

**Canadian Society of
Presbyterian
History**
Papers 2022

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Edited by Lois Rooney-Giurin

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About the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History

Dedicated to the Study of Presbyterian History and Reformed History

The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History (CSPH) is a religion-centred learned society. It meets annually on the last Saturday of September. Since its founding in 1975, about 200 papers have been presented. A sampling is published on **csph.ca**.

Membership is open to individuals and institutions that share an interest in and a fascination for the study of Presbyterian and Reformed history.

About the Authors of the 2022 Papers

Angus Sutherland is a retired minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. His family's service in Presbyterian ministry includes his grandfather, two uncles, and daughter. He has served as chair of the Committee on History and of the Advisory Committee for the Presbyterian Church Heritage Centre, the latter of which he continues to serve on. Angus's interest in history began with collecting the coinages of Canada and Scotland, and has continued with his strong interest in communion tokens and church medals. This is his fourth contribution to the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History papers.

Ian McKechnie is a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Lindsay, where he was baptized on Mother's Day of 1991. (Appropriately enough, his mother's family had been a part of the congregation since 1931.) Ian obtained a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English Literature from Trent University in 2013, and in 2022 graduated from the Ontario Museum Association's Certificate in Museum Studies programme. Between 2014 and 2023, Ian worked in various capacities with three local museums in the Kawartha Lakes area. Since 2017, Ian has been a contributing writer for The Lindsay Advocate magazine, an award-winning publication for which he writes occasional cover features and a monthly column on local history; more recently, he has been serving as the magazine's online news editor. In 2023, Ian took over as editor of Presbyterian History, the biannual newsletter of the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Committee on History.

Brian Graham is a ruling elder and the bell-ringer at the Osgoode Presbyterian Church in Vernon, Ontario. He is married to Cathy and they have two grown-up sons. Brian is a senior analyst employed full-time with the Canadian Coast Guard in Ottawa. Brian has lived and worked for nearly a decade in the North, including as an adult educator in Nunavut and Northern Quebec. He has studied the history of education with Professor Sharon Cook at uOttawa. Brian holds a Masters of Education and an Honours Bachelor of Social Sciences in Leisure Studies from uOttawa. He also has a Bachelor of Arts in Geography from Carleton University.

Stacey Mortson is a recently ordained United Church Minister, now serving in solo ministry in Rosemont Ontario. She retired from the position of CFO of a small hospital in Eastern Ontario, and instead of traveling the world as planned, accidentally entered a discernment program for seekers exploring ministry options. She was happy to have her studies to focus upon during the Covid pandemic as she completed her M.Div. through the Atlantic School of Theology, mostly online. Stacey and her husband Rob Montminy are parents to two grown boys, and have recently graduated to grandparent status. In 2022, Stacey was awarded the Dr. Mel Bailey Bursary — an

award given to beginning scholars who have crafted a paper on Presbyterian and/or Reformed history and is then presented at the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History.

Peter Bush is a parish minister and an independent scholar. He has served congregations in Flin Flon and Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Mitchell and Fergus, Ontario. Peter was Moderator of the 2017 General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He has written extensively about the Presbyterian Church's involvement in Indian Residential Schools and had a short-term research contract with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Additionally, his research interests have involved reflection on the arrival of World Christianity in Canada, and the impact of the missionary rebound. He is married to Debbie, and they have one son.

Presbyterian Music Camp: 50 Years of Harmony

Angus Sutherland

The idea of Presbyterian Music Camp began when the Rev. Irwin McElwain, minister of St. Stephen's Church, Scarborough, Ontario, was travelling in the Maritimes. He heard about an Anglican music camp on Prince Edward Island, which had been formed "to introduce good choral music to children and teens in a camp setting." The idea of a family camp with music at the centre was proposed to the Presbyterian Committee on Camping, even though family camps had not caught on in the church's camps across the country. Would such a camp succeed? They decided it was worth a try.

Mr. McElwain's suggestion came to fruition due to another factor. The Presbyterian Church was on the cusp of introducing a brand-new Book of Praise. It had been 54 years since the previous one was created and while some congregations were quite content to keep using the old one, a good many people within the church were saying it was about time we had something new. For one thing, they pointed out, a lot of hymns had been written in those 54 years and we ought to take advantage of them. For another, popular music had changed and was in constant flux. Young people were in agreement with Christian song writer Larry Norman, who asked, "Why should the devil have all the good music?"

While the new Book of Praise stopped well short of Norman's Rock and Roll, it was an expression of a church wanting to find new songs of praise to accompany the old songs that meant so much to so many. Looking for ways to promote the new book, the Book of Praise Committee and the Committee on Camping came together to create a family camp that would have a focus on music and especially the new hymns being introduced to the church. The onus of this project was placed on the shoulders of Alan Cowle, manuscript editor of the 1972 Book of Praise and organist at Knox Presbyterian Church, Oakville. A theatre organ was transported to the camp for his use

In order to encourage the attendance and participation of young people, the Rev. Garry Morton of Burlington was included as "leader in contemporary songs", for which he brought his guitar.

Irwin McElwain had the honour of being the first dean of the camp. He was also called 'director', and he is credited with making sure there were "times for rest, for handicrafts, for games, for instruction in various musical instruments, for entertainment, for camp-fires, and for worship." (Z. Dunn, Presbyterian Record) Presbyterian Church camps would have been the natural choice for the first camp, but their full schedules and complications of camp management removed them from the search. The committee searched for underused camps of other denominations and came up with a solution. The camp would be held at the United Church Camp at Golden Lake, ideal for its setting and as a mid-point between Toronto and Montreal. It was promoted as a "test camp", along with the expressed hope, that "it may be the first of many in our church across Canada."

The first camp took place on the last full week of August, from Sunday the 20th to Sunday the 27th, setting a precedent of eight-day camps that continues to this day.

The brochure promised:

- Sleeping accommodation in spacious cabins;
- Tent and trailer area (no hookups);
- Dining hall;
- Infirmary with nurse;
- Beautiful lakefront with safe swimming area;
- Lifeguard present at all times;
- Boating facilities (bring your own);
- Places to go hiking.

The price in 1972? Adults \$30. Children (8–12) \$26. Family rate: \$100. No children under 8 years of age! There was an additional registration fee of \$2 per individual, or \$5 per family. The price included accommodation, all food and snacks, and liability insurance.

From the beginning, it has been the practise at Presbyterian Music Camp that all workshop leaders are also campers, paying the full fees. Only the deans each year have had their fees covered.

The Golden Lake site was a great one for the camp. At the centre of the site and of the planned activity was the dining hall / lodge with the cabins in a ring around it. A field for sports and other activities was in front of the hall and there was plenty of space for gathering to talk, practice, or jam. A dock went from just below and behind the lodge out into the lake where campers could sit and play music, or just listen to the loons. It was altogether inviting.

The only notable drawback was that a road used by local cottagers ran through the camp grounds. People were asked to be careful when crossing the road.

All was set. Would the camp be a success?

Information went out and, on reading the minutes of the committee, there is a sense that they held their breath. Registrations began to come in, and the committee was startled when the numbers passed 70. When the camp began, “nearly 100” came together.

As far as the program is concerned, a number of changes that now must be considered standard were introduced right at the beginning. The brochure had clearly placed a limit, stating, “no children under 8”. Ron Klinck, organist of Central Presbyterian Church in Galt Cambridge, wanted to bring his whole family which included a child of four. If his whole family could come, he also offered to bring a full set of handbells and to train two groups of eight to play them. (It was noted that he had a very appropriate name for a handbell leader.) Those who made the decisions both accepted the offer of handbells and lowered the age-limit to accommodate the Klinck family. In one letter, Mr. Klinck brought two immediate but very welcome changes to PMC.

Alison Stewart-Patterson of St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Baie D’Urfé, Quebec, brought her Junior Chorus and, along with others from the camp, produced “Jonah-man Jazz” to the delight of the camping families. Such presentations became a standard.

Morning and evening devotions framed each day, and, in between, there were opportunities which provided “something interesting for everyone: guitar, recorder, orchestra, choir, Bible study, sports, swimming – or just sitting on the benches visiting.” (Mary Ritchie, from “Memories of Music Camp”, 1993)

Mary also comments on the great meals that were served. Campers ate together in the dining hall (which also served as the performance hall and centre for all things musical, as well as a place to gather when the weather brought people inside). She states that grace was offered by tables in turn, suggesting that campers always sat at the same table.

The Rev. Zander Dunn, in his article on the first camp, published in the Presbyterian Record and entitled, "A New Kind of Camp", mentions that "a great 'esprit de corps' was built up as we all participated in the games, skits, and as each cabin took its turn at doing dishes, leading in worship and entertainment." He further comments: "One thing you *cannot* imagine was the night when all the fathers dressed up as babies and were 'mothered' by their wives. The most beautiful baby prize was hotly disputed."

Both Mary and Zander refer to the first camp with the term "miracle." It seems there were several miracles of that first camp. They were that: nearly 100 largely unconnected people came together to learn and worship and sing together; one week of training brought about vocal and instrumental excellence; those who attended coalesced into a family; the participants went from that first camp eager to bring about changes in the Presbyterian Church.

Something Worth Continuing

The story, whether true or apocryphal, is that one of the young people from Baie D'Urfé, on the drive home, turned to Alison Stewart-Patterson and said, "I can hardly wait for next year's camp!" On arrival home, the story goes, Alison made phone calls to various people and got the ball rolling for the next year.

In the booklet, "Memories of Music Camp", created in 1993, there are references to two meetings. The first is entitled "Report of Fact-Finding Committee". It was chaired by the Rev. Wilf Moncrieff, with Alison Stewart-Patterson and Barbara Hogg noted as part of the meeting. The report indicates that a challenge had gone out from the Committee on Camping, but that no Presbytery had picked up on the idea of creating similar camps. It was, therefore, up to the small group of enthusiasts from the 1972 camp to keep the ball rolling.

It seems most everything was on the table, including the site, but apparently it did not take long to decide that Golden Lake suited the camp best. It was noted that time was of the essence as camp owners were setting schedules, and time was also needed for publicity and staffing concerns. Already they had Alan Cowle on board for the second camp.

The second report, from March 28, 1973, is entitled "Music Camp Committee", the first meeting using that title. The meeting consisted of the above three named plus Betty Siverns, who may or may not have been at the meeting of the Fact-Finding Committee. Golden Lake was booked, and the committee was approaching the Rev. Tom Gemmell to be treasurer, and he eventually agreed.

Wilf Moncrieff was appointed dean for the camp, and the theme was set as "Sing – and play – a new/old song to the Lord." Once again, a theater organ was obtained for Alan Cowle's use.

Prices went up. The first year's camp had gone \$500 over budget, so it was necessary to increase the costs. Still by today's standards they are quite surprising. Adults \$37 plus \$5 registration; Children \$33 plus \$5 registration; Families \$145 plus \$10 registration.

The second camp went well. There were 81 at camp, from New Brunswick through to Southwestern Ontario. There were 32 from the Presbytery of Montreal, which sponsored the camp. John Greenwood and Brad Sinclair led songs of contemporary praise, jam sessions, and guitar workshops. Alison Stewart-Patterson once again led junior choir workshops, producing another pop cantata, "100% Chance of Rain." Invitations were sent out to area churches to attend the Saturday night concert and there were Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican, and United Church people present.

The report to the Presbytery of Montreal concludes, "It was the unanimous opinion of the camp that every effort be made to make this camp an annual event. It was felt that, in addition to

the very real pleasure afforded to those attending, it may well have a long-range impact on the continuing health and vitality of our church.” The report was submitted by Alison Stewart-Patterson with one motion: that the Presbytery of Montreal continue the Music Camp as an annual event.

Success!

Presbyterian Music Camp began to settle into a routine. Enthusiasm for the camp quickly went beyond the bounds of the Presbyterian Church as people from other denominations saw the advantages of an intergenerational camp based on music. The oversight, however, has remained Presbyterian. At first, the camp came under the auspices of the Presbytery of Montreal, but then, as the camp location was outside the bounds of that Presbytery, oversight moved to the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario.

Attendance was not only stable, it increased. For several years the camp attendance was at the maximum that Golden Lake could accommodate. As each year saw more than the limit applying and a small number of cancellations from early applicants, a waiting list was established. It became clear in the late 1980's that the waiting list was getting almost as long as the camper list, so the committee worked with the management at Golden Lake to add a second week.

In 1991 there were two weeks of camp for the first time, both of them at Golden Lake and running consecutively. It was acknowledged that many campers in the past had said they wished camp would never end, so the committee was aware that it was important to discourage people from attending both camps.

The first week of camp was designated SWO for Southwestern Ontario, and the second week was designated MEO for Montreal and Eastern Ontario. These were nothing more than handy geographic terms for planning for the camp in that geographic area; registration for participants was not limited to those areas.

The creation of two camps brought about the separation of old friends, but also enabled campers to meet new people. While camp remained at Golden Lake, the last day of week one coincided with the first day of week two. It was a great time for gathering and sharing as first week campers, reluctant to leave, exchanged greetings and news with the second week campers, newly arrived.

For the first two years, the two camps operated with the same theme, but as there were different personnel leading the camps, separation was inevitable. In 1993 the camps had the same theme, “Promises Through the Ages”, but had separate tag lines. Week one (SWO) had the tag line “I am With You Always”, while week two (MEO) used the tag line “Promises of God.” In 1994, the two camps had completely different themes, and in 1995 there were separate brochures produced for the first time.

The year 1995 also was a time of transition. The committee was informed that fees at Golden Lake would be increased. Along with the camp use fee, a surcharge of ten dollars per camper was to be requested starting in 1996. As the committee found this surcharge unacceptable, PMC was forced to consider new locations. The search was on!

In 1996, for the first time, Presbyterian Music Camp took place in two different locales. The MEO became the first week and took up residence at Wesley Acres Camp near Picton, Ontario. The second week (SWO) moved into Camp Tamarack near Bracebridge, Ontario. Both were now within the bounds of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston (now the Synod of Central and Northern Ontario and Bermuda), so a transfer of oversight was necessary.

A New Beginning

Leaving Golden Lake was not easy. Campers were saying good-bye to a site which had become familiar, the home of Presbyterian Music Camp, but also to friends who would be meeting in a different area altogether.

Wesley Acres / Quinte

The MEO week was held at Wesley Acres, a camp of the Free Methodist Church, near Picton, Ontario. Once a farm, the camp is situated on a peninsula jutting into West Lake across from Sand Banks Provincial Park. There is a large portion of the property that is developed into seasonal residences, trailers, and mobile homes.

Music Camp had the use of three of the buildings, but, mostly, made good and regular use of an area with picnic tables and space for chairs covered by what appeared to be an army tent. It was nicknamed "The Swamp", the term coming from the M*A*S*H* television series.

The focus of Presbyterian Music Camp did not change. Centred on morning and evening worship and both instrumental and vocal music, the traditions continued from the earlier venue. Evening activities were pretty standard; first night ice-breakers, a free night, as well as dance night - but they had to be a bit creative in naming that activity. The Free Methodists do not allow dancing. There were members of the community that came to see just what the campers were up to. Of course, it was square dancing, but we took to calling it "rhythmic movement in a square formation". When they saw what was going on they were fine with it. Strangely, the name stuck.

The Quinte Camp continued to have a full complement of workshops, camp choir, band, Bible Study, children's program, crafts, handbells, and the opportunity to just sit in "The Swamp" with friends and talk, knit, whittle, or play games.

There was a small swimming area that had a small beach, but with lots of weeds in the water. Most people who wanted to go swimming in their free time would drive over to the day-use area at Sand Banks. Using the canoes was also a favorite activity during free time.

Meals were prepared by Wesley Acres staff, and the set-up and clean-up was done by them as well. The meals were very good. One thing the camp had to ask for was porridge each morning, something of a tradition at PMC; it wasn't normal for the Wesley Acres staff. Otherwise, they provided plenty of food and snacks and a good tuck shop.

The residents of Wesley Acres were invited to come to the talent show, and workshop concert. PMC also provided the leadership for the Sunday morning service at the end of the week.

At length, Presbyterian Music Camp as a whole was brought under the umbrella of Cairn, the body overseeing camping ministry for the Synod. The Quinte Camp took exception to the demands of those from Cairn who came to the camp and chose to opt out of this arrangement. Shortly afterwards, the camp dropped the word Presbyterian from their name and chose to continue without church oversight.

In the early 2010's, schools which the young people of the camp attended stopped allowing them to take home instruments for the summer. The camp became a Music Camp with much less music. In 2015 the Quinte camp moved to a four-day event, and changed location to a Baptist Church Camp.

Sadly, the Quinte Camp no longer exists. 2018 was its last year.

Tamarack

The site at Tamarack stretches along the western shoreline of Stoneleigh Lake, a beautiful setting amongst the trees and rock of the Canadian Shield. The Dining Hall is at the centre of the camp while the performance hall is to the south, beyond the dock and just before the trailer area. Cabins, available for families and singles alike, are on the rocks near the shore and in the woods to the west side. Tamarack is a sports camp with fields for various activities and a tennis court. The lake is available for swimming, canoeing and kayaking, and life-guards are provided. Some choose to bring trailers, and the area provided for them is spacious.

When PMC first gathered at Tamarack, the owner, Howie Kates, met the community with somewhat restrictive rules. However, he welcomed them back every year and was even heard to say, "I don't know anything about Presbyterians, but I can say this: you are the cleanest camp I've ever had here."

Perhaps the most difficult part of "Howie's Rules" was that the main building, the dining hall, was not available for workshops. In fact, it was not open at all between meals. (The meal situation changed too. See "Food" below.) What had been the centre of activity at Golden Lake no longer existed at Tamarack. PMC was forced to spread out, to make changes, and to develop a new style of camp.

It was also clear that Howie was thinking of PMC week as a time for construction and for updating buildings; campers had to get used to 'gators', Tamarack's ATVs, roaring around the camp, sometimes causing a pause in the musical moments at the performance hall as someone drove past.

Although the adjustment was perhaps a little bit difficult for those who had spent years at Golden Lake, by the second year the community found themselves adapting to the changes. Tamarack was becoming PMC's new home.

One thing that Tamarack could not re-capture from the years at Golden Lake, was the outreach to cottagers in the area. At Golden Lake, invitations went to neighbouring cottages to come and enjoy Concert Night. In 1975, the theme was "Christmas in August", and campers went to nearby cottages and sang carols. As Tamarack is more isolated, this contact with neighbours ceased to be.

Howie's Rules were somewhat vexing. PMC had been used to a very free use of the site, but found his policing of the use of camp property challenging. At one point, the committee became concerned that Howie was going to tell them that they were no longer welcome, and so the committee, in 2001-2002, instituted a site search. While several sites were examined, none met the criteria. Tamarack still offered the best location for the camp experience that the committee wanted to provide, and they were relieved to find that Howie had no intention of removing PMC from Tamarack. It may even be that he heard about the site search and lightened up a bit in order to keep Music Camp there.

In 2008, Howie indicated his plan to sell the camp to Rick and Ellen Howard. They were present at the time of the 2008 camp and the committee was able to meet them. The new owners were happy to continue the relationship with Presbyterian Music Camp, and it was noted in 2009 and since that the rules have relaxed considerably. They have even opened up the dining hall to camp activities. Although a recommendation of the site search committee of 2002 was that PMC undergo a site search every few years, this has not been done as the community continues to have a good working relationship with the Howards.

Their camp manager/director, Marc Cooper, became a particularly close friend to PMC. Who can forget his welcome speeches, his friendly wave from his gator, and his rendition of the camp

siren? After two years of pandemic closure, in 2021, PMC Campers were saddened to receive the news that Marc had taken his own life. He will be sorely missed.

During the last couple of years before the pandemic, PMC shared the facilities with a French language camp for children. Their camp activities and PMC have been separate, though all eat in the dining hall; the French campers on the north side of the building, PMC to the south. The only noticeable interaction is at meal times, when they enjoy PMC's meal-time music and the PMC campers join in singing with them when they celebrate a birthday.

Worship

The focus of Presbyterian Music Camp is Christian worship.

Worship is the filter through which all else takes place. The themes each year provide a Biblical basis to the music, activities and general experience of Camp. There is the weekly theme broken down into daily sub-themes, a focus for those who are leading.

PMC begins and ends officially with the Circle and the Flame, a gathering of all campers. Candles are lit for each family or group from the Christ Candle on the centre table. They sing the Taizé Community song, "Ubi caritas et amor; ubi caritas, Deus ibi est." (Where there is compassion and love; where there is compassion, God is there.) Often, they also sing the song that has come to express arrival together and departure from each other: "We are marching in the light of God."

Each day begins with worship. A candle is lit and the "Gloria" is sung: "Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria, gloria; hallelujah, hallelujah." (Glory to God in the highest; glory, glory; praise the Lord, praise the Lord.)

Worship continues in Word and singing and in the action of "Holy Motion", introduced by Hugh Donnelly and continued every year since. This time together warms campers up for the day ahead. Each day also ends with worship, this time a bit less boisterous, bringing together the events and lessons of the day before heading to the cabins for a good night's sleep.

Listed among the workshops are prayer groups and Bible study. Taking place each day, these groups normally base their study and focus their prayer along the lines of the chosen theme for each day.

Before the end of camp each year, the community gathers for an agapé feast, or Communion. It is a binding together, a time of unity, but also begins the process of saying good-bye, making the experience bitter-sweet.

At camp, God is worshipped with heart and mind, with talents and voices, and in body and spirit, with all thankfulness and joy for the grace and mercy received in Jesus Christ.

Workshops

As noted above, Presbyterian Music Camp began with specific workshops, including guitar, recorder, and Mr. Klinck's handbells. Over the years other workshops have been added, some on-going and some appear once only.

Leadership always comes from within the PMC community. The skills brought to camp are harnessed and people are taught by the leadership that is present.

