); *Profiles of Anabaptist Women*, co-edited with Linda Hecht (1996); and a festschrift volume, *Commoners and Community: Essays in Honour of Werner O. Packull* (2002).

Snyder's early work contributed to a better, contextualized appreciation of Sattler and the *Schleitheim Articles* of 1527. Snyder found influences from Sattler's Benedictine piety in the *Schleitheim Articles*, such as the stress on separation from the world; he also found themes from the *Articles of the Black Forest peasants*, such as the call for appointment and discipline of pastors by local congregations.<sup>54</sup>

Snyder's narrative history of the Anabaptist movement, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (1995), has been credited with providing "an impressive synthesis of recent scholarship."<sup>55</sup> Snyder himself stated: "this text is an attempt at a new synthesis and organization of the historical and theological material, and an attempt to integrate insights from different (and sometimes antagonistic) historical methodologies."<sup>56</sup> His history included insights from social, economic and political

historians as well as from those whose focus was religious ideas; he also incorporated the voices and stories of Anabaptist women.

Snyder has worked in several ways to make Anabaptist scholarship accessible to a non-academic audience. He has translated a volume of sixteenth-century German Anabaptist sources into Spanish, and written an article interpreting the Anabaptist movement in a way that might encourage liberation theology base communities in Latin America.<sup>57</sup> The Mennonite World Conference commissioned Snyder to write a book to stimulate discussion of Mennonite core beliefs and values within the global Mennonite community; the book appeared in 1999, *From Anabaptist Seed: The Historical Core of Anabaptist-Related Identity* (1999). The book's "user-friendly" features include side bars highlighting documentary sources and questions to facilitate discussion, practical application and "faithful living" among Mennonites today.

Especially noteworthy under popular scholarly efforts is Snyder's creation of Pandora Press, which he began in 1995 in his home on Pandora Avenue, Kitchener. His purpose was to make available to the public, at reasonable cost, "shorts runs of books dealing with Anabaptist, Mennonite, Hutterite, and Believers Church topics, both historical and theological." The press's specialty is "custom printing and binding of short run books and pamphlets of all sorts," giving a voice to those that larger publishers pass over. The vision is to serve Mennonite, Christian and general readers. Independently owned and operated, the press uses desktop technology and a cottage industry approach to the publishing business. Snyder's publishing efforts have been so successful that his press has been copied in the United States by Pandora Press, now called Cascadia Publishing House. He has also created an online bookshop featuring titles from a variety of publishers.

The first production of the new press was Snyder's book, already mentioned, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction*. This is more than a book for scholars.

From the start I intended this book to be accessible to university students. I also hoped that this telling of the Anabaptist story would have something to say to people in the churches, and especially to those interested in the Anabaptist roots (historical and theological) of the Believers' Church tradition. All the same, the effort was made to incorporate scholarly advances in Anabaptist studies into the narrative itself, which of course complicated the narrative.<sup>58</sup>

To make the book “accessible,” two versions of the text were printed: a full-text edition with more complete discussion of issues and extensive scholarly documentation and bibliography, and an Abridged Student Edition “for use in the classroom and in other settings where a more concise narrative would be more helpful.” “Every attempt has been made to incorporate the best of the research into an accessible story.”<sup>59</sup> The book is complemented by six maps and dozens of illustrations courtesy of the Mennonite Historical Library in Goshen, Indiana.

In the book’s Introduction Snyder indicated that he wrote *Anabaptist History and Theology* in the hope that it would promote self-understanding among Mennonites, and contribute to discussion of contemporary issues that face Mennonites today. Herein lies Snyder’s liberating role in serving believers today.

It is the author’s conviction that it is important, especially for those within Believers’ Churches, to understand and reflect upon the issues and the processes that by the end of the sixteenth century had led to the definition of the Anabaptist theological and ecclesial traditions . . . What survived was not necessarily “right” simply because it survived.<sup>60</sup>

Snyder invited members of these churches today to “continue the dialogue begun in the sixteenth century.” He realized that such study could result in “conscious acceptance” of the inherited tradition, or in re-evaluation and conscious change and departure from it.<sup>61</sup>

Snyder observed, “it is currently out of fashion for historians to address openly the question of the possible meaning or relevance of their subjects of study.” Nevertheless, the final chapter of the book, entitled “The Continuing Conversation,” represents his attempt as a member of the Mennonite faith tradition to engage his readers and “to carry the historical conversations further.”<sup>62</sup> Snyder suggested that those only interested in the history of the Anabaptist movement could simply omit reading this chapter entirely, adding, “Those who do pass over the concluding chapter will not lose any of the essential story of sixteenth-century Anabaptism, but they will miss a dandy sermon.”<sup>63</sup>

