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Please Note:

Papers by Elizabeth Elbourne, Thomas Evans, Gillis J. Harp, Karle Hele, Louise Johnston, Kevin Kee, and Michael Owen were not made available for publication.

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The Gospel of Success in Canada: Charles W. Gordon (Ralph Connor) as Exemplar

ROBERT A. KELLY

Scholars have long been interested in the ideas of success that drive Americans and have studied the literature that communicated these ideas and values extensively.¹ If we can trust the self-help literature they read, Americans in most of the nineteenth century agreed with figures such as Cotton Mather and Benjamin Franklin that success was a matter of character. If anything, low origins and lack of education were a help, for they forced the development of character and the habit of industry. Americans believed that character was developed through strenuous effort. Natural endowments did not matter, nor did an adverse origin. The successful were those who developed a character that featured the virtues of frugality, loyalty, industry, humility, and so on and so on. These virtues would be rewarded with success.

Among the most active success and self-help writers in the nineteenth century were Protestant ministers, especially Congregationalists, with Unitarians and Methodists, some Presbyterians and Baptists, and a few Episcopalians. Prime examples were William Makepeace Thayer, a Congregationalist; Russell Herman Conwell, a Baptist; and the most famous American success novelist of them all, Horatio Alger, Jr., a Unitarian. That Unitarians were active in success literature illustrates an important characteristic of the literature: it was not written by the conservatives of the time, but by the more progressive mainline Protestants. Among the lists of late nineteenth century clerical success novelists and tract writers were a number of clergy who were identified with the

social gospel movement. Perhaps the best known of these was Congregationalist pastor Charles Shelton of Topeka, Kansas, whose *In His Steps* (1896), has sold millions of copies and is still in circulation.

The purpose of this essay is to study whether or not equivalent authors in Canada put forward similar ideas about what is necessary to be a successful person. Though Canadian historians have apparently been less interested in the Canadian ethos of success than American historians have been in the American success ethic, there are reasons to believe that there are similarities, especially between the United States and Anglophone Canada. Both of these cultures derived from the values of the English Reformation and Enlightenment and both were affected by the evangelical revivals of the eighteenth century. Several studies have shown that the success idea in England's Puritan and Enlightenment colonies is little different from that in the mother country,² so we might assume that Canadian visions of success are similar to American. At least two examples of Canadian success tracts develop the same themes as their American counterparts of the same eras (1920s and 1970s).³

To test the hypothesis that Canadian clerical writers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were presenting ideas of success similar to the American clerical writers of that time, this essay will examine the novels of Charles W. Gordon who wrote under the pen name of Ralph Connor. I have selected Gordon/Connor for two reasons. First, Charles Gordon fits the profile of equivalent American authors almost exactly, being a late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century Presbyterian clergyman committed to the social gospel. Second, Ralph Connor was one of Canada's most popular novelists of the pre-World War I era. His novels of that period were best sellers in Canada and Connor was often the Canadian novelist most widely read outside of Canada.

Gordon was born in Glengarry County, Canada West, in 1860. In 1870 his family moved to Oxford County. In 1883 he graduated from the University of Toronto and in 1887 from Knox College. He was ordained in 1890 and served a variety of mining, lumber, and railroad camps centred on Banff from 1890-1893. Beginning in 1894 he served as pastor of St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg. Under his leadership the church grew to a thousand members and Gordon participated in community life as a moderate progressive. During the first part of World War I he served as a chaplain at the front and after 1916 spoke widely in Canada to encourage support for the war effort and in the United States to encourage

that country to enter the war. Gordon was involved in the Winnipeg General Strike and its aftermath and was moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in 1921-22. He was a strong advocate of church union and represented the United Church at the 1927 World Conference of Faith and Order. Even in the last decade of his life he spoke out against fascism and called on Canadians to institute national systems of social services. He died in 1937.⁴

In order to do this preliminary study I have read seven of the Ralph Connor novels: *Black Rock* (the first Ralph Connor novel, 1898), *The Sky Pilot* (1899), *The Man from Glengarry* (1901), *The Doctor* (1906), *The Foreigner* (1909, British edition: *The Settler*), *Corporal Cameron* (1912), and *To Him That Hath* (1921).⁵ My conclusion after reading these novels is that Gordon's views on success are very similar to his American counterparts, though not exactly identical. A number of themes common to success novels from the United States appear in the Connor novels, and in many cases there are no real differences. At several points, though, the Connor novels develop themes in ways that reflect differences between the United States and Anglophone Canadian culture.

The most basic of the themes shared is the fundamental assumption that success is a matter of personal character and that the person with a strong, virtuous character will be more successful than the person of weak character. This assumption forms the bedrock of all seven novels and each novel is something of a long illustration of the point.

Black Rock is the story of the reform and renewal of a mining and lumbering community in the Selkirk Mountains. The local Presbyterian minister and his allies wage a long and eventually successful campaign against demon rum and bring both sobriety and culture to the miners and loggers of Black Rock. There is a crisis created by the two weak characters of the local saloon owner and doctor. Because of the strength of character of the minister and Mrs. Mavor, the doctor gives up drink and the saloon is converted to a coffee house. The novel illustrates the point made in the preface: "The men of the book are still there in the mines and lumber camps of the mountains, fighting out that eternal fight for manhood, strong, clean, God-conquered."⁶ If this particular novel reads like a temperance or evangelistic tract, it is because the original purpose of the short stories on which it was based was to encourage Presbyterians in the East to give money in support of missions in the West. Nonetheless, when shaped into a novel, the stories of *Black Rock* found a ready audience

outside of the original readership.

An important aspect of the strong character – weak character motif is the contrast between the virtue of industry and the vice of sloth. Just like the hero of a Horatio Alger novel, the hero of a Ralph Connor novel is always industrious and those characters whose weakness leads to the crisis of the novel are always slothful. Interestingly, they often mix high intelligence with laziness or lack of direction.

An example of such a weak character is Tony Perrotte in *To Him That Hath*. Tony's moral character is contrasted with the strong, virtuous character of the novel's hero, Jack Maitland, throughout the book. As a child, Tony's sister had been taken out of school so that he could continue, but he had shown no appreciation for her act of sacrifice. On the contrary, Tony tended to take advantage of his sister's love whenever possible. During the Great War both Tony and Jack had committed deeds of great heroism, each saving the other's life on separate occasions. But on returning from the war and each being given jobs by Jack's father, Jack succeeded and prospered and became highly respected by both labour and management while Tony failed and wandered off to Toronto to live a dissolute life. Tony returned just in time to join the workers in a general strike and his weakness of character, combined with the weakness of character of one of the factory owners, lead to the violence which resulted in his own sister being shot. What were Tony's primary character flaws? He had a tendency toward arrogance, he could not stick with a project to completion, and he would rather talk than work.

Perhaps it is not incidental to Tony's weak character that his mother is Irish. In the Ralph Connor novels the Irish do not come off looking very well. Of course, they are all Catholic, which raises at least a minor question. Most of them are a bit too fond of the bottle and some of them even join together and plot to undo the success of various temperance and betterment efforts. Irish women tend to be empty-headed and vain. Very few of the Irish characters have the requisite moral character for success, though a few in the end have a conversion which leads to a change of life.

If the Irish are of questionable character in the Connor novels, immigrants who don't speak English are a serious problem. *The Foreigner* focuses on the life of the Eastern European immigrant community in Winnipeg. Gordon refers to these people as "Galicians," which the novel notes is the way that Anglo Winnipeggers referred to anyone of Slavic origin. The actual characters in the novel appear to be Ukrainians, though

some might be Poles who actually emigrated from Galicia. Whatever their origin, their living conditions are recorded as abominable and Anglophone Winnipeg pays little attention to them except for the few Christian activists who provide some measure of health care and counsel. Interestingly, in *The Foreigner* the evil landlords who oppress the immigrants are always other “Galicians,” never Anglos.

The situation of the immigrants in *The Foreigner* is part caused by social forces and part by the weak character of the immigrants themselves. Most are fairly stupid (except for those few of noble birth) and all drink like fish. After drinking for awhile, they then turn to fighting, especially at weddings. When they get around to working, they work at the lowest and meanest jobs available. The goal of the reformers – and these characters seem to speak for Gordon himself – is to turn the new immigrants into good Canadians, which clearly means into good English Protestants, and some do make that transition while working in mine or mill. If they can’t be turned into English Protestants, then the next best is French-Canadian Catholics.

This negative view of immigrants is quite similar to views expressed by American success novelists of the same era. The guides to success of the era, and even down into the 1920s, were written not only by, but also for the English Protestant native-born and show more than a little prejudice against immigrants. For example, Richard Weiss quotes success writer Bolton Hall who had no qualms about calling immigrants “the Dagos and Huns and Kikes.”⁷ Many other Americans saw immigrants as one of the biggest threats to traditional definitions of and opportunities for success. The images of success presented to Americans in the nineteenth and into the early-twentieth century were white, English Protestant, middle-class, and nativist. In this, Gordon’s views are similar. They are certainly more moderate than some⁸ in that immigrants in the Ralph Connor novels have the opportunity to become Canadian, but the prejudice against immigrants is still present and being Canadian is defined by British Protestantism.

In spite of Gordon’s pride that the North West Mounted Police treated aboriginal peoples much better than the United States Cavalry,⁹ his view of native Canadians is even more severe than his view of immigrants. In *The Foreigner* one significant character is Mack Mackenzie, half Scottish and half native. About Mack, Gordon says on one occasion, “His enthusiasm . . . even waked old Mackenzie out of his aboriginal lethargy.”¹⁰ In *Corporal Cameron* aboriginal people are described as

utterly unable to refrain from whiskey: “The Stonies had no doubt as to his meaning. Their hearts were filled with black rage against the unscrupulous trader, but their insane thirst for the ‘fire-water’ swept from their minds every other consideration but that of determination to gratify this mad lust.”¹¹

Success writers in the United States also were often anti-Catholic. Again, Gordon shares this attitude, but tempered by the existence of Quebec as part of Canada. The Connor novels have a definite hierarchy of Catholic priesthood. At the bottom are the priests who have come from Eastern Europe who are all out to fleece the flock as thoroughly as possible. In the middle are the Irish priests, who don’t work as hard as they ought to, but still are not out to con the people. At the top are the French-Canadian priests who work hard to care for the spiritual and material welfare of their people. Being an English Protestant is definitely the best way of being Canadian, but short of that, if you want to remain Catholic make sure that your priest is from Quebec.

In *The Foreigner* the young hero must be taken out of the immigrant community in Winnipeg to the Saskatchewan frontier in order to learn the lessons of character that will help him be successful. Even on the frontier there is a community of “poor, ignorant Galicians” that calls him away from his mission. Just like so many of Horatio Alger’s heroes, young Kalman has had to grow up poor for reasons beyond his control. His parents were noble revolutionaries – thus enabling Kalman both to have a noble birth and be committed to parliamentary democracy! – but his mother was killed because the revolutionary movement was betrayed by Rosenblatt, the villain of the novel, and his father gave him over to a poor, dumb “Galician” woman to care for. He becomes friends with several reform minded Anglos who decide to send him off to live on a ranch. There he becomes friends with the local Presbyterian missionary to the “Galicians” who functions as preacher, school master and doctor, and who helps Kalman in his quest for virtue. In the end Kalman becomes what everyone has hoped: a good English Protestant who discovers and then manages a thriving coal mine which employs the “Galicians,” teaches them how to be Canadians, and contributes to the economic and cultural growth of the West.

It is in Gordon’s hopes for Western Canada that we see one distinction between him and his American counterparts. Both have a sense of what is called in the United States manifest destiny. Whereas the

American sense of manifest destiny is that the United States is destined to cover the continent from Atlantic to Pacific with the benefits of democracy and capitalism, Gordon's sense of manifest destiny is connected with the place of Western Canada in the whole British Empire. The preface to *The Foreigner* says it most clearly:

In Western Canada there is seen today that most fascinating of all human phenomena, the making of a nation. Out of breeds diverse in tradition, in ideals, in speech, and in manner of life, Saxon and Slav, Teuton, Celt and Gaul, one people is being made. The blood strains of great races will mingle in the blood of a race greater than the greatest of them all.

It would be our wisdom to grip these peoples to us with living hooks of justice and charity till all lines of national cleavage disappear, and in the Entity of our Canadian national life, and in the unity of our world-wide Empire, we fuse into a people whose strength will endure the slow shock of time for the honour of our name, for the good of mankind, and for the glory of Almighty God.¹²

Charles W. Gordon was an active part of the social gospel movement in Winnipeg and as a novelist is not afraid to take on the social issues of the day. In *The Foreigner* he presents a story which takes up the plight of the immigrant community in Winnipeg. In *To Him That Hath* the crisis of the story is a general strike which has been brought on by a combination of certain owners ignoring the conditions of their workers and outside agitators. In these stories Gordon discusses some of the structural changes that need to occur. Here Gordon is a bit more cognizant of social and structural issues than most of his American counterparts. In the end, though, as in similar American novels, social problems are solved by the individual action of persons of virtuous character. The immigrants are bettered when Kalman opens a mine foils the attempts of the evil Rosenblatt to take it away. The mine then provides employment and that, combined with the education and religion provided by the Presbyterian missionary Brown, leads to the uplifting of the community. The strike is settled when Jack Maitland and Malcolm McNish sit down and hash out a solution acceptable to both sides. In both cases, individuals of virtuous character solves the problem. The structures are left pretty well intact.

Nonetheless, it is the case that Gordon is somewhat less individualistic than his American counterparts. For example, in the preface to *The Sky*

Pilot he says, "The measure of a man's power to help his brother is the measure of the love in the heart of him and of the faith that he has that at last the good will win. With this love that seeks not its own and this faith that grips the heart of things, he goes out to meet many fortunes, but not that of defeat."¹³ Later, in the course of the story, the hero, a Presbyterian missionary, confronts one of the characters:

"Well," I said, rather weakly, "a man ought to look after himself."

"Yes! - and his brother a little." Then he added: "What have any of you done to help him? The Duke could have pulled him up a year ago if he had been willing to deny himself a little, and so with all of you. You do just what pleases you regardless of any other, and so you help one another down."

I could not find anything just then to say, though afterwards many things came to me . . . This was certainly a new doctrine for the West; an uncomfortable doctrine to practice, interfering seriously with personal liberty, but in the *Pilot's* way of viewing things difficult to escape. There would be no end to one's responsibility. I refused to think it out.¹⁴

Another characteristic which Gordon shares with American clerical success writers of the character-ethic school is a certain ambiguity about the subject of success itself. Certainly these novels on both sides of the border were written to inspire young people to pursue those virtues which would lead to success. And failure was treated with contempt. For example, in *Corporal Cameron*, Cameron is listening to a sermon on the parable of the talents:

Cameron's vagrant mind, suddenly recalled, responded with a quick assent. Opportunity? Endowment? Yes, surely. His mind flashed back over the years of his education . . . How little he had made of them! Others had turned them into the gold of success . . .

"One was a failure, a dead, flat failure." continued the preacher. "Not so much a wicked man, no murderer, no drunkard, no gambler, but a miserable failure. Poor fellow! At the end of his life a wretched bankrupt, losing even his original endowment. How would you like to come home after ten, twenty, thirty years of experiment with life and confess to your father that you were dead broke and no good?"¹⁵

But which is most important, the virtues or the success? No one could deny that there were many who were quite wealthy who pursued their success not through a virtuous character but through double-dealing, shady practices, and monopoly. Did virtue always lead to success? Experience in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century said that it did not always, and often led to a much more modest success than did the practices of the great railway tycoons, stock market moguls and oil barons. Yet Charles Gordon and all of the other clerical success novelists on both sides of the border held out against experience on this point. For them virtue was its own reward, of course, but the idea that somehow virtue might go unrewarded was just unthinkable. It might take time and it might involve a period of privation, but virtue would be rewarded at some point with success in the world. While one needed to adapt to one's surroundings, there was simply no need to adopt shady practices in order to get ahead. Eventually those who failed to live lives of virtue would lose their temporary wealth while those of strong character would live out their lives comfortably middle or upper-middle class.

These few examples do show several of the ways in which the novels written by the Rev. Charles Gordon under the name Ralph Connor share themes and assumptions with equivalent novelists in the United States and show how Gordon's Anglo-Canadian context provided differences in nuance from his Anglo-American counterparts. At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, those who promoted the classic Protestant ethic of virtuous character and hard work in both Canada and the United States promoted the same doctrines of success. In particular, even the advocates of a progressive, social gospel Anglo-Protestantism on both sides of the border held to the classic model of character and a virtue ethic which had been developed in the English Reformation and Enlightenment.

This is important, it seems to me, for several reasons. Firstly, what philosopher Charles Taylor might call a "debased form" of the English Protestant character ethic still holds significant power in Canadian culture as it does in American culture. Several, usually right-wing, parties have attached themselves to this power in order to sell their programs to the public in recent elections on national and provincial levels. Belief in the social efficacy of individual character and effort persist even in the face of systemic and technological unemployment. These issues also appear in our debates over the similarities and differences between the United States and

Canada. If we are to have reasoned discussions on these issues and others, it is essential that we understand the history of the ideas and values behind our present beliefs.

Secondly, particularly for historians of theology and ethics there is an interesting tension that runs through the history of mainline Protestantism and shows itself in the success theories of American and, if this paper is correct, Canadian English Protestants. How does one hold together a belief in *sola gratia* and the simultaneous belief that hard work and virtue will be rewarded with temporal success? This question is perhaps not so sharp for the Wesleyan and Baptist traditions, but it is particularly sharp for Reformed traditions such as Puritanism / Congregationalism and Presbyterianism who must hold together belief in divine predestination with the belief that you are what you make of yourself. As a Lutheran theologian this question is especially interesting, because part of my task is to figure out how we Lutherans, whose ancestors came to this continent as “Foreign Protestants,” as some of those immigrants who were so problematic for the success writers of the late-nineteenth century, fit into this culture with its assumptions that sound so much like late-medieval doctrines of justification.

Endnotes

1. Compare, e.g., Peter Baida, *Poor Richard's Legacy: American Business Values from Benjamin Franklin to Donald Trump* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1990); Rex Burns, *Success in America: The Yeoman Dream and the Industrial Revolution* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976); Richard M. Huber, *The American Idea of Success* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971); Moses Rischin, ed., *The American Gospel of Success: Individualism and Beyond* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965); Richard Weiss, *The American Myth of Success: From Horatio Alger to Norman Vincent Peale* (New York: Basic Books, 1969); and Irvin G. Wyllie, *The Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches* (New York: The Free Press, 1954).
2. For example, see Louis B. Wright, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1935).
3. William E. Blatz, *The Habit of Success, A 1929 Edith Butler Pool Lecture* (Chicago: The Visiting Nurse Association of Chicago, 1930); and Jack H. McQuaig, *Challenge Yourself and Live* (Toronto: Hunter Carlyle

Publishing, 1973).

4. John Lennox, *Charles W. Gordon ("Ralph Connor") and His Works* (Toronto: ECW Press, n.d.), 1-3.
5. Charles Gordon (Ralph Connor), *Black Rock: A Tale of the Selkirks* (Toronto: Westminster Co., Ltd., 1898; American edition, New York: Grosset & Dunlap); *The Sky Pilot: A Tale of the Foothills* (Toronto: The Westminster Co., Ltd., 1899); *The Man from Glengarry* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1901); *The Doctor: A Tale of the Rockies* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906); *The Foreigner: A Tale of Saskatchewan* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1909; American edition, New York: George H. Doran Company; British edition, *The Settler: A Tale of Saskatchewan* [London: Hodder and Stoughton]); *Corporal Cameron of the North West Mounted Police: A Tale of the MacLeod Trail* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton; George H. Doran Co., 1912); and *To Him That Hath: A Novel of the West of Today* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1921).
6. *Black Rock*, v. The preface is signed C.W.G.
7. Bolton Hall, *Thrift* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1916), 6-7; cited in Weiss, *American Myth*, 132.
8. Compare J. S. Woodsworth's attitude toward immigrants.
9. See *Corporal Cameron*, 386-398.
10. *The Foreigner*, 288.
11. *Corporal Cameron*, 354.
12. *The Foreigner*, 5. This preface is also signed C.W.G.
13. *The Sky Pilot*, 7.
14. *The Sky Pilot*, 80-81.
15. *Corporal Cameron*, 272.

The Church as Employer: Ideology and Ecclesial Practice during Labour Conflict

OSCAR COLE-ARNAL

Christian denominations within twentieth-century Canadian history, and in the United States, have produced numerous statements on social justice. Indeed, some of these reflect rather radical traditions. As well, one can readily find books which contain the more prominent of these documents, often with thoughtful commentary and analysis. By way of one example, Gregory Baum, Canada's most noted Catholic theologian, has done significant work through his commentaries on social Catholic encyclicals and justice promulgations by Canadian and Québec bishops.¹ These statements provide an invaluable resource for analyzing where particular Christian denominations stand officially in terms of rhetoric and public principles. However, they by no means provide sufficient data on how effectively or passionately these churches put principle into practice.

Of course, there are different ways to get at this issue of comparing stated values and institutional practice, and this paper proposes to look at two case studies in Canadian history (one Protestant and one Roman Catholic) around the question of how well the church acts as an employer in relation to its stated justice values. Although there is no attempt to be exhaustive here, I will suggest that the weight which churches give to their stated principles can be assessed most clearly by how well they practice these convictions.

Case 1: Social Gospel Values and the Toronto Printers' Strike (1921)

Towards the end of the Great War the two major social gospel churches promulgated statements with clear, even radical, social justice dimensions. This was especially true with respect to what has been called "the Methodist statement" of 1918. The church's General Conference had not met since the beginning of the war, and although its radicals, in the persons of the William Ivens and Salem Bland, had suffered employment setbacks, Methodist leftists and left-leaning progressives remained a formidable force within the church. This strength faced a national test at the upcoming General Conference to be held in Hamilton, Ontario. In the Fall of 1918 the committees of Social Service and Evangelism and the Church in Relation to the War and Patriotism met to consider the documentation it would propose to the Conference. The broader body, the General Board of Social Service and Evangelism produced a statement for the Conference which social gospel historian Richard Allen describes as a "programme . . . further to the left than that of any party of consequence before the emergence of the CCF in 1933."²

The statement called for an end to "Special Privilege . . . not based on useful service to the community." Further, it demanded "that forms of industrial organization should be developed which call labour to a voice in the management and a share in the profits . . . All forms of autocratic organization of business should be discouraged." The statement declared that it was "un-Christian to accept profits when labourers do not receive a living wage, or when capital receives disproportionate returns as compared with labour." Government was expected to enact "legislation which shall secure to labour a fair wage adequate to a proper standard of living," and nationalizations of natural resources were advocated.³ These concerns demanded an alliance with the workers' movement in the name of the gospel: "As followers of the Carpenter of Nazareth, we sympathetically seek to understand the problems of life as they confront the claims of labour in Canada, and . . . find in them allies in the struggle, to realize the ends of fair play, humanity and brotherhood [sic]."⁴

However, what came to be called "the resolution of the Methodist General Conference" was not this document but rather the more radical statement drafted by the Army and Navy Board of the church. Capitalism fell under its judgment with the words "the present economic system stands revealed as one of the roots of war." The statement called for a

system based on “the undying ethics of Jesus,” demanding nothing less than a “transference of the whole economic life from a basis of competition and profits to one of co-operation and service.”⁵ In spite of much debate on the Conference floor, the opposition being led by Methodist business leader S.R. Parsons of the Canadian Manufacturers’ Association, the statement passed with only minimal modifications. With the conclusion of the Conference came the challenge as to how the Methodists would embody these words.

One such test emerged with the Toronto Printers’ Strike of 1921. Although the strike by the rather conservative International Typographical Union of America was continent-wide, it had a direct effect on the social gospel Methodists in Toronto through their official firm the Methodist Book and Publishing Company. The union was militating for a forty-four hour week with no drop in pay, a difficult program to achieve in the recession times of 1921. Negotiations deadlocked, and the strike began on 1 June 1921. The Methodist firm was drawn into negotiations led by Dr. S.W. Fallis, the head of the Book and Publishing Department. Given the Methodist commitment to the social gospel, the more religious working class leaders hoped that church publishing firms would support the union demands. In the 3 June 1921 issue of the *Industrial Banner*, Methodist labour chief James Simpson had this to say:

When they [religious publishing firms] enter the commercial world to compete with modern capitalism they must expect to be involved in some rather trying situations, situations which will prove the testing time. They will be called upon to either accept the rules of the competitive capitalist game, which their conferences, synods and assemblies condemn, or project their Christian principles into their business.⁶

However, the employers including Fallis began to utilize strikebreakers to keep the presses rolling. As well, there was a church committee behind Fallis which included only one progressive, W.B. Creighton, the editor of the Methodist *Christian Guardian*. Yet even he was adamant that the necessity of publishing church periodicals took precedence over honouring a work stoppage, a position that provided a contrast with his earlier stand on the Winnipeg Strike. To be sure, Dr. Fallis lived under the pressure of book and subscription orders, and some of the more progres-

sive clergy, who had placed such orders, accused Fallis of unjustly blaming the Printers' Strike as a cover for standard mercenary concerns.⁷ As well, union leader and Methodist James Simpson challenged the church to live up to its 1918 statement:

We wish to remind you that the declaration made by the General Conference in Hamilton, 1918, in which the Church was committed to the principle of co-operation for service instead of competition for profit, and in which industrial democracy was regarded as necessary to enjoy the full benefits of political democracy, warranted the workers generally in believing that our Church would lead the way for a better social and economic order. We, therefore, urge the Toronto Conference to take the necessary steps to remove the stigma which has been placed upon all its members by having the commercial ambitions of the publishing department of the Church subordinated to the higher objectives so clearly set forth at the last General Conference . . . Think of this in the light of the fact that Rev. Mr. Fallis has committed the Church to the Open Shop policy, which denies every elementary right of the workers to a share in the control of industry.⁸

Initially the Rev. Ernest Thomas, one of the architects of the Methodist Statement of 1918, supported Fallis' contention that the issue was survival of the publishing industry and not an assault on the fundamental principles of trade unionism, but as Rev. Fallis became more publicly intransigent and increasingly unwilling to negotiate, Thomas claimed sadly that the employers' campaign constituted a threat "to issues of unionism, collective bargaining and working conditions."⁹ In spite of this shift it became clear that the Department of Evangelism and Social Service (DESS) under the Rev. T.A. Moore, as well as its activist Ernest Thomas, vacillated in trying to maintain a mediating position even in the face of Rev. Fallis' letter in support of the open shop. Indeed, the DESS personnel expressed more suspicion toward the union than toward Dr. Fallis. In fact, Thomas sought to assure his boss T.A. Moore of his moderation: "Fallis now knows that my aim is not an alliance with Unions but an alliance with some bodies of employers which are out to promote industrial harmony in the trade . . . Fallis' strong opposition certainly tended to throw excessive emphasis on our cordiality with organized labor."¹⁰ Ultimately the DESS exonerated the Methodist Publishing House and its directors in a press release which, in part, read as follows:

There is no occasion here to discuss the matter in dispute with the printers. The contention of the publishers in the matter do [sic] not in any way conflict with the principles set forth by the General Conference. The declaration demanded the right to organize and to collective bargaining and to a voice in the determination of conditions of work. All this is granted without debate. Anyone may see, all over the Book Room, notices to the employees signed by the Book Steward not only recognizing the union but urging the men to attend and work through the union.

