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### **Please Note**

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**Hothouse Fundamentalism on the Prairies:  
The Early Years of Prairie Bible Institute  
Through the Private Eyes of Dorothy Ruth Miller**

JAMES ENNS

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Pray on and labor on. Don't be afraid of the toil; don't be afraid of the cross; they will pay well . . . It is a great blessing when God gives one a hunger for souls . . . good many of our early workers had it. We get better people now in some ways, better educated and so on, but it is not often you find that real hunger for souls – people willing to live anywhere and endure anything if only souls may be saved. They are very often humble people. If they were to offer themselves to [the China Inland Mission] now, they might not be accepted . . . But nothing can take its place, or make up for the lack of it . . . It is so much more important than any ability.<sup>1</sup>

The above passage is an excerpt from the journal of J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission (CIM), and one of the heroic figures for evangelical Protestant Christians who supported the faith-missions movement. Taylor's words are entered at the back of the 1934 diary of Dorothy Ruth Miller, who was at the time a teacher and women's dorm superintendent at a fledgling Bible school in the middle of the Alberta plains called Prairie Bible Institute (PBI). Miller's appropriation of Hudson Taylor's words provides a theological window through which to view the staff, students and general ethos of the school during its early years. Like her missionary forerunner, Miller saw the Christian life as a two-fold spiritual struggle: on the one hand there was the daily struggle of living the "crucified

life” of self-denial; on the other hand one was also engaged in the spiritual battle to save souls from a lost eternity. In both of these tasks the spiritual zeal of the individual believer was counted as more valuable than any skills and abilities he or she may have possessed, especially if those abilities had been nurtured in institutions of higher academic learning and stamped with the imprimatur of a scholarly degree. Taylor’s reflections on his missionary endeavor in China also expressed the ministry ideals and concerns Miller had for the students at her own school in the village of Three Hills, Alberta.

From her arrival in Three Hills, Alberta, in 1928 until her death sixteen years later, Dorothy Ruth Miller was a stalwart of the newly established Prairie Bible Institute. Next to PBI’s charismatic founder, L.E. Maxwell, Miller exercised the greatest influence in shaping the identity of the school. She did this not only through her teaching, but also in her capacity as a residence administrator, institute board member, and as a tireless advocate on behalf of her students for their placement in various missionary societies. In the midst of these many activities, often co-mingled with long bouts illness, she found time to keep a daily diary. These diaries have been maintained in the PBI’s archives, and provide a unique first-hand view of life in one of the many rural western Canadian Bible schools which sprang up on the prairies during the 1920s and 30s.<sup>2</sup> While Miller’s diaries do not give a fully detailed or evenly developed account of events at PBI, these documents do provide important insight into the theological and cultural worldview of the author, and the other members of a close-knit, fundamentalist, educational community.<sup>3</sup> Diaries are intensely private and intimate documents, and in Miller’s case each day’s entry was limited to the space equivalent to half a sheet of loose-leaf paper. In these pages we are presented with brief observations about both the mundane tasks and the perceived spiritual climate at the school which were dominant in the author’s mind on any given day. Rather than a flowing narrative these diaries can more accurately be considered a series of snapshots recorded by the private gaze of the author – in this case, a single woman in her early sixties who was an evangelical Protestant. Their cumulative effect, despite gaps and selectivity, is a mosaic of school life, which captures the spiritual hothouse sub-culture of missionary-minded fundamentalism.<sup>4</sup>

Miller’s description of life at PBI fits comfortably within the common contours of such institutions outlined in work of Virginia Brereton and Ben Harder.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Miller’s identity as a single woman, a Bible teacher, and a fundamentalist in the holiness theology tradition, has also been broadly

mapped out by scholars such as Betty A. DeBerg, Janette Hassey, and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth.<sup>6</sup> More particular to the Bible school movement in western Canada, the nature of PBI's role and identity in Canadian evangelical circles has also received no small amount of scholarly attention. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. and Robert Burkinshaw have focused on the influence of the school from the 1950s onward, and most recently Bruce Guenther in his macro analysis of western Canadian Bible schools has placed it on an educational spectrum vis a vis other similar institutions.<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of this brief study is not to challenge these helpful portrayals of PBI, or the generalized portrayals of fundamentalist women, but to respond positively to Guenther's call for "new ways forward." In his dissertation he states the need for "additional institutional biographies that might provide still more clarity to the variegated complexity found within the Bible school movement (and by extension within the nature of fundamentalism itself) in western Canada."<sup>8</sup> This brief glimpse at PBI from 1928 to 1936 through the private eyes of Dorothy Ruth Miller is intended to give a more particular and nuanced understanding of one expression of fundamentalist Christianity on the Canadian prairies.<sup>9</sup>

From these diaries three dominant themes emerge about school life: firstly, there is the monastic-like commitment to prayer and devotional discipline; secondly, Miller draws frequent attention to the culture of scarcity most evident in the spartan living conditions and meagre personal finances of the author; thirdly, there is the over-riding concern for students to heed the call to missionary service. All three of these themes come through the interpretive grid of Miller's Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) holiness theology: the belief that living the "crucified life" was the true measure of one's faith.

Before tracing the development of these themes from the diaries some background on both PBI and Dorothy Ruth Miller are in order. In the fall of 1922, Leslie Earl (L.E.) Maxwell, a Bible school graduate from Kansas, arrived at a small farm town located about one hundred and thirty kilometres northeast of Calgary. He was met at the Three Hills train station by a local farmer of Ontario Presbyterian stock named Fergus Kirk. Through a family connection Kirk had heard that the C&MA school in Kansas might be able to supply a teacher for some of the local young people who were interested in furthering their biblical education. Maxwell responded to the invitation thinking he might stay for a couple of years before moving on to fulfilling his ambition to go overseas as a missionary.<sup>10</sup> What began as an ad hoc

assignment grew into a permanent school. Over the next six years, through his charismatic teaching and summer preaching tours in western Canada, Maxwell saw the school grow from eight students, who met in an abandoned farm house, to forty-five students, who now occupied their own newly-constructed building in the town of Three Hills. The increase in students brought with it the need for additional teaching and residence staff. Maxwell had kept in touch with a couple of his former teachers from Kansas who had since moved on to another school in Seattle. One of these was Dorothy Ruth Miller. In the summer of 1928 Maxwell invited her to come and teach at PBI, an invitation she readily accepted.<sup>11</sup> When she arrived in Three Hills, Miller was fifty-five years old and had already taught at three other Bible schools, all under the administration of A.B. Simpson's C&MA organization. She would end up teaching at Prairie until her death in 1944 at age 71.

Due to the informal nature of PBI's early operations, as well as scant personnel records, little is known about Miller prior to her arrival in Three Hills. She held baccalaureate degrees from two eastern American universities: a degree in English from Columbia University and a history degree from New York University. She had been a school teacher for several years when she was urged by her local minister to attend Bible school in order to become a Bible teacher. Upon finishing her Bible training she was immediately offered a teaching position at the school from which she just graduated. At one point A.B. Simpson offered her the principalship of one of his C&MA schools, which she declined based on her views of women in leadership.<sup>12</sup> When Maxwell did announce her appointment to PBI's staff in the school's own periodical, he was quick to point out that "far more . . . than her scholastic attainments, is Miss Miller's devotion to the teaching of God's Word. Her twenty years of experience in Bible School work render her an invaluable asset to our teaching staff."<sup>13</sup> Among her previous teaching appointments Miller had held positions at C&MA schools in Nyack, New York, Kansas City and Seattle.

When she arrived by train in Three Hills on 29 June 1928, she saw a village defined by seven towering grain elevators posted along a railway siding. Running west to east away from the elevators was a single unpaved road that functioned as the main commercial artery and in turn was intersected by six or seven avenues. Electricity became available in 1926, and by 1929 the population passed the five hundred mark, giving Three Hills official town status.<sup>14</sup> The school itself consisted of a large multi-purpose building, which contained living quarters for students and staff, a dining



area, and classrooms. Next door was the chapel, or Tabernacle, which also doubled as a music classroom. Both of these buildings fronted onto the street which demarcated the northern limit of the town, and because the buildings lay on the north side of the street they were officially outside of town limits, thus reflecting a further degree of remoteness, or in good fundamentalist terminology, “separation from the world.”<sup>15</sup> It was in this doubly isolated environment – rural and spiritual – that Miller faithfully recorded her perceptions of school life for the next eight years, and it is to these perceptions which we now turn.

As stated above, the interpretive lens through which Miller records events is the importance of living a holy life. Holiness was measured by how well one gave evidence of living the crucified life of self-denial and total abandonment to divine leading into some form of Christian ministry and service.<sup>16</sup> While students were expected to have had a specific conversion experience this did not signal the final victory in one’s spiritual walk, rather it only marked the start of a new phase of spiritual warfare. This warfare usually took the form of a series of crises (or one major crisis) or tests of commitment, which usually involved a choice between following a more immediately desirable path of personal ambition, or the less desirable path of humility and self-sacrifice, usually culminating in some form of missionary service.<sup>17</sup> Miller notes the progress, or lack thereof, in the lives of students and staff in the following ways. After attending one of the frequently held student testimony meetings in the fall of 1934 Miller observed: “This evening the testimonies seemed rather depressing than bright and inspiring. It seems to me evident that the enemy is making a strong attack upon us from many sides. When we are tried may we come forth as gold. I know that no strange thing has happened unto us.”<sup>18</sup>

Just under a month later Miller offered a much more hopeful account:

We had a wonderful testimony meeting this evening and it was easy to see that God had done a real work in many, many lives. Orvis testified that hitherto he had studied his Bible to learn doctrine, and he had memorized it but had not realized that he needed it for the life of his own soul.<sup>19</sup>

When the school hosted a wider supporting constituency during the annual cycle of missionary conferences, youth rallies and summer camp meetings,

Miller was keenly attuned to the spiritual climate of these occasions. After one such revivalist camp meeting she joyfully recorded that

the Spirit of the Lord has been present in the meetings in a wonderful way today. I feel that we are as a school and as individuals definitely entering upon a new and deeper ministry – a deeper embracing of the cross, a greater prayer ministry and a more intense evangelism. I pray that we may miss nothing of what the Lord has for us.<sup>20</sup>

As the superintendent of the women's residence, Miller acted as den mother and spiritual confidant to many of the female students. Here again she recorded both the spiritual victories and set backs of individual students. A Miss Walker, "who had been undergoing a great spiritual conflict came into a place of liberty and victory in the Lord,"<sup>21</sup> while "Marge Dunn needs a breaking down and a cutting loose that will free her from the flesh. She is hanging on to Ralph Bradley in a most tenacious way. She cannot get any where with God until she cuts loose from this whole principle of seeking admiration."<sup>22</sup>

Living the crucified life was a serious undertaking, and as noted in the above case of Marge Dunn, one of the most prominent obstacles to achieving "victory in the Lord" was a preoccupation with members of the opposite sex. This is most clearly described by Miller as she tracked the spiritual growth of one of her former students from Seattle for whom she had developed a certain fondness, and who had become something of a protégé. He was a young man named Perry, who had joined the PBI staff as a teacher shortly after Miller arrived. When Perry began showing an interest in Laura, a single female staff member, Miller immediately began praying that God would break him and bring him to a point of yieldedness.<sup>23</sup> Two months later Perry still showed no signs of victory in his life as his infatuation with Laura continued.<sup>24</sup> The next year when Perry announced his engagement – this time to another young lady – Miller again was quick to measure this in spiritually negative terms. When the engagement was broken off three days later there was evident relief.<sup>25</sup> Six months later when this same relationship seems to have heated up once again, Miller recorded emphatically that "the Lord gave me a prayer for Perry and [his girl friend] Verna – that He would separate each utterly unto Himself. And that He will give Perry a mighty ministry of intercession – a eunuch for the kingdom of God's sake [sic]."<sup>26</sup> While these words sound severe and one-sided, in Miller's defense it must

be noted that she was not opposed to marriage, but deeply concerned that it be a result of following God's call to some form of Christian service and not an impediment to such a call.<sup>27</sup>

Besides romantic relationships there were other things which Miller viewed as impediments to the serious task of the crucified life. She was ill disposed toward recreational pursuits, such as baseball and skating parties. Pre-occupation with "trifles," frivolity and petty pleasures were evidences of a falling away. These and other self-pleasing activities were usually summarized under the general category of "worldliness," and stood out in sharp contrast to a life "poured out" for God.<sup>28</sup>

Miller was also conscious of applying these same tests to her own Christian walk. As she grew increasingly discontent with her position at the C&MA school in Seattle, she was still concerned about the legitimacy of her own motives in accepting Maxwell's invitation to move to PBI; she really wanted to go, but was uncertain as to whether the opportunity constituted divine leading.<sup>29</sup> A few years later she confessed that her newly-acquired enjoyment in learning Spanish might be taking her away from other responsibilities at school.<sup>30</sup> In Miller's eyes, PBI became the spiritual crucible in which students and staff together pursued the crucified life, and of the three earlier mentioned themes that characterized that life at PBI the most prominent one is the time and value given to prayer.

If nothing else, Miller's diaries are a record of a life devoted to prayer. There is a monastic-like commitment to both private and corporate periods of intense intercessory prayer. While there are intermittent references to her work in the classroom, an activity of school life that dominates Miller's daily observations was attendance at both mandatory and voluntary prayer sessions. The school day was structured to foster the discipline of prayer as students were required to have a personal devotional time before breakfast. Morning classes concluded at 11:15 a.m. after which everyone gathered for the mandatory Missionary Prayer Meeting which ran until noon.<sup>31</sup> On Tuesday evenings there was another required prayer meeting, while attendance at prayer meetings on the other week days was considered optional. Week-ends were given over to evangelistic meetings and up to three worship services on Sunday.<sup>32</sup> All this could be justified by the Keswick holiness teaching of the deeper life, and the on-going sense of spiritual crisis that threatened to undermine Christian growth. Miller summarized this concern as the 1931 school year was close to getting under way.

[I] have determined to put first things first. I am greatly burdened for spiritual conditions in our own house. We must have victory – love here or many will be defiled. This evening there seemed a brokenness in the meeting and there was something of confession but I am sure that a much deeper repentance and cleaning is needed.<sup>33</sup>

Confession and revival leading to spiritual victory for staff and students were not the only matters for prayer. The constant material needs of the school, the welfare of alumni who were active in overseas missions, healing from disease, rain in the face of drought, and the ongoing out-reach ministries of the school all provided plenty of grist for intercessory prayer.<sup>34</sup> But the pace could be exhausting even for the most devout spiritual athletes. In the summer of 1931 it was decided to scale back the number of evening prayer meetings to four nights a week, yet a month later Miller notes: “These prayer meetings seem to me almost killing because they take almost every evening. Tonight I am very very tired.”<sup>35</sup> Even a hardy prayer warrior could get battle fatigue.

By the mid-1930s Miller shows an increasing appreciation for the contemplative life. The infrequent occasions when she is able to spend extended times of prayer being “shut in with God” in the privacy of her own room are recorded with special affection.<sup>36</sup> At times she sounds like a medieval mystic: “Last night it seemed to me that all night long I was praying even in my sleep and that my one great desire was to know the Lord Jesus more fully. I woke asking for this. This is the one real prayer of my heart.”<sup>37</sup>

Miller’s understanding of prayer reflected one of the theological tensions in the holiness movement. On the one hand, there was the belief in God’s overarching sovereignty in directing human events to accomplish Divine purposes, yet at the same time there was also the belief that human appeals through prayer could move God to intervene or answer in specific ways. A positive answer was often connected to the amount of time the faithful were willing to spend in prayer. The act of prayer then took on a certain quantitative, persuasive nature – as if Christians had to spend much time convincing God to act in a particular way He knew to be good and benevolent, yet was somehow reluctant to go ahead with until a sufficient number of prayers had been offered. Thus Miller would chide herself that “I have not prayed enough for the healing of this cold. I must call upon God for a complete healing. I have been lax in this.”<sup>38</sup> Regarding her students she

worried at one point that “we are doing far less than we should do. Perhaps I have not prayed about it as I should have done . . . I must make it a subject of prayer.”<sup>39</sup> Later on she could report more hopefully, “I think we did better in our classes today. If I continue to pray I may expect yet more improvement.”<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, when Miller sensed she had been sufficiently faithful in committing a matter to prayer she also felt the freedom to chide the Almighty when desired answers were slow in forthcoming. Thus she could state that she was “reminding God that the new dormitory is for ‘his own household’ and that windows and siding, floors, heating plant, doors, plaster, etc. are needed. It is for Him to provide a shelter for those ‘of his own household.’”<sup>41</sup> The next day she continued in the same vein:

I have this day reminded God that Minna A. is one of His household and that He as the King of Kings is responsible to provide her [a] . . . passport . . . I have reminded him also that these North American candidates for missionary service in China are His own and that He is responsible to provide for their passage and outfits. Praise God! Praise God!<sup>42</sup>

At the same time Miller was not strictly formulaic, quantitative, or always this presumptuous in her prayers. The above entries are counter-balanced by other records which show a more nuanced theology. In response to the drought-like conditions on the prairies in the spring of 1931 she observed:

We had a good prayer meeting this evening. Several prayed very definitely for rain. I joined in this petition. I feel that God will answer. He must answer. We prayed in his name for His will, really desiring His will above all things. What we must look for now is the doing of His will. If it does not rain I, who have urged prayer for rain must believe that for some reason it is not His will. But how I must seek the Lord that if there is something in me or in others that makes it better that it should not rain, the hindrance will be removed and that God will be able to bless Three Hills with rain because we are in it.<sup>43</sup>

In this earnest, self-reflective entry one can detect a confidence that God will act in positive way to her prayers mixed with a humility which acknowledged God’s purposes were beyond human comprehension. Overarching this tension was the desire to experience God’s blessing.

Besides missionary concerns, student needs, personal health, and the elements of nature, another frequent topic of prayer was the provision of necessary material and human resources for the yearly operation of the school. Despite the insatiable demands of keeping the school's facilities adequate for the growing numbers of students Dorothy Ruth Miller and her co-workers at PBI would confidently claim, "Prayer can accomplish everything and God is pleased that we should trust Him."<sup>44</sup>

The theme of prayer was, in this way, linked directly to the second dominant theme of Miller's diaries: chronicling the culture of scarcity. There was no lack of opportunity to exercise trust in divine provision as PBI was often short of resources. The founders decided from the outset that the school would operate on the same principles as the faith missionary agencies it supported. Thus Maxwell would state each year in PBI's *Manual* that "the maintenance, and further enlargement of the school are dependent upon the free-will offerings of friends who believe in the work of this Institute."<sup>45</sup> Students were charged \$85 in annual fees, which covered living expenses. No tuition fees were charged and the staff simply lived off whatever money remained after operational costs and missionary support pledges had been covered.<sup>46</sup> At the same time, the school was generous in its financial support of various missionary societies. By 1944, the year of Miller's death and the twenty-second year of the school's operation, PBI had channeled over \$177,000 to nearly forty interdenominational faith mission agencies through its Missionary Treasury fund.<sup>47</sup>

The culture of scarcity evident in Miller's diaries comes in two guises. The most obvious one was the chronic need for more building supplies to make the campus livable. On several occasions Miller noted that the building fund had been reduced to zero.<sup>48</sup> It was in these times – frequently during the summer months – that the daunting task of getting the school ready for the coming fall drove her to despair: "the financial situation seems so hopeless. I must pray more about these matters. God may be just waiting for me to come through on this."<sup>49</sup> Decisions about how to use very limited resources in building the campus were informed largely by theologically-based principles of living by faith and living frugally. Miller reports a conference in which Maxwell, Fergus Kirk and she prioritized construction needs:

We decided to propose abandoning the enlargement of the Tabernacle, [and] finishing the outside with shiplap or tongue and groove and painting the building. The siding of the dormitory in the same way.

Plans for the diningroom [sic] were also discussed. It was agreed to definitely ask God for money with which to go on with the building without any interruption. We will try not to go beyond His thought in any expense and will look to Him for full supply of needs. I feel great access to faith through these decisions.<sup>50</sup>

The most sustained account of managing the school's physical needs, and the attendant stress caused by a lack of supplies, is recorded by Miller in the summer of 1932. During the previous year the school had experienced a dramatic increase in enrollment, going from 90 students to 152. The coming fall promised another dramatic increase (230 ended up coming) and the staff found themselves under considerable pressure to put up a new residence before students arrived in October. In July of that year PBI board chairman and co-founder of the school, Fergus Kirk, strongly advocated opening a credit account at the local lumber mill in order to continue construction on the newly-begun dormitory. Maxwell, however, was adamant that the school continue its standing policy of not going into debt for any aspect of operation. The issue raised strong feelings and polarized the board. Miller found herself caught in the middle as both sides sought her support for their position. Not surprisingly her recourse was prayer:

Today has been a day of much suffering of soul in behalf of this place. [Fergus Kirk's] proposal came to me as a terrible blow. It seemed to me like the beginning of the end of God's blessing upon the work if it were not in some way brought to naught. I have been praying with tears and strong crying that God would do something for us to prevent any such action being taken.<sup>51</sup>

For Miller this conflict was interpreted largely in spiritual, not economic, terms. As the stand off between Maxwell and Kirk continued she noted:

I have been inclined today to doubt God. But what time I am afraid, I will trust. This spring we had too easy a time entirely. We just thought that things were going to slide along easily. But God has far more to do in us than in the buildings. Oh may He accomplish that which pleases Him.<sup>52</sup>

By the end of August, Kirk was still insisting on the credit account; a few days later Fergus' brother Roger, who was also backing the credit proposal gave Maxwell "a terrible talking to. He accused him of most everything . . ."<sup>53</sup> As the dispute continued, Miller hints that Kirk practiced some work-to-rule tactics in his role as construction foreman.<sup>54</sup> Finally, two months after the crisis began Miller wrote with no small relief that "this morning Mr. Fergus Kirk came in and had a talk with Mr. Maxwell . . . He admits that he was in the wrong . . . Mr. Maxwell thinks that God has done a great work in Fergus . . . Praise God! I believe that things will begin to move now."<sup>55</sup> Shortly afterward Miller noted that money to proceed began to come in, but it was the middle of November before the building was close to being usable.<sup>56</sup> A year later Miller was still lamenting the unfinished state of campus buildings.<sup>57</sup>

Material scarcity was also evident in a second way, namely on a personal level. This is particularly noticeable from Miller's periodic references to her personal finances, or lack thereof. On at least two occasions she notes that for a period of several weeks her personal savings consisted of ten cents.<sup>58</sup> While food and accommodation were provided by the school such tight personal finances meant exercising thrift and ingenuity when it came to making one's wardrobe last, even if it became rather threadbare. When Miller did receive personal financial gifts from friends, she was quick to record her gratitude in her diary, but it was gratitude not because it would allow her some creature comforts, but because she could pass on a substantial amount, if not all of it, to support missionaries abroad. On one such occasion she wrote:

I praise God for His goodness and for His faithful provision for my needs. I have been looking to Him for money and this evening I received a letter from Lily Snyder and it was an order for \$5.00 . . . How glad I am to have this money to give to the [China Inland Mission] on my pledge . . . Now I need shoes and perhaps before the end of the year glasses, certainly work on my teeth. God never yet hated His own body but nourisheth and cherisheth it. I am glad that I can trust him for all.<sup>59</sup>

If personal material resources were in short supply, so also was personal time. From the frequent descriptions of each day's activities it is a wonder that Miller had even enough time to herself for daily diary entries. In spite of the dramatic growth in student numbers during the first half of the 1930s,



neither official school manuals nor Miller's personal reflections note a corresponding increase in faculty and support staff. It meant that PBI's personnel had to be versatile and work long hours. Besides teaching and supervising the women's residence, Miller also served on PBI's Board of Directors, preached frequently in Sunday services – especially when Maxwell was away, and during the summer helped in the cleaning and general upkeep of the campus. In late summer she helped the school cook do up preserves in preparation for the coming year. The work was demanding and Miller frequently noted how exhausted she was from both the physical and emotional demands placed upon her. The task she found most daunting, however, was not the physical labor or preaching and teaching, but the great personal weight of responsibility she carried as the school's chief administrator when Maxwell was absent. In September of 1933 when Miller found out that Maxwell would be delayed in Edmonton before returning home from an extended preaching tour she confessed, "It seemed as if I could not stand it. I did not realize how tired and worn my nerves are or how much I was counting upon the relief that his coming would be."<sup>60</sup> This mental fatigue was compounded a few days later when the board chairman Fergus Kirk angrily confronted Miller over the hiring of several men who were carrying out construction work for the school. It is with some relief that she was able to note Maxwell's return several days later.<sup>61</sup> But even in the midst of this culture of scarcity, Miller could see the theological bright side; in such times of need and crisis it was "good to be cast on Him. We have many and great things for which we must seek help from Him who alone can build [the school]."<sup>62</sup>

The third prominent theme in Miller's diaries is her desire to further her students' missionary aspirations. While she does make periodic references to teaching concerns and the performance of her students in their classroom work, most of her observations about students are tied to their development as potential missionary candidates. Seen through this lens, PBI becomes less a school and more of a half-way house for students to separate themselves from this-worldly engagement and prepare to take the Gospel to "the regions beyond" where Christ has not yet been preached. Miller's own disengagement from cultural activity, such as politics and other events that would be reported in the popular media, is clearly evident. Reference to such events is conspicuously absent. Outside of noting the unexpected banks closures in the United States in 1933, and a few lines about William Aberhart's electoral victory in 1935, Miller devotes little space to these

things in her diaries. The fortunes and failings of students, alumni and staff members as they work through the process of missionary candidacy with various agencies is one of her chief concerns.

Even here Miller shows particular interest in people who chose to apply to the China Inland Mission. Dr. Robert H. Glover, who was the North American director for the CIM, was a frequent speaker at Prairie's annual spring missions conference; he used his visits to recruit candidates for overseas service. Miller noted with some pride that Dr. Glover had mentioned to another missionary that CIM's best candidates came from PBI.<sup>63</sup> Conversely, a few years later she noted with shock that the whole slate of CIM candidates from Prairie had been turned down.<sup>64</sup> But such setbacks were the exception. Each spring at graduation Miller noted with glowing pride the number of students who had committed themselves to missionary service and the ones who already had been accepted by mission boards.<sup>65</sup> Echoing one of Dr. Glover's spring conference sermons she wrote,

Missions is the greatest investment in the world. Never have I met a true missionary who has had any regret as to the investment of his life in the missionary cause . . . the one thing in the world in which God is most interested is its evangelization. The supreme task of the church is carrying out the great commission.<sup>66</sup>

But missions was not just noted at graduation time. Throughout the year Miller counselled her students to consider missionary service and secretly anguish over them when they showed signs of opting for something, or someone else. She could rejoice when Laura "offered herself for China," but could only pray that Margaret would give up "all idea[s] of attracting men and set herself China-ward."<sup>67</sup> A fair amount of Miller's time was also devoted to writing references for students as they applied to mission boards, as well as carrying out an extensive correspondence by mail with graduates who were active in various mission fields. Some days she would write up to a dozen such letters a day.<sup>68</sup> Such a worldview leaves one with the understanding that for Miller, the culture that surrounded the school in its North American environment was a dim shadow land, not fully real. As such PBI functioned as porthole from that chimera to the true reality of the overseas mission field. For Miller the success of the school was measured by the number of students who responded to the call of missionary service upon completing their studies.

It is easy to conclude from the above description of prayer, scarcity and missions that Dorothy Ruth Miller and others like her who dedicated themselves to teaching in schools such as PBI, were rather grim ascetics who experienced little pleasure, and gave even less to those around them. In fairness to Miller she does make reference to other activities besides mission outreach and prayer. Even in the midst of a frontier environment exacerbated by the chronic shortages of the 1930s depression, Miller still found time to appreciate small pleasures. Each spring she notes in extensive detail the flowers she plants in various garden plots on the campus. Gardening seemed to be a kind of therapeutic hobby that gave her a break from the demands of teaching, sermon preparation and administration. She clearly enjoyed the outdoors but had few opportunities to travel. Her record of her one trip to Banff clearly shows a delight in the beauty of the mountains and the relaxation she gained from being able to hike around Lake Louise and Johnson Canyon.

Further evidence of a more three-dimensional character of institute life, and Miller in particular, comes in the occasional pointed observations she makes about her peers. As much as she respected Maxwell, she was also quick to point out perceived defects in his judgment. After hearing Maxwell give marital counsel to another young male staff member Miller indignantly commented: "I must say that on the subject of matrimony Mr. Maxwell tries me. He thinks that he know a lot about it but he knows nothing of women, even if he has a wife."<sup>69</sup> In recent interviews former students were asked to recall their impressions of Miss Miller. Invariably the first thing they mentioned was her sense of humor. In spite of her no nonsense enforcement of the school rules she was remembered for her infectious laugh and portly figure, which shook like Santa Claus. To some she was a holdover from the Victorian era: a women who could even carry her chamber pot with dignity as she made the daily morning trip from her second floor rooms down the hall and two flights of stairs to the outhouse. One student described her as mother figure not only to students, but also to L.E. Maxwell.<sup>70</sup>

So while PBI was a hothouse of holiness faith it is significant to note that through the private eyes of Dorothy Ruth Miller it was also a place where devout, pious staff members, with all too human failings, sought to live out the convictions of their faith, and encourage their students to personal devotion of the crucified life and missionary service.

**Endnotes**

1. The back page of Dorothy Ruth Miller's 1934 Diary (hereafter DRMD); Box 31, Prairie Bible College Archives (PBCA).
2. See Bruce L. Guenther, "Training for Service: The Bible School Movement in Western Canada, 1909-1960" (Ph.D. Diss., McGill University, 2001), 8.
3. Defining the term "fundamentalist" and its counterpart, "evangelical" has provided no end of challenges to historians of Christianity. For a further clarification of these terms as they are used in this paper see Guenther, "Training for Service," 12-26; and James Enns, "Every Christian A Missionary: Fundamentalist Education at Prairie Bible Institute, 1922-1947 (MA Thesis, University of Calgary, 2000), 10-36; John G. Stackhouse Jr. *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 12-17; and Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 28-36.
4. I am indebted to Bruce Guenther ("Training for Service," 349) as well as one of my students, Bob Do, for the "hot house" metaphor; both used the phrase to describe their understanding of Bible school life.
5. Virginia Lieson Brereton, "The Bible Schools and Conservative Evangelical Higher Education, 1880-1940," in *Making Higher Education Christian: The History and Mission of Evangelical Colleges in America*, eds. Joel A. Carpenter and Kenneth W. Shippy (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian University Press), 110-130; and Ben Harder "The Bible College Movement in Canada," in *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 19 (April 1980): 29-45.
6. See Betty A. DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 76-86; Janette Hassey, *No Time For Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1986), 11-30; and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth *Fundamentalism and Gender, 1875 to the Present* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1993), 76-89.
7. Guenther, "Training for Service," 297-360; Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 71-88, 131-137; and Robert K. Burkinshaw, "Evangelical Bible Colleges in Twentieth-Century Canada" in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. George A. Rawlyk (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 369-384.
8. Guenther, "Training for Service," 359, 364.

9. Although Miller continued to be active on the staff of PBI until late into 1943 when she was diagnosed with cancer. She spent the last few months of her life with relatives in West Virginia, but was buried in Three Hills in February 1944. For unknown reasons the diaries in PBI's archives do not go past 1936. The increasing number of lengthy gaps in the 1936 book suggests she simply stopped keeping a diary after that year.
10. For a more detailed account of PBI's origins see Enns, "Every Christian A Missionary," 1-7, 37-63; and Stackhouse, 71-88.
11. From Miller's diary entries of 1928 we learn that things were not going well at the Seattle school. She took Maxwell's letter of invitation, as well as the failure of the Seattle school to renew her contract for the coming year, as providential guidance that Seattle was no longer the right place for her (see entries from 29 March, 17 April, and 15-16 May).
12. "On Women Speaking," *The Prairie Pastor* 12, No. 12 (December 1939): 7-8.
13. "The Coming School Year," *The Prairie Pastor* 1, No. 9 (September 1928): 3.
14. "Town Timeline," *Three Hills Capital* (29 July 1987).
15. For further discussion on the relationship between school and town see Enns, "Every Christian A Missionary," 65-69.
16. For further explanation of the particular form of holiness theology taught at PBI see L.E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified: The Cross in the Life of the Believer* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1945).
17. For further explanations of this doctrine see Darrel R. Ried, "Towards a Fourfold Gospel: A.B. Simpson and the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada," in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, 271-288; and George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 78-79; and Enns, "Every Christian A Missionary," 40-46.
18. 15 October, 1934, DRMD.
19. 14 November 1934, DRMD.
20. 30 June 1932, DRMD.
21. 2 December 1933, DRMD.
22. 2 January 1935, DRMD.
23. 6 April 1930, DRMD.

24. 31 May 1930, DRMD.
25. 16, 19 December 1931, DRMD.
26. 28 July 1932, DRMD.
27. 26, 30 December 1934, DRMD.
28. 1 February, 1930; 30 June and 29 March, 1934; 16 January, and 4, 21 March 1928, DRMD.
29. 29 March, and 15-16 May 1928, DRMD.
30. 29 April 1930, DRMD.
31. Inside cover of 1934 Diary. Here Miller has a timetable of the school week laid out.
32. Miller makes frequent reference to a weekly street meeting held in Three Hills on Saturday evenings. On Sunday staff and students could attend two services at the local Presbyterian church, where some of the founding families worshiped, and where Maxwell and Dearing preached on occasion. In addition to that the school held its own afternoon service along with a Sunday School hour prior to that. As the school grew it seems that attendance at the local church was discouraged and PBI began to run a morning and evening service in its own Tabernacle (see Sunday entries between 1933 and 1936 for this trend, DRMD).
33. 9 September 1931, DRMD.
34. For examples see 6 February 1930; 26, 27 June 1928; 9 July 1932; 3 January and 9 June 1931; and 12 February 1932, DRMD.
35. 24 July, and 23 August 1931, DRMD.
36. 20 May 1934, DRMD.
37. 12 May 1931, DRMD.
38. 14 January 1930, DRMD.
39. 11 February 1931, DRMD.
40. 21 October 1931, DRMD.
41. 8 September 1932, DRMD.
42. 9 September 1932, DRMD.

43. 26 May 1931, DRMD.
44. 5 April 1932, DRMD.
45. *Bulletin of the Prairie Bible Institute: 1928-29*, 8; Registrar's Office Records, Prairie Bible College.
46. *Bulletin of the Prairie Bible Institute: 1928-29*, 14, 19-20.
47. *Manual of the Prairie Bible Institute*, 1944-45, 8.
48. 3 January 1931; 7 July 1932; 15 September 1933; and 10 July 1934, DRMD.
49. 31 July 1931, DRMD.
50. 26 April 1932, DRMD.
51. 25 July 1932, DRMD.
52. 29 July 1932, DRMD.
53. 2 September 1932, DRMD.
54. 15 September 1932, DRMD.
55. 26 September 1932, DRMD.
56. 19 November 1932, DRMD.
57. 4 November 1933, DRMD.
58. 16 October, and 14 December 1928, DRMD.
59. 1 December 1932, DRMD.
60. 16 September 1933, DRMD.
61. 20, 28 September 1933, DRMD.
62. 8 February 1931, DRMD.
63. 19 September 1931, DRMD. A few years later she also mentioned (perhaps a little smugly) that according to a visiting missionary conference speaker, PBI's candidates were considered superior to CIM's current slate of candidates from California schools (see 31 March 1936, DRMD).
64. 29 March 1935, DRMD.
65. For a typical example see 1 April 1934, DRMD.
66. 31 March 1934, DRMD.

67. 1 April 1931; and 30 December 1934, DRMD.
68. 31 August 1933. See also 10-11 April 1933; and 9 March 1936, DRMD.
69. 24 February 1930, DRMD.
70. Phone interviews with Ida McLean, Doug Kirk, and Jean Grasley, 16 May 2002, Three Hills, Alberta.



## **From Quaker to Upper Canadian: The Boundaries of Community Identity among Yonge Street Friends, 1801-1850<sup>1</sup>**

ROBYNNE ROGERS HEALEY

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In the spring of 1801, when Timothy Rogers arrived in Upper Canada with twenty Quaker families from Vermont to begin a settlement on Yonge Street, he envisioned the unification of Upper Canadian Quakers and the establishment of a stable, thriving faith community based on the fundamental Quaker principles of peace, equality and simplicity. Immediately, his settlers were followed by a similar number of Quaker families from Pennsylvania led by Samuel Lundy. Together, these members of the Society of Friends joined forces to create a strong faith community in the backwoods of Upper Canada.<sup>2</sup> This settlement of Friends did not attract a great deal of attention. It was well-removed from other settlements and Quakers were not a troublesome bunch. The colonial government was pleased to have them along Yonge Street. They were hardworking and diligently fulfilled their settlement duties. As plain folk they kept to themselves; in fact, they purposefully set themselves apart from the general population. They were proud to be a “peculiar people.”

The Yonge Street settlement, which quickly grew to be the largest community of Friends in Upper Canada, was an extension of the eighteenth-century Quaker retreat from mainstream society. Those who settled in the Yonge Street area established a community where they could live out the tenets of their faith relatively free from the laws of the larger society with which their testimonies often disagreed.

Yet, by the 1850s, what it meant to be a Quaker in Upper Canada had changed significantly. For instance, Daniel Rogers, Timothy's grandson, was not only an active member of the Yonge Street Meeting, but also a diligent citizen of the Newmarket community, and a loyal subject of the Queen.<sup>3</sup> This particular accommodation of identity as Quaker and active participant in Upper Canadian society would have been impossible fifty years earlier. Clearly, by the mid-nineteenth century, the boundaries of Quaker identity had changed and Yonge Street Friends had become integrated into mainstream Canadian society.

This paper examines the factors that nurtured that integration. It argues that the shift in Quaker identity that took place over two community generations<sup>4</sup> was a combination of two factors: doctrinal differences which splintered the community, and the collaborative efforts of Friends and their non-Quaker neighbours, in the years after the Hicksite-Orthodox separation, to press for the legitimacy of dissent in the context of a British North American colony. It demonstrates that through conflict and accommodation Quakers became less sectarian and more accommodative. This was not confined to Quakers. The larger process of conflict and accommodation that came out of the social, political and cultural intercourse of various groups over approximately seventy years between 1780 and 1850 formed the basis of Upper Canadian identity. This identity was generally based on a Protestant consensus and an accommodative ideology of loyalty.<sup>5</sup> While this identity was not universal, by 1850 it was certainly more comprehensive than it had been in 1800. It did not represent the movement of more people into a narrow band of identity as much as it exemplified the broadening of identity to encompass more Upper Canadians. This was not a simple teleological course whereby one group became more accommodating of difference. Rather, this was a movement from exclusivity to accommodation by a variety of groups.