Here is a listing of workshops noted in the early brochures, and, as far as is known, the first year the workshop took place:

Guitar (1972)

Youth Choir (1972)

Handbells (1972)
Adult (Camp) Choir (1972)
Recorder (1976)
Ukulele (1976)
Band Instruments/Orchestra (1976)
Rhythm Band (1976)
Communications (1976)
Drama (1976)
Dance (1976)
Arts and Crafts (1979)
Song-writing (1979)
Discussion Groups (1979)
Directing (1979)
Choral Workshop (1984)
Strings and Chamber (1985)

Not all workshops have been listed in the brochures. There have sometimes been pop-up workshops leaning on the skills of those who are leading. Some years the number of workshops has been more than the brochure could handle. Often the list ends with the words, “and more!”

And so, PMC has also had workshops in single instruments such as fiddle, banjo, and bagpipes. There have been workshops mixing instruments and producing musical styles such as bluegrass, Celtic, classical chamber music, and garage band. There have been workshops in various styles of drama, such as mime, “improv”, and show choir.

There have also been introductions to various crafts. “Arts and crafts”, a yearly workshop, has been popular among both children and adults. Other kinds of handicrafts have been brought to Camp from time to time, including rug hooking and knitting for two.

Some of the workshops last one year only; others are so popular that they continue year after year. With continual excellent volunteer leadership, our Presbyterian Music Camp is a place to discover new talents, learn about our potential, and grow in the knowledge and the fun of being and making music together.

Performance

Talent Night and Coffee House

All campers are invited to share their talents with the rest of the camp. In general, each camp provides two opportunities. Those willing to put themselves on show are welcomed and cheered with wild applause, whether they are professional, rank amateurs, or somewhere in between.

Some have the required courage in advance, but, for others, it is the atmosphere of the camp that brings out a strength that they might never have had in other situations. Such is the magic of Presbyterian Music Camp.

Concert Night

PMC culminates in Concert Night (or, sometimes, Concert Afternoon), the performance in which the workshops show off what they have learned. MCs are chosen from the community and introduce each workshop. Children and adults, whether beginner or more advanced, play what they have learned and enjoy the applause of the camp.

It is the Concert event that puts Presbyterian Music Camp in its proper light. During the week the community gathers morning and evening and at meals, but are separated for the workshop times. At Concert, people of all ages make music together, sharing in the learning experience. A

mutual respect, a common love of music, a show of the result of learning alongside one another, becomes evident. All barriers erected by our society disappear. Campers are in this together.

And they enjoy it!

Free Evenings

Most years, PMC has had a dance night. Whether moving to a Scottish country dance, salsa, or the PMC traditional “Old Fashioned Love” (by B. J. Thomas), it has been a favourite evening.

Free evenings have included games nights, movies and book readings for the youngest members of the camp, and other special one-time events.

Presbyterian Bands!

In the early years of camp, specifically the late 1970’s into the early 1980’s, part of the leadership was in the hands of a few Presbyterian ministers who had formed a band named “The Lost and Found Department”. Some of those known to have been involved at PMC were Ted Creen, Derwyn Hill, Terry Samuel, and Bob Spencer. They, along with Ian MacPherson and Warren MacKinnon, preferred a jazz-blues style of music. Their leadership in the early years of PMC was foundational and very much appreciated.

A second band has come out of PMC, “The Lost Pilgrims”. It is fair to say that this group, which has become quite popular in Presbyterian circles, would not exist without Presbyterian Music Camp. And just as PMC was the milieu which brought them together, all have benefitted from the leadership and enthusiastic music of Scott Cooper, Hugh Donnelly, Stephen Kendall, and David Linderman. As well as fine musicians, they have also been able ambassadors for Presbyterian Music Camp.

Food!

Anyone who travels in Presbyterian circles, knows that Presbyterians enjoy their food.

In the early years at Golden Lake, PMC was responsible for bringing their own cook and campers helped with the kitchen work. Those who were at Golden Lake often mention being grateful for the culinary skills of Jane Moncrieff and Paul Gemmell. There are also fond memories of getting to know each other as they set tables, cleared up after the meal, and did dishes together.

When PMC came to Tamarack, campers felt spoiled. The cooking, the clean-up, and the dishes were all done by a hired staff. But in the first year, it was quickly made known that this was no ordinary camp and had wishes for food beyond the camp standards of hamburgers, hot dogs, fries, and white bread. A kitchen liaison was created in the person of Lindsay Cooper, and everyone agreed that the food improved greatly in the second year.

Changes in the hiring of kitchen staff and in camp ownership have brought different kinds of fallout, but all in all, the food continues to be satisfying and more than enough to keep the camp running smoothly.

Besides the three standard meals, Music Campers can enjoy a mid-morning snack (generally fruit) and an evening snack (something sweet), all included in the price. Nobody goes hungry!

And, of course, there’s Tuck.

The Tuck Shop operates every afternoon through the week and there are long line-ups of hopeful purchasers. At first, the lines were slower as change was made after each purchase, but in recent years the introduction of “tuckets”, tickets valued at 25¢ apiece (50¢ in 2022!), has

helped the Tuck Shop run more smoothly. Chocolate, candy, pop (including Spruce Beer!), and chips bring campers running.

Swimming

When the days are hot, there's nothing like a swim to cool off. Swimming has been part of the Presbyterian Music Camp experience from the beginning. Lifeguards have been volunteers from the camp community, provided by Cairn, the body overseeing Presbyterian camping, and by the host camp. Whatever the source, the lifeguards have been a welcome addition to PMC.

One of the early issues with swimming was "the Golden Lake Itch". Swimmers were urged to shower right after swimming to avoid repercussions. Anne MacCready Audet describes the "itch" this way:

"The Golden Lake Itch" is the lake's own Swimmer's Itch that isn't any different from regular Swimmer's Itch. Golden Lake is just particularly well known in the area to have a bad case of it. It is caused by a parasite that lives in ducks and other aquatic birds. The eggs are released in the water via the duck feces and hatch into larvae that swims around until it finds a particular aquatic snail. The larvae infect the snail. This causes the snail to release a different type of larvae that swims around looking for a host such as an aquatic bird or mammal. And so the cycle continues. If a swimmer gets in the way of the swimming larvae, it may burrow into human skin where it can cause an allergic reaction. Humans are not a host for the larvae so it will die.

It's not "Jaws", but it has kept some people out of the water.

No "itch" has been associated with Duck Lake at Camp Tamarack.

Polar Bears

Early on, though the onset is somewhat disputed, campers were challenged to emerge from their beds in the early hours of the morning to dive into the chilly waters of the lake. This activity has been christened the "Polar Bear Swim" and the participants are certainly intrepid.

(Author's note: The use of the word "intrepid" here has been chosen after much deliberation. Many other adjectives have been used for those who take part in the Polar Bear Swim, notably by those who choose to remain within the confines of their warm sleeping bags. However, "intrepid" seems most appropriate.)

This early morning departure from warm sleeping bags into the coolness of an Ontario lake is rewarded with coveted awards: cut out images of polar bears in various forms of dress, the amount of clothing (ironically) increasing with the number of early swims taken during the week of camp.

Leadership of the Polar Bear Swim has been taken on by various people, but most of those leaders have been members of the MacCready family. Diane was a long-time leader, both Chris and Ian have taken turns, and in recent years Anne (MacCready) Audet has taken the reins.

Near the close of camp each year, great cheers go up for those who come forward to receive their rewards. There is great dignity in the presentations and great pride on the faces of those receiving them.

Prank Time

Have you ever known a camp that doesn't include pranks? Music Camp is no different. For more information, here is a quote from Lois Rooney-Giurin, writing in the 1993 booklet, "Memories of Music Camp".

Basically, there are three criteria for good pranks. They are as follows:

1. It must be creative;
2. It must not be destructive of property;
3. It must not harm or even potentially harm people.

Lois goes on to describe some of the pranks that were part of camp life while at Golden Lake. Canoes showed up in odd places, clothes hung up to dry disappeared only to reappear on other people, impromptu water fights, etc., have enlivened the already boisterous camps.

Although this author is unaware of many pranks since the camp left Golden Lake, creativity remains an integral part of life at Presbyterian Music Camp.

Praise Ways and Celebrate

The Presbyterian Church, having introduced its 1972 Book of Praise, was encouraged to create a book of praise for young people. In 1975, "Praise Ways" was created and it is fair to say that without Presbyterian Music Camp, the book may never have been produced.

The roots of "Praise Ways" in PMC are shown by the composers of many of its songs: Music Campers Alison Stewart-Patterson, Ted Creen, John Greenwood, and Wilf Moncrieff all contributed to the book.

A further songbook for young people was produced in 1983 called "Celebrate", and a look through the creators of words and music also calls to mind Presbyterian Music Camp. John Greenwood, Ted Creen, Angus Sutherland, Warren McKinnon (of the Lost and Found Department), and Linda Carmichael, provided songs. PMC continues to contribute to the worship of the church.

PMC Heroes

The Rev. Lady Alison Stewart-Patterson

Alison Stewart-Patterson was an early driving force in establishing and continuing the Presbyterian Music Camp.

She was born Lady Alison Bruce in Dunfermline, Scotland, third daughter of the Earl and Countess of Elgin and Kincardine. She studied music in London, becoming a Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music. She emigrated in 1956 to Canada where she met the man who was to become her husband, Cleveland Stewart-Patterson, and they raised three children, David, Iain and Christian. She attended the Presbyterian Church at Baie D'Urfé, a suburb of Montreal.

Alison sensed a call to ministry while at Presbyterian Music Camp and she continued her education, graduating from Presbyterian College, Montreal in 1977. She was assistant minister at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montreal before being called as Pasteur of Église St Luc, where she served for seven years. Twice during her time in Canada, her contact with Scotland was continued as she served as chaplain to the Lord High Commissioner of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Alison left Canada for three years, serving at First Church of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, but returned in 1989, called as minister to Maisonneuve St Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church in Montreal. Except for her years in New Zealand, she was a regular at Presbyterian Music Camp, lending her expertise in music and leadership to the camp.

Alison passed away in 1992 after a short illness.

Her indelible mark on PMC was memorialized by the creation of the “Alison Stewart-Patterson Fund” which provides funds for campers who cannot afford to pay the full fees.

The Rev. Wilf Moncrieff

In the early years of PMC, Alison and Wilf Moncrieff were the inspiration and the glue that kept the camp together.

Wilf was born in 1930 and grew up on a farm near Fowlers Corners, just west of Peterborough, Ontario, and learned his love of music at home. He was part of the Presbyterian Young People’s Society, and it was there that he met Jane Campbell, whom he was to marry. His father did not support his call to ministry, so he worked to be able to afford his education. On graduation from Knox College, he was called to Grand Falls, Newfoundland, where he came to enjoy the music so much a part of Newfoundland life.

Called from Grand Falls to Chateauguay, Quebec, Wilf connected with Tom Gemmell and Alison Stewart-Patterson in time to work on the beginnings of PMC. He was chair of the committee that produced Praise Ways for the national church.

Wilf spent a short time at First Presbyterian Church in Pembroke, and during that time Jane Moncrieff was cook for PMC. While Wilf was in ministry there, the Presbyterian Music Camp’s end of the week concert took place on the Sunday morning at the Pembroke church.

He also served the church in Sault Ste Marie.

During his ministry, Wilf was elected moderator of both Presbytery and Synod. During his service as Moderator of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, he was known as “the singing moderator”, always ready to call the gathered commissioners to a moment of praise.

At PMC, he instituted the agape service at Golden Lake. Perhaps he is remembered by older campers for his peanut butter sketch. “There are three ways to remove peanut butter from the roof of your mouth...”

Wilf also contributed his family to PMC. We continue to enjoy the presence of his children and grandchildren as part of the on-going camp experience.

Wilf passed away in 2000 in his 70th year.

He and Jane are commemorated in the Moncrieff Fund, through which musical instruments are purchased for use at camp.

Addendum

The Presbyterian Music Camp Board was notified in early 2023 that Tamarack, for financial reasons, had chosen to give the PMC week to another camp. After a quick site search, Presbyterian Music Camp for 2023 and for the foreseeable future will take place at Camp Kintail, a beautiful Presbyterian Church Camp on the shores of Lake Huron.

The 1972 *Book of Praise*: 50 Years On

Ian McKechnie

Let's begin by going back almost half a century. It's mid-May of 1973, and a Toronto-area organist is driving into cottage country where he has agreed to fill in for the summer months at a little country church – we'll call it The Little Brown Church in the Vale, for the sake of charity. Though small in dimensions, it is big in numbers and big in spirit. It was built in 1875, not long after the Presbyterian Church in Canada came into existence. For nearly fifty-five years, this church in the wildwood's congregation sang lustily from the 1918 *Book of Praise*.

Well they did until last November, at least. Almost overnight (or perhaps literally overnight) the beloved old *Book of Praise* published on the eve of the Armistice was replaced with a new book, a mysterious-looking thing with a turquoise cover. As he pulls into his allotted parking spot adjacent to the church, the organist shudders. He's heard through the grapevine that the "new" *Book of Praise* has been received to mixed reviews at this little country church.

One elder was apoplectic when the minister dared to suggest that "Come, risen Lord, and deign to be our guest" be used in place of the time-honoured "Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face" during a recent communion service. Several old-timers, reared on the beloved choruses of Moody and Sankey, are deeply disappointed to see that many of their "old favourites" have been eviscerated from the new book. Members of the local P.Y.P.S. contingent are still bristling over General Assembly's seemingly dismissive attitude towards their idea of including more youth in the revision process.

Despite all of the naysayers, the organist is encouraged by reports that the new hymnal is gaining acceptance among some quarters of the congregation. One couple in the choir has just returned from a month-long trip to the U.K., during which time they took in many of the great cathedrals and enjoyed the works of great British composers and hymn-writers. They are excited about all of the new music by Vaughan Williams, Fred Kaan, and others that the choir will learn – or ignore, as it may be. One centenarian, who was only twenty-five when the PCC issued its first hymnbook, shrugs off concerns about the newly-revised *Book of Praise*: "Why, this is nothing compared to the schism we had here when they put an organ in!" she is overheard to say at coffee social.

It's been an interesting six months at The Little Brown Church in the Vale, to say the least. Taking a deep breath, the organist enters the church and takes his seat. At least they will be starting, as they have since the dawn of time, with something everyone knows: No. 277 – Holy, Holy, Holy.

This is a work of fiction. However, it does evoke some of the concerns facing the rank-and-file of the Presbyterian Church in Canada during the eight-year process of revision that culminated in the launch of what has since been known as the 1972 *Book of Praise*. As with any change undertaken by the Church, there was a considerable amount of anxiety and excitement surrounding the introduction of a new hymn book. Fifty years on, it's time to look at its legacy.

This is not the first time the *Book of Praise* has been discussed by the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History. Seven years ago, Ian Marnoch spoke about "Continuity and Discontinuity in the 1997 *Book of Praise*," focusing in particular on the 1997 edition's emphasis on inclusive

language, contemporary social issues, and layout that subtly reflected changes in liturgical emphasis.

The 1972 edition was likewise defined by certain priorities and emphases, both musical and theological. This paper will look at those priorities that guided the Committee for Revision (hereafter called “The Committee”) and reflect on what factors might have shaped their thinking. We will then look at how the book was used by two sample congregations over two ten-year periods, noting some trends, similarities, and differences in both. Finally, we will take stock of what the Committee got right, what factors might have undermined its efforts, and wrap up by looking at what the 1972 *Book of Praise* might mean for the Presbyterian Church in Canada today.

The Dramatis Personae

Before we dive into its musical and theological priorities, we should look briefly at the people and process behind the Committee for Revision. By 1972, the Committee had consisted of twelve people, four of whom comprised the Music Committee. All but one member of the Committee were male.

The Preface to the 1972 book paid homage to the “gifted group of musicians whose technical qualifications are unrivalled and whose commitment to the creation of a God-glorifying hymn-book has been total.”¹ Alan H. Cowle (b. 19--) served as organist at Knox Presbyterian Church in Oakville, and was involved in other aspects of the music industry. G. Roy Fenwick (1889-1970) was a brilliant scholar, broadcaster, and adjudicator who served as Director of Music for the Ontario Department of Public Education from 1935 through 1959 and later served as the first president of the Canadian Music Festival Adjudicator’s Association. Fenwick had been exposed to music from a young age; his mother was a well-known Scottish soprano.² Lilian Forsyth (1911-1982), the sole woman to serve on the Committee, was organist at Knox Presbyterian Church in Ottawa for decades, retiring only a year before her death. While serving in Ottawa, Forsyth had the distinction of being one of six organists selected to perform at Expo ‘67.³ Carman Hilliard Milligan (1909-1999) studied composition at the University of Toronto and later earned an M.A. in musicology from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York.⁴ Milligan went west and served as organist and choirmaster at First Presbyterian Church in Edmonton for several years during the early 1930s, where he formed a Boys’ Choir in 1933 and a Girls’ Choir in 1936.⁵ A year later, he took up the post of organist and choirmaster at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, where he served until 1984. Henry Rosevear (1903-2003) was serving as organist at Glenview Presbyterian Church as of 1966, when he was profiled in *The Diapason* (a journal aimed at both the American Guild of Organists and the Royal Canadian College of Organists). Rosevear began his career as a teenager, and would go on to serve as President of both the R.C.C.O. and of the Ontario Registered Music Teachers’

¹ William Fitch, Preface to the (Toronto: John Deyell Company, 1972), ii.

² “G. Roy Fenwick” in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/g-roy-fenwick-emc>.

³ “Lilian Forsyth Scholarship.” Knox Presbyterian Church, Ottawa.

<https://www.knoxottawa.ca/pages/lilian-forsyth-scholarship>.

⁴ “Carman Hilliard Milligan” in *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*.

<https://hymnology.hymnsam.co.uk/c/carman-hilliard-milligan>.

⁵ Munro, Kenneth. *First Presbyterian Church, Edmonton: A History*. Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2004. Pgs. 149–150.

Association. He was highly regarded as a composer and arranger, and took a particular interest in service music.⁶ “The Presbyterian Church in Canada owes to them a great debt which can best be paid by a wholehearted acceptance of their work and the better praising thereby of the Lord they have sought to serve,” the Preface waxed eloquently.⁷ Whether their efforts were met with “a wholehearted acceptance” is open to question, as we shall soon see.

Among the clergy involved with the Committee was a “Who’s Who” of prominent postwar Presbyterian pastors. The Rev. Dr. William Fitch (1911-1984) was the incumbent at Knox Presbyterian Church on Spadina Avenue from 1955 through 1972. A powerful preacher in the evangelical tradition, the Scottish-born Fitch would serve as Convener of the Committee for the duration of its existence. The Rev. Dr. Louis H. Fowler was Clerk of General Assembly from 1952 through 1975, and for nearly a decade prior to becoming Clerk had ministered at St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church in Port Hope, Ontario. The Rev. George H. Douglas, a Royal Canadian Navy chaplain, later served at Knox Presbyterian Church in Woodstock before being appointed as the Librarian of Knox College in 1961. The Rev. Dr. H. Douglas Stewart spent four decades in ministry, serving congregations in Alberta and around southwestern Ontario before becoming the minister at Knox Presbyterian Church in Ottawa in 1956. In 1972, Stewart was called to St. Andrew’s Church in downtown Toronto, where he served until 1983. He thereafter became Minister Emeritus at St. Andrew’s and died in 2002.⁸ Other clerics serving on the Committee included the Rev. James H. Williams, incumbent at Glenview Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. George H. Young, who served as minister at Paterson Memorial Presbyterian Church, in Sarnia.

The Revision Process

Reporting to General Assembly about the revision process in 1965, the Committee explained that “the following objectives must be kept constantly in view:”

1. That the *Book of Praise* should express clearly the fullness of the Gospel of Grace, the Reformed doctrine of our Presbyterian Church, the heritage of the Church Universal. That the *Book of Praise* should be a book of the people – a true expression of the piety and dedication of the total membership of our Presbyterian Church in Canada.
2. That the *Book of Praise* should be completely contemporary with the twentieth century in music as well as lyric.
3. That the *Book of Praise* should measure up to the highest standards of all great hymnology and thus become a true means of grace both in our church worship and in the proclamation of the gospel.⁹

⁶ Anonymous. “Henry Rosevear Honored On 50th Year As Organist,” *The Diapason*, No. 681 (August 1966): 115.

https://sgcimages.s3.amazonaws.com/Diapason/Digitized%20Issues/1960_s/1966/August%201966.pdf.

⁷ Fitch, Preface to the *Book of Praise* (Toronto: John Deyell Company, 1972), ii.

⁸ Obituary, “the Rev. Dr. H. Douglas Stewart, Minister Emeritus of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Toronto.” Originally published in *The Globe & Mail*, April 3, 2002.

<https://www.legacy.com/ca/obituaries/theglobeandmail/name/h-stewart-obituary?pid=189764212>.

⁹ Report of the Committee on the Revision of the *Book of Praise* to the Venerable the 91st General Assembly in Acts & Proceedings, 1965. Pgs. 363–364.

It was exciting, if a little mystifying for some Canadian Presbyterians. Seeking to dispel any myths about the revision process, Alan Cowle made the following comment in the *Presbyterian Record*:

I wonder how people picture us as we meet? Do you have visions of seers – grey-headed, tome-weighted and scholarly, dour of mien, slaves of common metre, cushioned by experience against the impact of anything this age has to say? Well, forget it! We are dealing with music, and the Christian church is a singing church. Singing is a congregation's happiest activity, and our task is to enable them to do it better. We have more fun doing this than you would believe!¹⁰

Monthly meetings took place at Knox Presbyterian Church on Spadina Avenue. The Committee began by methodically going through the 1918 *Book of Praise* and ascertaining which hymns ought to be retained or retired. This process took up a considerable amount of time, and as late as 1971 there was still discussion taking place about whether or not certain hymns would make it into the new book.¹¹ Hymnbooks from a variety of denominations across Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Ireland were then pored over by the Committee. Working from a tentative table of contents, committee members were assigned specific headings (for example, Epiphany hymns, or hymns of discipleship) to research and report back with a batch of suggested hymns for inclusion.¹² Around 1970, for instance, the Committee agreed that Lilian Forsyth would focus on “God the Son: His Life and Ministry,” while Wm.. Fitch would tackle “Hymns of the old and new year.”¹³

Trying to ensure that the Church as a whole could participate in the revision process, concerted efforts were made to solicit insight and opinion from the presbyteries. While not all of their preferences and petitions are reflected in the new book, there can be no doubt that presbyteries took their role in the process seriously – even if individual church-goers seemed indifferent at times. “Those of you who were at Presbytery yesterday will, I am sure, have been surprised at the liveliness of the debate on our recommendations,” wrote the Rev. Dillwyn T. Evans, Convener of the Special Committee of East Toronto Presbytery on the Revision of the *Book of Praise*, on October 5th 1966. Evans continued, “I am sure too that you would have been pleased with the apparent interest that was shown, especially in view of the half-hearted response which we received to our questionnaire.”¹⁴

In typical Presbyterian fashion, there was occasionally tension between what the Committee thought was best for the denomination – and what those in the pews actually desired. Indeed, it was thanks to presbyteries that hymns which might otherwise have been rejected by the Committee were salvaged. In 1967, a dozen or so selections were retained as a result of what

¹⁰ Alan Cowle, “Where’s The Old Tune? A personal look at the revision of the *Book of Praise*,” *Presbyterian Record*, January 1970: 14.