The present dispute is solely one as to whether a proposed wage and time schedule is practicable, not as regards relation of wages to profits, but as regards the continuance of the industry. In such a matter the church has no voice . . . [T]he church may well assert principles which should be guarded in industrial life for the protection of spiritual interests; but this is entirely different from pronouncing on the technical points involved in a specific dispute over wages so long as those wages are above the line allowing of efficient human life.¹¹

That the forty-four week was not mentioned, that Rev. Fallis undertook to lead the city-wide employers' anti-union campaign and that the DESS asserted a neutrality that its own words belied seemed to have no effect on Mssrs. Thomas and Moore in their judgments on the issue. Class prejudice blinded them to such illusions while their actions undermined the glowing words of the Methodist Statement promulgated less than three years earlier. Under fire the social gospel progressives opted for the status quo by hiding behind pious generalities. The church in Conference closed the debate with a whimper, hiding behind a disclaimer of non-competence in these matters. Only in 1944 was the issue settled when the United Church of Canada in General Council voted a union shop for its publishing house.¹²

Case 2: The Pavillon St-Dominique Strike in Québec (1966-1974)

The Pavillon St-Dominique was a retirement home run by the Dominican Sisters of the Trinity mostly for priests, religious and aging Catholic notables with significant economic resources. Difficulties began in the winter of 1966 with the twenty-seven lay workers employed at the Pavillon along with the sisters. In June of that same year these lay employees sought to form a union under the rubrics of the Commission des

Relations de Travail. Though employer resistance was formidable, the CRT granted accreditation on August 30. In spite of further efforts to have this CRT decision rescinded the accreditation was upheld. From 1967 to 1970 the Pavillon fought a constant fight for union decertification, which fight they won on 17 August 1970.¹³

For the second time the process of certification was taken up by the lay work force. Again these employees were able to organize a majority of workers in favour of unionization, and once again they were certified, this time on 31 March 1971. The union was calling for an end to discriminatory job classification, a curtailment of the practice of assigning to religious tasks entrusted to unionized workers and a specified wage increase. Negotiations went nowhere so the new union called a strike on 19 March 1972.¹⁴

In the midst of this long conflict where had the church stood officially in the matter of labour concerns? Certainly the francophone Québec episcopate, through the social doctrine of the church, had supported confessional unions even before the birth of the Confédération des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada (CTCC) in 1921 and was inclined to favour its deconfessionalized successor the Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux (CSN) created in 1960. To be sure, episcopal endorsement followed more conservative social Catholic lines until the events of the Quiet revolution and Vatican II, but with this epoch the bishops' support of the unions took decided leftward turns. In general, these more progressive opinions emerged with the Dumont Report, published in 1972 and found further public expression in official statements by the Canadian bishops in general and by the Québec bishops in particular.¹⁵

For example, in its Labour Day message of 1956 the Canadian Catholic bishops had this to say: "Man [sic] has a natural right to form unions; without them he [sic] cannot, in the economic order of our times, obtain justice. The Canadian bishops have consistently encouraged workers to join unions and to participate actively in them." This position was expanded upon in 1961 with these words:

In our nation, even if trade unionism is largely developed, we must still affirm that our society has not fully accepted the trade union and that a far too great number of workers and farmers are still unorganized. This state of affairs hurts the direct action of the trade unions and above all, prohibits them from playing the role which accrues to

them in the face of the complex and considerable problems which our economic society poses.¹⁶

Finally, in 1972, while the Pavillon Dominique strike was in effect, the bishops addressed the issue of workers in Catholic institutions: "The rights of Church personnel, whatever their station, should be reviewed periodically so as to ensure that they receive just salaries, fair working conditions and security on retirement."¹⁷

Much like the social gossippers before them the Catholic establishment vacillated in the face of a union conflict within its own institutional ranks. Much like Rev. Fallis the Dominican religious in charge of the Pavillon Dominique sought to crush the union of its lay workers. Meanwhile Québec City's Archbishop Maurice Cardinal Roy named Father Gérard Dion as mediator on 29 May 1972. When negotiations stalled the Archbishop assigned a committee to the task (4 April 1973). After a brief effort to resolve the dispute the employers refused to meet with the union. In the midst of this a number of trade unionists occupied the office of Cardinal Roy for thirty-three days (November-December, 1973). For his part, the cardinal sought to receive permission from the Congregation of Religious in Rome to move toward a solution. He suggested binding arbitration.¹⁸

In the midst of this conflict Québec's growing number of progressive Catholics spoke out passionately in favour of the union. The Mouvement Mondial des Travailleurs Chrétiens (MMTC) supported the strikers as did Québec's own working class Catholic Action movements. Father Jacques Racine chastised publicly the Pavillon's director for refusing justice to the unionized workers and for manipulating diocesan organisms to escape Cardinal Roy's call for arbitration in good faith. Even more critical of the religious "patronat" were a number of the Québec church's open proponents of liberation theology. Three nuns put it this way in a joint public letter: "In conclusion, the Pavillon St-Dominique conflict shows a division in the midst of a monolithic Catholic bloc. Two churches find themselves face to face: a church of the majority, official, institutional, complicitous with the bosses by its silence and a minority church, marginalized and dismissed, which fights in the struggle for justice with the workers. Such a conflict leads us to offer a critique on our options in the light of the gospel." The Capuchin worker-priest Benoît Fortin promoted similar views. "During the Pavillon St-Dominique conflict, there was a solidarity

of the bosses,” he asserted. “The people of the Church became bosses who protected themselves” even to the point of locking out the union. Sadly, he concludes that “the religious are on the side of the poor in theory, in sermons, in spiritual readings, but they do not wish to anchor their feet among them . . . The world of church people has become powerful, it possesses too much. It witnesses too little of the liberty of God’s children. It has become a conservative force in the service of inertia and of our current capitalist system.”¹⁹

Cardinal Roy, though he seemed inclined to support the strikers, was also irked with Catholic leftist partisans of the union. In his communiqué of 21 March 1974 he spoke of “those Christians” who considered “worker struggles as one of the places where social justice ought to be built.” “For them,” he said, “the present conflict has acquired symbolic value.” Yet the cardinal hastened to add: “The disputing movements and expressions of solidarity, which demonstrate a new social conscience among many Christians, do not always facilitate a road for peaceful negotiations.” Further, Msgr. Roy underscored how difficult and delicate these negotiations were, especially in the face of the militancy of the union alliance of 1972 called the Common Front and “the financial difficulties” experienced by the Dominicans who operated the Pavillon Dominique. Next he expressed that Rome refused to intervene even to the point of giving special powers to the archbishop beyond those already intrinsic to his “episcopal jurisdiction.” Very clearly the refusal of Pavillon Dominique’s leadership to negotiate left Msgr. Roy deeply frustrated. He reaffirmed his inability to resolve the conflict as exceedingly sad, yet he concluded his words with a strong social Catholic endorsement of workers’ movements: “I have affirmed already and repeatedly that trade unionism is a necessity in our modern world. I have even deplored with frequency that trade unionism has not yet attained the entirety of Québec’s wage-earners.”²⁰

Unlike the Methodist Church’s position on the Printers’ Strike with respect to its own publishing firm, the Québec Catholic hierarchy in the person of Maurice Roy took a stronger stand toward the new union at the Pavillon Saint-Dominique. His obvious sympathies, however, did not prevent him from staking out a position between the two contending parties, and he was obviously displeased with those Catholic militants who endorsed the strikers unequivocally. Typical of ecclesiastical leaders, he adopted a mediating position geared more toward institutional peace than

toward a firm position on the side of a handful of vulnerable workers employed by a church body. In this respect the Pavillon Saint-Dominique conflict remains comparable to the issue of the Printers' Strike some fifty years before.

These two brief case studies here described seem to me to offer a research path to church historians that is rarely explored, namely the relationship between official ecclesiastical statements and how they are put into practice, especially in the arena of social issues. In short, how does the church fare in the tension between words and deeds? Perhaps too much credence is given to high-sounding words without serious research into matters of class, institutional survival and the sociopolitical infrastructure of the church politics that promulgates positions while at the same time often ignoring them in the rough and tumble of life. To be sure, this brief study does not claim to be exhaustive or conclusive, but it is my hope that it might be one small part of a research agenda that gives more attention to these matters.

Endnotes

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 13. "Historique du conflit (1966-1974)," *Dossiers "Vie Ouvrière"* (hereafter *DVO*) XXIV, 89 (novembre 1974), 517-518. See also, "Pavillon Saint-Dominique," *Le Travail* (mai 1974), 15.
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The Central Canada Presbytery: Prospects, Perplexities, Problems¹

Eldon Hay

In spite of its name, the Central Canada Presbytery was largely situated in what we now know as Western Canada. It was set up in 1917 by the American Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to embrace congregations in Delburne, Alberta; Regina, Saskatchewan; Winnipeg, Manitoba and Lake Reno (Glenwood), Minnesota. The presbytery was meant to solidify the Reformed Presbyterian witness in the constituent congregations, and to enhance the growth of the denomination. The Central Canada Presbytery is the third geographical grouping, and the last, that Reformed Presbyterians (or Covenanters) established in Canada.

The first cluster of Reformed Presbyterian congregations was established in the Maritime Provinces in the 1830s by the Irish Synod Mission Board. In 1832, the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Presbytery was formed.² Very slightly later, Covenanter congregations were being formed in Ontario (and unsuccessful attempts to do so in Quebec³), at Ramsey/Almonte in Lanark and Lochiel in Glengary counties.⁴ These congregations were formed under the aegis of the Scottish Synod Mission Board, though there was never a separate Canadian-based presbytery in Ontario-Quebec. At one time, therefore, Covenanter congregations were found in three parts of Canada – the Maritimes, Ontario, and Western Canada. Historically, there was slight interchange between them,⁵ though one clergyman served in all three regions.⁶ The few Canadian Covenanter congregations today are found in Ontario,⁷ though there is a mission station in Quebec.⁸

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The Central Canada Presbytery (1917-34) contained four congregations, as already indicated. Of these, Lake Reno, Minnesota, was not of course in Canada, though it was the oldest congregation, named for a beautiful lake by the same name, “five miles from Glenwood [Minnesota], and about one hundred and fifty miles north-west of St. Paul.”⁹ It had been organized into a congregation in 1869. Ulster-born Campbell and Ewing families were among the organizers.¹⁰ Content (later Delburne), Alberta, was the scene of Covenanter missionary activity in the early 1900s, the congregation was formally established in 1910. Here again the Campbells, one of the families who had helped organize Lake Reno, were prominent among the few organizers – the family of Clark Campbell (1848-1917) being most prominent.¹¹ Both Lake Reno and Delburne were essentially rural congregations.

The Regina congregation was formally organized on 20 May 1911, under Rev. Thomas Melville Slater (1869-1951), acting as a commissioner of Colorado Presbytery.¹² In Regina, “transplanted Iowans made up the original congregation.”¹³ Regina was more a town than Lake Reno and Delburne, but its original chief lay Covenanter was a farmer, from Iowa, James Smith Bell (1848-1912). “It was his earnest desire to see the Banner of the Covenant planted at Regina, and for this he never ceased to labour and to pray until he saw his desire fulfilled in the organization of the Regina congregation . . . when he was made a member of the session. The interests of the congregation were continually on his heart, and to its support and its work he gave liberally of his time, his service and his money.”¹⁴ Unfortunately, farmer Bell died in an accident,¹⁵ shortly after the “Regina [congregation] became self-supporting” in 1912.¹⁶ The congregation formed a vibrant Covenanter community before the formation of the presbytery.¹⁷ Originally and throughout its history, this congregation was strongly American; in 1924, pastor James McCune wrote that “unlike Eastern Canada, Americans are very much in evidence here . . . Perhaps the half of this congregation is American.”¹⁸

“The congregation at Winnipeg, MB was organized 23 October 1914.”¹⁹ It had originated chiefly out of the witness of one man, Samuel Richard McKelvey (ca. 1876-1950). He had come to Canada “from Ireland when a young man, and soon after began seeking out Covenanters from the ‘Old Country,’ bringing them together for a service of worship. He felt the number and opportunity warranted the services of a minister, and soon a congregation was formed, and later a church erected. Until the close of his

[long] life, he led the singing, was superintendent of the Sabbath School, taught an adult class, and during periods without a minister, conducted worship services both morning and evening.”²⁰ McKelvey was also a frequent and consistent reporter of matters Winnipeg in Covenanter papers.²¹ The Winnipeg congregation had few American members. Indeed, the first American clergyman visitor to the city, in 1910, reported that “I think it very strange that I did not find one Covenanter from the States.”²² A much later clergyman indicated that “the Winnipeg Covenanter Church congregation were mostly immigrants from Ireland and their families.”²³

In 1917, it was the sessions of Regina and Winnipeg which memorialized the Synod for the formation of a new presbytery. Synod granted the request, the name to be “the Presbytery of Central Canada and its territory to include the Provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, also the State of Minnesota . . . The Rev. J[ohn] C[alvin] [Boyd] French [1858-1921] is appointed Moderator . . . The Lake Reno Congregation is hereby transferred from the Iowa to this new Presbytery.”²⁴ The other three – Delburne, Regina and Winnipeg – were transferred from the Pacific Coast Presbytery.²⁵

“Representatives and delegates of those congregations appointed by Synod to organize the Presbytery of Central Canada met in the Regina Church²⁶ [Tuesday] 9 October 1917 at 10 o’clock to carry out the action of Synod. It was found that the representatives of Content/Delburne and Lake Reno could not reach the place of meeting at [that] time and adjournment was taken until Wednesday 10 October at 10 o’clock a.m.”²⁷ Rev. J.C. French, then serving Regina, was confirmed as moderator and Rev. Howard George McConaughy (1882-1951), stated supply at Content /Delburne, as clerk.

In spite of its somewhat uncertain beginning, the early days of the presbytery appeared promising. “Although our congregations are far separated from one another, they are vitally interested in each other’s growth and welfare. Their very isolation and remoteness from the rest of the church makes them more concerned about the upholding of Covenanter principles in their respective fields and more anxious for the fellowship and co-operation to which our Master is calling us.” And, “the formation of the Presbytery is already being abundantly justified by the increased amount of enthusiasm and enterprise shown by the churches under its care. They are becoming more aroused about their own needs and that of the whole church as a result of the bonds which have lately been made. Great

credit is due the Moderator (J.C. French), to whose able and untiring efforts it owes its success."²⁸

Nonetheless, from its earliest days, the vast geographical area made a cohesive presbytery very difficult. Quite often, the presbytery functioned by way of interim commissions; a sort of sub-presbytery set up locally or regionally partially to overcome the long distances. But such strategies, particularly when so often utilized, did not contribute towards a coherent Covenanter court.

Strong, long-term clergy leadership was another scarcity making for presbytery problems. J.C. French and H.G. McConaughy were respectively moderator and clerk when the presbytery was formed in 1917; yet by the end of 1919, both had left the presbytery.²⁹ Pastors came and went in the four congregations, there was little long-term consistency. When James McCune came to Regina in September 1923, he noted that "our congregation here has had only seven Sabbaths' preaching during the 15 months preceding our coming."³⁰

The congregations were not consistently vital nor financially viable. Delburne was perennially marginal, never emerging from Mission Station status. Lake Reno, though long-lasting, was far distant, had short term pastorates and was no bastion of numerical and financial prowess. Regina flourished in pre-World War I, during the war, and immediately after; but it was soon to wither to Mission Station status, in the late 1920s. Winnipeg, the newest of the Canadian congregations was the strongest and longest lasting of those in Canada. It had an established core of committed Covenanters, of whom S.R. McKelvey was the chief. Sabbath Schools were emphasized in all Covenanter congregations, Ladies Missionary Societies were also important,³¹ as were congregational Young People's Societies.³²

Attempts were made to enlarge the membership of congregations and to increase the number of Covenanter communities. In the early days of the presbytery, in 1917/8, an enthusiastic Rev. J.C. French visited Edmonton and Provost (a town south-east of Edmonton, close to the Saskatchewan border), but without success.³³ Later, in the early 1930s, renewed attempts were made to contact Reformed Presbyterians in Edmonton, Provost and Calgary, Alberta; and to revive the work in Regina and commence in other unnamed Saskatchewan locales³⁴ – Covenanters were living in these places, but in insufficient numbers and/or interest to found or form mission stations.³⁵

Could existing Covenanter congregations increase their membership? Under Synod urging, presbyteries established a phenomenon known as “budget of souls.” In 1930, “a budget of souls, of 15 converts, was set as the goal for our Presbytery this year. The suggested proportion for each congregation was – Lake Reno 4; Delburne 3; Regina 4; Winnipeg 4.”³⁶ A year later, the clerk indicated that “two congregations reported that efforts are being made, through the Sabbath School particularly, although no tangible results can be reported at the present time. A budget of 15 was adopted for this [upcoming 1931] year, apportioned as follows: Delburne 4; Lake Reno 5; Winnipeg 6.”³⁷ There is no evidence to suggest that this schema resulted in any appreciable additional members.

In 1918, the presbytery had 4 ministers, 10 elders, 217 Sabbath School enrolments, 173 communicant members.³⁸ In 1928, there were 3 ministers, 9 elders, 224 Sabbath School enrolments, 126 communicant members.³⁹

Budgets, not of souls, but of dollars? Lake Reno, Regina and Winnipeg were financially self-sufficient in 1917, when the presbytery began, Delburne alone being aid-receiving. A decade later, in 1927, all congregations were requesting aid: “the application for aid to the Mission Conference from our aid-receiving congregations were approved as follows: Delburne, \$900; Lake Reno, \$600; Regina \$1300; Winnipeg, \$1100.”⁴⁰

Church-state relations came to the fore, in three areas, in the Central Canada presbytery. Firstly, becoming a homesteader; secondly, becoming a soldier; and thirdly, serving in (municipal) government. In all of these contexts, an oath of allegiance was normally required. Taking such an oath was against Covenanter principles.

Homesteading

“Can a Covenanter who is not a British subject, take up and perform the required duties of a homesteader in Canada without disregard of his church vows?” That was the question of a Regina session memorial referred to the Synod, transferred by the Pacific Coast Presbytery in 1914. The decision of the Synod’s Committee on Discipline seems quite clear: “In view of the information before us, which we believe to be correct, that the homestead law requires an alien to be naturalized before he can obtain a patent for land in Canada, and that an oath of allegiance to the British

crown is required for naturalization, a Covenanter not a British subject cannot take up and perform the required duties of a homesteader without violation of his church vows.”⁴¹ Yet there is not a single surviving Canadian instance exemplifying a Covenanter clash because of this principle. James Smith Bell, a founding father of the Regina congregation, and a farmer, had come from the United States; so had the Campbell families to Delburne.

Soldiering

A Winnipeg deacon, A.A. Boone, was conscripted to serve in the army, in 1917. “He claimed exemption as a conscientious objector, refusing to take the oath of allegiance. His claim was rejected by the local tribunal, and the case was by him appealed to the supreme court at Ottawa.”⁴² The session (with Rev. David Bruce Elsey [1877-1950] as moderator and S.R. McKelvey, clerk) expressed its admiration for Boone’s stand. The session took up Boone’s case: what effect would “the military service act have on members of the church in their conscientious refusal to swear the oath of allegiance”? The session decided “to defend the historic testimony of the Church.” Their method? “To submit to the military authorities a substitute oath which could be taken by Covenanters instead of the regular oath of allegiance and, in the event of the authorities refusal to sanction the substitute oath, to claim exemption for all members of the Covenanter Church.” In compliance with the law, a letter was drawn up containing the substitute oath of allegiance:

I, A.B., make oath that I acknowledge Almighty God as the source of all authority and power in civil government, and Jesus Christ as King of all nations, and exclusive head of the Church, in the supreme authority of his moral laws to decide moral issues in national life. Believing also in the justice of the cause for war of Great Britain and her allies, against Germany and her allies, I hereby promise to serve in the army of Canada until the close of this present war, and shall defend his Majesty King George the fifth, and his successors as supreme representatives of this commonwealth against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of the generals and officers set over me in the Lord.

Accompanying this was a letter sent by the solicitor. The session had drawn a line in the sand.

The answer received from the military authorities wiped out the line. We “beg to point out that no oath at all need be taken by any man who is drafted under the military service act, 1917 . . . The act itself makes the man a soldier, and the form which he is required to sign is different from the attestation paper used in the case of volunteers. The new form called ‘Particulars of Recruit,’ does not contain any oath whatever.”

The case of the Winnipeg volunteer, A.A. Boone,⁴³ is the only one which surfaces which mentions any difficulty with the oath of allegiance. Fellow Winnipegger, a deacon, W.J. Hemphill, “soon after the outbreak of the war . . . heard his country’s call and volunteered for active service . . . he died at Vimy Ridge, in 1917.”⁴⁴ Alexander Muirhead, a member of the Regina congregation, enlisted when the war broke out, died in Ypres, in 1916.⁴⁵ Nor are any difficulties recorded in the situations of three soldiers from Delburne,⁴⁶ and four others from Regina.⁴⁷

Voting in municipal elections

Regina was the source of a memorial to Synod on this matter, transferred by the Pacific Coast Presbytery in 1914. Can a Covenanter vote “in municipal elections, where conditions of voting differ materially from the dominion elections?”⁴⁸ “In Saskatchewan for instance, the candidate for certain municipal offices is not required to take an oath of allegiance.”⁴⁹ The Committee on Discipline delivered: “In all cases in which voting requires an oath of allegiance to the British crown on the part of the voter or officer, as in Dominion and Provincial elections, voting is contrary to the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church; but in cases where no such oath is required, as in municipal elections in part of the Dominion at least, where we are informed no oath of allegiance is required of the officer, and even an alien can participate, we see nothing inconsistent with the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in voting.”⁵⁰

However, at a later synod, Andrew Alexander (d. 1951)⁵¹, a Regina elder made a major statement, carried in its entirety in the Covenanter newspaper.⁵² Alexander strongly the softening of the Synod’s stand in the face of municipal elections; believing it betrayed essential Covenanter convictions. “It is now [some time] since this question [of voting in municipal elections] came before this Synod from Regina. Synod has had ample time to investigate and give a definite answer. It can and should be

answered by either yes or no. There is no middle ground. It is either a duty to take an active part in civil affairs or it is a sin . . .” To those who argue that “when no oath to support the Constitution is required there is no incorporation, we ask who then is in the governing political body or do we have no such body in the municipalities of Saskatchewan? Or if it is contended that municipal officers are not incorporated with and a part of the British government, we answer, is the hand not a part of the body? Such ideas are repugnant to our intelligence.” Finally, Alexander asked rhetorically, “Can a church repudiate her Covenant obligation and expect either the favour of God or the respect of men?”⁵³

It is to be assumed that, in general, Covenanters did not vote. In Delburne, discipline was imposed on at least one occasion: “on motion, the session asked [Reverend] Mr. McConaughy to speak to that member of the congregation who had attempted to vote at the last Dominion election: remind him of his promise, and warn him not to do it again.”⁵⁴ Moreover, a version of James Reid Lawson’s 1878 work,⁵⁵ the abridged title being *The Elective Franchise or Why Reformed Presbyterians (Covenanters) Do Not Vote at Political Elections*, was published in Winnipeg, date uncertain. It concluded with the published sentence: “Free on request [from] S.R. McKelvie . . . Winnipeg, MB.”⁵⁶

There was one longer term clergyman in the presbytery – Rev. Frederick Francis Reade (1882-1981). English-born, he came to Winnipeg in 1926, as minister of the Winnipeg congregation. After a relative calm of four or five years, Reade and the congregation became involved in deep difficulties, surfacing in 1932. The pre-1932 Winnipeg session minutes are lost, so the details evade us. The whole matter of the difficulty in Winnipeg with Reade arises – out of the blue as it were – in the records of a Central Presbytery meeting on 24 December 1931.⁵⁷ The Winnipeg congregation was deeply divided; the presbytery’s weakness is illustrated by the fact that the Synod took over supervision of the congregation.⁵⁸ Reade was asked to relinquish the pastorate of the main congregation. The congregation was reconstituted, though Reade stayed on as leader of the smaller faction in the Winnipeg Mission from 1932 until 1939.⁵⁹ At the reconstitution of the main congregation, the “provisional session instructed the clerk to write to Rev. F.F. Reade, asking him for the communion service, the table cloth, the Sabbath School records, the financial records, and the communion tokens.”⁶⁰

In all this turmoil, Winnipeg elder S.R. McKelvey kept on keeping

on, though not without his own problems. At the same Christmas eve presbytery meeting where Reade's difficulties came to light, a case of discipline was brought against McKelvey. McKelvey agreed "1. To confess that he has sinned. 2. to confess that he is truly sorry." And "3. To promise that in the future, with God's help, he will abstain from the use of liquor and tobacco."⁶¹ Put it down to a stressful situation – the Winnipeg controversy driving the poor man to a double case of substance abuse – perhaps a cross-addiction – to tobacco and liquor. If for that short time, McKelvey did not always maintain his equilibrium; in the long run he seems to have maintained his integrity, continuing to be a tower of strength. The weaknesses were never again the subject of Central Canada presbytery or Winnipeg session discussions.

The Covenanter cause in Western Canada ultimately failed. There were too few Covenanters; they seemed unable to proselytize beyond their own numbers; and there were not enough American or Scottish or Irish immigrants. Perhaps its strict discipline and the prohibition of organs and other musical instruments in worship hurt the movement. Its peculiar church-state stance never became sharply articulated in Western Canada. Other Christian congregations crowded the Covenanters – stole their own sheep, in 1929, "Regina became disorganized through the removal of one of its elders who united with another denomination."⁶²

In 1934, the Central Canada Presbytery petitioned for its own dissolution, giving three reasons: "1) fewness of numbers; 2) great [geographical] distances; and 3) aid-receiving congregations."⁶³ The Synod concurred.⁶⁴ Regina having already disappeared,⁶⁵ the Synod approved the congregation of Delburne⁶⁶ being placed under the care of the Pacific Coast Presbytery, Lake Reno⁶⁷ and Winnipeg⁶⁸ under Iowa Presbytery. The seventeen-year history of Central Canada Reformed Presbyterian Presbytery was ended.

Endnotes

1. Primary sources for this article include: Central Canada Presbytery minutes [hereafter "Central Canada Presbytery Minutes"], 9 October 1917-9 August 1934 (original held at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary archives, Pittsburgh); Content/Delburne Reformed Presbyterian Church Session Minutes [hereafter "Delburne Session Minutes"], 16 March 1910-1 October 1937 (original held at Anthony Henday Museum, Delburne, AB); Regina Reformed Presbyterian Session minutes are not extant; Winnipeg Reformed Presbyterian Church Session Minutes [hereafter "Winnipeg

Session Minutes”] – congregation formed 23 October 1914, reconstituted 6 October 1932, Minutes extant from the reconstitution until 6 May 1957 (original held at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary archives, Pittsburgh [*Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* [Pittsburgh]], [hereafter *Synod RPCNA Minutes*].

2. A schismatic Eastern Presbytery was formed in 1859. For these two presbyteries, see Eldon Hay, *The Chignecto Covenanters: A Regional History of Reformed Presbyterianism in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, 1827-1905* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996).
3. Eldon Hay, “The Reformed Presbyterians of Quebec,” *The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History* (1996): 10-33.
4. Eldon Hay, “Ottawa Valley Covenanters,” *Historical Papers: Canadian Society of Church History* (1993): 57-79.
5. A couple of families came from Ontario to the Content/Delburne, Alberta, congregation. The Waddells came from the Ramsey/Almonte congregation: “My dad and mother [Robert and Mary Waddell] decided to come to this area [Delburne in 1907] because several residents were planning to establish a Reform[ed] Presbyterian Church . . . which they were members of in Ontario” (Ken Waddell, “Waddell, Robert and Mary,” in *Through the Years: A Sociological History of Ardley, Delburne and Lousana Districts*, eds. Diane Lewis and John Pengelly [Delburne, AB: History Book Committee, Anthony Henday Historical Society, 1980], 958). The Brodies, from the Lochiel congregation, came to Delburne at approximately the same time (“Brodie, Andrew and Alice,” *Through the Years*, 902.) There was also a link between the Winnipeg congregation and a New Brunswick Covenanter pastor-author (see notes 55 and 56 below).
6. Rev. James McCune (1871-1924) “was installed over the Barnesville, New Brunswick, congregation July 7, 1910, remaining in the charge only until 28 November 1911 . . . He was installed pastor of the Almonte, ON, congregation on 10 December 1914, and released 14 September 1920 . . .” (Owen F. Thompson, *Sketches of the Ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America 1888-1930* [Blanchard, Ohio: By the author, 1920], 200-201). For several months before his death, McCune “had served as stated supply at Regina.” He was buried in Canada: “soon after the conclusion of the [funeral] services, the widow, Mrs. Grace Morrow McCune . . . left with the body to lay it away in St. John, NB, the home city of Mrs. McCune, and twenty miles from Barnesville, where James McCune was pastor for some years (James Burt Wilson, “The Home-Coming and the Home-Going of James McCune,” *Christian Nation*, 27 August 1924, 4-5).

7. See "From Sea to Sea: The R[eformed] P[resbyterian] C[hurch of N[orth] A[merica] at Work in Canada," *Covenanter Witness* 104 (November 1988): 1-9.
8. St. Lazare, QC: "Report of St. Lawrence Presbytery," *RPCNA Synod Minutes* (Pittsburgh, 1997), 28.
9. W.M. Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America* (Baltimore: Hill and Harvey, 1888), 349.
10. See Mary Morrow, "Lake Reno R.P. Church: And Our Fathers Have Told," n.d.; Joseph Clark Ewing, "Covenanter History in Pope County, Minnesota," 1949; "Charter Members [and others] of Lake Reno Congregation," n.d. (originals in Pope County Historical Society and Museum, Glenwood, MN).
11. See Eldon Hay, "The Covenanters in Alberta," *Historical Papers: Canadian Society of Church History* (1994): 165-191. This article deals chiefly with the Content/Delburne congregation.
12. T.M. Slater, "Regina, Canada," *Christian Nation*, 5 July 1911, 10. Slater spent a short time in Regina in early 1911.
13. Robert M. More, Jr., *Aurora Borealis: A History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Canada (Covenanter) 1820-1967* (Pittsburgh: Board of Education and Publication, 1967), 47.
14. "In Memoriam. Minute on the Death of James Smith Bell, adopted by Regina Session 13 May 1912," *Christian Nation*, 29 May 1912, 15.
15. He was fatally injured by a bull ("[Death of James Bell]," *Christian Nation*, 8 May 1912, 10).
16. "Report of the Pacific Coast Presbytery," *Synod RPCNA Minutes* (Pittsburgh, 1913), 32.
17. Rev. James Gray Reed (1869-1959) "was installed pastor over the Regina, SK, Canada, congregation 9 May 1913, and released from Regina 1 May 1915 . . . From May 1915, to December 1918, he was in Condie, SK, Canada" (Thompson, *Sketches*, 270). Rev. John Calvin Boyd French (1858-1921) "was installed on 4 August 1916; on 27 May 1919, he resigned from this [Regina] charge" (Thompson, *Sketches*, 119). Although visited by many ministers, French was the last duly installed pastor in Regina; though James McCune served as Stated Supply for several months before his death in 1924.
18. James McCune, "Regina, Canada," *Christian Nation*, 28 November 1923, 11.