The first evidence of factionalism within the Yonge Street community took place in 1812 with the separation of the Children of Peace, or Davidites as they were known after their leader David Willson. This created a number of fissures in the community. It physically removed a significant group from the Meetings for business and worship and heightened tensions in the community. Suddenly, issues of doctrine, which were not commonly discussed, were debated openly in the Meeting and in the homes of Friends. Friends had no written doctrine or creed; nevertheless, most generally agreed that they shared a similar understanding of the original tenets of Quakerism.

Challenges to the belief system or the integrity of the community, such as the one produced by the Children of Peace, were easily addressed by disowning the offending parties. While this schism removed a significant group of Quakers from membership, the disowned group was not large enough to cause alarm about the future of the faith community. Their distinct lack of participation in the War of 1812, even though they lived on the major military road in the colony, indicates that at the end of the first generation, Friends remained insulated from mainstream society.

Despite the troublesome Davidites, the second generation of the community began with a strong and vibrant Quaker Meeting. Yet, even though they were disowned, the Children of Peace were not removed from the community. Connections between families and neighbours remained. And the issue of doctrine and “heretical” beliefs refused to go away. Moreover, despite the fact that the Yonge Street settlement was still a frontier community at the end of the first generation, the second generation witnessed considerable changes to the landscape and settlements around them. Shanties gave way to log houses and, in the 1820s, the first brick homes began to appear in the area.<sup>6</sup> Although Friends tried to remain insulated, they could not deny that they were a community within a colony that was increasingly mature.

The 1820s, especially, were an important period in the economic and agricultural development of the geographic community where Yonge Street Friends were located. A marked increase in immigration brought large numbers of non-Quakers to the area and forest was quickly turned to farmland.<sup>7</sup> The population changes and shifting demographics in the surrounding geographic communities heightened awareness of Upper Canadian society. It was in this environment that two major crises in the second-generation Yonge Street Friends community occurred. First, the Hicksite-Orthodox separation in 1828 fragmented the Quaker faith community and pushed Yonge Street Quakers to address their choices for dealing with mainstream society. Second, as another generation of Quakers reached adulthood, their aspiration to establish themselves as yeoman farmers was complicated by the decreased availability of non-clergy or crown reserve land in proximity to their community. Caught between their principles, and their desire to remain close to family and Friends, young Quakers increasingly found themselves at odds with the policies of the colonial administration. Frustration with the provincial government was something they shared with non-Quakers around them. More ties with non-

Quakers and further integration into mainstream society after 1828 drew a significant group of Quakers into political activity and eventually into active involvement in the Rebellion of 1837.<sup>8</sup> The notable involvement of Friends in the Rebellion marks the end of the second-generation community. Quaker commitment to an event so central to the mainstream political culture of the period reveals a marked difference in the relationship of Friends with Upper Canadian society. They began to become an integrated rather than separate group of people. Within the third generation, their integration into Upper Canadian society would be complete.

The second-generation community began in 1814 with a noticeable expansion of ministerial activity at Yonge Street. This was almost certainly associated with the fermenting doctrinal disputes that began with the separation of the Children of Peace. The separation and its accompanying doctrinal challenges peaked the interest of Quakers far and wide.<sup>9</sup> Doctrinal disagreements at the yearly-Meeting level also encouraged a higher incidence of charismatic visiting ministers to Yonge Street where they eagerly enlisted Friends for their “side” of the debate.<sup>10</sup> It was not just the ministers from outside who contributed to the excitement in the travelling ministry. Yonge Street Friends themselves began to get involved in the disputes and were actively engaged in their own travels. This steady increase in local ministerial activity in the second generation indicates that the circumstances that led to the eventual split in 1827-28 were the result of simmering differences over a number of years rather than sudden doctrinal revelations.

In addition to increased ministerial activity, the Meeting itself grew in numbers. In the 1820s, Yonge Street was the largest Upper Canadian Meeting. According to the records of travelling minister Isaac Stephenson, in 1824 Yonge Street claimed a total membership of six hundred forty-three.<sup>11</sup> Stephenson also noted that the Meeting had four recognised ministers and eight elders. This strong leadership in a growing and vibrant faith community made the Yonge Street Meeting an attractive location for Quakers who immigrated to Upper Canada.

Continued growth of the Yonge Street Meeting was due, in large part, to ongoing British immigration to the North American colonies in the post-war period. The significant difference in immigration in the second-generation community was the arrival of a more pluralistic group of Quakers. While Pennsylvania Friends had far out-numbered other Quakers in the pre-1812 period, immigrants into the second-generation community

came from a variety of American Meetings, other Upper Canadian Meetings, and, most notably, from the British Meetings where Friends had already begun to feel the influence of evangelicalism.

This immigration noticeably altered the composition of the Friends community at Yonge Street. The large influx of British Friends with their commitment to orthodoxy had especially important consequences on the theological makeup of the community. Their arrival during a period of intensified ministerial affected the reception of travelling ministers and the doctrinal debates that continued to brew as Quakers faced off across theological lines that eventually led to the Hicksite-Orthodox separation in 1828.

Discord plagued the Society as Quakers came into sharp disagreement over their religious organisation as a church or sect.<sup>12</sup> Quakers across North America who, in the eighteenth century, had worked so vigilantly to retreat from mainstream society found, in the nineteenth century, that they could not withstand the onslaught of western settlement or the influence of the evangelical revival that burned over the northern United States and Upper Canada.<sup>13</sup> This revival, begun by John Wesley, had started in the Church of England and resulted in the rise of Methodism in the mid-eighteenth century. Within this movement, the term evangelical took on specific connotations. Not only did it refer to the proselytising of believers, it came to mean acceptance of a certain set of beliefs that included belief in the infallibility of divinely-inspired Scripture, acceptance of Jesus Christ as the son of God, and his death as the atonement for the sin of humankind. Evangelicalism became a definite theological system and, for its exponents, belief in its component doctrinal parts was assumed to be essential to salvation. This was at direct odds with quietism, a more mystic approach to the relationship between God and humankind. Quietists believed in the direct spiritual inspiration of the Inner Light as the sole basis for their religion.

Evangelical Methodism was one of the most influential movements on the continent. It dealt a mighty blow to Quakerism because it struck at the heart of their worldview and identity. It separated family, friends, and neighbours into unforgiving, opposing camps. For the Yonge Street Quakers, it was disastrous. We know from the journals of visiting ministers that long-standing quarrels continued to trouble the Yonge Street community. The tenor of the Yonge Street Meetings was particularly divisive.<sup>14</sup>

The Meeting minutes reveal little about the controversies that chafed at Meeting unity. Yet, the strain in the Meeting in the years leading up to the

separation is apparent by what is not recorded in the minutes. All insertions into the minutes were the result of decisions based on consensus. Divisive disagreements between feuding parties meant that consensus was accomplished with great difficulty; sometimes it was not achieved at all. Minute books, which were customarily filled with numerous items of business, changed noticeably in this period. In some cases, especially at the preparative Meeting level, there were consecutive months where the only information recorded in the Meeting was its date! Obviously there was nothing more than the date upon which Yonge Street Friends could agree. This was the case in Meetings which lasted for hours.<sup>15</sup> The business of the Meeting became stagnant and almost impossible to conduct. Consensus could only function with a certain amount of unity; without it community governance began to falter.

By early 1827 it is apparent that the chasm between the evangelical orthodox and the quietist Quakers had become too wide to bridge. Meetings that carried on late into the day took their toll on members who had to care for farms and businesses. These Quakers still lived in very frontier-like conditions. Travel to monthly Meeting in a lumber wagon, one of the only vehicles that could tolerate road conditions, could take hours. Having to sit with fussy infants and restless children was possible for an hour but could become a great trial when that Meeting extended to six or seven hours in length. The strain spilled over into the community and wore at the ties that held Friends together. A marked increase in complaints of defaming neighbours and people calling each other “infernal liars” occurred during this period. Whether the complaint against John Cuir, charging that he “followed someone with an axe threatening to do him personal injury,”<sup>16</sup> was related to a theological difference is not absolute, but it is highly probable, given its location in the minutes and the atmosphere of the day. It speaks of the level of emotion and frustration that doctrinal issues incited among Yonge Street Friends. It was that level of emotion that eroded consensus and tore families and long-time friends apart.

The actual separation among Yonge Street Friends occurred in the early summer of 1828, following the separation in the New York Yearly Meeting. Both the Hicksites and the Orthodox considered themselves the true Society of Friends and began disowning members who had attached themselves to the opposite group. The London Yearly Meeting, in which there was no separation, recognised the Orthodox group who shared their doctrinal stance. Coming as it did from the centre of Quakerism, the

Orthodox viewed this recognition as proof that they were indeed the real Society of Friends. The Hicksites, who eventually gathered under the Genesee Yearly Meeting, considered these actions as just another indication of the level of depravity that had crept into the Society. Dissension and strife tore through the Meetings. A great deal of energy was expended in dealing internally with the splits. Some Meetings were so badly divided that they were closed. Others lingered on but were unable to gather the excitement and momentum of the earlier years. Because of their theology, the Hicksites initially remained distinct as a group, but the Orthodox, who were numerically stronger in the Yonge Street Meeting, developed closer ties with those who shared their theological underpinnings – the Methodists.

Immediately following the actual separation, the groups descended into rather vicious quarrels over ownership of the Meeting's property. Opposing groups in each of the preparative Meetings locked each other out of the meetinghouses. Because they were the larger group, meetinghouses remained in the hands of Orthodox Quakers, although not without "great trials and perplexities" on both sides.<sup>17</sup> The doctrinal battles that spilled over into disputes over control of property heightened the conflict between the groups. For a number of months both sides found it virtually impossible to transact business. Because each group claimed to be the real Society of Friends, they competed with the other and tried to transact their business concurrently in the same meetinghouse. This soon degenerated into nasty verbal and physical disputes. Barred from meetinghouses, heckled in Meetings, and consumed with trying to figure out which Friends belonged with which group, the business activity of both the Hicksites and the Orthodox came to a grinding halt. Moreover, at the same time that their energies were invested in dealing with the crisis, their financial resources, of the Hicksites at least, were directed into the building of new meetinghouses. This effectively drained the community of much of the vitality it had possessed as a separate and distinct group.

To add fuel to the fire on Yonge Street, the Hicksite-Orthodox schism occurred at the same time that the Children of Peace were at their zenith and were pouring all of their resources into the construction of the elaborate temple at Sharon. Where other Quaker communities were split in two at this time, the Yonge Street Quaker community was fragmented into three distinct groups: the Hicksite, Orthodox, and the Children of Peace. The Children of Peace watched the unfolding events of the second separation with great interest, in some cases offering commentary.<sup>18</sup>

The Children of Peace were not the only group watching these developments. The influx of non-Quakers to the fertile farming communities north of York in the 1820s and 1830s had resulted in increased interactions between Quakers and non-Friends. This was the logical result of pioneer work bees, neighbourly assistance, and business interactions in local shops and mills. The closure of the Quaker school on Yonge Street after the Hicksite-Orthodox separation meant that the Meeting's children attended local schools where they were exposed to non-Quakers and their ideas. There were also numerous opportunities for affiliation with non-Friends who were evidently eager to discuss the ever-present questions of doctrine.

The journals of the visiting ministers indicate that significant numbers of non-Quakers regularly attended Friends' Meetings and commented on their content.<sup>19</sup> Travelling ministers were a matter of great interest and they drew a crowd. Just as non-Friends attended Quaker Meetings, Friends attended the camp meetings regularly held by itinerant Methodist circuit riders. The increased interactions between Quakers and their non-Quaker neighbours in this period, however, was due to more than interest in hearing another sermon. Rather, according to the Hicksites, the Orthodox had actively undertaken to enlist the support of their non-Quaker neighbours in their doctrinal debates.<sup>20</sup> Influenced as they had been by Christian evangelicalism, the Orthodox found that they had more in common doctrinally with the Methodists than they did with their Hicksite brethren. The Orthodox did not hesitate to solicit this larger community support in the separation to gain control of their meetinghouses and property.<sup>21</sup>

Population growth, a more settled farming district, and a greater feeling of affinity with their Methodist and other evangelical neighbours meant that the Quakers began to be concerned with many of the same social and political issues that concerned their non-Quaker neighbours. This process had not only been the result of religious fragmentation, but it had also taken place over a number of years as Quakers found themselves caught between their faith community and the society in which they lived. Quaker testimonies on pacifism, oaths, and a paid ministry had created problems for Yonge Street Friends since their arrival in Upper Canada. As Quakers, they recognised that their principles could cause them personal hardship and they were prepared to accept the burdens associated with their faith. After all, a long tradition of Quaker martyrs had been kept alive in Quaker publications. However, the colonial legislature seemed to be continually unresponsive to the concerns of Friends. For instance, it had been firmly established by the



Canada Half-Year's Meeting in 1810 that no Quaker could lease Clergy Reserves because it was inconsistent with the religious principles of Quakers to support a paid ministry.<sup>22</sup> In the early community when there was a surplus of land this was not source of extensive hardship. However, by the time the second generation of Quakers in Upper Canada was looking for land to farm, the Quaker and non-Quaker community had grown.

This new group of young adults had to purchase land, unlike their parents. In addition to the cost associated with the purchase price, land was difficult to attain in the townships in which the Quakers lived. For instance, by 1825, 75.8% of the patented land in the townships of East and West Gwillimbury was occupied, an increase of 56.7% from 1820.<sup>23</sup> The remaining land not reserved as Clergy Reserves became harder to find and those who wanted it were pushed to move further afield or had to satisfy themselves with land provided to them by their parents. Also frustrating for Quakers who lived in those townships with larger percentages of unoccupied land was the issue of land speculators who held huge amounts of unimproved land that could be purchased at only the most exorbitant prices. These land speculators, of which the government was the largest, were holding back lands until improvements in surrounding areas drove up land prices.<sup>24</sup> Where East and West Gwillimbury were filling up, the other "Quaker" townships boasted large blocks of uncultivated, undeveloped, not-for-sale land.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, the roads fronting clergy-reserve land or land held by speculators remained primitive and underdeveloped. For farmers trying to get their product to market on unimproved roads, the Clergy Reserves and the unoccupied lands were not just a literal source of frustration, they were a symbolic reminder of the inequality entrenched in colonial Upper Canadian society. For young adults who were trying to make a living as farmers, this was also a personal issue. They could either lease the Clergy Reserves, or they could go deeper into the woods to the newly-opened townships. At times, Friends compromised their principles and leased the Clergy Reserves rather than move away from family; in other cases Friends did move further west and north to take up land. In the 1830s, Meetings were established in both Tecumseth and Eramosa townships indicating that sizeable Quaker populations had moved into those areas.<sup>26</sup>

As much as the Clergy Reserves became a personal issue for Quakers, they were also an issue for their non-Quaker neighbours. In the mid-1820s the Clergy Reserves had become an extremely contentious issue in the political life of the entire colony.<sup>27</sup> The wording of the 1791 Constitutional

Act set aside one-seventh of all land in the colony for “the support and maintenance of the Protestant clergy.” As far as the colonial authorities were concerned, the Protestant clergy could be none other than the Church of England, the established church in the colony.<sup>28</sup> Yet, in 1819 a group of Presbyterians from the Niagara District petitioned the government for support, arguing that the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves should not be confined to the Church of England alone. They did this on the principle that the Church of Scotland was one of the established churches in Great Britain. The response from the Colonial Office, suggesting that the Presbyterians were indeed entitled to some support, was not well-received by the likes of John Strachan and the executive council. Strachan’s fear was that conceding a share of Clergy Reserve proceeds to the Church of Scotland might lead all of the Protestant denominations to demand their share of revenue from the Reserves, something he was determined would never happen. The debate really heated up in 1825 when Strachan took pot shots at the other Protestant denominations during a funeral sermon for Bishop Mountain, the Anglican bishop of Upper Canada. Strachan was particularly scathing of the Methodists. The young Methodist minister, twenty-three year old Egerton Ryerson, responded with a compelling rebuttal that was viewed by his fellow Methodists as “the commencement of the war for religious liberty.”<sup>29</sup> What followed was an extended period of intense denominational rivalries and sectarian debate that would dominate the political life of the colony for many years.<sup>30</sup>

Military fines were equally as troublesome for Friends. In 1806 they had requested and received recognition of the Quaker testimony on pacifism from Lieutenant Governor Gore. This did little to help them in the years around the War of 1812; their refusal to pay fines in lieu of service had cost them dearly, both financially and in jail terms. Although the situation calmed down for a number of years after the war, it did not go away. In 1830 it was reported in the monthly Meeting that a bill was pending before the Assembly “to repeal an Act formerly passed, requiring members of our religious society with those of certain other religious societies (who are exempt by law from military requisitions) to pay a specified sum yearly on that account.” If that was not enough to upset Friends, another act was before the Assembly “requiring the members of said societies to work on the publick [sic] highways over and above their common statue labour to the amount of such demand as may be required of them of account of said exemptions.”<sup>31</sup> The response of Friends was outright refusal to comply. Notification was sent to

the lieutenant governor, but the problems continued. In early 1835 the Meeting was again addressing the issue of statutes passed in the Assembly requiring Quakers to pay a fine in lieu of service.<sup>32</sup> Increasingly, then, Yonge Street Friends found that the dictates of their faith were putting them at odds with the colonial administration. Decisions to live a particular way of life were becoming decidedly political. And Quakers grew more irritated by what they saw as an unresponsive and immoral government.

Vexation with the colonial government became widespread. By the 1830s, Newmarket and surrounding area, which were a part of the Home district, had become a hotbed of political dissent. Not only was this William Lyon Mackenzie's riding, but it was also the most active petitioning district in the colony.<sup>33</sup> Quakers and non-Quakers alike saw the unresponsiveness of the colonial government as confirmation of its corruption. Lack of improvements in roads, schools, and religious facilities were a festering sore. Political debates surrounding the Alien Question in the 1820s had pushed the issue of the legitimacy of dissent to the centre of political debate and had forced colonial leaders to articulate their idea of loyalty.<sup>34</sup> The issues contested in the debate over the Alien Question were of direct importance to Quakers in Upper Canada. The fact that, as "Americans," the majority of the Quaker community could become dispossessed and disenfranchised created an antagonistic environment. The debate that led up to the final approval of the Naturalisation Act illuminated the divergent attitudes of the Tories and Reformers.<sup>35</sup> And in the 1828 election more Reformers than Tories were elected to the Assembly. Pressure in the Quaker community was high. Religiously, the faith community was fragmented in 1828. Politically, tensions continued to brew.

In the 1830s political pressures in the Home District were fuelled by political rallies which featured William Lyon Mackenzie, one of the district's representatives in the Legislative Assembly. Throughout the 1830s, Mackenzie was repeatedly expelled from his seat in the Legislative Assembly for allegedly slandering its Tory members.<sup>36</sup> David Willson, leader of the Children of Peace, had become closely aligned with Mackenzie. In 1834 Willson was the main speaker at the first Reform convention.<sup>37</sup> He also regularly marched down Yonge Street with his silver band and choir of young women, denouncing the evils of the Family Compact. Samuel Lount, a Quaker blacksmith from Holland Landing, was also instrumental in Mackenzie's support. He, too, was frustrated for being ousted from his seat in the Assembly by the creative manoeuvring of Lieutenant-Governor Sir

Francis Bond Head. By 1837 there appeared to be community consensus that colonial justice could only be achieved one way—by resorting to violence to end the stranglehold of the Family Compact.

It was a Quaker, Samuel Lount, who rallied the young men of York County and led them down Yonge Street towards Montgomery's Tavern in December 1837. His troops were a rather disordered group of young men: Quakers, members of the Children of Peace, Selkirk Scots who had come to Upper Canada from their ill-fated experience in the Red River settlement, and various other settlers. Few had any military training. Those who did came largely from the Children of Peace at Sharon where, ironically, members trained regularly with firearms. Considering their previous insulation from mainstream society, the number of Quakers involved in the Rebellion is striking. Although Quakers formed only 4.2% of the population in rebel areas, they accounted for 40% of the known rebels and supporters.<sup>38</sup>

Because of their involvement in the Rebellion, a large number of Quakers and members of the Children of Peace were arrested and jailed. Many absconded across the border into the United States. Ironically, this is how Timothy Rogers' son, Asa, left Upper Canada. Asa Rogers Jr. did not take up arms in the Rebellion; he did assist the "rebels" by providing them with food, shelter, and the use of horses. As a result of his activity, he was arrested three times. Each time Quakers were successful in getting him released. After the third release, they warned him that any further arrests might result in his banishment to Van Dieman's Land. Not wanting to experience that fate, he and his family took what they could carry and fled through the night to Michigan.<sup>39</sup>

Politics and faith collided on Yonge Street in 1837. The defence testimony of one participant, Joseph Brammer, indicates the issues that pressed a group of pacifists to take up arms: "Your Lordship, I am an Englishman, I have a heart as true and loyal to the Queen and to Britain as any British subject in the country but if you mean disloyal to the Family Compact and the men who are robbing this county, I am guilty."<sup>40</sup> Most of those who were arrested languished in York jails where they carved "Rebellion boxes," small hand-carved wooden boxes, often inlaid with political messages. The inscriptions on one of these boxes is revealing of the reasons behind Quaker involvement in the Rebellion: "O when will tyrants cease to reign, the priests no longer preach for gain, and kings and emperors [sic] quit the throne and let the church of God alone."<sup>41</sup> This inscription indicates that the issue of the Clergy Reserves was key in the rebellious

activities of this group. Some Quakers suffered a worse punishment than jail. Samuel Lount, along with Peter Matthews, was hanged 12 April 1838 for his participation in leading the insurrection.<sup>42</sup>

While the Rebellion strengthened the determination of Tories to defend their exclusive idea of Upper Canadian identity, it also demonstrated the courage of the rebels' convictions in resisting perceived oppression.<sup>43</sup> It is here that one begins to see most clearly the evolution of the Yonge Street Quakers' identity. Their identity as a people separated and withdrawn from the world had changed enough that they were able to identify with their neighbours who shared similar concerns even though they may not have been Quakers. Friends had become part of the mainstream community. When a young Queen Victoria dispatched Lord Durham to inspect the state of the colonies in North America, Durham travelled through Upper and Lower Canada availing himself of public opinion. While in Newmarket, he stayed with Benjamin Pearson, a prominent Yonge Street Quaker.<sup>44</sup> The doctrinal strife that fragmented the faith community combined with the collaboration of Quakers and non-Quaker neighbours to insist on their right to disagree with the policies of the colonial administration caused a noticeable shift in the boundaries of Quaker identity and the integration of Friends into mainstream Upper Canadian society.

In 1837, as the Yonge Street community entered its third generation, Quaker identity had changed, but it had not disappeared. It had become less sectarian. Yet, Friends still adhered to their testimonies. Hicksite and Orthodox Friends involved in the Rebellion were disowned by their Meetings. Key members of the Children of Peace and active Reformers, like Samuel Hughes and Ebenezer Doan, were also deeply troubled by the military involvement of some of their members in the Rebellion. When David Willson refused to discipline the offending parties, arguing that their imprisonment had been sufficient punishment, Hughes and Doan left the sect and returned to membership in the Society of Friends. Both men joined the Hicksites.<sup>45</sup> By the time that these events were occurring, however, evangelical revivalism had taken its toll. The disowned were no longer bereft of a voice in the geographic community. This was no longer the frontier. As disowned Friends joined other denominational groups, especially the Methodists, denominational barriers broke down even more. Further integration of Quaker children into the local common schools where non-Quaker lessons were taught also decreased the barriers that separated Friends from the world. Significantly important, however, was the desire of

most Friends not to be “set apart” anymore. Most Quakers, both Orthodox and Hicksite, were looking for a faith that would allow them to participate in the affairs of the world.<sup>46</sup> Increasingly, young Friends who maintained membership in the Society were more nominal in their adherence to the letter of the Discipline. The movement towards non-sectarianism would be fully realised within a generation from the time of the Hicksite/Orthodox split. As census figures for 1851 demonstrate, 7,000 claimed to be Quakers, yet Meeting records only record a membership of 1,000. For many Friends, their faith identity was no longer defined by membership alone.

By mid-century the Yonge Street Quakers were no longer a separate, insulated group who happened to live in Upper Canada. Yonge Street Friends became Upper Canadians who happened to be Quakers. Faith was still a primary aspect of their identity, as it was for other Upper Canadians of the time. But that faith was no longer exclusive. Quakers continued to embrace their unique testimonies, but they did so from the perspective of a group that had become intricately related to the larger society in which they lived. God’s peculiar people were peculiar no more.

### *Endnotes*

1. This paper is based on work done for my doctoral thesis, “Keeping the Faith: Quaker Community and Women in the Yonge Street Meeting, Upper Canada” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Alberta, 2001). I would like to acknowledge the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship.
2. The Yonge Street Friends are those Quakers who belonged to the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting. This Meeting included preparative Meetings in the townships of King (Yonge Street), East Gwillimbury (Queen Street), Whitchurch, Uxbridge, and Pickering.
3. On 24 May Rogers commented on the local celebration of the Queen’s birthday, which had included public lectures and fireworks. He proudly ended his day’s entry by commenting that “Newmarket made quite a display of *Loyalty*” [Emphasis in original] (*Diary of Daniel H. Rogers* [Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society], 26).
4. The history of Yonge Street Friends can be divided into three distinct generations of community, which differ from a generational division of people in that they are distinct and clearly defined. The first generation began in 1801 with the arrival of Friends on Yonge Street and ended in 1814 with the separation of the

Children of Peace and the conclusion of the War of 1812. The second generation began in 1814 and ended with the Rebellion in 1837.

5. For works on the Protestant consensus see Curtis Fahey, *In His Name: The Anglican Experience in Upper Canada, 1790-1854* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991); John Webster Grant, *A Profusion of Spries: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: A History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); and William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989). Two works which address the development of an accommodative, pluralistic political ideology are: Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987); and David Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1784-1850* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).
6. Brian Coffey, "From Shanty to House: Log Construction in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," *Material Culture* 16, No. 2 (1984): 61-75.
7. Peter A. Russell, "Forest into Farmland: Upper Canadian Clearing Rates, 1822-1839," in *Historical Essays on Upper Canada: New Perspectives*, eds. J.K. Johnson and Bruce G. Wilson (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991), 131-149. See also, T.W. Achenson, "The Nature and Structure of York Commerce in the 1820s," in *Historical Essays on Upper Canada*, ed., J.K. Johnson (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 171-193; Douglas McCalla, "The Internal Economy of Upper Canada: New Evidence on Agricultural Marketing Before 1850," in *Historical Essays on Upper Canada: New Perspectives*, 237-260; and Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 45-91.
8. In addition to formal political activity, petitioning became very popular in Upper Canada in the years leading up to the Rebellion of 1837. The Home District, where the Yonge Street Quakers were located, was especially active in sending oppositionist petitions to the government. Carol Wilton has shown that, of the oppositionist signatures on petitions in 1831-32, 45.68% came from the Home District, over four times that of any other district in Upper Canada (Carol Wilton, *Popular Politics and Political Culture in Upper Canada, 1800-1850* [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000], 239). There was also formal political activity. Samuel Lount, a Quaker from Holland Landing and a leader in the Rebellion, was a member of the House of Assembly in the 1830s, before he took up arms and led a ramshackle group of dissidents down Yonge Street in an effort to overturn the colonial government.

9. David Willson incorporated music into his Meetings and enlisted the services of retired military officer, Richard Coates, to build the colony's first barrel organ and to conduct a silver band. This activity along with their unusual temple at Sharon drew visitors, both Quaker and non-Quaker.
10. The minutes of the Yonge Street Meetings indicate that between 1815 and the separation in 1828 thirty-seven Friends were recorded as visiting ministers.
11. This is recorded members only. There would also have been adherents or members who had been disowned who would still have been attending Meeting for worship (Isaac Stephenson to wife, Letter dated 1824, Isaac Stephenson Letters, D-2-10, Reel 54, MS 303, Provincial Archives of Ontario [hereafter PAO]).
12. Sect forms of organisation include a rejection of formality, internal specialisation, and the mores of the "world." This is usually coupled by a strict behavioural code. Church forms of organisation include more formality, internal specialisation, a code based more on belief than behaviour, and acceptance of the social mores of the world (Robert W. Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth Century America* [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1967], 3-15).
13. Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982).
14. "Copies of Letters of Elizabeth Robson," 1824-28, in "Quaker Women's Diaries: The Diaries of Elizabeth Robson, 1813-1843," No. 134, 29-12-1824, Reel 6, World Microfilms Publications. Robson's diaries indicate that in 1824, four years before the actual separation, the interactions in the Meeting were already very strained.
15. For instance, when Thoman Shillatoo visited the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting in early 1827, he recorded a Meeting that lasted over seven hours (*Journal of Thomas Shillatoo*, 2 vols. [London: n.p., 1839], 209).
16. "Yonge Street Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, 1828-1835," 16-04-1829, B-2-78, Reel 26, MS 303, PAO.
17. "Yonge Street Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, 1828-1835," 15-01-1829, B-2-78, Reel 26, MS 303, PAO.
18. Samuel Hughes, *A Vision Concerning the Desolation of Zion: The Fall of Religion Among the Quakers, set forth in a similtude or vision of the mind. Particularly dedicated to the captives, or scattered tribes of that body, now commonly called Orthodox and Hicksites* (Toronto: J.H. Lawrence, 1835), 3-4.



19. "Phoebe Roberts' Diary," *Ontario History*, 42, No. 1 (October 1950): 23; *Memoir of Priscilla Cadwallader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Philadelphia: T. Ellwood Zell and Co., 1864), 40; and *Journal of Thomas Shillatoe*, 209.
20. *The Friend, or Advocate of Truth for the Year 1829, Volume II* (Philadelphia: MTC Gould, 1829), 25-28.
21. *The Friend, or Advocate of Truth*, 25-28.
22. "Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, 1806-1818," 18-10-1910, B-2-83, Reel 27, MS 303, PAO.
23. Compare this with the other "Quaker" townships in the same period. 30.3% of patented land was occupied in Pickering, an increase of 19.3% from 1820. In Whitchurch and Uxbridge 41.8% of the patented land was occupied, up 10.7% from five years earlier. King township had only 20.5% of its patented land occupied, a percentage increase of 23.3% from 1820 (Leo A. Johnson, "Land Policy, Population Growth and Social Structure in the Home District, 1793-1851," in *Historical Essays on Upper Canada*, ed. J.K. Johnson, 44).
24. Gerald M. Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 131.
25. The problem of obtaining land was not confined to the townships in which the Quakers were located. This was a province-wide problem by the 1820s and led to a higher frequency of illegal settlement or "squatting" on unoccupied land (see Craig, *Upper Canada*, 141; and S.J. R. Noel, *Patrons, Clients, Brokers: Ontario Society and Politics, 1791-1896* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990], 81-82).
26. "Yonge Street Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, 1828-1835," 15-12-1831 and 12-12-1833, B-2-78, Reel 26, MS 303, PAO.
27. For a general discussion of the political tensions created by the Clergy Reserves in this period see Craig, *Upper Canada*, 171-179.
28. This was especially the case after 1812, when the growth of rival Protestant denominations in the colony became a cause for concern to the Anglicans. After the War of 1812 John Strachan put in a concerted effort to strengthen the church's institutional foundations by taking measures to turn the Clergy Reserves in a landed endowment and by attempting to create a university controlled by the Anglican church (Curtis Fahey, *In His Name: The Anglican Experience in Upper Canada, 1791-1854* [Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991], 61-74).
29. Quoted in Craig, *Upper Canada*, 174.

30. The secularisation of the Clergy Reserves was not achieved until 1854. Throughout this period, Upper Canadians continued to challenge the primacy of the Church of England and the Anglican-controlled King's College which were the recipients of the proceeds from the Clergy Reserves. In the 1830s a number of petitions were presented to the government calling for the secularisation of the Clergy Reserves (Wilton, *Popular Politics*, 46, 51-2, 172; see also Fahey, *In His Name*, 89-188; and Goldwin S. French, "Egerton Ryerson and the Methodist Model for Upper Canada," in *Historical Essays on Upper Canada: New Perspectives*, eds. Johnson and Wilson, 537-553).
31. "Yonge Street Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, 1828-1835, 18-02-1830," B-2-78, Reel 26, MS 303, PAO.
32. "Yonge Street Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, 1828-1835, 12-02-1835," B-2-78, Reel 26, MS 303, PAO.
33. See Wilton, *Popular Politics and Political Culture in Upper Canada*, 239.
34. David Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada*, 34-51. See also, Craig, *Upper Canada*, 114-123.
35. Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, 184.
36. Colin Read, *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada* (The Canadian Historical Association Historical Booklet, no. 48, 1988), 9.
37. *Genealogies of the Builders of the Sharon Temple*, 3<sup>rd</sup> revised and enlarged edition. Sharon Temple Study Series No. 1, 53.
38. Dr. Tom Socknat, talk given to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Friends Historical Association 1984, *The Tillsonburg News* (9 November 1984): 9; reprinted in *Canadian Quaker History Newsletter* 36 (December 1984).
39. "Asa Rogers: The Story of moving his family from Canada to the United States in 1838; his efforts to regain property left in Canada," Unpublished paper, Rogers file, Canada Yearly Meeting Archives (CYMA).
40. Quoted in *Genealogies of the Builders of the Sharon Temple*, 1.
41. Armitage Family File, CYMA. The top of the box is inscribed, "A present to Merib Armitage from Jesse Cleaver while confined in Toronto Gaol under Charge of H. Treason, June 20<sup>th</sup> 1838." The ends were inlaid with "UC" and "LC."
42. Quakers were also involved in the western uprising, as the conflict led by Dr. Charles Duncombe near London is known. In London, Joshua Gillam Doan, a birthright Quaker, was hanged for his involvement in the western uprising.

43. Read, *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada*, 24.
44. Robert Terence Carter, *Newmarket: The Heart of York Region* (Newmarket: Dundurn Press Ltd., 1994), 35.
45. *Genealogies of the Builders of the Sharon Temple*, 22, 39.
46. It is usually conceded by Quaker historians that the Orthodox certainly wanted a religion which would “sanction and recognize their activities in the world” (Robert W. Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth-Century America* [New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967], 31).



**Reconciling Faith and Reason:  
Universalism as Theological Anomaly in Nineteenth  
and Twentieth-Century Rural Ontario**

MARVIN L. ANDERSON

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In light of the thematic focus of this year's annual meeting on Boundaries, I will be giving specific attention to the various ways in which the Universalist understanding of Christianity was a theological anomaly in nineteenth and early-twentieth century rural Ontario that was at variance with more conservative formulations of Christianity in neighbouring Christian churches in their local rural communities. This paper is based on my historical research in preparation as the guest speaker for the celebration of the 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda located near Leamington, Ontario, in Essex County, on Sunday, 12 November 2000.

For the purposes of this paper, I will primarily concentrate on the salient theological challenge posed by the Universalist movement in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries within Canada. Secondly, I will examine the growth and formation of this "Christian" denomination at the Olinda Universalist Church during this period, with brief attention to its historical transformation into its present-day identity as the Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda.

In summary, this paper will examine the significant theological and historical inroads made by Universalism as a predominately rural movement in Ontario. The characteristic values and theological outlook of Universalism will be analysed with specific attention to the small town and rural context in which this liberal religious orientation took root and thrived. The

theological and religious anomaly of Universalism was clearly evident in how the longstanding Universalist church at Olinda contested, if not trespassed, traditional Christian, ecclesial boundaries and mores for normative religious life in southwestern Ontario. Furthermore, I will speculate on how the Olinda Universalist Church maintained its isolated Universalist religious identity despite the latent suspicion and occasional hostility from local and neighbouring Christian churches.

Even though the Olinda congregation continues to maintain amicable relationships with most of the local Christian congregations to the present day, its clearly liberal theological orientation was undeniably a source of misunderstanding, if not unspoken conflict and suspicion, for more conservative Christian congregations. Since 1880, the historic legacy of Universalism in Ontario reveals the tenuous yet palpable community tensions between Universalists and their counterparts, pushing the boundaries between faith and reason, rural and liberal (which usually implied urban), and salvation and damnation. The remainder of the paper will analyse the unique theological and historical context for Universalist congregations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within Ontario in light of the following summary descriptions of the above three categorical polarities, or ideological conflicts.

### ***Faith and Reason***

For early and later generations of Universalists, faith and reason were never considered antithetical to each other. Unlike the traditional Christian theological conflict opposing faith to reason, Universalists saw reason and rational thought as part of religious faith. This integral emphasis on reconciling faith and reason was both practical and theological in lay terms. It undoubtedly contributed to making Universalists more intellectually astute *and* religiously tolerant, especially compared to their Baptist and Methodist neighbours and peers within a dominant Christian social milieu. The rigour and thoroughness with which lay Universalist parishioners carried out their thinking and theological reflection suggests they were neither non-intellectual nor anti-intellectual, despite their limited access to formal education.

Most of the Universalist congregations were located in rural southwestern Ontario, and many of their members were farmers. Consequently, the time and money required for schooling and formal education was out of the question for most of them, not to mention the prohibitive geographical

distance they lived from schools. Furthermore, their “low-brow,” rural, self-educated intellectual and spiritual formation distinguished them from the humanistic ethos and social location of the very group with whom they would eventually merge in 1961 – the Unitarians.

### ***Rural and Liberal***

There is a prevalent stereotypical assumption that “rural” invariably equals conservative. This stereotype is persistent in historical documents, and continues to carry weight despite the lack of critical attention to its implied connotations. Conversely, the term “urban” is, generally speaking, equated with liberal. Moreover, since rural and urban have been and still are conceptualized as dichotomous to each other, the likelihood of any liberal thought or religion thriving in rural and farming communities seems remote. This assumption was, however, clearly contradicted by the liberal religious perspective and presence of the Olinda Universalist Church and other Universalist congregations alongside their more orthodox Christian neighbours.

### ***Salvation and Damnation***

The Calvinist emphasis on divine election and predestination was implicit in the orthodoxy of most Christian churches. Meanwhile, the firm theological conviction in universal salvation espoused by Universalists was not only central to their religious ethos, but it constituted their very name. The vernacular caricature of this doctrine was epitomized anecdotally in the following colloquial disdain for the Universalists’ dogmatic repudiation of hell-fire: “Those Universalists believe there is *no* hell; the hell there ain’t [no hell].”