¹¹ For example, “Angel Voices, Ever-Singing” (No. 320 in the 1918 *Book of Praise*), which was still on a tentative list published in the 1971 Acts & Proceedings. This hymn, among others, was later axed on account of the book being kept to a maximum of 600 or so selections for reasons of cost.

¹² Cowle, “Where’s The Old Tune? A personal look at the revision of the *Book of Praise*,” 14.

¹³ While Fitch and Forsyth took care of “Hymns of the old and new year” and “God the Son: His Life and Ministry,” George Young was assigned “The Lord’s Day;” H.D. Stewart, “The Trinity;” Henry Rosevear, “National Hymns;” J.H. Williams, “The Prophetic Office;” and Carman Milligan, “Evening Hymns.”

¹⁴ Dillwyn T. Evans to the Members of the Special Committee of the East Toronto Presbytery on the Revision of the *Book of Praise*, October 5th, 1966.

Alan Cowle called “the lobby of popular affection.” (Those who today feel strengthened in singing such hymns as *There Were Ninety and Nine*; *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*; and *He Leadeth Me*, owe that lobby a debt of gratitude.)¹⁵

Inevitably, there was occasionally disagreement among members of the Committee itself about what hymns to retain and which ones ought to be retired. At one point during the process, Carman Milligan expressed reservations over the Committee’s decision to reject eleven hymns that, in his opinion, “will prove to be a very serious loss to churches with a repertoire of 40-50 hymns.” Professional musician though he was, Milligan was nonetheless concerned about church unity: “I find myself deeply distressed about the reaction in the church over certain recent decisions of the Committee. For this reason, I am herewith making a few recommendations which, I hope might serve to mitigate some of the distress and even anger which will attend the initial appearance of the book.”¹⁶

The very fact that some hymns were rejected and other retained reveals much about the Committee’s musical and theological (or at least ecclesial) priorities – and perhaps biases. So what exactly were these priorities, and why do they matter?

The Committee’s Musical Priorities: Challenge and Identity

In Patrick Barlow’s stage adaptation of John Buchan’s novel *The 39 Steps*, protagonist Richard Hannay finds himself being interrogated by a Scottish sheriff, who is astounded that a small hymnbook Hannay carried in his breast pocket was able to stop a bullet from entering his heart. “Cigarette cases. Pocket watches. Spectacle holders. Ha ha ha! But never a hymn book Mr. Hannay!,” exclaims the sheriff. “Who’d a’thought a hymn book could stop – a bullet! Still, I’m not surprised. Some of those hymns are terrible hard to get through.”¹⁷

To Presbyterians who were raised in the comfort of singing hymns mostly written in the Common Metre, the Long Metre, or in otherwise predictable and easily-memorized rhyming schemes, a number of selections in the 1972 *Book of Praise* may well have been “terrible hard to get through.” Indeed, the Committee made no secret of its desire to challenge the Church musically, a theme repeated in the Committee’s internal correspondence, in reports to General Assemblies, and not least in the book itself. This challenge manifested itself both in the decision to forego printing alternative (and thus possibly “easier”) tunes in the new book, as well as in decisions to foist on churchgoers “fine tunes and lyrics hitherto unknown to them” – even if these tunes were novel, obscure, or difficult to sing.

¹⁵ Cowle, “Where’s The Old Tune? A personal look at the revision of the *Book of Praise*,” 14.

¹⁶ From a memo circulated to the Committee by Carman Milligan (date unknown). The eleven hymns in question were “How bright these glorious spirits shine;” “Lord of the worlds above;” “Sweet is the solemn voice;” “O day of rest and gladness;” “Zion’s King shall reign;” “Soldiers of the cross;” “My faith looks up to Thee;” “I need Thee every hour;” “Christ of all my hopes;” “Jesus Master whose I am;” and “Hushed was the evening hymn.” Milligan was quick to point out, however, that “their loss means very little to me personally.”

¹⁷ Patrick Barlow, *The 39 Steps* (Toronto: Samuel French, 2005), Pg. 61. Barlow’s script was derived from a four-actor play written by Simon Corble and Nobby Dimon in 1995, which in turn was inspired by a 1935 Alfred Hitchcock film loosely based John Buchan’s 1915 novel of the same name. As Lord Tweedsmuir, Buchan served as Governor General of Canada from 1935 until his death in 1940. While in this post, Buchan worshipped at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, where he no doubt heard Carman Milligan at the organ on Sunday mornings.

In a marked departure from the 1918 *Book of Praise*, those opening up the 1972 edition would have noticed that no alternative tunes were provided in its pages. Its predecessor, by contrast, was fairly liberal in providing congregations with a cornucopia of alternative tunes to choose from. Said the editors of the 1918 edition in their “Remarks On The Use Of The Music:”

This has been done in view of the fact that the number of tunes with which any single congregation is likely to become familiar is comparatively limited; and that, while the number ought to be judiciously increased, it is desirable that each congregation should use a much larger number of psalms and hymns than would be possible, were the tune associated to be adhered to in every instance.¹⁸

How things had changed by 1972. Although the Committee claimed in its Preface that including alternate tunes in the book would be “uneconomical,” their commitment to “the highest standards of musical excellence”¹⁹ and their unapologetic push to make the PCC sing a new song were surely factors in deciding to pair hymn texts with only one tune. In this sense, the 1972 *Book of Praise* had more in common with the nineteenth century collection known as Hymns Ancient and Modern than it did with its immediate predecessor. As the great British hymnologist Ian Bradley writes, “Victorian composers excelled at crafting tunes to fit the mood and message of a text...The dedicated hymn tune, specially written or chosen for a particular text and firmly and exclusively wedded to it, was as much a Victorian invention as the penny postage stamp or the railway system.”²⁰

Of course, some of these tunes reflected the personal and professional tastes of those on the Committee. Alan Cowle was vociferous in his disdain for certain tunes that had appeared in the *Book of Praise* from 1918. “Naomi – No. 278 – is the worst tune I know in any book I have seen,” Cowle wrote in the Presbyterian Record. “I cannot trace for the purposes of public exposure the tasteless and faceless one responsible for the horrendous adaptation of Schumann that goes under the title of Canonbury at No. 661,” Cowle continued, “and what shall we say from the standpoint of musical worth about the tune ‘Bread of Life’ for No. 291, second tune? Better nothing, say I!”²¹

Other members of the Committee were less abrasive in their assessments, but nevertheless freely allowed their own musical biases to influence selections in the 1972 edition. Lilian Forsyth, for example, was known to be a devotee of Ralph Vaughan Williams,²² and it should therefore come as no surprise that the venerable English composer was represented by half a dozen original compositions and almost twenty harmonizations or arrangements. Where there’s

¹⁸ W.J. Dey, W.T. Herridge, A. MacMillan, and J. Somerville, Preface to the *Book of Praise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1918), xiii. It should be noted here that the United Church of Canada’s first hymnbook, *The Hymnary* (1930) was more or less a clone of the 1918 *Book of Praise* and said much the same thing.

¹⁹ Fitch, Preface to the *Book of Praise* (Toronto: John Deyell Company, 1972), ii.

²⁰ Ian C. Bradley, “The Theology of the Victorian Hymn Tune” in *Music and Theology in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. Martin Clarke (New York: Ashgate, 2012), 7.

²¹ Cowle, “Where’s The Old Tune? A personal look at the revision of the *Book of Praise*,” 14.

²² Andrew Donaldson, email message to I. McKechnie, August 7 2022.

smoke, there's fire – and where there's Vaughan Williams there's bound to be Martin Shaw.²³ Seven of Shaw's hymn tunes made it into the 1972 *Book of Praise*, along with seven of his harmonizations or arrangements.²⁴

Lilian Forsyth took a special interest in the importance of tunes being paired appropriately with texts. "One can well imagine the ludicrous effect of singing 'Hark, the herald angels sing' to the tune Aberystwyth, and yet they are in the same metre!" she wrote in the *Record* not long after the new book came out. "There must be a complete unity in mood and rhythm," Forsyth continued. "The ideal arrangement is to use a tune specially written for the words. Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote *Sine Nomine* for the hymn 'For all the saints,' a tune which truly 'reflects the triumphant ring of the words.'"²⁵ (Ironically, the Committee more than once disregarded this "ideal arrangement" in its choices and left us with a hymnbook infamous for some of its bizarre pairings of texts and tunes.)²⁶

Using a tune specifically written for the words of a particular hymn did not necessarily mean that it would be easy to learn or sing at a congregational level. "In some cases we have deliberately accepted a tune which will prove very demanding," the Committee reported to General Assembly in 1970. "But this is being done in the belief that all our worship is thereby going to be greatly enhanced. It is your committee's fixed conviction that we have not tested our people enough in the realm of Christian praise." The Committee made no apologies for taking this approach, pointing out that Canadians were now more musically literate than ever before.²⁷

A second, if occasionally overlooked, priority of the Committee was reflected in its desire to celebrate national identity through sacred music. Not only did the Committee feel that Canadians of all ages were more musically literate, they also felt that Canadian compositions ought to have a prominent place in the new *Book of Praise*.

"Where a choice has had to be made between two tunes equally good, the committee has leaned towards a Canadian composer," the Committee explained to General Assembly in 1970. "This has happened in quite a few cases. It is our hope that the book will embody as much of great Canadian hymnody as possible."²⁸ Naturally, a few of these compositions came from the pens of Committee members, with Carman Milligan contributing seven original compositions,

²³ Shaw and Vaughan Williams were contemporaries, both having studied under Charles Villiers Stanford alongside Gustav Holst and John Ireland. Their collective musical output stretched across the first half of the 20th century and came to be equated with music used in the great British cathedrals.

²⁴ Shaw's compositions represented in the 1972 *Book of Praise* included CAMBER (No. 151); LITTLE CORNARD (Nos. 215 and 381); WESTRIDGE (Nos. 411 and 507); GENTLE JESUS (No. 452); JULIUS (No. 482); TOC H (No. 491); and MARCHING (No. 514).

²⁵ Lilian Forsyth, "That's a good hymn – Isn't it?" *Presbyterian Record*, September 1972: 11.

²⁶ As early as 1964, there was apparently some discussion about setting "What a friend we have in Jesus" to the Welsh tune BLAENWERN, rather than the more common WHAT A FRIEND. The latter ultimately made the final cut.

²⁷ Report of the Committee on the Revision of the *Book of Praise* to the Venerable the 96th General Assembly in Acts & Proceedings, 1970. Pg. 295.

²⁸ Although the Committee was keen to showcase the work of Canadian composers and hymn-writers, it took a guarded approach to the country's national anthem: "The suggestion made to us by the Parliamentary Committee on the new National Anthem was not received favourably. Their recommendation has been to hold to one verse only for the National Anthem, with an alteration to include the Name of God. To make the Anthem a prayer is welcomed by the committee. This alteration makes the inclusion of the Anthem a real possibility." (Report of the Committee on the Revision of the *Book of Praise* to the Venerable the 95th General Assembly in Acts & Proceedings, 1968. Pg. 249.)

and Alan Cowle contributing one.²⁹ Henry Rosevear was responsible for eight harmonizations or arrangements. Other Canadian composers represented in the book included Sir Ernest MacMillan (himself the son of a Presbyterian minister), Healey Willan and Giles Bryant.

Celebrating national identity through sacred music was also achieved through a hymn competition organized by the Committee.³⁰ As of January 1970, Alan Cowle admitted that the results of the competition had so far been “disappointing.” Even so, Cowle assured readers of the *Record* that “original words and music by Canadians will feature prominently in the new book.” Lyrics to the first and second place entries in the hymn competition were credited to Canadians, with the Rev. Binney Simpson Black (1882-1971) coming in first place with “Make Thou my life” (No. 448) and the Rev. Kenneth B. Moyer, a United Church of Canada minister, contributing “Thine invitation, gracious Lord” (No. 352) to a setting by Carman H. Milligan.³¹ Milligan also composed GLORIA DEI for “To God the Lord” (No. 279) by Helen L. Goggin, who served as director of Christian Education at Knox Presbyterian Church, in Oakville³² – thus making what the *Record* lauded as “An all Canadian hymn.”³³

The Committee’s Theological Priorities: Suspicions of Sentimentalism

Besides wanting to challenge the church musically and emphasize “Canadian content” in the revision process, the Committee was also concerned about the theology presented in the new book. In particular, the Committee was keen to distance itself from Victorian theological ideas affecting a number of the hymns that had been permitted to creep into the 1918 edition.

Writing in the *Record*, Lilian Forsyth said it best when she made the following observation:

We do our children in church school a disservice when we impose on their fresh minds hymns dripping with sentimental association from our own Sunday school days.³⁴ Children who are exposed to the finest prose and poetry in their day schools must be given the opportunity to feel the power and appeal of great and noble hymns, in their simple, child-like way when they come into the church school.

²⁹ Milligan’s compositions included WATERGATE (No. 112); EMMANUEL (No. 138); GLORIA DEI (No. 279); REMEMBRANCE G.R.F. (No. 352); BYTOWN’S GLEBE (No. 502); MANY MANSIONS (No. 535); and a setting of the Te Deum Laudamus (No. 607). Cowle’s WESLEY COLLEGE, DUBLIN was set to No. 145 in the 1972 edition.

³⁰ “One suggestion recurring again and again...is that we institute some form of competition for the writing of a hymn or a number of hymns in modern idiom with a tune which would match the words perfectly....there is scarcely a section of our hymnody which could not benefit from new inspiration and fresh melodies.” Report of the Committee on the Revision of the *Book of Praise* to the Venerable the 95th General Assembly in Acts & Proceedings, 1969. Pg. 297.

³¹ For coming in first place, Mr. Black was presented with \$300 by the Rev. Robert G. MacMillan, minister of Knox, Oakville, and Alan Cowle, representing the Committee for Revision.

³² Helen Goggin went on to be ordained, and was inducted as the Associate Minister at Knox, Oakville, in 1976. She became Associate Professor of Christian Education at Ewart College, and later Ewart Professor of Christian Education at Knox College. Goggin retired in 1999 and died in 2021.

³³ “An All Canadian Hymn” *Presbyterian Record*, September 1972: 15.

³⁴ Most of the Committee’s membership, including Forsyth herself, had been born in the twenty-five years prior to the First World War and would have come of age not long after collections such as Ira Sankey’s *Sacred Songs and Solos* reached their peak of popularity around the turn of the 20th century. Sankey himself, along with many of his contemporaries, was noted for favouring sentimental tunes and lyrics.

This had been a persistent concern of the Committee from almost its inception. Reporting to General Assembly in 1965, the Committee pointed out that almost fifty percent of the 238 hymns grouped under the section titled “The Christian Life” in the 1918 edition were overly sentimental and “can be retired without any real loss.” The singing Church, the Committee insisted, could not allow itself to fall into a trap whereby hymns were chosen for reasons of nostalgia or, indeed, escapism theology. “A hymn should be doctrinally correct and reflect a mature emotion,” the Committee stated. “Is the looking-back mood of 738, Verse 1, good as either doctrine or emotion?”³⁵

Despite the Committee’s best efforts, some of the “old favourites” dripping with sentimental association were retained after all. The Rev. Dr. Stanley L. Osborne (1907-2000), a key figure in the development of the notorious joint Anglican and United Church hymn book issued in 1971, wrote a detailed review of the 1972 *Book of Praise* in which he said many flattering things about the revision while mincing no words in pointing out the sins of sentimentalism:

The hymns for children reveal a notable weakness. At least half of them are over-sentimental, and many others are for adults to sing about their children! ‘Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild’ is not what I want to hold before a child. What does ‘Little drops of water’ say that leads to a commitment to a living Christ? ‘Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling’: is that the Jesus of history who demands body, mind and soul and strength? Both the thinking people in the world outside the church and children’s workers within the church, scorn this stuff and needle the church that preserves it. Sights do not appear to have been raised high enough here.³⁶

Osborne was also “struck by the steady insistence upon memorial and an insufficient emphasis upon Thanksgiving” in communion hymns (No. 342 through 358 in the 1972 edition). Despite his protestation, there can be no question that there was a subtle shift in theological emphasis when it came to the seventeen hymns in this section (an increase from twelve in 1918). Nearly half speak to the eschatological and/or missional dimensions of the sacrament³⁷ – perhaps reflecting a church that increasingly sought to distance itself from “mere memorialism”³⁸ and wanted to draw a link between what happens in the Lord’s Supper and what the Church does in

³⁵ From a letter the Committee circulated to Presbyteries in the early autumn of 1966. The hymn cited here is “I Think when I read that sweet story of old,” which was used in the 1918 edition by permission of The Sunday School Union. The verse in question, written in the first person, portrays a Jesus who is meek and mild – while the remainder of the hymn is drenched in what the Committee would undoubtedly call sentimental, escapist theology, with a focus on little children “going to heaven.”

³⁶ Stanley Osborne, review of *The Book of Praise*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1972. April, 1973.

³⁷ These include No. 345 (“The Son of God proclaim”); No. 348 (“As the disciples, when Thy Son”); No. 349 (“Come, risen Lord”); No. 350 (“Now let us from this table rise”); and No. 351 (“O holy Father, God most dear”).

³⁸ The idea that Holy Communion is principally about remembering the death of Jesus and reflecting on that in private devotion. “Allegedly,” writes former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, “Queen Victoria did not like going to Holy Communion on Easter Sunday, because, she said, she could not understand why you had to interrupt a joyful day with such a sad service.” (Rowan Williams, *Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014. Pg. 46.)

the world.³⁹ The eschatological and missional focus is not absent in 1918, but it is much more pronounced in 1972.

Finally, the Committee was acutely aware that many hymns of mission were increasingly viewed as outdated and in need of retirement. A letter sent to Dr. Fitch from Marjorie Ross, late of Toronto and serving as a missionary in Nigeria during the 1960s, made it clear that “although these hymns still apparently have spiritual value to missionary groups at home, the frame of mind they express is gone forever. None of those hymns can ever be used in a service in an independent African country – they are simply offensive to people here.” All of this being said, Ross nevertheless asked a fair question: “How can we devise hymns on this theme that are not patronizing and faintly ‘colonial’ and ‘do-goodish’? I certainly agree with you that hymns of this type are vital – especially those which would present a call to service to young people in today’s terms.”⁴⁰

Ross’s question was echoed in comments made by the Special Committee of the Presbytery of East Toronto on the Revision of the *Book of Praise*. It recommended that the “General Assembly’s Committee be requested to make a more effective selection of hymns for children and youth [and] that the committee solicit compositions of contemporary hymns dealing with the issues of our times in the language of our day.”⁴¹ This latter concern crossed denominational and international borders in the 1960s,⁴² and was a driving force behind the creation of yet another revision to the *Book of Praise* in 1997. That edition would supplant the 1972 *Book of Praise*, but it would not completely replace it.

How, then, has the 1972 *Book of Praise* been used by the denomination over the last half century?

50 Years On: How Is The Book Being Used?

When the revised *Book of Praise* was officially launched on Sunday November 5th 1972 at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Ottawa, and at subsequent “sing-ins” organized to introduce the new book,⁴³ emphasis was naturally placed on the 215 hymns that were being introduced to Presbyterian audiences for the very first time.⁴⁴ While some of these hymns subsequently found

³⁹ Among the contemporary communion liturgies recommended by the Presbyterian Church in Canada is a Great Prayer of Thanksgiving that makes the link between meal and mission especially clear: “Gracious and giving God, pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered around your holy table, and on these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be for us the body and the blood of Christ, and that we, being nourished by them, may be for the world the body of Christ, made strong, made new, and redeemed by His blood.”

⁴⁰ Marjorie Ross to Dr. William Fitch, Chairman, Committee for Revision of the *Book of Praise*, May 12th 1968.

⁴¹ Dillwyn T. Evans to the Members of the Special Committee of the East Toronto Presbytery on the Revision of the *Book of Praise*, October 5th, 1966.

⁴² A handwritten note to Henry Rosevear from one Rev. Thomas Tiplady, a Methodist minister from London, England, dated January 24th 1966, stated that “Our British Churches have not entered the 20th century, but like old ladies, are living on their inheritance. Our authorized version of the Bible and the Church of England Prayer Book are three centuries old and almost all the hymns in all church hymnals are one, two or three centuries old. Our missionaries learn the language of the natives but here the Church asks the people to learn its language of some three centuries ago and they simply decline to do it.”

⁴³ Dedication services also took place at St. Andrew’s (Toronto), Knox (Oakville) the following month.