19. "Report of the Pacific Presbytery," *Synod RPCNA Minutes* (Pittsburgh, 1915), 44.
20. "[Death of] S.R. McKelvey," *Covenanter Witness*, 26 April 1950, 271.
21. For instance, the opening of the new church building in Winnipeg in 1917 (S.R. M[cKelvey], "Winnipeg, Canada," *Christian Nation*, 28 March 1917, 8).
22. William Cochran Allen, "Winnipeg, Man.," *Christian Nation*, 9 November 1910, 11.
23. Letter to author, 24 May 1994, by Rev. J. Harvey Bishop. Bishop (ca. 1909) conducted services in the Winnipeg RP church from "the autumn of 1847 to April of 1949." Living in Winnipeg, Bishop is now a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
24. "Report of the Committee on Discipline," *Synod RPCNA Minutes* (Pittsburgh, 1917), 127.
25. Content/Delburne and Regina had belonged to the Colorado Presbytery, until the establishing of the Pacific Coast Presbytery in 1912.
26. Henderson's City of Regina Directory has the following listing for the "Reformed Presbyterian Mission":
1911-1912: west side of Robinson St. N. near corner of 9th Avenue. The Reverend B.M. Sharp, pastor.
1913-1916/1917: same location, The Reverend J.G. Reed, pastor.
1918-1920: same location, The Reverend J.C. French, pastor.
1921-1922: same location, no pastor is listed.
1923-1925: same location, The Reverend John [sic: James] McCune, pastor.
1926-1927: no listing.
1928-1931: address as 1580 Robinson St. N; no pastor listed.
27. "Central Canada Presbytery Minutes," Regina, 9 and 10 October 1917.
28. "[Report of] The Presbytery of Central Canada," *Synod RPCNA Minutes* (Pittsburgh, 1918), 24.
29. "J.C. French and H.G. McConaughy were transferred to Ohio Presbytery, Mr. French on December 15th, and Mr. McConaughy on November 20th, 1919" ("Report of the Presbytery of Central Canada," *Synod RPCNA Minutes* [Pittsburgh: 1920], 34).
30. "Regina, Canada," *Christian Nation*, 28 November 1923, 11.

31. See the account of the one in Regina: "Regina, Canada," *Christian Nation*, 12 January 1921, 9.
32. "Winnipeg, C.Y.P.U.," *Covenanter Witness*, 4 February 1931, 76.
33. J.C. French, "In the Presbytery of Central Canada," *Christian Nation*, 8 May 1918, 10. Before the founding of the presbytery, "Covenanter church services" had been held in Edmonton "during the month of December [1916]" and "were well attended by all our members there. There were also a number of other interested ones present" ("Edmonton, Alberta," *Christian Nation*, 10 January 1917, 10.
34. In pre-presbytery times, Rev. William John McKnight (1865-1951) had successfully conducted services at Tyvan: see W.J. McKnight, "The Work in Canada," *Christian Nation*, 29 June 1910, 6. And Rev. James Gray Reed (1869-1959) was in Condie, Saskatchewan, "from May 1915 to December 1918" (Thompson, *Sketches*, 270).
35. "Central Canada Presbytery Minutes," 20 May 1931.
36. "Central Canada Presbytery Minutes," 27 May 1930.
37. "Central Canada Presbytery Minutes," 20 May 1931.
38. "Statistics of Central Canada Presbytery for the year ending April, 1918," *Synod RPCNA Minutes* (Pittsburgh, 1918), 109.
39. "Statistics of Central Canada Presbytery for Year Ending March 31, 1928," *Synod RPCNA Minutes* (Pittsburgh, 1928), 149.
40. "Central Canada Presbytery Minutes," 9 June 1927.
41. *Synod RPCNA Minutes* (Pittsburgh, 1914), 167.
42. For this entire section, I am indebted to S.R. McKelvey, "An Appeal by the Winnipeg Session to have the Oath of Allegiance Changed," *Christian Nation*, 29 May 1918, 10.
43. Boone is not mentioned in John W. Pritchard's *Soldiers of the [Covenanter] Church* (New York: Christian Nation Publishing Co., 1919).
44. Pritchard, *Soldiers*, 67.
45. Pritchard, *Soldiers*, 68-69.
46. Andrew Brody [sic: Brodie] (Pritchard, *Soldiers*, 35); Alva L. Taylor (Pritchard, *Soldiers*, 49) and Lester T. Taylor (Pritchard, *Soldiers*, 50).

47. Charles Chambers (Pritchard, *Soldiers*, 36); John Lowry French (Pritchard, *Soldiers*, 39); Howard McA. Reed (Pritchard, *Soldiers*, 47 and 182); and James Robinson (Pritchard, *Soldiers*, 48).
48. Synod RPCNA Minutes (Pittsburgh, 1914), 167.
49. Synod RPCNA Minutes (Pittsburgh, 1916), 124.
50. Synod RPCNA Minutes (Pittsburgh, 1914), 167.
51. "I knew . . . Andrew Alexander, as he was my father. We moved from Iowa to Regina in March 1912. He became an elder in 1914 and continued in that capacity till we moved to Greeley, Colorado in 1919. He lived here till his decease . . . [16] April 1951" (letter to author, 30 May 1994, from Mrs. Geneva E. Elliott, Greeley, CO).
52. "In reporting speeches we do not attempt to do more than give key sentences, striking statements, and as accurately as possible the speaker's meaning. But we noticed that Mr. Alexander had ably prepared a written address, and for this reason and because of the importance of the subject, we requested the manuscript of his talk, which is here produced in full" (Editor's introduction, "Our Position on Voting in Canada," *Christian Nation*, 4 July 1917, 5).
53. "Our Position on Voting in Canada," *Christian Nation*, 4 July 1917, 5-6.
54. "Delburne Session Minutes," 27 December 1917.
55. James Reid Lawson (1820-1891), had been pastor of the Barnesville, NB, congregation. The first edition of his book, *Elective Franchise; or, Why Reformed Presbyterians Do Not Vote At Parliamentary And Municipal Elections* was published in Saint John, NB, 1878, CIHM 28415. The second edition, *The British Elective Franchise: Or, Why Reformed Presbyterians Do Not Vote At Political Elections* was published by the authority of the Reformed Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in Saint John, NB, 1884, CIHM 25598.
56. This third, abridged edition (probably shortened from the first edition), published in Winnipeg, is undated, but must come some time between 1914, when McKelvey is known to be in Winnipeg, and 1950, when McKelvey died.
57. "Central Canada Presbytery Minutes," 24 December 1931.
58. The matter first surfaced at the Synod in 1932 where it took up a great deal of time (*Synod RPCNA Minutes* [Pittsburgh, 1932], 117-121).

59. Alvin W. Smith, *Covenanter Ministers 1930-1963* (Pittsburgh: By the author, 1964), 175.
60. "Winnipeg Session Minutes," 7 October 1932. Perhaps Reade also held the pre-1932 session minutes, which are now lost.
61. "Central Canada Presbytery Minutes," 24 December 1931.
62. "Report of the Presbytery of Central Canada," *Synod RPCNA Minutes* (Pittsburgh, 1929), 25.
63. "Central Canada Presbytery Minutes," 2 August 1934.
64. *Synod RPCNA Minutes* (Pittsburgh, 1934), 40.
65. Regina had become a Mission Station in 1929 ("Report of the Presbytery of Central Canada," *Synod RPCNA Minutes* [Pittsburgh, 1929], 29); it is listed for the last time in the statistics of the Central Canada Presbytery in 1933 (*Synod RPCNA Minutes* [Pittsburgh, 1933], 163).
66. Delburne last appeared in the statistical rolls of the Pacific Coast Presbytery in 1941 (*Synod RPCNA Minutes* [Pittsburgh, 1941], 155).
67. Lake Reno became a Mission Station in 1978, and was disorganized in 1980 (*Synod RPCNA Minutes* [Pittsburgh, 1980], 80).
68. When the Central Canada presbytery dissolved, Winnipeg had both a Reformed Presbyterian congregation and a Mission Station. In 1944, the Winnipeg Mission Station was dissolved at the meeting of [Iowa] Presbytery (*Synod RPCNA Minutes* [Pittsburgh, 1944], 76-77). The Winnipeg congregation lingered longer, itself becoming a Mission Station in 1957 (*Synod RPCNA Minutes* [Pittsburgh 1957], 112). It finally disappeared completely in the mid-1960s, being listed for the last time in the statistics of Iowa Presbytery in 1967 (*Synod RPCNA Minutes* [Pittsburgh, 1967], 163).

Through the Eyes of *The Tattler*: Concerns of Baptist Youth in Rural Nova Scotia, 1933-1940

RUSSELL PRIME

In the midst of the economic and social instability of February 1933, a fourteen year-old youngster named Ivan Shortliffe began publishing a paper called *The Tiny Tattler*.¹ Ivan lived in Central Grove, a small hamlet of just over a hundred souls located in the middle of Long Island, Digby County, Nova Scotia. The two villages on either end of Central Grove, Freeport and Tiverton, were fishing ports. Westport on the neighbouring Brier Island was also a fishing-based village. Ivan had the fortune to attend the public school at Central Grove under the direction of the young Florence Tibert. Mrs. Tibert was the daughter of J.J. Wallace, the editor of *The Digby Courier*,² and it was Mr. Wallace's gift of a small hand-operated printing press to Ivan that enabled the business venture to begin and flourish for over ten years.

The *Tattler* was a special paper in many ways. First of all, it initially measured 3 by 5 inches and only increased in size in 1939 to become a 6 by 8 inch paper. It was a truly "tiny" source of news and was known as "Canada's Smallest Newspaper." Second, it was printed by a youthful editor with the help of a friend of the same age, Rupert Cann. Furthermore, printing began in the midst of the worst Depression year and yet grew so that Ivan and Rupert could boast of a local, national, and international circulation of over 5000 within the first four years. Both editors were able to support themselves with the income of the paper and its associated job printing while they were completing school and for a few years following. Finally, and of the greatest importance for this essay, Ivan and Rupert were

very active members of the United Baptist Church in Central Grove, and in the church's Sunday School and youth programs. Out of six active churches on these Islands with a population of 1500 people, four of them were Baptist.³ As a result, the paper included much news about Baptist church activities, youth gatherings, social news, and other happenings locally and elsewhere. In fact, one page entitled, "The Quiet Hour," was devoted to the discussion of religious topics in prose or poetry; this feature can be found in every issue of the paper; Shortliffe saw "The Quiet Hour" as the heart of his newspaper.⁴ The *Tattler* is therefore a rich source of social information for anyone interested in capturing a snap-shot of a rural Nova Scotian community and its relationship to the church and of seeing what captured the minds, energies, and time of the young people who lived there. What were young people interested in? What issues made them excited or angry? How did they relate to the church in rural areas? What role did the church play in educating them and helping them gain skills and beliefs to take them through life? What influence did young people have in the community and how were they supported?

This essay will attempt to provide some tentative answers to these questions by analysing and re-producing some of the content of *Tattler* pages. A few of the themes discovered in this newspaper between 1933 and 1940 might be expected or could have been predicted; these would include such issues as temperance, youth unemployment and migration, and peace. However, even the way that these issues were discussed in the *Tattler* might not be anticipated. Yet, other more surprising concerns were also openly discussed, including church leadership, youth training responsibilities of the churches and adults, inter-denominational co-operation, and new relationships and dating. These issues stand amongst many others. A report of this size could only deal comfortably with a few of these matters. Accordingly, this essay will briefly explore what the *Tattler* reveals about inter-church activities during the period, youth-church relationships, the exercise of church youth leadership and training roles, the mood of temperance, and the faces of war and peace. These youthful editors did express their views and attitudes in the columns of the *Tattler*, and I suggest that these views represent one voice – an important voice in attempting to understand the perspective of Baptist youth during the 1930s and early war years in the Maritimes. Other researchers will be left with the task of uncovering other voices and perspectives.

Why is this essay attempting to look at the situation of Baptist youth

through the lens of a local Digby County paper? This is an important question. Principally, work has already been undertaken outlining the development of the Baptist Young Peoples' Unions and related organs from a structural perspective. Robert Alden Colpitts submitted a thesis on "The Maritime BYPU: Through 50 Years" in 1943 as part of his Bachelor of Divinity work at Acadia; it explores the wider movement in great detail from the late-nineteenth century. Paul D. Berry wrote an updated survey of the movement in 1992 entitled, "A Hundred Years Young: The Baptist Young People of the Maritimes." There was no need to duplicate their fine work. Instead, this essay will try to go beyond the organized youth work to attempt to see the faces of young people and their hopes, dreams, and fears. Secondly, while some may not consider Digby County youth representative of rural youth, in general, the *Tattler* does provide a unique source of actual young peoples' words and ideas. This is difficult to find anywhere, especially in official denomination-based papers. Furthermore, few letters, diaries, or other possible sources continue for the span of a decade. As a final reason, readers must be willing to see the importance of local news and reporting.⁵ This may be difficult, for not even William H. Kesterton in his seminal book, *A History of Journalism in Canada*, examines the local press.⁶ The weekly community newspaper is often viewed as a "lesser press." Its importance is minimized. However, as *The Acadian*, an early Wolfville paper, observed in 1937,

The city papers do not take the place of your local paper, although some seem to think they do . . . You cannot learn from them when public meetings are held, who are dying and who are marrying, who are moving out and who wants to sell land, in fact, hundreds of items which might be of particular importance to you. Such matters city papers cannot furnish, but your local paper does.⁷

There are, of course, limitations to using newspapers as the primary source. Sometimes the issues that are not written about are more important than those that are clean and proper enough to be printed. There is also the danger that news may be one-sided or exaggerated. However, this tiny newspaper is a rich and rare source of dialogue and reporting by two Baptist youth. Readers should be aware of the limitations; this provides context. But, we must be ready to read on and be excited about what we might discover on the pages of "The Shortliffe Press."

Inter-Church Co-operation

On 1 November 1935, the Older Boys' Conference of Digby and Annapolis Counties met at Digby. Nearly 50 youth from Middleton, Annapolis Royal, Bridgetown, Digby, Sandy Cove, Bear River, Centreville (Digby), and Central Grove areas attended the conference from United Baptist, United, and perhaps other churches. J. Lloyd Jess of Acadia University was in charge of the event.⁸ Edward MacDormand was appointed Grand Praetor of the conference, and Ivan Shortliffe was appointed Deputy Grand Praetor. The theme of the event focused on two areas: "The boy that God needs" and "the God that boys need." As we can see from their comments, this conference made a striking impression on sixteen year-old Ivan and Rupert Cann:

The Conference closed by a Fellowship Circle, each boy clasping hands in silent prayer. Every boy left the church feeling something new and wonderful within him – something he shall never forget. And yet it was with a sad heart that each boy said good-bye to the new friends he had made and started for their homes, hoping that some day, some where, they might meet again.⁹

This article highlights the existence of inter-denominational co-operation in youth work during the period. Organized Baptist youth ministry on a convention-wide basis had collapsed in the same year that Regular and Freewill Baptists had accomplished their union in the Maritime Provinces (by 1907). The situation may not have been better in other denominations during this period; however, local youth work did of course continue. It was not until 1924, and more properly 1931, that the Baptist Young Peoples' Union (BYPU) of the Maritime Provinces was organized and actively functioning.¹⁰ However, as a result of the Sunday School and YMCA/YWCA movements, co-operative youth efforts began in earnest during the First World War. The social gospel movement and the related temperance movements had highlighted the importance of citizenship training, moral development, and character-building for young people. The roles of women's missionary societies of various stripes and the International Sunday School Association in these developments cannot be understated.¹¹ Programs such as Canadian Girls In Training (CGIT) and Trail Rangers sprung into existence based on a fourfold ideal of life as

expressed in Luke 2:52,¹² under the supervision of provincial and inter-denominational committees for boys' and girls' work.

By 1919, these Christian education committees fell under the jurisdiction of the newly formed Maritime Religious Education Council (MREC).¹³ Maritime Baptists played a key role in the formation of the MREC along with the constituent bodies of what would become the United Church of Canada.¹⁴ The MREC would become a major player in the effort of Protestant churches to provide youth education and training for the next forty years.¹⁵ Surprisingly, little work has been done on studying the impact and organizational history of these inter-denominational enterprises.¹⁶ Besides CGIT and ranger groups, the MREC would help coordinate the development of Boys' Conferences like the one that took place in Digby in 1935 and of Boys' Parliaments.

The *Tattler* is littered with evidence of these co-operative youth efforts. For instance, we learn that the Willing Workers CGIT of Sandy Cove, Digby County, "entertained" a teenage Sunday School boys class in February of 1936.¹⁷ Central Grove had an active CGIT program in 1938. Shortliffe, in a *Tattler* editorial on 9 May 1936, laments the resignation of the much liked Rev. I.J. Levy as the boys' field secretary of the MREC as it would mean that no boys' conference would be held for the year. Along with the youth of Sandy Cove, he urged the idea of holding a local conference under the leadership of Islands and Digby Neck pastors. It seems that local conferences had been held for the past three years under the auspices of the MREC and had been "outstanding successes." The Sandy Cove CGIT group appointed Clara Gidney and Edwina McClough to attend the Bridgetown CGIT conference on 8-10 May 1936. In 25 January 1940, readers of the *Tattler* learned of plans to publish an interdenominational young peoples' paper for Digby youth organizations under the chairmanship of Robert McCleave.¹⁸

These efforts by people of various backgrounds did not survive in Maritime Canada after the 1970s; however, they did leave a significant legacy of co-operation, the building of various children's summer camps, and the publication of Canadian-based Sunday School and youth group study materials.¹⁹ In a smaller way, co-operative efforts also served to encourage local groups of many denominations. For instance, according to the *Tattler*, the Baptist Young Peoples' Unions at Freeport²⁰ and Centreville often took part in inter-church events. The young peoples' group in Tiverton was a combined United Baptist and Church of Christ

(Disciples) group that was active in the 1930s through to the 1980s. Much of this local spirit pervades in some locals to this day. Ministers and churches at least in the Digby-Annapolis area seemed very committed to united efforts, and the young people appeared eager to share in new experiences and to meet new friends.²¹

Youth Involvement in Church Activities

While convention-wide youth work was largely dormant between 1907 and 1930, I have suggested that inter-denominational efforts helped fill the gap. However, in 1931, the Baptist Young Peoples' Union of the Maritime Provinces was re-organized and re-energized. Yearly conferences and young peoples' papers were produced, such as *The Challenger*. While no mention is made in the existing editions of the *Tattler* concerning Maritime-wide Baptist youth conferences, the editors in Central Grove would have certainly been familiar with *The Challenger*²² and other denominational materials. The BYPUs and other young peoples' groups were certainly central youth institutions on the Islands and in surrounding communities. Indeed, there is rarely an issue of the *Tattler* that does not record the activities a church youth group in one of the villages.

What were youth looking at these church-based institutions to provide? Why were young people interested in becoming involved in their activities? The pages of the *Tattler* provide some clues. One of the most obvious reasons appears to be associated with the need to develop friendships and to participate in social entertainment. Church youth groups were principally active during the winter or school months,²³ and they provided on-going programs for biblical study and something to do. For instance, on 19 December 1936, the Central Grove BYPU held a social evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Tibert. "Delicious refreshments were served," and "progressive crokinole was the main feature of the evening." On 17 April 1938, the CGIT of Central Grove helped hold an Easter program in the church. Readings, carols, a solo, and Santa were the fare (besides the gifts and candies) for a meeting of the Bear River BYPU in December of 1939.²⁴ In February of 1940, the same group held a Valentine Social in the vestry with the United YPS as their guests.²⁵

Furthermore, pastors were often involved in youth activities of a larger scope that developed in concert with young peoples' groups and inter-denominational or community-sponsored events, including baseball

leagues and sewing circles. Here is a supporting reference from a *Tattler* of 1938:

A visitor at Freeport this week and one you all remember is Rev. A.W. Akerley of Hillsborough, NB, former pastor of the Freeport Baptist church, and a great favourite with the younger set there. Do you remember those hot Saturday afternoons a few years back when his voice down shortstop way kept the Freeport ball team jumping? You do! And could he sock that old "apple" – You're telling me!²⁶

Baseball was an important recreation that brought many islanders together. As an example, in 1935, Freeport downed the Yarmouth "Hawks" with a score of 5-4 on 20 July, although Bridgetown beat Freeport 2-0 in a game a week later.²⁷

Other reasons for joining youth groups included the opportunities for Bible study and the chance to assist others in Christian service. The *Tattler* editors were very concerned about learning Biblical principles and teachings; this must not be underestimated. As a matter of fact, during the publication years of 1935 and 1936, various Baptist ministers from, or formerly from, the local area were invited to share their thoughts with readers through "The Quiet Hour" column.²⁸ Knowing Christ was important to Rupert and Ivan. In the 27 April 1935, editorial of the *Tattler*, "boys" [aged 14 and older] were urged to attend the "coming Boys Conference . . . in Sandy Cove." As the editorial states, your "church can derive benefit from these discussions, BUT ONLY IF YOU ARE REPRESENTED." The conference was organized to give opportunities for "worship, discussion of vital problems, addresses and happy fellowship." A November 1933 article outlined Rupert's belief that many times "we pray for Opportunity that in some small way we may help to enlarge the Kingdom of God," yet when chances come along "we are as the coward in battle" and we disappoint God.²⁹

A real concern for the plight of others is also revealed on the small papers' pages. This desire to serve may have contributed to youth having an interest in church groups and co-operative activities. The Island press could never be accused of backing down on issues, and youth groups and conventions provided important places for discussion for Ivan and Rupert. Key elements to the success of the 1935 Boys' Conference in Digby were two of the questions that small groups were asked to discuss: what were

the three most serious problems confronting the world and what were some possible solutions.³⁰ The paper speaks out against inappropriate attitudes, strives to give equal press to people regardless of their position in the community, advocates good morality, and empathizes with those in difficulty. The fishermen's strike of 1938 provides a good example. The prices for fish had fallen so low in October 1938 that the fishermen decided to strike and form a fishermen's union in order to force better company prices. Poverty was an issue of concern for both fishermen and plant works. On 7 December 1935, the paper reported that the lobster prices were very low – 17 cents per pound! Other issues were also important: youth employment and migration, liquor control, safe driving laws, adequate school education, ample ferry service, world peace & war, and even the safety of bridges and roads.³¹ Two other issues will be dealt with separately later in this essay: illegal liquor selling and the peace/war theme. Some of the editors' treatment of issues may at first appear naive and idealistic; however, must remember that these young people were growing up, learning, and trying to be honest with their feelings and values.

Finally, there may have been other factors, as well. For example, parent and peer pressure might have played a role in some youth joining groups. Certainly, if one wanted to be active and part of the crowd during this period, youth groups were the places to be. Another issue was the desire of young people to develop into good, capable, and balanced leaders for the future society and church. The *Tattler* portrays this issue as central, at least to the editors' understandings of their task, and this topic will be dealt with as a separate concern below. In fact, all remaining issues in this essay deal with aspects of leadership either to the church, community, or both.

Youth Leadership Development

Early in the *Tattler's* pages, the need for the church to be active and supportive in providing leadership training opportunities to young people is raised. The editors also remind young people of their duties to God. It is not surprising then, when either group fails to perform as expected, the editors let them know. Readers of the *Tattler* saw an example of this on 21 April 1938. The Womens' Missionary Aid Society and the CGIT of Central Grove – adults and youth working together – presented an Easter

program. The event was successful, but the editors were very concerned about the lack of audience support that the show received: “Outside of those who participated in the program few local people were there. The audience was made up mostly of people from Tiverton and Westport. Where were the people of Central Grove?”

Why were they upset at this? It appears that the chief reason was that adults in the community normally complained about “the doings of young people, insinuating” that they were wasting their time and money attending dances and shows while the church was “pushed in the background.” However, when the young people did put effort into a church event, the complainers stayed home. The editors reminded readers that their presence was needed in order for special services to be successful and that adults were doing the same thing that the youth had been accused of in the past.

However, the adults of the church and community did not heed the editors’ advice. The issue came to a head again during the winter of 1939, following the visit of the Rev. A.A. MacLeod, the Field Secretary for the Nova Scotia Sons of Temperance. Rev. MacLeod wanted to re-organize a temperance division. The editors supported the move and assured Rev. MacLeod of it, but they noted that there had been serious problems with youth work and adult co-operation in the past. “It most certainly would be useless,” they wrote, “to re-organize the Central Grove Division unless the older people are willing to back up the young people in their efforts. We have had young people’s unions in recent years, but all of them failed to make the grade.” The editors went on to explain why they felt that youth work had not been successful in recent times:

There are a few always ready . . . and eager to find some flaw that can be exaggerated and made ridiculous . . . It almost appears that the older church people don’t want to see the young coming forward to take their places. There never existed a young person who could walk spotless before the world, and there never will be such a person. But let a person make a slip who holds any office in any Christian organization, and the books might as well be closed then and there.

Central Grove has had plenty of talent in the past – plenty of it. But where is the talent now? [It has been] Completely crushed by malicious gossip and complete lack of co-operation.

We offer no apologies for this editorial, for we believe it is time something was done . . . Young people cannot carry on alone without the assistance of people who have experience. It is impossible.

Let's get to work and do some "house cleaning" . . . [and] get together in Christian fellowship . . . [then] will be the time to re-organize [the] Division.³²

This editorial sparked a significant amount of debate if the letter from a Freeport "Church Member" in the 30 November issue is accurate. The writer of the letter places the blame on both the young and the old; however, there was a strong message in it for the youth: the writer felt that too much emphasis was placed on dances and picture shows. Here is a part of the letter:

I hold nothing against the pictures. I believe that most of the motion pictures are highly educational and could be an asset to the young folk's welfare, but I do think that it is wrong to take the last cent to see the show Saturday night, and have nothing to put on the plate Sunday . . . Boys and girls are different today. To the most of them nothing is sacred, and they take little interest in anything pertaining to the church.

I do agree with you when you say it's time young and old got together in true Christian fellowship.

Attitudes do not appear to have changed very much in 60 years for adults or youth. They all see themselves as different.

Two weeks later on 14 December 1939, the situation worsened. In large print, the editorial headline read, "STRIKES BLOW AT YOUNG: Rev. J. G. Wakeling calls Freeport Young People 'Hoodlums'." The editors admitted that many a negative letter concerning the church and pastor had arrived at the *Tattler* office over the years, but the editors always promptly consigned them "to the waste paper basket." They assured readers that Rev. Wakeling was a "fine man, capable of accomplishing much good." but his comments the previous Sunday night could not be overlooked. The minister had accused boys invited to a CGIT gathering of misbehaving and some "imported specimens" of the same thing. The "imported" guests were both editors of the *Tattler*, and they denied that anyone had misbehaved. They went on to charge:

Perhaps if Mr. Wakeling had attended the party he would have left such a remark unsaid . . .

Had Mr. Wakeling been a worker with the young people: if he had

spared no effort to bring them together under Christian leadership, then his stand could be justified. Provide something for the young people; give them something to do and they MUST be guided.

Miss Nichols is putting up a gallant fight to keep the young girls together in the CGIT group. She deserves encouragement and help in this splendid work.

It is any minister's place to mix with both young and old, find out for himself what's going on and NOT BE MISLED BY MALICIOUS GOSSIP.

Rev. Wakeling was admonished to "Think it over."

While reactionary and personal in nature, this was "spunky" writing. The *Tattler* was attempting to live up to its motto of "Without Fear or Favour." It is difficult to know what the outcome of this situation was; however, it is important to note that the *Tattler* was circulated to over 5000 homes locally and beyond. In this way, the editors exercised a degree of power. I do not know whether they exercised it properly here but, certainly, the crux of their plea was that the youth "must be given encouragement and help before it is too late." I can find no mention of the issue in the newspapers following this time. Hopefully, the incident resulted in stronger youth programs and co-operation than before.

Temperance

One issue that the *Tattler* showed incredible leadership on even in the face of threats was on the impropriety of illegal liquor trading and bootlegging in the area. Prohibition had officially ended in Nova Scotia in 1930 as a result of a 1929 plebiscite. Liquor sales became legal only in government controlled stores,³³ and the profits of the Nova Scotia Liquor Control Commission were originally applied first of all to the costs of the newly established rural police.³⁴ Even with these changes, however, many areas remained dry and the temperance movement and spirit lingered in rural Nova Scotia. Organized youth programs talked about its vices.³⁵ The *Tattler* had reported that a cargo of rum had been brought on the Island in July of 1936, and the police had done nothing. In many Baptist churches in particular, drinking was not an acceptable behaviour for a member.³⁶ This attitude permeated the larger society. By 1937, the temperance movement appeared to be regaining some of its former popularity. For

instance, on Tuesday, 19 October of that year, a public temperance meeting was held at the Little River Baptist Church (Digby County) and the "Rising Tide" Division of the Sons of Temperance was re-organized with men, women, and youth participating. Similar revivals were attempted in other communities.

Following an article on 4 August 1938, in support of abstinence education for youth,³⁷ the *Tattler* ran an editorial on 29 September that stated that rum running on Long Island was in full swing and "must be stopped." "Let the Mounties come in plain clothes to some of our dances and *plenty* of arrests could be made. *Islanders are asking for ACTION.*" On the following week, the *Tattler's* headline read, "Stop Press, EXTRA, Editors' Lives are Threatened." Ivan and Rupert had received a threat of death if they published "one more word" about illegal liquor on the Island. In the 13 October issue, readers learned about the impending visit of the King and Queen to Canada later in the year and on the second page that two arrests had been made by the RCMP on charges of possessing illegal liquor. The editors urged the police to arrest the "promoters."

Faces of War and Peace

The final topic of imposing interest for the editors and youth of Central Grove (and by extension others) during this period was the issue of maintaining peace and avoiding war. Peace would have most certainly been discussed during youth meetings, especially around 11 November. The concern loomed larger as the 1930s drew near to a close. On Armistice Day 1937, Rupert Cann printed an editorial paying sad tribute to the over 60,000 graves and 170,000 disabilities of Canadians as a result of the Great War. The price had been huge, and the conflict had ended only nineteen years before. Placed side-by-side with a news item on the expected opening of Westport's new "Star" theatre, this editorial ended with an ominous prayer petitioning for the whole Dominion that "war will never sweep this old world, but that our young men shall be able to live for our country instead of dying on the altar of the world's stupidity and greed." In October, Rupert had also printed a poem in "The Quiet Hour" called "Song of Youth." In it, he expressed the following hope in the last two stanzas:

I want no touch of power that maims,

Nor glory that's won by hate
No triumph of blood, in mad renown,
No medals, nor vast estate.

