L. M. Montgomery and the Impact of Church Union

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SINCE the age of 10, I have been acutely aware of Lucy Maud Montgomery as Presbyterian. I knew she must be Presbyterian because I searched out, read, and reread her books, especially the Anne books. When my family moved to the village of West Lorne, in southwestern Ontario, my parents switched to the United church. One block away stood Knox Presbyterian church. I chose to go there. The fact that I understood Montgomery to be Presbyterian was not the *only* reason for my choosing Knox — it had an all-youth church choir and a thriving Canadian Girls in Training — but the author's Presbyterian identity was one factor. More recently, in November 2017, I felt compelled to correct a rare error in a Newmarket Historical Society newsletter. In its account of a program on Montgomery and the First World War, the newsletter had referred to the author's husband as Anglican. My printed response read, in part: "Lucy Maud Montgomery's husband, Ewan Macdonald, was no Anglican minister. He was Presbyterian, as was Maud. Montgomery's status as a Presbyterian has always been a source of pride almost . . ."

Fifty million readers[1] may well have gained their impressions, if not their understanding, of Canadian Presbyterians from L. M. Montgomery. As a prime example, consider *Anne of Green Gables* — first published 110 years ago, in 1908, and translated into at least 36 languages.[2] There, the author presents Presbyterians in an engaging and perceptive way.

Perhaps most notable, certainly to me, is Mrs. Allan, the charming, gracious minister's wife, a "kindred spirit" to Anne, someone who would be a Christian "even if she could get to heaven without it," as Anne puts it. Mrs. Allan was my first dramatic role on the local stage — a "good" character, a bland role. Why me? I asked. I had, the director informed me, the appropriate voice for a minister's wife — Montgomery would have understood this.

The Presbyterian Milieu of L. M. Montgomery

Beyond this taster of Anne's anodyne liniment–flavoured cake[3] is the whole Avonlea community. The fictional Avonlea is based on Cavendish, the deep-rooted Scottish-Presbyterian community on the scenic north shore of Prince Edward Island. That's where Montgomery grew up, raised by her stern Macneill grandparents. Montgomery loved Cavendish. There, her most famous character — introduced as an unloved, red-haired waif — flowers into a bright-spirited, loyal young woman, ready for the next bend in the road. Like Montgomery, Anne excels in language arts and elocution. These two things would

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1 CBC Books, "75 Facts You Might Not Know about Anne of Green Gables and Author Lucy Maud Montgomery," CBC.ca (June 6, 2018): Fact #15.

2 Andrew McIntosh, Chantal Gagnon, and Neil Besner, "Anne of Green Gables," *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2018): https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/anne-of-green-gables.

3 Having mistakenly flavoured a cake with anodyne liniment instead of vanilla, Anne finds it "providential" that Mrs. Allan is a kindred spirit: see Chapter 21: A New Departure in Flavourings in *Anne of Green Gables*.

have been prized by her community: a community steeped in the values of literacy and learning that the sixteenth-century Scottish reformer John Knox promoted.[4] Within the Presbyterian world of Avonlea, Anne finds a home she cherishes and a community that values her.

In 1911, three years after readers first met Anne, Lucy Maud Montgomery became a Presbyterian minister's wife. She married Rev. Ewan Macdonald, who had preached at Cavendish. The marriage was less a union of kindred spirits, more a means to start a family, which Montgomery much wanted to do. After Macdonald was "called" to Leaskdale, east of Newmarket, Ontario, Montgomery left Cavendish to join him. The manse was the first place Montgomery could call a home of her own,[5] but even then, the church owned it. Already famous for *Anne of Green Gables* and three more bestsellers, she ably fulfilled her minister's wife duties. As Jane Urquhart lists in an Extraordinary Canadians biography, Montgomery's obligations included

> Bake sales . . . Visits with the elderly and infirm. Teas with the wives of church elders. Rummage sales. Christmas bazaars. Funerals. Weddings. Listening to husband's sermons. Listening to husband's rants. Care and feeding of visiting ministers. Teaching Sunday School. Wearing the appropriate clothing, hats, footwear, hairstyle, facial expression . . .[6]

To that I would add: directing Sunday school concerts and plays, visiting the families of 16 young men killed in the First World War,[7] arranging for pulpit supply whenever her husband felt indisposed, and, of course, attending numerous worship services, two every Sunday. Montgomery fitted the writing of 11 novels around such commitments.[8] It was very much a Presbyterian milieu. And until early 1926, it was home.