⁴⁴ For example, “Tell out, my soul” (No. 244) and “Thine invitation, gracious Lord” (No. 352).

their way into common usage, they invariably had to compete with those hymns that “have already, through long use and hallowed association, become dear to our people.”⁴⁵

This observation is borne out in studying how the 1972 *Book of Praise* has been used in two congregations over the last fifty years. For the purposes of this study, we will look at how the ‘72 edition was used at Central Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ontario, between 1992 and 2001, and St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Lindsay, Ontario, between 2012 and 2021. Both congregations have historically had strong music programmes. Under the leadership of Paul Grimwood from 1979 through 2018, Central’s choir comprised almost fifty voices singing advanced repertoire. The choir travelled twice to England and Ireland (where it sang in Dublin, London, and Oxford), and offered a regular concert season.⁴⁶ By 1966, St. Andrew’s had “the largest choir system of any church in our area,”⁴⁷ and its music ministry would continue to expand through the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s with three levels of choirs for children and youth; a teen choir; and a senior choir for adults. Both choirs have historically been supported by pipe organs, though only that at Central remains in use.⁴⁸

The following criteria was employed in ascertaining the frequency with which hymns were used over the two ten-year periods under consideration. Rarely Used (1-5 instances); Occasionally Used (6-10 Instances); Commonly Used (11-15 Instances); and Frequently Used (16-20+ Instances).

Using this criteria, Tables 1 and 2 show the “top 10” hymns from the 1972 *Book of Praise* that were used at Central and St. Andrew’s over the two ten-year periods (several were tied!).⁴⁹ Table 3, meanwhile, looks at what percentage of hymns were used at least once per section. Not surprisingly, some sections of the ‘72 book have been used with greater frequency than others.⁵⁰

Table 1: Top 10 Hymns at Central Presbyterian Church (Hamilton), 1992–2001

	Title	Frequency (1992-2001)
1.	Love Divine, all loves excelling	29 Instances

⁴⁵ Fitch, Preface to the *Book of Praise* (Toronto: John Deyell Company, 1972), i.

⁴⁶ Paul Grimwood, email message to I. McKechnie, July 25 2022.

⁴⁷ William Parry to the Session of St. Andrew’s Church, re: “St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church Organ,” March 1st 1966.

⁴⁸ The organ at Central is a IV/80 (four manuals, eighty rank) instrument built by Casavant in 1908 and rebuilt in 2007. A two-manual pipe organ was installed at St. Andrew’s in 1899 by Karn-Warren, and subsequently enlarged by Franklin Legge in 1927. It was replaced in 1967 by a three-manual Rodgers electronic organ, which remains in use to this day.

⁴⁹ For context, the Task Force for the Revision of the *Book of Praise* reported in 1993 that survey data showed the “top ten” hymns among Canadian Presbyterians to be: (1) Amazing Grace; (2) Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven; (3) What a friend we have in Jesus; (4) Be Thou my vision; (5) Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah; (6) The Lord’s my shepherd; (7) How great Thou art; (8) Unto the hills; (9) Morning has broken; and (10) Great is Thy faithfulness.

⁵⁰ Note that this data is *approximate*. That from Central was taken from a handwritten ledger book in which some entries were slightly illegible, while at St. Andrew’s some hymns listed in the official record for a particular Sunday might have been substituted at the last minute by others, thus slightly skewing the results.

2.	The Lord's my shepherd	24 Instances
3.	Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven	23 Instances
4.	The Church's one foundation	22 Instances
5.	Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise The King of Love My Shepherd Is Unto the hills	21 Instances 21 Instances 21 Instances
6.	A little child the Saviour came God of earth and planets	20 Instances 20 Instances
7.	All things bright and beautiful Be Thou my vision Fairest Lord Jesus God of grace and God of glory	19 Instances 19 Instances 19 Instances 19 Instances
8.	For the beauty of the earth Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah Holy, holy, holy O come, all ye faithful O God, Our Help In Ages Past	18 Instances 18 Instances 18 Instances 18 Instances 18 Instances
9.	Jesus loves me Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	17 Instances 17 Instances 17 Instances
10.	Christ is made the sure foundation Jesus, good above all other O Love that wilt not let me go When I survey the wondrous cross	16 Instances 16 Instances 16 Instances 16 Instances

Table 2: Top 10 Hymns at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Lindsay), 2012–2021

	Title	Frequency (2012-2021)
1.	My hope is built on nothing less	24 Instances
2.	Be Thou my vision Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah Holy, holy, holy O little town of Bethlehem What a friend we have in Jesus	19 Instances 19 Instances 19 Instances 19 Instances 19 Instances
3.	Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee	17 Instances
4.	O Master let me walk with Thee	16 Instances
5.	A mighty fortress is our God Come, let us sing of a wonderful love Great is Thy faithfulness	15 Instances 15 Instances 15 Instances

	Jesus loves me	15 Instances
6.	May the mind of Christ my Saviour	14 Instances
7.	Glory be to God the Father God of grace and God of glory We give Thee but Thine own	13 Instances 13 Instances 13 Instances
8.	Come Thou almighty KING Come, Thou long-expected Jesus How firm a foundation Lord of all power O Canada Praise, my soul, the King of heaven Saviour, like a shepherd lead us This is my Father's world	12 Instances 12 Instances 12 Instances 12 Instances 12 Instances 12 Instances 12 Instances 12 Instances
9.	All the way my Saviour leads me Away in a manger God reveals His presence Immortal, invisible, God only wise My faith looks up to Thee O worship the King Simply trusting every day Spirit of God, descend upon my heart Stand up, stand up for Jesus Take my life and let it be Take time to be holy Thou didst leave Thy throne To God be the glory	11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances 11 Instances
10.	Can a little child like me Hark! The herald angels sing Joy to the world O God, our help in ages past The first Nowell	10 Instances 10 Instances 10 Instances 10 Instances 10 Instances

Table 3: Percentage of Hymns per Section (Central and St. Andrew's)

Section & Quantity	Quantity/Percentage Used at Central (Hamilton), 1992-2001		Quantity/Percentage Used at St. Andrew's (Lindsay), 2012-2021	
Psalms (68)	34	50%	16	23.5%
The Divine Perfections (8)	4	50%	5	62.5%
The Divine Attributes (14)	9	64.2%	8	57.1%
The Divine Word (6)	3	50%	1	16.6%

The Divine Providence (13)	9	69.2%	6	46.1%
Advent (10)	6	60%	6	60%
Christmas (26)	20	76.9%	20	76.9%
Epiphany (11)	6	54.5%	1	9.0%
God The Son: His Life and Ministry (12)	10	83.3%	4	33.3%
God The Son: His Suffering and Death (19)	14	73.6%	8	42.1%
God The Son: His Resurrection (16)	11	68.75%	5	31.25%
God The Son: His Ascension (5)	3	60%	0	0%
God The Son: His Prophetic Office (4)	2	50%	0	0%
God The Son: His Priestly Intercession (3)	1	33.3%	0	0%
God The Son: His Kingly Office (3)	2	66.6%	2	66.6%
God The Son: His Coming To Power (11)	4	36.3%	2	18.1%
God The Son: His Praise (23)	20	86.9%	14	60.8%
God The Holy Spirit: His Person and Work (13)	9	69.2%	3	23%
God The Holy Spirit: Pentecost (5)	3	60%	2	40%
God The Trinity (9)	3	33.3%	6	66.6%
The Holy Scriptures (15)	10	66.6%	2	13.3%
The Church of Christ (14)	6	42.8%	5	35.7%
The Communion of Saints (10)	3	30%	2	20%
The Sanctuary (13)	10	76.9%	5	38.4%
The Lord's Day (6)	1	16.6%	0	0%
Baptism (4)	4	100%	1	25%
The Lord's Supper (17)	6	35.2%	4	23.5%
Stewardship (6)	3	50%	2	33.3%
Pastors and Teachers (4)	2	50%	1	25%

The Call of Christ (10)	6	60%	3	30%
Worldwide Mission (13)	8	61.5%	5	38.4%
Repentance and Faith (21)	13	61.9%	8	38.0%
Union With Christ (13)	6	46.1%	5	38.4%
Prayer (18)	4	22.2%	3	16.6%
The Fruit of The Spirit (10)	6	60%	4	40%
Discipleship (34)	25	73.5%	17	50%
Compassion and Service (13)	4	30.7%	3	23.0%
Pilgrimage and Guidance (27)	13	48.1%	11	40.7%
Victory Over Death (14)	3	21.4%	2	14.2%
Morning (11)	6	54.5%	1	9.0%
Evening (10)	1	10%	0	0%
Harvest Thanksgiving (10)	8	80%	7	70%
Old Year and New (4)	2	50%	2	50%
Marriage (5)	0	0%	0	0%
Home (4)	2	50%	1	25%
Church Building and Dedication (3)	0	0%	0	0%
Anniversaries (3)	0	0%	1	33.3%
The Nation (9)	5	55.5%	5	55.5%
Doxologies (4)	2	50%	1	25%
Service/Liturgical Music (10)	0	0%	1	10%
TOTALS	332	54.0%	211	34.3%

After reviewing the data, it seems that Central used 332 hymns, or 54.0% of the book between 1992 and 2001, while St. Andrew's used about 211 hymns, equal to a little over 34% of the 1972 edition.

Analysis

The 1972 *Book of Praise*: No longer the “only kid on the block”

The most obvious difference between the two congregations is that Central used more hymns from the 1972 *Book of Praise* than St. Andrew's did over a ten year period. Although the 1997 *Book of Praise* was eventually adopted at Central, its mainstay throughout the 1990s was the 1972 edition. By contrast, the second decade of the twenty-first century saw St. Andrew's drawing its congregational canon from sources other than the 1972 *Book of Praise*. The vast majority of these songs and hymns have been projected on to a screen at the front of the sanctuary (a little over 50%), and while a goodly number of them have come from the 1997 edition, many come from other songbooks or from online sources. A supplementary songbook

called Songs of the Gospel, which dates to the late 1940s, has occupied the pew racks at St. Andrew's for more than thirty years and its use accounted for just under 10% of the repertoire used at St. Andrew's between 2012 and 2021.⁵¹

Using hymnals other than the *Book of Praise* was a trend observed across the denomination by the Task Force responsible for developing the 1997 edition – yet was one that the 1964-1972 Committee cautioned against in a 1969 report to General Assembly. “Few things cement a denomination more firmly than the hymnbook it uses,” said the report, “and if in some way we arrived at a position where every congregation had its own separate and disparate hymnbook, we would be in an undesirable condition indeed. Congregations would tend to use fewer rather than more hymns.”⁵²

Wither the Psalms of David?

Use of the metrical Psalms (1–68 in the 1972 book) has declined at St. Andrew's over the last decade or so, with only 23.5% of the section being used from 2012-2021. Central, in Hamilton, used a remarkable 50% the metrical Psalms at least one or more times over ten years. This figure isn't all that impressive, however, when one realizes that only three or four of the metrical Psalms sung at Central were used “frequently” – sixteen or more times over ten years.⁵³ Most were used less than five times over ten years. The picture is even bleaker at St. Andrew's, where the most frequently-used of the metrical Psalms was No. 9, “The Lord's My Shepherd.” It has been sung only “occasionally” – seven times over the course of ten years. This trend towards singing fewer and fewer metrical Psalms reflects what was noted by the Task Force in the 1990s⁵⁴ – but what does this say about a denomination that once embraced the singing of metrical Psalms as part of corporate worship?

More People = More Hymns?

Two of the most frequently-used sections of the 1972 *Book of Praise*, at both Central and St. Andrew's, were Christmas and Harvest Thanksgiving. At 76.9%, both congregations were tied in their use of the former over the two ten-year periods under consideration – but this did not mean that the same Christmas hymns were sung, or were sung with the same frequency.⁵⁵ Indeed, most of the same “old favourites” were used from one Christmas season to the next.⁵⁶ Turning to the hymns grouped under Harvest Thanksgiving, we find that Central used 80% of them over ten

⁵¹ This data was compiled by the author in October of 2021 for a meeting of the St. Andrew's worship committee.

⁵² Report of the Committee on the Revision of the *Book of Praise* to the Venerable the 95th General Assembly, in Acts & Proceedings, 1969. Pg. 297.

⁵³ These included such standards as No. 9 (“The Lord's my shepherd”), No. 42 (“All people that on earth do dwell”), and No. 54 (“Unto the hills around do I lift up”).

⁵⁴ “Report of the Life and Mission Agency,” Acts & Proceedings 1993, 275.

⁵⁵ For example, Central sang No. 137 “Of the Father's love begotten” ten times over ten years, while St. Andrew's has never sung it in the lifetime of this writer. No. 130, “O Little Town of Bethlehem” was used fairly sparingly at Central between 1992 and 2001, while it was used twice as often at St. Andrew's between 2012 and 2021 – 19 times!

⁵⁶ Interestingly, the Committee reported to General Assembly in 1967 that “there have been many requests for inclusion of a great number of carols – but the committee has felt the necessity for restraint here.” (Report of the Committee on the Revision of the *Book of Praise* to the Venerable the 93rd General Assembly, in Acts & Proceedings, 1967. Pg. 290.)

years, while St. Andrew's used 70%. Why are more hymns from this section in use, while a section of comparable length (e.g. The Communion of Saints) has not enjoyed nearly the same frequency of use? One reason might be popularity; perhaps the texts and tunes associated with Harvest Thanksgiving are more familiar to Canadian Presbyterians than are those associated with All Saints' Day. One minister suggested that more familiar hymns were likely to be selected on Sundays when "some of the less-frequent churchgoers graced our doors."⁵⁷ This raises an important, if awkward, question for church leaders and musicians: to what extent are some hymns being selected solely on the grounds that they are familiar to people? To what extent can and should the Church challenge longtime member and infrequent visitor alike with the hymnbook "by exploring its contents with an open mind"?⁵⁸

Other Trends and Observations

Other trends were noted apart from these three. The dearth of evening services over the last four decades or so has silenced virtually all of the dedicated evening hymns printed in the 1972 *Book of Praise*.⁵⁹ This is not unique to the PCC, and has been observed across most mainline Protestant denominations.⁶⁰ Funeral hymns, at least at St. Andrew's, have rarely over the last several years been drawn from the section of the *Book of Praise* titled "Victory Over Death."⁶¹ Of the fourteen hymns in this section, only No. 533 ("Abide with me") has been used with any real frequency, usually on Remembrance Day Sunday. The same appears to be the case at Central over the years, as well.

Finally, it was noted that, through sheer frequency, some hymns seem to do duty for an entire section of the book. "What a friend we have in Jesus" dominates both Central's and St. Andrew's usage of the section titled "Prayer" – it has been used 13 and 19 times, respectively, and has effectively sidelined most of the other hymns in this section. Likewise, despite the Committee's efforts to expand the section on communion hymns, both Central and St. Andrew's have not consistently taken up the Committee's challenge to explore more of this section's contents with "interest, curiosity, and adventure:"⁶² No. 343, "'Twas on that night" was used over a dozen times at Central between 1992 and 2001, while St. Andrew's has tended to favour No. 342, "Here, O my Lord, I see Thee."⁶³

⁵⁷ The Very Rev. Dr. Alan McPherson, email message to I. McKechnie, August 15 2022.

⁵⁸ Fitch, Preface to the *Book of Praise* (Toronto: John Deyell Company, 1972), iv.

⁵⁹ The last time the author heard "The day Thou gavest" at St. Andrew's was in 2014, during an evening communion service wherein the Rev. Linda Park was installed as Moderator of the Presbytery of Lindsay-Peterborough. Even then, it was strictly an instrumental version, played on the organ while the elements were being distributed.

⁶⁰ Ian Sadler, email message to I. McKechnie, July 23 2022.

⁶¹ The most frequently-used hymns at funerals taking place at St. Andrew's, Lindsay, over the last decade seem to be, in alphabetical order: "Amazing Grace;" "Because He Lives;" "Great Is Thy Faithfulness;" "How Great Thou Art;" and "It Is Well With My Soul."

⁶² Fitch, Preface to the *Book of Praise* (Toronto: John Deyell Company, 1972), iv.

⁶³ The late Bob Tompkins, who served as organist and choir director at St. Andrew's from 1968 through 2005, once told the author that the Rev. Orville G. Locke, who served as minister from 1960 through 1978, "used one hymn for every communion service." What that hymn was has yet to be ascertained.

The 1972 *Book of Praise*: Pros, Cons, and Lessons for the Church Today

In terms of both the process by which it was revised and the final product, the 1972 *Book of Praise* had and has much to recommend it.

The Committee for Revision should be commended for resolutely insisting that hymns worthy of inclusion in the new book be judiciously selected on the grounds of theological, musical, and literary merit. “It would be very easy for us to yield to pressures from many sources and produce a song book to vie with the spirit of the age,” said the Preface to the 1972 edition. “But this is not our commission. We are persuaded that only the best is good enough for God; and we must offer to Him as pure a sacrifice as we can.”⁶⁴ Though long and painstaking, the discernment process by which the Committee arrived at its final selections offers lessons for congregations that are divided over whether music in worship ought to be “traditional” or “contemporary.” The Committee would have rejected that distinction; after all, they made it clear from the outset that “the *Book of Praise* should be completely contemporary with the twentieth century in music as well as lyric.” What mattered was that the hymns reflected the best of Christian hymnody, whether the selections originated in medieval Europe, Victorian Britain, or in twentieth century Canada or America.

Church musicians were pleased with the general structure and layout of the 1972 *Book of Praise*, not least because it apparently didn’t make the same mistakes as the joint Anglican-United hymn book, which had been published the previous year. While the latter contained much excellent material, at least one organist felt that “the Presbyterians made some better judgments.” These included the placement of the index of first lines at the end of the book and a more attractive typeface with slightly larger print. “In the jargon of a later age, the *Book of Praise* was more ‘user-friendly’ than the Anglican-United book,” observed this organist. He also noted that “the [*Book of Praise*] didn’t try to dress up ‘What a friend we have in Jesus,’ ‘My faith looks up to Thee,’ and ‘All the way my Saviour leads me’ in big-city clothes, with ultra-clever arrangements – the way the Anglican-United book did. The *Book of Praise* kept the simple (and much-loved) four-part harmonies.”⁶⁵

Unfortunately for both the Committee and the wider Church, there were some factors that perhaps ultimately undermined the 1972 edition’s long-term impact on the PCC.

Musical Missteps?

One of the most frequently-noted aspects of the ‘72 book was its sometimes eccentric pairings of texts and tunes – the most notorious example being the setting of No. 403, “Amazing Grace” to a jaunty tune called GLASGOW, rather than the revered and very singable NEW BRITAIN. Especially considering the fact that “Amazing Grace” had never before appeared in a Canadian Presbyterian hymn book, this faux pas was widely derided. Other hymns were given new musical settings that were then ignored by congregations in favour of more familiar tunes: No. 404, “My hope is built on nothing less,” was set to an early seventeenth century tune called EISENACH, rather than the more familiar SOLID ROCK, composed by American William B. Bradbury in 1863.⁶⁶ In some cases the settings selected by the Committee were obscure when compared to

⁶⁴ Fitch, Preface to the *Book of Praise* (Toronto: John Deyell Company, 1972), ii.

⁶⁵ Christopher C. Hunt, email message to I. McKechnie, July 28 2022. Hunt was organist at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Kingston when the 1972 *Book of Praise* was launched, and later served as organist and choirmaster at Thornhill Presbyterian Church.

⁶⁶ “My hope is built on nothing less” was the most popular selection from the 1972 *Book of Praise* at St. Andrew’s, Lindsay, between 2012 and 2021 – yet it has never been sung to the tune printed in the book.

settings used for the same hymns elsewhere in the western world. At the suggestion of Alan Cowle, No. 309, “In our day of thanksgiving” was paired with NONGENARY, as it was in the Church of Ireland’s hymnal. Today, most recordings of this hymn – both in Britain and North America – set it to the stately ST. CATHERINE’S COURT, by Richard Strutt.⁶⁷ The same held true for No. 499, “Come, labour on.” Though set to John S. Scott’s SALONICA in the 1972 *Book of Praise*, this hymn has almost invariably come to be associated, in North America at least, with Thomas Tertius Noble’s ORA LABORA.⁶⁸

A second, related criticism of the 1972 edition relates to the Committee’s apparent discomfort with choruses and refrains. That associated with “Great is Thy faithfulness” was included in the *Book of Praise* as an additional verse rather than a chorus, while that associated with “To God be the glory” was omitted entirely – rendering both unusable in the opinion of one prominent organist.⁶⁹ The Committee was apparently not unanimous in its opinion of whether or not chorus and refrains should be included: a story is told that the Committee voted in No. 459, “Standing by a purpose true,” complete with refrain, “at an opportune moment when [the Convener] was out using the facilities.”⁷⁰

In their zeal to make the church “discover and learn to appreciate fine tunes and lyrics hitherto unknown to them,” was the Committee a little overzealous?

Some churches apparently thought nothing of taking up this challenge. At Central Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, the Session allegedly passed a resolution to the effect that the tune printed with the words in the *Book of Praise* would, with some exceptions,⁷¹ be the one used by the congregation on Sunday mornings. (This meant, for example, that “O little town of Bethlehem” would be set to FOREST GREEN – even though the perennially popular ST. LOUIS might have been more familiar to the rank-and-file.)⁷² Other churches were more pragmatic. The late Bob Tompkins, organist and choirmaster at St. Andrew’s, Lindsay, when the ‘72 edition appeared, apparently felt that some of the tunes had been chosen by “lofty musicians” and were not congregational-friendly. Said his widow, “Bob was always longing to help people worship through music rather than being deterred by ‘unsingable tunes.’ If they were struggling with the tune, he felt they couldn’t focus on the message in the words, [thereby] eliminating the purpose of praise.”⁷³

Composition of the Committee

A second shortcoming of the 1972 *Book of Praise* has less to do with its content and more to do with the composition of the Committee responsible for revising it.

While there can be no question that the twelve individuals on the Committee were more than qualified for the task of revising the *Book of Praise*, they cannot be said to be a cross-section of the church or of Canada. Almost all of them were associated professionally with large urban congregations, usually in Ottawa, Toronto, or in south or southwestern Ontario. None of the

⁶⁷ An online search for audio or video recordings of “In our day of thanksgiving” set to NONGENARY yields little to nothing. Virtually all are set to Strutt’s tune.

⁶⁸ According to Hymnary.org, “Come, labour on” was set to SALONICA in just three hymnals (including the 1972 *Book of Praise*), while it was set to ORA LABORA in more than twenty hymnals.

⁶⁹ Dr. Jonathan Oldengarm, message to I. McKechnie, August 29 2022.