Though amusing, the above commentary on the Universalists’ reputed denial of hell-fire and damnation attests to some of the contemporary reservations surrounding Universalists in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Such anecdotal sarcasm signaled the implicit moral danger in no belief in the doctrine and reality of hell. The historical record testifies to this climate of suspicion and fear of “heresy” occasioned by the new presence of Universalists. In 1846, the third Universalist minister to arrive in the province of Ontario was named J. R. W. Lavelle.<sup>1</sup> Lavelle was twenty-eight years of age and a convert from Presbyterianism. He went first to Smithville

where the local Universalist congregation, which had been organized by Alexander G. Laurie, the first ordained Universalist minister to arrive in the province two years earlier, was now meeting in a schoolhouse.<sup>2</sup> Two or three years later Lavelle moved to London, Ontario, to succeed Laurie who had returned to the United States. For several years Lavelle published a monthly paper, *The Gospel Messenger or Universalist Advocate*. The appearance of the first issue in January 1849 aroused unsavory comment from as far away as Montreal:

We are grieved to see, by the receipt of the first number, that a Universalist paper has been commenced in Western Canada. The beginning of this grievous error lies either in contemplating only the goodness of God's character, to the exclusion of his justice, truth and holiness; or in taking such an exaggerated and erroneous view of Christ's atonement as to believe that it will save all men, whether they will or not. But, however amiable the mistakes may be in which it originates, its onward course is, like that of all other errors, a desolating one. In many cases the atonement is discarded; Scripture, or, at all events, the greater part of it, ceases to be regarded as of Divine authority, and much uncharitableness appears towards those who continue to believe it. All the sanctions under which men usually act disappear, and the out-and-out Universalist may, so far as his creed is concerned, do anything he chooses, in defiance of all laws, human and Divine. The most man can do to him is to put him to death, and then he enters into immediate and unmingled happiness. Or, let the worst come to the worst, if no one will kill him, he may do it himself, with the same glorious result. Truly this is an awful decision!

We do not say that Universalists are such dangerous members of society as their faith tends to make them, but if they are not, we think it is because they have not full confidence in their own creed, and not because of the goodness of the human heart.<sup>3</sup>

Lavelle reportedly traveled widely throughout rural Ontario on horseback, and announcements in his publication indicate that he was preaching in Westminster, Beamsville, Berlin, Galt, Brantford, Waterford, Louth, Aylmer and Temperanceville.<sup>4</sup> In her book, *Universalists in Ontario*, Louise Foulds carefully documents the various historical stages through which the present Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda and former Universalist congregations gave formal expression to their Universalist



identity throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>5</sup> Foulds points out that the first organized congregation for which there is record was founded at London, Ontario, on 10 September 1831. Thirty male members signed the constitution, which declared, "The object of this society shall be the cultivation of peace and harmony and the promotion of religion and morality among ourselves and our fellow men." But interdenominational hostility was rife during this period of history, and the Universalists were clearly seen as a threat on both theological and political grounds.<sup>6</sup>

Convinced that reason was on their side, Universalist missionaries rejected outright the manipulative emotionalism of the revivalists at this time, and opted instead for public debate as a means of capturing public interest.<sup>7</sup> Both David Leavitt, the first missionary to settle in the province, and Lavelle, were skilled debaters. Having memorized much of the Bible, Leavitt, in particular, was never at a loss for the right quotation to counter his "Partialist" opponents; Universalists often referred to non-Universalists, and Calvinists, in particular, as "Partialists," because they believed that only part of the human race would be saved.<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact, Leavitt reportedly enjoyed debating so much that he often paid the expenses of his adversary in order to have the opportunity of showing off his oratorical prowess. A Leavitt obituary quoted from *The Universalist* described him as "a man of great natural ability, having unexcelled logical keenness, and possessed with argumentative powers beyond anyone we ever knew . . . simply a giant among pigmies in the days of his activity . . . a Universalist of the Ballou order."<sup>9</sup>

Generally speaking, parishioners in rural communities and small towns across Ontario and New England were more biblically literate than many have recognized. There was intense public interest in theology during this period, and theological debates between Universalists and their opponents had great drawing power. The debates over hell-fire and damnation often lasted for two, and sometimes three, days.<sup>10</sup> They must have easily provided the equivalent entertainment staying power of Oprah Winfrey at a historical time when the practice of both skilled elocution and rhetorical debate was more sophisticated than it is today. Most listeners were intellectually and patiently engaged for hours in attending such debates, unlike the "sound-bite" visual audience to which we have become accustomed in a television culture.

A sketch of Leavitt's life by his grandson, Ezra, offers firsthand testimony to the entertainment value of these oratorical contests. Ezra wrote

of his high school headmaster recalling Leavitt debates that he had attended in his younger days, in which the headmaster admitted that while he hadn't believed a word "the old man" [Leavitt] said, he would have traveled any distance to see the fun. The teacher added: "I once saw him [confound] four Methodist preachers one after another – they angry and he with a smile on his face."<sup>11</sup>

A famous two-day debate took place in a schoolhouse in Picton, Ontario between Leavitt and David Oliphant, a "Disciple Baptist" (Campbellite) minister in 1846. In February three years later, in the Methodist chapel in Jordan, Oliphant met Lavelle in a three-day marathon that attracted a huge crowd and was reported in detail in the local newspaper. It also drew brickbats from "Partialist" clergy, and three months later Lavelle again arranged for use of the chapel "for the purpose of informing the people what Universalism is and replying to some disgraceful misrepresentations made by some of the endless misery ministers."<sup>12</sup>

In 1853, however, an even bigger crowd of reportedly 1,500 people attended an open air debate at Fonthill – impossible to contain within any local town hall or schoolhouse – to hear Lavelle and C.P. Harris, a Methodist minister argue for and against the scriptural authority for Universalist doctrine. The two men spoke from a six-foot high platform, each supplied with a table and writing materials. Speaking fifteen minutes at a time, they debated for two days from eight in the morning to six in the evening, and only a short break for lunch. The whole affair was recorded in shorthand for publication after the event.<sup>13</sup>

In order to understand the prevalent and practically ubiquitous acceptance of "Partialist" theology over against Universalism in both Ontario and New England, it is important to recognize the prominent sacred canopy of New England Calvinism in eighteenth and nineteenth-century North America. It will also help set the stage for the entry of possibly the most famous Universalist preacher to whose lofty status in the communion of Universalist saints David Leavitt was elevated above – Hosea Ballou (1771-1852).

In 1750, Joseph Bellamy, a follower, and to some extent, a popularizer of Jonathan Edwards, published his theological masterpiece, *True Religion Delineated*, with the latter's blessing and explicit endorsement, to "distinguish true religion from false."<sup>14</sup> Despite the objections of some Calvinists, Bellamy's tract represented the last major formulation, or reformulation, of the older idea of the atonement as put forth in New England Calvinism. As

Anne Douglas suggests in her book, *The Feminization of American Culture*, one can probably trust Harriet Beecher Stowe's claim that *True Religion Delineated* was one of the most popular non-fictional books in New England in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.<sup>15</sup>

In delineating his own Calvinist interpretation of eternal punishment, Bellamy stressed repeatedly that humans have no claims on God at all: every person has deserved eternal damnation if only because God wants it that way.<sup>16</sup> God has every right to judge everyone and, conversely, God's judgment cannot be doubted by anyone. In fact, Bellamy infers that God has so written the human story of damnation and salvation so it will fully reveal and exercise his gifts. "What will he get by it all?" Bellamy inquires. "He will excite and display every one of his perfections to the life and so . . . will exhibit a most perfect and exact image of himself." To paraphrase Douglas' commentary on Bellamy's divine scenario, regenerate humans will be so bedazzled by the spectacle of God's glory that they will happily consent to play any bit part in his orchestrated cosmic drama.<sup>17</sup>

Two contemporary Calvinist Edwardseans, Samuel Hopkins and Nathaniel Emmons, offered complementary interpretations of the Last Judgment. As Hopkins was to explain, regenerate believers would be willing to be damned if God so wills it.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, they will even rejoice, as Nathaniel Emmons liked to emphasize, in seeing once-cherished friends and relatives tossed into hell-fire by a justly incensed deity. According to Bellamy, Christ was sacrificed not to take away sin, but to display God's dislike of it; Christ's death was not meant to show God's mercy, but to stress God's punitiveness. In other words, the Saviour died to pacify the Lord's pride. Hence, God can now feel justified in saving humans, if he so chooses, from the damnation they still richly and infinitely deserve.<sup>19</sup>

Douglas notes that Bellamy, like other prominent Edwardseans, was under considerable pressure by the Universalists to move toward the idea of a general Atonement. God's sacrifice of Christ has thus made it possible for all humans to be saved, although all humans will not be able to avail themselves of this opportunity.<sup>20</sup> Needless to say, many would concur with Ann Douglas – if not with Bellamy's rival Universalists – that "this doctrine of the Atonement is in many ways a horrifying one."<sup>21</sup> Yet, as Douglas suggests, this same doctrine clearly resonated with many people in its immense imaginative and intellectual appeal. As unfair as it undoubtedly is, especially to modern sensibilities, it still operated as a model of divine majesty; likewise, for as psychologically crushing and humiliating as it may

appear and often was, this doctrine could also be a source of moral energy, if not religious inspiration. Furthermore, “it provided its adherent, no matter how it belittled him, with a supreme and commanding object of worship.” According to popular lore, a long-time black parishioner of Bellamy’s was asked after Bellamy’s retirement how he liked his successor; the parishioner found the new minister satisfactory, but not nearly so exciting or stimulating as Bellamy had been. Bellamy “made God so great – SO GREAT,” he explained.<sup>22</sup> Douglas makes the astute observation that the terror and thrill of obeying such a mighty being with whom one could partially identify and from whom one could even anticipate being punished on Judgment Day, must have been enormous.<sup>23</sup> It was no doubt as exhilarating as it was frightening to most believers.

The idea of the atonement, which gradually replaced the Edwardsean or “New Divinity” theory among liberal Protestant ministers and theologians in the early and mid-nineteenth century, represented a shift from this basically paternal (or gubernatorial) and authoritarian view above to a fundamentally maternal and affective one.<sup>24</sup> God is no longer seen as expressing his hatred of sin by requiring the sacrifice of his son, but is now seen as demonstrating his love of humanity. Therefore, God ceases to govern by the direct and arbitrary imposition of his paternal will and begins to hold sway by the virtuous influence of his example. This theological shift in the doctrine of the atonement was already under way in various forms in the eighteenth century within the liberal wing of the Calvinist clergy, but it surfaced most decisively in the next century with the Universalist attack on the atonement in 1807 by Hosea Ballou (1771-1852). The Unitarian assault begun by William Ellery Channing in 1819, and consummated by Noah Worcester (1758-1837) in 1830, eventually led to a Congregationalist redefinition of the doctrine of atonement under the skilful interpretation of Horace Bushnell in 1866.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to the formidable legacy of its founder in New England, John Murray, succeeding generations of Universalist thinking in North America were profoundly indebted to the seminal influence of Hosea Ballou. With practically no formal schooling, yet gifted with an acutely logical and inquiring mind, Ballou first drafted his *Treatise on the Atonement* in 1805.<sup>26</sup> Although Ballou’s *Treatise* was indisputably his single greatest contribution to Universalism, his entire career as a preacher, pastor, and theologian augmented his formidable influence throughout the Universalist movement.<sup>27</sup>

In his *Treatise on the Atonement*, Ballou supported his arguments with a direct appeal to reason as well as to Scripture. He flatly denied the doctrines of original sin, eternal punishment, the Trinity and the supernatural redemption of humanity, on the grounds that they were not only unscriptural, but also irrational. “Why the above ideas should ever have been imbibed by men of understanding and study,” he said, “I can but scarcely satisfy myself; their absurdities are so glaring that it seems next to impossible that men of sobriety and sound judgment should ever imbibe them.”<sup>28</sup> Ballou saw Jesus’ mission on earth not as one of saving humanity from its inherently sinful nature and God’s resulting wrath, but of winning men and women over to an understanding of God’s loving character and a reciprocal desire to express the same love in their own lives.

Furthermore, Ballou reasoned that punishment could only be justified as a reforming influence, and therefore concluded that it made no sense for God to threaten humans with eternal punishment. No parent would be so irrational. He exalted human reason as “the highest faculty we have received from God” and proclaimed as a tenet of the faith “an extensive latitude to think freely.”<sup>29</sup> The majority of Universalists quickly adopted Ballou’s Unitarian position, but only gradually did the denomination embrace the whole of his modern thinking. Foulds comments that the Winchester Profession of 1803 differed from its predecessor in that it dropped both the Trinitarian concepts and the description of Jesus as a sacrificial saviour – reflecting a growing sentiment that salvation was assured by reason of the loving and merciful character of God. The Five Principles of 1899 acknowledged simply “the spiritual authority and leadership of Jesus.” It was not until 1935 that Universalism officially shifted its basis of authority from the divinely revealed Bible to “truth known or to be known.”<sup>30</sup>

According to Ballou, nowhere does God require more of his creatures than they can actually perform. God is not concerned with self-assertion but, in keeping with his loving character, he is eager to accommodate humans in the working out of their salvation in terms comprehensible to them.<sup>31</sup> Ballou mocks the very idea that God could either want to preserve or to add to his own glory, for such a wish would imply that his glory is not already eternal and immutable. Moreover, God would never punish humans eternally because endless torment by definition cannot possibly heal or reclaim them, and would contradict God’s preoccupation with their spiritual growth. “It is profane,” Ballou explains in his *Treatise*, “to attribute a disposition to the Almighty which we can justly condemn in ourselves.” Ballou always

believes it is fair and pertinent to ask the following question about any divine action: is it the way a parent would treat a child?<sup>32</sup>

While Bellamy consistently started from the premise that it is obvious that God does not treat humans as a father treats his son, Ballou assumes the reverse. As Douglas notes, it is precisely from this assumption of implied familial affection on the part of God the loving father that Ballou sets forth his own explanation of the Atonement, which he illustrates repeatedly by invoking the parable of the prodigal son. Ballou believes that God, like any good parent, loves all his children equally; likewise, he wants all of them to be happy, and he will thus save them all. Furthermore, Ballou utterly rejects Bellamy's notion that humans could so readily lose themselves in God's glory as to rejoice in anyone's damnation. Human feeling, which is superfluous and vain in Bellamy's impregnable logical system, has become the supreme value in Ballou's theological scheme. By his own emphatic confession, Ballou "had rather . . . be possessed of that *sympathy* which causes [one person] to *feel* for *another*, than to *enjoy* an *unsocial pleasure* in a *frosty heaven* of misanthropy" [italics in original].<sup>33</sup>

This same sentiment was undoubtedly shared among Universalist parishioners in general because it was central to their firm conviction that their God would never indulge in relegating even the worst of sinners to eternal damnation. Granted, the definitive theological understanding of the process of salvation in relation to suffering as a consequence of sin remained controversial among Universalists. In the early 1800s one faction, known as the "Restorationists," maintained that sinners in this life must undergo a limited period of penance in the afterlife before the soul could be "restored" to holiness and happiness. Others, known as "Ultra" Universalists, categorically rejected any idea of punishment after death. They believed that the consequences of wrong-doing were suffered in *this* life. While Restorationists were only a minority at first, their position would eventually become the dominant one by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup>

In order to understand the Universalists' dogmatic repudiation of "partial salvation" central to the prevalent Edwardsean and Calvinist theology in nineteenth-century Ontario and New England, I turn now to the Russian philosopher and Eastern Orthodox theologian, Nicolas Berdyaev. Exiled from his country in the wake of the Russian Revolution, Berdyaev was writing long after Ballou in a completely different cultural and religious milieu amid the political upheaval and transformation that followed the Revolution. With poignant similarity to Ballou, however, Berdyaev laments

the tragic course of Christian history in regards to the doctrine of salvation. He states emphatically, “the Gospel does not recognize a race of the good who are going to heaven and a race of the wicked who are going to hell.”<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the very “idea of hell,” Berdyaev insists, “has been turned into an instrument of intimidation, of religious and moral terrorism.”<sup>36</sup> With incisive and disturbing imagery, Berdyaev’s sarcastic inditement of the “Partialist” scenario for salvation sounds uncannily like Ballou:

The so-called good are often “wicked” and the apparently “wicked” are often “good.” People managed to deduce from Christianity the most disgusting morality that has ever been known . . . The “good” are so anxious to get to the Kingdom of Heaven that in the crush at the entrance to it they are ready to trample on a great number of their neighbours and push them down to hell, to eternal damnation. And since the gate into the Kingdom is narrow, there is a struggle and a selection. “The good” and the righteous fight their way into Paradise over the corpses of their neighbours, less good and righteous than themselves.<sup>37</sup>

Although the influence of Calvin’s formulation of election and predestination had waned by 1860, lurid descriptions fitting the above image of fiery torments awaiting unrepentant sinners were still a prominent feature of rural communities and small towns in New England as well as in Ontario. Based on both a defiant rejection of this arbitrary “Partialist” view of salvation, as well as a strong belief in a loving God, twenty-three men and women founded the First Universalist Parish of Olinda on 10 November 1880.<sup>38</sup> Nine of them were women. For the previous twenty years, Michael Fox, a local settler, had circulated Universalist literature in the community and organized services when visiting ministers were available. Mr. Fox was known locally as “Big Mike” – a name bestowed on him by the local Chipewewa people. At a time when it was common for European settlers and non-native residents to refer to native people as “savages,” Mr. Fox regarded them and referred to them as his brothers. Among his kindnesses to them was the donation of a small plot of land for use as a burying ground about 1840. This tiny cemetery, marked by a single stone, may still be seen on the Fourth Concession, not far from the church.<sup>39</sup>

Writing in 1889, J.C. Barrows, the Clerk of the church, gave the following account of the mixed, if not openly hostile reception of Mike Fox’s evangelism on behalf of Universalism:

Mr. Fox had been educated in the Orthodox faith, as had also Mrs. F., and it seems a happy co-incidence that their minds should simultaneously call in question those barbaric ideas which obscured their mental horizons. The Baptists at this time were predominant, and when it became known, as it speedily did, that Universalist literature was being introduced into their midst, they, with renewed vigor, sought to counteract its influence by a more literal presentation of an endless hell and kindred doctrines. Mr. Fox was assailed as the devil's emissary, and he, more than all others, was pointed out as the man who would suffer the most intense pain in the hottest corner of hell. The most opprobrious epithets were applied to him, while his very presence at that time was sufficient to appall the more credulous.

In the midst of all, however, Mr. Fox and his wife retained a perfect composure of mind, and were ever ready to defend their new-born faith as a precious inheritance vouchsafed by the loving kindness of God. They never hid their light under a bushel, but kept it bright until others seeing the good way followed. And thus the one *Gospel Advocate* falling casually into the hands of an individual proved the means whereby the tide of religious sentiment, in that locality, was turned.<sup>40</sup>

The formation of the church (as distinct from the parish) took place on 24 June 1883, when the Universalist Convention of the Province of Ontario was meeting for the first time at Olinda.<sup>41</sup> At the time of its founding, Olinda was a thriving little farming community with a general store and post office, a blacksmith's shop, a school, and a Methodist church. Located near Leamington, in Essex County, Olinda even had its own industry – a broom factory, using local broom corn. There had also been a Baptist church in the area at one time, but it is not clear if it was still in existence in 1880.<sup>42</sup>

Although many of their neighbours thought otherwise – as we have heard above – there was no doubt in the minds of the first generations of Ontario Universalists that they were Christians. The earliest denominational body in what is now Ontario was named the Christian Universalist Association for Canada West. It was succeeded in 1877 by the Ontario Universalist Convention, which eventually comprised six small churches at Bloomfield, Smithville, Port Dover, Nixon, Blenheim and Olinda.<sup>43</sup> Dr. Church and W.S. Goodell both referred to Universalism as “a Christian body,” and the first meeting of the Association spoke of “Christian Universalism.”<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, Convention memorials frequently referred to the departed as faithful Universalists and Christians. Foulds is convinced that the decision to drop



the word “Christian” from the name of the Association in 1856 does not appear to have been associated with any visible decline of Christian commitment, or any implied rejection of Christian identity. Rather, it probably reflected the “coming of age” of Universalism in Ontario so that by this time it may have seemed superfluous to spell out their literal identification with Christianity.<sup>45</sup>

Parallel to this is the fact that for the first generations of Universalists in Ontario, there was absolutely no question that the Bible was still the ultimate authority in matters of faith.<sup>46</sup> For example, the Bible and the cross figured prominently in the design of the Convention’s seal.<sup>47</sup> In addition, some of the early Olinda records describe the faith as “Bible Universalism,” and speak of the Bible as “our only Creed” and “the rule and guide of our faith and practice.”<sup>48</sup>

The idea of Jesus as Christ and Saviour, “a Mediator who gave himself a ransom for all,” appears to have been generally accepted in the early years at Olinda. This was reflected in the changing of its name from “The First Universalist Parish of Olinda” to the “The Church of Our Saviour” in 1902. Three years later, however, the minister, Willard Bodell, offered more liberal options. His list of the essential principles of the Olinda Universalist Church included, along with “the Universal Saviourhood of Jesus Christ,” “the Divine authority and leadership of Christ” and “Salvation by Character.”<sup>49</sup>

As the years went by, it was obvious that there was less and less emphasis on the “saviourhood” of Jesus and more and more on the exemplary nature of his teachings. By 1951, Stewart Moore reiterated from the Olinda pulpit that the teachings of Jesus, though difficult to follow, were the lofty ideal to which everyone should aspire. Simply put, one’s *life* was now the measure of one’s religion.<sup>50</sup>

Eight years later the congregation voted nineteen to two in favour of the merger being negotiated between the Universalists and the Unitarians, forming the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in 1961 and the Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) the following year.<sup>51</sup> Both organizations are still active and carry the same name, although the CUC has officially become independent of its mother affiliate, the UUA, within this past year. For 23 years after Blenheim closed in 1938, Olinda was the only remaining Universalist congregation in Ontario, and one of only three in all of Canada (the other two being in Halifax and North Hartley, Quebec – both are still active, and affiliated with the CUC). In spite of the cynical prediction of a local resident during the building of the church that he would live to see it

used as a sheep-pen,<sup>52</sup> the congregation continues to meet regularly, having recently celebrated its 122<sup>nd</sup> anniversary. “The Olinda Universalist Church” is now called “The Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda,” and it remains the oldest church building built in Canada by either a Unitarian or Universalist congregation.

Despite the gradual decline of the denomination and the changes in Universalist theology over the last two hundred years, Foulds concludes that there was one defining element of the historic Universalist faith that remained constant – the conviction that the only real religion is one that puts its principles into practice.<sup>53</sup> This was reiterated in formal Universalist declarations in 1790, 1803, and as late as 1935. The reputed founder of Universalism in New England, John Murray, had said that “every man’s faith, be it what it may, is only between him and his maker. It is his actions and their influence in society that concern mankind.” Similarly, Ballou had emphasized brotherly love as the single overriding imperative flowing from the practice of true religion.<sup>54</sup> If God was the father of all men and women, it naturally followed that all men and women were brothers and sisters.

One of the direct consequences of the above emphases was a strong ethical and humanitarian thrust characteristic of historical Universalism, and one that propelled many of its followers into the front ranks of reform movements of all kinds in Canada and the United States. Disproportionate to the historically small size of its denomination compared to other Christian denominations, Universalists have historically shown leadership in social programs and causes such as temperance, penal reform, abolition of slavery, non-sectarian education, the humane treatment of children, animals and people with mental illness, as well as the rights of conscientious objectors to war.<sup>55</sup>

Needless to say, Universalism’s primary distinguishing mark – that salvation was universal – undoubtedly challenged not only the reigning theological orthodoxy of the day, but also the social and community climate. Furthermore, Universalism’s ecclesial practices must have scandalized many of the residents in small towns and rural communities in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Ontario. Consider its practice of ordination, for example. First, it had ordained George Moses as the first native person to enter the Universalist ministry in 1871.<sup>56</sup> Moses had already been leading a small congregation on an Indian reserve near Hagersville, Ontario, for seven years prior to being recommended by the Indian Universalist Society of Delaware Line at the meeting at Port Dover.<sup>57</sup> Second, it ordained women.

The first ordained woman to serve a Universalist congregation in Ontario was Mrs. L. Fidelia Woolley Gillette, who came to Bloomfield in 1888 from Rochester, Michigan. She began her pastorate in April 1888 at a salary of \$500.<sup>58</sup> When the Universalist Convention met at Bloomfield that year, one of the resolutions congratulated the church on “the evidence which we see of genuine wisdom of their choice of pastor” – hardly a token gesture aimed at affirmative action!<sup>59</sup> Mrs. Gillette may have been the first ordained woman to serve in any denomination in the province of Ontario. Next, in 1901, came Martha Jones who with her husband served two pastorates at Olinda. Yet, as late as 1921, the validity of a marriage she performed at Olinda was contested because one of its officiating ministers had been a woman.<sup>60</sup>

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that it might be the characteristically rural nature of the congregation at Olinda – more than any other factor – that has enabled it to survive to this present day. The sound reputation and amicability of its parishioners have proven to be tangible witness to their good relations with neighbours and the surrounding farming community in which they lived and worked. Because they lived and worked together with mostly “Christian” neighbours, they no doubt lent each other draught horses and machinery, cooked meals for each other, and like most rural communities, looked out for each other when adverse weather, a family tragedy or a crisis in the community warranted it.

While the doctrinal adherence of Olinda parishioners to the belief in “universal salvation” clearly put them at odds with more conventional Christian dogma and their mainstream Christian neighbours, it is likely that it proved less important than how Universalists lived out their faith with comparable “Christian” piety. In other words, the liberal theological outlook and beliefs of the Olinda membership were probably secondary to who they were in practice, and how they walked their talk. In spite of the conspicuous theological anomaly that distinguished, if not isolated, Olinda Universalists from other local religious groups, they were nevertheless still seen as dependable neighbours to whom the locals could turn to for a helping hand. When I was asked to preach on the occasion of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of what is now the Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda, I stressed first that the salient “Christian” witness of both early and later generations of Olinda Universalists was their consistently silent witness, emphasizing their ethical and lived practice of the gospel and Jesus’ teachings. Second, it is likely that their community ethic and practical concern for their neighbours revealed the true integrity of their piety. In his interpretation of the parable of the Last

Judgment, in which people are judged on the basis of what they have done to the least of their brothers (Matthew 25:3ff), the Asian theologian, Kazoh Kitamori, says, “what we learn from this Scripture passage is that God expects us to love him not as an immediate object, but rather through our neighbours. That is, God becomes immanent in historical reality.”<sup>61</sup> If I could surmise why the Unitarian Universalist congregation at Olinda continues to meet every Sunday, it is, in part, because Olinda’s sound reputation in the local community has vindicated its historic commitment to “inclusiveness” and theological egalitarianism with respect to God’s promise of salvation.

### ***Endnotes***

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6. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 1.
7. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 7.
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10. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 7.
11. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 7.
12. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 7.

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14. Anne Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 121.
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25. Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, 124.
26. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 126.
27. Robinson, *The Unitarians and the Universalists*, 62.
28. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 126.
29. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 126.
30. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 126-127.
31. Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, 125.
32. Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, 125.
33. Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, 125-126.
34. Louise Foulds, *A Search For Truth* (The Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda, 1999), 7.
35. Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960): 112.
36. Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man*, 278.
37. Berdyaev, *The Destiny of Man*, 114.

38. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 72.
39. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 70-71.
40. Letter to *Gospel Banner*, exact date unknown; cited in Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 70-71.
41. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 74.
42. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 69-70.
43. Louise Foulds, *A Search For Truth* (The Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda, 1999), 17.
44. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 135.
45. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 135.
46. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 134.
47. Foulds, *A Search For Truth*, 17; see also Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 133-134.
48. Foulds, *A Search For Truth*, 17; see also Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 134-135.
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56. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 14.
57. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 14.
58. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 53, 103.
59. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 53-54.
60. Foulds, *Universalists in Ontario*, 103-104.

61. Kazoh Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God* (Richmond, VI: John Knox Press, 1965), 98ff.





## Sacred Tunes and Religious Identity: Developing the Hymn Tradition for Contemporary Use

MARGARET LEASK

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In this paper I would like to pay tribute to one of the distinguished members of the Canadian Society of Church History, Dr. John Webster Grant. Many will be well acquainted with his work in the field of church history and as editor of Ryerson Press. Fewer may be aware of his significant contribution to Canadian religious experience through his role in the making of the joint Anglican and United Church *Hymn Book* of 1971. His interest in hymnody is the focus of this paper.

In July 1986 Grant spoke to members of the Hymn Society of America (now The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada), who had gathered at the University of Toronto for the society's annual conference. The title of his keynote address was "The Hymn as Theological Statement." He spoke about the need for "a proper blend of the timely and the time-tried" in worship; and he analysed developments in contemporary hymnody that were modernizing the practice of worship in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

The joint Anglican and United Church *Hymn Book* (1971) was one of several hymn books that tested newly-written hymns, religious songs and service music during the 1970s. Others included the first edition of the *Catholic Book of Worship* (1972), the *Presbyterian Book of Praise* (1972), and the *Baptist Hymnal* (1973).<sup>2</sup> Canadian hymn books were among the first to contain the new materials. This paper will examine how a religious tradition – in this case congregational hymnody – develops for contemporary use. It is a periodic process. A number of questions may be asked about the process: for example, what role do sacred texts and tunes play in shaping and

reflecting religious identity? What is the function of a hymn book in religious experience? How did Canadian hymn book committees manage to weave together the “timely and the time-tried” in their respective hymn books? En route the paper will highlight Canadian hymns.

### ***Shaping and Reflecting Religious Identity***

Herbert O’Driscoll, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver during the late 1960s, wrote a hymn that captured the era of *The Hymn Book* (1971). “From the Slave Pens of the Delta” is about the Exodus theology of that period. Its fourth verse sets the theology of the hymn in the context of its time:

In the maelstrom of the nations,  
in the journeying into space,  
in the clash of generations,  
in the hungering for grace,  
in man’s agony and glory,  
we are called to newer ways  
by the Lord of our tomorrows  
and the God of earth’s todays.<sup>3</sup>

The attention paid during the 1960s to the present moment, the “now,” is evident; space travel, and generational conflict between “baby-boomers” and their parents are also elements of this hymn. O’Driscoll’s reference to the “maelstrom of the nations” is apt, given that he wrote the hymn after the Seven Days War, the outbreak of the “Irish troubles,” and other intermittent conflicts requiring the deployment of United Nations’ peace-keeping forces.

At this time a proliferation of hymn-writing was occurring globally. New hymns and religious songs were being sung by congregations days after they were written; within six months to a year some were circulating from the United Kingdom as far as Australia and New Zealand, appearing also in various centres across North America. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Church Light Music Group (a group of British Anglican musicians and clergy formed about 1957 by Geoffrey Beaumont and Patrick Appleford) launched the new movement with their experimental music settings of well-known hymn texts, using the musical idioms of contemporary dance rhythms and music-hall songs. The experiments had begun with Beaumont’s composition of *A Twentieth-*

*Century Folk Mass*, where he set the Church of England's communion service to the beguine and other forms of popular music.<sup>4</sup> The *Folk Mass* was Beaumont's contribution to new liturgy commissioned by the church in the mid-1950s. The group published its first collection of hymn tunes in 1960.<sup>5</sup> At a summer music workshop held at the Prairie Christian Training Centre at Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan in 1962, John and Catherine Ambrose (later the managing editor and a music consultant respectively for the hymn book *Voices United*) were teaching songs and service music by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Church Light Music Group.<sup>6</sup> During the mid-1960s, working in Saskatchewan and in Winnipeg, they continued to teach these and other collections of contemporary British hymns and religious songs, including ones by the Notting Hill Group and songs by a folk singer who was beginning to make a name for himself by singing religious songs in the pubs and coffee houses of London and Newcastle – Sydney Carter. Carter is perhaps best known as the author and arranger of "I danced in the morning when the world was begun."<sup>7</sup>

Hymn-writing initiatives took root in various locations. Daniel T. Niles produced *The East Asian Christian Conference Hymnal*, edited in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and published in Japan in 1963.<sup>8</sup> It was a collection of two hundred hymns, half of which consisted of translations of western Christian hymns. Niles also gathered or wrote translations of Asian hymns. Where a text could not be translated directly, he included new texts written on the themes of hymns set to Chinese, Thai, Japanese, and other Asian hymn tunes. The collection was intended for use at ecumenical services organized by the East Asian Christian Conference. It soon became a source of global hymnody for western English-language hymnals. In 1966 a small paperback collection entitled *Songs of Faith* was published by the Joint Board of Christian Education for Australia and New Zealand.<sup>9</sup> It included five songs by Sydney Carter, hymns by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Church Light Music Group and by the Notting Hill group, texts by a Congregational hymn-writer working independently with his congregation at Plymouth, England – Fred Kaan, black spirituals from the United States, and new Roman Catholic hymns by James McAuley, Australian poet and translator for the Jerusalem Bible. Meanwhile Lutheran churches in the mid-western United States were preparing paperback collections of folk songs and religious songs set out in formats appealing to their growing youth membership. *Hymns for Now: A Portfolio for Good, Bad or Rotten Times* was an issue of the *Workers' Quarterly* published in Chicago in July 1967, a long, narrow paperback

collection designed to be tossed into backpacks and guitar cases.<sup>10</sup> Two years later the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship (formed in 1966) issued the first volume of a series of trial hymn and service books which would become known as the *Contemporary Worship* series. *Worship Supplement* contained newly-written hymn texts and tunes, older hymns which had not been included previously in Lutheran hymn books, translations, and new service materials.<sup>11</sup> Several influential British hymnal supplements were also published during 1969. They included two volumes of hymns, songs, and service music published by the Scottish Church Music Consultations at Dunblane; a Methodist collection entitled *Hymns & Songs; 100 Hymns for Today* by the Church of England; and *New Hymns for All Seasons* by the Scottish Jesuit hymn-writer James Quinn.<sup>12</sup>

### ***What Prompted This Outburst of New Hymn Writing?***

It was made essential by the rewriting of church liturgies into modern structures and language, by the numerous translations of the Bible (Revised Standard Version, New English Bible, and The Jerusalem Bible, among others), and by the ecumenical movement, which sponsored the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, opening up another field of hymn writing. After 1960 the language of hymn texts was starting to sound antiquated in contrast to that of the new translations of the Bible and the liturgical texts. John Webster Grant had worked on the development of new liturgies before turning his attention to rewriting certain Psalms and translating ancient Latin hymns into contemporary English. In his address to the Hymn Society he commented: "It is scarcely open to question that hymns have reflected and affected the beliefs of those using them." He explained that "people choose to sing what is on their minds. To note what people choose to sing, indeed, is to learn a good deal about what they believe."<sup>13</sup> The editor of the *Bulletin of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland* and leader of the development of British hymnody, Erik Routley, put this idea another way. He argued that people choose to adopt certain hymns as their own. Writing in 1964, Routley observed: "But because it is poetry, and more because it is a skilfully constructed congregational hymn, a person may sing it and say, 'This is my view. I have always thought this.'"<sup>14</sup>

Grant noted that the momentum of the liturgical movement had prompted hymn-writers to try their hand at creating hymn texts to complement the liturgies.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, liturgical change (particularly for the

sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist) had created gaps in congregational hymnody which needed to be filled. The primary change was to transfer the perspective of the liturgy from that of the priest or minister to that of the congregation: liturgies being written at the time of Vatican II were designed to enhance the participation of the “people of God” in the practice of worship. Hymns became more closely integrated into the service: they no longer served primarily to prepare for the sermon and respond to it, or to complement the choir’s role in the service, or to provide music at moments of transition in the service. Instead, careful thought was given to the place and purpose of each hymn in the order of service, enabling members of the congregation to participate directly in worship, in response to the Old Testament, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Epistles (some of which could be sung rather than read), to express contrition, to give thanks, and to participate in the service of the Eucharist. The role of hymns in congregational worship had been the subject of the Scottish Church Music Consultations held at the ecumenical centre at Dunblane between 1962 and 1968.<sup>16</sup> Discussions and experiments in new hymn-writing conducted at Dunblane influenced the work of hymnal and liturgy committees well beyond the United Kingdom. The new liturgies and hymns included lay members of the congregation with clergy, organists, and choirs as active participants in worship.

### *Two Phases of Hymn Development*

#### **1) Modernizing Language and Liturgy**

In Canada, the first phase of new hymn writing emerged in response to the work of four committees formed in the mid- to late-1960s to prepare new hymn books for the Anglican and United Churches, for the Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church, and the Roman Catholic Church. Negotiations were underway towards union between the Anglican and United Churches: in 1962 the United Church committee on worship invited the Anglican Church to form a joint committee to prepare an ecumenical hymnal. Similar invitations were extended to the Presbyterian and Baptist Churches in Canada; both declined, choosing to compile their own denominational hymn books. The *Catholic Book of Worship* was the first Canadian Roman Catholic hymnal published in English after Vatican II.

The Joint Committee for the Anglican and United Churches began its work in 1965. John Webster Grant reconfigured the order of the hymns for *The Hymn Book* (1971).<sup>17</sup> He moved away from the standard format of the first half of the twentieth century, where hymns were set out in the sequence of a theological treatise, as occurred in the United Church *Hymnary* (1930), which opened with hymns about the three persons of God. Instead, Grant created a new liturgical order of hymns, paralleling the new orders of service, beginning with hymns about approaching God in worship, and then hearing the Word of God, and on to the people's response to God. Subsequent sections included hymns for the sacraments and other acts of worship (marriages, burials, ordinations and inductions, church dedications and anniversaries), hymns about times of worship (morning, evening, the Lord's day, and the seasons of the year), and hymns for each stage of the Christian year, concluding with a comprehensive liturgical appendix (settings of the communion service for the Anglican and United Church rituals, psalms, canticles and other scriptural songs). The structure of this hymnbook attracted the attention of other hymnal committees.

Grant contributed several hymn texts to *The Hymn Book* (1971). He is the author of a paraphrase in contemporary English of Psalm 122, a psalm about the City of God: "With joy we go up to the house of the Lord, / and enter his gates with a song," (#17), and of several translations of Latin hymn texts: "O Holy Spirit, by whose breath," a ninth-century hymn, *Veni Creator* (#246); "Holy Spirit, Font of Light," a thirteenth-century hymn (#248); "The Flaming Banners of our King," a sixth-century hymn by Fortunatus (#445); and "King of the Martyrs' Noble Band," also from the sixth century (#500). In his *Panorama of Christian Hymnody*, Erik Routley recommended Grant's translations of the medieval Latin texts to hymnal editors.<sup>18</sup> His translation of *Veni Creator* has entered several hymn books:

O Holy Spirit, by whose breath  
 life rises vibrant out of death:  
 come to create, renew, inspire;  
 come, kindle in our hearts your fire.

You are the seeker's sure resource,  
 of burning love the living source,  
 protector in the midst of strife,  
 the giver and the Lord of life.

In you God's energy is shown,  
to us your varied gifts made known.  
Teach us to speak; teach us to hear:  
yours is the tongue and yours the ear.

Flood our dull senses with your light:  
in mutual love our hearts unite.  
Your power the whole creation fills;  
confirm our weak, uncertain wills.