The Union Movement

Impinging on life in rural Leaskdale was the prospect of Church Union. Over a quarter-century, Canadian Protestant churches explored the idea of merging. The movement was to culminate in the institution of the United Church of Canada on June 10, 1925. The new denomination encompassed Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians — but not *all* Presbyterians. Two-thirds of the Presbyterian Church folded into the United Church; one-third opted not to.[9]

So, by 1925, did the creator of *Anne of Green Gables* approve of a made-in-Canada church: a church founded on the notion that Union was best for Canada and its perceived role as a Christian nation? The author of *The Man from Glengarry*, Presbyterian minister

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4 For more on the huge influence of John Knox on Scottish character — especially the Lowland Scots, from which Montgomery descended — and on literacy, see Arthur Herman, "The New Jerusalem: Part I," in *How the Scots Invented the Modern World* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001), 15–27.

5 Caroline E. Jones presented a paper titled "Growing Independence: L. M. Montgomery in Leaskdale" on L. M. Montgomery Day (October 27, 2018) in Leaskdale, Ontario. Jones also emphasizes the importance of Leaskdale as a home for Montgomery, noting: "She [Montgomery] doesn't really have a sense of home until she comes here."

6 Jane Urquhart, *L. M. Montgomery*, Extraordinary Canadians (Toronto: Penguin, 2009),102.

7 Mary Beth Cavert, *L. M. Montgomery and World War I: The Dedication in L. M. Montgomery's Rainbow Valley 1919* (2011), 7. First published in *The Shining Scroll*, periodical of the L. M. Montgomery Literary Society (1997).

8 "About Maud," Lucy Maud Montgomery Society of Ontario website: http://lucymaudmontgomery.ca/about-maud/.

9 John Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2004), 205, 222.

Ralph Connor, certainly did.[10] And what impact did Union and the drive up to it have upon Montgomery, her family, and places she loved? I have delved into her detailed journals — her "places of protest" as editors Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston describe them — to find out what she thought and felt while diligently fulfilling her role as a minister's wife.[11]

General Assembly Decisions

In 1912, a Presbyterian referendum found that two-thirds of voters supported Union; however, since one-third did not, General Assembly felt the time was not ripe to commit fully to the concept.[12] Four years later, in 1916, General Assembly passed a resolution for the Presbyterian Church to unite with the two other denominations. With Canada heavily engaged in the First World War, though, the Assembly decided not to act on it till the war was over.[13] Montgomery wrote about the decision from the Leaskdale manse:

> The General Assembly has voted for church union. I expected they would but I feel bitterly on the subject. I have never been in favour of union, although Ewan is. But when the whole world is rent and torn, what matter another rending and tearing? Our old world is passed away forever — and I fear that those of us who have lived half our span therein will never feel wholly at home in the new.[14]

In 1921, the Presbyterian General Assembly ended its truce on Union and moved more deeply into the matter.[15] The last GA vote on Union took place in June 1923. A year earlier, Montgomery had professed not to worry about the issue. She wrote, "This 'Union' matter has been a Dweller On My Threshold for years and now I'm just going to kick it out."[16] However, when the General Assembly formally voted for Union — "in the teeth of a large minority,"[17] she noted — she expressed grief.

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10 Ralph Connor was the pen name of Rev. Charles W. Gordon. Among other things, the bestselling author served as an army chaplain during the First World War, a strong advocate for the war effort and for Church Union, pastor of a thriving Winnipeg church, moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1921/22, and United Church delegate to a 1927 world conference on faith — quite a contrast to Montgomery in her limited role as minister's wife. [Robert A. Kelly, "The Gospel of Success in Canada: Charles W. Gordon (Ralph Connor) as Exemplar," *Historical Papers: Canadian Society of Church History* (1998): 6–7.]

11 Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston, eds., *The Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery*, vol. 3, *1921–1929* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1992), xviii.

12 Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 205–6.