I want to live for my own true land--
To give of my best and then
To know that a world of peace is won
By the love of God and men.³⁸

As readers can see, the issue of war cannot be easily separated from the idea of youth in the editors' minds; this is largely due to the fact that the front-line burden of war is placed on the shoulders of young people. The duty of grieving and holding the home fires together is that of the older people.

A year later, as the local situation on Long Island seemed to be falling apart amidst a fisherman's strike in Freeport and a threat of death to the editors for their ranting against booze, the editorial was not about the strike or the threat. Instead, the minds of the editors were on the close call with war that the world had nearly suffered. It is entitled "Peace" and is printed below in its entirety:

As the world toppled on the brink of another war, Great Britain [led it] back to peace. Since the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 1 November 1918, the world has never been so close to war. The outlook the first part of last week was everything but promising. But Britain "pulled the cords," and the world was saved – saved from the slaughtering of the youth of the land, the destruction of cities, terror, and the shedding of precious blood. Today the scene has changed to brightness and rejoicing. Today we have Peace: may it be enduring.

In hindsight, we know that this "Peace" was anything but enduring.

While the editorial policy of the *Tattler* did change following the declaration of war a year later, in 1939, the change to a pro-war policy, while never in doubt, was made with an air of reluctance and with the hope that peace would quickly prevail. On 14 January 1940, the following poem, probably written by Rupert Cann, was published in "The Quiet Hour":

Lines of Peace

Peace lies around me
Like a garment,
I gather it in and hold it
As a vestment:
Then cloaked in
Thought transference
I send it out into that part
Of the world wherein
War is raging or discontent
Smoulders, hoping against hope
That my thoughts
Made into a universal prayer
In His name,
Will reach and soften
The hardened hearts
Of war lords who delight in war's game,
Dear God, Omnipotent One,
Answer my loving prayer,
I beseech Thee!

It was in this war period that the notion of peace which the *Tattler* spoke about was forced to change from one aimed at cessation of conflict to one of God's transforming grace. In the above poem, we see the start of this altering perspective. In the interest of patriotism and maintenance of personal faith, the peace that Jesus came to give would become more important and in some senses more enduring and powerful. Reflective of this need to change is an opinion piece on the eve of the Dominion elections that while both the Liberals and Conservatives had promised no conscription, "Mr. King and Mr. Manion seem to forget that Canada must have men, thousands of them [and, that unless] peace comes in the near future, conscription of man-power in Canada will be necessary, and neither Dr. Manion or Mr. King will be able to prevent it."³⁹

Finally, the Freeport BYPU would print two editions of a newspaper, called *The Freeport Gazette*. They would continue the tradition of two earlier Baptist youth in their aim to serve the needs of the local community and of young people in particular. The paper was printed by The Island Print (publishers of the *Tattler*) and was the same size; 500 copies were

printed of each issue. It was sent out to the over one hundred “Boys In Service” from the area (including one “girl”)⁴⁰ as a source of information and entertainment while they were away. It was also distributed in Freeport, as well. Acadia University Archives holds the only known copy of the second issue of this short-lived newspaper. It told of the two and a half month loss of power on the island in the winter of 1942/43 and of a comical black out in Tiverton that disrupted a Bible study. There was fishing news, a wedding report, church and Red Cross fundraising notes, and some discussion as to the “post-war” world. An interesting opinion piece on “The Freeport of 195-” was also included.⁴¹

Some Concluding Words

The Tiny Tattler ceased publication on Dominion Day, 1943, ten years and five months after it began as the innovative dream of Ivan Shortliffe and Rupert Cann during the Depression years. Rupert had handled the press since 1940 with the help of his sister, Winifred Cann, and others. Rupert had decided to volunteer for military service, and Ivan had accepted a job with *The Halifax Herald*.⁴² The paper had wrestled with many important issues, events, and concerns over its publication decade. This essay has highlighted a few of the more important ones in relation to young people and church; these included such things as the existence of inter-denominational work and excitement about it during the period, the scope of church involvement by young people, the role of church and its agencies for leadership development, the spectre of temperance, and the desire of these young Christians for a peaceful world. Other issues could have also been outlined, including the important interest in boy-girl relationships,⁴³ the presence of national and international news, the enjoyment of entertainment and “famous person” articles, comments on scientific developments, the problem of petty crime in the 1930s, and the difficulties of fishermen in the latter part of the decade. However, these issues and many more must be left to future researchers.

The 1930s and 1940s were indeed promising times for inter-church work especially amongst youth. Young people were excited about it, at least Rupert and Ivan were. These larger movements also increased the awareness of teenagers to issues like the need for better leadership development, the need for Christians to act as God would want them to, the devastation caused by “social evils” like drinking alcohol, and an

excitement for united and peaceful co-operation. Perhaps, it is not surprising, then, that many of these issues would find space in the pages of “Canada’s Smallest Newspaper.”

The editors pushed hard to cause the community to support youth work in the church. They recognised the need for younger folks to experience leadership roles, to test out their abilities and talents, and to learn from the experiences of the more mature Christians. Alongside the shipping news and social columns, these editors even had the gumption to stand up to community leaders and remind them of their duty toward the young. They did the same to young people and others. Perhaps idealistically, but not without passion, they turned the power of their paper against illegal liquor and exposed its presence in their community; they did this even in the face of death threats. They also dared to hope for peace in an imperfect world, to pray for it in 1940 when there seemed like no other situation would prevail.

The editors of the *Tattler*, *The Freeport Gazette*, and others like them⁴⁴ leave us a rich legacy of Baptist young people seeking to serve their communities, country, and God in an active and determined way. This social history is important, as are similar stories of the thoughts of youth of other denominations in other areas, and they all deserve more study. Ivan Shortliffe and Rupert Cann defied the circumstances of the Depression and pulled themselves above it. As their masthead often read,

*Who can tell what good may spring,
From such a tiny, little thing.*

Endnotes

1. *The Tiny Tattler* is available on microfilm from the Public Archives of Nova Scotia (hereafter PANS); the film contains most issues. Copies may also be viewed at the museum of the Islands’ Historical Society, Tiverton, Digby County, NS. Smaller paper collections can be found at PANS and at Acadia University Archives. I extend special thanks to my professors, David Frank and Robert S. Wilson, for their encouragement with this task. I wish to thank the Islands’ Historical Society; Mr. and Mrs. William Brown of New Harbor, Maine, and my grandparents, Chester and Rosena Outhouse, for allowing me to make use of their numerous copies of *The Tiny Tattler* over the years. The staff of Acadia University’s Archives were also extremely patient and helpful

in making Baptist Collection materials available at my convenience. They all deserve my sincere thanks.

2. *The Digby Courier* continues to be the principal weekly newspaper of Digby County.
3. United Baptist Churches were located in Tiverton, Central Grove, Freeport, and Westport. Westport maintained its own pastorate. While Tiverton had at various times supported its own Baptist minister, the Depression conditions meant that Tiverton and Freeport co-operated in supporting a pastorate. Central Grove had always been a part of the Freeport field. The remaining two congregations on the Islands were associated with the Disciples of Christ: the Tiverton Christian Church and the Westport Church of Christ. A few families in Westport continued to worship on an infrequent United Church of Canada circuit, and a small number of people on Long Island considered themselves members of the Anglican, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist, or Roman Catholic churches even though no congregations continued to exist. In fact, there had never been a Catholic building in the communities, but some residents of Acadian descent had met in homes on occasion (see Walter R. Greenwood, *The History of Freeport* [Yarmouth: The Davis Print, 1938], 28-29, 39).
4. See Shortliffe's final editorial in the *Tattler*, 1 July 1943. The second issue of the *Tattler* in August 1933, contained the following prayer: "Our Heavenly Father, / we thank Thee for all Thou has given us to enjoy / Bless this page and may it do much for Thee. / In the name of Jesus. / Amen."
5. The *Tattler* eventually printed social news and events for places as far from the Islands and Digby Neck areas as Digby and Smith's Cove in Digby County, Port Maitland in Yarmouth County, Maitland Bridge in Annapolis County, and Kempt and Caledonia in Queens County. It also printed national and international news, especially in later years. This paper served an important local readership; however, it was a novelty item and travelled across the continent through the hands of Island residents and around the world. *The Tiny Tattler* was even featured on a pre-movie entertainment reel of the Associated Screen News in 1938 that was circulated across Canada and as far away as the Philippines (see September 1938 issues of the *Tattler* for more information).
6. See William H. Kesterson, *The History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967).
7. As quoted in the *Tattler*, 20 January 1938, 5.

8. J. Lloyd Jess acted as the clerk of the Senior Boys' (Maritime Tuxis) Parliament for a number of years. He was a student at Acadia and graduated with a Master of Theology degree from Union Theological Seminary, New York, in 1937 (see *The Upward Trail* [ed. J. Arthur Covey] 9, No. 3 [September 1937], 6). *The Upward Trail* was a quarterly newsletter published by the Maritime Tuxis Parliament under the direction of the Maritime Religious Education Council (MREC).
9. *Tattler*, 9 November 1935, 1 and 16.
10. Rev. Alexander Gibson, United Baptist Convention Secretary, gave a major push to the revival of the BYPU Convention in 1931. Ninety youth had attended the regular convention in 1930, and they discussed plans at that time for the young peoples' convention the following year (George Edward Levy, *The Baptists of the Maritime Provinces* [Saint John: Barnes-Hopkins, Limited, 1946], 308).
11. William Clayton Bower and Percy Roy Hayward, *Protestantism Faces Its Educational Task Together* (Appleton, Wisconsin: C.C. Nelson Publishing Company, 1949), 112-115.
12. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52, RSV). A more modern translation would use "humans" or "people" instead of "man."
13. The Maritime group was an auxiliary council of The Religious Education Council of Canada, formed in 1918. Through the Canadian council, the Maritimes were represented in the American-Canadian body called The International Council of Religious Education (Bower, *Protestantism Faces its Educational Task Together*, 27). The Canadian council and each denomination sent representatives to the International body. The Maritime Baptist representative was often the General Secretary of the United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces (see The International Council of Religious Education, *Yearbook 1946: Reports, Minutes & Directory* [Chicago, June 1946], 251 and 286). In 1946, for instance, Rev. Robert Shaw of the Milton Christian Church served as President of the Maritime Religious Education Council and Rev. I. Judson Levy served as Chairman of the General Board. The national council eventually became the Department of Christian Education of the Canadian Council of Churches in 1947.
14. Representatives of the Maritime Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists formed the greater majority of the council membership. The Anglicans and the Disciples of Christ would also be represented in the united work.

15. Catherine MacLean, President of the Maritime Young Peoples' Conference of The United Church of Canada, addressed a letter to Baptist youth on "What Others Are Doing" in *The Challenger*, February 1935, 4-5. This is further testament to the co-operative spirit of the period.
16. Several histories and articles have been written on the work of the Canadian-Girls-In-Training (CGIT) during this century; however, I have been able to find little or nothing on the efforts of the boys' movement outside of some YMCA historical sketches. Margaret Prang has written an important article on the CGIT exploring its ideology ("The Girl God Would Have Me Be': The Canadian Girls in Training, 1915-39," *Canadian Historical Review* LXVI, No. 2 (1985): 154-184.
17. Even though the programs of the MREC were divided by gender, the groups did encourage co-educational activities (see "Co-Operation with the Teen Age Boys' Department," in *The Leader's Book, CGIT* [Toronto: The National Girls' Work Board of The Religious Education Council of Canada, 1934], 94-95).
18. I have not been able to verify whether or not this initiative was acted upon from the sources available to me.
19. For example, a number of youth from Port Maitland, Yarmouth County, "spent an enjoyable evening, 18 July, at Greenwood Camp" "Port Maitland column," *Tattler*, 3 August 1935, 5.
20. The Freeport Baptist Young Peoples' Union was formed in the fall of 1893 (Robert Alder Colpitts, "The Maritime BYPU Through Fifty Years," B.Th. Thesis, Acadia University, 1943, Appendix I, 4).
21. The sense of the unity and co-operative spirit can be found in *The Freeport Gazette* (30 April 1943): "In Tiverton, we [the BYPU] share a ministry with the folk of the Christian Church. The people co-operate well as the minister[s] direct their services on alternate Sundays without any conflicts in appointment or any sense of rivalry. We quite realize that the ideas should be for the One Church but until that time comes when this can be brought about we are glad to work together in this spirit of harmony and mutual helpfulness (3)."
22. This magazine was printed for BYPUs by the Atlantic Baptist Convention for three years, 1934 to 1936 (Colpitts, "The Maritime BYPU: Through 50 Years," B.D. thesis, Acadia, 1945, 45).
23. "Plans are being made to start a BYPU for the winter months" by Rev. J. G. Wakeling in Central Grove (*Tattler*, 25 November 1937, 2). The BYPU appears to be in place for older youth.

24. *Tattler*, 21 December 1939, 8.
25. *Tattler*, 22 February 1940, 2.
26. *Tattler*, "A The Man About Town," 25 August 1938, 2.
27. *Tattler*, 3 August 1935, 2.
28. For instance, see "The Quiet Hour" feature entitled, "Appeal to Youth," by Rev. A. L. Huddleston, D.D. of Halifax, suggesting that young people let the "love of God guide us in our amusements." (*Tattler*, 4 January 1936, 9).
29. *Tattler*, November 1933 (monthly at this stage), 5.
30. *Tattler*, 9 November 1935, 16.
31. Note that the liquor "problem," unemployment, youth and war, and issues of peace were suggested as world problem issues for discussion by BYUP for 1934/35 (see Insert in *The Challenger*, ed. Margaret Hutchins (Saint John or Kentville: The Maritime Baptist Young Peoples' Convention, November 1934).
32. *Tattler*, 23 November 1939, 4.
33. Refer to the *Nova Scotia Liquor Control Act*, S.N.S. 1930, c. 2.
34. Nova Scotia, "Report of the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission," in *Journals of the House of Assembly* (Halifax, 1930), 5.
35. For instance, see the March and September Issues of *The Upward Trail*, a quarterly publication of the Maritime Tuxis Parliament (under the auspices of the Maritime Religious Education Council).
36. See Levy, *The Baptists of the Maritime Provinces*, 261-264.
37. The *Tattler* had carried an article concerning on a meeting held at Immanuel Baptist Church in Truro, reporting on ways to fight the liquor store system. The speaker was Rev. A. A. MacLeod, Field Secretary of the Sons of Temperance (*Tattler*, 2 June 1938, 3).
38. *Tattler*, 7 October 1937, 3.
39. *Tattler*, 21 March 1940, 3.
40. A woman, Phyllis Crocker, served with the RCAF and was stationed in Prince Edward Island in 1943 (*The Freeport Gazette*, 30 April 1943, last page). Several thousand women served with the branches of the armed forces during the Second World War (see the web page of Veterans Affairs Canada,

[“http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/historical/secondwar/vrww2.htm”](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/historical/secondwar/vrww2.htm)).

41. The predictions included in this fanciful letter of the future have proven surprisingly and uncannily true in most cases. Its Freeport writer, Keith Perry, must have been an avid observer. Perry was also present as a youth counsellor at the MREC’s Pinehurst Camp in Nova Scotia during the 1940s (see MREC, “Records of Pinehurst Camp”, Vol. 2, 1941-1951 in the Baptist Collection of Acadia University).
42. *The Freeport Gazette*, 30 April 1943, 5.
43. Beginning in 1939, a new question and answer column was unveiled, called “Aunt Judy.” Aunt Judy gave serious answers to questions sent to the paper for her response. Her identity was never revealed; however, I suspect that she was respected as much as “Dear Abby” is today (*Tattler*, 14 December 1940, 1). Many of her questions dealt with youthful relationships and difficulties.
44. For instance, the publishers of the *Tattler* also printed for differing periods, *The Tiny Telegram* for the Caledonia area of Queen’s County, and *The Bridgewater High School Globe* in Lunenburg County.

**The Calgary Local Council of Women:
Traditional Female Christianity in Action
(1895-1897 and 1912-1933)**

ANNE WHITE

In 1938, Alice Grevett delivered the Presidential address before the Calgary Local Council of Women (hereafter CLCW). Grevett reminisced over the Council's past 26 years of social activism. She stated,

Look back in imagination over the years and see the Council as a part of the Woman's Movement by women for women; see it as part of an expression of the community's needs, attempting to bring the need for remedial legislation to the attention of the provincial authorities, to serve women and children of all creeds; see it as a manifestation of democracy in a country whose people have come from differing traditions, from all nations and races.

Identifying and expressing the religious sentiments of the CLCW, Grevett continued,

. . . 26 years of organized service to the community. We were organized to be of mutual helpfulness and understanding . . . to help build a Christian order; to try to educate public opinion by our own experiences what the needs of others are, and as to conditions of today which must be changed if we are to give women that fullest kind of life.¹

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These statements embody two clearly identifiable themes: female social activism and Christian religious conviction, which within the historical time frame from 1912 to 1933, presents an intriguing picture of a powerful, politically-motivated female lobby group. It was during this period, as at no other time during the CLCW's history, that the presence of a strong evangelical influence was so obviously linked with social activism.² Also to be noted is the fact that the strongest, most assertive leadership came from women in whose denominations revivalism was an accepted vehicle for social and religious renewal.³ Further, there is also strong evidence of an ecumenical and progressive outlook, with groups from the Catholic and Jewish communities participating on the Council.⁴ Corroboration of these facts is to be found within the unbroken records of the CLCW from 1920 to 1933.⁵ Unfortunately records from 1911 to 1919 are sparse and most of them are acknowledged to have been mislaid.⁶

Confessions of Faith and Identity of Purpose

Upon becoming an affiliate of the powerful National Council of Women, the CLCW adopted as its primary creed the official "Confession of Faith" composed in 1894 by the Federation of Women for the inaugural meeting of the National Council. One of the major tenets of this Creed expressed resolve to "further the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom and law."⁷ The full National Council Creed read,

We, Women of Canada, sincerely believing that the best good of our homes and nation will be advanced by our own greater unity of thought, sympathy and purpose, and that an organized movement of women will best conserve the highest good of the Family and the State, do hereby band ourselves together to further the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom and law.⁸

In addition to this, for Local Council affiliates there was a further statement of intent which was issued by the National Council as a guide and explanation of purpose and identify. It read,

Believing that the more intimate knowledge of one another's work will result in larger mutual sympathy and greater unity of thought, and therefore in more effective action, certain Associations of Women

interested in Philanthropy, Religion, Education, Literature, Art and Social Reform, have determined to organize Local Councils.⁹

It is within these declarations that the key to the strength and motivation of this formidable Albertan movement may be found.

Calgarian Distinctions as a Local Council

In Calgary alone, the re-constituted Local Council of 1912 was the first Albertan organization of women to present an Albertan petition for the provincial franchise in 1914.¹⁰ In addition to this, among its other accomplishments, the CLCW was the first Albertan women's group to achieve political gains and representation for women with the election of various female candidates to influential appointments. One of its members, the evangelical Christian, Annie Foote, was the first female Calgarian Public School Trustee.¹¹ Another CLCW member, also an evangelical Christian, Annie Gale, became Canada's first City Alderwoman. There was also the appointment of CLCW President Alice Jamieson as the first female magistrate of a juvenile court in the British Empire. Jamieson too also a devout Christian.¹² Further, the CLCW record attests to the successful campaigns for education, rights, equality, health care, and protection for women and children.

Traditionally, the women of the CLCW had little legal voice within their own conventional Christian denominations and until 1916 possessed no provincial voting rights of their own. However, these women were able to circumvent subtly the rigid religious and societal controls to establish a formidable, well-organized political vehicle. The CLCW created a separate, autonomous group, which enabled them to express their considerable expertise and knowledge of social issues, to effect positive change in their community, Alberta, and the Dominion of Canada.¹³

Composition, Constitution and Earlier History of the CLCW

The composition of the reconstituted Council reflected an impressive representation of Calgarian women's societies and service clubs. These organizations had themselves been established much earlier in Calgary's history. In itself, this comprehensive selection of societies was in accordance with a directive from the National Council of Women which advised

those wishing to form a Local Council to obtain copies of the “Constitution and Rules and papers bearing on the aims and workings of the Council” and to “distribute these papers to ladies representing the different churches, societies and institutions in the district who would be likely to take an interest in the formation of such an organization.”¹⁴ This directive was first issued circa 1894 when the National Council was first formed.

Historically, the first formal attempt to form a Local Council in Calgary was undertaken approximately one year after the publication of this directive, in November 1895.¹⁵ This attempt was launched by Lady Ishbel, Countess of Aberdeen, first President of Canada’s National Council of Women, upon her arrival in Calgary that year.

Lady Aberdeen was herself a devout, conservative, Presbyterian, evangelical Christian and she emphasized in her addresses the “feminine” quality of nurturing as the high calling of the Local Council. This high calling revolved around an expanded concept of the “mothering” influence within the community.¹⁶ According to the *Alberta Tribune*, Lady Aberdeen called on the women of Canada, “. . . to carry that spirit of love, which they already recognize as the principle governing home life, into this higher life, and thus from one end of Canada to the other we shall find ourselves bound in a golden link of sisterhood.”¹⁷ The *Alberta Tribune* also reported Lady Aberdeen’s call “to love, to understand and serve one another.”¹⁸ In response to her leadership a small Local Council was formed.

Rudimentary analysis of the early Council indicates that eleven affiliate groups joined and that six of these were clearly identifiable as Christian organizations. Out of the eleven groups in 1896 there were three Methodist, two Anglican and one Catholic society.¹⁹

Church leaders and politicians from these denominations were quick to endorse an organization espousing the lofty sentiments of a “mothering” mission.²⁰ Nevertheless, the CLCW was short-lived as division soon arose surrounding the traditional subservient role of women in relation to the authoritative participation of male patrons endorsing and directing the Council.²¹ This caused concern from amongst the more independent female members of the Council who believed that the organization should function as an autonomous women’s movement.²² Another contentious issue was the subject of suffrage which many of these women were eager to address in an early campaign for the provincial franchise.²³ For these primary reasons, coupled with internal manoeuvring for political influence, the first CLCW was disbanded in 1898.

Henrietta Muir Edwards Organizes the New CLCW

By 1912, however, a new era appears to have arrived, one in which a Local Council presented as a viable independent entity. This is evidenced by the response to the visit of Henrietta Muir Edwards to Calgary in the fall of 1912. The renowned Muir Edwards was Vice President of the National Council of Women.

When Muir Edwards arrived in Calgary to create a new Local Council she was almost 63 years-old and came with the reputation of a prominent social activist with deep religious convictions. She possessed an extensive record of Christian service in Montreal, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and held credentials in the women's movement dating back more than twenty years.²⁴

In 1893 Muir Edwards had espoused the suffrage movement as a member of the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association. The Association later changed its name to become the Canadian Suffrage Association (CSA). Seventeen years later, in 1910, Muir Edwards' commitment to the cause was rewarded when, through her influence, the National Council of Women endorsed the women's suffrage resolution tabled by the CSA.

Muir Edwards further distinguished herself as a founding member of the Alberta and Saskatchewan WCTU in 1905, as well as becoming its Superintendent of Equal Franchise and Citizenship. Further to this she also became recognized as a leading authority on Canadian/Dominion law as it pertained to women and children. Ten years after her successful campaign to establish the Calgary Local Council of Women, Muir Edwards published a work entitled *Legal Status of Women of Alberta*. This text was authorized by the Attorney General of Alberta and served as a legal reference for many years.²⁵

Muir Edwards was a charismatic, seasoned campaigner, tough yet remarkably kind and sensitive. She had been raised as a Baptist and had been exposed to revivals and the evangelical emphasis on the new birth. During the 1860s and 1870s the transatlantic evangelical revival had inspired many young women to work for God including Muir Edwards. She espoused many evangelical causes but it was her lifelong commitment to women's issues that promoted her to leadership in the campaigns for female enfranchisement, equality, legal rights and status.²⁶

By 1912 Henrietta Muir Edwards held the position of Vice-President with the National Council of Women for Alberta, with the responsibility for organizing its Local Councils. Her expertise and organizational abilities, together with the ability to inspire others, were credentials by which she was recognized and respected in many women's groups throughout Canada.

When Mrs. Muir Edwards arrived in Calgary in 1912 it was with the intent to re-establish the Calgary Local Council of Women. It would appear from an analysis of the original Calgary affiliate groups that the women whom she attracted to the first meeting and subsequently drew into membership, were sympathetic to her objectives. These women formed the new, aggressive, organized and committed Local Council in 1912, and among its membership lay some of the most talented and articulate women in the Calgarian community.

On 26 October 1912, at the inaugural meeting of the CLCW, only 50 women were present to hear Muir Edwards' address. Fortunately, those 50 women served as representatives for the majority of important women's groups in Calgary. Due to the diversity of the organizations and their demonstrated commitment to the Calgarian community, these groups were amenable to Muir Edwards' advice that the Local Council abstain from religious and political factions. In order to pursue their goals of social reform the women accepted the reality that religious and political points of difference would have to be set aside.²⁷

Composition of the Re-constituted CLCW

An interim executive was elected on 26 October to function until the Annual Meeting was held on January 1913. Mrs. R.R. Jamieson (Alice) was elected President and seven other executive members were appointed. Each acting executive member was officially appointed at the Annual Meeting in 1913.

The aggregate membership of the executive alone reflected the involvement of the Protestant and Catholic churches in the Calgarian community. Those groups represented included the Ladies Aid Society, the Mothers Union, the Methodist Women's Missionary Society, the WCTU, the YWCA, the Victorian Order of Nurses, the Independent Order of the Daughters of the Empire, the Hospital Aid Society, Children's Aid Society, the Alberta Women's Association, the Woman's Canadian Club,

the Calgary Women's Literary Society, the Calgary Woman's Press Club and the Business Women's Club of Calgary.²⁸ With the inclusion of the affiliate groups represented within the general membership of the CLCW, it soon became a movement dominated by a Christian majority.²⁹

Reflected within these women's societies and clubs was the drive, expertise, commitment and social awareness of groups already well attuned to the political, social and religious issues of the day. Each group had previously from its own endeavours established itself within the Calgarian community and had already created a network with other groups in the city.

In addition to this, within the context of traditional links within the Christian community in Calgary, there was close communication between women's groups. For example, denominationally affiliated organizations such as the Mothers Union, Methodist Women's Missionary Society, and the Ladies Aid Society, shared multiple interests and membership within wider inter-denominational groups such as the WCTU, the YWCA and the Children's Aid Society. All groups shared common ideologies based on evangelical or social gospel belief systems. These included the improvement of society and morals, temperance issues, law reforms regarding custodial rights for mothers, and rights and protection for women, children and the destitute. Later, from 1914 to 1918, the shared ideologies would expand to include the goals of obtaining the provincial and federal franchise. As a consequence, there was an identifiable overlapping of interests and an overlapping of memberships within the groups.³⁰

The CLCW and the Women's Forum

This complex composition of group interests united in a common front can be identified from the inception of the re-instituted Calgary Local Council of Women in 1912. Historically, the first demonstration of this complex group ideology and choreographed program of action can be identified in early December, 1912.

After its formation on 26 October, 1912, the CLCW lost no time in establishing its credibility and its power to involve Calgarian women in political campaigning. A municipal election was scheduled for 9 December 1912. Voter participation in the past, especially on the part of women, had traditionally been low. Since women in Calgary had been afforded the municipal vote in 1894 the CLCW decided it was time to create female

voter awareness.

The Civic Committee of the CLCW sent a letter to Calgary's female voters notifying them of a public forum to be held on 6 December 1912. The letter informed the women that at this forum the 40 candidates for the offices of mayor, alderman and commissioner, would be invited to address the women's concerns and questions. This would give the women an opportunity to assess who would be "the most moral and progressive" candidates.³¹

On 6 December 1912, history was made and the Women's Forum proved a noted success. The Forum was chaired by Mrs. Emily Kerb, Vice-President of the CLCW, and the list of prepared questions was read out by Miss Annie Foote, secretary of the Local Council's Civic Committee.