From inner strife grant us release;  
turn nations to the ways of peace.  
To fuller life your people bring  
that as one body we may sing:

praise to the Father, Christ his Word,  
and to the Spirit: God the Lord.<sup>19</sup>

The plainsong melody to which this hymn is set was arranged by Healey Willan.

Speaking to delegates at the Hymn Society conference in 1986, many of whom were participating in the development of new hymn books, Grant commented on the changes in hymn writing which had taken place alongside the rewriting of liturgies during the preceding quarter century:

Other new impulses emerged out of the ferment that convulsed the churches in the 1960s. In the wake of Roman Catholic *aggiornamento* there was an explosion of lyrics and tunes designed to communicate in contemporary idioms. There was a sudden revulsion against all set orders of service, which were structures and therefore inhibiting and not to be tolerated. Above all, the suffocating rigidity and introspective melancholy of traditional worship were to give way to spontaneity and joy. For these related developments the key watchword . . . was "celebration."<sup>20</sup>

The idea of "celebration" was evident in the new services for the Eucharist where the focus of worship had moved from the suffering and death of Christ to the joy of the Resurrection. In *The Hymn Book* (1971) an expanded section of hymns for Communion (twenty-six hymns) included new ones such as

Brian Wren's "I Come with Joy to Meet My Lord" (#328), a text that started with the individual's search for God, moving in verse two to the gathering of the people of God to share the Eucharist meal, in the process forming a new community – "And thus with joy we meet our Lord." It is an unusual hymn in its poetic representation of the experience of the Eucharist drawing people together into a worshipping community.<sup>21</sup> This spirit of celebration is the central element of an immensely popular song for the Eucharist written by James Thiem: "Sons of God, Hear His Holy Word!" (#336) was published by Friends of the English Liturgy, an American Roman Catholic organization, in their *Hymnal for Young Christians*. It literally bounced with the energy of the youth audience for whom it was written:

Brothers, sisters, we are one,  
and our life has just begun;  
in the Spirit we are young,  
we can live for ever.<sup>22</sup>

It concluded with a refrain of "Alleluias" – not standard fare in communion hymns prior to this. Thiem's song of celebration was used extensively for about ten years. It then dropped out of favour, replaced by newer songs written in inclusive language which reflected the experience of a subsequent generation of youth.

Grant also noted the absence of the person of the suffering servant and of the concept of sin in hymns of the 1960s, such as Thiem's "Sons of God": "Joy was in, gloom was out; there was little room for the tragic element and therefore for the suffering servant, for the passion and the cross." He added: "Even in our hymnal committee, words reflecting the darker side of experience, admittedly often heavily introspective, had a hard time gaining acceptance."<sup>23</sup> What did enter the hymn books of the 1970s were religious songs about freedom, such as the spiritual "When Israel was in Egypt's Land" (#143), and about civil rights, for example, Fred Kaan's "Sing We a Song of High Revolt" (#177). Popular religious songs about social causes overtook older hymn texts about the theology of sin and salvation: "Sin came into the picture all right, but normally as *their* sins rather than *ours*."<sup>24</sup> Grant was not alone in this observation. In the United Kingdom Gordon Wakefield, a Methodist leader, was keenly aware of the loss of genuine pietism, personal faith and salvation. Speaking to the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1968, at a festival of hymns written since the end of World War



One, he described that loss as “the great casualty of the last fifty years.” Wakefield explained that, “We think of ‘sin’ more in terms of the frustration of the [human] race and the iniquities of the system than as personal transgression.”<sup>25</sup> The loss would become evident in popular charismatic hymns and songs of the 1970s and 1980s where texts focussed almost exclusively on themes of praise, prayer and thanksgiving (the celebration thesis).<sup>26</sup> One exception was a new text for the hymn tune Jerusalem written by R.B.Y. Scott, a Canadian teaching Old and New Testament studies at Princeton. His “O World of God” concluded:

O world of time’s far-stretching years!  
There was a day when time stood still,  
a central moment when there rose,  
a cross upon a cruel hill;  
in pain and death love’s power was seen  
the mystery of time revealed,  
the wisdom of the ways of God,  
the grace through which man’s hurt is healed.<sup>27</sup>

## 2) Texts for the 1980s and Beyond

The first phase of hymn-writing developed rapidly between 1965 and 1975. It was a period during which ideas were being absorbed and forwarded, as improved means of communication expanded the dissemination of texts and tunes. The distribution of newly-written hymns and religious songs among hymnal supplements and hymnals published around the world during this period makes the point. The Canadian hymn books, for example, brought the work of British writer Fred Kaan to the attention of the international community (especially through *The Hymn Book*). His hymn, “For the Healing of the Nations” had been written for his congregation at Pilgrim Congregational Church in Plymouth to commemorate United Nations Day on 10 December 1965. In the first verse Kaan (joined by the people who choose to sing his hymn text) is praying for “a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords.” The hymn makes a stronger statement on behalf of universal human rights in its third verse:

All that kills abundant living,  
let it from the earth be banned:  
pride of status, race or schooling,

dogmas keeping man from man.  
In our common quest for justice  
may we hallow life's brief span.<sup>28</sup>

The new hymns were interleaved with older hymn texts throughout the four Canadian hymn books. Texts written in traditional and modern hymn language were used together in a service when the new hymns were being introduced. By the 1980s the issue of inclusive language was being debated vigorously by Canadian congregations, making the older hymns in the “new” hymnbooks seem dated. One solution to the problem was to turn once again to paperback supplements that served as bridges during the second phase of the renewal of hymnody. One of the first, and better-known, supplements was *Songs for a Gospel People*, edited by Gerald Hobbs and Darryl Nixon for the British Columbia and the Alberta and Northwest Conferences of the United Church of Canada.<sup>29</sup> The experience of the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver in 1983 prompted this book. Gerald Hobbs described the situation which gave birth to a hymnal supplement only fifteen years after the publication of *The Hymn Book* (1971):

Today's hymnody bears the mark of today's church. It is ecumenical, drawing from all members of the family of God throughout the world. It is pluralist, recognizing that in the church we are a mixed community, and that our words and musical styles need to reflect that diversity. It is biblical and rooted in the Church's story, because being faithful in the great issues of justice and peace in our world means drawing nourishment from our past. It is inclusive, imaging and nurturing the wholeness of the body of Christ.<sup>30</sup>

*Songs for a Gospel People* contained an assortment of new hymns and songs along with older hymns which had not been included in *The Hymn Book*. The editorial team's call for new Canadian hymns to be considered for the supplement elicited an inundation of three thousand texts and tunes. Twelve were included in the collection. Among the new hymns were “Tho' Ancient Walls May Still Stand Proud” (Walls that Divide, #32), and “Give to Us Laughter” (#107) by the hymn-writing team of author Walter Farquharson and composer Ron Klusmeier. Others included Sylvia Dunstan's “You, Lord, are Both Lamb and Shepherd” (Christus Paradox, #64), and her translation of the ancient Greek hymn Phos hilaron:

O laughing Light, O first-born of creation,  
radiance of glory, light from light begotten,  
God self-revealing, holy, bright and blessed:  
you shine upon us.<sup>31</sup>

### ***1990s - The Importance of the Biblical Story***

John Webster Grant spoke to the Hymn Society in Toronto shortly before the supplement was published: in his address he noted the shift in emphasis from “celebration” in the 1960s to the search for “stories” to tell about oneself or about the people of a community. He drew attention to the urgent need to re-educate people about the stories of the Bible. Roman Catholic hymn-writers told these stories in hymns written in vernacular language to be sung with their new liturgies. Other hymn-writers were also retelling the religious stories from their traditions in hymn form. Hymn books published in the 1990s incorporated this story-telling aspect of hymns. Grant anticipated, in 1986, that these stories would “restore to our hymnody the gamut of experience.”<sup>32</sup> He hoped that, by retelling biblical stories about the work of the Holy Spirit, the story of salvation would also come forward once again: “Out of fashion for some years now, it seems to me the necessary complement to our rediscovery of our own stories.”<sup>33</sup>

Four Canadian hymn books published in the 1990s are the products of the two phases of hymnal development in Canada. They contain stories from the Bible told in numerous ways, and stories about the work of the Holy Spirit; these stories, along with a resurgence of interest in the Psalms, have caught the attention of hymn-writers. Proof of that interest may be found in the comprehensive indexes, listed by topic and by biblical reference, at the back of each of the new hymn books. The Canadian *Catholic Book of Worship* (1994), *Voices United* (1996), *The Book of Praise* (1997), and *Common Praise* (1998) were prepared and published during the decade following John Webster Grant’s address.<sup>34</sup> They mark the end of a thirty-year cycle of hymn development. Scanning their pages it is evident that the hymnal committees adhered closely to Grant’s view that: “what makes a hymnody theologically good . . . is that it constitutes a proper blend of the timely and the time-tried, a treasury from which . . . a leader of worship can draw what a congregation needs for a balanced diet of worship.”<sup>35</sup>

**Endnotes**

1. John Webster Grant, "The Hymn as Theological Statement," *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song* 37, No. 4 (October 1986): 7-10.
2. *The Hymn Book of the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada, 1971); *Catholic Book of Worship* (Toronto: Gordon V. Thompson Limited; and Ottawa: Publications Service, Canadian Catholic Conference, 1972); *The Book of Praise* (Don Mills, ON: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1972); and *The Hymnal* (The Baptist Federation of Canada, 1973).
3. *The Hymn Book* (1971), #170, v. 4. The hymn verses are quoted as they appeared in *The Hymn Book* (1971), and in *Songs for a Gospel People* (1987). Most have since been revised to take into account developments in religious language during the past three decades.
4. Geoffrey Beaumont, *A Twentieth-Century Folk Mass* (London: Josef Weinberger Ltd, 1956).
5. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Church Light Music Group, *Thirty 20<sup>th</sup> Century Hymn Tunes* (London: Josef Weinberger Ltd, 1960).
6. Personal communication to the author, May 2001.
7. "Lord of the Dance," *The Hymn Book* (1971), # 106.
8. Daniel T. Niles, ed., *E.A.C.C. Hymnal* (Kyoto: Kawakita Printing Company Ltd, for the East Asia Christian Conference, 1963).
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12. *New Songs for the Church: Book I - Psalms, Children's Songs, Ballads and Hymns*, eds. Reginald Barrett-Ayres and Erik Routley (Great Yarmouth, Norfolk: Galliard Ltd, 1969); *New Songs for the Church: Book II - Canticles for Holy Communion, Series II*, eds. Reginald Barrett-Ayres and Erik Routley (Great Yarmouth, Norfolk: Galliard Ltd, 1969); *Hymns & Songs: A Supplement to the Methodist Hymn Book* (London: Methodist Publishing House, 1969); 100

*Hymns for Today: A Supplement to Hymns Ancient & Modern* [1950] (London: William Clowes and Sons Ltd, 1969); and James Quinn, SJ, *New Hymns for All Seasons* (London: Geoffrey Chapman Ltd, 1969).

13. Grant, "The Hymn as Theological Statement," 7.
14. Erik Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 21.
15. Grant, "The Hymn as Theological Statement," 8. He referred to the influence of Gregory Dix, and of the Scottish group (see note 15 below).
16. Ian M. Fraser, "Beginnings at Dunblane," in *Duty and Delight: Routley Remembered. A Memorial Tribute to Erik Routley (1917-1982)*, eds. Robin A. Leaver and James H. Litton, with Carlton R. Young (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company; and London: Stainer & Bell Ltd, 1985), 171-90. See also Ian M. Fraser, "Dunblane Praises and After," *Bulletin of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 217 (October 1998): 181-185.
17. Grant, "The Hymn as Theological Statement," 7-8.
18. Erik Routley, *A Panorama of Christian Hymnody* (Chicago: G.I.A., Inc., 1979), 212.
19. *The Hymn Book* (1971), #246. Quoted with permission of the author, J.W. Grant to M. Leask, 4 July 2002.
20. Grant, "The Hymn as Theological Statement," 8.
21. Brian Wren revised this hymn text in 1993: the new version, "I come with joy, a child of God," may be found in *Voices United* (1996) at #477.
22. *The Hymn Book* (1971), #336, v. 1.
23. Grant, "The Hymn as Theological Statement," 9.
24. Grant, "The Hymn as Theological Statement," 9.
25. Gordon S. Wakefield, "The Hymnody of the Past Fifty Years: Words," *Bulletin of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 114 (Winter 1968-69): 239-251. Part of this article was reprinted for North American readers as "Beliefs in Recent British Hymnody," *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song* 22, No. 1 (January 1971): 13-19.
26. Donald Hustad, *Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1993), 273-74, 279-97; and Donald Hustad, "The Historical Roots of Music in the Pentecostal and Neo-

- Pentecostal Movements,” *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song* 30, No. 1 (January 1987), 7-11.
27. *The Hymn Book* (1971), #89, v. 3.
  28. *The Hymn Book* (1971), #210, v. 3.
  29. *Songs for a Gospel People: A Supplement to The Hymn Book (1971)*, eds. R. Gerald Hobbs and Darryl Nixon (Winfield, BC: Woodlake Books, Inc., 1987).
  30. R. Gerald Hobbs, “Foreword.”
  31. *Songs for a Gospel People*, #101, v. 1.
  32. Grant, “The Hymn as Theological Statement,” 9.
  33. Grant, “The Hymn as Theological Statement,” 10.
  34. *Catholic Book of Worship III* (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994); *Voices United: The Hymn and Worship Book of the United Church of Canada* (Etobicoke, ON: The United Church Publishing House, 1996); *The Book of Praise* (Don Mills, ON: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1997); and *Common Praise* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1998).
  35. Grant, “The Hymn as Theological Statement,” 10.

## **Forgotten Social Gospellers: Reverends J.B. Silcox and Hugh Pedley**

MÉLANIE MÉTHOT

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In the introduction to *Rethinking Church, State and Modernity*, David Lyon states that “secularization understood as religious decline, deflects attention from ways that religious impulse is being relocated and religious activities restructured.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Ramsay Cook and David Marshall,<sup>2</sup> by focusing on the decline of theological doctrines, attenuate the fact that turn-of-the-century Christians experienced differently their faith. Lyon’s comment obliquely endorses Richard Allen’s 1971 conclusion.<sup>3</sup> Studying the social gospel, a movement led by Protestant church leaders who responded to the challenges that Darwinism and the new philosophy of higher criticism posed to religious beliefs, Allen points out that many religious leaders decided to direct their attention away from theological issues to social questions. He contends that Christianity did not lose its appeal during this period of intense philosophical challenge; on the contrary, it became more widespread.<sup>4</sup>

By shifting the central focus from religious elites, and by giving voice to prosaic preachers and to how their message was received, one realizes that churches and denominations deepened their public presence rather than lost their appeal. If advertisement speaks the language of popularity, that is, pastors, priests or pope are often portrayed endorsing a variety of products, that is in itself revealing. But that is the object of another paper. Reverends J.B. Silcox and Hugh Pedley might not be familiar names to our contemporary ears, but to turn-of-the-century Canadians, they were celebrities. Their pastorates are real testimonies of church relevance. Not only did the two reverends attract large crowds, but their influence is also confirmed by the

fact that their ideas were published in books, pamphlets and newspapers, with readers commenting on them. They even qualified for entry in the celebrated *Who's Who in Canada*.

Both pastors worked to fulfill the expectations of a modern Christian society. They did not propose revolutionary measures, not even groundbreaking solutions, but they revealed their idealism and their faith in the regeneration of individuals. Like other social gospellers, they took on the mission of Christianizing the political economy of industrial capitalism. Each had his own particular plan to bring the Kingdom of God on earth. Believing that the "industrial system" was flawed because it had lost touch with Christianity, Silcox advocated the preaching of the gospel as the chief solution to the ills of the city. Pedley thought that the "unification" of the churches in Canada was the start of substantial social reforms. They impressed their peers, at the very least, by exposing what they saw as urban ills and at prompting action. They engaged their community.

### *Who were they?*

One of twelve children born of William Silcox and Nancy Phillips, John B. Silcox became a renowned reverend. He grew up on his father's farm while attending Frome's Elementary public school. He entered the normal school in Toronto and pursued his theological studies in the Congregational College of Montreal at the time when Reverend Henry Wilkes was principal. At McGill University he encountered the most eminent nineteenth-century Canadian scientist, Sir William Dawson. There is, however, no trace of Dawson's influence in his sermons.<sup>5</sup> Silcox did not belong to the scientific community, nor show any interest in scientific research. Silcox was more attracted to poetry, literature and art, than to natural sciences. Some of his sermons even dealt extensively with the works of John Whittier or other "poet-preachers." Silcox did not try to reach people with facts, to appeal to reason or common sense, he hoped to touch souls through sentiment. He took after Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887), a dynamic American Congregational preacher, orator, and lecturer who discussed every important issue of the day in his sermons.

It is striking that the preacher chose big cities to spread his message, cities that were trying to cope with massive immigration and rapid industrialization. Silcox's first position between 1876 and 1883 was at the Western Congregational Church in Toronto. Then from 1883 to 1890 he occupied the



pulpit of the Central Church of Winnipeg. Next he moved to the United States for two years and preached at the First Church of Sacramento (California). Then after three years at Emmanuel Church in Montreal, he returned to the United States for five years, three spent at Leavitt Street Church (Chicago) and two back at the First Church of Sacramento. He was called to preach once more in Winnipeg and remained there for four years. Leaving Winnipeg, he spent close to one year at Plymouth Church (Lansing Michigan) before returning to Toronto. From 1908 to 1915, he preached at the Westminster Congregational Church in Kansas, and the next two years in a London (Canada) church. Then widowed and seventy years old, he did not occupy specific pulpits but, still in great demand, continued to preach across Canada and the United States until his death in 1933.

The energetic pastor adapted his preaching to modern society. He was well aware of the growing demand for “entertainment.” He even preached on the art of preaching, stressing that: “It is the preacher’s business to get a hearing for the gospel.”<sup>6</sup> He specified that, “To win the ear of the people, you must talk their language. The preacher must be a man of his time.”<sup>7</sup> Silcox thought that the pulpit had to use tools and strategies to keep the people interested in the gospel.<sup>8</sup> Without a doubt, Silcox mastered the art of oratory. His “Grip and Grit” sermon was just as popular as an Oscar-winning film would be in our day, so popular, indeed, that he delivered it more than two hundred times!

Perhaps less colourful than Silcox, Reverend Hugh Pedley nevertheless attracted a large following.<sup>9</sup> The question of his identity is, however, hard to answer as no personal papers exist, and apart from the 1898 and 1912 notices in Morgan’s collected biographies of famous men and women,<sup>10</sup> no other biographical sketch of the man has been found. Born in England in 1852 to Charles Pedley and Sarah Stowell, daughter of Dr. Stowell principal of Chesnut College (England), Hugh Pedley graduated from McGill in 1876 and studied for the ministry at the Congregational College of Montreal. His father was a preacher, and he had at least one brother, James William, who also chose to join the ministry. At thirty-one, Hugh Pedley married Elizabeth Field, the oldest daughter of Corelli Collard Field, a merchant who in 1886 became mayor of Cobourg, Ontario, and was later elected to the House of Representatives.

Although they often occupied the same pulpits, Pedley’s career path differed substantially from that of Silcox. Pedley preferred to remain in one congregation rather than moving every third or fourth year. He first occupied

the Congregational pulpit of Cobourg, where he laboured for ten years. It was during that ministry that he published his first article entitled, "Theological Students and the Time" arguing that the ministry had a duty to solve the problems of the times. He personally made his commitment to "deal bravely and skillfully with the actual world of to-day,"<sup>11</sup> thus indicating his sympathy with social gospel thinking.

In 1888, Reverend Pedley moved to Winnipeg to replace Silcox at the Central Congregational Church. He often gave speeches or sermons on social reform and labour issues.<sup>12</sup> In 1900, Pedley accepted a call to preach at Emmanuel Congregational Church in Montreal where he worked for the next seventeen years. He was elected to many honourable positions such as chair of the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, moderator of the Congregational Association of Quebec and President of the Montreal Protestant Minister's Association. He was also a member of the joint committee on church union. In 1909 he was elected Chair of the Congregational Union of Canada and chosen as their delegate to the World's Congregational Congress in Chicago, and the World's International Congregational Councils in Boston and London. These positions all confirm his dedication to church union. Unfortunately, Pedley died in 1923, two years before his long-time dream came true with the formation of the United Church of Canada.

If Silcox's philosophy is mostly drawn from his sermons, Pedley's comes principally from his utopian novel, *Looking Forward. A Novel for the Times. The Strange Experience of the Rev. Fergus McCheyne*. His novel was modelled after the most famous and influential of American utopian novels of the nineteenth century, Edward Bellamy's (1850-1898) *Looking Backward 2000-1887* (1888). Bellamy's novel presents an ideal state by contrasting one to the old order. Through the eyes of fictional Julian West, a rich Bostonian about to get married, but who falls into an hypnotic sleep of a hundred and thirteen years, Bellamy depicts a society where the social and cultural divisions of the nineteenth century have disappeared. The author addressed the tensions between individual freedom and society's needs. Opposed to the individualism of the marketplace, he suggested a collectivist social order that would fulfill man's spiritual as well as material needs. As Michael J. Turner demonstrates, Bellamy counted on humanity's inherent goodness to transform society.<sup>13</sup>

Pedley's own utopian novel constitutes the tangible proof of Bellamy's influence. He borrowed many elements from the successful American

utopian novel, starting with the romance between Julian West and Edith, the descendent of West's former fiancée. Reverend McCheyne, Pedley's own hero, also falls for the daughter of the woman he loved in his former life. The similarities between the novels are, however, much more substantial than the romance. In Pedley's story, the protagonist is a scientific-minded Presbyterian minister who questions from a young age the division among the Protestant churches. For the love of science (and for the plot of the novel), McCheyne puts himself in a coma that is supposed to last only two weeks, but fate leaves him in that state for twenty-five years. In contrast to the one hundred and thirteen years of Bellamy, Pedley needs only twenty-five years to bring about "The New Order." This speaks volumes about the idealism and optimism of Pedley. Borrowing the tactic of Bellamy, it is through the eyes of McCheyne that the reader discovers the changes that took place in the last quarter of century, how the old order was transformed into a new state. Remembering the horrid urban conditions of 1902, McCheyne is happily surprised to see that conditions have improved tenfold in Winnipeg and in Montreal. In both utopias, universal education and moral enlightenment become commonplace. Just like Bellamy, Pedley did not seek to overthrow industrialism, but to purify it. The reverend's concerns were more spiritual rather than political or economical.

Although they promoted a similar type of society, Pedley and Bellamy proposed a different path to reach it. For Bellamy the catalyst is the replacement of private capitalism by public capitalism, the result being collectivist ideas superseding the competition ethos; for Pedley, the unification of the Church serves as the turning point for men's and women's purification. In his perfect society, the new unified church brings "a catholicity of feeling, a consciousness of responsibility for the national welfare, a sensitiveness to real-world problems." A mentor explains to the young Reverend McCheyne: "you know, some of our best men never had joined the church, but in some way, not easy to explain, the unifying of the churches made Christ more real to them."<sup>14</sup>

Pedley also took Bellamy's *Equality* as the "foundation of his words" for a published Labour Day sermon.<sup>15</sup> Much less popular than *Looking Backward*, probably because of the lack of dramatic interest, but more revealing in terms of Bellamy's social philosophy, *Equality*'s goal was to fill in the empty spaces left by *Looking Backwards*. Pedley readily conceded that of the two novels, the sequel was better. He admired the vivid descriptions of the "modern social conditions" found in *Equality*. "There are certain great

anomalies and injustices that stand out like great open sores to shame all our boast of progress,” he said. Pedley mentioned the vivid portrayal of the economic waste of competition and the unequal distribution of the world’s wealth. But, what Pedley probably found the most enticing was the novel’s “recognition of great Christian principles.” Pedley stated that *Equality* “denounces sectarianism and rebukes the hatred of nation against nation.”<sup>16</sup> Bellamy made clear that although there were no more churches and specially trained preachers in his new order, religion had not faded away.

Amidst the praises Pedley showered on Bellamy, he injected one criticism. For the American author, economic changes were imperative for the soul to progress, the revolution had to start with the system rather than with individuals. This is where Pedley differed, stating that the “defect [of the novel] is the virtual refusal to take into account the factor of human sinfulness.”<sup>17</sup> He believed the revolution had to be spiritual first. Religion simply had to be pertinent again.

While Bellamy’s work clearly had a great influence on Pedley, he acknowledged that he owed much to George M. Grant (principal of Queen’s University), Samuel S. Nelles (Principal of Victoria University), William Caven (Principal of Knox College), and John F. Stevenson (principal of the Congregational College of Montreal). Their commitment to church unification inspired him, he noted, to “take the forward step,” to suggest a solution to the afflictions of urban and industrial society.

While J.F. Stevenson is not very a familiar figure in Canadian history, the other three men, especially Grant, have been widely studied. Carl Berger writes that Reverend George Monro Grant (1835-1902) was a “precursor” to the social gospel movement.<sup>18</sup> Hubert Krygsman documents that already in 1870, Grant “developed a system of ideas that consciously departed from Presbyterian orthodoxy and imitated the liberal theology of the social gospel.” Krygsman further argues that “the efforts to unite God’s people into a tolerant Christian society that recognized all of life as the arena of religious practice was the central impulse of Grant’s life.”<sup>19</sup> Grant was expressly recognized by his peers for his progressive views towards other faiths. John Dent wrote in 1881 that the gentleman was “a zealous advocate of [church] union.” Also of interest to Pedley must have been Grant’s dedication to “scientific research.”<sup>20</sup> The technological advances he described in the novel, the inquisitive mind of his hero, and the detailed explanation of McCheyne’s scientific experience, all illustrate Pedley’s own inclination for sciences.

This untainted curiosity in modern science was something that Pedley, Grant and Reverend Samuel Nelles (1823-1887) all shared. When Nelles became Principal of Victoria University, there were only two faculties: arts and theology. He devoted time and energy to add the Faculties of Medicine and of Law. His biographer, G.S. French, writes that Nelles actively encouraged the study of sciences.<sup>21</sup> As McKillop demonstrates, the destructive impact of evolutionary ideas on orthodoxy prompted some religious men to welcome “critical inquiry.” McKillop states that Reverend Nelles believed that “clear and independent thinking . . . guided by principles derived from religious inspiration”<sup>22</sup> was the solution to free thinking. This was exactly what Pedley advocated in his piece on what a preacher’s education ought to be: “He [the minister] should be qualified so to master this great flood of free-thinking that, instead of laying waste all that is fairest and best in our life, it shall be as a broad river which fertilizes and clothes with beauty all the land through which it sweeps in its stately course.”<sup>23</sup>

In William Caven (1830-1904), the Principal of Knox College, Pedley must have admired the active role the man took in the amalgamation of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Pedley probably also valued Caven’s interest in education matters. Education was an important tool in reforming the souls. Pedley stressed that in the new order “intellectual life would have due honour,” that “there would be no longer ignorance nor the brutality that has its roots in ignorance.”<sup>24</sup> Also, the very fact that the four men he chose to dedicate his novel to were all principals of colleges or universities testifies to the value Pedley put on education.

### ***Their Thought***

Both Silcox and Pedley definitely felt that modern, especially urban society, needed to be injected with a fresh dose of Christianity. Civic corruption, the inequities that the industrial system engendered, the sweating system, the bad working conditions that the majority of labourers suffered, slums, drunkenness, prostitution, and gambling, in sum the social ills that tended to converge in the city, disturbed them greatly. As Pedley put it: “The history of humanity is largely a history of great cities, and it is in the city that the battle between good and evil reaches its climax.”<sup>25</sup> For him, cities were prisons where immoral habits clustered, poverty was the norm, and civic officials were corrupted. It was important to be aware of the sad conditions that prevailed in the city. Just like “the ancient prophets of Israel” who were

not “blind to the sinister side of life or deaf to the cry of human wrong and suffering,” seeing with “clear penetrating gaze the evil of the world,”<sup>26</sup> social gospellers were to tell it the way it was.

Silcox sincerely believed that the urban “industrial system” was flawed because it widened the gap between rich and poor, sanctioned “white slavery,” and fostered child labour. What made it flawed was the fact that it had lost its touch with Christianity. Men and women were physically and morally suffering because of the lack of ethics within the industrial order. It was inherently imperfect because it promoted materialistic values instead of Christian ones. Indeed, the very values underlying the industrial order were amoral, or worse “pagan.”<sup>27</sup> What was intrinsically wrong with the industrial system was that it shifted the focus of life from the spiritual to the material realm.

Like Silcox, Pedley stressed that the industrial system tended to deepen the gap between rich and poor.<sup>28</sup> Commenting on Bellamy’s *Equality*, he congratulated the author for illustrating truthfully the present glaring contrasts of the industrial city.<sup>29</sup> Pedley recognized that it was the labouring class which suffered the most in an industrial society that was unduly led by the concept of profits. He contended that “the competition between these commercial monsters means the lowering of wages to the smallest possible figure.”<sup>30</sup>

Silcox also believed capital was wrong and that labour was needlessly suffering injustices. Workers should, therefore, fight ardently until capital recognizes its sins and make amends. Unhesitatingly, he explicitly justified labour’s fight, proclaiming in metaphorical language that “the unrest of the people, the discontent of the masses, the volcanic eruptions in the form of labour strikes and wars are not to be deplored as evil. They are the lightening flashes, the thunder peals of a storm that will clear the social atmosphere and refresh the valleys of toil with fertilizing showers.”<sup>31</sup>

Silcox was not calling for a socialist revolution, but for a metamorphosis of the practices current in the capitalist system, for a “return” to Christian values instead of the material ethos that permeated industrial society. Capital would not disappear, but the exploitation of labour had to go. He did not condemn workers for using strikes, as he whole-heartedly felt they were justified. His rhetoric was moving, forceful and passionate. “Our industrial system has enriched a few to a limit beyond the dreams of avarice,” he asserted, “at the same time it has allowed multitude to sink into a poverty that means dark, hopeless, helpless servitude.”<sup>32</sup> Silcox compared workers to the

slaves of antiquity: “to the hierarchical potentates, monarchial despots, political bosses and industrial Pharaohs of today, God is saying in plainest language, ‘Let my people go.’”<sup>33</sup> Silcox did not hesitate to use the slave analogy. He professed in a much publicised sermon that: “the fact is we have white slaves by the thousands, men and women, who drudge from morn till night, hardly earning enough to keep soul and body together.”<sup>34</sup>

By depicting workers as slaves, Silcox was posing as a “nineteenth-century Moses” whose divine mission was to free workers from the chains that ruthless Capital tied around their necks in the form of long hours, bad conditions and meagre wages. It was through repeated denunciations that Silcox hoped to free workers. And they did come be the hundreds to listen to him.<sup>35</sup>

Pedley’s stand on labour issues was as passionate. The *Morning Telegram* summarized his message:

He compared the position of the workers who were between buyers and sellers to those unfortunates in the death chamber of the inquisition, where the ceiling and the floor slowly come together and though the agony might be shorter or longer, according to circumstances, the final end was the same, and he reminded those present that the condition of the employees in Emerson & Hague’s factory was the thin end of the wedge of the sweating system being introduced in Winnipeg. He said that the payment of inadequate wages has ever been the means of creating crime and immorality and of indirectly instituting the system from which such evils grow.<sup>36</sup>

Pedley apparently wanted to show that profit-oriented entrepreneurs endangered the physical, mental and moral health of citizens. The fundamental problem with turn-of-the-century Canadian society was that individualism (self-interest without regards to others) was winning the day at the expense of communitarianism. Pedley warned his congregation that

there are evils that spring out of our system, and with a change of the system the evils may pass. But there are other evils, that do not spring out of the system, that spring out of the perversity and selfishness of the human heart, and hearts must be changed as well as systems before these are abolished.<sup>37</sup>

God was certainly not to blame for the “dark and squalid places” found in some cities; people were. Pedley preached that “there are at least three facts in human nature that stand in the way of the regeneration of society, and these are Ignorance, Sloth and Selfishness.”<sup>38</sup> “Man should have an interest in the welfare of his fellow-creature and respect the rights of all,” he said.<sup>39</sup> In other words, the community must have, before all else, a sense of the common good. It was time to abandon individualism and adopt a more community-oriented approach, a more Christian attitude.

It is interesting to note that Pedley’s portrait of a perfect society accepts that classes would not disappear, but that by 1927, the church is aware of the different needs of each class. McCheyne’s friend, the Bishop, tells him:

There are many classes in the community and our services are so arranged that it is difficult for anyone to find an excuse for non-attendance. The nurse, the night-watchman, the men on night shifts, the servants, are all taken into account. From seven o’clock in the morning to ten o’clock at night on Sunday there is in this place opportunity for worship.<sup>40</sup>

Classes would remain in society, but a united church would be able to reach everyone, implying that the church would guide them into being better citizens. The church would establish a politic of common good.

Churches were to Christianize society and this meant embarking on many crusades. Silcox was very much distressed by issues such as sabbath observance, temperance, prostitution and gambling. His position on these issues was as categorical as his views on the industrial system. He declared: “there is no need that Theatres, Moving Picture shows, should be open on Sunday. It is against the cultivation of religion to have them open, and what works against religion works against the well-being of humanity and of the nation.”<sup>41</sup> The sabbath simply had to be observed.

His position on temperance was as clear-cut as the one he held on the sabbath. He affirmed: “I believe in total abstinence for the individual. I believe in total prohibition for the nation. I believe in moral suasion and I believe in legal suasion.”<sup>42</sup> To Silcox, prohibition was Christ’s will.<sup>43</sup> He was equally uncompromising when it came to prostitution. Silcox delivered powerful sermons on the issue, telling his congregations that: “we quarantine the house where scarlet fever rages. Why not quarantine the house where the



scarlet sin is rampant? If we have the right to protect our families from physical contagion, why not from moral infection?"<sup>44</sup>

Social vices also concerned Reverend Pedley. He once asked: "is it not axiomatic truth that the welfare of society depends upon the morality of society?"<sup>45</sup> Pedley strove to direct public opinion so society would declare, without reserve, gambling, prostitution, and intemperance as serious moral, physical and social threats that had to be dealt with promptly.<sup>46</sup> He found the question of prohibition pressing enough to postpone his sermon on the "Law of love in business life" in order to preach a series of three sermons on the 1897 prohibition plebiscite. It is interesting to note that Pedley did not believe that alcoholism was specifically a working-class problem. He stated: "the snake intemperance is not content with winding in and out the dirty dwellings, it glides through the door of the prosperous home and finds victims where the floor is richly carpeted and the walls decked with art."<sup>47</sup> It was specifically because intemperance was widespread that it had to be treated with urgency, he believed.

Religion was indeed to influence all aspects of life. Silcox saw the solution to all the ills of modern life in the application of the golden rule. He believed there was one, and only one, way to bring the kingdom of God on earth, to create a "perfect society". He claimed that "converting men and women to Christian life is the surest and only permanent way of social reform."<sup>48</sup> For him, "every industrial problem, every political problem [was] a religious problem. The principles of religion extends [sic] over the entire domain of human life . . . the great problem that confronts us today is the Christianizing of human relationships."<sup>49</sup> It did not matter how he formulated it, he always came back to the same idea: "the salvation of men depends largely on the preaching of the gospel."<sup>50</sup> His strategy was to touch first the soul by spreading the gospel, and then to Christianize the "shop and the store, the factory and the bank."<sup>51</sup>

For Pedley, the best way to inculcate a politic of common good was through the unification of the Christian churches. If only the church could become the "social centre for the community," Pedley thought, people would be better Christians, hence less selfish. His hero reflects: "what we need is a parish system along free church lines, that will put a well-equipped church in every section of the city, and lay upon it special responsibility for the moral and social welfare of that section."<sup>52</sup> The church would be more than a place of worship, it would also be a place to socialize.

Throughout his career, Pedley emphasized the role a unified church should play in social matters. In his novel, he mentioned two other agencies, the government and the school. Indeed, three weapons were to be used to purify the hearts of Canadians: “Force, Education, Religion – the baton, the school, the church – the policeman, the teacher, the Christian worker.” The “Triple Alliance” would cleanse society:

It is wonderful how much can be done by vigorous city government, wonderful what can be accomplished by an efficient school-system. But there is this to be said for the Church, that, in addition to the direct actual work it accomplishes, it has a tremendous influence in making the other agencies, especially the municipal effective. Why, the Church in that parish has created such an atmosphere that municipal corruption cannot live in it.<sup>53</sup>

In sum, a powerful unified church would lead towards the purification of industrial and urban society.

### ***Their impact***

Their contribution can not be measured in terms of impact on direct legislation, but what counts is their success in raising public consciousness. Given Silcox’s apparent popularity, one may argue that his sermons really spoke to the people. Unfortunately, how they directly affected men and women is more difficult to measure. Although some did criticise his stances on prohibition, prostitution and sabbath observance,<sup>54</sup> he nevertheless repeatedly filled churches and meeting halls. This indicates that turn-of-the-century citizens did go to church.

Silcox’s influence on implementing direct legislation to deal with social and moral issues, however, was limited. Aiming at the clergy in general, rather than at Silcox specifically, the editor of one labour paper concluded that: “not one of them has made a practical move towards relieving the oppressed, beyond a few empty, meaningless exhortations as to what should be.”<sup>55</sup> Even with regards to specific campaigns that Silcox led, there was little impact. For example, prohibition did not come into effect in 1897, and authorities continued to favour a segregation policy throughout Silcox’s terms in Winnipeg. Where Silcox did succeed, however, was in raising public awareness. A certain “Purity” thanked him for the “fearless

stand” he took on the question of prostitution.<sup>56</sup> Pedley received similar praise when *The Montreal Herald* described him as “a man who thinks, who faces vexing questions squarely, who does not avoid the sometimes unorthodox solution of these questions, and who expresses his opinions orthodox, or unorthodox, with a fearless tongue.”<sup>57</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Reverends Hugh Pedley and J.B. Silcox were social gossellers who believed a better society was within reach. Silcox strove to bring the kingdom of God on earth, to create a humane society based on Christian principles of love, charity, humanity, brotherhood and democracy. The church had to be concerned with social problems such as prostitution, alcoholism and intolerable living and working conditions. Silcox did not work to establish social missions, settlement houses or workers’ unions, but laboured to alter people’s attitude. His idea of direct assistance was to promulgate the teaching of the Bible.

*Looking Forward* is the best testimony that the kingdom of God could be established right now on earth. The church, aided by the school and the state, could inculcate a politic of common good. Reverend Pedley certainly displayed the same idealism that his friend Silcox did. He too believed he could change society by preaching the gospel. He went one step further than Silcox, however, by focusing on a concrete reform: the unification of the church. It was only when the church was united that the gospel could reach all classes in society.