13 Phyllis D. Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 33, 39–40.

14 Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston, eds., *The Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery*, vol. 2, *1910–1921* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1987), 186. The language of Montgomery's journal entry is reflected in her 1921 title *Rilla of Ingleside*, an authentic story of life on the home front during the First World War. In a 1917 letter, Rilla writes about Susan Baker, the Blythe family's housekeeper: "She used to be so bitterly opposed to Church Union. But last night when father told her it was practically decided she said in a resigned tone, 'Well, in a world where everything is being rent and torn, what matters one more rending and tearing? Compared with Germans, even Methodists seem attractive to me'" (Chapter 27: Waiting). Mary Rubio writes that, in this speech, Montgomery catches a huge shift in society — the discussion of evil moving from the world of theology to a secular world: "L. M. Montgomery: Scottish-Presbyterian Agency in Canadian Culture," in *L. M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, ed. Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 100.

15 Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 33–34.

16 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 57.

17 Ibid., 132.

> From all points of view I think it is a tragic blunder. The stately Presbyterian church, with its noble history and inspiring traditions, has been forced to commit suicide . . . I feel that I have no longer a church. My Presbyterian Church has gone — I owe and feel neither love nor allegiance to its hybrid, nameless successor without atmosphere, tradition or personality.[18]

Montgomery, whose books reflect a strong sense of place, felt homeless. The notion that the new church would become the "church of Canada" did not comfort her. How could the United Church be the "church of Canada," she argued in her journal, when as far back as 1906, Baptists and Anglicans had chosen not to enter negotiations?[19]

In July 1924, the House of Commons passed what Montgomery called the "Coercion Bill"[20] — the *United Church of Canada Act*. Section 10 of the Act, however, provided for church members to take a vote within six months of the Act coming into effect: at a regularly called meeting, a congregation could confirm it would go Union or opt out by majority vote. What did this mean for the national Presbyterian Church? In 1921 at least, the Presbyterian Church in Canada had the greatest strength of the three Canadian churches moving towards Union. Of the total population of Canada, 16.4 percent called themselves "Presbyterian."[21] And what did Union mean to individual churches, such as Leaskdale? Much was to happen at the local level before and after June 10, 1925.

Union Winds at Zephyr

Montgomery's husband, Rev. Ewan Macdonald, had a two-point pastoral charge. Leaskdale, where the manse was situated, had a relatively stable and harmonious congregation. Zephyr, on the other hand, was fractious.

On May 22, 1922, Montgomery wrote, "Union is in the air at Zephyr."[22] She noted that while the Zephyr Presbyterian church seemed to favour Union in the abstract, much of the congregation was "bitterly averse," as she put it, to uniting with Zephyr's Methodist church.[23] Yet, on the local level, that was precisely what it could expect to do.

Montgomery had objected to Union (in her journal) from the start, but her husband was not so certain. On August 24, 1924, however, Macdonald announced he had decided to remain Presbyterian. "I was glad to hear him say this," Montgomery recorded. She had told him she would, of course, support whatever path he took. "As a minister's wife," she noted, "there could be nothing else for me to do."[24]

Macdonald's mental health affected his viewpoint. Since 1919, Montgomery had known that her husband had religious melancholia. This kind of depression, peculiar to Christians believing in predestination, meant that Macdonald believed that he was damned. He felt that preaching hope of salvation to others was his punishment. Whenever he lapsed into melancholia, as happened in late fall, he turned Unionist. "He never has any energy then," observed Montgomery.[25]

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18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 191.
21 Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 10.
22 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 57.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 200.
25 Ibid., 207.

Encounters with petty politicking Unionists stiffened the couple's support for the Anti-Union cause. For November 26, the Macdonalds invited a minister and his family to supper. Till then, they had quite liked the Dyers. Reverend Dyer, however, had taken a Union charge and not only "turned his coat," as Montgomery wrote, but "like all renegades," was "determined that everyone also should follow his example." Neither Montgomery nor her husband would be "herded along a road" by "brash, young ministers."[26]

Local Voting

On December 6, 1924, Montgomery predicted that Leaskdale would vote Presbyterian, but she felt less sure about Zephyr. She noted that the Zephyr Session favoured Union. These same men had blocked all efforts to strengthen and inspire the Zephyr Presbyterian congregation. They objected to prayer meetings, disapproved of the Guild, and opposed Christmas trees, concerts, and the Sunday school diplomas Montgomery had introduced.[27] Both congregations, as well as hundreds across Canada, would take a vote early in 1925.