The questions presented by Miss Foote covered various bylaw issues. Some questions concerning the provision of sanitary, safe and comfortable accommodation for those of modest means were raised. This especially addressed the needs of young women employed in offices and stores, who needed warm, safe and affordable lodging. These questions reflected the perceived threat to young women and the concern that the Council felt for the young women's moral safety. The women of the Council believed there to be a connection between insufficient wages, poverty, poor accommodation and ensuing immorality to provide for the necessities of life.³²

Other questions concerned such issues as: the preservation of Sunday as a day of rest for all Calgarians; the enforcement of the bylaw forbidding boxing matches or "contests" within the city limits,³³ and the enforcement of equal justice and punishment to be "meted out to the men and women found in houses of ill fame."³⁴

Within the press reports of the Forum certain interesting points emerge: (1) the candidates did not anticipate the level of awareness, discernment and ruthlessness of their female inquisitors; (2) the sins of omission and commission on a political and public level were clearly identified by the women; and (3), condescension on the part of the male politicians was promptly and aggressively confronted. The Calgary press was quick to pick up on these factors and the headlines the next morning in *The Morning Albertan* read, "Candidates Raked by Merciless Fire of Cross Questioning by Women."³⁵

Voter attendance for the 9 December 1912 civic election was the largest in the history of Calgary. Arising out of this renewed civic interest

the *Calgary News Telegram* stated that a year of reform lay ahead for Calgary and that this hopefully would lead to the improvement of municipal conditions.³⁶

Historically, the Forum is also interesting in that it appears to showcase the CLCW's enduring approach to female involvement in political and moral issues. In the public arena, a mayoralty candidate, R.A. Brocklebank, was relentlessly questioned by Mrs. M.S. Russell, representative of the Calgary Women's Hostel. Mrs. Russell, ignoring the social convention of female delicacy, confronted Mr. Brocklebank as to his real estate interests in the thriving red-light district of Calgary's South Coulee. Mrs. Russell drew the audience's attention to the fact that Mr. Brocklebank had financial connections to bordellos in that area and that he had been present in a notorious cafeteria at the time of a police raid. She noted that his name had been omitted from the police charge sheet. Mr. Brocklebank denied knowledge of both the bordello connection and his fortuitous omission from the charge sheet.³⁷

Membership and Philosophy

As previously observed, the Women's Forum acted as the springboard for the CLCW to display its concern for morality and justice. It was a platform to which it remained committed over the years. Analysis of the Council in 1912, and then from 1920 to 1933 when there are more comprehensive records, presents a consistently religious identity. The societies in membership ranged from 41 to 48 in number, and even when not overtly linked by religious affiliation, the majority of these societies still reflected a religious orientation. In addition to this, each President of the Council from 1912 to 1933 was identified by her denominational affiliation and some link to religious work within that denomination.³⁸

The CLCW's social activist stance was a successful one. On a municipal level during the years 1912 to 1933, the Calgary Local Council was instrumental in the establishment of: (1) the inclusion of women on local boards and government committees; (2) legal aid to women including immigrant domestics and unwed mothers; (3) a Housekeepers' Association with protection for domestic workers; (4) a local Consumers League and Humane (charities) Society; (5) safeguards to protect babies against venereal disease; (6) a police matron to aid female prisoners and, (7) a town planning commission with the resulting appointment of a woman to

the commission.³⁹

Provincially, the influential CLCW also participated actively in the successful campaigns for: (1) the franchise for Albertan women (gained in 1916); (2) the Mother's Pension; (3) the Woman's Home Protection Act; (4) the Devolution of Estates Act; (5) the age of consent raised to 18 years of age; (6) marriage licences to be obtained through a regulated, legal procedure; (7) a woman's right to the custody of her own child, and (8) the marriage age raised to 16.⁴⁰

Federally, the CLCW as an affiliate of the National Council of Women, participated in the campaign for the legal recognition of women as persons under the BNA Act and their appointment as senators within the parliamentary system. At the National Convention of the NCW, held in Calgary in 1921, it is recorded that Mrs. Arthur (Emily) Murphy urged that "the time to act is now when vacancies (in the senate) are open." There was one dissenting voice – Charlotte Whitton representing Kingston, ON. The motion was still proposed by Mrs. Jean MacIvor of Toronto and seconded by Mrs. G.W. (Emily) Kerb of Calgary.⁴¹ The motion was carried.

The CLCW – "Mental Hygiene" and the "Menace of Mental"

At the same National Convention, among the many positive aspects and gains recorded, there is also a report noted which presents an aspect of Canadian, North American and European history which cannot be overlooked. This report addressed the problems associated with mental illness regarded as the "menace of mental disease" and the need for "mental hygiene"⁴² This approach or theoretical remedy was known as *eugenics* and it presented itself as a popular "scientific" answer to the problems of "mental disease." The idea itself had found popularity in western Canada in the early 1900s and "instilled in the public a belief that scientific knowledge was a means to improve existing social conditions."⁴³ Eugenics argued that defective genetics, manifested in insanity, vice and criminal activities – mostly demonstrated within the characters of the poor and the foreign immigrant – could gradually be culled from the population by effective birth control measures. These measures were believed to be most efficiently implemented through sterilization. This sterilization process would be imposed upon those identified as "defective."

This belief in a scientific solution, however chilling to the modern

reader, was regarded as a “logical” answer by many during this period. This is clearly reflected in Mrs. J.J. Hall’s NCW Mental Hygiene report presented at the National Convention held in Calgary, in June 1921. The report clearly demonstrated that within society at that time “. . . there was a pre-occupation with the ‘mental illness menace’ and its cause.”⁴⁴ As an outcome of these concerns remedy was actively sought in an endeavour to control the perceived sources of social problems.

Listed in Hall’s report were five principles which were “universally acknowledged to be true”: (1) insanity is a disease which may be cured by proper remedial measures; (2) feeble-mindedness is an inherited condition and is incurable; (3) manual labour has been proven an invaluable remedial measure in the treatment of insanity; (4) segregation is essential in preventing the increase of feeble-mindedness; (5) the insane and the feeble-minded should not be housed together and treated in the same manner.

During the National Convention a further recommendation was proposed by the Citizenship Committee which requested that mental examinations and subsequent registration of all subnormal cases within Canada be conducted. In addition to this it was proposed that mentally deficient women of child-bearing age be “supervised” which basically meant that they would be segregated from males and general society. By being segregated in this way the women would not have opportunity to reproduce.⁴⁵

As part of the perceived threat to a well-ordered society attention was also given to the massive numbers of immigrants pouring into Canada. Two studies were discussed during the NCW convention which illustrated the concerns of the NCW. These were studies conducted on immigrant populations in the Montreal and Toronto areas and ultimately the studies drew the conclusions that “criminality and vice had a direct relation to insanity,” especially among the foreign populations. On the basis of these studies, together with other information, the Emigration Committee forwarded to “the meeting of the premiers through the secretary of state for the colonies,” a petition asking that a uniform medical standard for immigrants be set.⁴⁶ The intent of this petition was to restrict or block the number of defective or undesirable immigrants entering Canada.

There is no doubt that the NCW, CLCW and the other Local Councils who participated in the 1921 National Convention were deeply concerned and involved with these issues. By 1922 the problem of “mental

hygiene” and the perceived need for effective remedial measures in answer to the presence of vice, criminality and the spread of mental illness, had crystallized into an official movement within Alberta.

The CLCW, the Provincial Council and the Delegation of 1922

On 12 January 1922, the *Morning Albertan* reported that a “delegation of outstanding women of (the) Province” met with Premier Greenfield in Edmonton. The deputation of women presented Greenfield with a proposed plan for social improvement and change.⁴⁷ The delegation of outstanding women was led by Mrs. P.S. Woodhall. Woodhall was a prominent Calgarian and a spokeswoman for the Provincial Council of Women. The Local Councils within Alberta were affiliates of the Provincial Council of Women and the Calgary Local Council of Women also consequently held membership within it.⁴⁸ By 1922 the CLCW had gained a prominent position within the Provincial Council as Mrs. P. S. Woodhall was a leading women within the organization. Woodhall had been President of the Calgary Council from 1920 to 1921.

From the *Morning Albertan* report it is clear that the representatives from the Provincial Council met with Premier Greenfield and a Cabinet delegation. The women of the Council placed before Greenfield certain social and religious concerns. It was reported that those concerns met with a sympathetic hearing from the government, whose members at the same time urged caution and time for deliberation.

In true newspaper style, the *Morning Albertan* listed in order of importance the main targets for social change raised by the Provincial Council of Women. There were eight main topics: (1) custodial care and sterilization of the mentally deficient; (2) equality within the divorce laws; (3) a detention home for prostitutes; (4) an industrial school for delinquent boys; (5) amendments to the dower law for widows; (6) request for the compulsory reading of the Lord’s Prayer and a portion of Scripture “without comment” in the public schools; (7) the appointment of women as board members on any provincial “boards named to deal with laws or matters where women were concerned,” and (8) the training and appointment of female nurses to assist in rural areas as community nurses in hospitals and to provide home care nursing support in isolated areas.

Upon examination, seven of the eight points present the familiar platform held by these women. It goes without argument that it is the first

point – the care of the “mentally deficient” – that raises discomfort and consternation. The *Morning Albertan* reported that, “The outstanding feature of the hearing was the discussion on the care and treatment of the mentally deficient, and the great need of some radical measures to prevent reproduction by mentally deficient men and women.”⁴⁹

It is clear that the Provincial Council was lobbying on behalf of the Local Councils for legislation to implement compulsory sterilization of these unfortunate people. It is also apparent, no matter how utterly incomprehensible to the modern reader, that during this era sterilization was regarded as a modern, progressive, “humane answer to the menace” and to the growing problems in dealing with the “insane and the feeble minded”!⁵⁰

That the eugenics movement was popular can be seen in ensuing developments that same year and again in 1928. The United Farm Women of Alberta adopted a eugenics program in 1922 and in 1928, the United Farmers of Alberta enacted Canada’s first legislation concerning compulsory sterilization of the mentally defective.⁵¹ From the perspective of the late-twentieth century the whole concept of eugenics is utterly revolting. Nevertheless historically, in the context of the Provincial Council and the Local Councils, it must be submitted that the full and horrible ramifications of the theory of eugenics had not yet been fully experienced or comprehended.

Indeed this defence of ignorance is clearly supported by the naive approach the Calgary Local Council still retained in 1933 and which it expounded in its *Year Book Souvenir* dated that same year. In its list of achievements the CLCW recorded, alongside its many praiseworthy accomplishments, the “custodial care of mentally defective – also sterilization of same.”⁵² A question must be raised at this point – no matter how controversial. One must ask, did these women in the 1920s and early 1930s fully comprehend the pain and suffering that would later become apparent in the 1940s, 1950s, through to the 1990s?

Another factor overlooked in this context is that the Local Councils were trying to create safe environments for many mentally ill people as many of these unfortunate people had been abandoned, physically abused and/or sexually exploited by others within society. That the women of the Local Councils failed to understand the full logical outcome of their actions, and the depth of sensitivity that many mentally challenged people were capable of, does not negate all of the Local Councils’ sincere

concerns and actions for the welfare of this disadvantaged group.

This explanation does not seek to dismiss the dreadful lobbying and ultimate outcome of legislation but it does offer a historical setting in which to view these actions and the part played by the Calgary Local Council. In defence of the Local Councils and the Provincial Council, a comparison must be made between the repugnant eugenics viewpoint and the rest of the women's record. Speaking to the Local Councils of Women, including the CLCW, the 1933 *Year Book Souvenir* lists the following achievements:

Provincial Franchise brought in by the WCTU and the Local Councils.
 Equal Parental Rights.
 Married Women's Relief Act.
 Women's Home Protection Act.
 Dower Act and Devolution of Estates.
 Home for Mental Defectives.
 Mother's Allowance Act.
 Old Age Pensions.
 Non-publication of names of juvenile offenders.
 Issuing of marriage licences at court house only by responsible parties.
 Care of indigent poor – each municipality required to provide for its own.
 Custodial care of mentally defective – also sterilization of same.
 Appointment of women to all boards and commissions dealing with questions appertaining to women and children.
 . . . That divorce in Alberta be granted to a wife on the same grounds as
 to the husband.
 . . . Establishment of eligibility of women to the Canadian Senate through five petitioners – the late Mrs. O.C. Edwards, the late Mrs. Louise McKinney, the Hon. Irene Parlby, Judge Emily Murphy, and Mrs. Nelly McClung, each one at some time a delegate to the Provincial Executive of the National Council of women.⁵³

The question to be raised at this point is, should the reader completely reject or despise all of the achievements of the Local Councils based on one, albeit tremendous mistake? From the perspective of the successful social reforms implemented by the Calgary Local Council of

Women, should all their achievements, including their powerful lobbying for protection of all women and children, despite race or creed, be dismissed?

In order to understand the Calgary Local Council, and reach an objective conclusion, it is essential to again examine the profile of the group within its religious-socio-historical context. Distressing as it may be, the hard historical fact is that many people within Canadian, American, British and European society considered eugenics to be a “scientific” answer to many societal woes. In rebuttal to this and to their credit, there were others who adamantly opposed the theory.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, however, history attests to the fact that eugenics was a popular, powerful if controversial, totally incorrect “answer.”

Profile of the Second CLCW

Upon returning to the enlightened and progressive aspects of the CLCW it is still fair to state that the well-being of women and children was paramount to the group. By definition of the creeds to which the CLCW adhered, together with their other campaigns for reform, it is clear that they perceived themselves to be activists for, and on behalf of, many disadvantaged within society. In addition to this, it is also clear that there were very strong religious overtones which, when analysed, are distinctly Christian in outlook. It would be reasonable, therefore, from this analysis to conclude that social reform, the Golden Rule and the Christianization of society were all inextricably linked together and integrated within the Council’s philosophy.

Further to this, and proceeding from examination of the CLCW’s composition, additional information is adduced as to the complexity of the group. The women of the CLCW were clearly successful, aggressive and politically astute members of Calgarian society. They also considered their female perspective to be a great asset and strength, and were very clear about their roles both as nurturers and reformers in the community. There appears to have been no conflict between the two identities as they apparently derived strength from both. This definition can easily lend itself to a simple categorization of the group as social activist and/or maternal feminist.

Additional historical analysis, however, presents greater complexity. Research indicates that in the West, during the period 1912 to 1933, there

existed another popular ideology. This ideology was the social gospel and the movement exerted a powerful influence particularly in western Canada.⁵⁵ The denominations which were the most prominently affiliated with the social gospel in the west were the Methodists, Presbyterians and Anglicans. Again, the majority of the societies affiliated with the CLCW reflect this denominational composition. At this juncture another query might be raised as to whether these women were just part of the social gospel movement and merely a political adjunct of it instead of a manifestation of original, independent female religious spirit.

To complicate analysis further, another factor for consideration is the presence of a strong evangelical identity within the Council, which offsets the argument for a straightforward social gospel philosophy. As previously mentioned, Alice Jamieson, the CLCW's first President (1912-1915), was an evangelical Presbyterian. Emily Kerb was a strong Methodist and a one-time leader within the Women's Missionary Society. Mrs. Kerb was clear about the centrality of Christ in her life. Annie Gale and Annie Foot were also evangelicals. In addition to this, the consistent presence of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Society, the WCTU and even the Mothers Union, embody, albeit to varying degrees, traditional evangelical belief systems. Interestingly, these evangelical patterns appear not to be in conflict with the independent female ideology of the CLCW; indeed these belief systems appear to uphold and support the Council in its social reform campaigns.

The clue to the resolution of these contradictions is an innovative, yet logical explanation, found in Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau's work, *A Full Orbed Christianity*.⁵⁶ These writers argue that in Canada, the institutional church permitted a blending rather than a severing of evangelical and social gospel traditions.⁵⁷ From the preceding analysis of the CLCW, and Christie and Gauvreau's observations, it would appear that that is exactly what women within the CLCW did on an inter-denominational level.

Arising out of the foregoing analysis of the CLCW it is believed that the evidence supports the claim that all these ideological and religious factors were part of the Council's early identity. From the successful cohesion of the group and its adherence to the Creeds, it seems evident that some dynamic process of blending occurred early within the Council's history. If, as urged by Muir Edwards, the spirit of ecumenicism and toleration was fostered to enhance the women's cause, it is reasonable to

conclude that early in its organization the CLCW developed a unique religious synthesis which accommodated and embodied both the religious and secular convictions of its female community.

The reasons for the CLCW's social and religious identity are varied. They are additionally complicated by the interaction of one ideology with another. Nevertheless, when viewed as a complete entity, the group presents an intriguing example of a women's organization, empowered by religious beliefs and committed to a social goal. Historically the record attests to the Council's powerful influence in the shaping of Calgary, the Province of Alberta and the Dominion of Canada, during the First World War, labour and social unrest, religious change, and the beginning of the Great Depression. The CLCW's contribution to Canada was that in one small part of the Dominion it achieved rights, freedoms and a level of equality for women and protection for children. In accordance with the Council's credo these women followed the Golden Rule to the best of their ability. That they had feet of clay does not detract from their tremendous contribution to society and their political achievements on behalf of women and children of all classes.

Endnotes

1. Alice L. Grevett, "President's Address," Glenbow-Alberta Institute (hereafter GAI), CLCW, M5841, Box 1, F8 1-9.
2. Marjorie Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies: A History of The Calgary Local Council of Women* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 71.
3. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 71.
4. "Calgary Local Council of Women," *Annual Report, 1913*, from the personal archives of Marjorie Norris. See also "Roll Call: Calgary Local Council of Women, 1920," for the earliest record of Jewish affiliation through the Hebrew Church [sic] Ladies' Aid and the Jewish Benevolent Society.
5. Earliest existing CLCW records at the Glenbow Archives date only from 1919.
6. In examining the early years 1896-1911 extensive use has been made of the Norris' work, *A Leaven of Ladies*. Norris was President of the CLCW in 1972-73, and possesses in her own personal files a collection of earlier documents. It is from these sources that Norris has drawn for early details, and this writer, simply due to scarcity of other material, has extracted these

details from *A Leaven of Ladies*. The writer has also conducted interviews with Mrs. Norris concerning these facts.

7. *Women Workers of Canada, Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting and Conference of the National Council of Women of Canada*, Ottawa, April 1894, 22. The Golden Rule is the commandment of Jesus Christ, which states, "Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do so for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7:12, NASB).
8. *Hand-Book of the National Council of Women of Canada*, November 1899.
9. *Constitution Recommended by the National Council for Local Councils in Federation with the National Council of Women of Canada*, Toronto, ca. 1890.
10. *The Morning Albertan*, 10 October 1914.
11. By definition "evangelical" describes a crucicentric emphasis. This emphasis stresses the atoning work of Jesus Christ, his sacrificial death, and personal salvation gained through an individual relationship with him. It is the evangelical emphasis on personal regeneration – being "born again."
12. Interview with Marjorie Norris. See also *A Leaven of Ladies*, 135, 163, 148.
13. The independence of each Local Council was guaranteed within the National Council's constitution. By virtue of that autonomy each Local Council possessed the flexibility to deal with local issues, both political and social. At the same time, any matters brought before a provincial legislature had to be endorsed first by the executive committee of the NCWC (see Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 52).
14. *Hand-book of the National Council of Women of Canada*, November 1899, 52.
15. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 29.
16. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 26.
17. "A Royal Reception," *Alberta Tribune*, 30 November 1895, 4.
18. "A Royal Reception," *Alberta Tribune*, 30 November 1895, 4.
19. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 71.
20. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 13.
21. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 13.

22. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 14.
23. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 14.
24. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 51.
25. Henrietta Muir Edwards, *Legal Status of Women of Alberta as Show by Extracts from Dominion and Provincial Laws*, 1921.
26. Patricia Roome presents a thorough examination of Henrietta Muir Edwards' religious and social convictions in her dissertation, "Henrietta Muir Edwards: The Journey of a Canadian Feminist," Ph.D. diss., Simon Fraser University, 1996. For a religious perspective consult especially Chapters II and IX.
27. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 53.
28. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 53.
29. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 69.
30. Marilyn Whiteley, "The Methodist Woman's Missionary Society and Social Christianity: Towards 'A Broader Culture, A Wider Experience,'" unpublished mss., 5. Whiteley indicates a common overlapping motif which is evidenced in missionary and WCTU groups. This observation is corroborated within the Calgary community during 1911-1933, when there was extensive communication and correspondence pertaining to shared ideas and goals.
31. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 56.
32. This was a prevalent view and is regularly alluded to in the work of the CLCW (see Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 71). This was also a common view held by the National Council of Women (see "Poverty and Social Conditions," *Woman's Century*, October 1915, 4).
33. This question addressed concerns regarding unregulated fighting matches. At these fights it was believed that there was gambling, liquor, and also easy access to prostitutes who frequented these large, unruly male gatherings.
34. "Candidates Raked by Merciless Fire of Cross Questioning by Women," *The Morning Albertan*, 7 December 1912, 1-3.
35. "Candidates Raked by Merciless Fire of Cross Questioning by Women," *The Morning Albertan*, 7 December 1912, 1-3.
36. "Reform Laws Projected in Calgary," *Calgary News-Telegram*, 13 December 1912, 4.
37. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, pp 57-58.

38. "The Local Council of Women – Calgary, Alberta, Inaugurated – 1912," GAI, CLCW, M5841, Box 1, F8 1-9.
39. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, chapters 5 and 6.
40. Constance Lynd, "Women and the Ministry," *The Outlook*, 7 November 1928.
41. "Appointment of Women Senators Approved of by National Council," *The Calgary Daily Herald*, 17 June 1921, 26. See also Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 115.
42. "The Menace of Mental Disease," *Woman's Century*, February 1916, 3.
43. Terry L. Chapman, "Early Eugenics Movement in Western Canada," *Globe and Mail*, October 1997.
44. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 107.
45. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 107.
46. "Uniform Medical Standard Asked For Immigrants," *The Calgary Daily Herald*, 18 June 1921, 18.
47. "Greenfield Government Shows Strong Sympathy With Aims of Women's Council," *The Morning Albertan*, 12 January 1922.
48. Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies*, 78.
49. "Greenfield Government Shows Strong Sympathy with Aims of Women's Council," *The Morning Albertan*, 12 January 1922.
50. "The Menace of Mental Disease," *Woman's Century*, February 1916, 3.
51. Chapman, "Early Eugenics Movement," 9.
52. *Local Council of Women Year Book Souvenir 1933*, 30.
53. *Local Council of Women Year Book Souvenir 1933*, 30.
54. J.B.S. Haldane, FRS, Weldon Professor of Biometry at University of London, presented a rebuttal in his work, *Heredity and Politics* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1938). Haldane was one of many opponents of eugenics in the late 1930s. By 1936 it had become blatantly evident that there was a direct correlation between eugenics and Adolf Hitler's implementation of horrific measures in Germany.

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55. Richard Allen, "The Social Gospel and the Reform Tradition in Canada, 1890-1928," in *Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Canada*, eds. Samuel D. Clarke, J. Paul Grayson and Linda Grayson (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Limited, 1975), 46.
 56. Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada 1900-1940* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 42.
 57. Christie and Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*, 42.

“Casting Sand in the Eyes”: Conrad Bröske’s Literary Dispute with the Orthodox Reformed Preachers in Elberfeld, 1704-1706

DOUGLAS H. SHANTZ

I. Introduction

The present study examines a controversy between Conrad Bröske (1660-1713) and the Reformed preachers of the Elberfeld Classis. At issue was the decision by the Reformed parish Church in Elberfeld, Germany, to call Bröske as its “Second Preacher” against the advice of the Classis.¹ Lasting from November 1704 until mid 1706, the controversy provides significant insight into the personalities, issues and conflicts that dominated much of the religious landscape of the German Empire at that time, and which affected the German Reformed Church in particular. This paper is part of a larger investigation into the life and influence of Bröske, a German Reformed Court Preacher, radical Pietist and member of the German Philadelphian movement.

The study argues that while *theology* and *official formalities* were certainly significant to this dispute, it was *personal issues* that drove the controversy and took on a life of their own. On both sides matters of personal reputation and influence, perceived injury and injustice, Christian integrity and truth-telling were the driving force that prevented an easy resolution. These personal issues magnified Bröske’s suspected heterodoxy, a suspicion due largely to his numerous eschatological writings and millennialism. The study concludes that the same *ad hominem* factors that

scholars have previously found at work in Pietist-Orthodox controversies among the *Lutherans* were operative to a high degree in the *Reformed* context as well. One explanation for this phenomenon could be that Protestants generally, and Reformed churches in particular, faced a special problem: who decides if someone's interpretation of Scripture and the Confessions is acceptable?

A. Conrad Bröske (1660-1713), A Man of Controversy

Max Goebel's *Geschichte des christlichen Lebens in der rheinisch-westphälischen evangelischen Kirche, Bd. III* (1860) introduced Bröske as "a disciple of the English Chiliast [Thomas] Beverley, the latter a member of the Philadelphian Society in London, a group committed to the union of all true Christians among themselves. Bröske translated Beverley's apocalyptic-minded *Zeitregister* into German in 1696, as well as writing his own chiliastically-minded works which reflect Beverley's influence. He taught that the preparation time for the thousand year kingdom of Christ would begin around the year 1700. The first fruits of this kingdom he saw in the English Philadelphians and the beginnings of the Philadelphian movement among Pietists, Chiliasts, Quietists, and all those who found fellowship with each other without regard for confessional differences. The expected thousand year kingdom would last from 1772 to 2772."²

Bröske seemed to be a man born to controversy. An earlier study examined Bröske's controversy with a fellow Philadelphian, Johann Conrad Dippel. Lasting from 1700-1702, this dispute was intense, vigorous and acrimonious, with some sixteen treatises written back and forth and with accusations from both sides of duplicity, heresy and hypocrisy. Dippel took special offence at Bröske's Reformed theology and position as a Court Preacher within the State Church. The fact that Bröske retained outward ceremonies, including infant baptism, made him suspect to Dippel. Just two years after the first dispute had died out, Bröske again faced opposition but from the opposite flank. This second dispute forms the subject of the present study. Here Bröske found himself accused of compromising Reformed teaching on the church and sacraments. In facing this kind of double opposition, from both more conservative and more radical critics, Bröske was in good company, joining such famous Pietists as Philip Jakob Spener (1635-1705), August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) and Johann Wilhelm Petersen (1649-1726).³

B. The Sources for Investigating the Dispute between Bröske and the Elberfeld Classis

Volume three of Max Goebel's *Geschichte des christlichen Lebens in der rheinisch-westphälischen evangelischen Kirche* (1860), published posthumously, provides the best scholarly survey to date of the conflicts within the Reformed Church in the Rhine region in the eighteenth century. Goebel rejoiced that "the sources flow so richly" concerning the story of Philadelphian Chiliasm in Elberfeld, of which this controversy forms a part.⁴

The dispute in question ran to some eight treatises over a one and a half year period, four by Bröske and four by the Elberfeld preachers. Of these, six were available to me in whole or in part in researching this paper. Hans Schneider lamented in 1993 that two of Bröske's contributions, his *Rechtmäßige Schutzrede* of 1705 and *Billige Zurückweisung* of 1706, were "no longer obtainable."⁵ In fact, both of these Bröske works are available to scholars.⁶

II. Max Goebel's Presentation of the Controversy

A. Goebel's View of the Conflict: A Clash of Theologies

Goebel characterized the controversy as a classic conflict between the mystical Pietist religion of the heart and the Protestant Orthodox religion of doctrinal precision. He argued that the Elberfeld parish Church (*Gemeinde*) was inwardly-oriented and held to new, chiliastic, Philadelphian, erroneous teachings; the Classis, on the other hand, followed proper outward forms and held to old, strict, ecclesiastical traditions of right belief.⁷ And so for Goebel the conflict was first of all a clash of theologies and secondly one of formalities; the two sides disagreed over who held the correct *theology* and who was following proper *procedure* in appointments to church office. By contrast, we shall argue that while *theology* and *official formalities* were certainly at issue in this controversy, it was *personal issues* that constituted the real basis for dispute.

B. Goebel's Overview of the Conflict

At this point it would be useful to provide a brief sketch of the course of the controversy, as Goebel outlined it, before examining the parties and issues in detail. In fall of 1703 the Reformed Church in Elberfeld was shocked by the deaths, within just a month of each other, of

their two pastors, Andreas Austen of Rinteln and Peter Türk, at only 45 and 44 years of age. In Austen's place Johann Grüter was chosen, and in November of 1704 there followed the election of the second preacher of the Elberfeld Church. Issues related to the latter election would draw the recently arrived Grüter into angry quarrels with his Church lasting for several years.⁸

For some time various individuals in the Elberfeld Church had had their eye on the Court Preacher in Offenbach, Conrad Bröske, despite Bröske's reputation as a Philadelphian Chiliast. Indeed, noted Goebel, "on account of his pious, impartial and Philadelphian thinking, he [Bröske] had had on his side for some time a large and determined party among the electors, the members of the Consistory and the Church leaders or officers in the Elberfeld Church, with the result that he was officially elected and called."⁹

Grüter, at that time also Inspector of the Classis, sought in vain to hinder Bröske's election. For example, before the election he sought the judgment of the other preachers of the Elberfeld Classis concerning whether the Church should even be permitted to elect a preacher from outside the Classis (*der Wahl eines fremden Predigers*) before the Classis had received reliable testimonies as to his "pure teaching, blameless life and good behaviour." Even though the Classis voted ten to one against Bröske's candidacy, the Church went ahead with the election. The presbytery of the Elberfeld Church became embittered against Pastor Grüter since, without its prior knowledge, he had directed a circular letter to the Classis outlining his concerns.¹⁰

After the election on the 7th of November 1704, the Classis, with Grüter at the head, made a formal objection against Bröske's call and forbade the Church from issuing an official invitation. The Elberfeld Classis met on the 15th of December 1704 and identified some forty-two "strange, dangerous, offensive expressions and dogmas" in Bröske's writings¹¹ and raised the matter for investigation to the Provincial Synod. At the same time it warned Bröske from too quickly accepting the improper election.

Meanwhile Bröske felt deeply offended by all that had happened. He turned down the call, but then complained at length in his writings about the hasty and arbitrary proceeding of the Elberfeld Classis. He authored for this reason his *Rechtmäßige Schutzrede (Legitimate Defence)*, published on the 12th of March 1705. To this the Elberfeld Classis set in opposition

its *Gerechtsame Ablehnung* or *Justified Refusal* followed by Bröske's *Billige Zurückweisung* or *Reasonable Rebuttal*. The Classis replied in 1706 with the *Wohlgegründete Verthätigung* or *Well-founded Defence of the truth and innocence of the Elberfeld Classis against Brüske's Illegitimate Defence and Unreasonable Rebuttal*. In that same year the Classis produced, with the approval of the Synod and with the support of the theological Faculty in Leyden, a massive critique of millennialism entitled, *Wagschale* or *The Scales, in which the newly conceived thousand year kingdom of Mr. Conrad Bröske is weighed and found to be too light by the Evangelical Reformed Preachers of the Elberfeld Classis* (1706).¹²

The Consistory of the Elberfeld parish Church decided to consult its own experts, seeking an opinion from the theological Faculty in Frankfurt on the Oder. The Frankfurt Faculty found nothing seriously heterodox or sectarian in Bröske's writings so as to make him ineligible. This judgment strengthened the opposition of the Church's Presbytery against Pastor Grüter and the Classis. Only in 1706 did the Synod succeed in settling the dispute between the Elberfeld Church and Grüter by a formal agreement and a new election which appears to have satisfied the Bröske party.¹³

III. Parties to the Controversy

We now take a more careful look first of all at the parties and then at the issues involved in this controversy. The parties include the Reformed parish Church in Elberfeld, the Classis of Reformed preachers in the surrounding region led by Johann Grüter, and finally Conrad Bröske. The purpose of this section is to indicate for each party something of their social perspective and theological standpoint as background for understanding their positions on the issues of controversy.