Regardless of how idealist, optimistic or even utopic we might find their respective plans, they still sounded rational and sensible to the ears of turn-of-the-century Canadians who by the thousands listened to the two reverends.

### **Endnotes**

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23. Pedley, "Theological Students and the Times," 91.
24. Hugh Pedley, *War and the New Earth. Sermon Preached in Emmanuel Congregational Church, Montreal, Sunday Evening May 30th, 1915*, 5.
25. Hugh Pedley, quoted in "Civic Evils, Their Cure," *Daily Nor Western*, 23 April 1894.
26. Pedley, *War and the New Earth*, 3.
27. J.B. Silcox, "A Preacher of Righteousness," 17, E4, Box A, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
28. "Progress of the Working Classes," *The Voice*, 15 December 1894; and "Rev. Mr. Pedley," *Daily Nor Western*, 23 October 1896.
29. "Labour Day Sermons."
30. "Labour Day Sermons."
31. J.B. Silcox, "God and the People" (1893), 12, H4, Box 8, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
32. J.B. Silcox, "The Christianization of Industrial Relations" (1915), 5-6, 15, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
33. J.B. Silcox, "God and the People" (1893), 13, H4, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
34. J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), 14, S3, Box A, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
35. In 1931, a journalist recalled that "for four years he crowded the building to capacity every Sunday," "Central to Hold 50th Anniversary," (Vertical File, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO). One of his obituaries stressed: "One of the most

widely known members of the clergy in Canada, he never preached to a vacant seat at a Sunday evening service" ("Rev. J.B. Silcox Dies Suddenly in Toronto," [Vertical File, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO]). "Those who reached the Congregational tabernacle early yesterday morning obtained seats, but those who came late considered themselves fortunate on even gaining admittance and standing room to listen to the farewell sermon of the popular pastor J.B. Silcox who leaves this week," ("Farewell Sermon" [San Diego], Newspaper articles, E7, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO).

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37. "Labour Day Sermons."
38. Pedley, *War and the New Earth*, 6-7.
39. "The Ministers' Sympathy With Closing of Stores," *Winnipeg Daily Tribune*, 28 April 1890.
40. Pedley, *Looking Forward*, 106-107.
41. J.B. Silcox, "The Humanity of Sunday" (1913), 2, B1, Box A, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
42. J.B. Silcox, "The Modern Devil," 6-7, W5, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
43. J.B. Silcox, "The Man Sent from God," 20, V5, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
44. J.B. Silcox, "The Scarlet Sin," 16, Z6, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
45. Pedley, "Theological Students and the Times," 88.
46. "Social Reform," *Daily Nor Western*, 9 December 1896.
47. Hugh Pedley quoted in "Social Reform," *Daily Nor Western*, 14 December 1896.
48. J.B. Silcox, "A Man Concerned for Other Men" (1915), 16, K3, Box A, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
49. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), 2.
50. Silcox, "A Preacher of Righteousness," 5.
51. Silcox, "A Preacher of Righteousness," 15.
52. Pedley, *Looking Forward*, 138, 143.
53. Pedley, *Looking Forward*, 138, 143.

54. A Man, "The Modern Devil," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 5 December 1901; James Shillinglaw, "Ministers and Prohibition," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 6 December 1901; A Lover of Freedom, "Sabbath Slavery," *The Voice*, 21 August 1897; and St-Charles, "A Workshop View of Our Sunday," *The Voice*, 31 May 1901.
55. "Current Comment," *The Voice*, 1 June 1895.
56. Purity, "Letter to Rev. J.B. Silcox, 21 May 1912," File 1, MS353, PP58, JBSP, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, McGill University Libraries.
57. Quoted in Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 893.





**Responding to the Reds:  
Conservative Protestants, Anti-Communism,  
and the Shaping of American Culture, 1945-1965<sup>1</sup>**

ERIC R. CROUSE

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Responding to the development of communist regimes throughout the world and perceived communist “infiltration” in the United States, conservative Protestants, on many occasions, expressed their understanding of the threats that American society faced. The success that evangelist Billy Graham, religious editor Carl Henry, and FBI director J. Edgar Hoover had in presenting their anti-communist message to countless Americans suggests that conservative Protestantism played a meaningful role in the shaping of American cold-war culture. One way to understand this process better is to probe how conservative Protestants drew motivation and legitimation from dominant American expectations that were religious, anti-communist, and masculine. Of course, conservative Protestants were not alone in reinforcing these ideals, since many liberal Protestants, Catholics, and Jews likewise represented dominant American expectations. What sets conservative Protestants apart was the profusion of voices, in all regions of the nation, that upheld a more consistent and rigorous anti-communist message.

American culture of the early Cold War period is striking for the uncritical acceptance of anti-communism.<sup>2</sup> Communists usually found it impossible to hold public addresses, as was the case in Trenton, New Jersey, in 1947, when leaders attempted to speak at a public hall only to be attacked by an anti-communist mob determined to protect “The American Way” from the influence of “Commies,” “rats,” “bastards” and “Stalin-

lovers.”<sup>3</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* warned, in 1949, of the demise of capitalism and the creation of a communist America – “the United Soviet States of the American Republic (USSAR).”<sup>4</sup> In a 1952 letter to the *Washington Herald-Times*, Robert Palmer urged mothers and fathers to drill the letters “D.B.A.C. (don’t be a communist), in every child’s mind,” and for news commentators to do likewise every time they broadcast.<sup>5</sup> Television shows and Hollywood movies, such as “The Red Menace,” “The Red Nightmare,” “I Was a Communist for the FBI,” and numerous others, alerted Americans of the communist threat. Many such films castigated labor unions and communist infiltrators (who allegedly had no real interest in the plight of the downtrodden), lionized law enforcement officials, and promoted the patriotic duty of informing on friends suspected of communist sympathies.<sup>6</sup> One national survey in the early 1950s indicated that 91% of Americans held that high school teachers who were admitted communists should be fired and 77% approved having their American citizenship taken away.<sup>7</sup> Many agreed with L. Nelson Bell, Billy Graham’s father-in-law, that the ultimate goal of communism “is complete domination of the world” and that “America is in the gravest danger in her history.”<sup>8</sup>

Countless historians have established the persistence of religion in American culture. During the early cold-war period, numerous surveys indicated that at least 95% of Americans “believed in God.” Good and patriotic Americans attended church. Besides, as the *Los Angeles Times* stated: “A Churchgoer Makes A Better Neighbor.”<sup>9</sup> Popular magazines proclaimed that religion “is booming in America” and thus it is no surprise that a 1958 Gallop poll revealed that 80% of the American electorate would “refuse to vote for an atheist for President under *any* circumstance.”<sup>10</sup> Many concurred with Senator Joseph McCarthy when he stated that “the fate of the world rests with the clash between the atheism of Moscow and the Christian spirit throughout other parts of the world.”<sup>11</sup>

Anti-communism in America took solid root during the Red Scare period immediately after 1917, with conservative Protestants among the key leaders who responded to the reds. Anti-communist rhetoric thrived decades later in conservative religious magazines such as the bi-weekly *Christianity Today* financially supported by ardent conservative J. Howard Pew, the president of Sun Oil Company. With almost 200,000 copies distributed throughout the United States to clergy and lay people by the late-1950s, the Washington-based *Christianity Today* sought to influence national policy and it offered hundreds of commentaries, reports, and articles on commu-

nism. In the early decades of the century, many conservative Protestants had been relatively poor rural people, but more evangelicals rose to the middle-class after World War Two (in step with economic expansion), becoming more visible as a political force. The problem, often repeated by conservative Protestants, was that atheistic communists recognized no fixed principles of morality; a communist's word, integrity, or intentions could not be trusted, even those stated in international treaties. In conservative Protestant circles, communism was nothing less than a sinister force seeking to subvert Christianity and American freedom and individualism.<sup>12</sup>

American expectations and traditions were not only religious and anti-communist, but also masculine. Defenders of America had to be aggressive. They had to uphold manliness because there was the belief that a lack of virility or homosexuality might lead to political subversion.<sup>13</sup> Critical of their own movement, some communist activists despaired of the "failure of masculinity in writers who would not deal with the hard realities of the class struggle."<sup>14</sup> Of course, there was also the issue of gender equality that communists promised. Women would be freed from "slavery" and placed in the workplace and their babies in nurseries, a threatening idea to many Americans. As Christian statesman John Foster Dulles pointed out in 1950, the constitution of the Soviet Union provided women equal rights with men in all spheres of society (including economic and political life) assured by a wide network of nurseries.<sup>15</sup> One Iowa housewife, who suspected another woman of being a communist, stated: "I just don't trust her . . . She has more money to spend and places to go than seems right."<sup>16</sup> In *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (1947), Freudian analyst Marynia Farnham and sociologist Ferdinand Lundberg claimed that communist agents used feminism to disrupt the West and terminate its vigor.<sup>17</sup>

As the cold war germinated in post-World War Two America, Billy Graham, brimming with piety, anti-communism, and masculinity, began to make his mark. In *The Culture of the Cold War*, Stephen J. Whitfield noted Graham's influence, stating "he probably remained the most consistently and deeply admired American of his time."<sup>18</sup> According to William McLoughlin, Graham's "popularity was part of the grass-roots reaction to the whole traumatic postwar experience," the desire for reaffirmation of ideals and values that had given "meaning and order to American life in the past."<sup>19</sup> In 1957, one commentator claimed that his "authoritarianism" and "decisiveness" appealed to many revival listeners.<sup>20</sup> Beginning in 1947, Graham's revival campaigns held in major cities and covered by print and

frequently by radio and television had a far-reaching impact. While his focus was a gospel message, Graham often highlighted the threat of communism to hammer away at the necessity for repentance of sins and thus revival.<sup>21</sup> The use of fear and anxiety were not necessarily melodramatic ploys, for Graham believed that the three major crises that America faced were the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and the communist menace.<sup>22</sup>

At the 1949 Los Angeles campaign, where he first received national exposure, he declared that “communism is not only an economic interpretation of life—communism is a religion that is inspired, directed and motivated by the Devil himself who has declared war against Almighty God.”<sup>23</sup> To a Washington audience, he declared that this anti-God and anti-Christ “fanatical religion” sought to undermine “this great America of ours.”<sup>24</sup> In North Carolina, he explained that in times of darkness communist promises of hope enticed followers, believing the communist pledge to rebuild the world. Graham lamented that when communism demanded conversion many would chose this “counterfeit of Christianity.”<sup>25</sup> Responding soon after the Cuban Missile Crisis, he warned that “in spite of a few recent reverses, the communists have been winning during the last 15 years.”<sup>26</sup>

There were other signs of a cold-warrior attitude such as his earlier statement, in *I Saw Your Sons at War: The Korean Diary*, that the division of Korea at the 38th parallel was a “scandalous” decision by “men who sold us down the river.” Graham supported an American “offensive war” and held that the Truman administration was “cowardly” for not allowing MacArthur to win the Korean War, even if it meant bombing China.<sup>27</sup> In 1958, responding to the Eisenhower administration for lessening its commitment to troops in Lebanon, to fight communism, Graham stated: “We hesitate, we vacillate, and weakly back down when the going gets tough.”<sup>28</sup> Described by a *Boston Daily Globe* journalist as a “tall, athletic evangelist,” Graham upheld a fighting spirit and the campaigns themselves frequently exhibited signs of an aggressive masculinity.<sup>29</sup> He preached that only God could hold communism back, but if called he would “shoulder a gun.”<sup>30</sup> He also pointed out the manliness of Christ, who “was every inch a ‘He-man.’” In fact, “Christ was probably the strongest man physically that ever lived. He could have been a star athlete on any team. He was a real man with His strong shoulders [and] squarish jaw.”<sup>31</sup> It is notable that revival converts who received the most press attention tended to be manly individuals such as “a hard-boiled police sergeant,” tattooed brawler Eddie Dickens, “real genuine cowboy” Sam Means of Texas, New York Giants bad boy Kirby Higbe, war

hero and former Olympic track star Louis Zamperini, or Californian racehorse owner and cowboy legend Stuart Hamblin who was described as a “man’s man.”<sup>32</sup> By way of revivals and television, Graham and his blend of piety, anti-communism, and masculinity, reinforced a conservative Protestant understanding of American cold-war culture.

Another conservative Protestant who voiced religious, anti-communist, and masculine ideals to a wide audience was *Christianity Today* editor and theologian Carl Henry, former professor at Fuller Theological Seminary – “strictly a men’s school” that discouraged women from attending classes.<sup>33</sup> Under his editorialship, *Christianity Today* rose to prominence in conservative Protestant circles, and, consequently, television camera crews periodically descended upon the Washington office seeking commentary on various issues.<sup>34</sup>

The exclusively masculine *Christianity Today* sought to offer a more balanced approach than fundamentalist thinking, but it still championed free-market capitalism and certainly did little to temper its attacks on atheistic communism. Like many other contributors to the magazine, Henry, himself, wrote of the dangers of communism to the Christian faith and the importance of eradicating sin by the redemptive power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>35</sup> America had to maintain its biblical heritage and be on guard against subtle socialistic proclivities, internal threats, and external foes. He feared the signs of “cancerous collectivism” or “secret totalitarianism” in the United States such as soaring costs of government, the rise of punitive taxation, greater federal support for education, and plans for socialized medicine.<sup>36</sup> In 1960, Henry defended the House Un-American Activities Committee and implored Americans to be vigilant of the monstrous evil of communism at home, particularly during the post-McCarthy era when communist agitators taking orders from Moscow were likely to have greater freedom to inflict the nation with subversive influences.<sup>37</sup>

Like Graham, Henry’s response to external communist threats was aggressively masculine, in keeping with the militancy against communism promoted by conservative Evangelicals and Fundamentalists. Adopting Christian sentimentality or “a sentimental theory of the love of God” meant being soft on communism.<sup>38</sup> Henry was critical of American foreign policy that allowed a little man who “plays the rumba on his tuba down in Cuba” to initiate a serious threat to American national security. Here Castro the warrior and revolutionary is downgraded to “a little man,” which corresponded with the persisting stereotype, in the early twentieth-century

popular press, that Americans were superior and masculine and Latinos “childlike people of color.” As Henry saw it, Americans, of course, would have to take action in Cuba; they could not permit Castro to leak communism, bringing in foreign powers, ninety miles off shore, that “would destroy us.”<sup>39</sup>

Henry asserted that American military support for the Bay of Pigs episode was weak and an embarrassment<sup>40</sup> and in the following year, days before the unfolding of the Cuban Missile Crisis, he decried American pacifism in religious and diplomatic circles and the so-called “better Red than dead” philosophy.<sup>41</sup> There was even the suggestion that pacifist pickers at Pennsylvania Avenue aided Khrushchev. Concerned that communist sympathizers manipulated public opinion, Henry contested peace “propaganda” such as “unilateral American suspension of nuclear tests, demilitarization of Germany, and withdrawal of American troops from South Vietnam.” Disputing the pacifist axiom “that war is always evil,” he supported the concept of a “just war” and warned of a surprise attack that could result in American surrender to communism.<sup>42</sup> As he stated elsewhere, “We must arm, certainly. We cannot allow ourselves to be engulfed by the dictatorship of the Soviet Union.”<sup>43</sup>

J. Edgar Hoover was another cold warrior who voiced an uncompromising position on communism. Viewed as a “folk hero” to millions of Americans, Hoover relished his role as a powerful guard and defender of America and the traditional Christian values that most Americans upheld against the internal threats of communists. According to one biographer, Hoover had, throughout his decades of FBI service, “a turn-of-the-century vision of America as a small community of like-minded neighbors, proud of their achievements, resentful of criticism, fiercely opposed to change.”<sup>44</sup> Like other religious conservatives, he championed a romanticized America of the past with its old truths and pieties. Hoover initially attended a Lutheran church, but at age fifteen he became a Presbyterian, remaining a member for the rest of his life.

While his religious life (at odds with some of his law enforcement ethics and methods) has received minimal treatment by historians, his connection to conservative Protestantism became more public in the late-1950s and early-1960s when he published a number of “revival oriented articles” in *Christianity Today* that explained how communists operated against the American religious heritage.<sup>45</sup> For example, in 1960 the magazine invited Hoover to present a three-part series entitled “The

Communist Menace: Red Goals and Christian Ideals,” “Communist Propaganda and the Christian Pulpit,” and “Soviet Rule or Christian Renewal?” He painted a dark picture of Marx as an “intolerant atheist” mixing the ideological acids of an evil philosophy, V.I. Lenin as a “beady-eyed Russian” seizing power with Bolshevik henchmen, and Joseph Stalin as crafty and cunning. Hoover used nuclear war rhetoric to warn of the communist foe: “The communists are today spraying the world with ideological and propaganda missiles designed to create a deadly radioactive cloud of Marxism-Leninism,” with the “deadliest” missiles targeting the “Christian pulpit” to be “liquidated, pitilessly, mercilessly, finally.” In rejecting God, he argued, communism became “a fanatical, Satanic, brutal phenomenon.”<sup>46</sup>

Hoover alerted Christians of a false communist claim for tolerance of religion, a communist plan to agree with Christians on common issues, and the goal to exploit the church for communist ends.<sup>47</sup> His warnings were consistent with conservative Protestant fears that liberal Protestants were vulnerable to socialist influences and thus communist exploitation. Communism is a deceitful and bitter enemy of religion, but the nation would remain strong as long as Americans looked to the Bible for “inspiration, zeal, and guidance for life.”<sup>48</sup> Concerning one of Hoover’s article, Marion Walger of Baltimore wrote to *Christianity Today* desiring that Hoover’s words “could be put into the hands of every man and woman, and every boy and girl – in America at least.”<sup>49</sup>

In his book *Masters of Deceit: The Story of Communism in America and How to Fight It* (1958) and other publications, Hoover utilized strong language to explain how Americans could effectively respond to the red menace.<sup>50</sup> His jeering of communists represented an aggressiveness, bravery, and loyalty that were manly qualities. Although Hoover’s forceful presentation might in part be explained as his way to promote his manliness and counteract any rumours of his homosexuality, it was also vital for him to take the role of the unyielding defender of American and Christian ideals, a responsibility he took serious since joining the Department of Justice.

In assessing the impact of the religious, anti-communist, and masculine ideals of Graham, Henry, and Hoover, one might acknowledge the function of traditions that legitimize and even prescribe particular group or societal behavior.<sup>51</sup> One of a number of reasons why early cold-war Americans upheld intense anti-communism was because of its intimate connection with fundamental values and traits of American society,

including religiosity and masculinity. Although many Americans were outside conservative Protestant circles, most Americans upheld the importance of Christian values. As for gender, the dominant ideal of domesticity held that the wife stayed home to insure the rearing of patriotic children. Excessive anti-communist activity by ordinary Americans was legitimate. Did not conservative religious leaders advocate an aggressive and virile response? Reinforcement worked both ways. Conservative Protestant leaders could promote unyielding anti-communist attitudes, that occasionally bordered on hysteria, without much challenge from Americans who not only feared communism for its threat to capitalism but also its promotion of atheism and perhaps even gender equality.

Additional ways to explore the impact that conservative Protestants likely had in shaping early cold-war culture in America can be found in social psychological research on group and societal behavior. For example, studies demonstrate that people are more susceptible to persuasion if the speaker is believed to be an expert, has style, self-confidence, and high status, and offers a message that arouses strong emotions.<sup>52</sup> Graham the athletic, globe-trotting evangelist, Henry the learned and respected evangelical journalist, and Hoover the FBI national hero offered credible, emotional, and persuasive messages concerning the threat of communism. Their messages also benefited by the tendency of individuals to divide the social world into “us” and “them” or “in-group” and “out-group” categories, with the “in-group” viewed favorably so as to protect and bolster social identity and the “out-group” perceived disapprovingly to the point that all characteristics of the group are viewed in a negative manner.<sup>53</sup> Applying this model of social categorization to communism in America, one can understand how those who were supportive or sympathetic to socialist causes appeared to possess only undesirable traits, particularly in the eyes of conservative Protestants such as Graham, Henry, and Hoover who, because of their strong identification with the in-group, were especially threatened by communist activity.

The warnings of Graham, Henry, and Hoover also reinforced negative stereotypes of left-wing Americans that would continue to persist as a result of the construction of social walls between true Americans and those who allegedly carried out un-American activities. Thus, the many Americans who experienced the anxieties of cold-war culture also fell under conformist and psychological influences that commanded a vigilant and united response to communism. It was no surprise that most Americans who sought acceptance



and understood and endorsed the goals of the patriotic in-group desired to work within the group in order that anti-communist ideals dominated.<sup>54</sup> Believing that the danger of communism was real, they were unlikely to show much tolerance for those espousing communist views. Not until traditional ideals came under attack by the counterculture of the 1960s, moral relativism, and the disturbing images of the Vietnam War – all signs of the crumbling of the anti-communist consensus – was there a sustained challenge to America’s perception of communism, religion, and gender.

As Americans faced the rise of communist regimes throughout the world and the threat of “infiltration” in the United States, conservative Protestants reacted with vigilance. For conservative Protestants, the time was right to play a greater role in American life and policy. In the past generation, conservative Protestants in general were on the defensive with the rise of the New Deal and overall greater support for governmental intervention in society. With the arrival of the cold war, conservative Protestant leaders gained the best opportunity in decades to play a prominent role in society since they appeared to be one with American culture, on the issue of responding to communist forces. The whole traumatic postwar experience demanded reaffirmation of time-tested ideals and values. Billy Graham, Carl Henry, and J. Edgar Hoover, who offered strong, virile, and dynamic leadership, responded to the “reds” effectively because their message embodied American expectations that were religious, anti-communist, and masculine.

### ***Endnotes***

1. I would like to thank the CSCH for providing a forum that allowed the presentation of my ideas on religion and American culture. Also, I thank those in attendance who offered helpful suggestions and questions.
2. Culture can be defined as a collection of beliefs, values, and ideals expressed in popular forms and embodied in political and other institutions (see George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1980], vii).
3. The 1948 report by Robert Myers is included in Myers, “Anti-Communist Mob Action: A Case Study,” in *Readings in Collective Behavior*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Robert R. Evans (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1975): 152-161.

4. "Red Says New War to Doom Capitalism," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 November 1949; and "Reds Outline Plan for Soviet America," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 October 1949.
5. "Slogan Suggestion," *Times-Herald*, 4 February 1952.
6. Margot A. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 69-70.
7. Samuel A. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties: A Cross-section of the Nation Speaks Its Mind* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955), 40, 43. The national cross-section survey "sought to be representative of the American population twenty-one years of age and over, living in private households. Excluded were persons in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, hotels, and military establishments" (237).
8. "A Layman and his Faith," *Christianity Today*, 18 July 1960.
9. Such was the title for the list of church services (*Los Angeles Times*, 12 November 1949).
10. William L. O'Neill, *American High: The Years of Confidence, 1945-1960* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 212; D.W. Broyan, "Unnoticed Changes in America," *Harper's Magazine* (February 1957), 31; and Douglas T. Miller and Marion Nowak, *The Fifties: The Way We Really Were* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1977), 92.
11. Miller and Nowak, *The Fifties*, 91.
12. "Red China and World Morality," *Christianity Today*, 10 December 1956; "Even the Devil Wears a Smile," *Christianity Today*, 2 February 1959; "Karl Marx: A Study in Tragedy," *Christianity Today*, 23 November 1959; L. Nelson Bell, "Christianity and Communism," *Christianity Today*, 19 January 1959. On Russia, the Cold War, and prophecy (particularly Soviet invasion of Israel) see Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 157.
13. Michelle Mart, "Tough Guys and American Cold War Policy: Images of Israel, 1948-1960," *Diplomatic History* 20, No. 3 (Summer 1996): 359.
14. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 294.
15. John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), 166.
16. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, 177.

17. Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Spectre of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917-1953* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 121.
18. Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: John Hopkin's University Press, 1991), 78.
19. William McLoughlin, *Billy Graham: Revivalist in a Secular Age* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1960), 95-96.
20. Ralph Lord Roy, "Billy Graham in New York -II," *Christianity and Crisis* 17, No. 15 (1957): 119.
21. McLoughlin, *Billy Graham*, 80.
22. "Graham Describes Three Great American Crises," *Christianity Today*, 8 July 1957.
23. *Revival in Our Time: The Story of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Campaigns* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1950), 73.
24. "Graham to End Crusade Here Next Week End," *Times-Herald*, 10 February 1952.
25. *Charlotte Observer*, 12, 26 October 1958.
26. "Facing the Anti-God Colossus," *Christianity Today*, 21 December 1962.
27. Billy Graham, *I Saw Your Sons at War: The Korean Diary* (Minneapolis: Billy Graham Association, 1953), 63; and McLoughlin, *Billy Graham*, 115.
28. Quoted in McLoughlin, *Billy Graham*, 223.
29. "Billy Graham Feels Like Wet Dishrag After Sermon," *Boston Globe*, 8 January 1950.
30. "Evangelist Will Remain Silent on Cohen Matter," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 November 1949.
31. "Sermon No. 13," *The Charlotte Observer*, 5 October 1958.
32. *Charlotte Observer*, 21 & 27 September 1958; Donald E. Hoke, "Harvesting at the Revival – in Columbia," in *Revival in Our Time*, 49; "Zamperini, Hero in War, Converted," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 November 1949; and Mel Larsen, "Trusting Revival at Los Angeles," in *Revival in Our Time*, 14.
33. George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 123.

34. Carl F.H. Henry, *Confessions of a Theologian: An Autobiography* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 177-179.
35. For example, see “The Fragility of Freedom in the West,” *Christianity Today*, 15 October 1956 ;and “Christianity Versus Communism,” *Christianity Today*, 11 May 1962.
36. “America’s Future: Can We Salvage the Republic?” *Christianity Today*, 3 March 1958.
37. “‘Push Button’ Riots Now Promote Communist Goals,” *Christianity Today*, 13 March 1961; and “Strategy for Disaster: Burn the Fire Truck,” *Christianity Today*, 29 August 1960. Supportive letters to the editor can be found in “A Growing Threat,” *Christianity Today*, 8 May 1961.
38. For example, see “Christian Default in the West,” *Christianity Today*, 27 August 1965; and “Christianity and Communism,” *Christianity Today*, 24 April 1961.
39. “Cuba Situation Becomes a Battle for the Hemisphere,” *Christianity Today*, 1 August 1960. On negative stereotypes see Thomas Patterson, *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6.
40. “The Fiasco in Cuba and Freedom’s Supports,” *Christianity Today*, 8 May 1961.
41. “Peace in Our Time: What Are the Pacifists Doing?” *Christianity Today*, 26 October 1962.
42. “Peace in Our Time: What Are the Pacifists Doing?” *Christianity Today*, 26 October 1962.
43. “The Communist Surge,” *Christianity Today*, 23 June 1958.
44. Richard Gid Powers, *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 3, 201.
45. Although Hoover may have aligned himself with conservative Protestants for political (keeping support for the FBI strong) rather than religious reasons, he nonetheless made the connection with conservative Protestantism.
46. “The Communist Menace: Red Goals and Christian Ideals,” *Christianity Today*, 10 October 1960; and “Communist Propaganda and the Christian Pulpit,” *Christianity Today*, 24 October 1960.

47. "Communist Propaganda and the Christian Pulpit, *Christianity Today*, 24 October 1960.
48. "Soviet Rule or Christian Renewal?" *Christianity Today*, 7 November 1960.
49. "Even the Brave and Free," *Christianity Today*, 9 October 1964.
50. J. Edgar Hoover, *Masters of Deceit: The Story of Communism in America and How to Fight It* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958).
51. For example, see Natalie Zemon Davis, particularly the chapter "The Rites of Violence" (of the late-sixteenth century), in Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 152-187.
52. Charles Kiesler and Sara Kiesler, *Conformity* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969), 15; Robert Baron, *Psychology* (Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1998), 670-671.
53. Baron, *Psychology*, 673-674.
54. Kiesler and Kiesler, *Conformity*, 31, 33.



## **John Burgess Calkin (1829-1918): Educator and Churchman in Truro, Nova Scotia**

ELDON HAY

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John Calkin married Martha Sommerville (1833-1903) in October 1854. Her father was Rev. William Sommerville (1800-1878), Covenanter minister at Cornwallis. He had been John Calkin's teacher and mentor in theology. Both John and Martha were members of Cornwallis Covenanter church.<sup>1</sup>

William Sommerville was furious, hurt and embarrassed about the wedding. Why? It wasn't the age of the couple (John was about twenty-five years of age, Martha about twenty-one). It was because they eloped. The usual, normal, appropriate, proper course would have been for the couple to be married by Martha's father, at the manse, or in the Cornwallis Covenanter Church. But no, they eloped. Who married them? Not another Covenanter pastor, which might have been permissible. Not even by a mainline Presbyterian minister – which would have been embarrassing enough. Much worse – they were married, in nearby Kentville, by an Anglican clergyman. “On Saturday, the 28th Oct., by the Rev. Lee Yewens, at the Episcopal Church, Kentville, Mr. John B. Calkin, Cornwallis, King's County, to Miss Martha Ann Dickie, daughter of the Rev. Wm. Sommerville, of the same place.”<sup>2</sup>

Sommerville was furious, hurt, embarrassed. Why had the couple eloped? Why had they overlooked the person who obviously should have married them? And why, pray tell, would they stoop to be married by an Anglican? It was too much!

Mrs. Ruth Lumsden, a grand-daughter of John and Martha Calkin, had some reminiscences of that time. “I remember my mother burning the letters

Wm. Sommerville wrote to my grandfather after the elopement. My mother would not let any of us read the letters, but I understand he berated my grandfather as a 'no good,' 'worse than a horse thief,' etc., and then signed his letters 'Believe me, your humble servant, Wm. Sommerville.'"<sup>3</sup>

Why did they elope? No, it was not what we might have conjectured. John and Martha Calkin's first child was born eleven months after they were married, they named that child Sarah Barry Calkin,<sup>4</sup> undoubtedly after Martha's mother, who had died in 1853,<sup>5</sup> leaving William Sommerville a widower, still with some very young children.

Why did they elope? We don't know. One possible explanation is that Widower William Sommerville had himself remarried, in September 1854,<sup>6</sup> a month before John and Martha. There were still Sommerville youngsters from William's first family in the manse. William had a new, second wife. Perhaps John and Martha felt they were doing Rev. William and his new bride a favour; perhaps his new wife may have seen it that way. That wasn't the way William saw it, at least not initially. However, "in later years Wm. Sommerville became very fond of my grandfather and said he was one of the ablest students he [ever] had."<sup>7</sup>

But let's go back to the beginning, to the childhood of Martha Sommerville and John Calkin. Martha Anne Sommerville was the oldest of ten children born to William Sommerville and Sarah Barry Dickey (1810-1853). William had been born in Ireland, came out to New Brunswick, did some itinerating and met Sarah Barry Dickey of Cumberland County (a brother of hers, Robert Dickey, became a father of Confederation). Martha Sommerville was born in "Amherst, N.S. June 28th 1833; baptized by Rev. A. Clarke Amherst July 18th 1833."<sup>8</sup> Shortly after, in the mid-1830s, William and Sarah Sommerville found themselves in Horton, Nova Scotia. Presumably Martha went to school; after that, little is known about her until her marriage to John Burgess Calkin in 1854.

John Burgess Calkin was the seventh of eight children born to Elias Calkin (1779-1851) and Mercy Burgess Calkin (1789-1874).<sup>9</sup> John Calkin was "eighth in line of descent from Hugh Calkin, who was born in the year 1600, at Chepstow, Monmouthshire, England, and who, in 1640, accompanied by his wife and several children, crossed the Atlantic, and joined the Plymouth (Mass.) Colonists."<sup>10</sup> The Calkin family spread from there, some of them ending up in Cornwallis. Elias Calkin, John's father, "made for himself a home in the forests of Cornwallis, remote from any settlement, and five miles beyond the farthest limits of any public highway. He married



Mercy, daughter of Benjamin Burgess, who also it is said, was descended from a family connected with the Plymouth Colony.”<sup>11</sup>

John Calkin spent his early years on his father’s farm. He received his education at the district school and, later, under his future father-in-law, Rev. William Sommerville, A.M., of Cornwallis, a clergyman of the Reformed Presbyterian or Covenanter Church. Sommerville was a very good teacher, and Elias Calkin, who died 31 March 1851, had an item in his will (dated 13 March 1851) about his son, John. Having provided for his wife and daughters, and having bequeathed to older sons Gurdon Ahira and Edmund “. . . all my Real Estate comprising the Farm,” he had an item about John which made clear his wish was that this son be educated, and under Covenanter minister Sommerville:

I give and bequeath to my beloved son John two years schooling under the instruction of the Revd. William Sumerville [*sic*] together with Board, Washing & lodging at my Dwelling House and also suitable and decent Wearing apparel during said two years the same to be provided and supplied by my two beloved Sons as hereafter named Gurdon Ahira and Edmund also the sum of thirty pounds to be paid to him in one year after the expiration of said two years.<sup>12</sup>

A brief word about the Reformed Presbyterians or Covenanters.<sup>13</sup> They were a Presbyterian group, formed in Scotland in approximately 1690, spreading to Northern Ireland. Rev. William Sommerville, as noted above came from Cornwallis, having previously lived in New Brunswick, and Northern Ireland. Covenanters did not vote, swear oaths or sit on juries. And in their worship, Covenanters did not use the organ or any other musical instrument. They were also anti-Catholic. They were vigorously opposed to bishops in both the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church: this was one of the reasons William was so incensed and hurt by his daughter being married by an Anglican.

J.B. Calkin was heavily influenced by his teacher, Rev. William Sommerville. The Calkin family had belonged to the Free Church; J.B.’s father Elias was “an Elder in the Free Church, Cornwallis.” But John left the Free Church: he “was brought to recognize our distinctive [Covenanter] principles through the teaching of . . . Mr. Sommerville.”<sup>14</sup> At least some of J.B.’s family also became Covenanter.<sup>15</sup> As a student, J.B. “enjoyed the advantages of several years’ study under the direction of Rev. Wm.

Somerville, widely known throughout the lower provinces as an exceedingly full and accurate scholar. Undoubtedly the impulse received from this ripe and enthusiastic educator to a large extent determined his future career.”<sup>16</sup> Somerville, the teacher, imparted to John “English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Mathematics and Physics.”<sup>17</sup>

Somerville’s teaching embraced what today could be called both secular and theological subjects. It is clear that John Calkin not only became a Covenanter member, but he also seriously considered becoming a Covenanter clergyman. Having finished his secondary education, he commenced studying theology under Somerville in 1850.<sup>18</sup> In October 1851, before the Reformed Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia: “Mr. J.B. Calkin appears for examination prior to his entering College with a view to the Ministry . . . The examination is sustained and [Mr. Calkin] is recommended to the favourable notice of the Professors of any College in which he may consider it convenient to prosecute his studies during the approaching Winter.”<sup>19</sup> Clergyman Lawson wrote back to the Covenanters in Ulster: “we recommended him [Calkin] to the Professors of Halifax Free Church College, to be taken under their care and tuition, during the approaching winter.”<sup>20</sup>

“Subsequently Mr. Calkin attended the Free Church College, Halifax, for a short time” during the winter 1851-52.<sup>21</sup> In June of 1852, Calkin again appeared before presbytery, “as a student of the first year. He was examined at some length, on Logic and Greek. The examination is sustained and [further] exercises are prescribed, to be in readiness for the next meeting [of presbytery].”<sup>22</sup> But at the next meeting of presbytery, Calkin did not appear, nor did he ever appear again – at least not as a candidate for the ministry. His two-year period as an intended Covenanter candidate was over. While still remaining a Covenanter member, Calkin turned his attention away from being a clergyman to a career in education. That educational trajectory was already in motion.

When he was sixteen years of age, John Calkin received a Common School licence,<sup>23</sup> and “began . . . as a teacher in the Autumn of 1848, having charge of the district school at Sheffield Mills, Kings Co., Nova Scotia for a period of six months. From 1852 to 1856 he taught one of the county grammar schools at Canard, Kings County.”<sup>24</sup> During the first few of those years, as Calkin himself wrote, he conformed to the custom of the time by “boarding around” among the parents of my pupils, staying from three days to three weeks in a place, according to the number of pupils that the various

homes sent him. Whatever objections this system had, it had the advantage of bringing the teacher into close contact with his pupils and their parents.<sup>25</sup>

As we have seen, Calkin married Martha Sommerville in 1854. I hunch – although I am not certain – that, after they were married, the two lived in a humble dwelling in Canard. Almost certainly, Martha did not remain in Cornwallis at her father's house!

The Provincial Normal School was established at Truro in 1856. Calkin, with a view of obtaining a more thorough knowledge of the principles of pedagogy, attended a term at the Provincial Normal School, shortly after it opened. In May, 1857 he was appointed as Head Master of the Model School,<sup>26</sup> in connection with the Normal School at Truro, a position he held for seven/eight years, until 1864.<sup>27</sup> The Calkin family undoubtedly lived in Truro, during those years, likely beginning in 1857.

“When, in 1864 the free school system was established, Mr. Calkin at the request of Dr. Theodore Rand [1835-1900],<sup>28</sup> then Superintendent of Education, took charge of the task of introducing the Act in Kings County.”<sup>29</sup> The free school system was not universally popular, and Calkin ran into real opposition. However, he persevered. In his report at the end of the year, Calkin wrote:

Within the year I have visited about one hundred schools . . . Sometimes I found willing ears and, as soon as erroneous impressions were removed, a readiness to act in the right direction; in other cases, opposition was so strong and prejudice so deeply seated, that every argument seemed to be fruitless as corn sown upon the desert. Yet by subsequent action in several of those sections which appeared so unpromising, I have been taught the value of the [Biblical] injunction, “In the morning sow thy seed and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper [Eccles. 11:6].”<sup>30</sup>

At another point in his report, Calkin spoke of parents: “Some parents . . . will do more to improve their stock, their grains, and their roots, than to elevate the tone of society around them, take more interest in the architecture of a stable than of a schoolhouse, more pride in a well groomed horse than in a well educated son.”<sup>31</sup>

After one year, Calkin returned to Truro where he was to live for the rest of his life. He took charge of the English and Classical Department in the Normal School, and four years later, in May, 1869, on the death of the first

principal of the institution, Alexander Forrester (1804-1869),<sup>32</sup> Calkin was appointed principal, a position which he held for thirty-one years. When Calkin was named principal of the Normal School, all six Calkin children had been born: two died in infancy,<sup>33</sup> four lived into adulthood.<sup>34</sup>

I now turn from Calkin the educator, to Calkin the churchman; and back to the mid-1860s. The Calkins had maintained their membership in Cornwallis Covenanter Church from the time of their marriage. Perhaps they were able to return there for Communion and other seasons. There is no record of any of the Calkin children being baptized in the Covenanter church, though the oldest, Sarah Calkin (1855-1910), eventually became a member.