On January 8, 1925, Montgomery confided in her journal: "I fear the Island [Prince Edward Island] will go mainly Union. They are so far away from the centre of things and do not understand the tremendous issues at stake." Montgomery understood all too well. "I could 'weep my spirit from my eyes' as I think of it."[28]

Both points of Macdonald's pastoral charge voted to remain Presbyterian. On January 13, Leaskdale voted 63 to 11.[29] On January 20, Zephyr formally opted not to go Union, too, but with a much closer count: 23 to 18.[30] Macdonald felt elated. And the couple's youngest child, Stuart, greeted the news with "Hurrah! Now we won't have to leave."

"Stuart is like me," Montgomery noted in her journal. "He gets deeply attached to his home spot and dreads the thought of being uprooted. I am sorry for it."[31] Montgomery doubted the Zephyrites would accept the results with good will. If even three families left to join the United Church, it might mean the dissolution of the small congregation. That would leave Leaskdale at loose ends, and "we," she said, "will have to move."[32]

Stresses, Accommodations, and Betrayals

A month later, on February 26, Montgomery wrote that she was

> literally obsessed by the Zephyr situation and the Union mess. My intellect tells me it is nonsense to take it so seriously and presents a score of reasons why it need not worry me at all. But this has no effect on my feelings.[33]

Two days later, another event disturbed her equilibrium. An earthquake, part of a much larger phenomenon affecting northeastern Canada, shook Leaskdale. She mused,

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26 Ibid., 208–9.
27 Ibid., 210.
28 Ibid., 216.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., 217.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 219.

Macdonald gave a gracious farewell to Zephyr Unionists on June 8. Although Montgomery had expected to lose a few Zephyr Presbyterians to Union, she was shocked to learn who was going. Several members who had signed her husband's paper for support in April — Janet Meyers among them — were, in fact, going Union. "Is there any such thing as honor known to anyone in Zephyr?" Montgomery railed.[43] She went on to assert:

> Not *one* of these people who are leaving are going because they sincerely believe that Union will "hasten the coming of the kingdom of God." Not one. We know the motives that have actuated everyone and in not one case is it a right motive.[44]

As for Mrs. Meyers, she returned to the Presbyterian fold once she learned there was more to saving her husband than going Union. She had "gone Union" in the mistaken belief that her husband would automatically become a member of the new church — he had attended, but never joined the Presbyterian church. Her goal was to get him to Heaven.[45] She fretted that unless he was a bona fide church member, he could not reach it. In any event, her daughter had objected vigorously to leaving the Leaskdale Sunday school.[46]

"The Fatal Date" and Beyond

Wednesday, June 10, 1925: That was what Montgomery called "the fatal date." The date when the United Church of Canada came into being was, she wrote, "[w]hen our beautiful Presbyterian church is torn asunder by those who swore to protect and cherish her."[47]

Canadian newspapers saw the event rather differently. Their accounts hailed the institution of the United Church as a great "birth." In her journal, Montgomery retorted: "No, 'tis no 'birth.' It is rather the wedding of two old churches, both of whom are too old to have offspring."[48]

Much of the impact of Church Union had yet to be felt. "It is Leaskdale I am worried over," Montgomery wrote. "What will it do now? We have built up such a good church here. It was a miserable congregation when we came here — torn by feuds and cross-purposes. Now it is harmonious and flourishing, full pews, lots of young people coming into it every year — all a church should be. But it is not strong enough to stand alone."[49]

On Sunday, June 14, the church in Leaskdale was filled to the doors, and Montgomery could report that, so far as she and her husband knew, not one person was leaving it.[50] As for ex-Presbyterian Zephyrites, by July 6 she could note that "only three" had worshipped in Zephyr United the night before. "It would seem that they are no better to go there than to their own of yore."[51] But the loss of Zephyr members undermined Leaskdale's viability.

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43 Ibid., 234.

44 Ibid., 235.

45 Indeed, Montgomery's Scottish forebears, as well as people in Cavendish, where she grew up, and in the Avonlea of her Anne books, believed that the main goal of life was to get ready for Heaven: Rubio, "Scottish-Presbyterian Agency in Canadian Culture," 100.

46 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 236, 241.

47 Ibid., 235.

48 Ibid. Interestingly, Phyllis Airhart quotes this comment with respect at the start of her 2014 book, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, page 3.

49 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 235.