A. The Reformed Church in Elberfeld

Elberfeld is situated about 25 km or 15 miles east of Düsseldorf, in the Ruhr region of northwestern Germany. It was completely destroyed by fire in 1687. Thanks to the protection of special regional privileges, this small municipality was soon thriving again. By 1719 it would number some 3,000 people, leaving behind its far older sister cities of Solingen and Düsseldorf, the Prince's residence city.¹⁴

There was at that time only one Reformed Church in Elberfeld. It joined other Churches in the lower Rhine Reformed Church region in

making the *Heidelberg Catechism* the foundation and norm of public teaching. The Bergische Synod called it "the only symbol book of these churches." The *Catechism* served as the teaching norm in all credentialing and certification of pastors. It was used in schools and in catechizing, and Sunday afternoon sermons were based upon it.¹⁵

There were also other forces at work in shaping the piety of the Elberfeld Church. This is evidenced in the Church's openness towards Pietist thinking and its interest in Bröske's writings and teaching.¹⁶ In the first third of the 18th century, the Reformed Church in the lower Rhine region around Düsseldorf found itself influenced by a variety of separatist groups and individuals. One list of these includes: Hochmann from Wittgenstein, Johann Conrad Dippel from Hessen, Hummel from Heidelberg, Conrad Bröske from Offenbach, Schleyermacher from Gemünd in Hessen, Gerhard Tersteegen from Mülheim in the lower Rhine region.¹⁷

B. Johann Grüter and the Elberfeld Classis

In his *Schutz-Rede* Bröske indicated the names of some nine pastors "who have not conducted themselves towards me in a brotherly fashion."¹⁸ He did this, he said, in order to spare the innocent. His list included: Johannes Grüter, pastor in Elberfeld and Inspector of the Classis; Johannes Sethman, Assessor (Assistant) of the Classis; Conrad Gülcher, secretary of the Classis; Rütgerus Henckel, minister in Düsseldorf; Thomas Kolhagius, minister in Gruten; J.H. Ovenius, minister in Cronenberg; Johann Halffman, minister in Sonborn; Friderich Johann Sethman, minister in Belbert; Johann Caspar Kersten, minister in Gräffrath. These are the individuals who represented Bröske's main opposition before, during and after his election as Second Preacher in Elberfeld.

During the first third of the 18th century there were constant conflicts and battles between church authorities and separatist groups.¹⁹ This evidently created a climate of suspicion that helps to explain the anxiety of the Classis over the candidacy of an "outsider" whose theology was suspect. Goebel notes that "all Klass and Synod minutes from this period contain bitter complaints about the spread of the Pietists and 'Schwärmer' or of the sectarian character of the itinerant, unauthorized Schwärmer in the churches."²⁰ "All pastors and consistories are repeatedly and earnestly encouraged not only to be watchful against such people, so that no poison from their erroneous teaching should creep in, but also where necessary to

implore the help of the regional authorities.”²¹ For example, the Elberfeld Classis affirmed and reaffirmed in 1711 that, “the presbyteries, after brotherly admonition, warning and discipline, should finally seek the help of the regional authority, so that the Schwärmer and such, who confess none of the three tolerated churches and religions in the Roman Empire, might be driven out of the churches.”²²

C. Conrad Bröske (1660-1713), Reformed Court Preacher

Conrad Bröske was a complex individual, indicated by his two-fold identity as a radical millenarian, looking for the present age to pass away, and a Reformed Court Preacher, making him a prestigious and influential member in the Court of his Count.

Bröske’s credentials as a Reformed Preacher were impressive. He came of a family of Protestant clergy going back to the 16th century.²³ He completed his studies at the Reformed (Calvinist) Philipps-University in Marburg in 1682, and then made several study tours that acquainted him with leading Reformed scholars in Heidelberg, Geneva, Utrecht, Leiden, London and Oxford. In 1686 at 26 years of age Bröske took up the position of Court Preacher to the Reformed Count Johann Philipp of Ysenburg (1655-1718) in Offenbach near Frankfurt am Mayn, whom Bröske served until his own death in 1713.²⁴ As Court Preacher Bröske faithfully taught the fundamentals of the Reformed faith according to the *Heidelberg Catechism*, instructing young children as well as preaching them publicly year by year to his congregation in Offenbach. Bröske published an explanation of the *Catechism* that went through three editions and was used as a model by churches in other regions.²⁵

As Court Preacher Bröske evidently enjoyed considerable prestige and influence both within the Court of his prince and in the county. Bröske was successful in winning over Count Johann Philipp and the Countess Charlotte Amalie to his views on religious tolerance, and to his chiliastic hopes for future peace and unity within Christendom. Under Bröske’s influence Offenbach became a refuge for persecuted Radicals and the germ seed (*Keimzelle*) for the growing Philadelphian movement within Germany. One scholar speaks of Bröske’s “significant influence in the Court and position of unlimited power in directing the region’s churches and schools.” It was Bröske’s efforts that “essentially produced the cultural establishment of the region.”²⁶ Bröske’s close relationship with the Count and the trust that Bröske enjoyed are especially evidenced by the fact that

in 1692 the Count gave his own half sister Luise to Bröske as his wife, “going against every convention of his class.”²⁷

However, Bröske also joined fellow “Philadelphians” in looking for a new church age marked by heart-felt faith and Christian unity. Bröske joined his fellow Marburg student Johann Heinrich Horch in presenting himself as the true defender of the Protestant Reformation, calling the Church back to its reforming vision after generations of decline. When Horch was dismissed as Professor at the Reformed Seminary in Herborn in February 1698, Bröske welcomed Horch to his pulpit in Offenbach. There Horch proclaimed: “The Protestant Church had indeed been delivered from spiritual Egypt during the Reformation, but like Lot’s wife it had looked back and returned there again.”²⁸ Their reform and publications focussed on four issues: improvement of schools, improvement of pastoral teaching and public worship, the coming kingdom of Christ, and divine revelations.²⁹

This two-fold identity as radical millenarian and prestigious member of the Court surely caused Bröske some inward conflict and helps to explain the outward conflicts he encountered throughout his life.

IV. Issues in the Controversy

Our concern now is to describe and illustrate from the primary sources how theological arguments came to be over-shadowed by *ad hominem* arguments and personal conflicts including power struggles, pettiness and name-calling.

A. Theological Issues

1. From the Perspective of the Classis

On the 15th of December 1704 the Elberfeld Classis held an extraordinary meeting in Tönneseide, where it examined several of Bröske’s published works including: *Wahre Christen-Tauffe* (True Christian Baptism), *Alte und Neue Religion* (Old and New Religion), *Das Gebeth des Herrn* (The Lord’s Prayer), and *Schlüssel der Offenbarung* (Key to the Book of Revelation). The Classis recommended that the Synod conduct a further investigation of Bröske’s views, based on the fact that “so many foreign, dangerous and ill-considered statements and ways of speaking were found in Bröske’s published writings.”³⁰ It identified some

forty-two specific extracts from Bröske's writings that illustrated these concerns.

From the perspective of the Classis there were three key issues in their opposition to Bröske: Bröske's views on the sacraments, the outward ministry of the Church, and the thousand year kingdom of Christ. The Classis cited Bröske's own words in *Wahre Christen-Tauffe*, noting his statement that the sacraments have been "ordered and established by the Lord Christ really more as a service to the weak than to the strong."³¹ "Those well instructed in the secrets of true godliness and whose hearts are truly cleansed by the blood and Spirit of Christ and have been truly nourished with the true bread of heaven, could well dispense with all these elements, such as a Word outwardly seen and heard and also an outward bath of water and the bodily eating and drinking of bread and wine."³² These statements were taken to be evidence of potentially heterodox thinking.

Closely related to this was Bröske's suggestion in his tract, *Alte und Neue Religion*, that the outward ministry of the Church, which involves attending in a certain prescribed place, with singing, reading, praying, preaching, listening, etc. is itself a middle thing (*ein Mittel-Ding*). To Bröske it mattered little whether this happened in private or in homes, only that the practice was sensible.³³

Finally, the Classis cited Bröske's comment in his *Schlüssel der Offenbarung* regarding the circumstances of the thousand year kingdom, where he explained the verses in *Revelation* 20:7-11: "While Christ rules splendidly along with the resurrected saints in the heaven in the clouds freed from the vanity of the world, and with their fellow saints on the new earth, then the dragon, the old serpent which is the devil, sits for a long time shut up in the abyss along with his angels, and the godless stand on the pillory, so to speak, in the four corners of the earth during this time and must see, to their great torment and shame, how those whom they previously hated, tortured, persecuted and killed, now rule and are comforted. That represents the two-fold condition in this time of judgment."³⁴

Bröske interpreted the millennium as the time of Christ's reign when he would exercise judgment on the world. (II Timothy 4:1)³⁵ Bröske observed that the world was now indeed in a vain condition; on the day of judgment it would attain a condition where it was freed from vanity; and then when judgment was complete, everything would be changed to the condition of eternity.

2. From Bröske's Perspective

Bröske insisted that nothing in his writings could be shown to be inconsistent with the Reformed confessions. "I maintain that in the excerpted statements not the least thing can be found that is in conflict with God's Word and the Symbol Books based upon it of the Churches Reformed according to the Gospel of Christ."³⁶ This argument is reminiscent of earlier arguments by Spener and Petersen. Both Spener and Petersen were at pains to prove that their Chiliasm was not in violation of the *Augsburg Confession*. In 1695 Petersen wrote a work arguing that the idea of Christ's thousand year reign "does not go against the 17th article of the *Augsburg Confession*."³⁷

Bröske noted that impartial observers were amazed at how little substance there was to the Classis' accusations of suspect theology against him. Those who knew Bröske, both educated and uneducated, had entrusted their own children to him for instruction and spoke well of him; how strange that those who scarcely knew him should so readily condemn him without consulting those who did.³⁸ For Bröske these theological issues were all a smoke-screen for envy and hatred, the real issues.

3. Summary

Clearly a lot of theological discussion did take place, culminating in the 440 page *Wagschale* produced by the Classis and which appeared in March 1706. Along the way the Classis had consulted with theologians in Duisburg and in Leyden. The parish Church in Elberfeld consulted with theologians in Frankfurt.a. Oder. But by the time the two sides got down to this theological work, the lines had been drawn, sides taken and the power struggle had been engaged.

B. Procedural Issues

A case can be made that it was the lack of a clear procedure for resolving the question of Bröske's heterodoxy that resulted in the bitter conflict of personalities. Both parties appealed to the larger Christian public to "judge" which side had truth and Scripture to recommend it. The repeated argument by both sides went as follows: "Any impartial Christian reader can easily recognize . . ." or "let everyone judge according to God's Word how far Bröske's writings can stand with the Orthodox and right-minded teaching of the Reformed Churches."³⁹

The Classis felt that it clearly had a role to play in the election of a second preacher for the Elberfeld Reformed Church.

They hoped I would hold off my decision on this call until the Classis was able to inquire properly into my teaching and as well as be assured of my right-mindedness in doctrine and faith from sufficient testimonies such as my writings and explanations to which examination they are obligated according to church law. And then afterwards with the agreement of the Bergischen Synod and of the Elberfeld Classis a proper and in their region required Certificate of Calling could be sent to me.⁴⁰

There were also procedural issues here from the perspective of the Classis. The Classis was evidently disturbed by the fact that Bröske came from outside the Elberfeld jurisdiction and that proper procedure had not been followed to clear his candidacy with them. Bröske was referred to as “an outsider” (*fremder Prediger*).

It is surely significant that the individual who won the next election for Second Preacher was Pastor Meyer from Urdenbach⁴¹, a parish within the Bergischen Synod and only about 25 km from the community of Elberfeld. Bröske’s Offenbach, on the other hand, lay some 150 km away, to the southeast of Elberfeld.

Bröske and the Church, however, lost confidence in the fairness of the Classis in judging Bröske’s fitness as a candidate. Bröske learned, however, that their purpose was not really to clear the way for his coming, but to do all to hinder it.

These gentlemen have sufficiently demonstrated that they had in mind not to pave the way for my coming but to hinder it, not to deliver me from false slanders but to make me more and more loathsome (*stinckend*) among the residents of the region and especially in the Christian Reformed Church in Elberfeld.⁴²

Thus unclarity and lack of confidence over procedure paved the way for full-blown antagonism and power-play to stream forth.

C. Personal Issues – The Real Issues!

One need not read far in the extensive contributions to the controversy by Bröske and the Classis to realize that the main issues had more to

do with the manner and tone and motive of speaking than with theological content. Today's postmodernists would point to issues of power and control as the operative factors. A cursory over-view of the polemical writings on both sides confirms this interpretation.

1. Bröske's *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede* ("Legitimate Defense against the insulting rumours (*Schmachreden*) being spread behind his back unjustly by some Preachers belonging to the Elberfeld Classis.")

As indicated by the work's title, Bröske's main complaint against Grüter and the Classis concerned the "various unjust and evil rumours" about him and his teaching that were being spread by "those with a reputation for being godly." They had done this behind his back, in order to "disgrace his good name, so that they might turn the thoughts and affections of truth-loving people away from him."⁴³ He especially "hated" the behaviour of those who praised him to his face for his convictions, but then among others spoke insults and scorn concerning him. He attributed their behaviour to two things: want of judgement and total lack of love.⁴⁴ Bröske's passion and indignation are transparent in his writing. He felt badly used, and that theological issues were a mere pretext for personal enmity on the part of the Classis.

Bröske then accused Pastor Johann Grüter of instigating "this depraved game" and of showing unreasonable prejudice against him as an "outside" candidate by opposing his candidacy on the day of the election. "Herr Grüter sufficiently demonstrated and showed his partiality by his behaviour, and that he had been seized at least with prejudice against me if not with hatred and envy and a resulting willfulness to be a hindrance and also obnoxious towards me."⁴⁵ After the Church went ahead and elected Bröske instead of the other candidates, and the next day sent him an official letter of call (*Beruff-Schein*)⁴⁶, Grüter went to work and met with his fellow preachers. They drafted a letter advising Bröske that his call had been highly "irregular" and that he should wait upon their investigation of his credentials. Then the Classis prepared some excerpts from his writings and sent them to the Church's Consistory as grounds for their concern. Here as well, complained Bröske, they had not acted forthrightly. First, they had not sent these passages to him for clarification, but to the Church. "They made no mention of these excerpts in their writing to me, much less sent them to me and sought my explanation, which would have been the most direct, proper, loving and reasonable way

to proceed, but sent them to the Consistory in Elberfeld.⁴⁷

Second, the passages from his works were taken badly out of context and so did not truly represent his thinking. “They wrote out some passages from my writings out of context, calling them a shocking, foreign, dangerous and inappropriate manner of speaking and without in the least demonstrating wherein the error consisted.”⁴⁸ Bröske insisted that he would only feel thankfulness and love for the person who could show any heretical teachings in his writings, and point him to the right path. But this they had declined to do.⁴⁹

Bröske concluded the *Schutz-Rede* by saying that he wrote especially to serve those who complained that the accusations of the Classis “put them in doubt as to whom they should believe . . .”⁵⁰ His whole intention was simply to “redeem” his innocence and his good name among these people. Finally, Bröske called on his accusers to recognize their error and to seek God’s forgiveness.⁵¹

2. The Gerechtsame Ablehnung (Justified Refusal) of the Classis and Pastor Grüter

The Classis responded by refusing his invitation to apologize, hence their “justified refusal.” The Classis insisted that it had proceeded “with all considerate care and provided the Synod with complete information regarding Bröske’s thinking and his consequent eligibility, in order to relieve itself of any accusation of improper proceeding in his case, and so has entered upon no loveless or twisted ways with him, as he now does with the Classis, but have dealt with him according to love and in an approved manner . . .”⁵² If anyone lacked love, it was not they.

The Classis argued that Bröske’s *Schutz-Rede* (Word of Defense) was itself a *Schmach-Rede* (Word of Insult) against the Classis. They expressed their amazement that Bröske, “has not blushed to go publicly into print before the whole world against the preachers of the Elberfeld Classis with his so-called *Schutz-Rede* which cannot be seen by honourable readers as anything but a bitter *Schmach-Rede*.”⁵³ They provided evidence to prove how unjustified Bröske’s own approach had been, and to show “what unChristian lovelessness and careless folly” he had instigated against them.⁵⁴ For example, he had undertaken to circulate in the region “a bitter and stinging writing against the Classis” so that the Classis might be wounded and insulted by it.⁵⁵ Was that really necessary and motivated by love on his part?

This was all carried on in public through published proceedings. he Classis justified this publicly held dispute as follows:

This is set before the reader's eyes, of whatever class and position he might be, in a provisional way by open publication, so that the Elberfeld Classis might challenge the untruthful accusations of Herr Bröske with these few reasons and at the same time show that he himself has no reasons with his groundless so called *Schutz-Schrift* to break forth in so untimely a fashion, where he, being ignorant in these matters, was so impudently minded so as to **cast sand in the eyes** of the unlearned and to cover over the pure truth and right nature of things with dull clouds of mist.⁵⁶

3. Bröske's *Billige Zurückweisung* (Reasonable Challenge)

To this Bröske replied bitterly in his *Reasonable Challenge*:

It should now be more clear than the mid-day sun, that the Classis has used no modest care in this case, that they would in no way apologize for their unceremonious behaviour and lovelessness against me . . . which did not pertain to the matter at hand nor was of any help.⁵⁷

He added:

This too is set before the reader's eyes in print in order that each might see how fairly I challenge the *Ablehnung* written against my *Schutz-Rede*. And that I have set forth the facts clearly in my *Schutz-Rede* and have invited the Classis to answer me, and, once the answer followed, have invited friend and foe to form an impartial judgment. Yet the Classis has addressed the matter with not a word, passing by with silence all the questions put to them.

Bröske concluded, "I leave it to the reader to judge who among the two of us, whether they or I, **cast sand in the people's eyes**, and cover over the pure truth and right nature of things with dull clouds of mist."⁵⁸

4. The second Appendix to Bröske's *Schutz-Rede*

Bröske provided his own brief account of the course of the conflict in the "Second Appendix" to his *Schutz-Rede*. It is significant that there he highlighted and summed up what are best described as the "personal"

points at issue, rather than raising theological issues. Bröske's list noted:

- i) the attacks by Pastor Grüter and the other Preachers on Bröske's "good name";
- ii) the resulting damage that had been done to his reputation at home and elsewhere, his good name thereby having suffered "shipwreck";
- iii) the failure of the Classis to proceed in the most direct, proper, loving and reasonable way, which would be to deal with Bröske directly, and to seek his clarification on matters of concern; instead making matters public and proceeding to inform the Consistory and the Synod of their concerns;
- iv) the spread of a false rumour "so far abroad, high and low," even so far as Offenbach, that Bröske very much desired to go to Elberfeld but could not go there on account of erroneous thinking in his doctrine;
- v) Bröske's desperation in threatening a lawsuit if they would not clear his name by a favourable statement concerning him and his writings: "I would pursue my legal rights and would either accuse them before Synod or publish a *Speciem Facti* in defence of my good name";
- vi) Bröske's concern that this bad reputation be turned aside if he were any longer to be edifying in his office of Preacher in Offenbach;
- vii) Bröske's conviction that since the controversy had become known to "many thousands of people" in many places, only a published true account of the controversy could make things right;
- viii) finally, Bröske's concern to have what was entitled to him "by natural, civil and divine law."⁵⁹

5. Summary

In a situation where lines of power are not clearly drawn, personal conflicts come readily to the fore. Who should decide if Bröske was an admissible candidate for "Second Preacher" in Elberfeld? The Church? The Classis? Bröske's own reputation, friends and writings?

The Classis concluded the *Wagschale* by noting: "If only Bröske would choose the truth and not grieve for his own respect and honour . . . Bröske would not be the first Court-Preacher who had spoken according to his own inclination and wisdom and upon later instruction had retracted his teaching . . ." ⁶⁰ St. Augustine, after all, had written his "retractions." Bröske should swallow his pride and do the same. Bröske, however, found

it unjust and arbitrary that his interpretation of Revelation and appeals to authorities were questioned when others were accepted.

The freedom which another preacher takes to follow the explanation of Cocceius concerning the thousand year kingdom, the same freedom have I exercised to follow the explanation of the first apostolic Christians, who personally heard the apostle for themselves . . . It is an aggravating thing that I for my part should not have the same freedom as others to choose the meaning most agreeable with the holy scriptures.⁶¹

From Bröske's perspective, it was the Classis which should swallow its pride.

V. Conclusion: A Paradigm for Understanding Seventeenth/Eighteenth Century Protestant Controversies?

We conclude that matters of personal reputation, truth-telling, unloving behaviour, hatred and envy, unfair prejudice and personal rights were of paramount concern in this eighteenth century controversy. Both sides seemed to have had good reason to accuse the other on at least some of these points. Matters of theological difference became secondary and were ultimately unresolved.

It may be asked whether we have found a "paradigm" for understanding seventeenth/eighteenth-century Protestant controversies. Certainly the same *ad hominem* factor can also be found at work in Pietist conflicts with Orthodox Lutherans at the time. For example, one sees personal motives and political factors at work in the opposition against both Philip Jakob Spener and August Hermann Francke.⁶² Johann Friedrich Mayer, described by a contemporary as *malleus haeticorum et pietistarum* ("the destroyer of heretics and Pietists"),⁶³ had initially been positively impressed by Spener.⁶⁴ What seems to have turned him against Spener and the Pietists had more to do with personal motives than theology. It was shortly after Spener's move to bring official discipline to bear against Mayer on account of adultery that Mayer began his attack on Spener as "the patron and protector of all the *Schwärmer*."⁶⁵ In 1690 Mayer composed a scathing opinion concerning August Hermann Francke and sent it to the city council in Erfurt. In 1695 he warned theology students against Francke's Bible commentaries.⁶⁶

We have suggested that one explanation for this phenomenon could be that Protestants generally and Reformed churches in particular faced a special problem: who decides if someone's interpretation of Scripture and the Confessions is acceptable? Theological differences easily resolved themselves into power struggles. Today many historians perceive in such personal disputes larger issues of power and control. This paper provides a case study to illustrate how perceptions of theological "heterodoxy" have often been determined by social groups in ways that protect their own power. Parties to disputes based on personal jealousies invariably misrepresent things, "casting sand in the eyes" of others. Then everyone is blinded, and truth suffers.

VI. Bibliography and Chronology of Key Sources

1. Conrad Brüßke. *Wagschale des tausendjährigen Reiches*. Anno 1704.

*2. *Acti Conventus extraordinarii Classis Elberfeldensis*, gehalten auff der Töniß-Heyden den 15. Decemb. Anno 1704. (Gegen die den 7. Nov. Anno 1704 zu Elberfeld gehaltene Predigers-Wahl).

*3. Conrad Bröske. *Rechtmäßige Schutzrede wider die von einigen zu der Elberfeldischen Classe gehörigen Herrn Prediger, ohne sein Verschulden hinter ihm her mit Unrecht ausgestreute Schmachreden*. Offenbach: de Launoy, 12. März 1705. 16pp. plus 21pp of Appendix. [UB Mannheim: Wk 317]

*4. Die Elberfelder Predigern. *Gerechtsame, Abgenöthigte voraußlauffende Ablehnung der Evangelisch-Reformirten Prediger Elberfeldischer Class, im Herzogthum Berge Gegen die am 12. Martii 1705 von Hn. Conrad Brößkens Hof-Predigern zu Offenbach am Mayn Außgegebene so genante Schutz-Rede*. 1705. 8pp.

*5. Conrad Brößke. *Billige und auff die Warheit gegründete Zurückweisung der im Namen der Evangelisch-Reformirten Herren Prediger der Elberfeldischen Class, im Druck herauß-gegebene Ablehnung Gegen Conrad Brößkens Hof-Predigers zu Offenbach Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*. 1705. 11pp.

*6. Die Elberfelder Predigern. *Wohlbegründete Verthädigung der Wahrheit und Unschuld der Elberfeldischen Classe wider Brüßkes Unrechtmäßige Schutzrede wie auch wider desselben Unbillige Zurückweisung*. Duisburg am Rhein: Johannes Sas/der Königl. Universität Buchdrucker, March 1706. 84pp. (Of this work Hans Schneider writes that it was written "against Bröske's writing, which is no longer obtainable, written in his own defence . . ." see Schneider, "Der radikale Pietismus im 17. Jahrhundert," p. 431 n. 147. In fact, both Bröske works mentioned in the title are available.)

*7. Die Elberfelder Predigern. *Waagschale worinnen das neu-ersonnene tausendjährige Lust-Himmlisch-Paradiesische Gerichts-Reich Herren Conraden Brößkens und dessen hierüber geführte unschriftmässige Lehrsätze und andere Rede-Arten nach dem Gewicht des Heilighums gerechsam abgewogen und zu leicht befunden worden durch Evangelisch-Reformirte Prediger der Elberfeldischen Klasse im Herzogthum Berg*. Duisburg am Rhein: Johannes Sas/der Königl. Universität Buchdrucker, March 1706. 440pp.

8. Conrad Bröske. *Waage der Wahrheit, wodurch entdeckt wird, die Ungerechtigkeit der Waagschalen, womit einige Prediger der Elberfeldischen Classe die durch ihn vorgestellte Lehre der ersten Christen, vom tausendjährigen Reiche, wie auch einige seiner Red-Arten und Meynungen ungebührlich abgewogen haben*. Offenbach: de Launoy, 1706.

* Secondary Source: Max Goebel, *Geschichte des christlichen Lebens in der rheinisch-westphälischen evangelischen Kirche, dritter Band* (Coblenz: Karl Bädeker, 1860), especially chap. 12, "Die philadelphischen und chiliastischen Anfänge in Elberfeld, 1696-1722," 450-455.

* Indicates availability in whole or in part. Six out of the eight primary sources were available to me.

Endnotes

1. The "Classis" was simply a district of neighbouring Reformed churches or the assembled representatives of those churches. It was equivalent to the Presbytery in Presbyterian polity. The delegates to the Classis included the minister and an elder from each church. Normally power resided in the Consistory of the local church; the Classis would oversee congregations and ordain and discipline clergy; above the Classis was the Synod, made up of representatives from each Classis (see L. Praamsma, "Classis," *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, vol. III (Marshallton: National Foundation for Christian Education, 1972), ed. Philip E. Hughes, 12).
2. Max Goebel, *Geschichte des christlichen Lebens in der rheinisch-westphälischen evangelischen Kirche, dritter Band* (Coblenz: Karl Bädcker, 1860), 81ff.
3. Spener, for example, continually sought to soften the radicalism of his followers and to avoid at once any breach with them or with the Orthodox. See Martin Brecht, *Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), Chap. VI, "Philipp Jakob Spener, Sein Programm und dessen Auswirkungen," esp. 338, 363, 368, 370. This is volume one in *Geschichte des Pietismus*, edited by Brecht.
4. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 449. Goebel writes, "Indem aber diese Geschichte uns wie zu einem Brennpunkt führt, in welchem der Separatismus und die Mystik, die Inspiration und der philadelphische Chiliasmus jener Tage zusammentreffen, so können wir uns nur freuen, daß die Quellen über sie so reichlich fließen . . . sie meist in das Archiv der Rheinischen Provinzialkirche übergegangen sind, dem Verfasser in Größter Vollständigkeit zu Gebote."
5. Hans Schneider, "Der radikale Pietismus im 17. Jahrhundert," 431 n. 147.
6. See Conrad Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutzrede wider die von einigen zu der Elberfeldischen Classe gehörigen Herrn Prediger, ohne sein Verschulden hinter ihm her mit Unrecht ausgestreute Schmachreden* (Offenbach: de Launoy, 12. März 1705) located in UB Mannheim: Wk 317; and *Die Elberfelder Predigern, Wohlbegründete Verthädigung der Wahrheit und Unschuld der Elberfeldischen Classe wider Brüßkes Unrechtmäßige Schutzrede wie auch wider desselben Unbillige Zurückweisung* (Duisburg: Universität Buchdrucker, 1706) located in Universitäts- und Stadt-Bibliothek Köln: RhT 1357.