In this final chapter, Snyder raised thirteen issues for discussion “framed by sixteenth-century Anabaptist conversations.” His approach is often quite provocative in encouraging a fresh engagement with old issues; a few examples will serve to illustrate this. On the issue of “Spirit and Letter,” Snyder observed that there are obvious “negative lessons” to be

learned from the movement's excesses at either extreme: on the one hand, the prophetic spiritualist Anabaptism of people such as Hans Hut and David Joris) with its visions, dreams and revelations led to abuse of freedom and weakened church order; on the other hand, the Biblical literalism of persons such as Menno Simons led to a new legalism. One lesson is the importance of humility concerning one's interpretations and experiences; another is the recognition that all readings of Scripture are tainted with "human tradition"; one cannot argue that the Anabaptist tradition is "purely biblical."<sup>64</sup> On the issue of Regeneration, Snyder noted that early Anabaptist "optimism" about the thoroughness of regeneration was not borne out in practice; the tradition did not take the persistence of sin seriously enough. The result was "perfectionist" expectations, severe discipline in dealing with failure, and hypocrisy. Snyder encouraged Mennonites today to rethink "the entire package of pastoral issues related to sin and regeneration" and to develop a more realistic understanding of the spiritual life as a journey and pilgrimage of growth, not one of perfect obedience.<sup>65</sup> Finally, on the issue of baptism, Snyder confronted the weaknesses of Anabaptist reasoning in defence of adult baptism. Mennonites today no longer sees the rite of baptism as an issue of salvation or damnation. A key issue they must address is, what do conversion and baptism mean to children who have been raised in the faith, and not converted as adults? Snyder concluded the discussion with another question: "How might the inner dimensions related to this powerful symbol of dying and rising in Christ be recaptured in churches long accustomed to fairly 'automatic' performances of the outward rite" by whole Sunday School classes?<sup>66</sup>

Snyder has played a liberating role in encouraging Mennonites to engage in conversation with their own tradition in critical fashion. Much of his work is designed to facilitate discussion of contemporary issues that Mennonites face today.

### ***III. Conclusion***

Margaret Miles observed that our primary bond as scholars is our commitment to our work and to a socially responsible life, integrating both critical and passionately engaged scholarship.<sup>67</sup> My goal in this presidential address has been to provide a kind of pep talk to the CSCH to encourage us to be passionately engaged with contemporary issues among our Canadian churches and within Canadian society, and to find inspira-

tion in some exemplary colleagues in the field who show us what can be done. For Noll the historian's liberating role has been in the service of American evangelicals, for Atwood it is in the service of American Moravians, for Van Die it is in the service of Canadian society, and for Snyder in the service of North American Mennonites and Believers' Churches.

Canadian academic leaders such as Martha Piper are calling on us to contribute our knowledge and scholarship to building a civil society in Canada. I am convinced that, whatever field of church history we may be in, we can play a liberating role in providing believers and Canadians generally with self-understanding and responsible choice, in revealing the negative effects of religious beliefs and practices, in critiquing myth-making, and in contributing to discussion of contemporary issues in our society. The question is simply, will we make the effort to offer the public a usable past, and will we see ourselves as engaged scholars, called to serve the common good?

### ***Endnotes***

1. Martha C. Piper, "Building a Civil Society: A New Role for the Human Sciences" (Annual Killam Lecture, 24 October 2002), 5ff.
2. Piper, "Building a Civil Society," 8, 3.
3. Past lecturers have included Margaret Somerville from McGill on medical ethics, Paul Knitter from Xavier University on Interreligious Dialogue, John Polkinghorne from Cambridge University on science and religion, and Marguerite Van Die from Queen's University on religion and public life.
4. On 3 March 2003 I spoke at Good Shepherd Community Church (Moravian) on the subject, "A Church Ahead of its Time: The Eighteenth-Century Moravian Community on Gender, Worship and Ecumenism."
5. William J. Bouwsma, "Introduction," *A Usable Past* (Berkeley: University of California, 1990), 1.
6. Bouwsma, *A Usable Past*, 3.
7. Bouwsma, *A Usable Past*, 8.
8. Bouwsma, *A Usable Past*, 8, 9. Bouwsma defined Western culture as "a series of efforts to constrain and control its internal conflicts" and anxieties. At some moments in history, these conflicting forces produce a crisis, such as during the Renaissance and Reformation.

9. Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob *Telling the Truth about History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 4ff.
10. Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, 9.
11. Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, 10.
12. Eric Hobsbawm, *On History* (London: Abacus, 1997), viii. In the preface Hobsbawm explicitly joined authors Appleby, Hunt and Jacob in affirming the objective reality of the past, distinguishing historical statements based on evidence from those which are not, and denying the postmodern idea of the past as simply a construct.
13. Hobsbawm, *On History*, 6ff.
14. Hobsbawm, *On History*, 7.
15. Hobsbawm, *On History*, 9ff.
16. Hobsbawm, *On History*, 33.
17. Hobsbawm, *On History*, 47.
18. Margaret Miles, "Becoming Answerable for What We See," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 68, No. 3 (September 2000): 471-485.
19. Miles, "Becoming Answerable for What we See," 473.
20. Miles, "Religious Studies in a Religiously Plural Society," Lecture at University of Calgary (5 November 2002), 4.
21. Miles, "Becoming Answerable for What we See," 472ff.
22. Miles, "Becoming Answerable for What we See," 478.
23. Miles, "Religious Studies in a Religiously Plural Society," 4.
24. Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 17, 73.
25. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 27.
26. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, ix.
27. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 24.
28. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 249.
29. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 24.
30. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 182.

31. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 184.
32. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 180.
33. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 196.
34. Craig D. Atwood, "Blood, Sex and Death: Life and Liturgy in Zinzendorf's Bethlehem" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1995). The dissertation is forthcoming as *Wondrous Wounds: Life and Liturgy in Moravian Bethlehem* (Penn State University, 2004).
35. Atwood, "Introduction," 2.
36. Atwood, "Introduction," 5.
37. Atwood, "Blood, Sex and Death: Life and Liturgy in Zinzendorf's Bethlehem," 3.
38. Atwood, "Blood, Sex and Death: Life and Liturgy in Zinzendorf's Bethlehem," 2ff.
39. Atwood, "Abstract," "Blood, Sex and Death: Life and Liturgy in Zinzendorf's Bethlehem."
40. Craig Atwood, "Why a Doctrinal Statement in the Moravian Church?" (Clergy Retreat, February 2003), 2ff.
41. Craig Atwood, "Why a Doctrinal Statement in the Moravian Church?," 3ff.
42. Atwood, "Why a Doctrinal Statement in the Moravian Church?," 7ff.
43. Craig D. Atwood, "Op-Ed: Moravian Faith and Practice" (Winston-Salem).
44. See Van Die's website: [www.queensu.ca/theology/L3Us-Faculty-Vandie.htm](http://www.queensu.ca/theology/L3Us-Faculty-Vandie.htm)
45. Van Die, "The End of Christian Canada: Past Perspectives, Present Opportunities for Faith and Public Life" (Calgary: September 23, 2002), 6. For full text see the website of the Chair of Christian Thought at the University of Calgary: [www.christchair.ucalgary.ca](http://www.christchair.ucalgary.ca)
46. Van Die, "Religion and Public Life in Canada and the United States: How Different Are We?," 20. For full text see the website of the Chair of Christian Thought at the University of Calgary: [www.christchair.ucalgary.ca](http://www.christchair.ucalgary.ca)
47. Van Die, "Religion and Public Life in Canada and the United States: How Different Are We?" 21.
48. Van Die, "The End of Christian Canada," 19ff.
49. Van Die, "The End of Christian Canada," 18.

50. Van Die, "The End of Christian Canada," 21.
51. Van Die, "The End of Christian Canada," 23, 24.
52. Van Die, "The End of Christian Canada," 24.
53. Van Die, "The End of Christian Canada," 25.
54. C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 1995), 61. See also Snyder's articles: "The Monastic Origins of Swiss Anabaptist Sectarianism," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 52 (1983): 5-26; and "The Schleithem Articles in Light of the Revolution of the Common Man: Continuation or Departure?" *The Sixteenth-Century Journal* 16, No. 4 (1985): 419-430. In this last article Snyder argues that, "Schleithem represents a synthesis of several theological traditions--monastic, peasant, and Anabaptist" (428).
55. James Stayer, "Review of *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction*, by C. Arnold Snyder," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 70 (October 1996): 473-482.
56. Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 3.
57. C. Arnold Snyder, "The Relevance of Anabaptist Nonviolence for Nicaragua Today," *Conrad Grebel Review* 2, No. 2 (1984): 123-137.
58. Snyder, "Preface," *Anabaptist History and Theology*, vff.
59. Snyder, "Preface," *Anabaptist History and Theology*, vi.
60. Snyder, "Introduction," *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 8.
61. Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 379.
62. Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 8.
63. Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 8.
64. Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 381ff.
65. Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 385ff.
66. Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 392ff.
67. Miles, "Becoming Answerable for What we See," 483, 472.