The Cornwallis session met in May 1865, William Sommerville was moderator; among the session members was John's oldest brother, Gurdon Ahira Calkin.<sup>35</sup> The minutes read:

The Moderator read a letter from J.B. Calkin in which he gave intimation to the Session that in consequence of a change in his views respecting Covenanting principles, he could no longer remain in the membership of the Church; which declination the court resolved not [to] accept till it be furnished with his reasons for dissolving his connection with the Church. And the Clerk was instructed to give him notice to that effect.<sup>36</sup>

In the autumn, the session met again; John Calkin's reasons for dissolving his connection with the Church were read and received and the following resolution adopted:

Whereas Mr. J.B. Calkin has confessed his violation of his profession in voting at the last general election [which had been held 28 May 1863], and in a communication to this Session justified the act and in general vindicates his dissent from the distinctive position of Reformed Presbyterian Church. Therefore resolved that he be no longer recognized as one of its members.

That should Mr. J.B. Calkin apply for anything in the form of certificate of demission from the Church – the Clerk be instructed to furnish him with a copy of this decision signed with his name as Clerk of the Session.

That an answer to his reasons of dissent from the principles formerly professed be prepared and kept among the records of Session.<sup>37</sup>

Unfortunately, neither John's letter outlining his dissent from Covenanter principles, nor the session's letter in response, have survived. Between the time Calkin voted in the general election of 28 May 1863, and his first attempt to leave the Covenanters, 13 May 1865, the Calkins had a son, whom they called William Sommerville Calkin, born 13 September 1864.

John Calkin was no longer a Covenanter. But his ties to the Covenanters were not completely cut off. Calkin's wife, Martha, undoubtedly remained Covenanter,<sup>38</sup> as did his daughter, Sarah Calkin.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, over the next years, J.B. Calkin did a considerable amount of writing for American Covenanter journals,<sup>40</sup> partially due, no doubt, to the influence of his brother-in-law, Rev. Robert McGowan Sommerville (1837-1920). Rev. Robert Sommerville had assisted his father at Cornwallis from 1861 to 1873, then leaving Nova Scotia and going on to a distinguished career as a Covenanter pastor and journal editor in the city of New York.<sup>41</sup>

J.B. Calkin – though not Mrs. Calkin<sup>42</sup> – joined the Truro [later First] Presbyterian church, on 10 March 1866.<sup>43</sup> The Calkin family may well have been worshipping at First Presbyterian for some time. Calkin, the educator, became Sabbath School superintendent at First Presbyterian in 1867.<sup>44</sup> In 1871, Calkin was elected chair of the Annual General meeting of the congregation.<sup>45</sup> Truro Presbyterian was the largest and most affluent Presbyterian congregation in the district; it had several offspring in various mission stations in the area – for example, Brookfield and Beaver Brook.

A feeling grew in First Presbyterian that a new Presbyterian congregation was needed; Calkin played a leading part in that undertaking. St. Andrew's Presbyterian was the result: "the separation of St. Andrew's from the parent [First], was rather reluctant. It was undertaken only because it was believed that the cause of religion demanded it."<sup>46</sup> "St. Andrew's was born out of the need for a division of the large congregation of First Presbyterian Church."<sup>47</sup>

St. Andrew's Presbyterian congregation – the offshoot – was to be the chief locale of Calkin's greatest contributions as a churchman, a role he undertook very devotedly. A charter member, he was one of its first trustees, though he was not elected as an elder until 1888.<sup>48</sup> "A Sabbath School was started in connection with St. Andrew's simultaneously with, or at least very soon after the organization of the new congregation. The appointment of the first Superintendent, J.B. Calkin, was made on 28 January 1875."<sup>49</sup> In 1887, the minister, Rev. Thomas Cumming (1835-1922), made reference to the

Sabbath School, which “we regard as a Model School in many respects – especially for the good order which is maintained in it, and for the capacity and efficiency of the Superintendent, teachers and officers. But we would like to see the children especially, take much greater interest in the singing than they usually do.”<sup>50</sup>

In one of his own reports, in 1892, J.B. spoke of the School very positively: “The School may be justly described as orderly and of high moral tone. In this regard, indeed, there has been very manifest improvement within the past few years. It should be stated that the school has the full confidence of the parents. They send their children with regularity and it is very seldom that a scholar comes late.” Then Calkin gently scolded the adults: “The parents never make complaints, nor do they ever show a suspicion that all is not going on well by visiting the school.”<sup>51</sup>

Teachers’ meetings for the study of the lesson and the discussion of matters connected with the Sabbath School was held Wednesday evenings at close of the prayer meeting, concerning which, Calkin further reported, “Some, with a touch of humor, asked what purpose would be served by attending these meetings, others were good natured enough to say that they had been in some measure profited.”<sup>52</sup>

Calkin was to be Sabbath School Superintendent until 1905; completing thirty years in that post at St. Andrew’s. Moreover, “he frequently represented the congregation and presbytery in the higher courts of the Church. He was a member of the executive of the Nova Scotia auxiliary of the Canadian Bible Society, from the time of its formation [in 1904], and his counsel was always deeply appreciated by this organization.”<sup>53</sup>

Now, from the churchman, to Calkin the educator. In 1869, Calkin had just been named Principal of the Normal School. He was eminently fitted for the position. He knew the school system from the ground up; he had paid his dues. He had been a teacher in rural schools of the Province before the Normal School was established; a student at the Normal School during the second term of its existence; and the first Headmaster of the Model School which was opened in Truro in 1857. He served in this latter capacity for seven/eight years, resigning to become Inspector of Schools for Kings County, in 1865. Returning to Truro, he became a member of the Normal School staff, head of the English and Classics Department of the Normal School.<sup>54</sup> In 1869, he became principal.

Dr. Calkin entered upon his new work with enthusiasm and vision. Taking into consideration the wider interest in the educational progress of the province, he felt that two things were immediately necessary. He advocated, in his first annual report, that a new building be provided sufficiently large to include the Normal and Model Schools and, secondly, that the length of the teacher-training period be changed from two short terms in the year to one long term. As a result of his continued advocacy, both of his proposals were to be realized before many years.<sup>55</sup>

Calkin's achievements were already widely recognized. In 1870, a year after he became principal, the university of Acadia college, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, bestowed on Principal Calkin the honorary degree of Master of Arts,<sup>56</sup> "a fitting recognition of his attainments, and his position as an instructor."<sup>57</sup>

Space is not adequate to relate his many achievements as principal – planning and pleading with the Nova Scotia government for this facility or that improvement – doggedly and persistently putting the case.<sup>58</sup>

Calkin was a great educator. He was also a prodigious author. When he had been inspector in Kings County in 1865, he noted a lack of good Canadian books. He observed that "by far the majority of books used in the schools of King's County are American publications. Indeed, I may say they were almost exclusively such twelve months ago. This is an evil to be remedied."<sup>59</sup> Calkin tackled this evil personally: in fact he had already begun – his *Geography and History of Nova Scotia* had been published in 1859. There followed a spate of books, Calkin attempting to remedy the situation of which he had earlier written. Within a few years Calkin produced *School Geography of the World* (1881). Calkin's *History of British America* appeared the next year. Other texts followed: *New Introductory Geography* (1885), *A History of the Dominion of Canada*.<sup>60</sup> In addition to his publications in education, his *Historical Geography of Bible Lands* appeared in 1905. Finally, his *Old Time Customs, Memories and Traditions* was published after his death.

Calkin was in the forefront of the education of women. In his earliest report as principal of the Normal School in 1869, he wrote: "I . . . notice that a young lady in attendance this term has the honor of being the first of her sex in the Normal School (and, if I mistake not, in the Province), to compete successfully for Grade B."<sup>61</sup> Undoubtedly, not a few of Calkin's female relatives attended the Normal School. His sister-in-law, Rachel Sommer-ville, was present in 1870; his oldest daughter, Sarah, was present in 1871.<sup>62</sup>

Calkin had a role in the admission of the first women to Dalhousie University. That decision was finally put into effect in 1881. Dalhousie principal, Rev. James Ross (1811-1886), “greeted the women undergraduates that November 1881, all two of them, with a graceful speech.”<sup>63</sup> The two women were Amelia (or “Lillie”), Calkin’s daughter, and Margaret Newcomb, his niece. Lillie had been present at the Normal School in 1879; and his niece, Margaret Newcomb, the daughter of his sister Abigail, had attended the Normal School in 1876, at which time she won a Governor-General prize medal. Lillie was the first woman admitted to Dalhousie University in 1881; and Margaret Newcomb was the first woman graduate.<sup>64</sup> Lillie left after one year, marrying a Presbyterian minister, Rev. G.S. Carson. But Margaret stayed on, not only becoming the first woman graduate, but pursuing an educational career by teaching at the Halifax Ladies College.<sup>65</sup>

There is no doubt Calkin had a hand in the admission to Dalhousie of these two women. Ruth Lumsden wrote that, John Calkin, “was responsible, against considerable opposition, for Dalhousie becoming co-ed. His daughter Amelia (Lillie) and niece Margaret Trueman (née Newcomb) were the first two co-eds.”<sup>66</sup> This may be giving Calkin too much credit – though he clearly had some responsibility. Some years after the women were admitted, Rev. John Forrest (1842-1920),<sup>67</sup> undoubtedly present when the momentous original decision to admit women was made, told the “story of an eventful day in the old college building on the Grand Parade [at Dalhousie University], when a letter was read from a friend of the college asking that ladies be allowed to attend the classes. The writer of that letter was J.B. Calkin.”<sup>68</sup> The same Rev. John Forrest “referred to Principal Calkin, Dr. Rand and Dr. Forrester as the three great educational men of the Province.”<sup>69</sup>

Considerable time could be expended speaking about Calkin’s other students. One of them, near the beginning of his career, was Annie Leake (1839-1934),<sup>70</sup> for whom he wrote a letter of recommendation, in 1873.<sup>71</sup> Of course, there were countless others.

Calkin retired in 1900, to a good deal of fanfare; his many gifts as educator amply recognized by a variety of notables, and by his own faculty and students.<sup>72</sup> “He continued to act as emeritus professor of psychology and pedagogy.”<sup>73</sup> He became Truro’s “Grand Old Man.” Dalhousie University awarded him the degree of LL.D in 1909.<sup>74</sup> His wife, Martha, died in 1903.<sup>75</sup> His eldest daughter, Sarah, somewhat like her father, an educational leader, died in 1910.<sup>76</sup> J.B. Calkin died 17 September 1918, and is buried in the family plot in the Robie Street Cemetery in Truro.<sup>77</sup>



Personally, Calkin was one of the most charming of men, genial, kindly, possessing a broad charity and a tender regard for the rights and feelings of others. He carried with him to the very end of life a youthful spirit, taking a deep interest in the young and in all that concerned their welfare. He had a large circle of attached friends, and he was affectionately remembered by hundreds of old Normal School students throughout the province who received their training under him. Moreover, he was a man of simple, childlike faith and genuine piety. The unseen things were to him great and ever-present realities.<sup>78</sup>

There are two present day Truro fixtures where his legacy is clearly manifest. The first is found in Calkin Hall, now part of the Truro Campus, Nova Scotia Community College.<sup>79</sup> It reads:

CALKIN  
AUDITORIUM - GYMNASIUM  
NAMED IN HONOUR OF  
DR JOHN B. CALKIN  
WHO SERVED AS THE SECOND  
PRINCIPAL  
OF THE  
PROVINCIAL NORMAL  
SCHOOL  
1869-1900

The second plaque is displayed prominently in the present-day chapel of St. Andrew's United Church.<sup>80</sup>

TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
JOHN BURGESS CALKIN  
1829-1918  
AUTHOR AND EDUCATOR  
CHARTER MEMBER AND ELDER OF THIS CHURCH  
1875-1918  
FIRST SUPERINTENDENT OF ST. ANDREW'S SUNDAY SCHOOL  
1875-1905

**Endnotes**

1. Somerset, Nova Scotia, Cornwallis Ref. Pres. Church, Minutes and Records, Mfm, Maritime Conference United Church Archives, Sackville, New Brunswick (hereafter MCA). Strangely, the name J.B. Calkin is missing from the roll of members, though Mrs. J.B. Calkin's name is included.
2. *Presbyterian Witness*, 11 November 1854, 179.
3. Ruth Lumsden, letter to author, 1989. Mrs. Ruth Sommerville Wilson Lumsden (1902-1997) was then living in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.
4. 6 September 1855 was the birth date of Sarah Calkin.
5. 11 February 1853 was the date of death of Sarah Barry Dickey Sommerville (William Sommerville Family Bible, New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, New Brunswick).
6. 26 September 1854 was the date of the wedding (William Sommerville Family Bible).
7. Lumsden, letter to author, 1989.
8. William Sommerville Bible. Rev. Alexander Clarke (1795-1874), Covenanter missionary, had come to Nova Scotia in 1827. He ministered in the Chignecto region, dying in Amherst in 1874 (see Eldon Hay, *The Chignecto Covenanters* [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997], chapter 1).
9. A.W.H. Eaton, *The History of Kings County* (Salem, MA: Salem Press Co., 1910), 596.
10. "Normal School Closing: A Successful Term's Work; Lessons by Pupil Teachers," *Truro Daily News*, 28 June 1900, 4, 6, 7.
11. "Normal School Closing," 7.
12. Probate File #C - 37, Kings County Registry of Deeds, Kentville, Nova Scotia.
13. See Hay, *The Chignecto Covenanters*, chapter 2.
14. J.R. Lawson, "Extract of a Letter," *Monitor and Missionary Chronicle*, 5 (December 1851): 930. Rev. James Reid Lawson (1820-1891), was a Covenanter colleague of Sommerville's, ministering at Barnesville, New Brunswick. The *Monitor* was a journal published in Belfast, Ireland.

15. Mrs. Elias Calkin, John's mother; Gurdon Calkin (b. 1817), his oldest brother; Abigail Calkin (b. 1827), his next oldest sibling, are listed as members of the Covenanter Church.
16. "John Burgess Calkin, M.A., Principal of the Provincial Normal School, Truro, Nova Scotia," *The Canada School Journal*, Toronto, 4 (April 1879), 73.
17. "John Burgess Calkin, M.A., LL.D.," *Presbyterian Witness*, 1 May 1909, 132.
18. "John Calkin is studying in the first year, 1850-51, under Rev. William Sommerville, Somerset, N.S.," and "John Calkin is studying in the second year, 1851-52, under Rev. William Sommerville, Somerset, N.S.": W.M. Glasgow, *Historical Catalogue of the Theological Seminaries of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America: Together with a list of those Studying Privately of Elsewhere* (Beaver Falls, PA: Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America, 1898), 18.
19. Minutes, Reformed Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, 20 October 1851, Mfm, MCA.
20. Lawson, "Extract of a Letter," 930.
21. "Normal School Closing."
22. Minutes, Reformed Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, 8 June 1852.
23. A copy of the license is found in J.B. Calkin, *Old Time Customs, Memories and Traditions* (Halifax: A. & W. Mackinlay, 1918), 42.
24. "Normal School Closing."
25. *Old Time Customs*, 43.
26. "The original program of the Normal School did not provide for a model school for practice teaching . . . The model school was opened in Truro in June 1857 . . . In 1865 the Model School came under the joint control of the Principal of the Normal School and the local authorities of the town of Truro" (*100 Years of Teacher Education, 1855-1955* [Truro, NS: The College, 1955], 14, 15).
27. "Normal School Closing."
28. Margaret Conrad, "Rand, Theodore Harding," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 12: 879-884.
29. "John Burgess Calkin, M.A., LL.D.," *Presbyterian Witness*, 1 May 1909, 132.

30. J.B. Calkin, "Inspectors' Reports: County of Kings," *Annual Report of the Common, Superior, Academic, and Normal and Model Schools in Nova Scotia*, For the School Year ended 31 October 1865 (Halifax: A. Grant, 1865), 111.
31. "Inspectors' Reports: County of Kings," 114.
32. Judith Fingard, "Forrester, Alexander," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 9: 270-73.
33. "CHILDREN\ Emmeline Marcy\ Died Sept. 4, 1857\ Aged 2 mos." and "Wm. Alexander\ Died May 8 1859\ Aged 5 weeks" (Calkin tombstone, Robie Street Cemetery, Truro, NS). There is a variant on William Alexander: "BIRTH, At Truro, Thursday, March 31, the wife of Mr. J.B. Calkin, of a son" (*Presbyterian Witness*, 2 April 1859, 55), and "DIED, At Truro, on Sabbath, April 24th, William Alexander, infant son of John B. Calkin, Esq." (*Presbyterian Witness*, 30 April 1859, 71).
34. Sarah Barry, 6 September 1855-1825 October 1910; Amelia ("Lillie") Benn, 27 September 1862-9 July 1952; William Sommerville, 13 September 1864-22 May 1931; Carrie Hughenia, 15 October 1868-30 March 1951.
35. Gurdon Calkin was elected elder 26 June 1851, ordained 30 January 1852.
36. Minutes, Cornwallis Reformed Presbyterian Session, 13 May 1865.
37. 3 October 1865.
38. There is no record in the Cornwallis session rolls that she was ever removed.
39. Listed as a member, Sarah Calkin was removed by certificate on 19 November 1883.
40. The bulk of Calkin's writings were Sabbath School lessons, published in the *Christian Nation*: 2 December 1885, 346-347; 30 December 1885, 408-410; 13 January 1886, 24-25; 20 January 1886, 56-57; 3 February 1886, 72-74; 10 February 1886, 88-90; 17 February 1886, 104-105. Two articles appeared in journals edited by his brother-in-law, Rev. Robert McGowan Sommerville (1837-1920): "Christian Work a Necessity to the Christian," *Herald of Mission News* (January 1889), 10-12; and "Strength," *Olive Trees* (January 1903), 53-56.
41. See Eldon Hay, "The Canadian Career of Rev. Robert McGowan Sommerville," *Canadian Society of Presbyterian History Papers 2001*, ed. Walter Elliott (Parkhill, ON: Canadian Society of Presbyterian History, 2001), 1-22.

42. Martha apparently remained rooted in the Covenanter faith. Her tombstone reads “Martha Annie D./ Daughter of/ Rev. Wm Sommerville/ and wife of/ John B. Calkin/ Born/ June 28 1833/ Died March 12, 1903.” Perhaps her primary identification was daughter of Sommerville, secondarily, wife of Calkin?
43. “Mr. J.B. Calkin presented a certificate of dismissal from the ‘Reformed Presbyterian Church’ whereupon he was admitted as member of the Truro Presbyterian congregation” (Session minutes, Truro [later First] Presbyterian: First United Church archives, Truro, NS).
44. “Mr. Calkin . . . in his [St. Andrew’s Sabbath School] report for 1887 . . . [said that] he himself had been, ‘Superintendent of the School in this congregation and in that of another for the combined period of twenty years.’ Reference was of course here made to his service in that capacity in the (First) Presbyterian Church from which St. Andrews had separated” (Frank A. Doane, *History of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church* [Truro, 1937], 74).
45. Old Meeting House Annual meeting book, 1834 and up to 1913: First United Church archives, Truro, Nova Scotia.
46. W. McN. Matthews, *Two Centuries of Christian Witness in Truro, Nova Scotia: First United Church, 1760-1960* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1960), 26.
47. *A Tale of Two Centuries: Truro Presbytery, Oldest in Canada* (Sackville, NB: Tribune Press, 1993), 113.
48. Doane, *A History of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church*, 70. J.B. and Sadie (Sarah Jane) Calkin are listed among the charter members (14).
49. Doane, *History of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church*, 74.
50. Doane, *History of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church*, 75.
51. Doane, *History of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church*, 75.
52. Doane, *History of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church*, 75.
53. “Death of J.B. Calkin,” *Presbyterian Witness*, 21 September 1918, 8.
54. *100 Years of Teacher Education 1855-1955*, 18.
55. *100 Years of Teacher Education 1855-1955*, 18.
56. *Calendar of the Acadia University College Wolfville, N.S. For Academic Year 1884-85* (Halifax: Christian Messenger Office, 1884), 38 . The date of the award was 9 June 1870 (Acadia University Archives, Wolfville, Nova Scotia). See as well “Acadia College,” *Presbyterian Witness*, 18 June 1870, 193.

57. "Principal John B. Calkin, M.A., Truro, N.S.," *The Canadian Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Eminent and Self-Made Men: Quebec and the Maritime Provinces* (Toronto: American Biographical Publishing Co., 1881), II, 434.
58. Reports of the Normal School (Halifax) from 1869 to 1900 carried Calkin's reports as Principal (*Annual Report of the Common, Superior, Academic, and Normal and Model Schools in Nova Scotia*).
59. Calkin, "Inspectors' Reports: County of Kings," 1865, 113.
60. "Keeping in Touch - Little White School House," 3 (October 2001), 3.
61. J.B. Calkin, "Report of the Provincial Normal School" (Halifax, 1869), 4.
62. In the Colchester County 1871 Census she is described as a school mistress.
63. P.B. Waite, *The Lives of Dalhousie University* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 1: 132.
64. "[To] Lillie Calkin . . . belongs the distinction of being the first woman enrolled in the degree program in 1881" and Margaret Newcombe was "the first graduate" (Judith Fingard, "Dalhousie Coeds, 1881-1921," in *Youth, University and Canadian Society*, eds. Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989], 32 and 27).
65. Margaret's father, John C. Newcomb, had been a deacon in the Reformed Presbyterian church at Cornwallis and also its treasurer. Margaret was undoubtedly raised a Covenanter, and became a member of the Church. Her father died when she was nine. She attended the Normal School where she did exceedingly well. She probably taught school and then went to Dalhousie University in 1881, although her cousin, Amelia (or Lillie) Calkin had registered slightly earlier. Margaret graduated in 1885, taught school, was married to James Star Trueman, a Saint John man. (The minister marrying them was Rev. Thomas McFall [1848-1929] Sommerville's successor, for the record of their marriage is found in the Cornwallis Covenanter records). Margaret's husband died two years after their marriage. She was granted a certificate of standing from the Covenanter Church, post-1888. Margaret taught at the Halifax Ladies College, retiring in 1918; she died at Berwick in 1935 (Harry Bruce, "How did she get into the picture?" *Dalhousie Alumni Magazine* [Winter 1985], 7-8; and Mrs. Henry D. Hicks, "Margaret Florence Newcombe," 7 [n.d.], Dalhousie University, Killam Library Archives, Halifax, NS).
66. Lumsden, letter, undated, 1989.

67. Already at Dalhousie in 1881, he was President from 1885 to 1911: "John Forrest was tall and straight, in figure and in manner; forthright he was ... He had a prodigious memory for people and faces, and a shrewd judgement of them" (Waite, *The Lives of Dalhousie University*, 1: 127).
68. "Dalhousie University Convocation: Big List of Graduates - Dr. Hill and J.B. Calkin, M.A., Made Doctors of Law," *Truro Daily News*, 30 April 1909, 4.
69. "Normal School Closing."
70. Marilyn Whiteley, ed., *The Life and Letters of Annie Leake Tuttle* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999).
71. Annie Leake Tuttle's scrapbook, MCA:

John D. Philbrick, Esq  
Superintendent of Public Schools, City of Boston

Dear Sir,

The bearer, Miss Annie Leake – one of our most successful Primary School Teachers – desires to visit some of the Schools of Boston, in which she may have an opportunity of witnessing the best exhibition of your system. Especially she would like to see the 'Kinder-Garten' Schools of Madame Krieg and the Training School over which Miss Stickney presides. I shall be very grateful for anything you may be able to do to further her wishes

Yours very sincerely, J.B. Calkin, Normal School, Truro, N.S,  
May 2nd 1873.

72. "Normal School Closing," has a very full description of the events of the day.
73. "To Mark 100 Years of Service," *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 3 June 1955, 9.
74. "It is now 'Dr. Calkin,'" *Truro Daily News*, 30 April 1909, 4.
75. "Suddenly, at Fern Bank, Willow St., Truro, March 12th, Mrs. Calkin, wife of ex-Principal J.B. Calkin, aged 68 years," *Truro Daily News*, 12 March 1903, 4.
76. She died 25 October, at the home of her father (*Presbyterian Witness*, 29 October 1910, 8). She was "known widely in educational circles throughout the province of Nova Scotia and even beyond its borders" (*Presbyterian Witness*, 5 November 1910, 8).

77. The Calkin plot contains the remains of J.B. Calkin and his wife, their two infant children, their eldest daughter, Sarah B. Calkin, and her second husband, Rev. Alexander Gatherer Russell, who “Died Nov. 10 1911.”
78. “Death of J.B. Calkin,” *Presbyterian Witness*, 21 September 1918, 8.
79. “Calkin Hall was the Teachers’ College gymnasium built here [in Truro] on campus, starting Oct. 1961 and opened in 1962. It is now the Truro Centre for Sport and Wellness and part of the Truro Campus, Nova Scotia Community College. Although called the Truro Centre for Sport and Wellness, the Calkin name lives on in the plaque located inside the door and over the entrance to the gym” (Kevin Quinlan, principal, e-mail to author, December 2001).
80. The original St. Andrew’s Presbyterian became United Church in 1925; the church building was dismantled in the late 1970s, and a new one constructed, “formally opened and rededicated on May 4, 1980” (Rev. George MacLean, “The MacLean Years 1973 to 1987,” *St. Andrews at 125* [Truro, November 2000], 12).



**“We Are the Church Together”:  
A Case Study of Community, Family, and Religion at  
Richmond Hill Methodist Church, 1875-1899**

SARA KNIGHT

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The church does not exist in a vacuum: it co-exists with the society in which it is situated, interacting and developing in concert with the people who comprise it.<sup>1</sup> The Methodist church in the latter half of the nineteenth century, for example, shifted the rhetoric of its discourse from that of patriarchy to that of family in order to fit with Victorian ideals of domestic piety.<sup>2</sup> And yet religious history as written from the perspective of a male-dominated institution is a story of declension rather than evolution and progressive development. If the wider family and community implications of the church are made the focus of study, its status shifts from one of a male-based hierarchical institution to one of a place for communal interaction mirroring the increasing influence of family and domesticity on Victorian culture. This inclusiveness created a more active religious community that welcomed the talents brought by all members of the family, not simply those of the patriarch. Previous studies of Protestantism and domesticity in the nineteenth century have begun to address the role of women in the church, but they have done so without reference to their position as members of a household, an attribute central to their own definition of self.<sup>3</sup> And while male roles have been central to discussions of church organization, they have most often been without reference to the position of these roles as part of a larger male community in business, civic leadership, and leisure pursuits.<sup>4</sup> Children were an integral part of the Victorian church, and their upbringing was central to the cult of domesticity and family, yet they are seldom mentioned in religious studies.<sup>5</sup> Through church involvement we can

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examine their response to the precepts of their parents and attempt to re-evaluate the traditional story of religious declension.

I propose to examine the relationship of these three components of the traditional nuclear family – husband, wife, and children – to Methodism in late nineteenth-century Ontario through a case study of the leadership of Richmond Hill Methodist Church from 1875 to 1899. Richmond Hill was located approximately twenty miles north of Toronto on Yonge Street and primarily served the surrounding farm areas. The first Methodist services were held in a log schoolhouse as early as 1810, and a wood frame church was begun in 1847. On 21 December 1879 this church was destroyed by fire and only a month later new property was deeded for the construction of a much grander stone edifice. The cornerstone of the new church was laid 24 May 1880 and the church was dedicated 20 March 1881. The congregation raised \$17,000, over twenty-five times its annual giving, to finance this project.<sup>6</sup>

A dozen families dominated the leadership of Richmond Hill Methodist Church over the course of this quarter century, encompassing three generations. William Harrison (born 1834) was the most prominent lay leader – the patriarch – at the church, acting as a secretary of the Board of Trustees from 1868 to 1915 and superintendent of the Sunday school from 1849 to 1889, while also serving as a class leader, member of the circuit quarterly board, representative to conference, and church steward at various other times.<sup>7</sup> Seven other family names dominate the list of trustees and other lay positions in the church. However, it was not just the men in these families who were active, but also their wives and often their children. This can be illustrated with William Atkinson, who was a church trustee and active in the construction of the new building. His daughter, who was choir leader and a key member of the Women's Missionary Society, married J.A.E. Switzer, who was also a church trustee, class leader, Sunday school superintendent and recording secretary for the Methodist circuit.<sup>8</sup>

Being a prominent family in church leadership did not automatically mean a higher social or economic class in the greater community. There were a few doctors, but the majority of the men were self-employed businessmen.<sup>9</sup> They included a harness maker, a tailor, two shopkeepers, a blacksmith, a carriage maker, a machinist, an undertaker, and later two school principals.<sup>10</sup> Several of the business partnerships in town were comprised of trustees who were associates outside the confines of the church, indicative of its larger community orientation. The majority of the

businesses lined Yonge Street, all within walking distance of each other. The church was not the only foundation for the association of this group of men.

While these men were not necessarily the wealthiest in the community, their religious leadership was matched by their civic roles. With the exception of two men, all of the prominent trustees were actively involved in community leadership. William Harrison, the aforementioned outstanding trustee, was also the most active church member in the community. He was responsible for forming the first fire brigade, founding the Richmond Hill Mechanics Institute, and founding the Richmond Hill Library Society. He was also instrumental in Richmond Hill's incorporation as a town, was its second reeve, and served as a high school trustee.<sup>11</sup> Five of Richmond Hill's early Reeves were also trustees at Richmond Hill Methodist Church, including the first. Various trustees served as librarians, led the town band, sat on the board of education and the library board, served on municipal councils, and one served as the Justice of the Peace.<sup>12</sup> Thomas McMahon, who became a trustee later in the century, was the proprietor of the town newspaper, *The Liberal*.<sup>13</sup>

It has been suggested that positions of leadership within the church "could also contribute to secular success," and that "the public profile and respectable image of church leader would be sought by those with political ambitions."<sup>14</sup> A close correlation between religious and secular leadership at Richmond Hill Methodist Church shows that this is possible; however, none of these men ever went on to grandiose political careers or amassed fortunes. Leadership is an attribute of a specific personality, making it more likely that these men were simply active in all aspects of their lives. This provides a more satisfactory reason for their tireless involvement in a multitude of activities than do self-interested motives.

The men of Richmond Hill Methodist Church may have done business on weekdays, led committees in the evening, and joined together in spiritual brotherhood on Sundays, but they also had another form of community socialization: the fraternal lodges. Over half of the prominent trustees of the church belonged to one or more of the fraternal orders existing in Richmond Hill at that time.<sup>15</sup> These included the Independent Order of Foresters (IOF), the Ancient Order of United Workmen (AOUW), the Masons, and the Royal Templars.<sup>16</sup> Many of these men were actively involved in these groups, as is evidenced by the remarks in obituaries of funerals that combined elements of both fraternal and Christian ceremonies.<sup>17</sup>

While it has been asserted that "ministers clearly feared losing both members and financial contributors to the lodges,"<sup>18</sup> in Richmond Hill the

connections appear to have been very beneficial to the church. After the fire of 1879, which levelled the church building, the congregation was in need of a place to hold services. On 23 January 1880 the trustees' minutes state that "the following members of the Trustee Board met on the above date in the Masonic Hall."<sup>19</sup> Not coincidentally, a number of the trustees belonged to that lodge.<sup>20</sup> And the trustees made use of their connection not only for their benefit, but also for the benefit of the entire congregation. On 23 February 1880 the trustees' minutes suggest they "arrange with the trustees of the Masonic Hall for the use of their building for six months worship."<sup>21</sup> After the land had been purchased for the new building, it was brought to the trustees' attention that "a gore of land with a ten feet frontage on Yonge Street could be purchased off the Trustees of the Masonic Lodge for the sum of \$100."<sup>22</sup> The church then made arrangements to acquire it. While it is possible that the Masonic Lodge would have allowed the use of its building for services even had the church been without connections, it is very likely that the trustees' membership in the lodge allowed them the opportunity to purchase land.

The fear that men would leave the church family in favour of fraternal brotherhood was clearly unfounded in Richmond Hill. These men were all able to maintain prominent lay leadership roles within the church concurrent with their lodge membership. It could also be debated how "clearly" the ministers of Richmond Hill were worried about losing men. Among those initiated into the Richmond Lodge (Masons) from 1880 to 1894 were the Reverends J.T. Morris, J. Oliver, and J.C. Speer.<sup>23</sup> All three were Methodist ministers serving at Richmond Hill Methodist Church at the time. It would seem apparent that they did not see any conflict of interest between membership in a fraternal order and leadership at the church.

The lives of the men of Richmond Hill Methodist Church were evidently diverse, and by no means dominated by their church activities. Even these, the most prominent lay leaders, were active in other community endeavors. In a small community, there can be little question they socialized outside of church, but their career affiliations, lodge memberships, and civic duties reinforce this sense of religion as an activity that extends into the entire community. However, religion in late Victorian Ontario was also a family activity: how did their wives play a role?

The women of Richmond Hill Methodist Church were active in many facets of church life. They were class leaders, members of the Ladies' Aid, organized teas and bazaars, and provided significant financial support for church activities.<sup>24</sup> They existed both as independent contributors and

members of a marital team, with female leadership often corresponding to the level of the husband's participation. Without the numerical presence or financial assistance of the women of the congregation, Richmond Hill Methodist Church would have been a much smaller and less well endowed religious community. From this perspective the church does not tell a story of declension, but rather of increasing vitality through the activities of women who were central to the building of a new church and corresponding faith community.<sup>25</sup>

Because the construction of the new church building acts as a turning point in the history of the congregation – its arrival as a large and relatively wealthy center of Methodism in the region – it is here that we can begin to examine the contributions of female members. The land for the new building was purchased from Mr. Abraham Law, a member of the Board of Trustees for the church. However, without his wife relinquishing her dower claim the church could not have held clear title to the land. The trustees' minutes state, "that they had secured the old deed and paid the sum of eleven hundred for the same as follows – nine hundred and fifty dollars (\$950) to Mr. Law for the lot and the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars (\$150) to Mrs. Law for signing off her Dower."<sup>26</sup> Mrs. Law was given her own receipt of payment and required to sign off on the deed in order for the land to be sold. It is interesting, however, that her husband is the only one acknowledged for the donation of the land in official histories, although she herself played a crucial role.<sup>27</sup>

Not only was a woman instrumental in establishing the site of the new church building, but the women of the congregation were also active in its financing. Twice in 1880 the Board of Trustees requested money from the Ladies' Aid, first stating that "this board borrow of the Ladies' Aid, the sum of \$200 at five percent,"<sup>28</sup> and later that "the secretary be instructed to borrow of the Ladies' Aid another \$100."<sup>29</sup> And although these women were members of the congregation, it is important to note that they did not donate the money: the church borrowed it at a significant interest rate. In financial matters the Ladies' Aid was independent of the larger church and its male leadership.

In the trustees' discussion of the ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone, it was "moved by Mr. Crosby, seconded by Mr. Duncan that the Ladies' Aid be requested to arrange for a dinner and tea for the 24<sup>th</sup> of May."<sup>30</sup> These festivities were advertised in the *Christian Guardian* of 19 May 1880:

After this [the dedication] a dinner in the Masonic Hall, prepared by the Ladies' Aid; also a grand bazaar, to be opened by Mrs. Dr. Reed, Thornhill. At 5 p.m. a tea will be provided, to be followed by a public meeting at 7 p.m. . . . The musical part of the programme by Miss McCallum, Professor Wilson, and others. Dinner, 25cts; tea, 25cts; entertainment, 25cts.<sup>31</sup>

Once again the male leadership's connection to the fraternal order was of benefit to the entire congregation. The ladies provided not only the dinner and tea, but also initiated a bazaar and entertainment to facilitate fundraising. This new church was a reflection of their work as well as male efforts.

The women of the Ladies' Aid continued to be very active in fundraising for various projects even after the building was completed. At the opening of the church, the ladies gave a tea, which was recorded by the minister in the *Christian Guardian* as follows: "We then retired to the school room to enjoy a good dinner such as the ladies of Richmond Hill know how to provide: cleared between \$200 and \$300, which, by the way, belongs to the ladies, and with which they intend to upholster the pews."<sup>32</sup> The Ladies' Aid was also often cited for their contribution to the church in the annual report. The amounts of money raised were often quite high, including a tea at the anniversary service in 1885, which raised \$101.<sup>33</sup> The yearly donations of the Ladies' Aid to the running of the church amounted to, on average, \$70,<sup>34</sup> the remainder of the money being used to initiate their own projects, such as the aforementioned upholstering of the pews.

A close examination of the class lists from the years 1894 and 1899 shows the overwhelming predominance of female members.<sup>35</sup> In all classes except the young men's, women outnumber men. Membership in the church for men rested heavily on the presence of a wife, for in most classes the number of men is very close to the number of couples listed. This implies that the men came with their wives and not vice versa, as there were always numerous single women in attendance. As the annual financial statement for 1881 demonstrates, this numerical dominance was also reflected in individual givings. Women gave forty percent of the money while men gave thirty-five and couples (obviously including one woman) gave twenty-five.<sup>36</sup> The percentage of giving by women did not correspond directly to their numbers (while they dominated some classes, overall they comprised fifty percent of the total number of class members) but their financial support was evidently important to the running of the church.

In addition to their financial contributions, the women of Richmond Hill Methodist Church gave of their time. Two of the six classes were led by

women, including the young ladies' class. There was also an active Sunday school, which had on average fifteen teachers each year, and a choir that was for some time led by Mrs. J.A.E. Switzer.<sup>37</sup> The Ladies' Aid had been prominent in church life since before construction began on the new building, and in May 1893 the first Women's Missionary Society (WMS) was established to help support the wider dissemination of religion.<sup>38</sup> The WMS quickly grew in popularity, from twenty-one members in 1894-95 to thirty-four in 1895-96.<sup>39</sup> As members of a religion based on experience, these women clearly saw the importance of teaching religion to the greater community.

Just as a dozen men dominated male lay leadership over the period in question, so too were the same women present in all of the women's activities. The executive for the WMS changed by one or two members each year, the other two positions filled by a shifting mixture of the same women. The women in these positions also tended to share the same name as a trustee or minister, an observation that suggests a familial linkage in leadership.<sup>40</sup> While husbands were attending meetings, their wives were equally active in their own pursuits. A comment in the *Christian Guardian* suggests these women most likely interacted outside of the church as well, for "The garden party held by the ladies of the Methodist church, on the grounds of Mrs. Amos Wright, on Wednesday evening, August 9<sup>th</sup>, was very successful. The grounds were beautifully illuminated with Chinese lanterns, and presented a very attractive appearance."<sup>41</sup> This seems to have been less a fundraiser, as the amount of money raised was not explicitly mentioned, and more a social gathering. Given the close community associations of the men, it would be surprising if their wives were not also familiar with each other outside the church circle.