⁷⁰ Andrew Donaldson, email message to I. McKechnie, August 7 2022.

⁷¹ Notably, “Amazing Grace” and its setting to GLASGOW!

⁷² Paul Grimwood, email message to I. McKechnie, July 22 2022.

⁷³ Mary Lou Tompkins, email message to I. McKechnie, June 25 2022.

other provinces were represented, not least Quebec. In fact, petitions to have a bilingual hymnbook were summarily rejected by the Committee.⁷⁴ (In this sense, the revision process for the *Book of Praise* was not too dissimilar from the process by which the Maple Leaf was chosen as the national flag in 1965: “The flag project was led exclusively by Anglo-Canadians,” writes historian C.P. Champion.)⁷⁵

Another significant shortcoming of the Committee’s composition was the lack of input from the Church’s youth and young adults. Apart from Alan Cowle, who was in his thirties at the height of the revision process, most of the Committee was made up of middle-aged ministers and organists.⁷⁶ This did not go unnoticed by the youth of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, as one item of business brought before the Committee in 1971 indicates:

A letter was read from Ian Shaw, one of the Young Adult observers at the recent General Assembly, indicating his very great regret that the motion to have young people on the committee of the Revision of the *Book of Praise*, with a view to the inclusion of some hymns in modern idiom and presently being sung by the young people of our church had not carried.⁷⁷

While the Committee may well have been suspicious of “hymns in the modern idiom,” the lack of meaningful input from young people almost certainly reinforced a generational divide in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Said one observer: “It seems to me that the 1972 *Book of Praise* was constructed for adults, and [the hymns] selected as if no children would be present in church.”⁷⁸

Conclusions

The 1972 *Book of Praise* was an auspicious effort by the Presbyterian Church in Canada to encourage its membership to sing a new song unto the Lord. In undertaking its work, the Committee for Revision sought to challenge the church by significantly broadening her repertoire, while simultaneously trying to avoid the pitfalls of theological and musical nostalgia that may well have held the Church back. Whether the Committee went too far, or whether it went far enough, in its efforts is open to question.

Half a century on, the 1972 *Book of Praise* still has the capacity to challenge and inspire. Consider, for instance, how the words of No. 429, “O God of youth, we come to you,” can speak to the challenges of a deeply-divided and anxious twenty-first century church and society:

The stress is great and absolutes are bending,
We cannot find our way without Your care;
It seems the search goes ever forth unending,
And fainting hearts cry out, O Master, where?

⁷⁴ Hugh McKellar, “150 Years of Presbyterian Hymnody in Canada,” *Canadian Society of Presbyterian History Papers*, 1986: 10.

⁷⁵ C.P. Champion, “Canada’s red maple leaf flag is a product of our imperial history,” *nationalpost.com*, January 10 2014, <https://nationalpost.com/opinion/c-p-champion-canadas-red-maple-leaf-flag-is-a-product-of-our-imperial-history>.

⁷⁶ William Fitch, Lilian Forsyth, and Carman Milligan were all over fifty; G. Roy Fenwick was seventy-five when the Committee began its work in 1964.

⁷⁷ Minutes, Committee For Revision of the *Book of Praise*, June 22 1971.

⁷⁸ Andrew Donaldson, email message to I. McKechnie, August 7 2022.

And what about G.K. Chesterton's prophetic text in No. 594, "O God of earth and altar?"

O God of earth and altar,
Bow down and hear our cry,
Our earthly rulers falter,
Our people drift and die;
The walls of gold entomb us,
The swords of scorn divide,
Take not Thy thunder from us
But take away our pride.

Neither of these texts appeared in the 1918 or the 1997 editions, making them unique (insofar as PCC audiences are concerned) to the 1972 *Book of Praise*. For some, this hymnal was but a mist that appeared for a little while and then vanished.⁷⁹ Yet, as these two texts show, the '72 book and some of the hymns it contained were far ahead of their time. Let's sing them over again once more.

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⁷⁹ St. James 4:14.

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Presbyterian Women’s Missionary Society and “Indian Schools” — 1914 to 1939

Brian Graham

My interest in the work of the Women’s Missionary Society is a result of knowing the late Bette Crerar. She was a life member of the WMS and inspired leader for the Presbyterian Church in Vernon, Ontario. Her scholarly son, Dr. Duff Crerar, made many helpful suggestions for an early draft of this paper. Later, Rev Dr. Stuart Macdonald worked to help prepare a draft for presentation at the 2022 conference of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History. I am also greatly indebted to my cousins Debbie and Barb Grisdale, sisters Wendy and Joanne, my mother, and especially to Cathy Graham for having endured months of “WMS talk”. Without their interest and encouragement this paper would never have been completed.

Notes About Terminology

The term *Indigenous peoples* (or *Aboriginal peoples*) refers to organic political and cultural entities that stem historically from the original peoples of North America. The term is meant as general encompassing those who would identify as *Indian, First Nations, Aboriginal Inuit or Métis* peoples of Canada (see section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*).

The term *Indian* is used in at least three contexts:

1. Quotations from other sources, such as in church and missionary publications.
2. Where the term used in legislation or policy, such as “Indian Act”, or educational policy (e.g., Indian Residential School); and
3. Where the term was used in the past to describe categories of persons in statistical tables and related discussions.

The Church said of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters: “If they could be like us, if they could think like us, talk like us, worship like us, sing like us, and work like us, they would know God and therefore would have life abundant.”

(*Quotation from: Confession to God and to Indigenous people, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1994*)

While leafing through old missionary magazines one day, I came across a story about Indian Residential Schools and the Presbyterian Women’s Missionary Society (WMS). I was surprised to read that Presbyterian women had been part of this difficult history, including responsibility for the operation of two schools in Western Canada: the Birtle Indian Residential School and the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School.

For our present purposes, the term “Indian” is used in the context of quotations from church publications or educational policy. In the past, the terms “savages” and “pagans” represented a race of people, original inhabitants of the land needing conversion to Christianity. From a colonial perspective, the notion of “terra nullius” (unowned land) enabled the Crown to justify taking land away from Indigenous peoples and giving it to waves of immigrants that settled in the West prior to World War I. After seeing years of decline, European Canadians assumed that Indigenous populations would soon be removed from the face of Canada. This assumption lay

behind the development and implementation of the government's assimilationist education policies, including to establish a system of Indian Residential Schools.

It is estimated that some 150,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit children were placed in residential schools in Canada starting in 1870. Canadian denominations partnered with the Government to develop and operate a residential school system, including Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, United (after 1925) and Presbyterian.¹ The federal government formally ended its partnership with the churches in 1969.

Drawing from the women within a church congregation, WMS members organized as a group that was in agreement with the purposes of WMS (Western Division). Per their 1914 constitution:

The aims and objects of the Society are to unite the women and children of the church in prayer and service for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ; to develop a missionary spirit and effectively to aid the Mission Boards of the Presbyterian Church in Canada by supporting women's work at home and abroad (WMS, 1914).

The question we will explore in this history paper is: What did WMS members living in Ontario and Quebec know about the Indian Schools that their Society operated from 1914 to 1939?

It was believed that WMS members had a limited knowledge of the schools. The women could not easily confirm the information communicated to them through various church publications. The schools were located far away in Western Canada, and opportunities to observe first-hand the work being done by their Society in the schools were rare. This paper presents a series of vignettes and images based on quotations that are reprinted from the actual copies of magazines popular with WMS members in the past.

Through their worship together, reading Society literature and other activities, some WMS members may have recognized a potential for harm to result from their Society's work for educating Indigenous children and youth in the residential schools, even though it was unintended in the curriculum as planned.

Sources: Church Publications

The main source for this essay is a collection of Presbyterian missionary magazines found at the Osgoode Presbyterian Church in Vernon, Ontario, including original copies of: *The Foreign Missionary Tidings* (1887-1897), *The Missionary Messenger* (1914-1924), a full run of *Glad Tidings* (beginning in 1925), and *The Presbyterian Record* (1918-2016). The quotations in this paper are from the actual copies used by early members of the WMS Auxiliary in the Vernon church congregation. The magazines included stories and various other information that WMS members used to learn about their Society's mission to evangelize and socialize Indigenous children in Canada.

Beginning in 1925, The WMS (Western Division) published the monthly *Glad Tidings* magazine. From 10,000 subscribers, the circulation nearly doubled to reach 19,051 by the end of 1933. The contents included a diverse mix of stories about the Society's work in both foreign mission fields and at home in Canada. The low frequency of content focused on the work of

¹ Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996) *Looking Forward, Looking Back*. 1, 319.

missionaries at the Indian Schools is an indication that magazine subscribers were more interested in reading about foreign mission fields.

Glad Tidings maintained a remarkably high editorial quality for a span of nearly a century. Editors were middle-class educated women, who may have tended to have a one-sided view, except when a broader perspective was introduced by occasionally publishing stories by laypeople and others from outside the WMS. By printing letters written by workers in the schools, *Glad Tidings* gave WMS members a glimpse of some of the challenges and conditions faced in the schools.

Glad Tidings was a vehicle to promote support amongst the home base for a range of WMS priorities, as decided by the Executive Council of the WMS (Western Division) in Toronto. For instance, the Secretary of the Supply Department appealed directly to WMS members on a regular basis through the magazine, asking for clothing, blankets and other goods to benefit Indian reserves and schools.

At their monthly meetings, WMS members followed a prescribed study theme as outlined in their personal copy of *The Glad Tidings*. For example, in the January issue of 1937, the magazine outlined a study guide on the theme of “Work amongst the Indians”, as follows:

- Work among Indians – taken up in studies of Manitoba.
- Study Three – In the Province of Manitoba.
- Work among the Indians (Including Ontario and Saskatchewan). Discuss their claim on us; beginnings of work: (John Black, James Nisbet, Lucy Baker); government treaties, education, religion; results, future prospects.
- As we Work among the Indians.
- Our Indian Work at Birtle.²

Regarding the work that was being done in the schools, the overall message intended for WMS members was one of reassurance: the children in institutions were “happy and healthy”. However, for some members a troubling ambiguity may have intruded on this optimistic picture. For example, the quotations below are more nuanced.

In all work with Indian children, so lovable, yet at times so trying, the early environment and habits of living must never be forgotten. The restraint and regularity of school life is so different from home conditions where time is not a consideration that it is a wonder that more do not rebel. Love and patience work wonders and Christian ideals are making their way into the hearts of these boys and girls. Discipline is always a problem.³

In a 1924 issue, *The Missionary Messenger* informed readers of the long hours and dedication of WMS workers in one of the “Indian” schools operated by their Society. “I was very glad of my holidays this year as I was very tired with school closed. Eleven months with not even a half day off is quite a strain.”⁴

² (1937, January). *Glad Tidings*, XIII, 21.

³ (1936, June), *Glad Tidings*, XII, 6, 211.

⁴ Runacres, M. (November, 1924) Letters from the Field, Round Lake. *The Missionary Messenger*, XI, 1.

In a 1938 issue of *Glad Tidings*, Rev. E. H Lockart (School Principal 1933-1941) reported on a quarantine situation at the Birtle Indian Residential School, and alluded to “unpleasant” aspects of his work:

Both staff and children have grown to like Mr. and Mrs. Lockart, who have had a full school of 115. Measles and chicken-pox caused a quarantine situation. “In all work we have the pleasant and unpleasant but my joy in the work has outweighed any annoyances I have experienced” says Mr. Lockhart.⁵

Background on the Indian Residential Schools System in Canada

After Confederation, the Government of Canada was obligated to provide education in its role as custodian of Native people. In Western Canada, the numbered treaties reinforced that obligation. Treaty 1 made a promise to the Native people of southern Manitoba: “Her Majesty agrees to maintain a school on each reserve hereby whenever the Native people of the reserve should desire it.” All the other prairie treaties and Treaty 3 contained a similar clause (Ray, 1996).

The Government’s educational policy was succinctly expressed by Government officials, as follows: “The Indian problem exists, owing to the fact that the Indian is untrained to take his place in the world. Once we teach him to do this, and the solution is had”.⁶

In 1895, The Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) justified implementing the residential school model in its annual report to the church’s General Assembly, as follows:

Boarding schools, in which latter class it can easily be seen that the moral and religious training are greatly superior, because the missionary has control of the child all the time and does not send him back every afternoon to the uncivilized and often filthy and pagan surroundings of the reserve.⁷

According to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015), the purpose of the residential schools was to “separate Aboriginal children from their families, in order to minimize and weaken family ties and cultural linkages, and to indoctrinate children into a new culture – the culture of the legally dominant Euro-Christian Canadian society.”⁸

The report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) attributed the rapid spread of the residential school system due to pressures exerted by the churches: “Federal reactions to the force of missionary efforts across the country and the considerable force of the churches’ political influence in Ottawa by which they secured funds to operate the schools.”⁹

⁵ (January 1938), *Glad Tidings*, XIV, 10.

⁶ Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996) *Looking Forward, Looking Back. 1*, 319.

⁷ (1895) Acts & Proceedings (Foreign Missions Committee Report), Presbyterian Church in Canada, page xviii.

⁸ (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>.

⁹ Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996) *Looking Forward, Looking Back. Volume 1*.

Early Presbyterian Witness among Indigenous peoples

The church historian John Webster Grant has described the contribution of Presbyterian women to Indian missions as being “unusually significant”. According to Grant, in the early years the Presbyterians had “fewer commitments to existing missions compared to other denominations, and were thus in good position to expand”. In 1862, Rev. James Nisbet was appointed as the first missionary amongst the Cree people in Saskatchewan. His repeated requests to establish a residential school were turned down by the Church Foreign Missions board. Nisbet would later establish a day school in Prince Albert. Soon after, Lucy Baker arrived in Prince Albert on October 12, 1870. She became the first Presbyterian woman missionary to minister to the Indians. (Grant, 1978).

Partnership between the Presbyterians and the Government of Canada

Presbyterians had “an evangelical emphasis upon conversion that was extremely strong” (Reid, 1976, p. 133). According to the historian Stanford Reid, the Presbyterian Calvinistic background accounted for a strong sense of divine calling. Scottish Presbyterian traditions included the value of hard work and thrift (Protestant work ethic).

Scottish Protestantism laid great stress on the importance of one taking his proper place in society where he could work for the benefit of the commonwealth (Reid, p. 132). Scottish Presbyterians were likely to send their children to school and make great sacrifices to have them educated. The Scottish character put stress upon the school “where the teachers were not always good or even kind, but where youngsters knew that they had to have the elements of education if they were to accomplish anything in life”. (Reid, 1976, p. 132).

WMS members following the Scottish tradition, which formed a large segment of Presbyterian congregations, would have been satisfied knowing that missionaries adhered to the very same social and religious values that they themselves held so strongly, including the Protestant work ethic, thrift, emphasis on conversion, etc. Those members were likely not so inclined to question or challenge the approach implemented in the schools in order to socialize Indigenous children.

In 1911, the first conference with representatives of the Canadian Church denominations was held on invitation of the Department of Indian Affairs. Out of this came a recognition of the principle that the Churches would conduct the schools, and the Department of Indian Affairs would finance them by means of per capita grants.¹⁰

By the time of Church Union in 1925, the PCC was responsible for a total of 11 Residential Schools, in Quebec, Ontario and the Western provinces, as well as several day schools and mission work on reserves.¹¹ After 1925, all but two of the schools (that were still open) were transferred to the United Church of Canada. The PCC and WMS continued to operate the Birtle Residential School, Manitoba, and the Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in Kenora.

In 1893, the Board of Missions of the PCC acknowledged the financial support of the WMS, while explaining the increased share of investments allocated to expand a system of residential schools in terms of their greater efficiency and effectiveness as compared to day schools.

¹⁰ (1935) *Glad Tidings*, 131.

¹¹ (2018). The Presbyterian Church in Canada & Residential Schools: A Narrative History. <https://presbyterianarchives.ca/2018/08/17/narrative-history/>.

No report of the Board of Missions committee would be complete without the grateful acknowledgement of the help received from the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. The large sums of money which it raises year by year for the evangelization of heathen women and children, has made possible the recent extension of our work in the way of boarding and industrial schools – a system of training which is already achieving an improvement in the morals, the manners, and the intelligence of the children, such as never could have been expected by means of day schools.¹²

Origins and background of the WMS (Western Division) – The World in Christ

In the late nineteenth century, Canadian women increasingly became a significant force in the major Protestant denominations through their membership in missionary societies (Mitchinson, 1977).

Only slowly did Presbyterian women expand their work to include other groups in Canada separated from their world by culture or colour. Most missionary societies were reluctant to face domestic issues. The Presbyterian was the most reluctant.” (Mitchinson, pg. 64).

The WMS appealed particularly to educated young women from the small towns of Ontario and the Maritimes (Rosemary Gagan, 2004). According to Gagan, the typical missionary was characterized as a devout, able, adventurous, and energetic woman. They were often university educated with medical training, teaching certificates, or other practical skills. The WMS board “sent” the most “socially and intellectually” accomplished recruits, to the “more visible mission fields of the Orient”, such as China and Formosa.

Gagan explains that home mission work (national) was much less acceptable or attractive to Canadian women. Home missionaries worked and lived in conditions the Society would not have condoned for their foreign workers. The WMS board sent the least qualified recruits to work among Canada's native peoples. Fewer home missionaries (16%) had fathers or other relatives who were ministers, and their educational level was lower than that of foreign missionaries (Gagan, 2004).

Perhaps, as a consequence of this selection, the WMS was challenged to staff and retain workers for the Indian Schools. *Glad Tidings* frequently appealed to readers to fill vacant positions in the schools increasingly in the years after 1939. It is not known how many WMS members responded to seek those opportunities after reading the ads in their magazine.

According to Wendy Mitchinson (1977), the missionary societies of the Presbyterian Churches developed through the need of already existing male organizations. Presbyterian women had a difficult time asserting their independence from the men of the church. There were conflicts between the all-male Foreign Missions Committee and the women's Executive Council, with disputes over the control of funds which the women's societies had raised for their own missions and were reluctant to give up to the men for other uses (Mitchinson, 1977).

Regarding the origin of the WMS, in 1864 the Ladies Auxiliary Association was formed in Montreal. Their stated goal was: “to assist the Church of Scotland in work among the French” (i.e., Roman Catholics in Quebec). Later, the work expanded to include “Home, French, and Foreign Work” (Elspeth Reid, 1989).

¹² (1893). Acts & Proceedings (Foreign Missions Committee Report), Presbyterian Church in Canada, page xlv.

In 1876, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS) was formed. At first the WFMS was an auxiliary to a male Foreign Missions Committee. This body made all appointments and allocated all money (Grant 1978). By 1888, the WFMS was contributing toward the support of nine schools for Indian children in Canada's "Northwest". Whereas the WFMS was extremely successful at fund raising, the Foreign Missions Committee had "perennial budgeting problems." (Elspeth Reid, 1989). In 1899, the Western Division of the WFMS raised \$45,513 from 21,000 members. At that time, the Western Division maintained 36 missionaries, matrons, and teachers in the Canadian Northwest (Mitchinson, 1977). Over time, the WFMS became "a powerful body that initiated its own projects, with much input to their operation, in large part because of its involvement in Indian missions". (Grant, 1978).

The Woman's Home Missionary Society (WHMS) was organized in May 1903. By 1914, the WHMS amalgamated with two other women's organizations, namely, the Montreal Women's Missionary Society and the WFMS. The new organization was named the Women's Missionary Society (WMS). (Elspeth Reid, 1989).

The WMS worked as two separate and distinct sections: the Western Division (WD), which included the organizations from Eastern Quebec to the Pacific Coast; and the Eastern Division (ED), which was centred in the Maritime Provinces. The Society consisted of a Council, Provincial Societies, Presbyterian Societies, Auxiliaries, Home Helpers, Young Women's Auxiliaries, Girls' Organizations, Mission Bands, and Associate Societies. One of the rules of the Society was that no branch should be organized within a congregation without first communicating with the Session concerned.

In the beginning, the WMS was an Auxiliary to the Home and Foreign Mission Boards of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. According to Elspeth Reid (1989), the financial transactions of the society were subject to the approval of the church mission boards. As such, the WMS (WD) had no control over how the funds its members raised were to be distributed, nor over the placement of missionaries whom they supported. (Elspeth Reid, 1989).

Prior to church union in 1925, the WMS (WD) was comprised of 3,515 branches with a total membership of 99,716 and a staff of about 240 workers. As part of the continuing Presbyterian church, the WMS (WD) membership fell to 41,533. By 1933, the WMS membership grew to 46,498 (Reid, 1989).

In 1925, the General Assembly of the PCC revised the Constitution of the WMS making the Council Executive an integral part of the Assembly's General Board of Missions. This change gave the WMS responsibility for both the Birtle Indian Residential School and the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School. Going forward from that date, the WMS cooperated with, but was independent of, the Mission Board.

Wearing the breeks: WMS groups in the Russell and Vernon congregations

At the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Congregation in Russell, Ontario, the first Missionary Society, was organized in 1884 (WFMS). In those years, many ministers and elders were opposed to foreign missions (Rev. N.D. Patterson, 1924). Therefore, Mrs. (Rev.) A.M. McClelland broached the questions cautiously.

Asking the opinion of the late Mr. John McLaren, she was met with a look of astonishment as he said: "Really the women will soon want to wear the breeks." However, she was not disappointed, as he rose, laid his hand on her shoulder, and smilingly said: "Go on, we will stand by you," and in Mrs. McClelland's own words "they all did." (Patterson, 1924)

At the Osgoode Presbyterian Church Congregation in Vernon, Ontario, the WMS was first organized by Mrs. John Thorburn, on October 29, 1889, however no records exist from before 1925. A review of the minute books kept for the years 1925 to 1939, indicates that the group discussed the theme of “Indian Schools” on at least five separate occasions. This low number of entries, compared to other study mission study topics, suggests the Vernon congregation had a limited knowledge about their Society’s Indian Schools.