7. According to Goebel, the conflict was between “the parish Church (*Gemeinde*) which was inwardly oriented and the Classis which held strictly to outward forms; between the independent, new Philadelphian faith and the stubborn, ecclesiastical (*kirchlichen*) right-minded belief”; for Goebel the Classis represented “strict, ecclesiastical (*kirchlichen*) right-mindedness against the intrusion of new and foreign teachings (*Lehre*)”; finally, he referred to “the victory of the old ecclesiastical (*kirchlichen*) right-minded belief over the new, chiliastic and Philadelphian wrong-headedness which had squeezed itself into the teaching office . . .” (see Goebel, *Geschichte*, 453, 454 n.1, 455)
8. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 451ff.
9. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 452ff.
10. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 453.
11. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 453.
12. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 454.
13. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 454, 455. Goebel concluded: “This unpleasant story continued on for some time, so that even in 1710 and 1717 misunderstandings had to be removed, which arose among some brothers of the Classis on account of the publication of a book by Brößke.” The books published by Bröske may refer to his use of the press in Offenbach to publish works by Thomas Bromley and Johann Wilhelm Petersen, such as: Thomas Bromley, *Geistreiches Tractätlein von denen Reisen der Kinder Israels. Welchen hinzu gefuget des Autoris Lebens-Beschreibung* (1710) [Gv 514]; and Johann Wilhelm Petersen, *Mysterion Apokatastaseos Panton. Das Geheimniß der Wiederbringung aller Dinge . . .* Bd. I-III. Pamphylia (Offenbach: 1701-1710).
14. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 450f.
15. Max Goebel, *Geschichte*, 43f. It is noteworthy that, “The essential purpose of catechetical instruction was not preparation for the first communion, as with the Lutherans, but preparation for the public confession of faith, to which no one might be admitted without first wishing to be publicly catechized” (49f).
16. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 453.
17. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 236; and Johannes Wallmann, *Der Pietismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 33. Goebel observed that “among the Evangelical-Lutherans in previous years many and various writings were exchanged on the matter of the thousand year kingdom, while this had not yet

been necessary in the Reformed churches since this newly-conceived teaching had only just been put forward in recent days by Thomas Burnet, Beverley and similar Chiliasts from whom Brüßke derived his views" (454).

18. Conrad Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutzrede wider die von einigen zu der Elberfeldischen Classe gehörigen Herrn Prediger, ohne sein Verschulden hinter ihm her mit Unrecht ausgestreute Schmachreden* (Offenbach: de Launoy, 12. März 1705), 5f.
19. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 236.
20. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 236.
21. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 236.
22. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 237.
23. *Hessen* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1960), ed. Georg Wilhelm Sante, 302f. Bröske's great-great-grandfather Werner Bröske (1500-1575) was appointed the first Protestant pastor in Balhorn in Nieder-hessen by the Landgraf Philipp of Hessen.
24. See Hans Schneider, "Der radikale Pietismus im 17. Jahrhundert," *Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 409f; and Hans-Jürgen Schrader, *Literaturproduktion und Büchermarkt des radikalen Pietismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 131ff.
25. Conrad Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutzrede wider die von einigen zu der Elberfeldischen Classe gehörigen Herrn Prediger, ohne sein Verschulden hinter ihm her mit Unrecht ausgestreute Schmachreden* (Offenbach: de Launoy, 12. März 1705), 14.
26. Hans-Jürgen Schrader, *Literaturproduktion und Büchermarkt des radikalen Pietismus*, pp. 133f. Schrader writes of Bröske: "dessen Aktivitäten den kulturellen Aufbau des Landes wesentlich gefördert haben." It should be noted that although Bröske had radical chiliast ideas, he was not a separatist. He saw his place as being to remain in the state church and to work for renewal of church and society.
27. Hans-Jürgen Schrader, *Literaturproduktion und Büchermarkt des radikalen Pietismus*, 134. Protestant clergy had long since been recruited from the Bürger class, the clerical loss of political and economic power to princes within Protestant territories making the ministry less attractive to the upper classes. See Wilhelm Pauck, "The Ministry in the Time of the Continental Reformation," in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, ed. H. Richard

- Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 143. See also Bernd Moeller, *Pfarrer als Bürger* (1972); and Bernard Vogler, "Rekrutierung, Ausbildung und soziale Verflechtung: Karrieremuster evangelischer Geistlichkeit," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 85 (1994), 225-233.
28. C.W.H. Hochhuth, *Heinrich Horche und die philadelphischen Gemeinden in Hessen: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des christlichen Lebens in der evangelischen Kirche* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1876), 68.
 29. Hochhuth, *Heinrich Horche*, 69.
 30. Bröske, "Anhang," 37.
 31. Bröske, "Anhang," *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 19.
 32. Bröske, "Anhang," 19.
 33. Bröske, "Anhang," 34.
 34. Bröske, "Anhang," 36.
 35. Bröske, "Anhang," 26f.
 36. Bröske, "Anhang," *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 18.
 37. Johann Wilhelm Petersen, Öffentliche Bezeugung für der gantzen Evangelischen Kirchen: Das das Reich Jesu Christi, Welches ich Johann Wilhelm Petersen, der H. Schrifft Doctor, Aus Apoc. am XX. behaupte, Weder mit den alten ketzerischen Irrthümern des Cerinthi noch mit den Jüdischen Fabeln einige Gemeinschafft habe; Imgleichen Daß dasselbige nicht gegen den 17. Artickel der Augspurgischen Confession lauffe (Magdeburg: 1695) [Ts 66 (16)]; Philipp Jacob Spener. *Auffrichtige übereinstimmung mit der augsp. confession . . . samt eine Anhang gegen Herrn D. Johann Benedict Carpovium und Herrn D. Johann Friedrich Mayern* (Frankfurt: Zunner, 1695). HAB: [Tf 108 8'] und [K 393.4' Helmst. (4)].
 38. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 14f.
 39. Die Elberfeldische Classis, *Wagschale . . .* (Duisburg: Sas, 1706), 440.
 40. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 10.
 41. Goebel, *Geschichte*, 455.
 42. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 10.
 43. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 2f.

44. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 4f. “. . . Welches betragen einen unverstand und grossen mangel der liebe zum grunde hat.”
45. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 6f.
46. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 9.
47. Bröske, “Zweyter Anhang,” *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 40.
48. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 11.
49. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 14.
50. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 17.
51. Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 16.
52. Die Elberfelder Predigern, Abgenöthigte voraus-lauffende Ablehnung der Evangelisch-Reformirten Prediger Elberfeldischer Class, in Conrad Bröbke, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 7.
53. Die Elberfelder Predigern, *Gerechtsame, Abgenöthigte vorauslauffende Ablehnung* (1705), 3.
54. Die Elberfelder Predigern, *Gerechtsame, Abgenöthigte vorauslauffende Ablehnung*, 3. “. . . was für eine unchristliche Lieblosigkeit und unfürsichtige Thorheit er dadurch begangen . . .”
55. Die Elberfelder Predigern, *Gerechtsame, Abgenöthigte vorauslauffende Ablehnung*, 5.
56. Abgenöthigte voraus-lauffende Ablehnung, 8.
57. Conrad Bröbke, *Billige und auff die Warheit gegründete Zurückweisung* in Conrad Bröbke, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 48.
58. Conrad Bröbke, *Billige und auff die Warheit gegründete Zurückweisung* in Conrad Bröbke, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 48f.
59. Conrad Bröske, “Zweyter Anhang,” in Conrad Bröbke, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 38-41.
60. Die Elberfeldische Classis, *Wagschale*, 440.
61. Conrad Bröske, *Rechtmäßige Schutz-Rede*, 3ff.
62. *August Hermann Francke: Streitschriften*, ed. Erhard Peschke (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), xiii-xxiii.

63. Peschke, "Einleitung," xx.
64. Peschke, "Einleitung," xx.
65. Peschke, "Einleitung," xxii.
66. Peschke, "Einleitung," xvi.

Building Identities: St. George's Anglican Churches, Kingston, Upper Canada, 1792-1826

CARMEN NIELSON VARTY

Churches are articulate visual statements declaring the preoccupations, aspirations and ideologies of their builders. Whether a church is a small, weatherboard structure in a rural parish or a large imposing stone cathedral, its architectural style can tell historians a great deal about the people who built and attended it and the kind of religion they practised. This is particularly evident if we consider St. George's Anglican Church in Kingston, Upper Canada during the first fifty years of the congregation's history. The first St. George's church was built in 1792; what would eventually become St. George's Cathedral was built in 1826 to meet the needs of an expanding congregation. What is fascinating is how different these churches were, architecturally; it is clear that they were really quite different in terms of the aspirations and assumptions of their respective congregations. However, historians have tended to focus attention on the formal architectural styles of large urban churches and their symbolic importance for participants and observers. Thus, we know a great deal less about the vernacular architecture of small rural churches like the one at Kingston and the meaning that this church had for those who attended it.

Certainly a good deal has been written about the St. George's Church built in 1826. Several articles explore what historians imply is the "real" St. George's. Moreover, as one of the few neo-classical churches built in the nineteenth century in Upper Canada St. George's is considered by many historians as the physical embodiment of British conservatism in the province. William Westfall's insightful analysis of the religious

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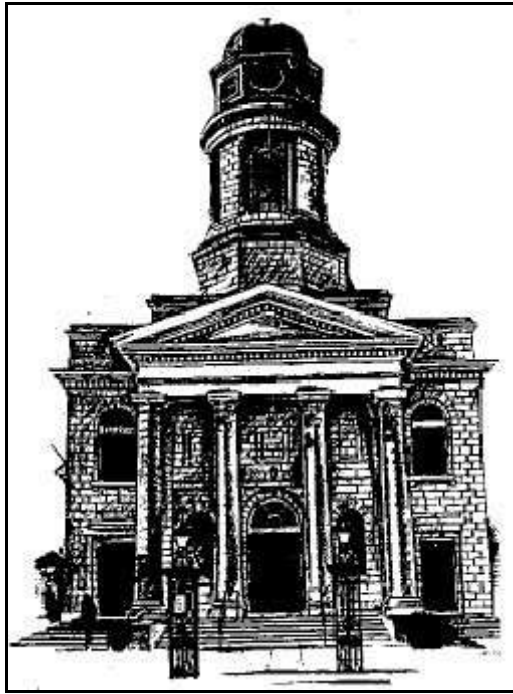


Figure 1: St. George's Cathedral, c. 1841. Sketch by Jennifer Walton. Reprinted from Donald Swainson, ed., *St. George's Cathedral: Two Hundred Years of Community* (Kingston: Quarry Press, 1991), 27.

l a n d s c a p e of nineteenth-century Ontario, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* reveals an ideological partnership between neo-classical architecture and religious and political conservatism in Upper Canada. Westfall claims that “[b]oth the internal organization and the external features of [neo-classical] churches spoke volumes about the essential cornerstone of the religion of order, [and] the close relationship between church and state.” The classical lines and symmetrical proportions of the neo-classical church “expressed a set of social

and religious beliefs that integrated religion and society in a hierarchical social system” that was distinctly conservative.¹ Westfall’s architectural interpretation of the neo-classical style exposes the conservative ideology imbedded in the very walls of this nineteenth-century church.

There is however more than architecture to suggest that St. George’s was a bastion of conservative ideology in Upper Canada. The church was originally founded shortly after the American Revolution in Kingston, which was settled primarily by United Empire Loyalists. Nationalist historians and loyalist hagiographers have assumed that the loyalists were ideologically British and sought to establish British conservatism in Upper Canada. Thus, it is presumed, building St. George’s, an Anglican Church,

was powerful evidence of the loyalists' ideological commitment to Britain and the official state church. Also, John Graves Simcoe, a staunch conservative who sought to recreate the "very image and transcript" of eighteenth-century Britain in the province, deemed St. George's a "suitable place" for staging the inauguration of the Constitutional Act of 1791 in Upper Canada. Moreover, the participation of several prominent Tories and members of the Family Compact in the Kingston church reinforced the image of St. George's as a site of establishmentarianism and conservatism in the province.

While the second church has been infused with much meaning, there has been no discussion about what the first church meant. When the first St. George's Church is mentioned historians imply that the settlers "made do" (for 34 years) until such time as they were able to build the second church.² It has generally been assumed that frontier settlers were simply too poor and too busy building homes and clearing land to have the luxury of caring much about the appearance of their church. The style of the first St. George's Church was not particularly worthy of study because historians have assumed it was merely a provisional building. Secondly, since historians have claimed that the first settlers in Upper Canada were British conservatives, it is presumed that the second church spoke for the first and hence, the original church carried no secrets.

But, the original St. George's is no less articulate or revealing of the preoccupations, aspirations and ideologies of its builders than its neo-classical successor. It was not a provisional building and lack of funds did not prevent these settlers from building a church that they regarded as respectable and proper. Furthermore, these builders were not nascent nineteenth-century conservatives but had a set of values and expectations quite different from those who built the second church. Thus, the men who built the neo-classical church in 1826 were not building a church that reflected a long-standing conservatism in the St. George's community; rather they were attempting to build an identity of conservatism and establishmentarianism into the Kingston landscape that reflected their own time. To address these inaccuracies, we must tear down (figuratively, of course) the nineteenth-century church to return the geographical and ideological landscape of Anglicanism in Kingston to the time before neo-classical architecture obscured the view.

In October of 1791 a group of settlers resolved to build a church in Kingston. They set down detailed and specific instructions about the

dimensions and features of the church and elected Archibald Thomson, who was a carpenter and a vestryman, to build it. Thomson constructed a weatherboard church, 40 feet by 32 feet and 12 feet high, with a gabled roof and square windows. He built, floored, plastered, and glazed the church for a sum of 168 pounds, which was paid by donations of the townspeople.

Of the 54 individuals who contributed funds for the building of the first St. George's Church, 31 (57.4%) appear on the official list of United Empire Loyalists.³ A few others had come to the Canadas from England, such as officers on half-pay, like Commodore David Betton,⁴ and Alexander Aitken,⁵ a surveyor for the British government. The rest of the non-loyalist contributors likely migrated to Upper Canada from the United States *after* the American Revolution. It is also notable that many of the loyalists were North Americans who had lived most or all of their lives in the Thirteen Colonies; men such as John Stuart⁶ (St. George's first minister) and Richard Cartwright⁷ had been born and raised in North America. The benefactors of the first St. George's Church were an eclectic group of individuals who were most preoccupied with setting themselves upon the land, establishing familiar institutions, and recreating a viable North American community.

The church that they built was, by most accounts, humble. When Lieutenant Governor Simcoe arrived at St. George's in July of 1792, Thomson had not yet lathed, plastered nor painted the walls, the church had a roof but no ceiling, and no belfry had been built.⁸ The church was in use for more than a year without a pulpit, desk or communion table.⁹ In 1795 the French Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt said St. George's looked more like a barn than a church.¹⁰ Despite the fact that the Duke spoke disparagingly about the architectural style of this church, North American observers deemed the church "commodious" and "decent."¹¹ The approval of North American participants demonstrates that this church met their expectations about what a church should look like, even though this image clearly differed from what Europeans (and later many historians) expected of a church.

Dell Upton, who has written one of the few historical analyses of parish church styles in colonial America, claims that churches built in rural and undeveloped regions tended to be simple constructions, much like the

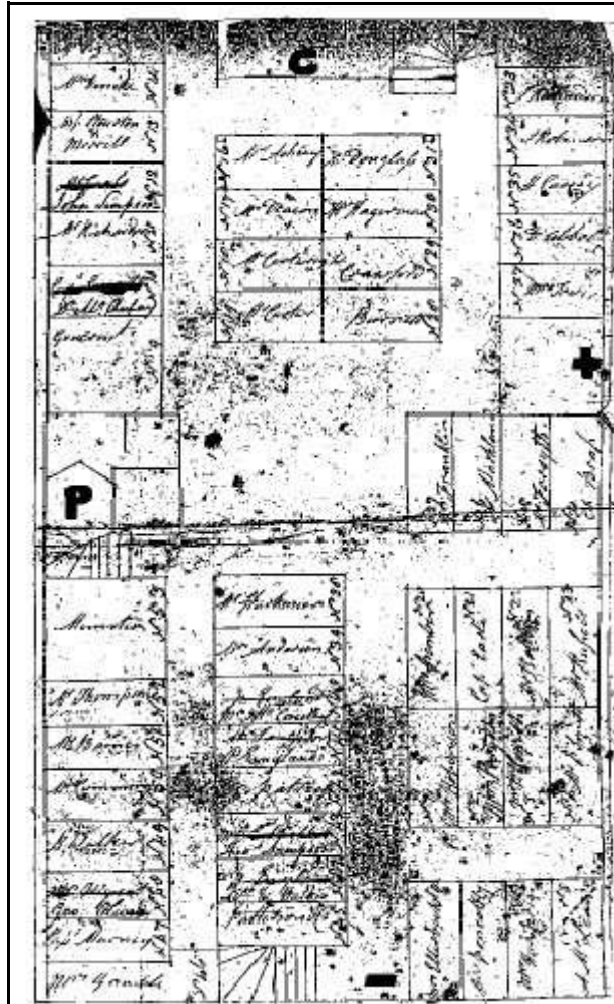


Figure 2: Interior drawing of St. George's Church, c. 1817 (Anglican Diocesan Archives of Ontario, St. George's Vestry Minutes, 2-KM-2, 1799-1817. Identification of architectural features superimposed onto the original. This drawing shows the pulpit (P) in the centre of a long north side, a double alley of pews, a raised gallery with the communion table © in the east end, a main south entry (+), and a smaller subordinate entry (-) in the west end.

church at Kingston.¹² Although these churches were neither costly nor ornate they adhered to an architectural idiom that clearly identified the building as a church in the minds of North American colonials. St. George's appearance reflected the fact that this church was a part of and inspired by eighteenth-century North American parish church styles.

Upton found that parish churches in colonial Virginia tended to fall into three basic types. The third type, which is characterized by 1)

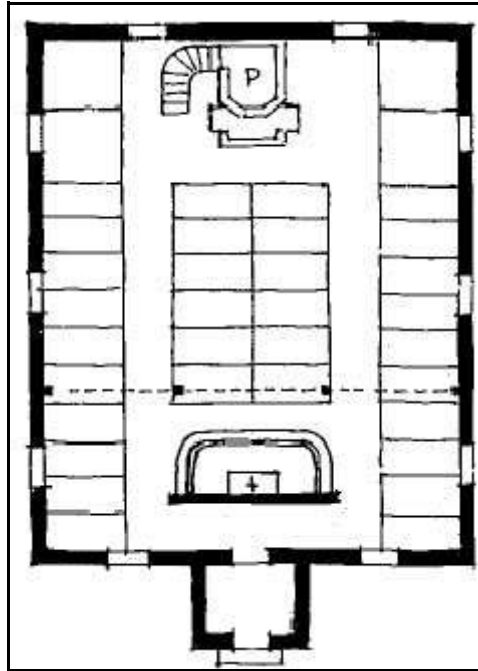


Figure 3: Interior of St. George's Anglican Church. Drawing by Anthony Adamson. Altar (+), pulpit (P). Reprinted from Marion McRae, *Hallowed Walls: Church Architecture of Upper Canada* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1975), 36.

building. The pulpit was, however, moved to the centre of the north side after the addition was complete.¹⁴ This illustration also shows an alternate entry in the west end of the church and a gallery and communion table in the east. Also, John Stuart's description of the church's dimensions shows that like the parish churches Upton identifies, St. George's had deep width-to-length proportions. The church was originally 32 feet by 40 feet, making the width four-fifths of the length.¹⁵

This information contradicts current assumptions about the appearance and architectural inspiration of the first St. George's Church. Some historians have made the anachronistic claim that this church had a longitudinal orientation, which was a common orientation for churches in

deep proportions, 2) a central south entrance opposite the pulpit, 3) an alternate west entry, and 4) a gallery and communion table in the east, is consistent with the architectural design of St. George's.¹³ Figure 2 is a sketch of the interior of St. George's recently discovered in the Anglican Diocese of Ontario Archives and dated at 1817 with the use of the pew rent records. This illustration of the first St. George's Church shows that the pulpit occupied the long north side and the main doors were placed just off centre on the south face. The pulpit was likely opposite the main doors when the church was first built, but in 1802 twenty feet were added to the length and thus the doors were no longer in the centre of the

nineteenth-century Ontario. Marion McRae stated that the original church was modelled on the liturgical plan of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church in Philadelphia at the instruction of John Stuart. A sketch of the original St. George's by Anthony Adamson, who co-authored *Hallowed Walls* with McRae, shows the pulpit opposite the altar at the west end of a main alley (see Figure 3). The myth of St. George's interior design has created an inaccurate image of the church in various drawings (see e.g.,

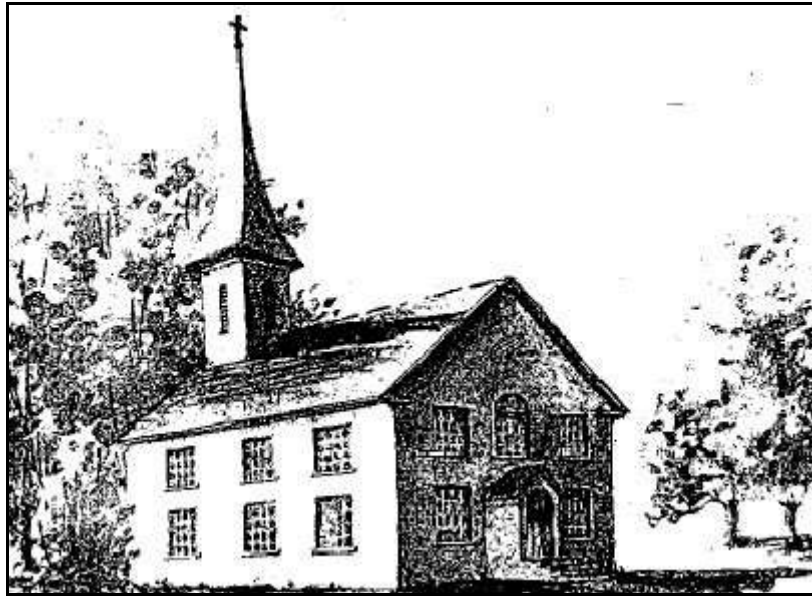


Figure 4: St. George's Church, 1792 (Queen's University Archives).

Figure 4). Figures 5 and 6 attempt to correct these inaccuracies and reproduce the basic form and appearance of the exterior of St. George's Church based on this newly discovered evidence.

It is clear from an architectural analysis of the first St. George's Church that these builders were constructing symbolic places that reflected their colonial circumstances and desire to mold their new communities in the image of familiar North American forms. The architecture of the middle and late-nineteenth century only obscured and distorted our view

of their church. Similarly the Anglican theology preached in the middle and late-nineteenth century by leaders such as John Strachan bears little resemblance to the Anglicanism that was practised at St. George's in the

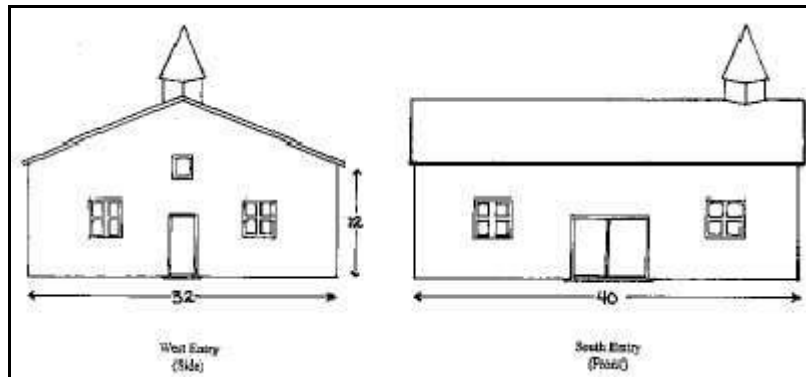


Figure 5: St. George's Church, c. 1794. Drawing by Carmen Nielson Varty, 1998. Measurements in feet.

late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. What little is known about what went on inside the original church suggests that the establishment principles and conservatism that later characterized the Church of England in Upper Canada was neither espoused nor promulgated by the first minister of St. George's.

The Reverend John Stuart was a loyalist, a native of the Thirteen Colonies, and "the product of a religiously heterogeneous society." Stuart practised a "North American Anglicanism" that shunned the exclusivity and formalism of Old World Anglicanism.¹⁶ While Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe may have hoped that Anglicanism would be officially established in Upper Canada according to the British model, John Stuart certainly did not share this opinion. Stuart regarded Simcoe as "a very high churchman" who "wishes to put ecclesiastical matters on the most respectable footing." But according to Stuart, Simcoe's expectations that Anglicanism would become the established church in Upper Canada were "sanguine" at best. Stuart, on the other hand, was "confident, that any Thing like an Establishment . . . would alarm the Sectaries, and eventually disappoint . . . [Simcoe's] . . . Expectations."¹⁷ Stuart knew from his North American experiences that any ground gained by the Anglican Church

“must be by slow and almost imperceptible advances.” He claimed that it was “The Purity of Our Doctrine; and the unassuming, exemplary Lives of both clergy and laity, [that] will promote our cause better than any legal Sanctions or Provisions.”¹⁸

Stuart believed that moderation and circumspection were essential to a missionary’s success on the frontier in North America.¹⁹ During the formative years of settlement at Kingston Stuart made no attempt “to

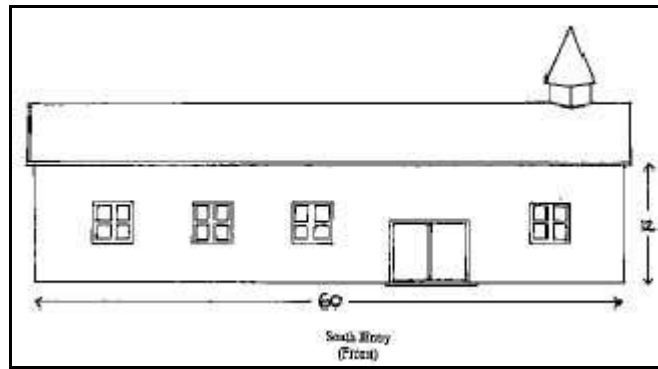


Figure 6: St. George’s Church, c. 1803. Drawing by Carmen Nielson Varty, 1998. Measurements in feet.

discriminate Episcopalians from Dissenters” and found that “every one profess[ed] his Approbation of me as his Minister . . .”²⁰ Stu-

art also reported that he had great success adapting an extemporaneous style to sermons and prayers in the fashion of Methodist itinerants. He was “fully persuaded, that . . . plain, practical Discourses adapted to mean Capacities, and delivered in this manner, will ever be attended with beneficial Effect.”²¹ Stuart’s ability to adapt Anglicanism successfully to the eclectic religious tastes and sensibilities of these colonials demonstrates the efficacy of a “North American Anglicanism” in the eighteenth-century world of Upper Canada.

The conditions of Upper Canada in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century clearly mitigated against the establishment of a formal, conservative, British-style Anglicanism in Kingston. This analysis of the first St. George’s church corroborates scholars’ recent assertions that eighteenth-century Upper Canadian colonists – who were, by and large, Americans – drew upon their experiences in the Thirteen Colonies rather than the tenets of British conservatism when building their communities.²²

Over the thirty-four year life of the first church a complex set of

processes that will only be described briefly here transformed the identity of this church and its community, of which the building of a new St. George's was the most powerful physical expression. Certainly the new large church reflected the growing size and wealth of the Anglican congregation at Kingston. But ideological, political and generational change experienced within the congregation played the primary role in determining the physical style and new image of St. George's. The beginnings of these transformations can be situated roughly around the time of the War of 1812.

The war was "an irrevocable watershed in colonial development" wherein the Upper Canadian community, a mere "string of scattered settlements on the frontier," became a "relatively well-established and prosperous province."²³ After the war, communication and travel within the province and with the trans-Atlantic world improved dramatically. In Kingston, the war boosted fortunes, doubled the population, and catapulted the town and its townspeople into a position of provincial importance. In the older and more settled areas of the province, like Kingston, social institutions sprang up, including schools, libraries, and theatres.²⁴ By the mid-1820s "residents of most of the towns and villages of Upper Canada enjoyed the amenities of a relatively sophisticated urban existence. And the loneliness and back-breaking hardships of a backwoods existence was being replaced by a much more open and diversified community life."²⁵

A growing proportion of those who attended St. George's Church in the post-war period did not and indeed, could not share the experiences and outlook of the first generation congregation. They did not share the loyalists' common experience of life in the Thirteen Colonies or the post-revolutionary migrants' experience of life in the United States. Neither were they involved in settling upon the frontier. Rather, this new generation shared the experience of victorious defence of British territory against American attack and of living in a relatively sophisticated and affluent colonial community that was emerging as an important player in the larger provincial arena.

Also, between 1815 and 1828 the population of the colony doubled, owing in large measure to a major influx of immigrants, especially from Great Britain. British immigration was actively encouraged and patronized by the anxiously anti-American post-war provincial administration.²⁶ Several individuals and families from the British Isles are known to have joined the congregation of St. George's after 1812. For example, Henry

Smith immigrated to Canada from London, England with his wife and children in 1818 and began renting a pew at St. George's in 1824.²⁷ A few discharged British officers also attended St. George's, including Joseph Scott, a surgeon discharged from the Royal Navy²⁸ and Hugh Earl, a native of Ayrshire, Scotland who had been a lieutenant in the Provincial Marine during the War of 1812.²⁹ The Britons who arrived in Canada in this period and joined St. George's Church presumably had strong ties to the institutions of the British State, including an established Anglican Church.

Furthermore, in the era after the War of 1812 leadership was gradually passed from loyalist fathers to their Upper Canadian sons. This larger provincial trend was paralleled in the Anglican community at Kingston. After John Stuart's death in 1811, his son George Okill Stuart was requested by the congregation to "succeed his father at Kingston."³⁰ George Okill represented a new generation of Upper Canadians who had "new ideas and new understandings of the needs of the colony and of its relations to Great Britain and to the United States."³¹ For George Stuart and his contemporaries, these new ideas and new understandings were grounded in "a belief in British conservative ideals and respect for authority and order."³²

In its British manifestation the Church of England upheld and inculcated the conservative ideals of order and tradition to which the new elite aspired. For conservatives participation in the Anglican Church became cloaked in new political and ideological significance and was an important symbol of elite membership and status. These post-war Anglicans, many of whom were British- or Upper Canadian-born, tended to shun things American and espouse many of the traditional institutions of the British State, of which the Church of England was a pillar.