It was not only adults who were actively involved in events at Richmond Hill Methodist Church, but the importance of including children is also clearly evident.<sup>42</sup> These second-generation residents of Richmond Hill followed closely in their parents' footsteps, often assuming prominent leadership roles if their parents had also been active in the church. Young women contributed at a much younger age than their male siblings, taking on many of the same responsibilities as their mothers, while it was much less common for young men to take any prominent role.<sup>43</sup>

Richmond Hill Methodist Church began publishing annual reports in 1892, and here we are given our first numbers for Sunday school attendance. However, William Harrison had been Sunday school superintendent from 1849, which suggests the early establishment of this program. In 1892 there

were 137 scholars in the Sunday school, with an average weekly attendance of 120, or eighty-eight percent of students.<sup>44</sup> Given the rural nature of the community, this attendance rate appears impressive. By 1897 there were 160 scholars enrolled, with an average attendance of 135, which at eighty-four percent is a slight decline.<sup>45</sup> Records suggest that the increase was most likely a result of individual family growth rather than new members arising from revivals or in-migration.<sup>46</sup>

When children were past the age for Sunday school, they were transferred into a class. Given the prominence of family names in some classes it would appear that some young people immediately joined their parents. However, there were also classes established specifically for the young men and young women of the congregation. The young ladies' class was run by the minister or his wife, while the leadership of the young men's class shifted from Mr. Hume (a long-time trustee) to a Mr. Michael and his wife in 1894. The number of youth in the young men's class remained consistent at eight between 1894 and 1899, and they were the same eight young men. In 1894 they had lost one member to death, two brothers had moved, and one member had transferred to an adult class.<sup>47</sup> The number of young women also remained consistent from 1894 to 1899, with most losses coming in 1894 when three young ladies died and one was married.<sup>48</sup> The family names of the young women are consistent with prominent male leaders' names, while the young men seem to be sons of less actively involved members.<sup>49</sup>

The young women of the church appeared to follow their mothers in their fundraising efforts. For one tea, prepared by the Ladies' Aid, the entertainment was provided by Miss McCallum (the minister's daughter) and others. To stay for the entertainment was an additional twenty-five cents to the twenty-five cent cost of the tea,<sup>50</sup> and as such the young ladies contributed significantly to the amount of money raised. The young women also hosted their own entertainments, such as this one, mentioned in the *Christian Guardian*: "The young ladies in connection with the Richmond Hill Methodist Church gave a social and concert on Tuesday-evening, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, in aid of the Trust Fund. Proceeds, one hundred and five dollars."<sup>51</sup> The proceeds from this event indicate that they were experienced in their activities and adept at supporting their congregation. When called upon, they would be competent to assume the role as the next generation of leaders from their mothers.

The other major outlet for youth at Richmond Hill Methodist Church was the Epworth League. This group is first mentioned in the 1892 annual



report, and met Friday evenings at eight o'clock. The Epworth League "attempted to develop a commitment among the young to spiritual growth, education, and mission work and provided a variety of moral and social activities."<sup>52</sup> As a continuation of Sunday school, the group promoted Bible study and self-improvement through religion. However, it also broadened the focus of the youth by introducing them to mission work (similar to the WMS) and to social issues. Members were required to take the temperance pledge, expanding their understanding of religion and their responsibilities to the larger community.<sup>53</sup> The League at Richmond Hill Methodist Church was first led by A.J. Hume, also leader of the young men's class, but later E.A. Coombs became president. He was particularly well suited to this endeavour as he had a BA and MA from the University of Toronto and served as the principal of Richmond Hill High School.<sup>54</sup> Methodism had roots as a religion of experience, and placed specific emphasis on living a Christian life throughout the week, not just on Sunday. As such, this blending of religious and secular spheres with the overlap of a prominent authority figure would only serve to highlight the importance of religion in everyday life in the greater community.

The men, women, and children of Richmond Hill Methodist Church were active on many different levels within the church and within the wider community. Although this paper deals primarily with the more prominent lay leaders of the church, there are also many other names that recur faithfully in class lists, demonstrating their contribution to the congregation. That the church was able to raise \$17,000 in 1880 for a new building strongly demonstrates the greater community involvement in religion at this period: the leaders and members alone could not have raised that amount of money. Funds for churches were not solicited only from members of the congregation, but the larger community also extended a helping hand. All of the teas and socials that raised over \$100 could not have done so without the patronage of non-Methodists who attended it as a social rather than religious event.

Because this investigation spans twenty-five years, one is able to glimpse three generations of church membership. The majority of the men who were serving as trustees in 1880 were over fifty years old. By the turn of the century, their children had often come to play a role in the church, and their grandchildren after them. William Atkinson, born in 1830, had a daughter, who married J.A.E. Switzer, born in 1839. All three of them were active as executive members on the Board of Trustees or, in Mrs. Switzer's case, the Ladies' Aid. The Switzer daughters also appear in the young ladies'

class, indicating that they followed in their parents' and grandparents' footsteps.<sup>55</sup> This same pattern of marriage within the faith community can also be seen in the Trench family: Mr. Trench, a prominent trustee, had several daughters, all of whom married men from the Methodist church.<sup>56</sup> These genealogies serve to emphasize the family connections of the church. Mr. Atkinson and his son-in-law were also business partners, making this relationship part of the larger community.

The Methodist church provided opportunities for all members to become involved in some way. Young and old, male and female, all were encouraged to become actively involved in their faith, and to make that faith known to others and encourage others in their quest for spiritual fulfillment. The grand edifice that was the new Richmond Hill Methodist Church building in 1881 proclaimed the arrival of the Methodists as an established church, and invited others to join in their worship.<sup>57</sup> Located at the top of the hill, with the tallest steeple in the town, and perhaps the largest capacity, these men and women were proud of their church and the congregation it housed. Revival and conversion played a dominant role at least into the mid-1880s, as the *Christian Guardian* attested in 1884:

For the last four weeks a very gracious work has been going on at Richmond Hill, from five to seven hundred attending every evening. The presence of the Lord has been felt in awakening power, numbers coming forward every evening. Many conversions have taken place. Last week one was one of especial power, young men rushing forward to the communion rail as anxious enquirers.<sup>58</sup>

These new members helped to maintain an active and vibrant religious community into the 1890s, which continued to interact with the larger civic community.

The shift in Richmond Hill from the establishment of Methodist services in 1810 to the turn of the twentieth century, as seen in the window from 1875 to 1899, is the social, economic, and religious evolution of a community. The lay leadership of Richmond Hill Methodist Church, while not wealthy, were certainly middle-class: the women had sufficient spare time to become deeply involved in the congregation, while the men were able to balance their businesses with civic and religious duties. This middle-class Victorian mindset was highly conscious of both religion and family as central to its being, and this is clearly demonstrated at Richmond Hill Methodist Church. If historically religion is seen as slowly shifting from a male to a female sphere,<sup>59</sup> this last quarter of the nineteenth century is the

moment of overlap, when women and men both contribute to the religious congregation. The women were not passive in their domestic roles as pie-bakers and entertainers, they sought to assert control and influence over their own money and the financial, as well as spiritual well-being of the church: the men were not alone in their decision making. The church became a team effort, often between husband and wife. And while children are often neglected in a discussion of religion, it is clear that their decision to continue the family commitment was of significant importance to the older generation. By examining Richmond Hill Methodist Church from 1875 to 1899, one can see a picture of religion as a community activity that involved all members of the family.

### **Endnotes**

1. Many recent studies examine the fluidity of religion and its interaction with culture. Some examples include, Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115<sup>th</sup> Street* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); and Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
2. A. Gregory Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home: The Domestication of American Methodism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), xxi. This is also discussed in Marguerite Van Die, "Revisiting 'Separate Spheres': Women, Religion and the Family in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario" (unpublished manuscript).
3. The connection between the role of women and the activities of their husbands' is further developed in Schneider, *The Way of the Cross Leads Home*, 169-195.
4. For an introduction to male activities outside the church, see Lynn Marks, "Mostly Male Worlds: Leisure and Associational Life," Chapter Five in *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).
5. For a discussion of the importance of youth in maintaining religious tradition, see Marguerite Van Die, "The Marks of A Genuine Revival: Religion, Social Changes, Gender, and Community in Mid-Victorian Brantford, Ontario," *Canadian Historical Review* 79, No. 3 (September 1998): 524-563.
6. A pamphlet on the history of the church, "Our Heritage on the Hill: Richmond Hill United Church 1880-1980," was prepared by the congregation in honour of their centennial anniversary.

7. Richmond Hill Public Archives [hereafter RHPA], *Family History Binders*, "Harrison."
8. RHPA, *Family History Binders*, "Atkinson" and "Switzer."
9. This pattern was common to Methodist churches. Neil Semple states that "nearly every community across the country had lay leaders, usually merchants or substantial farmers and their wives, who provided much of the impetus for building and administering churches and therefore for establishing the moral and social norms for the community" (Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996]).
10. This data is derived from the Richmond Hill Methodist Church Board of Trustee minutes, United Church/Victoria University Archives [hereafter UCA] and the RHPA *Family History Binders*. See Appendix #1 for further information.
11. RHPA, *Family History Binders*, "Harrison."
12. According to Neil Semple, no element in Methodism's transformation from a pioneer church to a social institution "was more important than education" *The Lord's Dominion*, 4. This focus was clearly developed at Richmond Hill Methodist Church and is highlighted by the trustees' activities in community education.
13. This list of community involvement comes from RHPA, *Family History Binders*. See Appendix #1 for more a more detailed breakdown of community involvement.
14. Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, 54.
15. RPHA, *Family History Binders*.
16. The nature of fraternal orders, their membership demographics, and the motivations for joining orders are all addressed in the prologue of Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 1-14. The Canadian context is more specifically dealt with in Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*.
17. One such funeral is that of Isaac Crosby, who was a past master workman in the Ivy Lodge (AOUW) and active in the Masons. He was also a church trustee and a member of the circuit quarterly board. The entire Masonic ceremony was read at the graveside following the Methodist one.
18. Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, 113.
19. UCA, Board of Trustees' Minutes, 23 January 1880.

20. See Appendix #1 for lodge memberships.
21. UCA, Board of Trustees Minutes, 23 February 1880.
22. UCA, Board of Trustees Minutes, 17 April 1880.
23. List from *A History of Richmond Lodge 1824-1974*, a commemorative book published by the Lodge on 23 October 1974.
24. These traditional contributions are recognized in several studies of female roles in Victorian Protestant Ontario. These include Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*; Marilyn Fardig Whiteley, "'Doing Just About What They Please': Ladies' Aid in Ontario Methodism," *Ontario History* (December 1990): 289-304; and Marguerite Van Die, "Marks of a Genuine Revival."
25. This shift in perspective to examining religious history from a female viewpoint is used extensively in Anne Braude, "Women's History Is American Religious History," in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
26. UCA, Board of Trustees Minutes, 15 March 1880.
27. Such histories include the congregational booklet *Our Heritage on the Hill*, and the programmes from the 1907 and 1930 Jubilee Services at the church (UCA). It is also evident in *A History of Vaughan Township Churches*, eds. Patricia Somerville and Catherine Macfarlane (Maple: Vaughan Township Historical Society, 1984), 207.
28. UCA, Board of Trustees Minutes, 31 May 1880.
29. UCA, Board of Trustees Minutes, 12 July 1880.
30. UCA, Board of Trustees Minutes, 8 April 1880.
31. *The Christian Guardian*, 19 May 1880, 160.
32. *The Christian Guardian*, 13 April 1881, 119.
33. *The Christian Guardian*, 22 October 1884, 351.
34. This number is determined by looking at the Annual Reports from 1892, 1893, 1894 (UCA)
35. UCA has the class lists for these two years, which allowed for a close analysis of names and gender distribution. See Appendix #2 for exact details.
36. These numbers were determined through an analysis of the "The Recording Steward's Annual Financial Statement: 1881" (UCA), which gave monetary contributions according to class and individual.

37. This information comes from the Annual Reports, 1892-94, UCA.
38. Neil Semple addresses the missionary nature of Methodism, saying “the role of the church was not merely to expand its own horizons, but more importantly, to create a moral social order and to promote God’s kingdom on earth” (*Lord’s Dominion*, 4).
39. This information comes from the recollections of Dorothy J. Rumble, written in 1961 and kept in the archive room at Richmond Hill United (Methodist) Church.
40. This pattern can be observed in other communities in the same period. For example, see Marguerite Van Die’s discussions of Brantford.
41. *The Christian Guardian*, 16 August 1882, 261.
42. While Methodists were particularly concerned with religious education, the desire to pass religion to younger generations can be seen in the actions of David Wilson in Albert Schrauwers, *Awaiting the Millennium: Children of Peace and the Village of Hope* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993). In the Methodist tradition it is also evident in Donald Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).
43. For a discussion on the roles for young men in the Victorian church, see Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, 54.
44. UCA, Richmond Hill Methodist Church, 1892 Annual Report.
45. UCA, Richmond Hill Methodist Church, 1897 Annual Report.
46. Revivals in Richmond Hill are recorded in the *Christian Guardian* in the mid-1880s, but the class lists for 1894 and 1899 do not show an increase in the number of members to correspond to the increase in the number of children enrolled in Sunday school.
47. UCA, 1894 Register for Recording the List of Members of Richmond Hill Methodist Church.
48. UCA, 1894 Register for Recording the List of Members of Richmond Hill Methodist Church.
49. Given the trend towards familial involvement, I would suggest that the lay leadership had more female children than male. In the course of research no specific breakdown of offspring was undertaken, but the class lists from 1894 and 1899 show that there were no sons with trustee surnames in the young men’s class. It is possible they simply were not active church members, or that they immediately joined their parents. Further research is needed to address this

issue.

50. *The Christian Guardian*, 19 May 1880, 160.
51. *The Christian Guardian*, 11 March 1885, 149.
52. Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 385.
53. For a broader discussion of the temperance movement in Ontario, see Jan Noel's *Canada Dry: Temperance Crusades Before Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993). While the RHPA suggest that some adult members of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church were active in the temperance movement, the recorded numbers are very limited.
54. RHPA, *Family History Binders*, "Coombs."
55. This can be traced through the class lists of 1894 and 1899, in conjunction with the RHPA *Family History Binders* and the UCA trustee list.
56. RHPA, *Family History Binders*, "Trench."
57. William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989) examines the Protestant culture of the mid-Victorian period in Southern Ontario. Chapter Five, "Epics in Stone: Placing the Sacred in a Secular World," addresses specifically the physical attributes of churches built in this period, and their meaning in the context of their environment.
58. *The Christian Guardian*, 5 March 1884.
59. Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) addresses the increasing role given to women in an earlier period. Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860," in *Religion in American History: A Reader*, ed. Jon Butler and Harry Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) underlines the development of women's roles in the American church in the nineteenth-century, and the corresponding evolution of theology to accommodate this new audience.

**Appendix #1*****Richmond Hill Methodist Church Leaders***

Total Number in Sample: 12

Number of Trustees: 9

Number of Class Leaders: 3

Number of Sunday school Superintendents: 2

Number of Epworth League Leaders: 2

Number of Representatives to Circuit Quarterly Board: 3

Number of businessmen: 4

Number of tradesmen: 5

Number of Principals: 2

Number of reeves: 5

Number of school trustees: 5

Number involved with Public Library: 3

Number of Richmond Hill Council members: 3

Number of Justices of the Peace: 1

Number born in Canada: 4

Number born in England: 3

Number born in Scotland: 3

Number of Liberals: 3

Number of Conservatives: 2

Number of members of AOUW: 4

Number of Masons: 5

This data is derived from the Richmond Hill Methodist Church Board of Trustee minutes, UCA, and the RHPA *Family History Binders*. It is not a complete list of all trustees over the period 1875-1899, but rather a sample comprised of those trustees whose families also appear in the RHPA, thus providing data on their community involvement and personal lives.



*Appendix #2**Demographics of Class Lists, 1894 and 1899  
Richmond Hill Methodist Church**Numerical Break-down, 1894 Class List*

	Class #1	Class #2	Class #3	Class #4	Class #5	Class #6
<b># Males</b>	27	6	9	11	10	0
<b># Females</b>	34	25	1	16	26	23
<b># Family Names</b>	31	23	9	15	21	18
<b># Trustee Family Names</b>	7	4	0	4	9	5
<b># Couples</b>	12	6	1	5	6	0
<b>Total Number of Members</b>	61	31	10	27	36	23

*Numerical Break-down, 1899 Class List*

	Class #1	Class #2	Class #3	Class #4	Class #5	Class #6
<b># Males</b>	31	6	9	12	9	0
<b># Females</b>	36	26	1	15	27	23
<b># Family Names</b>	33	23	8	15	21	17
<b># Trustee Family Names</b>	8	5	1	4	8	5
<b># Couples</b>	15	4	1	5	6	0
<b>Total Number of Members</b>	67	32	10	27	36	23

This data is derived from the only two class lists available for this period, located in the UCA.



## **Boundaries Rejected: Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Missions Among the Nuu-chah-nulth Peoples on Vancouver Island, 1874-1910**

JAMES MANLY

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Like colonizing states, Christian denominations and missionary societies often staked out territories for missionary activity and expansion. This, of course, had little to do with the consent of the people to be colonized or missionized.

On the sparsely populated outer coast of Vancouver Island, deeply indented with inlets and covered with islands, both Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches established missions during the late-nineteenth century. Each denomination hoped to claim the entire coast as its mission field. Each seeking to convert the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people who lived in the many scattered villages, they competed for the favour of chiefs, the presence of children in their schools and government funds to operate them. Although never a major factor, the Methodists were also sporadically active in the area.

The historical context provides an understanding of this rivalry. Religious and ethnic tensions exacerbated by the Riel Rebellion continued to agitate Canadians over the Manitoba Schools question. A number of Protestant churches maintained missions for converting French Canadian Catholics. Presbyterian ministers still subscribed to the Westminster Confession, which named the Pope as “the antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God.”<sup>1</sup>

Catholics showed equal intolerance, anathematizing all who did not accept the declarations of the Council of Trent and of the 1877 Vatican

Council.<sup>2</sup> Catholic missionaries, including Fr. Brabant on Vancouver Island, used the Catholic Ladder as a teaching tool with First Nations people. This chart shows Protestantism as a detour from the path to heaven and onto the path to hell.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, voices such as that of George Monro Grant spoke for a wider vision of Christian fellowship that included Catholics as well as Protestants. A Vatican-initiated survey of Catholic dioceses in Canada showed “that direct proselytism by Protestants was simply not a major concern” and disproved the notion that widespread anti-Catholic feeling existed. The greatest exception to this growing tolerance was work among First Nations people in western Canada.<sup>4</sup>

W.S. Moore, the Presbyterian Missionary at Mistawasis, Saskatchewan, provides an extreme example of the anti-Catholic bigotry that some missionaries brought to their work. Although strongly objecting to the “heartless brutality” of the Presbyterian school at Regina, he said he would sooner see Indian children die than to have them sent to the Catholics.<sup>5</sup>

In his *Reminiscences*, Rev. Augustin Brabant describes the 1874 beginning of the Catholic mission when he accompanied his Bishop, Charles Seghers, on a trip from Victoria along the west coast of Vancouver Island as far as Kyoquot. Considering the language difficulties involved, it is questionable that any effective communication took place. Nevertheless, between 13 April and 15 May they visited numerous villages where, according to Brabant, they adopted the following method:

In this and in every tribe on the coast instruction was begun by stating who we were, what was our object; then followed a history of the creation, the fall of man, the deluge, the multiplication of languages, the redemption of mankind; after which, if agreeable to the natives, baptism was administered to their little children. And, if time was left, a few hymns and songs were taught. But in all cases the teaching of the Sign of the Cross and the making of that sign by the Indians was the great thing and caused real excitement. We had in this camp eighty baptisms of young children.<sup>6</sup>

On this trip of initial contact the two clerics baptized an astounding number of children: at one village only two and at another nine but at others forty-three, seventy-five, ninety-three, one hundred and thirty-five. At Kyoquot on 26 April, Brabant says he “baptized one hundred and seventy-

seven children. I commenced at nine o'clock in the morning and it was five o'clock in the afternoon when I got through."<sup>7</sup>

On a second trip Bishop Seghers arranged with the chief at Hesquiat to obtain a mission site.<sup>8</sup> In May 1875, Fr. Brabant was posted to Hesquiat where he spent the next twenty-five years of his life. At the time there were no white settlements and only four one-person trading posts scattered along the 200-mile coast line. Brabant, working among people of a totally different culture and language, experienced times of great loneliness and isolation, being, as he said, "as much as six months without seeing the face of a white man, and consequently speaking a civilized language."<sup>9</sup>

Bishop Seghers' instructions to Brabant placed primary emphasis on "the salvation and spiritual progress of the Indians." In addition to this, the missionary was to "neglect nothing towards establishing a civilized social order of life among them," to encourage them to acquire property and "improve their condition of life, so that with the improvement of their temporal and physical conditions their minds and hearts may be raised to higher and better things." Of particular interest to this paper, he was instructed to "teach the Indians fearlessly to beware and avoid with the utmost caution all heresy and heretics."<sup>10</sup>

Brabant established a second mission among the Ohiaht people at Namukamus in Barkley Sound in the fall of 1877. In 1880 Bishop Brondel, Seghers' successor, instructed Brabant to establish a mission at Kyuquot, sixty miles up the coast. Brabant had already spent time among the Kyoquots who had expressed desire for a resident priest and he was very hopeful, particularly with regard to the children.<sup>11</sup> Brondel also added to the earlier Bishop's instructions. Missionaries must teach children "to read, to pray, to learn the catechism, to sing, arithmetic, personal order and cleanliness, and some stories taken from the Sacred Scriptures. In times of recreation they should learn how to till the soil."<sup>12</sup>

Brabant built a small church at Ahousaht, between Hesquiat and Barkley Sound in 1881 and in 1886 Bishop Seghers, who had returned to the diocese, placed Fr. Lemmens in charge of all mission work in Clayoquot Sound, including Ahousaht, leaving Fr. Brabant at Hesquiat.<sup>13</sup> Like the Presbyterians and the Methodists, the Catholics could not maintain a consistent missionary presence in all the mission stations which they had opened. Clearly, however, they had established themselves as the pioneering Christian presence on the outer coast of Vancouver Island.

In 1888 the Foreign Mission Committee of the Presbytery of Columbia of the Presbyterian Church in Canada reported on a perceived need for a mission among the Indians of British Columbia. "As yet very little has been done for them by any of the evangelical denominations and nothing at all has been done by our church. The Committee believe that schools of the kind lately introduced by the government in the North West Territory are greatly needed on this coast."<sup>14</sup>

In March 1890, Mr. John A. McDonald offered himself as a "missionary to the pagan Indians of British Columbia . . . The Methodist, English and Roman Catholic churches have missions among them. Our church has none."<sup>15</sup> The following year he visited Methodist missions on the north coast of British Columbia and William Duncan's mission at New Metlakatla, Alaska. He then travelled up the west coast of Vancouver Island, meeting Mr. H. Guillod, the local Indian Agent, who gave valuable information about the area and its people. Concluding his report to the Foreign Mission Committee in Toronto, he wrote, "So have decided with your permission to locate at Alberni for the first year, to learn the language and to take the whole coast for a field."<sup>16</sup> Doubtless, Mr. Guillod had informed McDonald, if he didn't know from other sources, that the Roman Catholics had already been active at a number of points which McDonald proposed to take for his field.

Brabant noted in his journal for October 1891, "that a young man representing the Presbyterian Church of Canada has taken up his residence at Alberni, Barclay Sound, and has been introduced by the Indian Agent to the natives of that district."<sup>17</sup> In 1893 his Bishop told him that the Methodists planned to build a mission at Nitinat and had been given a \$500 grant from the Dominion Government. "They had asked and obtained the grant for the building of a school, but of course with them that also means a meeting-house or a church."<sup>18</sup> Because of his health, Mr. McDonald was not able to stay for more than a year and a half at Alberni. During this time he did, however, invite some children into his home where his sister began to teach school. This became the "Home," the beginning of the Alberni Indian Residential School.<sup>19</sup>

McDonald's successor, Melvin Swartout, did not get along well with Bella Johnston, the woman who had been placed in charge of the "Home," After a few months, with his wife and two small children, Swartout moved to Ucluelet, situated on the outer coast sixty miles down the channel from Alberni. He set about to meet the Nuu-Chah-Nulth in the other villages in the

vicinity, to evangelize and to establish schools.<sup>20</sup> Brabant reflected bitterly in 1895:

Our Indians over all the coast are well-disposed . . . This being known seems to have excited the Presbyterian and Methodist denominations, and their efforts to invade the coast are very pronounced. Now that the Indians are more than half civilized and are withal peaceable and docile, the sects will come and give us trouble . . . When a man's life was in danger and when the only means of travelling was an Indian canoe; when the mails reached us only once or twice a year . . . we were welcome to do alone the work of converting the natives; but now with the present facilities and the absence of danger, the ministers come in sight to give us trouble and to pervert our children.<sup>21</sup>

Seeing the Protestants as a threat to his work, Brabant proposed to his Bishop that the Catholics should build "in a central part of the coast, an industrial school for boys and girls."<sup>22</sup> Although education had been part of Brabant's mandate since 1880, he had not seriously committed himself to this work. Swartout claimed in 1901 that, in his seven years on the coast, he had "not met one Indian who has been taught by the priests to read and write."<sup>23</sup>

Bishop Lemmens arranged a meeting with the Indian Agent who promised Brabant that a per capita grant would be available once the school was occupied. "Everything we asked for was promised by the agent, and so I returned to my mission, rejoicing in the thought that through a school we could keep the children from perversion."<sup>24</sup> Shortly after, however, the Bishop instructed him to abandon the boarding school plans which Brabant thought so necessary for preserving the results of his work over the past twenty years.

Four years later, in 1899, Bishop Christie, who had succeeded Lemmens, called Brabant to Victoria to discuss the building of a boarding school. Christie wrote, "I have just returned from Ottawa and have obtained a per capita grant from the government for fifty children. If we do not accept the grant it will be given to one of the sects; your children will be perverted and you will lose the fruit of all your labors."<sup>25</sup>

The wording of this letter, reported in Brabant's memoirs which were circulated in 1890, created great agitation among the Presbyterians who had been trying for years to get a much smaller grant for a school that was already

built and operating. Brabant's *Vancouver Island . . . and Its Missions: 1874-1900* became a popular book among Presbyterians and Swartout made a point of ordering copies for distribution.<sup>26</sup>

Brabant selected a commanding site on Clayoquot Sound for the new school which was built towards the end of 1899. Limited mission funds pushed the Presbyterians to use federally financed schools, with Presbyterian teacher-evangelists, as their means of gaining access to the villages. They frequently opened the school and placed the teacher before obtaining the government's recognition and grant. At times this practice led to delays and misunderstandings. Always there was difficulty in obtaining qualified teachers.

In 1896, Brabant wrote that a "young man [John Russell] representing the Presbyterian Church is now stationed in Ahousat. He is a school teacher by profession, but he holds divine service on Sunday."<sup>27</sup> The Presbyterians applied for a school grant at Ahousaht, which the government first gave but later withdrew.

The Presbytery of Victoria's formal protest of this action emphasized that the government was making no provision for the education of large numbers of Indians on the west coast, that the Presbyterians had opened a school at Ahousaht with a qualified teacher and, having applied for the annual grant of \$300 had received three quarterly payments of \$75. However, near the end of 1896, when the Catholics opened a school at Clayquot, "another point, about ten miles across a dangerous water . . . separated both geographically and tribally from Ahouset [sic]" the Indian Department transferred the grant from the Presbyterian school at Ahousaht to the Catholic school at Clayoquot. The Presbytery rejected claims of prior occupation by the Catholics. "The Roman Catholic Church were only in Ahouset for one or two school terms, and that about six or seven years before our Church commenced work there – during which interval of years, Ahouset was utterly abandoned."<sup>28</sup>

In response, the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs set out the Department's view of the history claiming that the grant to the Catholics had been made for Ahousaht and Clayoquot, "considered as one Mission." Even though no school had been held since 1891, the grant was still available and therefore had been transferred to Clayoquot. The Department reminded the Presbyterians that, in 1895, when Swartout had applied to open a school at Ahousaht, he was told that "there were no funds available for the establishment of a Protestant School on that Reserve." When the Presbyterians had



proceeded with the school without permission and sent in reports, payments were made until the error was noticed and the payments stopped. The Department regretted that no grant could be made for the school at Ahousaht and added that “any arrangement that might be made with that object in view might create a good deal of difficulty.”<sup>29</sup> The Presbyterians continued to negotiate with the Department and finally, in March 1900, succeeded in obtaining the annual \$300 grant for the Ahousaht school.<sup>30</sup>

After the Presbyterians had been able to place a young man among the Ohiahts at Dodger’s Cove, across Barkley Sound from Ucluelet, Swartout, noting that “Roman Catholics are evidently preparing an aggressive work on the coast,” thought that the time had come for the Presbyterians to expand their work. In 1900 he indicated his own willingness to go to the Nootka Sound area up the coast from Hesquiat. He dismissed any Catholic claims to the area, saying that Brabant only visited the area once a year.<sup>31</sup>

The ill-fated Presbyterian venture at Nootka illustrates many of the factors at work in the intense Presbyterian-Catholic rivalry: the difficulty both churches faced in placing competent, long-term workers in small, isolated, difficult to reach communities; the appeal by the churches to factions and divisions within the aboriginal community; and the expedient use of schools and the presence of federal authority and funding.

Rev. Thomas Oswald, a young minister who had been asked to go to Nootka, indicated in August 1900 that he was waiting for a clear sign from God.<sup>32</sup> Nine days later, although he did not mention any sign, Oswald announced that he was available to be appointed as of the end of March. John Russell, the Presbyterian teacher-missionary at Ahousaht, wrote in January 1901, that he had received several deputations from the Nootka area asking for a teacher. “They are very anxious, as they say, they have no one to help them to obtain any light whatever as the Catholic priests who have occasionally gone there are very uncertain in their services & in their tempers as well.”<sup>33</sup>

Although appointed to Nootka as of 1 April 1901, Oswald asked if he could wait with going until May 1st so that he might visit relatives and attend synod.<sup>34</sup> Russell complained that this further delay was “a great blunder” and would lead to trouble for Oswald. Monthly steamer service meant that Oswald would not reach Nootka before 20 May by which time the people would be scattered for the summer. Adding to Russell’s concern, he had received a letter “purporting to be that of Chief Maquina of Nootka,” but

which he suspected was inspired by Brabant, forbidding him from going to Nootka.<sup>35</sup>

While Oswald arrived on the Island's west coast in May, visiting Swartout and Russell, he did not arrive at Nootka until 18 June, making the fifty-two mile trip from Ahousaht in a canoe with Russell. Still tired from their journey, they explained their purpose to the Moachaht people and reminded them of their urgent appeal for a school.

We were informed that, the people were in favour of our coming & that they desired a resident missionary & a school but that while all were unanimous in desiring us to remain they were afraid to allow us, because (1) the priest at Hesquiaht had threatened to summarily degrade the chief & to deprive him of his chieftainship if he sanctioned our remaining & that he would moreover take away the cattle that he had given to the late chief. He had moreover informed him that our work was to do away with (summarily) their old customs, dances & c. To all of these objections I replied & stated that to retain us it was necessary for them to not only desire us to remain but to provide a building site. Fear of doing anything to injure their chief's prospects influenced them from readily receiving us so we left the council meeting . . . We were privately & urgently requested to remain by old & young . . . We consider it our duty to do all in our power to release the Indians from the slavery they enjoy at the priest's hands, who resorts to most unscrupulous means & who has systematically & persistently refused to alleviate their sufferings or to grant their requests for education.<sup>36</sup>

Disregarding the opposition of the Chief, they rented a house and opened a makeshift school. Russell expressed great satisfaction that they had been able to work so quickly. "To rent a house 6 p.m. on Saturday, to conduct Sabbath services, manufacture school furniture & open a school at noon on Tuesday, has not I think been often accomplished."<sup>37</sup>

Russell learned that Bishop Orth, now planned to appoint priests to Ahousaht and to Dodger's Cove, two points which the Presbyterians had been serving.

There is no religion of course in this, it is retaliation . . . I am certain that Bishop Orth is determined to make a last grand attempt to obtain supremacy of the West Coast. Nothing but very effective measures can meet him . . . We must have a vigorous policy or else leave the field. The

Methodist Ch. is responsible for the giving up of Clayoquot to the Catholics & our delay in filling Nootka is causing the trouble there.<sup>38</sup>

Less than a month after Oswald settled at Nootka, the trouble arrived which Russell had predicted. Chief Maquina asked the Indian Department to order Oswald off the Reserve as a trespasser.<sup>39</sup> The Catholics, who had a government grant for a school at Hesquiat, arranged for it to be transferred to Nootka where they started a rival school.<sup>40</sup> The Catholic school at Nootka had an average daily attendance of eight children while Oswald's had only two and one-half.<sup>41</sup>

In spite of militant rhetoric from others, Thomas Oswald did not "stick to his guns." On 26 August, ten weeks after his arrival, he left on the monthly steamer. In his plaintive letter of resignation he cited the reasons for leaving: his loneliness, the lack of work to do, the Indian Agent's official order for him to leave, the losing competition with Fr. Brabant, and his feeling that there was no one in the village on whom he could rely. Oswald concluded by saying, "While I have not earned the martyr's crown, I believe that I ought not to be branded with a coward's name."<sup>42</sup> According to Chief Joe of Ehatisht, one of the villages on Nootka Sound, the Catholic school was closed as soon as Oswald left.<sup>43</sup>

Swartout vigorously defended the decision to place Oswald at Nootka and to open the school without asking permission of the Indian Department in accordance with the Indian Act. He claimed that application in advance would have required the Indian Agent to hold a meeting at which Fr. Brabant would have been present to influence the people against the Presbyterians. Instead, Swartout felt that the Presbyterian Church should go on the offensive: "what right has the Indian Department to treat Protestant missionaries as tramps to be ordered off the reservation at the whim of the Romish priest? What right has that Department to put barriers in the way of preaching the gospel to the Indians as difficult, if not more so, as those facing our church in China?"<sup>44</sup>

The Presbyterians resented what they considered unfair treatment. With an obvious reference to latent anti-Catholic prejudice, Swartout wrote to R.P. MacKay, the Secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee in Toronto, "the sooner our church realizes that it has a conflict on with state-aided Roman Catholicism, the easier the question will be settled. Our people only need to get stirred up, to settle it quickly."<sup>45</sup>

Swartout urged the Presbyterian Church to do battle with Ottawa to have the same privileges as the Roman Catholics, that is to have entry to any village on the coast. Until then the Presbyterians could not get a footing in any new village “without the risk of being ordered to leave.” Once free access was recognized by Ottawa, they should choose the “very best place on the coast for the experiment of testing Presbyterian Protestantism with Roman Catholicism.” Once again Swartout declared his own willingness to go to Nootka, provided he could take his family.<sup>46</sup> Although Swartout and Russell made numerous appeals for another man to be sent to Nootka, these were never acted upon.<sup>47</sup>

R.P. MacKay, although not sharing Swartout’s enthusiasm for an all-out assault on Ottawa, did meet with Clifford Sifton, the Minister of the Interior, concerning the practices of the Catholics and the action of Indian Affairs Superintendent A.W. Vowell in ordering Oswald to leave. “The Government,” he told Russell, “is in an extremely delicate position in dealing with so highly organized and aggressive body as the Roman Catholics. Their Agents are everywhere, and they act as a unit, and can bring such pressure to bear upon the Government.”<sup>48</sup>

In a letter to Russell, MacKay noted that Bishop Orth had been in Ottawa, “interviewing the Government . . . I think that Mr. Sifton wishes to favor us in these matters until the grants to the Presbyterian Church are somewhat up to grants to other churches. Political exigencies, however, are such as to make it practically if not theoretically impossible for the Government to do as they would like.”<sup>49</sup> MacKay was acutely aware of two problems which argued against a prolonged struggle with the Catholics: the shortage of personnel and the shortage of money.<sup>50</sup>

In supporting the call for a large Boarding school at Ahousaht, Swartout said in a letter to John Campbell in Victoria:

I have always had a great deal of sympathy for the Roman Catholics. I have admired their pluck in opening up the wilderness, sending missionaries across the continent in the early days &c. &c. And I have believed in the policy of not interfering with them at any point where they have established a mission. But when I learn that the Roman Catholics seek to hold against all comers territory to which their highest claim is the fact that they have erected a building and pay it an occasional visit; when I learn that the most devoted priest on the coast descended to threatening the Nootka chief with the loss of his position

if he permitted the Protestants to establish a school for the benefit of his ignorant and wholly neglected children; when I learn that one of the most important themes discussed in the Romish service . . . is the Evils of Protestantism; and when I read in their own publications that the avowed object of erecting the Roman Catholic Boarding School at Clayoquaht . . . is to save the Indian children from the baneful influence of the Protestants, I confess to a change of opinion. Today, I hold the view that our Church should meet this Catholic question, should meet it effectually, and at once.<sup>51</sup>

In his letter to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Swartout, as evidence of Catholic failure to serve the needs of the different villages, points to their abandoned buildings at Alberni, Ohiaht (Dodger Cove) and Ahousaht and to the seldom-used building at Nootka.<sup>52</sup> Work among the Ohiahts had been particularly important for Melvin Swartout. By canoe and sailboat he had travelled there as often as possible; he had lived at Dodger Cove himself for a few months, and he frequently had urged the appointment of a suitable teacher-missionary. But the Presbyterians had the same problems as the Catholics in keeping suitable missionary personnel, and Dodger Cove was vacant much of the time. In August 1904, a month after Melvin Swartout's drowning, Dr. Campbell, concerned that the Presbyterians might lose the village to the Catholics, asked, "Why is D. Cove left so long without a teacher?"<sup>53</sup> John Ross was appointed soon after this but when he left in 1908 the work was abandoned.<sup>54</sup>

In 1908, when the Presbyterians hoped to secure a grant for a Boarding School at Bamfield, in the territory of the Ohiahts, R.P. MacKay was forced to agree with the Indian Agent, A. W. Neill, "that our church has not been doing justice to the missions on the Western coast, that is Ucluelet and Dodger Cove. I regret it very much but we do find it difficult to get agents that are suitable."<sup>55</sup> Although MacKay saw little that could be done "amongst the children at Dodger Cove" he agreed with Campbell that "we must not let go and allow the Roman Catholics to come in."<sup>56</sup>

John Russell, the Presbyterian teacher at Ahousaht, knew in advance the significance of a Catholic Boarding School at Clayoquot. Children from Ahousaht, after attending his primary school, would never go past the Catholic school to attend the Presbyterian school at Alberni.<sup>57</sup> Aware of a concerted attempt by the Catholics to attract Ahousaht children to their school, he became discouraged when they "succeeded in enticing" his most

promising schoolgirl. "It seems hard for me to spend the best years of my life only to have my pupils go over to the Catholics when they reach ten or twelve years of age."<sup>58</sup> This sad and discouraged statement, which parallels similar statements by Fr. Brabant, highlights the personal anguish caused by denominational rivalry. According to Russell, the Catholics intended to recruit ten girls from his school and the preferred method of doing this was the offer of school dresses; the priests and nuns attracted the girls who then pressured their parents to allow them to go to Christie Residential School.<sup>59</sup> On one occasion, arriving by a small steamboat decked out with streamers, the Catholics paraded through Ahousaht accompanied by the school's brass band. Although Russell was able to keep his charges safely in the school room during this visitation, he had the sense that he was losing the battle.<sup>60</sup>

In response to Russell's complaint, the Indian Agent said that the Catholics had a prior claim at Ahousaht. Russell countered by pointing out that the Catholics claimed any whom they had baptized; he referred to the mass baptism of infants and children practiced by Bishop Seghers and Brabant on their first trip along the coast in 1874. "If Father Brabant baptized 177 children in eight hours . . . it required two minutes, 42 42/59 seconds on an average to baptize one child."<sup>61</sup>

By all accounts, Russell was a good and conscientious teacher, deeply dedicated to the educational process as well as to the Presbyterian version of the gospel. He complained that the Government used the churches in order to escape its own responsibility for providing education. But, he said, the government had no idea whether or not the churches were doing a decent job of teaching the children in their care.<sup>62</sup>

Looking at the results of residential or boarding schools, Russell raised serious questions about their efficacy. At one point he said, "Regarding the Home Schools I am entirely opposed to them on this Coast."<sup>63</sup> He observed that graduates of these schools sank to the "common level" when they returned to their home communities so that "the last state is worse than the first." Instead, he proposed what he called an "'Industrial day school' where the children are trained daily & then sent home, the idea being the raising of the standard of the whole community . . . In this case the parents are responsible for food and clothing as they ought to be in every case & they get the benefit of what training the child gets."<sup>64</sup> Russell particularly objected to the practice of residential schools training young women for "service" in white people's homes in the city. "Fitting the girls for servants here is robbing the Indians of those who ought by nature to be the mothers of the

future members of the tribe & to thus unfit them for this is assisting in the extinction of the tribes.”<sup>65</sup>

Russell noted that with the new Christie Residential School, highly visible on a hill overlooking a bay a few miles from Ahousaht, the attitude of the Ahousaht people towards residential school began to change. “The Indians are . . . gradually becoming more in favor of the Home Schools, as they think the training must be superior. I notice also a growing desire of the children after they have some advancement in the day schools [for] training in the Home schools.”<sup>66</sup> Recognizing the “probability . . . that I shall not be able to hold my best & most desirable pupils on the present system,” he suggested that the Presbyterians, instead of enlarging the Alberni Home, should build at Ahousaht. “The hope of our Mission on West Coast is Ahousaht . . . Unless we can hold Ahousaht intact, our prospects are not bright.”<sup>67</sup>

Although Swartout also had his doubts, other Presbyterian workers favoured the residential school system. At a workers’ conference, the Presbytery of Victoria and the Synod of British Columbia passed resolutions in favour of a Presbyterian boarding school at Ahousaht.