In the minute book dated May 10, 1928, for the WMS at the Continuing Presbyterian Church in Vernon, it is noted succinctly: “Mrs. Crerar gave a very interesting reading on ‘Our Churches work among the Indians’ from the study book”. In the Fall of that same year, a more elaborate note on the topic was recorded as follows:

The regular monthly meeting of the WMS was held in the Vestry September 10th with eleven ladies present. Mrs. Killock led the Devotions. A reading by Mrs. Anderson about our Indian Schools in Sask. was very helpful and instructive.

In the same year, the Vernon WMS hosted a Western missionary from the Peace River area. That visit of a missionary on furlough would have surely boosted the women’s knowledge of their Society’s educational work in Western Canada, although the minute books are silent on details of the visit.

For WMS members living in rural settings, such as the Vernon Auxiliary, there were few opportunities for respite from the constant presence of men in their daily lives. Many of the women had grown up on farms. School attendance records from Osgoode Township confirm that boys were frequently absent from school depending on seasonal demands for their labour. Girls missed school to care for younger siblings, sick family members, and to help with chores. There were few magazines available for women to enjoy in their leisure.

For women in rural church congregations, stories in *Glad Tidings* that described students being trained to work on farms or in homes would have been seen as “normal”, not very far removed from their own experiences, and in that context, would have raised no cause for concern. Moreover, life in the schools, as portrayed in the stories published by *Glad Tidings*, would have struck many WMS members as being similar to their own experiences with schooling in rural Ontario. Likely, several members of the group had worked professionally as classroom teachers prior to their marriage. They would likely have viewed evidence of harsh discipline in the schools as approaching the norm.

This quotation is from a teacher who worked at the turn of the century near Vernon, Ontario:

The cane was in evidence, it was certainly not spare the rod and spoil the child. It seems there was need for stern measures at times, especially in winter when the farm lads were attending [...] They were tough teachers in Dalmeny in 1898, you had to be tough. (Elizabeth Stuart, 1998).”

Bales for Indian Schools and Reserves

Beyond evangelization, the WMS provided social services in response to material needs. In 1911, *Foreign Missionary Tidings*. Rev. J.C. Campbell, D.D. reported from Victoria BC:

The women of our congregations are becoming much more interested in the work than they were in the past. The women of my own church have been for months preparing clothing, and have now a large box ready for shipment to Ahousaht.¹³

The Ottawa Presbyterial (a WMS court) requested local Auxiliaries to contribute a bale. The groups responded with money and articles of clothing. For example, at the WMS in Russell:

Several times either a boy or a girl (North-West Indians) has been clothed by the Society. For this year, 1924, The Society has been asked to clothe a young girl. (Rev. N.D. Patterson, 1924)

The following quotation is from the Annual Report of the WMS, Ontario Provincial Board for 1922. It shows bales were sent that year to six Indian Schools and three Indian Reserves.

Supplies were sent to the Indian Schools at Birtle, Ahousaht, Alberni, Portage la Prairie, Round Lake and Cecilia Jeffrey, also clothing and Xmas gifts to three Indian Reserves. [...] Many bales of warm clothing were sent to Northern Ontario, to relieve and cheer the fire sufferers. [...] The total value attached to the bales shipped to the different Schools, Hospitals, and needy Mission Fields, was \$31,642.93.

The Secretary of the Supply Department for the WMS regularly appealed through *Glad Tidings* for groups to increase their giving in order to meet the needs of children in the Indian residential schools:

This year we estimate that it will cost at least \$10,000 to clothe the Indian children. [...] our most important duty is the clothing of almost three hundred Indian children in the Indian Residential School at Birtle, Manitoba, and the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian School at Kenora, Ontario. This we undertook to do because of the privilege extended to us to give these children Christian teaching. There is no need to mention to you the rise in the cost of children's clothing. We are all keenly aware of that....¹⁴

In hindsight, we see this action of packing up goods for missions as “noble” work done by the WMS Auxiliaries. The bales of clothing and other goods sent to the schools reveal that government funding granted to the WMS was insufficient to meet basic needs.

Sketches of selected WMS “Indian Schools”

The educational work of the WMS (WD) was done at multiple school sites in Western Canada. What was taught at each school could vary depending on local demands, geography, available resources, etc. The following are brief descriptions of the Indian Schools for which the PCC had responsibility prior to church union in 1925. Historical information in this section is mostly drawn from online sources of the United Church of Canada archives. After 1925, WMS members

¹³ Campbell, Rev. J.C. (July-August, 1911). Notes from Victoria, B.C. *Foreign Missionary Tidings*, XXVIII, 3–4.

¹⁴ Strachan, D. (January 1938). Estimates for 1938, *Glad Tidings*, 10.

would have had access only to information, including financial data, on the three schools that remained, namely; Birtle, Cecilia Jeffrey, and Mistawasis.

Ahousaht, B.C. – Indian Residential School

In 1904, the WMS opened the Ahousaht Indian Residential School. The children attended two hours of classes in the morning and two in the afternoon. They went home for a few hours on Saturdays. Vocational training at the schools was carried out without dedicated instructors. When the school first opened, the boys' "industries" consisted primarily of cutting wood. By 1910, the boys were taking on major construction projects. Nearly all construction at the school over the years was carried out with the boys' labour. The girls assisted in the laundry, baked bread, sewed, and performed other housekeeping duties.

In this next quote reprinted from a 1918 issue of *The Missionary Messenger*, the writer apparently anticipated that his readers naturally accepted the belief that Indigenous children were inferior learners compared to urban and white children.

The children at the boarding schools at Alberni and Ahousaht, and also those at the day school at Ucluelet, are bright, clever and intelligent, and in Bible knowledge and catechism memorizing are superior to many of the Sunday School children in our cities. This may seem incredible. But it is a fact all the same.

The Inspector cited the case of one girl of 10 who came to School without any knowledge of English. In six years, she took her matriculation and attended Victoria Normal School, and is at present teaching a white school.

It is the opinion of those closely connected with Indian work that girl graduates should not be allowed to work in the canneries nor go to neighboring cities as domestics without a close and kindly supervision by interested Christian people.¹⁵

Alberni – Girls Home (1892); Indian Residential School (1900–1966)

In 1904 the WFMS paid for a new building making space for up to 60 children near the Tseshaht reserve at the head of Alberni Inlet. The government raised the number of students covered by the per capita grant to 50. James Motion, Principal of the Alberni Indian Residential School reported:

Three children under ten have memorized one hundred verses of Scripture and received certificates; five have memorized the Shorter Catechism, eight others have memorized two hundred verses of Scripture [...] As soon as the people become Christian so soon will they give up those customs". (United Church, 2022)

File Hills Indian Residential School

The File Hills Indian Residential School (IRS) was located approximately 100 kilometres northeast of Regina. In 1889, the Women's Missionary Society built a large stone building outside the reserve's boundaries. Principal Campbell hoped that the food and clothing the home

¹⁵ Campbell, Rev. J.C. (July-August, 1911). Notes from Victoria, B.C. *Foreign Missionary Tidings*, XXVIII, 3–4.

supplied, which had been donated by the WFMS, would induce local families to send their children. From 16 students in 1899, enrolment increased to 80 by 1924.

Farming and dairying were major activities at File Hills. In 1900, the WMS owned a total 200 acres, with four acres put in vegetables. By 1908, the Church purchased an additional 200 acres. That land was largely bush with limited capability for farming.

Parents frequently complained that their children spent excessive time working on the school farm. In September 1913, Chief Ben Pasqua wrote that “his two boys spent all their time herding sheep and tending cattle and never went to school”. (United Church, 2022)

Portage la Prairie Indian Residential School

In 1886, The WFMS agreed to finance and manage a new school if it were made into a residential school. For six months, the Presbyterians in Portage la Prairie tried to recruit boarders without success: “Some were afraid to come even as day pupils, lest in some way they might be entrapped and become residents in spite of themselves.” (United Church, 2022)

After 1925, Sioux families who wished to remain Presbyterian petitioned the government “to have this school turned over to the Continuing Presbyterian Church where we can have our children there rather than for the poor youngsters to be sent away about 100 or more miles away, when we are living within a mile from the present school.”

At the Portage La Prairie Boarding School, most of the “Indian farmers” near the school had from ten to twenty acres extra. They would hire the older boys from the school at \$2.50 per day. One boy bought a suit of clothes. “To help start a little home after he graduates”, the school Principal put boys’ wages into a bank account. According to *Glad Tidings*, the Department of Indian Affairs had approved this banking relationship.

The school officials rationalized exploiting student labour on the school farm on the grounds that “surely our work should receive some benefit from their labors when we maintain them from the age of seven.”

As well, the school paid for clothing provided to the older boys by using the money earned by the boys themselves through their labour at other farms nearby.¹⁶ *Glad Tidings* described this practice as: “a benefit for the W.M.S. by providing much needed revenue”. In the period under study, all children were expected to work and contribute as much as they were able, and so few WMS members would have objected to the practice of using students as a source of labour to support school operations.

Round Lake Indian Residential School

In 1885, Presbyterian Rev. Hugh McKay established a mission and a small boarding school on the shores of Round Lake, 200 km east of Regina. In 1886, with funding from the WFMS, additions were made to accommodate 50 children, and staff were hired. In 1887, the government provided a per capita grant of \$30 per annum for up to 50 students.

The school’s aim was to train Indigenous children to become farm labourers or to operate small farms of their own that would not compete with larger farms in the district. During McKay’s lengthy tenure as principal (1884–1922), boys were expected to work at least two hours doing manual labour and were paid ten cents an hour for additional work. Girls’ labour was cooking, sewing, and cleaning, as well as some dairy work,

¹⁶ (December, 1918). *The Missionary Messenger*, V, 332.

Uclulet (1918) – Day School

The residential school model had the advantage of being less costly to operate compared to day schools, and better attendance was ensured. The following quotation is dated before compulsory attendance at “Indian Schools” was legislated in 1920. In this quotation, from a 1911 issue of *The Missionary Tidings* magazine, WMS members were reminded of the responsibility of the State for education, and the key importance of English in order to successfully civilize the children.

The day school is not well attended, and Church and State should see to it that the parents send their children or school privileges may be withdrawn in the near future. The great difficulty lies in the children talking their own language at home and persisting in doing so at school.¹⁷

Mistawasis, Mont Nebo, Sask. (1925) – An Improved Day School

After 1925, the PPC started ministering to Indigenous people on the Mistawasis Reserve near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The school at Mistawasis included boarding for some students. A Government grant paid for the teacher’s salary in full. The teacher also served as the minister for two congregations, “one of them for white people”. The Indian Agent supplemented WMS grants with \$5.00 worth of groceries.

By 1936, twenty-three children were on the roll that year, the largest number since the opening of the school. The average attendance was ten treaty children and five non-treaty children. At noon a hot nourishing meal is served to them. The older pupils are sent, as in previous years, to Birtle, where they are doing good work and are very happy”.¹⁸

At Mistawasis, the teachers worked out of two large Government owned buildings. Schooling at Mistawasis began at age seven. Eight grades were completed until students reached 18 years. The pupils were drawn from the Indian Reserves.

They come with their inherited tendencies to indolence and to looseness of morals. We like to get them at seven years of age. But the Indian, as a rule, is slow to decide on signing in his child, with the result that we have them entering as old as eleven or even older, and having to commence at the beginning of the public-school course.¹⁹

The school day was divided into two parts. For one half of each day, students were present in the classroom. At noon, Mrs. Moore, the teacher’s mother, supervised the serving of lunches.²⁰ The other half of each day was spent “learning habits of work”.

In 1942, *Glad Tidings* reported there were 19 reserve children enrolled the previous year; 561 meals were served to them. All the young men of military age who were fit, enlisted. WMS members with a strong sense of patriotic duty would have approved reading this report during the war years.²¹

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ (1936) *Glad Tidings*, XII, 211.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ (June 1943). *Glad Tidings*, XIX.

²¹ Ibid.

This year again he [the teacher] was full of grateful thanks to the Women's Missionary Society for their continued thoughtfulness. It is thus that we feel encouraged when we realize just how much work and many sacrifices from so many parts of Canada are indeed bearing fruit. Sometimes we feel discouraged with the younger men, but in times of crisis, they, too, have played their part, and we may be too near the picture to see it in true perspective.²²

Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School

In 1901, the Presbyterian Church started a mission among the Ojibway Indians in the Lake-of-the-Woods area. The following year a school was erected by the WFMS. at Shoal Lake. It was named "Cecilia Jeffrey" in honour of the Society's first Secretary for Indian Work.

The "legend" of the founding of the Cecilia Jeffrey school at Shoal Lake may have been intended to legitimize missionary efforts in the area, suggesting that Christianity was superior to human sacrifice, even if the good of the community was at stake.

The story was told that long ago when there was famine, the Indians had tied their most beautiful girl to a tree and left her to appease the spirits. Someone rescued her and Cecilia Jeffrey School was founded on the spot in 1902.

On the occasion of the death of Chief Kesick in 1935, *Glad Tidings* published a variation of this legend, lending authority to the work done by the WMS at the school by invoking the name of the Chief and his unwavering support for the school.

He was one of the first pupils in the school, his own children were in residence. During his term of office, he rescued from the ravages of starvation a tiny Ojibway who had been bound and left on an isolated island on the Lake – an offering to the great spirit – and carried her to the School, where, as a joint protégé, she retained always his affection and his care.²³

Interestingly, the three First Nations that would be sending children to the school entered into an agreement with the PCC about how the school was to be operated.²⁴ Remarkably, the Ojibwa band of Shoal Lake had petitioned the Presbyterians to set up a school for their children; and were described to have been "not only willing but *anxious* for a boarding school".

Not surprisingly, Elders wanted their children to be taught skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the changing world beyond the reserve. Local First Nations expected pupils to be treated humanely in the schools. The contractual agreement they had signed with the Church included articles to the effect that: little children (under eight years of age) shall not be given heavy work, older children would attend school at least half of each school day, there was an allowance for removal of children one at a time to participate in traditional Ojibwa rituals, no baptism could be conducted without consent the of the parents, and other clauses. One article of

²² (May, 1935). *Glad Tidings*, X1, 181.

²³ (2018). The Presbyterian Church in Canada & Residential Schools: A Narrative History. <https://presbyterianarchives.ca/2018/08/17/narrative-history/>.

²⁴ (December, 1918). *The Missionary Messenger*, V.

the agreement said that “a number of children shall be sent now and if they are well treated more shall be sent.”²⁵

The remote location of the original school site at Shoal Lake was challenging for school administrators and students, as evidenced by this quotation from *The Missionary Messenger*, dated 1918. Note the impressive numbers of Indian youths who enlisted to serve their country that year.

When we consider the hardships of this isolated life 45 miles from the nearest town, Kenora, and that all the supplies for winter use had to be brought in by boat, and that Mr. Dodds [principal] was captain of their little steamer, we feel that a life spent in this way, to better the conditions of the pagan Indians in our own country, is worth of a V.C. [Victoria Cross]. From this school and vicinity some 18 or 20 of our Indian youths enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force to fight for their country’s cause.²⁶

In 1929, the government paid for the construction of a new school building on the outskirts of Kenora. The WMS-owned building on the Reserve at Shoal Lake was closed.

By 1933, in the region around Kenora, there were 890 families with 1,222 young people under 21 years of age, the parents of most of them being pagan, and 475 of these boys and girls are in the five schools other than our own.²⁷

WMS members would have been pleased with the significant contribution the boys made to finish the new building, as indicated in the quotation from *Glad Tidings*. They may have been alarmed to read about the pest control done by staff shortly after the building opened.

There were not enough desks for the 40 children and orange crates were used for extras.... A good deal of painting and decorating was done, under Mr. Highfield’s supervision – in the rooms in the basement, the staff dining-room, four staff bedrooms, the office and senior classroom on the first floor, a girls dormitory, and two staff bedrooms on the second floor, and on the third floor, two staff bedrooms, a small dormitory, and two landings. Mr. Highfield spent about 380 hours in supervision, and the boys did over 1,500 hours’ work.

The building was infested with cockroaches that had come with groceries when the school was being built and lived in open walls behind the cupboards, etc. Armed with magazines, Helen Ross and I went to the dining room ready to swat them when we put on the lights. We estimated that about 500 were killed each time.

In a desperate effort to overcome them. I used the blower end of the big vacuum cleaner to blow cyanide powder into the attic and walls. It got into the staff’s clothes closets and the result was a large drycleaning bill.²⁸

²⁵ (September, 1933). *Glad Tidings*.

²⁶ Blake, K. (July 1985) Remembering Cecilia Jeffrey. *Glad Tidings*.

²⁷ (May, 1935). *The Glad Tidings*, X1, 181.

²⁸ Sigvaldason, J. P. (December, 1938). Library and Archives Canada, RG10, vol. 8449, file 511/23-5-014, Department of Indian Affairs Inspector’s Report on Birtle Indian Residential School, John P.

Birtle Indian Residential School, Birtle, Man

The Birtle Indian School (“Stone School”) started as a day school in 1883. The Presbyterian Church converted the facility to an industrial boarding school in 1888 after a new school was built in 1894 on a hill overlooking Birtle. Children were taught agricultural methods at a model farm located at the school. According to *Glad Tidings*, the facility was used “to teach skills which would make it possible for Indian youth to become gainfully employed”. There were serious health issues at the school. In 1911, school principal Walter W. McLaren (1905-1913) wrote “This school has an unenviable record for deaths from pneumonia and tuberculosis.”

Over the years, the yearly attendance at the Birtle School varied between 19 and 170 students. In 1935, the addition of 30 new pupils created a shortage of linen and clothing. In 1936, there were 133 students enrolled. The larger boys, who were working outside of the school, earned money to pay for most of their own clothing. As well, the “Indian” parents contributed when requested by the WMS.²⁹

Reporting on the Birtle School in 1938, school inspector John Sigvaldason noted that the students spent “half the day” working in the laundry, kitchen, and sewing room. The inspector noted “This training is in practice,” adding that “Such instruction as they receive is, I believe, incidental.”³⁰

Health issues in the Schools

The following quotations show that the WMS members were aware of health issues in the schools during the “Spanish Flue” epidemic. WMS members would have felt empathy towards the workers and students in the schools, having only just recently experienced anxiety and suffering due to the spread of the “Spanish Flue” in their own communities. The following quotations give us some indication of the severe impact of the “flue” in the schools.

December 1918, At the Birtle Indian School

We are glad that everyone here is so healthy this fall and that the “Flue” has not come among us yet although it is not far away and several cases, with one death, are reported from the Birdtail Sioux Reserve. Our hearts go out to the Cecilia Jeffrey School in their sicknesses and sorrows caused by this plague. All churches, schools, etc., in town are closed. The municipality is in quarantine to prevent the spread of this disease.³¹

Spanish influenza is sweeping westward, and the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian School has come in its course. Forty-five miles from the nearest town and with neither doctor nor nurse for a week, the plight of this institution was indeed pitiable. This lack of professional attention came about through the illness of their usual physician and the resignation in September of their nurse. [...] the farm instructor, the principal and forty-three children were ill.

Sigvaldason Esq., Inspector of Schools, Shoal Lake, Manitoba, to R.A. Hoey, Supt. of Welfare & Training, available at https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_c13800/1616?r=0&s=3.

²⁹ (December, 1918). *The Missionary Messenger*, V.

³⁰ Miss A. Folliott, (October, 1918) Indian School Swept by “Flue”, *The Missionary Messenger*.

³¹ (Jan, 1938). *Glad Tidings*, XIV.

The situation was rendered the more serious as Mr. and Mrs. Dodds had but recently left. Mr. Matthews, the newly appointed principal, was the only person who could run the launch. In his anxiety to relieve extreme conditions, although he felt far from well himself, he took the long trip to Kenora to bring out Miss Grant, the nurse we had sent in before we knew of the outbreak. Her arrival was providential, for had she not come when she did twenty children would have died. His trip, prolonged by stormy weather, apparently overtaxed Mr. Matthews' strength and we were shocked and saddened by the arrival of a telegram announcing his death from pneumonia. To his widow and little children, we would extend sincerest sympathy.³²

More of the children took ill and by Saturday night every boy and girl were in bed, also the farm instructor. Both our wood and water supply was very limited. No Indian came near us, and a storm delayed the boat, so Miss Brodie and I gave salts to all the sick ones, and I remained up all night. About 10:30 Sunday morning the Wanderer returned, and I was never so glad to see anyone as I was to see the nurse. Not long after the doctor came and told us what we were pretty sure of before – that it was the Spanish “Flue.” I am too tired to write more. I hope the morning brings better news. But no matter what happens we shall all do our very best for the good of the school.”³³

Glad Tidings carried a report by the school nurse at the Birtle School about efforts to treat Trachoma (bacterial eye infection) amongst pupils. Since nursing was accepted as “women’s work”, many WMS members likely took a professional interest in the report quoted below.

December, Birtle - We were in the midst of piles of half made costumes [for Christmas concert] when on the sixteenth of December Dr. Wall came and we had a Trachoma clinic. The copper stick treatments went up from twenty to sixty-seven a week. He was pleased with the progress made. [...] We have pounced down on the Trachoma, determined to stamp it out if possible. Dr. Wall tells of a place in British Columbia where ninety per cent of the people are infected.³⁴

In 1918, *The Missionary Messenger* informed readers that one of the girls had died at the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, possibly from “Spanish flue”. This quotation is evidence of human compassion by a WMS worker in relation to a grieving family.

The little girl who died was a grandchild of Chief Redsky. I had sent for him and he came just before Martha passed away. I was so glad he was here as the mother was ill and could not come. We made a casket last night and the Chief came this morning for the body. He was very much pleased when he saw her, she looked so nice. I had a pretty red dress on her and a red ribbon on her hair and we had some pretty flowers for the inside of the casket. The chief said Martha’s mother would be so glad when she saw how nice she looked.³⁵

³² Leslie, F. L. (December 1918) *The Missionary Messenger*.

³³ Presbyterian Record, Vol. XLVII. August, 1922, no. 8. Rev. D.N. McLachlan, BD, Field Secretary, Home Mission.

³⁴ Freeman, Rev. E.G.D. (December, 1924). *The Missionary Messenger*, XI, 345.

³⁵ Buckley, M.E. (April, 1944). Missionary at Rolling River Reserve, Manitoba, *Glad Tidings*, XX, 157.