Church members such as George H. Markland, Thomas Markland, C. A. Hagerman, John Macaulay and John Kirby personified the post-war image of the Anglican congregation at Kingston.³³ These affluent and elite men were firmly committed to the conservative and Tory ideologies of the new Upper Canadian leadership. C.A. Hagerman had derived a "keen sense of the loyalist legacy and an uncompromising adherence to the Church of England" from his father and was "obdurate in his defence of church and state."³⁴ John Macaulay advocated the "preservation of the British constitution 'in all its purity.'"³⁵ And, although Thomas Markland was "perhaps the most influential member of the local 'family compact'" he left direct contact with the provincial administration to his son, George.

George Markland, “who, by virtue of age, personal contacts, and political beliefs, fitted into the society of the post-war,” was a prominent Tory advocate.³⁶ John Kirby was “[a] political conservative . . . and an ardent supporter of the province’s Tory administration.”³⁷ These men were part of an emerging elite of conservative thinkers who were instrumental in creating a new identity for the Anglican Church in Kingston. They, notably, were also the individuals who were elected to oversee the construction of the new St. George’s Church.

In 1825 this building committee of Kingston’s most influential



Figure 7: Design for the facade of St. George’s Church by Thomas Rogers, c. 1825 (Queen’s University Archives).

Tories hired architect Thomas Rogers to design a large stone church in a neo-classical style. Rogers designed a classical basilica, five bays in

length, with a shallow apse, and galleries surrounding three sides of the interior. Figure 7 shows that he intended to build a terrastyle portico in the Ionic Order set against a tower of several stages, containing a clock and presumably a belfry.³⁸

A neo-classical church would proclaim a close association between St. George's and the military, administrative, and civil structures of Upper Canadian society. Several churches had been built in Kingston in the early decades of the nineteenth century and threatened Anglican hegemony in the town. The congregation's vigorous support of the Anglican establishment would be reflected by the very act of building. An elaborate corner stone laying ceremony, the proceedings of which were published in the local newspaper, clearly articulated the political and ideological importance of church building for this community. This ceremony was not just a gathering of the Anglican congregation but was a dramatic public statement that proclaimed the support and patronage of local and provincial leaders. It is clear that for these conservatives church building was a self-conscious attempt to construct an established Anglican Church onto the Upper Canadian landscape.

The first St. George's demonstrates that early Upper Canadians drew liberally on North American ideas and experiences to build their new society. The congregants who built and attended this church reproduced architectural styles with which they were most familiar and their church was very similar to small rural parish churches of the Thirteen Colonies. Also, an analysis of church benefactors' origins and an examination of the attitudes of the first minister of St. George's Church suggests that these congregants were not all loyalists nor did they ascribe to the establishmentarian style Anglicanism that was characterized by British conservatism. However, by 1826 the first St. George's no longer reflected the identity of its church community. The architecture and the image of the original church was simply inconsistent with the aspirations of prominent Anglicans who wanted to make their church a bastion of British conservatism in the town and province.

Endnotes

1. William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 145-146.

2. For example, the original St. George's Church is discussed only briefly in the institutional volume, *St. George's Cathedral: Two Hundred Years of Community*, ed. Donald Swainson (Kingston: Quarry Press, 1991). Swainson's brief description of the first church features disparaging remarks by contemporary observers who commented on the barn- or brewery-like appearance of the church ("Loyalist Stock: The Founding of St. George's Church," in *St. George's Cathedral*, 7-8).
3. A.H. Young, *The Parish Register of Kingston, Upper Canada, 1785-1811* (Kingston: The British Whig Publishing Company Limited, 1921); and Kathryn Bindon, "Kingston: A Social History, 1785-1830," Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, 1979.
4. Young, *Parish Register*, 36-37.
5. Frederick Armstrong, "Alexander Aitken," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB)*, vol. IV (1979), 12.
6. T.R. Millman, "John Stuart," *DCB*, vol. V (1983), 785-788. See also James Carruthers, "The Little Gentleman, The Reverend Dr. John Stuart and the Inconvenience of Revolution," M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1975; Paul Banfield, "To the Love of Peace and Ease, John Stuart's Later Career"; and John D. Blackwell and Laurie C.C. Stanley, "Two Anglican Images: John Stuart and John Langhorn," in *St. George's Cathedral*.
7. George Rawlyk and Janice Potter, "Richard Cartwright," *DCB*, vol. V (1983), 168.
8. 20 August 1792, John Stuart to the Bishop of Nova Scotia, Stuart Letters, Synod of Ontario, in Richard A. Preston, *Kingston Before the War of 1812: A Collection of Documents* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1959), 285; 15 March 1794, John Stuart to William Morice, Box 4, 38, "C" MSS, London S.P.G. Archives, in Preston, *Kingston Before the War*, 290.
9. 15 March 1794, John Stuart to William Morice, in Preston, *Kingston Before the War*, 290.
10. Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt; cited in Carruthers, "Little Gentleman," 115.
11. John Stuart; cited in Carruthers, "Little Gentleman," 114; 15 March 1794, John Stuart to William Morice, in Preston, *Kingston Before the War*, 290; 15 September 1794, Bishop of Quebec, Mountain Papers, Archives Diocesaine, A.P.Q., in Preston, *Kingston Before the War*, 292.

12. Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986).
13. Upton, *Holy Things and Profane*, 97.
14. 29 October 1802, John Stuart to the Bishop of Quebec, Box 1/12, 3-3, Episcopal Records, Anglican Diocesan Archives of Ontario.
15. Upton, *Holy Things and Profane*, 91.
16. Blackwell and Stanley, "Two Anglican Images," 176.
17. 25 June 1793, John Stuart to the Bishop of Nova Scotia, Box 1/12, 2-3. Episcopal Records, Anglican Diocesan Archives of Ontario.
18. 25 June 1793, John Stuart to the Bishop of Nova Scotia, Box 1/12, 2-3. Episcopal Records, Anglican Diocesan Archives of Ontario.
19. Blackwell and Stanley, "Two Anglican Images."
20. 6 July 1788, Letter to Bishop Inglis, Stuart Letters, Synod of Ontario, in Preston, *Kingston Before the War*, 133.
21. 11 March 1792, Letter to Bishop of Nova Scotia, Box 1/12, 2-3, Episcopal Records, Anglican Diocesan Archives of Ontario.
22. See for example, Jane Elrington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).
23. Elrington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, 89.
24. Elrington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, 90-91.
25. Elrington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, 90.
26. See G.M. Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), 87-88; and Elrington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, 98, 159-163.
27. Donald Swainson, "Sir Henry Smith," *DCB*, vol. IX (1976), 725.
28. Bindon, "Kingston," 583.
29. Preston, *Kingston Before the War*, 251, fn. 38.
30. 30 August 1811, 2-KM-2, 1799-1817, St. George's Vestry Minutes, Anglican Diocesan Archives of Ontario.

31. Elrington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, 92.
32. Elrington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*, 93.
33. See Robert L. Fraser, "John Macaulay," *DCB*, vol. VIII (1985), 514; S.F. Wise, "John Macaulay: Tory for All Seasons," in *To Preserve and Defend: Essays on Kingston in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Gerald Tulchinsky (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976); Craig, *Upper Canada*; J.K. Johnson, *Becoming Prominent: Regional Leadership in Upper Canada, 1791-1841* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989); and Elrington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada*.
34. Robert L. Fraser, "Christopher Alexander Hagerman," *DCB*, vol. VII (1988), 365-366.
35. Fraser, "John Macaulay," 514.
36. Jane Elrington, "Thomas Markland," *DCB*, vol. VII (1988), 584.
37. Jane Elrington, "John Kirby," *DCB*, vol. VII (1988), 471.
38. J. Douglas Stewart, "George Browne's Influence: The Architectural Heritage of St. George's," in *St. George's Cathedral*, 29.

CSCH Presidential Address 1998

**“Give me that old-time Religion”:
The Postmodernist Plot of the Theologians?**

PAUL H. FRIESEN

I feel I must begin this paper with an apology for using the “p-word” in my title, so hackneyed has the term “postmodern” and its derivatives become in the 1990s, in the academy, in North America. But I risk embarrassment, I think, for a good reason. I do so not because I regret never having seized the opportunity to put the word in a paper I have read (though I have not had cause, till now!), but because the term is central to the argument of an essay to which I propose to respond this afternoon. And I also address the term because behind my little argument lies a fundamental problem worth our joint contemplation, a problem upon which the postmodernist controversy continues to shed light.

So much for my formal apology. Let me now try to convince you that the postmodernist issue is still worth our corporate attention after years of being bandied about. What captured my attention some months ago was an off-hand footnote in a recent article by Russell McCutcheon, of Southwest Missouri State University, in which he describes the award-winning historian of religion, George Marsden, as a “theologian.” In any technical sense, of course, McCutcheon’s comment is defenceless. Marsden’s work is noted by the historical community for the academic rigour he has applied to the study of religion in his *Fundamentalism in American Culture* and subsequent monographs.¹ It is true that Marsden’s

historical work is admired by many (including some theologians one would assume) who are outside the historical community – but within the academy. But none I have encountered would dream of calling Marsden a theologian.

In light of McCutcheon's overarching argument it would seem that he feels justified in calling Marsden a theologian because of the kinds of remarks Marsden makes near the end of his very long *Soul of the American University*,² though McCutcheon refers to this monograph without citing it. "Conventional standards of objectivity based on scientific models no longer have any prospect for claiming universal authority," says Marsden, "[we have] no intellectually valid reason to exclude religiously based perspectives that have strong academic credentials on all other grounds."³ "Pure naturalism," Marsden concedes, is a "useful methodological premise," but it is not any more objectively provable in an epistemological sense than a manifestly religious assumption.⁴ In his article: "My theory of the brontosaurus': Postmodernism and 'theory' of religion," McCutcheon sums up his response to such arguments in this way: "Using the multiplicity of the postmodern world as a means for smuggling a foundationist perspective back within the academy strikes me as a giant step backward."⁵ This "foundationalism" strikes McCutcheon as the "old-time religion" of explicit Christian presuppositions. The academic machinations of scholars with such a religious weakness, he would suggest, amount to nothing but "the postmodernist plot of the theologians" – or so McCutcheon's complaint seems to me to be best paraphrased.

It is not within the scope of this paper to defend George Marsden's historical reputation – he hardly needs it, so well does Marsden's own historical writing play by the rules of scholarly engagement McCutcheon feels are being abandoned. (This does not mean I necessarily agree, at the level of theory, with Marsden's particular justification of "religious perspectives" in the academy.) Most importantly perhaps, it is not my task to enter into the extended argument McCutcheon has with Garrett Green (of the Department of Religious Studies of Connecticut College) about the advisability of including Karl Barth's writings in a "religious studies" course as an academic example of "theories of religion."⁶

Rather I see my task as more fundamental: to question the assumptions McCutcheon and others make about the nature of what he calls the "academic study of religion," and to suggest the fruitful role historians of religion might play in the postmodernist controversy he raises by moving

beyond his assumptions, and the assumptions of those who approach religion in a manner similar to his. It is the particular argument of this paper that, ironically, McCutcheon's own assumptions about scholarly theory are best described themselves by the old evangelical hymn to which I have just referred: "Give me that old-time Religion." His "old-time religion" is a species of what I would call an "omniscient scientism," a worn and tired "foundationalism" no longer serviceable in the study of religion. So the paper will proceed in three sections: first, a summary of McCutcheon's lament; second, a critique of the assumptions he makes and an attempt to explain their persistence in the scholarly community; and third, a brief inquiry into the role historians might play in moving the study of religion beyond the limitations of "omniscient scientism."

.....

At the outset, McCutcheon's complaint seems straightforward. He contrasts the analysis of religion based on what he calls "its historical, economic, psychological [and] sociological causes" with the attempt to use postmodernism to "relegitimize theological discourse in the academy"(4). In other words, what he calls "anything goes" postmodernism(7), is a ruse used by confessional Christians (he seems to target Christians for the most part) to return to a pre-scientific view of humanity, in which theological convictions about God, humanity, history, absolute truth and so on, become the starting place for what pretends to be contemporary, civil, scholarly inquiry. The theological barbarians are past the gates, he seems to be saying, and can be found even in departments of religion. Their disguises must be named, before we descend to the pre-critical, religious, tribal loyalties that discouraged academic enlightenment for so long. (It hardly needs to be said that acquaintance with the Protestant and Catholic historical polemics that extended into this century has surely convinced all of us of the folly of a return to such genuine tribalism under the guise of postmodernism or any other theological or theoretical agenda.)

But McCutcheon's criticism is not nearly so straightforward as this. What he means by "theology" as opposed to "theory" and by "modernism" as opposed to "postmodernism" reveals his deeper anxieties about what he feels are current "suspect" tendencies – as they are labelled in the summary at the head of his article – in the minds of some scholars of religion. First, what is meant by "theology" and "theologians"? At points McCut-

eon seems simply to equate the work of “theologians” with the work of those whom he calls “religious devotees”: they speak from “outside” the realm of the scholarship, “where our claims (i.e., the claims of “scholars of religion”) must be open to public criticism and debate” (21). So theologians have no public, academic significance, they have meaning only within their religious, that is confessional, communities. They are “outside” the work of what he calls the true scholar’s “inside” or academic work, whose nature I will summarize in a few moments. Though no sustained definition of theology beyond this is attempted, several of McCutcheon’s asides en flesh this skeletal assumption.

Put cautiously, theology and theologians “presume a normative standard that is not available to the student of the academic study of religion” (20). McCutcheon comes cleaner when he remarks that theologians “claim as their basis of authority some kind of inspiration from beyond history” (8), that is they resort to “grand narratives” or what postmodernists call “meta-narratives” – what others have called “world views” – which by definition exclude the claims of other religions. His analysis of Karl Barth, whom he sees as the prototypical theologian is clearest: Barth makes, “bold rhetorical, metaphoric, and totalized claims that are firmly based on the Christian perspective intent on demarcating ‘true’ from ‘false’ and ‘revelation’ from ‘religion’” (19), thus removing religious truth from the kind of public, academic criticism to which McCutcheon feels genuine religious scholarship must be submitted.

On the other hand, McCutcheon says this of those he believes are genuine religious “theorists”: “Because we can describe, compare and analyze . . . we can engage in the meta-theoretical critique of scholarship itself” (21). So theorists, as opposed to theologians, are able to free themselves not only from “grand narratives,” but from the theoretical limitations of their own discourse. How is this possible? It is because of the double-barrelled nature of “theory as explanation” and “theory as critique.” What is explanation? “While most everyone has assumptions, a system of ideas, or a world view,” claims McCutcheon, “not everyone’s world view entails the attempt to investigate whether there are any regularities in casual relations among observable events that the researcher finds interesting or curious”(13-14). This raises the theorists’ critique above “first order experiences of the world” to provide what he describes as “a rational, explanatory account for [first order experiences] . . . observations and events *that we as scholars deem important, puzzling or*

curious”(15). Such explanations, moreover, must be capable of empirical verification and predictive accuracy. Who would disagree? But on closer examination, McCutcheon’s understanding of “theory as critique” is complex and somewhat confusing. He says that the function of this “higher order” effort is to criticize the “maps” or “models” of reality proposed by “theory as description” (15-17). Yet the examples given of the categories of “class, race and gender” as critique, suggest that by “critique” McCutcheon is referring only to a slightly more self-conscious “map-making,” not to theory in the sense of a truly deconstructive “critique.” This is confirmed, I think, by his assertion a few paragraphs later that religious “practices, beliefs and institutions” must be understood as nothing more than “dynamic historical, cultural, discursive artifacts.”

So how do “modernism” and postmodernism” fit into this debate? Here the argument departs from the distinctions that one might expect. For McCutcheon, “modernism” (and he has very little to say about it), hangs on to the ineffable, the transcendent in religion, and is dependent on “the scholar’s apparently direct experience (or empathetic re-experience) of what they are studying (22). Thus modernists claim to avoid the reductionism of purely materialist explanations, and thus they lack “defensible theories,” it would seem, of both the explanatory and critical kind. As far as postmodernism is concerned, McCutcheon wants to press it into service for the scholarly study of religion. So he claims that it “demystifies” religion, or lays bare the assumptions of theologians which rest on the authority of meta-narratives (10). From here, McCutcheon moves on, with the use of the postmodern vocabulary to which we have become accustomed in the past decade or two. He argues that scholars who call for the inclusion of theories of religion which depend on meta-narratives, are scholars who have missed the point of postmodernism: “the promise of postmodern theorizing, therefore, is to be found in the continual, self-critical . . . movement between [theory as explanation and theory as critique]” (16).

This non-foundational, self-critical process McCutcheon does not define, further than his portrayal of explanation and critique would allow us to speculate. But as he has taken pains to point out that “theologians” cannot theorize, he does go on to argue why in a postmodernist universe they cannot be scholars of religion. Quite simply, the “demystification” task of postmodernism helps separate the claims of legitimate scholarly “games,” from those of “games” which can never be scholarly. So,

“[Postmodernism] allows us to describe some [claims] as theological (those that presume essential, ontological status to their constructs) and other to be naturalistic (those that acknowledge the constitutive role of the theorist and the theory)”(11). Given that there is both a scholarly game of religion and a very different theological game, why does only the former deserve a role in the academy? It would seem so because the academy is public, and funded by public money, and must be above the capriciousness of “first order experiences” which are apparently not in the public interest.

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This construction of the proper sphere of the scholar of religion is, I believe, open to serious criticism. Most problematic is its general understanding of postmodernism and its specific understanding of theory in the academic study of religion. The problem with the type of approach taken to postmodernism is not so much the summary of postmodern theory offered, as with what McCutcheon forthrightly calls, “appropriating postmodernism”(11). It is true, as Keith Jenkins points out in his *Post-modern History Reader*, that postmodernity is more an historical condition of society and scholarship in which we all find ourselves, than simply one choice in the marketplace of late twentieth-century ideologies. It is quite right to say with Jenkins that postmodernity is due to the failure of the two-hundred and fifty year-old experiment to solve intractable social and political problems by the application of reason and science,⁷ and for us to name a “shrinking globe” and a host of other factors in this recognition. Yet with Jenkins we do make choices and commitments about how to serve the public interest, however we might define “public,” even if we define it as our confessional community or communities amongst a host of others. How does McCutcheon fare in his choice, in “appropriating post-modernism”?

Though his article cites a number of postmodernist theorists, McCutcheon does several times credit Pauline Rosenau’s *Post-modernism and the Social Sciences* as formative of his conception of postmodern theory. In documenting the “game playing” analogy used by postmodernists to relativize all epistemologies and to reduce them all to closed systems of religion, McCutcheon seizes on Rosenau’s conclusion that postmodernists do not however see all epistemological games as equally valuable (15). But Rosenau herself cannot, nor can postmodernists in

general do as McCutcheon does, and move from such an observation to the necessary exclusion of “foundationalist” or “religious” theories in the academic study of religion, and to the uncritical inclusion of approaches McCutcheon names variously as “social scientific” (4), “humanistic” (4), “rationalist” (4) and “naturalistic” (11). Such approaches are in fact deemed “modernist” by Rosenau. “Sceptical postmodernism,” she says, calls such strategies “ideological and rhetorical, although claiming to be scientific.” In this perspective, put bluntly, McCutcheon’s or any one else’s “theory” is “impossible.” Or, speaking of “affirmative postmodernists” (the perspective with which McCutcheon identifies his critique), Rosenau says: “[Affirmative postmodernists] generally deny the truth claims of theory and annul its privileged status,” and “they de-centre theory and substitute everyday life and local narrative.”⁸ In other words, the academic study of religion, if it continues in the mood which McCutcheon would have scholars or religion adopt, misses the whole point of postmodernism. “Meta-narratives” are as problematic in the modernism which McCutcheon denies (but in fact espouses), as meta-narratives are in the “foundationalism” which Karl Barth happily admits. As Keith Jenkins puts it: “We can now see how both upper and lower case histories, being ‘metahistorical constructions,’ are, like all constructions, ultimately arbitrary ways of carving up what comes to constitute their field.”⁹

This misappropriation of postmodernism is evident in a closer examination of McCutcheon’s theory construction. Though true scholars of religion, we are told, speak of adopting the theoretical “critical play” espoused by affirmative or “soft” postmodernists, McCutcheon’s two levels of theory are not what postmodernists have in mind. For as his argument goes, “theory as critique” makes “explicit the assumptions, internal logic and sociopolitical preconditions” of theory as explanation (16). This is promising, though obviously it must move beyond a “higher order” critique based on McCutcheon’s examples of class, race, and gender analysis (16). More seriously and more unfortunately, nowhere does his argument openly admit the myth, the dearly held meta-narrative beyond which scientific religionists will not move, the claims of “omni-scient scientism.” This belief assumes the possibility of a rational subject-object distinction, specifically the objective separation of the scholar from what is being studied. It posits an independent, detached observation on the part of a scholar who can rise above “meta-narratives,” even his own. But the whole notion of the “unified subject” (whether author or reader)

dissecting a discrete object (whether text or phenomena) is in fact at the heart of the postmodernist controversy.¹⁰ Dominick LaCapra, in his famous, ferocious *American Historical Review* exchange with Russell Jacoby in 1992, describes such “scientism” as the “extreme objectification of the other wherein the status of the researcher as subject is itself occluded or at least not posed as a problem.”¹¹

So McCutcheon’s argument, then, is clearly modernist in the eyes of genuine postmodernists, though it is an argument which sees the benefits of post-modernism as applied to the “foundationalism” of the “theologians” he critiques. The social science he would apply to the study of religion he deems capable of precisely the kind of detached objectivity postmodernism denies is possible. We might say that McCutcheon has simply reinforced a slightly more introspective form of “that old-time religion” modernism. Thus we might ask why a sizable group of scholars in the various branches of the academic study of religion (which is not restricted to the spectrum of methods found in “Departments of Religion” as McCutcheon sometimes seems to assume) – why a sizable group of scholars of religion continue to resist the insights of genuine post-modernism.

Worth mentioning in passing at least, and worth in fact future serious study, is the observation that a very significant minority among current scholars of religion are ex-fundamentalist Christians whose hard-earned modernism is not likely to give way quickly to radical postmodern critiques of scientific method, or postmodern proposals about the irreducible, paradoxical nature of reality and the like. More demonstrable is the inordinate attention McCutcheon gives to “boundaries,” both theoretical and professional. In saying at the outset of his article that “demarcation – methodological, theoretical and institutional”(5) is under threat, he betrays the anxieties of many scholars who know, as he puts it, that “the very future of the academic study of religion as an institutionally viable practice” (22), is under threat. Hence he is keen, first, to keep separate the various discursive “games” and keep their rules intact (10), and, second, to claim that the social scientific rules of the academic study of religion are in the best interest of the public who fund the academy, whereas the rules of the theologians are not (6-8,10-12,22). This can I think be described in appropriate postmodernist terms as an exercise in hegemony, though an understandable exercise, and one from which none of us can pretend to be more than partially exempt – though not to try to

resist it should strike us as cynical. But perhaps more useful for this discussion than the risky business of probing motives is a brief consideration of what historians, as one species of scholars of religion, might contribute to scholarship in a postmodern era.

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It would be pretentious, after such a discussion, to assume any one of us or any academic discipline were above a similar critique. Even if we wanted to acknowledge the realities of a postmodern world with a postmodern theory none of us could claim with confidence any sort of overarching theory or even systematic approach. So let me simply put forward several observations and suggestions for our general discussion. I believe that historians of religion, in spite of sharing the modernist limitations we do with McCutcheon, have some advantages in postmodern religious scholarship simply by being historians. I am not suggesting the possibility or advisability of the complete “de-centring” of religious history: such postmodern attempts are I think impossible, and inadvisable. As Eric Hobsbawm has recently affirmed about the academic study of any “other”: “it is the nature of writing about other cultures that it has to explain what needs no explanation at home . . . [there can be] only one voice and one conception, the author’s.”¹² But I would like to suggest that we as religious *historians* can benefit from the postmodern project in ways that the mood of modernist “omniscient scientism” cannot allow us.

I start with the suggestion that historians have had their epistemological and methodological certainties undermined for some time. This has had several causes. In terms of the evolution of the academy, history (and to a large measure religious history) has retained a generalist tone (even in his last century) at the same time that many new specialist fields of enquiry have come into existence, and many traditional disciplines have sub-divided. I am not suggesting that historians have retained the a critical “bird’s eye view” while “lower” forms of explanation (scholarship) have not. But I am suggesting that the barrage of new approaches that have seeped into general historical discourse has undercut notions that religious history – to use our case – can be done competently within easily definable parameters or easily described games with obvious rules. Thus all who claim the name of historian have at least had to acknowledge the proliferation of types of history, and often have been obligated to interweave the

findings of at least some of them into their particular field of enquiry, whether economic or political or social or religious history.

The ideal of “interdisciplinary history” has proved of course to be almost impossible almost from the beginning, and it is by no means immune from charges of “omniscient scientism” brought by postmodern theorists. But while theoretical self-critique has not dominated history as much as it has literary studies (whence comes most postmodernist theory), the field of history has sustained considerable criticism from key historians who have been predisposed to respond to the postmodern challenge by the multi-faceted breadth of the historiographical discipline. History is still a discipline which often sees itself as a clearing house for a variety of approaches, though caving in, often it is true, to the specializing tendencies of more carefully delineated disciplines built on the scientific model, such as those practised by some theorists within departments of religion. But historians have an advantage (which they have too often spurned as many one dimensional studies have clearly shown), an advantage in the study of religion.

As far as the matter of what deserves historical study: historians have often not responded graciously to the undermining of their assumptions by popular calls to broaden the canon of the texts and movements which they are willing to consider. But this call from the social margins has nonetheless yielded significant results. Few who teach introductions to the history of Christianity, for instance, can escape the need to be more inclusive, especially if forced to by the astonishing social, racial, sexual, economic, diversification of those they teach. As historians we have every reason to be more radical in our appreciation of the consequences of this. We must listen to more and more dissonant voices from the past, and cannot be content with revision of theories alone, or only with critiques of current forms of religion. The combined weight of decades or centuries of contradictory voices provide a powerful corrective to those of us tempted by unjustifiably privileged European canons. Such weight can also serve as a corrective to the European positivism that has supported the scholarly enterprise. These new, but very old voices, if heard, are bound to affect any theory we bring to bear on old or new canons. The challenge, of course, is to actually hear them.

This brings me to one other observation about the relation of historians of religion to the texts they study: I say texts and not “artifacts” – as McCutcheon prefers – for the same reason that LaCapra advocates

“the elaboration of theory that is not self-contained.”¹³ Historians must more easily admit the interdependence of reader and text, than do some scholars of religion the interdependence of “social scientist” and “artifact.” This is not a matter of moral superiority or conscious choice. Historians, historians of religion, even – dare I say it – theologians, have had to continue to play with religious works or phenomena in a way that “science,” because of its very nature, has avoided. To broaden the matter: whether historians in general owe their slight reverence towards texts to their predecessor’s convictions that Augustine or Voltaire actually had something of value to say which could shape the scholar, is moot. Many historians (as many literary scholars) have at least felt obligated to elucidate the inner coherence of the texts they study, before classifying the social scientific functions of bits and pieces of the discourse of the historical actors under examination. It would seem to me that one exciting avenue for historians of religion is to investigate the dialogue between their own interdisciplinary method and the interpretive key promoted by the texts themselves. This may promote messy varieties of explanations dependent on the texts under study, but it is “totalizing” explanations (as McCutcheon says) we want to avoid as much as possible.

So why should we not seek solace in “omniscient scientism”? However we want to regularize it, with scientific or social scientific or quasi-scientific theory, the world and with it religion, grows messier and more complicated for all scholars, as for all other human beings, every year, for reasons with which we are well acquainted. But it is only as we admit the increasing insignificance of our own dominant voices, and the increasing significance of hitherto hidden or ignored or suppressed voices that we can consciously admit this messiness. It is a choice to acknowledge the reality of a postmodern world, a significant choice. As Rosenau says of this trajectory: theory must become “unsystematic, heterological, de-centred, ever changing, and local.”¹⁴

This is the promise of postmodernism for historians, and historians of religion. Perhaps it is time to actively *hear* the voices which an omniscient scientism would only have us “explain” and “critique” – and it is time to hear more carefully those scholars who speak from outside our boundaries, even outside the boundaries of social science. This is above all things a genuinely public project, regardless of the politics of public funding and the ideological control of departments of religion. And it is a project, we would hope, that will not succumb in the age of shrinking

public government, to the panicked privileging of one form of scholarly discourse over another in the matter of religion.

Endnotes

1. *Fundamentalism in American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).
2. George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Unbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
3. Marsden, *American University*, 424.
4. Marsden, *American University*, 431.
5. Russell T. McCutcheon, “‘My theory of the brontosaurus’: Postmodernism and ‘theory’ of religion,” *Studies in Religion* 26, No. 1 (1997): 22. The page numbers of all further citations of this article will be cited in parentheses within the text of this paper.
6. See Garrett Green, “Challenging the Religious Studies Canon: Karl Barth’s Theory of Religion,” *Journal of Religion* 75 (1995): 473-486.
7. Keith Jenkins, “Introduction: on being open about our closures,” in *The Postmodern History Reader*, ed. Keith Jenkins (Routledge: London and New York, 1997), 3-4.
8. Pauline Marie Rosenau, *Post-modernism in the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 81-83.
9. Jenkins, “Introduction,” *Postmodern History Reader*, 8.
10. See Rosenau, *Post-modernism*, 25-61.
11. “*AHR Forum*: Intellectual History and its Ways,” *American Historical Review* 97 (April 1992): 429. For Russell Jacoby, see his article in the same issue, “*AHR Forum*: A New Intellectual History,” 405-424.
12. This is found in the chapter entitled, “Postmodernism in the Forest,” in *On History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), 196.
13. LaCapra, “Intellectual History,” 439.
14. Rosenau, *Post-modernism*, 83.