But the Ahousaht Residential School did not come into existence as the result of a rational planning process. Instead, Russell, “at great inconvenience & with considerable discomfort,” took a little boy into his home in the summer of 1901 to prevent him from going to the Catholics. The following year, as parents moved to summer work sites, Russell took in several more children for the same reason. At the end of September he had seven children in his home and at the end of October he had sixteen – with fifteen on a waiting list. The following March Russell had twenty-five children under his care.<sup>68</sup> Everything was done on an ad hoc basis and none of these children had been properly admitted with signed consent forms.<sup>69</sup> There had been no preparation in terms of food, beds, bedding, or other furniture.

Frantic appeals to the Woman’s Foreign Mission Society secured financial support for purchase of basic items.<sup>70</sup> But the house was not equipped to handle these numbers and Russell, who had a growing family of his own, broke under the strain. He asked for a furlough and, once away from Ahousaht, submitted his resignation to take effect 31 October 1903. In his resignation letter he urged that a boarding school for fifty students be built at Ahousaht.<sup>71</sup>

Melvin Swartout had disagreed with Russell for taking in so many children and criticized him for leaving on furlough before making adequate

arrangements for their care.<sup>72</sup> The Presbyterians were left with a situation where one loyal woman worker, Miss McNeil, herself near the point of collapse, was responsible for looking after all of these children. The church came through with grants, hired another couple as principal and matron and arranged to build a residential school. After some negotiations, the Indian Department promised a grant of \$1,500 for construction and a per capita grant of \$60 for up to twenty-five children.<sup>73</sup> In the same government estimates the Catholic school at Clayoquot was raised to the status of an industrial school and, as such, received \$120 per capita for fifty students. The application of the Presbyterian school at Alberni for similar status was “noted for future consideration.”<sup>74</sup>

Dr. Campbell, concerned about the cost of building at Ahousaht, nevertheless thought that the Presbyterians had to press on. “We cannot draw back, unless we are to abandon the place to the R.C.’s, and if we do that we may withdraw our other missionaries, & if so the ghost of John Knox wd. haunt us. The Pres. Ch. is not the church that is accustomed to hand the heathen under her care to the Papists.”<sup>75</sup>

Regardless of how one might judge their objectives today, one can presume that both Presbyterians and Catholics entered their missionary work on Vancouver Island’s west coast with sincere motives. In seeking to carry out their mission as effectively as possible, they saw the need to work in a large contiguous area. This need brought them into mutual conflict to such an extent that their struggle with each other began to take precedence. Both Christie Residential School and Ahousaht Residential School were founded, not because of any analysis of the needs of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth communities or their children, but in order to prevent the other denomination from securing the hearts and minds of the children.<sup>76</sup>

The residential schools at Alberni, Clayoquot and Ahousaht are perhaps the most important legacy of this rivalry for denominational supremacy among the Nuu-Chah-Nulth. Canadian churches and Canadian society as a whole are only beginning to understand the meaning of that legacy as they face up to court challenges. In addition to problems of sexual, physical and emotional abuse at the residential schools, Canada and the churches must confront larger justice questions of First Nations cultural identity and their place in Canada’s future. One man told the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, “we need to know why we were subjected to such treatment in order that we may begin to understand and heal.”<sup>77</sup> Other Canadians also need to know so that they too may begin to



understand and heal. Denominational rivalry is one of the factors which needs to be acknowledged in that process.

### ***Endnotes***

1. *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1643), Chapter XXV, vi.
2. “The Tridentine Profession of Faith, 1564,” with added decree of 1877, *Documents of the Christian Church*, ed. Henry Bettenson (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), 373.
3. John W. Grant, *The Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 124; J.R. Miller, *A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 191-192. For reference to Fr. Brabant’s use of the Catholic Ladder, see Chas. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island* (Victoria, BC: Acme Press, 1926), 49.
4. Mark G. McGowan, “Rethinking Catholic Protestant Relations in Canada: The Episcopal Reports of 1900-1901,” *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association Historical Studies* (1992): 22-23.
5. “Holding as I do that the system of Romanism is Antichristian, idolatrous, blasphemous and deluding: a system that . . . with God’s grace I would die before I would adopt it, and one which I would ten times over see my own children being laid in their graves than see them adopting, of the Indian children I would have no less care but would most certainly send them to Regina or any other place save one -Hell- then send them to a place where trained in delusion they should come forth to Mistawasis and other places to spend their lives in deluding others to the same doubt and the same damnation” (W.S. Moore to R.P. MacKay, 11 March 1903, File 47 # 79.199C, Foreign Mission Committee, Western Section, Indian Work in Manitoba and the North West, Presbyterian Church in Canada Papers, United Church of Canada Archives).
6. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 14. Charles Lillard points out that, including his own *Mission to Nootka: 1874-1900*, there have been four different versions of Fr. Brabant’s memoirs (*Mission to Nootka: 1874-1900* [Sidney, BC: Gray’s Publishing, 1977], 5). In this paper, except where otherwise noted, I have used Chas Moser’s 1926 text.
7. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 18.
8. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 30.
9. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 9.

10. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 4-6.
11. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 63, 77-79, 89, 95.
12. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 8.
13. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 99, 115.
14. Report of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Presbytery of Columbia, File 22, #79.199C, UCCA.
15. John A. McDonald to Rev. G.M. Grant, March 1890, File 3, #79.199 C, UCCA.
16. McDonald to Hamilton Cassels, 12 September, 1891, File 3, #79.199 C, UCCA.
17. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 122.
18. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 123.
19. McDonald to Rev. James Ross, 5 July 1892; McDonald to Cassels, 11 November 1892, File 1, # 79.200C, Foreign Mission Committee, Western Section, Indian Work in British Columbia, Presbyterian Church in Canada Papers, UCCA.
20. Cf. Melvin Swartout to R.P. MacKay, 23 February, 1894, 16 March 1894, 3 April 1894, 18 April 1894, 16 May 1894, 22 June 1894, File 4, #79.200 C, UCCA.
21. Lillard, *Mission to Nootka*, 112. This material is not found in Moser's version of Brabant's work.
22. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 125.
23. Swartout to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 29 August, 1901, File 32, #79.200 C, UCCA. Vince McNally, the Oblate historian, says, "although he had made half-hearted attempts, Brabant had still not established a school for Native children after almost twenty-five years on the West Coast" (Vince McNally, "A Lost Opportunity? A Study of Relations Between the Native People and the Diocese of Victoria," *Western Oblate Studies* 2 [1992]: 172). My attention was drawn to this by Patrick Jamieson, *Victoria: Demers to De Roo: 150 Years of Catholic History on Vancouver Island* (Victoria: Ekstasis Editions, 1997), 162.
24. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 126.
25. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 128.

26. Swartout to MacKay, 5 August 1901, File 32; cf. Swartout to MacKay, 9 February 1901, File 30; 8 July 1901, File 32; Campbell to MacKay, 13 July 1901, File 32; Swartout to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 29 August 1901, File 32; and Russell to MacKay, 16 September 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA
27. Moser, *Reminiscences of the West Coast of Vancouver Island*, 126.
28. Minutes from Presbytery of Victoria, 3 May 1899, File 23, #79.200C, UCCA.
29. Deputy Superintendent General to Rev. Wm. Moore, 18 June 1899, File 23, #79.200C, UCCA
30. J.D. McLean to Wm. Moore, 16 March 1900, File 26, #79.200C, UCCA.
31. Swartout to MacKay, 3 May 1899, File 23; 24 March 1900, File 26, #79.200C, UCCA.
32. Thomas Oswald to MacKay, 20 August 1900, File 28, #79.200C, UCCA.
33. John Russell to MacKay, 28 January 1901, File 30, #79.200C, UCCA.
34. Oswald to MacKay, 4 March 1901; 29 March 1901, File 30, #79.200C, UCCA.
35. Russell to MacKay, 9 April 1901, File 31, #79.200C, UCCA.
36. Russell to MacKay, 28 June 1901, File 31, #79.200C, UCCA.
37. Russell to MacKay, 28 June 1901, File 31, #79.200C, UCCA.
38. Russell to MacKay, 28 June 1901, File 31, #79.200C, UCCA.
39. Campbell to MacKay, 18 July 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
40. Swartout to Campbell, 17 July 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
41. Oswald to MacKay, 26 August 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
42. Oswald to MacKay, 26 August 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
43. Campbell, notes attached to "Statement made by Chief Joe of Ehatisaht at Victoria, 12 May 1903," File 50, #79.200C, UCCA.
44. Swartout to Campbell, 23 July 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
45. Swartout to MacKay, 25 July 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
46. Swartout to MacKay, 7 November 1901, File 33, #79.200C, UCCA.

47. Swartout to MacKay, 2 September 1901, File 32; 7 November 1901, File 32; 14 August 1902, File 41; Swartout to Miss Greig, 26 September 1902, File 42; and Russell to MacKay, 29 May 1902, File 38; 5 July 1902, File 40, #79.200C, UCCA.
48. MacKay to Swartout, 19 November 1901; MacKay to Russell, 6 December 1901, *MacKay Letter Book, Nov. 1901-July 1902*, #79.185C, UCCA.
49. MacKay to Russell, 26 December 1901, *MacKay Letter Book, Nov. 1901-July 1902*, #79.185C, UCCA.
50. MacKay to Swartout, 19 November 1901; MacKay to Russell, 13 January 1902; 25 June 1902; 31 July 1902, *MacKay Letter Book, Nov. 1901-July 1902*, #79.185C, UCCA.
51. Swartout to Campbell, 8 July 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
52. Swartout to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 29 August 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
53. Campbell to MacKay, 17 August 1904, File 65, #79.200C, UCCA.
54. John T. Ross, *Reminiscences*, unpublished manuscript, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 62.
55. MacKay to Neill, 4 December 1908, File 118; cf. MacKay to Campbell, 24 February 1909, File 119, #79.200C, UCCA.
56. MacKay to Campbell, 8 March 1909, File 121, #79.200C, UCCA.
57. Russell to MacKay, 14 June 1901, File 31, #79.200C, UCCA.
58. Russell to MacKay, 9 April 1901, File 31, #79.200C, UCCA.
59. Russell to MacKay, 4 September 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
60. Russell to MacKay, 27 September 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
61. Russell to MacKay, 16 September 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
62. Russell to MacKay, 24 March 1900, File 26, #79.200C, UCCA.
63. Russell to MacKay, 9 April 1901, File 31, #79.200C, UCCA.
64. Russell to MacKay, 23 February 1901, File 30, #79.200C, UCCA.
65. Russell to MacKay, 9 April 1901, File 31, #79.200C, UCCA.

66. Russell to MacKay, 14 June 1901, File 31; cf. 3 July 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
67. Russell to MacKay, 3 July 1901, File 32; cf. Russell to Swartout, 3 July 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA.
68. Russell to MacKay, 9 September 1901, File 32; 2 July, 1902, File 40; 27 September 1902, File 42; 25 October 1902, File 43; Russell to MacKay, 2 March 1903, File 48, #79.200C, UCCA.
69. J.C. Butchart to Mackay, 14 January 1904, File 58, #79.200C, UCCA.
70. Russell to Campbell, 3 November 1902, File 44, #79.200C, UCCA.
71. Russell to MacKay, 13 August 1903, File 53, #79.200C, UCCA.
72. Swartout to MacKay, 3 August 1903; 10 August 1903, File 53, #79.200C, UCCA.
73. Frank Pedley to MacKay, 5 November 1903, File 56, #79.200C, UCCA.
74. James Motion to MacKay, 19 December 1903, File 57, #79.200C, UCCA.
75. Campbell to MacKay, 7 January 1904, File 58, #79.200C, UCCA.
76. Although it does not change my conclusion, we should notice Swartout's comment to MacKay: "It is not wholly because of the RC's that we would build at Ah. The Rc's only make it more urgent. If Boarding schools are to be the solution of this work . . . there should be one at Ah" (5 August 1901, File 32, #79.200C, UCCA).
77. *Report of The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1996), I, 384.



**CSCH Presidential Address 2002**

**Adjusting the Sails:  
Reflections of an Independent Scholar**

MARILYN FÄRDIG WHITELEY

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Last November I went to Ottawa and attended the meeting of the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada. Time after time the group's attention was brought back to one central concern: the current demographic shift, and the need it will bring for a large number of university teachers. From where will they come? This raised a second question: how many will come from the "lost generation" of scholars who received their education during a time when there were practically no academic positions available in Canada? Some of these have retained a marginal place in academia; others are developing careers in fields related to their academic training; still others have gone into completely new areas; and a few have sought ways to market their expertise independently.

I found this question very interesting, both when I looked back at my own experience, and when I considered the situation of my older son, a member of that "lost generation" in another academic field. Yet through this discussion and most others at the meeting, I did not feel very free to participate. It was not because I was not welcomed: I was. And it was not because I wasn't our society's official representative, although I was there only because Gary Miedema had a scheduling conflict. It was because I felt like an outsider. I am not an academic, not even a recently retired academic.

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The meeting sent things whirling around in my mind, and I want to reflect with you on some of them today.

That “lost generation” of potential academics is only a conspicuous example of a much more general situation in society today. Consider this: Is the journey of your life following the course you intended to take once you passed the stage of wanting to be a movie star or a hockey player? For many of us, plans have changed. For some of us, actual careers have changed, and in fact it is common for people today to have, not only a number of different jobs, but different careers during their lifetimes. Partly, of course, this is due to the tremendous pace of change in our world. Even for the younger ones among you, there are many jobs today that simply didn’t exist the first time somebody asked, “And what do you want to be when you grow up?” There are also complex market factors, and family circumstances, and personal changes and growth. You have adjusted and are adjusting to this. In some cases you consciously made decisions. In other cases, if you are like me, you have come to recognize decisions that you had already made.

In today’s world all of us are adjusting, but I want to focus on one of the more radical adjustments, that of the independent scholar. As a definition, I give a statement of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS): independent scholars are those “whose research, unlike that of full-time faculty, is not supported by an institution.” They are people who “are actively carrying out work of scholarly merit.”<sup>1</sup> Of course many people doing this do not think of themselves as independent scholars, and probably a good number have never even hear the term, but whatever they call themselves, these are the people on whom I shall focus.

The full quotation of the practical wisdom to which I allude in my title is this: “You cannot change the wind – but you can adjust the sails.” First, as text, I shall outline my own experience – how I adjusted the sails and journeyed where I never intended to go. Next I will look at what it means to be an independent scholar, the advantages and the difficulties. Then I wish to speak to you as individuals, wherever you stand along the continuum from independent scholars to fully tenured faculty and beyond. And finally I want to suggest what role the Canadian Society of Church History can play in the lives of independent scholars. From my own experience, I believe that this role can be a vital one.

In September of 1954, I set forth for Oberlin College, in Ohio, intending to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree and then perhaps a Bachelor of Music Education degree. During the next two and a half years I learned two



very important things. First, while my rather middling musical talent might have sufficed, I lacked the consuming passion for music of many of my conservatory classmates. This negative realization was more than balanced, however, by my discovery of all sorts of unanticipated fascinations, especially the academic study of religion. So it was that part way through my third year, I became a religion major.

This worried my parents because it was not a practical choice, and they had married during the depths of the Great Depression. I was able to stave off their immediate panic, however, because I received a Woodrow Wilson Foundation Fellowship for my first year of graduate work. That was a time not unlike the present in this respect: a need for university teachers was forecast. The fellowships were designed for those who were willing to consider going into college teaching. I needed no encouragement because that had quickly become my dream, and it looked as though this generous aid might make it possible.

In September of 1958 I arrived in New York City, to study in the combined M.A. program of Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University. What a stimulating environment it was! My major was church history, and in June I returned home to write my thesis. At the end of the summer I travelled to New York to hand it in, and to take the required exam.

But I am ahead of myself. In the spring of 1959 I knew that, when fall came, I would need a job, and I hunted. Finally I was hired, though not to teach. I became Director of Student Religious Life, at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia. They wanted someone to serve in an interim position, and that suited me because I had become engaged to an Oberlin classmate. And so it was that this Yankee spent a year in the South during the height of civil rights movement.

But during the year, that Oberlin fellow and I disengaged, and again I needed a job. Again there were no prospects for teaching, again I found a position in campus ministry, this time at the Wesley Foundation at the University of Minnesota, in Minneapolis. Two noteworthy things happened during that year. First, I met an interesting graduate student in engineering, from Canada. And I realized that the parts of my job about which I felt most positive were those most akin to teaching. I did something that still amazes me, and took charge of my life. I saw that I wasn't going to be able to teach without another degree, so in September of 1961 headed back to graduate school.

I had few savings and no financial aid; furthermore teaching assistantships were virtually unknown in that time and place. My parents were able to help me a bit, and I got a job. By the end of three years I had finished the research for my dissertation, and felt it was time to leave New York and go to work. The Woodrow Wilson Foundation had instituted an internship program in which it placed former Fellows mostly in predominantly black colleges in the South, and so it was that this *white* Yankee spent two years in the black environment of Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina in the mid-1960s. It was an amazing cultural experience, and it also confirmed in my mind the choice I had made. I loved teaching! And in that particular setting I also felt that I was doing something worthwhile. I had no desire for a more prestigious position, and would happily have remained.

I would have remained, that is, if I had not agreed to marry that Canadian engineer. Hugh and I married in August of 1966, and two days later I was a landed immigrant, living in Guelph. Hugh was very supportive of my teaching, and he made the initial contact with universities in the area. For three years I taught in the religious studies department of what was then Waterloo Lutheran University, two years part-time and one year full-time. The latter was a very busy year: before it ended, I defended my dissertation and produced our first son. But this was a time when core curricula were under fire, and at the end of that year, WLU discontinued the religious studies requirement; enrollments declined, and a sessional lecturer was no longer needed. For a number of years after that, I taught one or two semester courses per year in humanities at the University of Guelph until that, too, was finally affected by the fortunes of the university department that had been hiring me.

It was then that I realized I needed to adjust the sail. I wanted to do research and writing, in church history, but not in the field of *early* church history in which I was trained. I needed some retraining, but I'd had enough of taking classes. So I went to the United Church of Canada archives, and bravely asked whether there was anything I could do as a volunteer. I was a perfect candidate for the chief archivist's pet project, so I began going into Toronto one day a week to work and to learn. Soon I was being paid, and eventually I was working three days a week. I found it satisfying to be doing something useful and at the same time to learn informally through the material with which I was working and especially through contact with the knowledgeable staff. After about seven years I made my choice of research areas, or rather I realized that I had chosen. I began to spend part of my time

at the archives doing my own research, and in 1987 I presented my very first paper, at a meeting of the Canadian Methodist Historical Society. A year later I gave a paper to the Canadian Society of Church History.

By 1990, the United Church was experiencing financial pressure, and the archives had no money to spend on a project outside the regular mandate of archives, and so after twelve years I no longer had a job. I was distressed by this, but at the same time – much as I hated to admit it – I realized that it was good for me. I needed to leave my comfortable situation and devote more of my time, *all* of my time, to my own work. And so, dragging my heels and shedding some tears, I was pushed into the future. Before long but with considerable timidity, I ordered business cards that proclaimed: “Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, Independent Scholar, Church History/Women’s History.”

Several “winds” had brought me finally to become a somewhat reluctant independent scholar. One was the employment situation in the discipline. While many denominational colleges had a long heritage of teaching religious knowledge as well as religious values to their students, the modern field of religious studies blossomed with the burgeoning interest in the church in the 1950s. Not only was it widely taught in “secular” independent colleges and universities in the United States, but it even appeared in curricula of some state-supported institutions. Nevertheless it was a “low numbers” field. Some people like me took graduate training in the area, but the pool of potential faculty members was greatly increased by men (and I use the term in its exclusive sense) who were disaffected with parish ministry. Thus even in a period when universities were competing vigorously for faculty members in many disciplines, in my area there was no shortage of candidates. Some of you have ridden the crest of the wave and others have been in the trough, but all of us are affected by shifts in supply and demand.

Another factor was significant at the time I was attempting to enter the work force: I am a woman. In the United States there were men’s colleges; their faculties were almost entirely male. There were coeducational schools; their faculties were predominantly, often overwhelmingly, male. And there were women’s colleges; their faculties were mixed in differing proportions. The job prospects of a woman were not bright. That situation gradually improved, but by then I was bound to a geographic location by family connections and responsibilities, and I was not “modern” enough to consider setting up a second home and commuting between the two.

The demographic factor continues to affect the employment situation while gender has declined as an issue. There is one more aspect of my story which I hope is archaic, but which I must mention. That is mentoring. Once I reached graduate school, I had none. In the doctoral program, my main contact was one interview each semester with a member of the joint degree committee. It lasted possibly as much as five minutes; at that time my registration forms received the necessary signature. That was all. When my dissertation topic was approved, it was apparent that no one either in Union Seminary or on the joint committee was an appropriate advisor, and I was sent to ask a medieval philosopher at Columbia if he would take me on. He agreed. I had already audited one of his courses, and I audited a second, but aside from that my only other contact with him was that I went to see him as I prepared to leave New York to begin teaching. I asked whether he wanted to see my writing chapter by chapter or all at once. He said all at once. Several years later I mailed him the completed dissertation. I guess he read it, and it got passed on to the other committee members. One of them suggested a revision to one paragraph. That is the extent of my mentoring as a graduate student. I never tried to publish my dissertation or even to coax an article out of it. To be honest, I don't think I even knew that people did that! I had no knowledge of academic societies; I had little knowledge and felt less support regarding job searches. And then I came to Canada where I knew no one besides that engineer, and had no academic contacts at all. That is another of the winds that brought me where I am.

All of you have adjusted your sails to the winds of change that are so strong today. You have made changes, you are considering changes. Some of you in university positions are probably working to the point of exhaustion, and you may wonder what would it be like to be an independent scholar. Others, on the margins and wondering what to do to get in, may fear the fate of the independent scholar. Some of you have moved into administration, some are in the pastorate, some are working in unrelated areas, yet trying to pursue interests and use expertise in religious history. What might it mean to identify yourself as an independent scholar? And perhaps those who are retired might consider themselves promoted to independent scholarship! So let us look at independent scholars, the advantages they enjoy and the challenges they face.

Certainly life as an independent scholar has its rewards. How many of you have envied me my time to "do what you want"? I am privileged, and my experience is not the norm for independent scholars. Yet there are those

working part or even full-time outside of teaching who find time and energy to do research and writing that they were not able to do under the pressures of teaching and committee work. I also have the flexibility to do research when and where the need calls me, and I am blessed with a wonderfully supportive husband. I have been free to accept an occasional invitation to travel along an interesting side-channel, off the main course of my research, presenting my work at sometimes rather odd but always stimulating meetings. These are opportunities that most of you in academic positions could ill afford to pursue, and indeed they might do little to enhance the credentials you must forward from time to time to the appropriate committees, yet they have enriched my experience.

Independent scholars also have challenges. Those who are combining scholarship in one field with work in another have the obvious problems of distributing their time and energy, while any who seek self-support have difficulties which I can only acknowledge; I cannot claim to have found a solution. Besides the general challenge of seeking sponsorship for scholarly work, independent scholars may run into two specific difficulties. One is that some granting agencies only consider the applications of those with academic affiliation. The other is that some grants are made in lieu of salary, and if one has no salaried position from which one would be taking leave, it becomes very difficult to present a compelling grant proposal. These are both questions which NCIS has recognized as major issues.

There are other practical matters even if one discounts the financial challenges. Access to resources is a significant problem, and this is another area of concern tackled by NCIS. Scholars need borrowing privileges at libraries, and interlibrary loan service. A valid Victoria University staff library card is one of my precious possessions, but it's probably better if you don't ask how it is that I have it! Friends outside the field wonder whether I can't do most of my research on the internet now. You know the answer to that; if the types of primary sources that I use ever become available electronically, it will be long after I have finally shut down my computer! There is now fine bibliographic information available to anyone who has an internet connection, but a number of more specialized resources available on-line and in university library systems are password-protected and are unavailable or prohibitively expensive to unaffiliated individuals.

There are also internal challenges. For me, the problem of identity was daunting. In fact, I found that to be the most difficult thing about leaving the archives. I no longer had a peg on which to hang my identity, both how I

perceived myself and how others perceived me. There is often no explanatory line on my name-tag, nothing that provides strangers with an adequate label for me.

Related to this problem is the challenge of defining success. In a talk at the Western Association of Women Historians, independent scholar Karen Offen stated that the criteria of success have largely been defined by men, and few women have been able to meet them. Instead, they must develop their own criteria. She continued, "It's a question of saying: I'm not the crazy one, they are. It's a question of trusting your own gut, of achieving some sense of inner direction, of retaining some sense of the wholeness of life, of balance."<sup>2</sup> That is what all independent scholars, men as well as women, must do.

Connection with others in the field can be a scarce resource for independent scholars. I recognize that those of you who are teaching may lack colleagues who share your interests and concerns. Even if you are fortunate enough to find compatible colleagues, you have little time for intellectual intercourse with them. I am also fully aware from experience as well as hearsay that universities are not utopian communities. Nevertheless you have much more opportunity for connection than someone who has *no* colleagues. Even those students who are often the bane of your existence may sometimes stimulate you by their provocative questions or by the sheer magnitude of the task of getting them to comprehend your ideas!

Finally, there is the independent scholar's problem of mustering energy and using time. As much as I can, I try to spend my days as if I were working for pay, outside the home, but the world considers me to be at leisure, a potential doer of many good and useful things. When the kitchen is in chaos and the cupboard is bare, it is hard to justify sitting with a book or at the computer. No promotion and tenure committee is going to look at my CV. I have found it useful to take on small assignments because, for me, nothing stimulates action like a deadline. So I have submitted paper proposals and accept requests for pieces of writing, knowing that such activities deflect my time and energy from larger projects.

From time to time the big question intrudes, and now that I am officially of retirement age it raises its head more often: why bother to keep working? Then I remind myself of something Frederick Buechner has written, that God calls us to vocation, to the crossroads where "your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."<sup>3</sup> Admittedly, when I am

rejected the world does not seem very hungry, but mostly I persist in my “deep gladness.”

Now I offer a few words to you as individuals. First I would speak to those who are following non-traditional paths whether by choice or by circumstance, and to those who are considering doing so, or recognize that they may be forced to do so. I cannot tell you how to make a living, but I can reinforce what I hope you already know: as an independent scholar (whether or not you take on that title), the work you can do is valuable, and it will be valued on its own merits, and not by the pedigree of an academic position. Of that I am convinced.

For your information, I pass on the address of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars: <http://www.ncis.org>. Though it is based in the United States and some of its initiatives are focussed there, it has a number of Canadian members, and the organization will be holding a conference at Simon Fraser University in October 2002. The group is working on issues of real concern, and it deserves your attention.

Of course you already know to call on friends and acquaintances, but I wish to underscore this. Although I was doing research and writing at the time that the Canadian Learned met in Guelph, I didn't attend because I hadn't the slightest knowledge of how to become connected. Later I asked Phyllis Airhart, I believe, and became a member of the CSCH. Friends told me I should meet women's historian Alison Prentice, but it took me several years to screw up my courage and arrange to see her. I have been very grateful that I finally did, and I urge you to be more forward, less hesitant, than I have been. There are undoubtedly many knowledgeable people willing to be as helpful as Phyllis, Alison, Marguerite Van Die, and others have been to me, but they cannot know your needs unless you tell them.

Most of all, I encourage you to attend meetings of the CSCH and other relevant academic societies whenever you can, and to become involved in them. For those who are not in traditional academic positions, such groups offer an unparalleled opportunity to connect with people in the field, try out your ideas, hone your skills, and not incidentally add to your CVs. Some people regard society participation as a one-shot experience; they present a paper and then disappear. Stick around! There are many rewards.

As I mentioned, last November the HSSFC gave much attention to the impending need for university teachers, and people wondered how many of those who had not found academic positions fresh from graduate school might do so during this second chance. Yet all of us either know directly or

can easily sense how quickly a scholar can get out of touch or become invisible. Academic societies offer one way that those on the margins can keep in touch with what is going on, and can strengthen their credentials.

For those of you who are established in academia or anticipate being there soon, first of all I hope that you will be aware of the variety of opportunities available. You, like all the rest of us, are on a journey, and sometime you may wish to adjust your course. Second, when you are in positions of power or influence, I hope that you will remember that there are competent and dedicated people who may need information, or encouragement, or help in gaining access to resources. What are the practices of your university toward serious but unaffiliated scholars who need research material? And are there any ways that such people can gain some official affiliation with your institution? There are things you can do to help alter policy, and there are things you, personally, can offer to independent scholars.

I would especially encourage you, as you are able, to be alert for opportunities to mentor. To my delight I observe the mentoring in which some of our members engage, and I know that what I see is a small part of the whole. I told about my experience at length because it was – I trust – extreme. I recognize that it was from a distant era, yet I hope it might startle you enough to prod you to wonder whether even today there are people who could use your support or advice, or simply a friendly pair of ears.

To the CSCH as a whole, I would say that we have much to offer independent scholars, but I would not have this sound like “haves” giving largesse to “have-nots.” Let’s step back for a moment and look at our diversity. At an earlier meeting, when we were discussing the thorny issue of subscriptions to *Studies in Religion*, it was suggested that at some future time we might look at the diverse and shifting composition of our society. Someone who might have opened up that issue at a later meeting decided not to because it was potentially divisive. Today I say let us open it up, but in the context of a wider range of diversity.

When the issue came up, it did so because some judged *SR* to be irrelevant to those who identify themselves primarily as historians, rather than as church historians or as historians of religion. That is the first division, and I have deliberately exposed myself this afternoon as coming from the classic line of church historians. In fact, I confess with some trepidation that I have not had a straight “history” class since my first year at university! Although my teaching career was brief, I have taught courses in philosophy,



Greek and Roman Culture, Medieval and Renaissance Culture, Old Testament, New Testament, and a year-long course on Eastern religions; the only teaching I have done in my own field comprised twelve lectures covering all of church history in the large introductory course at WLU. How different that is from the experience of most of you!

But there are other differences, many more – overlapping – categories. Those who are primarily “historians” and those who are “church historians” or “historians of religion” would define “the field” differently, but let us set aside that ambiguity and look at another instance of diversity. We have within our membership people teaching directly within the field (whatever that is!), students in the field, pastors who retain active interest in the field, people who have taught in the field and retain an interest while they are engaged in another activity such as administration, people involved in another field but doing research that is somehow within the realm of interest of the CSCH, members of the “lost generation,” retired people who remain interested and active to various degrees, independent scholars, and probably some other categories that I’ve missed.

Then there’s the matter of age. We have students, recent graduates seeking appointment, genuinely young scholars, those in mid-career, established, mature scholars, grand patriarchs, and people like me who have occasionally been classed anachronistically as “young scholars” based on our limited experience in our new field. Theologically we are situated on a long continuum from conservative to liberal, and even beyond to those who have a purely intellectual interest in this area. Those who teach do so in various types of institutions: we teach secondary school students, undergraduates, graduates, and seminary students, and we teach in both publicly supported and private religious schools. This latter difference became acutely clear some years ago when the group found itself sharply divided on issues of academic freedom.

When I was telling you the story of my life, I hope that at some level of consciousness each of you had two experiences. I hope that there were at least a few things that resonated with your own experience. But I also deliberately stood before you as “the other.” My experience is unique, *and so is that of each one of you*. And it is only when we recognize and celebrate that diversity that we can become truly welcoming, welcoming of independent scholars and welcoming of everyone who may venture within our circle.

If we wish to be even more welcoming – for I do believe that we are already hospitable – how can we express this welcome? I have no ready-

made answers, but I do have an example. I frequently attend meetings of our counterpart in the United States, the American Society of Church History (ASCH); I value the stimulation of the meetings and also the connections that I have made and nourished there. One of the things that draws me to the ASCH is the women's breakfast: Women In Theology and Church History. (Newcomers are always invited to notice the acronym.) It's a no-reservations-necessary, over-priced continental breakfast in a hotel meeting-room. At some time during the hour and a half, all are invited to introduce themselves to the group. Who are you? What is your current project? Is there something that we might celebrate with you? Is there anything with which the women in this room might be able to help you? Women with institutional affiliations speak of them, but that's not the focus. I've seen new books, watched people make connections with strangers who share their interests, and heard sad tales of searches for employment and of academic promises not kept. The ASCH women's breakfast cannot simply be transplanted to the CSCH, but surely that approach, that attitude can be nurtured.

So I return to the question of what this society can offer to independent scholars. First of all, there is our welcome in all our diversity, a welcome that does not assume that we are all alike, but accepts "the other" as someone with whom to share and someone from whom to learn. By doing so, the society helps to nourish that scholar's identity as a scholar, which is of more value than you may recognize.

The American Historical Association offers letters of introduction which may be of value to unaffiliated scholars travelling to do research. The CSCH may not possess quite the prestige to make that a viable service! More realistically, our society affords an opportunity for the independent scholar to hear and to present papers. Through our constructive discussion and criticism, we can give the feedback that is in such short supply in the isolated world of an independent scholar. The society best serves independent scholars and indeed all its members by presenting programs of high quality, where methods are explored and resources are shared and everyone's work is given serious attention. The society is especially enriched when it includes presentations of established, mature scholars. While these can be traditional papers, they need not be, and I would encourage not just program chairs, but other members to consider diverse ways – panels, after-dinner speeches, or perhaps informal coffee hours, pub gatherings, or breakfasts – to facilitate the use of the human resources that are in our midst.

Furthermore, the society can serve as a matrix for the development of mentoring. Although mentoring is traditionally an individual activity, our society provides an environment in which such connections are made. For many of us, meetings are times to visit with far-away friends and colleagues, to catch up, and make plans, and seek help. All this is good, but it may lead us to ignore those who are not woven into the same network. It may not be obvious what an unaffiliated scholar has to offer. If we reach out to include them, we may give more than we know, and we may also be surprised by what we receive.

That brings me to one last thought: how do we in the CSCH benefit from the activity of independent scholars within our midst? We can be enlivened by their fresh papers and stimulating questions, and by the enthusiasm of those not burdened by academic drudgery. And occasionally the society may receive the services of an independent scholar who recognizes a debt to the society and knows that he . . . or she . . . has some of that precious commodity, time, to take on responsibilities on behalf of the society.

The Canadian Society of Church History has been of great value to me, and I bring you these thoughts in the hope that many more people can benefit as I have. Perhaps some of them will feel called to give back to the society a bit of what they have received.

I have felt welcomed . . . almost always . . . but let me end with an example that is less than positive. The very first CSCH meeting I attended was not at the Learned's, but was a joint meeting of the CSCH and the ASCH held in downtown Hamilton in the spring of 1987. Before the first session, people were milling around waiting for the hotel meeting-room to be opened, and I was feeling far from secure. A member of this society greeted me. I knew him from another group. In a most patronizing voice he asked, "And are you getting interested in church history?" I summoned up as much dignity as my fragile ego could muster, and said rather quietly, "I do have a doctorate in church history." I bit my tongue and did not continue, "Do you?" I *knew* he didn't. I was a woman, lay, not ordained, without an academic position. If I had heard the term "independent scholar," I certainly hadn't yet appropriated it. And I did not feel welcomed.

We can do better than that. We are a diverse group of scholars united by a common core of interests. Some of us have needed to make mighty adjustments to our sails. Let us help one another on the voyage.

***Endnotes***

1. Margaret DeLacy, *A History of NCIS* (revised 21 August 1999). Available [Online]: <http://www.ncis.org/history.htm> [April 2002].
2. Quoted in *The Independent Scholar* 15, 2 (Spring 2001): 13.
3. Fredrick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 95.