After 1925, *The Glad Tidings* informed its readers about incidences of outbreaks in the WMS-run schools, including pneumonia, tuberculosis measles, chickenpox, flu, and trachoma, etc.

Power to heal: Traditional vs. Western Medicine

WMS members were aware of the leadership role played by women elders in the traditional Indigenous ceremony amongst West Coast tribes known as the potlatch. In a story published in 1922 by the Presbyterian Record, Rev. D.N. McLachlan describes the tension experienced by a young man between the advice given to him by the missionary, and pressure by the “medicine man” to give a potlatch. It should be noted that in 1884, the Canadian government amended the 1876 Indian Act making it a criminal offence to participate in the potlatch.

What is the potlatch?

Is it a latch to keep the lid on a pot? No it is a heathen feast in honor of false gods and evil spirits, a feast that used to be common among some of the tribes of Indians in British Columbia.

It is a costly feast, for a man who gives it usually runs himself into debt, sometimes so deeply that he never gets out of it.

It is a degrading feast in some of the practices connected with it, so much so that the government of Canada has made laws forbidding it.

It is a feast that both the missionaries and the government have been trying to put a stop to, the missionaries by teaching, the government by penalties.

It is the older people, who were brought up in heathenism, who try to keep it. You see how important it is to form right habits when young for when we get old the habits formed in youth are likely to continue.

A young man, a former leader in the Mission, while still weak and nervous from the “flue” epidemic of 1918, was told by one of the old women, who claimed to have become a “great medicine man” through a vision she had, that unless he gave a potlatch, he would soon die. In his weak state, with no missionary to hand at that time to advise him, he had yielded and given a potlatch. Despite the credit he gained among his people, the pathetic longing of his face during service, which he still attended, showed that his heart was unsatisfied and his conscience ever stirring him up to seek the better way.³⁶

In a 1924 article in *The Missionary Messenger*, Rev. E. G. D. Freeman, expressed his exasperation with the refusal by local First Nations to take advantage of medical services offered by the WMS at the nearby Cecilia Jeffrey Indian residential school. Note the destruction of dogs as part of the medicine dance ceremony. Dogs had been introduced by whites (Murphy, 1996 p. 181).

³⁶ Lockhart, Rev. E.H. (1934) Our National Mission Work, Indian Residential Schools, for use in a Western Presbyterial. *Glad Tidings*.

On Monday, June 2nd, Indian bands 39 and 40 met at Treaty Point, about 4 miles from Waugh, Man., to receive their annual \$5.00 per head treaty money. [Treaty 3] Most of them had been camped three or four weeks, near the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Boarding School.

One of the Indian women was seriously ill. Instead of taking her to the hospital at the Indian School or having the school nurse go to see her, they were preparing for a medicine dance.

On Tuesday morning the preparatory meeting was held for about two hours. About fifty people were seated around the tent on cedar boughs spread on the ground. There were two drummers sitting together at one side. One had a modern drum and the other a native drum made out of a piece of hollow cedar log with a bit of moose hide stretched across it. Quite a few of the people had chunks of meat in their hands which they were eating. At intervals the people would rise from their seats and dance along a path that surrounded the central enclosure. A brand-new watering can was used to keep down the dust.

After several meetings of this kind, a specially made enclosure was made for the medicine dance where they wear all sorts of animal skins. At a certain stage, a dog was killed. Everybody got a little piece of it on a stick. The dyed stick bundles were attached to the dog's body and the whole thing thrown, into the lake as an offering to appease the angry devil who was responsible for the woman's sickness. All this with a nurse and a hospital only two miles away....in sight, in fact.

This is the kind of life to which the boys and girls who graduate from the school have to go back. How would your own young people stand up against a social and family life such as that? The work of the school is splendid, but there is urgent need of a missionary who will live on the reserve and identify himself with the life of the older people and help to establish Christian ideals there.³⁷

Together with schooling, a medical mission by the WMS gradually displaced the power of traditional medicine and healers. WMS members were informed of the success of their Society in reducing infant mortality rates on the Rolling River Reserve, Manitoba.

During the first few years [at the Reserve] the death rate, especially among the infants, caused the doctor and myself much anxiety. Although I cared for the sick children in the schools, I knew nothing about sick babies.... For a few years I thought the Indians had more faith in their own medicine man than in me or the doctor, for I would often meet him just leaving a house or just going in as I was coming out, and I was never sure just what treatment was being given to the patient. However, some years ago the dear old man died, and so far no other qualified to take his place, so that the Indians rely more and more on the doctor and the missionary for medical treatment. As a result, the death rate is lower than it has ever been.³⁸

³⁷ Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996) *Looking Forward, Looking Back*. Volume 1.

³⁸ (June 1943). *Glad Tidings*, XIX.

Focus of the Curriculum

WMS members were aware that students in the Indian Schools were on a “half-day” system that split between classroom and vocational training. Students worked at gardening and harvesting the crops on the farms adjacent to the schools. The girls sewed school uniforms (by the hundreds), repaired clothes, and made sheets, pillowcases, etc. WMS members were told that having the “half a day in school” still allowed for progress to be made in the classroom: “Good progress has been made in the three school rooms in spite of the fact that every pupil spends only half a day in school and the other in acquiring skill in house or farm life”.³⁹

From a contemporary standpoint, the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) explains that the department [Indian Affairs] and church officials conceived the schools as a circle.

The school was to be an all-encompassing environment of re-socialization with a curriculum that comprised not only academic and practical training but the whole life of the child while they were in the school. [...]

The school was to be a home - a Canadian home - On crossing its threshold, the children were entering a non-Aboriginal world where, with their hair shorn and dressed in European clothes [...] for a life ordered by the hourly precision of clocks and bells and an annual calendar of rituals, the festivals of church and state — Christmas, Victoria Day, Dominion Day and St. Jean Baptiste Day — that were the rapid, steady pulse of the industrial world.

Prompt and persistent obedience to authority, order and discipline, were virtues of a civilized society, and in its homes, schools and judicial systems, punishment was one of its servants. Children removed from "permissive" Aboriginal cultures would be brought to civilization through discipline and punishment and would become, in the course of time, civilized parents able naturally to "exercise proper authority" over the next generation of children.⁴⁰

Music Programs

A strong focus on music and the arts was part of the educational program at the WMS Indian Schools, as well as public events in Winnipeg. Miss Proctor of Birtle taught music in the school, and reported good results. When some of her pupils took part with the white children in a musical program in the town they were commended for their ability and good behaviour. Miss Eva Lynch of Birtle came in to the school one evening a week to teach singing. School choirs could be invited to sing at WMS Presbyterian meetings. For example, at the carol service in December held by a WMS Auxiliary from Winnipeg, “the Indian girls formed the larger part of the choir.”⁴¹

At the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, junior and senior bands and choirs earned top honours at local music festivals. The school band visited Winnipeg, played at a local radio

³⁹ (June, 1938). *Glad Tidings*, 223.

⁴⁰ Lockhart, Rev. E.H. (1934) Our National Mission Work, Indian Residential Schools, for use in a Western Presbyterian. *Glad Tidings*.

⁴¹ (1934). *Glad Tidings*, 217.

station, and recorded. In later years, the WMS advertised sales of recordings by school bands and choirs in *Glad Tidings*.

Praising the Junior Band of the School as a unique organization and one that has “lived up to the really splendid things I heard about it”, Maurice Jacobson, Adjudicator of the musical section at the eighth annual musical competition festival, awarded the highest marks of the festival to that band, giving them honour marks, with ninety points.⁴²

Agricultural Training

Educators saw the teaching of agriculture as a means to “civilize” Indigenous children. In 1934, *Glad Tidings* reported that “the school saw boys as capable of doing much work in the school farm and garden once they had reached the age of eleven or twelve years. The teaching of farming and stock raising [at Cecilia Jeffrey school] has resulted in a herd of 40 cattle, some of which took prizes at the Winter Fair in Toronto”.⁴³

In a 1934 issue, *Glad Tidings* carried a story about the Birtle Residential Indian School, titled: “The Happy Stokers: Indian boys and girls in demand as farmers and farmerettes”

These boys very proudly bought for themselves suits and boots with the money thus earned. The senior girls, too, were in great demand and as farmerettes proved to be good stokers and did their “bit” as daughters of the soil.

Nearly every evening during September, from four to nine o’clock, they stoked wheat or oats for several farmers. We all enjoyed these outings, the work as well as the car-rides to and fro and singing of hymns and patriotic songs as we hummed over the prairie trails. Then came potato-picking days. School being dismissed, all hands, staff and pupils, got to work and in a few days we had 1,500 bushels of lovely potatoes picked. What a jolly lot we were on our hands and knees up and down the rows on the hillside! Over a carload was sold.

Threshing came next. Great excitement prevailed among the children as the engine came puffing into the yard. At recess we all had to go and examine the workings of the machine and test the wheat. To the children it was Grade 1, but to the elevator man only Grade III.⁴⁴

Religious education

WMS members were informed about the success of the mission in the schools to evangelize children. An article published in 1918, notes the effective use of repetition and drills for teaching scripture in schools:

The closing of the school classes took place while your Secretary was here, and the teacher, Miss Brooker, deserves credit. Several of the children from 10 to 12 years repeated the Ten Commandments and Memory Verses set by Assembly without one mistake. There was also an exhibition of their work, drills, recitations, etc.⁴⁵

⁴² Clark, C. (December, 1918). *The Missionary Messenger*, V. 341.

⁴³ (September, 1933) *Glad Tidings*. 293.

⁴⁴ (June 1936), *Glad Tidings*, XII, 211.

⁴⁵ (September, 1936). *The Glad Tidings*.

Administrators reported on the number of pupils “united with the Church” in order to give WMS members an indication of their success in evangelizing children at the Indian Residential Schools, as indicated in this quote from an issue of *Glad Tidings*:

The response of our pupils to Christianity is evident in the fact that during the year 33 pupils from Cecilia Jeffrey School united with the Church and 18 from the Birtle School.

Too much cannot be said for the principals and staffs, all so faithful and devoted. They seek to inculcate in the children habits of cleanliness, health and good conduct, to develop social instincts and the spirit of fair play, and to exemplify the Christ life to these first Canadians. The school life is all too brief for such training. Let no one say the Indian work has no results. Lives changed and given new motives are sufficient answer. The greatest handicap is the lack of contact and follow-up work when school days are over. Deaconesses could do much in this regard.⁴⁶

One hundred and fifty-three are in attendance, 77 boys and 76 girls, an increase of 9. Grants are received for 145. Two passed the Entrance and are attending high school, and two are studying art. Thirty-nine were baptized during the year. Fifty pupils have completed the course as outlined for the Progress Diploma for Scripture memorization.⁴⁷

In June of 1936, *Glad Tidings* reported that at the Birtle Indian School:

Worship is held after breakfast every morning in the children’s dining room and every evening in the chapel. Fourteen united with the Church last year.⁴⁸

In September 1936, readers of *Glad Tidings* were informed about progress made in the Indian Residential Schools that would have been welcome news for many WMS members:

Each year had seen an improvement in Sunday School work and more Church members. The Boy Scout Movement was helping the boys. She [Mrs. McKerroll, Secretary of Schools] told of the offer of Joe Paul, a former pupil, to conduct Church services on the Birdtail Reserve until a missionary could be sent to them.⁴⁹

“The play life, always a problem”

In 1936, *Glad Tidings* described extra-curricular activities at the Birtle Indian School:

The play life, always a problem, was helped by an outdoor rink so that skating and hockey added to the joys of the winter season. Great was the enthusiasm when the school was victorious in a game to which the town hockey team of boys of the same age challenged them. Football and baseball are gaining in favour. Boy Scouts have been organized by Mr.

⁴⁶ (June 1936), , XII No. 6, pg. 211.

⁴⁷ *Glad Tidings*, June 1943, Vo. XIX, No. 6, pg. 233.

⁴⁸ *Glad Tidings*, March, 1940.

⁴⁹ Lamb, E. (March, 1940) Christmas at the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, 1939. *Glad Tidings*.

McLeod who is doing good work with them. Miss Eva Lynch of Birtle comes in one evening a week to teach singing.⁵⁰

By 1943, there were six hockey teams at Cecilia Jeffrey Indian School. “To the Indian boys hockey is the best of all sports, and Mr. Pitts [Principal of CJ] finds that there is a marked improvement both in work and conduct when there is organized hockey”.⁵¹

Christmas Day at the Indian Residential Schools, 1939

School staff were assigned responsibilities months in advance in order to prepare for the annual Christmas concert. In 1939, the event at the Birtle Indian Residential School featured a patriotic theme, linking an image on stage for students to identify with the British Empire, a cherished value for Presbyterians.

The Birtle Indian School enjoyed a most successful Christmas season this year. Our annual concert began at half-past seven that evening. The chapel was filled with visiting Indians and people from the town. The programme began with everyone singing “O Canada”. For this we had one of the boys pose as a soldier all in white on a white raised platform. Behind the “statue” we draped a large flag. The whole was lighted with a cold blue spot light. The scene was most impressive.⁵²

The March, 1940, issue of *Glad Tidings* carried a story by Miss Evelyn Lamb with the title: “Christmas at the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, 1939”. The following quotation illustrates Indigenous values for families and children.

On Christmas Day the Indians from reserves fifty to a hundred and fifty miles away, travelling mostly on moccasined foot, perhaps on snowshoes, begin to arrive with the dawn. Even mothers with babies a few days old come in for this day of days to see their children. Indian parents are very fond of their little ones, and in many cases this is the only time during the school year when they see their children.

After breakfast each child visits with his or her parents, relatives and friends. I have seen a little twelve-year-old girl with tears running down her cheeks as she proudly held her baby sister in a moss bag for our approval, she was so overcome with joy.

The programme begins at two o’clock to last until about half past four or five, as a rule.... For the remainder of the evening horns are heard above the gay chatter, the crackling of peanuts, and the popping of toy guns. After bed bell, prayers are said, and in a few minutes, one could see rows of little black heads on the white pillows as tired children sleep peacefully.⁵³

⁵⁰ (January, 1935) *Glad Tidings*.

⁵¹ (1936). *Glad Tidings*, 21.

⁵² (June 1936), *Glad Tidings*. XII, 211.

⁵³ *Ibid*.

The quotation below was submitted to the “teen pages” of *Glad Tidings* by a student at one of the Indian residential schools. It describes a strict daily routine and division of labour at the institution. The controlling nature of the schools and structured life would have made it difficult for some students, leaving school, to fit back into life on the reserve. The last paragraph in this quotation would have allowed WMS members a glimpse of how the schools functioned to intervene in family life.

There are over fifty pupils. The rising bell rings at 6 o'clock. Every child is expected to report for work at 6:20.

Some of the girls help prepare the breakfast; others go to the laundry and bake-room. Breakfast at 7 o'clock. After breakfast we have worship in the children's dining room.

The home is all swept and dusted, beds made, dishes washed, and vegetables prepared for dinner before the first bell rings for schools at 8:45. The boys do all the work in their dormitories and playrooms.

Only the small pupils attend school all day. The larger boys and girls work half a day. Three girls receive a good training in all branches of housework and sewing. The boys are kept busy looking after the gardens and stock.

The children come to us when seven years old and remain until they are eighteen. Our youngest girl is not six. She is a dear little brown-eyed girl. Her mother died last spring, and we have the five sisters.⁵⁴

School Funding Arrangements

In his study of the residential school system over the period from 1879 to 1946, John Milloy (2017) concluded that the system was chronically underfunded by the government. The following analysis confirms that Milloy's analysis is applicable to the schools operated by the WMS.

Prior to 1925, the Church paid part of the salary for the principals of the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Boarding School, and the Indian Boarding School at Birtle. However, this type of dual control was not satisfactory for the PCC. In March, 1927, the Board of Missions voted that all Indian Boarding schools should be under the direct management of the WMS. The Society became responsible for their financial support over and above the Government grant.

WMS finances (revenues) included government grants, Presbyterian giving, gifts/donations, and bequests. The WMS expected the schools to be self-sufficient as much as possible. The schools sold handicrafts, furniture etc. that was produced in the school shops. Administrators also relied on sales of produce from the school farm operations. The following quotation from *Glad Tidings* is evidence of the impact of government cutbacks on the schools, and the disparity between the per capita levels compared to “white children”.

⁵⁴ (January, 1935) *Glad Tidings*.

Late in 1936, representatives of all denominations who administered the residential schools took a forward step in their Indian work when they gathered in Ottawa to consult with each other regarding common problems, and to meet with the Prime Minister.

The deputation unanimously reaffirmed their conviction that, while boarding schools were far from perfect, that after trying day and improved day schools, “the residential school as at present conducted is undoubtedly the best instrument as far devised for the development of Indian youth”. It is interesting to note, that costs of other institutions in Canada educating white children had been investigated and it was found that the per capita cost ranged from \$400 to \$700. This compared to an average grant per child to the Churches that was only about \$105 per year. This level of government funding had recently been reduced by 15 per cent.

This cut has been most serious in its effect. Strict economy has been at all times required to finance, and now with lessened grant since January 1932, stocks of food, bedding, linen, agricultural implements, etc., are seriously depleted, and deficits are mounting up. The Premier promised a restoration of the 10 per cent reduction from April 1st, 1935.⁵⁵

In 1936 the government decided to lower the school exit age from 18 to 16 years of age. “The lowering of the school age to 16, except in very special cases, shortens the period of training”.⁵² This made it more difficult for administrators to meet their enrolment targets, and maintain levels of government per capita grant funding that was needed to operate the schools and meets the basic needs of the students.

Cecilia Jeffrey School Finances

In 1936, there were 135 on the roll at the close of this year for Cecilia Jeffrey, with an average attendance of 131. This has meant much recruiting by Mr. Byers, as 24 were discharged. Financing has taken a great deal of time and thought. To save the fuel bill, Mr. Byers purchased for \$75 standing timber, and has cut 200 cords.⁵⁶

The Government of Canada covered capital costs, including major repairs to buildings and related systems when substantiated by inspection reports: “The Grand Jury report declares the school well managed. It draws attention to the need of caulking the windows and repairing the septic tank, which we have reported to the Government, who is responsible.”⁵⁷

For 1938, the estimates published in *Glad Tidings* indicated that the WMS risked not being able to complete teacher training for two Indigenous students. This was a progressive initiative at the time to employ Indigenous teachers in its schools.

An advance step is noted in the estimate for two Indian girls, graduates of the Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School, at the Missionary and Deaconess Training Home, and how very welcome this advance is. It is estimated that it will cost the W.M.S \$1,000. The Department of Indian Affairs is granting us \$165 a year for each and the balance of \$870 is

⁵⁵ (1936). *Glad Tidings*, 21.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

being taken from the Special Indian fund, which is really rent paid the W.M.S. by the Department of Indian Affairs when the old Cecilia Jeffrey School, owned by the W.M.S., was in use. It is hoped that there is enough in this fund to complete the education of the two girls.⁵⁸

Birtle School Finances

The school was expected to be as financially independent as possible. In 1932, the Birtle School raised \$400.00, double the amount it had contributed in the previous year. In addition, the school sent \$100 to the WMS in Toronto. The fundraising efforts at the school involved all ages, as shown by this quote.

At Treaty Day, the W.M.S. made \$50.00 selling food, etc., and Mission Band children have filled their mite-boxes with hard earned coppers.

By 1934, a 15% reduction in the government grants received by the WMS made financing of the schools very difficult. The condition of the outbuildings owned by the WMS was assessed as very poor (“mere shacks”), and it was recommended to replace the barn as soon as possible. As well, the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa asked the WMS to construct a new concrete water tank. The school was dependent on the C.P.R. water supply, and the old well had collapsed. Indian Affairs also asked the WMS to construct a new sewage tank and offered to contribute \$200 towards its cost.⁵⁹

Table showing estimated costs for 1934 for three “Indian” Schools⁶⁰

Birtle, Man. -

Principal’s Salary.....	\$1,350.00	
Matron’s Salary.....	500.00	
Two Teachers’ Salaries.....	1,370.00	
Assistant Matrons (two) Salaries	500.00	
Laundress	500.00	
.....		
Nurse’s Salary	600.00	
.....		
Engineer’s Salary	600.00	
.....		
Water, Light, Fuel	1,225.00	
.....		
Taxes on Farm	7.00	
.....		
	-----	\$7,352.00
	--	

⁵⁸ Strachan, D. (January, 1938). Estimates for 1938. *Glad Tidings*, 10.

⁵⁹ (January 1934). *Glad Tidings*, X.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Mistawasis, Sask. -		
Teacher's Salary, Paid by Government	
Board of Children	\$250.00	
.....		
Maintenance and Fuel	350.00	
.....		
	-----	\$600.00
	--	
"Cecilia Jeffrey" Kenora, Ont. -		
Principal's Salary	\$1,350.00	
.....		
Matron's Salary	600.00	
.....		
Nurse's Salary	720.00	
.....		
Three Teachers' Salaries	2,210.00	
.....		
Sewing Matron, Salary	500.00	
.....		
Engineer's	720.00	
Salary.....		
Water, Light, Fuel	1,225.00	
.....		
	-----	\$7,325.00
Contingency		120.00
.....		

		-
		\$15,397.00
Insurance on Old School		179.60
.....		

	--	\$15,576.00
Additional - Per Capita Grant from Government		\$32,000.00

Financial

The charts and table shown below reflect the bi-monthly Treasurer Reports as published in *The Glad Tidings*. Total annual disbursements (i.e., expenses) are presented below for operating Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey over a period of seven years, starting in 1933. This analysis shows that the Department of Indian Affairs did not provide sufficient funding to the WMS to operate the schools.

The total disbursements include additional expenses that were paid by the W.M.S. in order to meet their annual budget for each of the schools (i.e., the extra expenses over and above the funding received in the form of per capita government grants).