50 Ibid., 236.

51 Ibid., 238.

There was talk of finding a different point in her husband's charge — perhaps Wick, maybe Mount Albert — but even if that happened, it still meant disruption. Presbyterians choose ministers based on a preach for the call. Any new church partner with Leaskdale could not have called Rev. Ewan Macdonald. It seemed clear that life in Leaskdale must soon end. "And I cannot bear the thought," wrote Montgomery.[52]

On October 16, 1925, Montgomery recorded meeting Walter W. Bryden. "Then at Woodville it was Union — Union — Union," she complained in her journal. "The subject of Union has more bite than that of missions, but I am horribly fed up with it too." Bryden was the new minister based some 26 miles away from Leaskdale. Montgomery described him: "He is a man of first rate intellect and sees very clearly. His sizing up of the situation was masterly."[53] Bryden was to play an instrumental role in providing the continuing Presbyterian Church with its theological reason for being.[54] Through the lens of twentieth-century theologian Karl Barth, he interpreted the ideas of sixteenth-century Reformed theologian John Calvin. He thereby went deeper than the Presbyterian Church's Scottish roots to where that denomination comes from: Calvin's Geneva. Bryden identified Calvin's key insights — summed up in two words as "God matters"[55] — as relevant to continuing Canadian Presbyterians and key to their post-Union identity. He served as a professor of church history at Knox College and later as the college's sixth principal.

Meanwhile, Union was harming close, long-time friendships. Montgomery's friend Margaret Stirling had joined the Union church because her husband, Rev. John Stirling, had joined the Union church.[56] Margaret used to favour the Anti-Union cause. "[N]ow, I hear, she out-Unions the Unionists," wrote Montgomery. "There will always hereafter be a subject we cannot discuss," she mourned. "I *cannot* joke to Margaret of Unionist ministers and I *will* not of Presbyterian ministers. She will be in the same predicament and half our fun will be absent."[57] Montgomery compared the change in relationship to the 1919 death of her best friend to Spanish flu. "For some reason he [the devil] could not kill Margaret as he did Frede so he just brewed up Church Union to spoil it."[58]

Snow in the Air

The Macdonalds had served Leaskdale and Zephyr Presbyterians for 15 years, something that had suited Montgomery's need to feel settled and at home. By late 1925, however, change could not be avoided. "I have long felt the coming change," Montgomery observed, "as one feels snow in the air before it comes."[59]

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52 Ibid., 263.

53 Ibid., 256–57.

54 John A. Vissers, "Calvin and Canadian Protestantism: The Thought and Influence of W. W. Bryden," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 30, Supplement 1 (2015): 5–16. DOI: 10.3138/tjt.30.suppl_1.5. See also Walter W. Bryden, *Why I Am a Presbyterian* (Belleville, ON: Essence, 1934/1977).

55 Vissers, "Calvin and Canadian Protestantism," 15.

56 The Reverend John Stirling had married Montgomery and her husband Ewan Macdonald in 1911; in 1942, he officiated at Montgomery's funeral in Cavendish. (See Kevin McCabe, "The Funeral of L. M. Montgomery," in *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album*, compiled by Kevin McCabe (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside), 325.

57 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 258.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., 260. Despite its loss of members at Union, Zephyr did survive as a Presbyterian church until 1969, at which time the congregation merged with Leaskdale: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1970 *Acts and Proceedings* of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada: 585.

At an Uxbridge anniversary service, the Anniversary preacher, Rev. Mr. McKay, talked to Montgomery and her husband about "a very nice charge" at Norval and Union, west of Toronto.[60] As interim-moderator, McKay was looking for a minister to take the newly created charge. Union church had remained Presbyterian. As for Norval church, half the congregation had left to join the United Church but half of another church, Mount Pleasant, came in when their church went Union. That left Norval as strong as ever. Macdonald agreed to preach for the call on December 20. He came home from a weekend away confident he would be invited to take the charge. By December 30, he got the call. The Macdonalds prepared to move and say good-bye to Leaskdale.

So, as Elizabeth Waterston observes, the Macdonalds benefited from Church Union. In her article "Lucy Maud Montgomery: 'Mistress of the Manse,'" Waterston notes that the departure of so many Presbyterian ministers for the United Church meant that "the 'continuing' Presbyterians were short of incumbents. The call to the Norval Presbyterian Church . . . was a step up, to a bigger congregation and a handsome manse."[61] Montgomery might not have welcomed the change, but from about February 28, 1926, till 1935, the well-designed, attractive red-brick manse — complete with electric lights — was the family's home. She wrote five books at Norval. Over time she came to say, "I have never loved anyplace so well save Cavendish."[62]

Loss in Cavendish

After Church Union, however, the Presbyterian identity of Cavendish was no more. On Sunday, July 17, 1927, Montgomery attended the "United Church" — the term set in double quotation marks — in Cavendish. That building used to be the Presbyterian church. Montgomery's ancestors had provided the land for the church, which stood right beside the Macneill family farm. Her grandfather and an uncle had served as elders there. As the Cavendish United Church website notes, that was Montgomery's home church and where Anne of Green Gables would have attended. In an article about Montgomery and Scottish-Presbyterian agency in Canadian culture, Mary Rubio wrote, "The Presbyterian Church was the measure of her personal world."[63]

"It is a bitter thing to me," Montgomery told her journal, "that there is no longer a Presbyterian church in the old historic congregation of Cavendish. Many of the people are bitterly discontented. They voted early for 'Union' having been told by their minister that there would be no Presbyterian church for them to belong to! Some of them have left the United Church altogether . . . And the old manse is gone . . ."[64]

The Presbyterian Worldview as a Countervail to Church Union

In Ontario, though, the two Presbyterian manses where Montgomery lived and wrote have become National Historic Sites that draw people engaged, entertained, and empowered by L. M. Montgomery's writing. In March 2017, the Norval manse made Smithsonian

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60 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 263.

61 Elizabeth Waterston, "Lucy Maud Montgomery: Mistress of the Manse," *Touchstone* (January 2009): 39–45.

62 Nancy Wigston, "Fans of Anne Make Pilgrimage to Tiny Village of Norval," *Toronto Star*, August 7, 2008.

63 Rubio, "Scottish-Presbyterian Agency in Canadian Culture," 100.

64 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 343.

Institute news with the announcement it was now a museum.[65] The Leaskdale manse and historic church are the base of the Lucy Maud Montgomery Society of Ontario, which offers tours, teas, and programs. Other continuing Presbyterian churches related to Montgomery — Leaskdale, Norval, and Union — remain active.

But for Montgomery, the Union movement had posed a threat to a key part of herself: her religious identity as a member of a church of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation — indeed, the Scottish Reformation — founded on the vision of the Scot John Knox and the theology of Genevan John Calvin. Church Union had diminished the Presbyterian Church in Canada as an institution while offering, in Montgomery's critical analysis, only a faulty new premise. As she experienced it, the movement's success owed more to local foibles and false news than on any rallying to embrace a spiritual or national vision. Union undermined her need to be deeply rooted in her home and community. On October 30, 1925, she reflected: "It has been my misfortune to be a born conservative, hater of change, and to live my life in a period when everything has been, or is being turned topsy turvey, from the old religions down."[66]

In some sense, though, I think that Montgomery held the impact of Union at bay. Even as the movement was gathering steam, Montgomery — the epitome of a literate, eloquent, critical thinking Presbyterian — was creating books infused with the Presbyterian worldview.[67] As Mary Rubio puts it, "The Scottish-Presbyterian legacy still lives. It is encoded in Montgomery's texts, which themselves have travelled all over the world, wielding their own influence."[68] For more than 50 million readers over the past 110 years, Avonlea is Presbyterian, and Anne of Green Gables, quoting poet Robert Browning, has the last word:

"God's in his heaven, . . . all's right with the world."

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65 Brigit Katz, "L. M. Montgomery's Ontario Home Will Open as a Museum," *Smithsonian.com* (March 17, 2017). See also Nancy Russell, "Ontario Manse Where Montgomery Lived to Become Museum," *CBC News* (March 14, 2017).

66 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 259.

67 "She's such a can-do kind of girl, that's why I'm crazy about her," said Aretha Franklin in a 2014 interview: CBC News, "Why Aretha Franklin Found a Kindred Spirit in Anne of Green Gables," CBC.com, August 17, 2018, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-aretha-franklin-anne-of-green-gables-1.4789516. I believe this comment reflects an appreciation of the sense of agency, of empowerment, reflected in Anne, something much a part of the Scottish-Presbyterian character.

68 Rubio, "Scottish-Presbyterian Agency in Canadian Culture," 101.