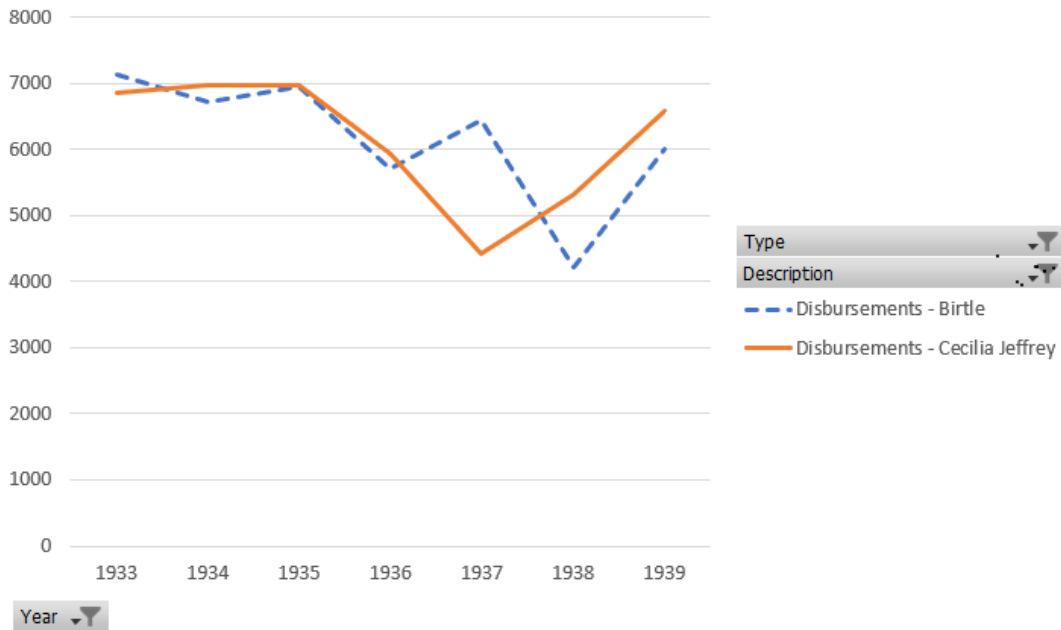


Figure 1 — Comparison of Birtle to Cecilia Jeffrey — Disbursements

Note that disbursements (not including government grants) appear to be similar values for both schools. For comparison purposes, the size of the schools (enrollment) was approximately the same.

	Disbursements - Government Grants	Additional Expenses to Cover Shortfall	Grand Total	% Shortfall
1933	\$ 31,373.42	\$ 13,996.60	\$ 45,370.02	31%
1934	\$ 21,740.45	\$ 13,703.29	\$ 35,443.74	39%
1935	\$ 25,050.47	\$ 13,925.43	\$ 38,975.90	36%
1936	\$ 24,832.65	\$ 11,654.81	\$ 36,487.46	32%
1937	\$ 20,207.61	\$ 10,883.96	\$ 31,091.57	35%
1938	\$ 40,303.21	\$ 9,548.98	\$ 49,852.19	19%
1939	\$ 35,334.06	\$ 12,606.46	\$ 47,940.52	26%
			Average Shortfall	31%

Figure 2 — Table showing details of disbursements and % funding shortfall for Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey Schools.

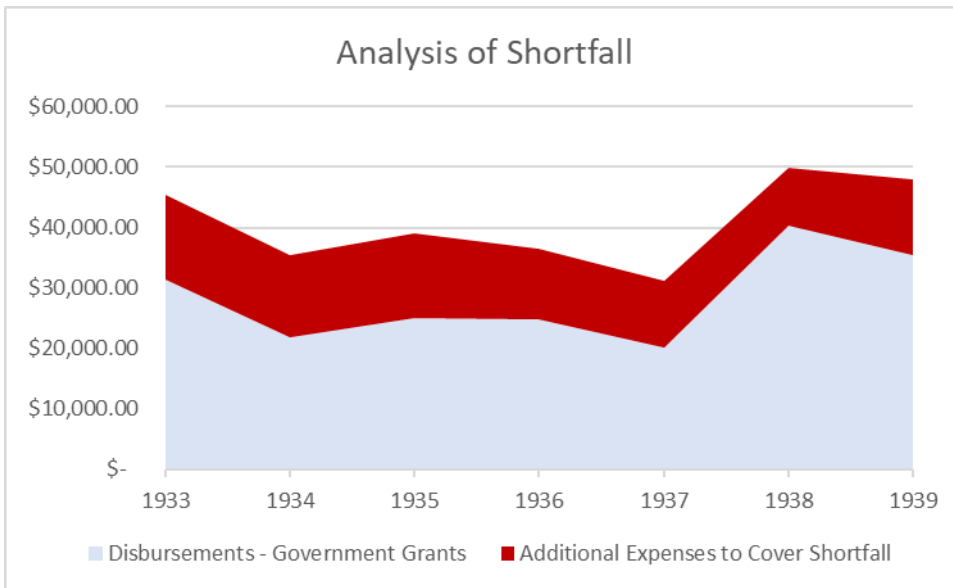


Figure 3 — Analysis of Shortfall for Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey Schools showing additional expenses incurred by WMS over and above government grants paid. The area in red represents an annual average shortfall of 31% over seven years.

Governance

The WMS and the Government of Canada made arrangements for a permanent co-operating committee with “at least one member from each unit. The WMS agreed to meet periodically to discuss common problems involved in its relationships with the Government, through their co-operative effort for the education of Indian children. The WMS considered that change to be an important and far-reaching step and was expected to assist the various administering bodies.⁶¹

As well, a Joint Committee was struck, with representation by all church denominations interested in Indian work. They met with representatives of both the Conservative and the Liberal Governments in Ottawa to discuss various questions of mutual interest. The Committee had three Presbyterian representatives, including for a time Dr. A. S. Grant, as the Chairman.⁶²

In 1927, *Glad Tidings* informed its readers that “twice a year, the Government Inspector spent two or three days in the school and everything from cellar to garret was closely inspected. The Inspector then sent a lengthy report to the Government”. As well, The Chief Medical Inspector visited at least once a year; an Indian Agent once a month, and a local doctor supervised the health of children. There was also a “Grand Jury” composed of 24 men. They did an annual inspection of the schools.⁶³

In the following quotation, *Glad Tidings* leans on the authority of a provincial medical examiner, Dr. Cameron, adding weight to the teacher’s own assessment of the quality of the work done in the schools:

Only one who has visited the Indian Schools knows how much good work is being done, Miss Lang says; “Dr. Cameron visited both Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey and was much

⁶¹ (May, 1935). *Glad Tidings*, XI.

⁶² (December, 1939) *Glad Tidings*.

⁶³ (August, 1927) *Glad Tidings*, III.

impressed with the value of the training being given under the Women's Missionary Society."⁶⁴

Over a vast sweep of Canadian history, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1997) found "very few exceptions when senior departmental officials, Parliamentarians, or churchmen raised their voices against the assumptions that underpinned the Residential School system or its abusive character".⁶⁵

Conclusion

This paper tells the story of a dedicated group of church women, well intentioned certainly, but blind to the risks associated with their Society's educational efforts for harm to Indigenous children, youth and families. In a dark period of Canadian history, with economic scarcity and racist government educational policies in effect, the information provided to WMS members through regular channels tended to focus on work done in the schools in order to civilize the children and achieve efficiencies of all kinds. That focus may have distracted WMS members from questioning: Was the church's mission in the schools being achieved? and "At what human costs?"

Epilogue

In 1960, a meeting of The National Department at Council for the WMS took place in Winnipeg. Miss Helen Ross, a Deaconess on the Society's staff for thirty-one years, spoke to participants about a programme of integration that had begun earlier that year at the Cecilia Jeffrey School.

Extra classroom space was made available by dividing the gymnasium. Each day 50 of the Indian children were sent out to a township school, and 80 non-Indian children came into the Cecilia Jeffrey School. This programme of integration has been quite successful, and an interesting outcome has been that at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and again at Easter, the Indian children were entertained in the homes of the non-Indian children, some for a day, or several days, or for the entire holiday period.⁶⁶

Delegates at the Winnipeg meeting were able to meet Mr. Gordon Williams, then a Grade 13 student at the Birtle Indian Residential School (student years 1959 to 1961). During the lunch hour, Gordon sang for the guests the solo "How Great Thou Art".

In February, 1962, a story in *Glad Tidings* by Miss Giollo G. Kelly, then Secretary responsible for the Indian Residential Schools, reported on her first impressions on stopping to visit the Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential schools. At that time the schools had combined enrollment of over 300 children. While the buildings looked in good shape and staff were doing good work, wrote the Secretary, the "school was fraught with disappointments".

As I listened to the soft voices of the youngsters, voices which reminded me of the whisper of the wind through the trees, I could not help but wonder what the future held for them.

⁶⁴ (June 1943). *Glad Tidings*. XIX, 233.

⁶⁵ Matthews, F. E. (July-August, 1961). The National Department At Council. *Glad Tidings*, XXXVII.

⁶⁶ Williams, G. (1973). Indians no longer come to back door. *Encounter*, 4, Issue 1. Toronto: Presbyterian Church in Canada.

How quick these children were to accept and claim one as their friend! I thought how very different the story of our Indian Canadians would read, if we were as ready to accept them.⁶⁷

On March 31, 1969, the Cecilia Jeffrey and Birtle Indian Residential Schools were finally closed. The staff in the schools became employees of the Federal Government. The Birtle site was abandoned in 1970. The Cecilia Jeffrey school building was demolished in early 1980.

In an article that appeared in the Church's newsletter *Encounter* (1973), titled "Indians no longer come to back door", Rev. Williams wrote:

The old approach of "rescue the perishing" or "save the lost souls of our less fortunate brethren" is no longer effectual in reaching the native people or meeting their needs. The church must first gain the confidence of the native leaders who are developing cultural programs that involve and even revive their original beliefs.⁶⁸

In a 2008 interview with *The Ottawa Citizen*, Rev. Williams described his experiences at the school in Birtle, saying "it often felt like a prison". He would never forget his feeling of confinement living at the school, since students were not allowed to leave the school grounds "It was almost like staying within a minimum (security) institution".⁶⁹

The high incidence of students running away from the schools was in itself a rejection of the prison-like setting. Retired school nurse, Kay Blake reminisced about her years at Cecilia Jeffrey in a story in *The Glad Tidings*, including this story about an attempted escape.

Some accidents were unforgettable. Danny Walpole, fell between freight cars, when he ran away. A man in the caboose saw a leg on the track and administered first aid. Although Danny returned with a full-length artificial leg, he could play football better than the other boys.⁷⁰

Colin Wasacase graduated from the Birtle Indian Residential School. He later became the Principal of Cecilia Jeffrey school (1966-69). In a letter dated September 24, 1966, Principal Wasacase downplayed the issue of school runaways:

The weather has been beautiful for the past two weeks and the children have been taking advantage of it by staying away from school and wandering away from the premises. The wanderers have been many. Their reasons all stem to loneliness and various other reasons. We do hope that they will all soon recover from it and settle into the school situation as the year progresses.⁷¹

In the October 1994 issue of *Glad Tidings*, Emma Paishk is identified as a "former student of the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School". That month, the magazine published a letter by

⁶⁷ Kelly, G. (February, 1962). First Impressions. *Glad Tidings*.

⁶⁸ Williams, G. (1973). Indians no longer come to back door. *Encounter*, 4, Issue 1. Toronto: Presbyterian Church in Canada.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Blake, K. (July 1985). Remembering Cecilia Jeffrey. *Glad Tidings*.

⁷¹ Wasacase, C. (1966) Correspondence. Presbyterian Church in Canada, <https://www.cbc.ca/thunderbay/interactives/dyingforaneducation/docs/1988-7004-17-4.pdf>.

Emma Paishk addressed to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. *Glad Tidings* had solicited former residential school students to submit letters for publishing in the magazine. An excerpt is reprinted below:

Following great consideration on my part, I have decided to respond [...] I lived in such fear of those people that ran the school, that my throat was always constricted with unshed tears. I became the shell of a once beautiful creation of God. As an adult, I began to live a very destructive way of life. All the repressed hurts and anger of those years within the confines of the boarding school system had to come out one way or another. Recalling all the verbal abuse I suffered as a student in the boarding school, such as being called “dirty Indian”, led me to think that I was not worthy of anything anymore. “I might as well live like they say I am” was the thought that went with me as I struggled to exist. Alcohol made things worse [...]⁷²

A comprehensive class-action settlement in 2007 involving survivors, the federal government and churches that ran the schools, resulted in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and a related Independent Assessment Process (IAP) in order to compensate students who had attended the schools. As part of that process, the PPC assumed all liability for the WMS related to its past involvement with the Indian Residential School system.

On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized in the House of Commons for Canada’s role in the Residential Schools. Responding to the Prime Minister’s statement, Rev. Gordon Williams, replied that [he] wished more attention had been brought to the students who actually died at the schools. “It’s almost as if it was a passing thing”, he said in reference to the way the deaths were addressed in the apology.⁷³

In 1994, the PCC apologized for its part in the Indian Residential Schools system in Canada. The church confessed to Indigenous people, asking forgiveness: “What we have heard we acknowledge. It is our hope that those whom we have wronged with a hurt too deep for telling will accept what we have to say.”⁷⁴

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The Women's Missionary Society as a "New Culture"

Stacey Mortson

I am a woman who has been an active member of the United Church of Canada (UCC) for more years than I care to admit. Throughout my many years of service as a lay leader, Christian educator, elder and through many committee roles, I have never been denied access to a pulpit, a position or a vote. I have recently realized, to my chagrin, that my attitude of entitlement to full participation in the life and work of the church was not always available to women. In fact, women's participation in full membership in the UCC is a more recent phenomenon than I had assumed. It came to fruition chiefly through the actions of the strong and courageous women of the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS). Although the ladies of this organization may not have viewed themselves as feminist activists, they were certainly influential in the Canadian women's movement in the late 19th century and up until the mid 20th century in a period now recognized as the "first wave."⁷⁵ Women's groups that were birthed during this time were not directly concerned with obtaining power; rather, they pursued organization in response to issues such as the social conditions of the time, and generally moved these concerns from the private to the public domain, and from the local to the international sphere.⁷⁶ Explicitly, the group's purpose was altruistic and religious in its desire to spread the Gospel, to care for the needy and underprivileged, and to share God's grace and goodness⁷⁷. I propose that there was an underlying, implicit (perhaps unintentional), goal met by membership in the WMS, for both volunteer staff and paid missionaries, in the creation of what German theologian Dorothee Soelle called "another culture", a place where women could live, work, care for and serve one another as full and independent (yet interdependent) participants in the servant church⁷⁸. In the WMS world, women developed "another culture" where they could develop faith, fellowship and administrative skills outside the patriarchal culture of the larger church, from which today's communities of faith may learn much.

In the Beginning: Inauguration of the WMS of the United Church of Canada

The inaugural meeting which took place to establish the United Church of Canada (UCC) in June of 1925, was largely a men's event, wherein only four of the 350 commissioners were women.⁷⁹ However, a second inaugural event took place six months later, on October 26, 1925, where all the delegates were women⁸⁰. This was the initial meeting of the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS) of the United Church of Canada. This happy occasion saw the amalgamation of four organizations into what was undoubtedly the largest women's organization in all of Canada.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Margaret Gillett, "Goals of Canadian Women's Organizations: The First Wave" *CIESC*, Volume 21: No. 1, Article 1 (1991): 6.

⁷⁶ Margaret Gillett, "Goals of Canadian Women's Organizations", 7.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 8.

⁷⁸ Donna Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds: The Story of the Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada*, (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1993) 17.

⁷⁹ C.T McIntire, "Unity Among Many," in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer (Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 7.

⁸⁰ McIntire, "Unity Among Many," 10.

⁸¹ McIntire, "Unity Among Many," 10.

The oldest of these was the WMS of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Eastern Division, which had been established in PEI in 1825 as the first Woman's Missionary Society in Canada.⁸² The largest was the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Western Division, which had been established in 1876, and whose mission fields covered Japan, China and India as well as Canadian home missions to both 'Indians' and Jews.⁸³ The WMS of the Methodist Church had two branches, one of Wesleyan background dating back to 1881, and the less dominant Episcopal branch dating to 1876.⁸⁴ The smallest of the amalgam was the Congregational Woman's Board of Mission, which had been established last, in 1886, yet had the furthest global reach with missionaries in China, India, Ceylon, the Turkish Empire, Angola, Brazil, Peru and Canada.⁸⁵ The local Union Churches who joined the new United Church did not have a division of women's missions separate from men's missions. When the fiscal books of the amalgamating societies were closed and consolidated into the new organization, the total funds held by the WMS as they began anew was \$1,004,243.78, a monstrous sum of money for the time.⁸⁶ There is no question that this organization had auspicious rich and powerful confederation of female administrators, supporters and staff. In the early years of the UCC, there were few opportunities for women to exercise full participation in the life and work of the church in a meaningful way. The WMS recognized the talents and capabilities of women who received little welcome in the formal structure of the church, and created a parallel organization with a similar structure that would be bastioned by a feminine workforce and executive. Some scholars of Canadian history have found evidence of a "feminized" or "shadow" church within the mainstream church tradition⁸⁷. In light of their exclusion from the hierarchy and traditional decision-making bodies, United Church women formed the WMS as a strong, inter-connecting organization of their own from which they wielded a great deal of power and autonomy. Their goal was to have a branch in each congregation of the UCC in Canada, and soon the hierarchy was replete with congregational branches, presbyterial societies, conference branches, and an overarching Dominion (national) Board.⁸⁸ Their mandate was to pray for, recruit, appoint, fund and supervise female missionaries to serve both at home and abroad.⁸⁹ In accordance with their evangelistic, educational and medical work, they ran hospitals, schools and homes, and community programs in urban and rural areas.⁹⁰ In effect, these women ran a multi-national multiple-division large-budget organization in a man's world.

⁸² Ibid, 11.

⁸³ James Dennis, Harlan Beach, Charles Fahs, editors, in *The World Atlas of Missions*, (New York: Student Volunteer Missions, 1911), 16.

⁸⁴ Marilyn Fardig Whitely. "Canadian Methodist women and missions: the transformation of 'pious, plodding' females." *Methodist History*, vol. 34, no 2 (Jan. 1996): 104.

⁸⁵ Dennis, Beach, Fahs, ed. *The World Atlas of Missions*, 16.

⁸⁶ Donna Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 106.

⁸⁷ M. Lucille Marr, "Naming Valiant Women: Biographical Sketches of Three Women in the Canadian Methodist Tradition," *Consensus: Vol. 20: Iss. 2. Article 4. 35.*

⁸⁸ McIntire, "Unity Among Many," 28.

⁸⁹ McIntire, "Unity Among Many," 28.

⁹⁰ Phyllis Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada* (Canada: McGill Queens, 2014), 77.

Opportunities for women at home

Participating in the activities of the WMS provided women across Canada, in settings both rural and urban, with opportunities for personal growth and an expansion of their world outside of the home. The missionaries abroad received a modest paycheque; however, work done on Canadian soil was accomplished by many dedicated, competent and (mostly) married volunteers.

In a time when a woman's work was considered to be the care of her home and family, the participation in WMS meetings expanded the world she knew. Belonging to such a society offered women from even the most conservative and restrictive households a church-sanctioned level of freedom – even the most patriarchal of husbands or fathers could not object to the women of their homes participating in such Christian endeavours.⁹¹ Important aspects of such meetings were worship, fellowship and study, which served to enrich the religious experience of members.⁹² The study of the WMS magazine *Missionary Monthly* provided a broader vision of the world for those who might not experience international travel for themselves, and as historian John Webster Grant pointed out, they were “better informed on international affairs than many members of parliament, then or now.”⁹³ When missionaries were on furlough from the field, they often visited congregations and presbyterial groups, sharing first-hand their experiences abroad, while billeting in the homes of members. This personal contact provided an expansion of woman's horizons to friends across the world, creating a strong bond of sisterhood throughout the denomination. This raising of consciousness was a reward in itself.

Other rewards lay in the skills built while in attendance at meetings. Since few married women worked outside the home, there were scant opportunities to cultivate professional skills. The WMS provided opportunities for members to develop abilities in conducting meetings, taking minutes, writing and preparing reports, preparing and presiding at worship and education programs⁹⁴. Public speaking, which included praying and preaching in front of others, increased the self-confidence of participants, who were encouraged by the sisterhood of ‘another culture’. Women who practiced leadership skills at the grassroots level of congregations, could then expand to the larger courts of presbyteries and conferences, and then further to social reform movements outside the church, and in war-times to the business sphere. The training acquired in safety among sisters was transferable to women who sought out further challenges in the secular world. Administrative knowledge to be gained by members reached into the worlds of finance and human resources. Ordinary women assumed positions of responsibility for budgets locally and nationally, handling large amounts of money.⁹⁵ Their philosophy was to have a whole year's planned expenditures in cash before committing any of the money, thereby avoiding any debt or chance of insolvency. The Dominion board oversaw the recruitment, appointment, funding and supervision of female missionaries for programs both at home and abroad.⁹⁶ Though members at home lived in a society that encouraged them to believe they were limited to marriage and motherhood, they observed through those they supported in the mission fields that women could teach, doctor and minister to others, in their own feminine way.⁹⁷ The ladies spent little time in actual fundraising activities. Their philosophy was that if people truly knew what the women in

⁹¹ Margaret MacPherson, “From Caretakers to Participants”, 42.

⁹² Phyllis Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 77.

⁹³ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 135.

⁹⁴ MacPherson, “From Caretakers to Participants”, 42.

⁹⁵ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 135.

⁹⁶ McIntire, 28.

⁹⁷ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 33.

the mission fields were accomplishing, the money would naturally follow. How could one understand the value of the work, and not want to contribute to it? The sharing of their faith, their passion for spreading the gospel and genuine concern for the marginalized should be enough to convince folks to support the movement – and it was. When their books were finally closed in 1962, they turned \$5,858,724.20 over to the Board of Finance of the UCC, PLUS substantial investments in real estate properties such as staff houses, group homes, schools and hospitals.⁹⁸

Opportunities for women in the field

The foreign missionary movement that began in the 19th century was a reflection of the Protestant churches' desire to conquer the superstition and tradition of 'heathen' folks around the world, and to win souls for Christ.⁹⁹ Early missionaries, either married or single men, were convinced of their own moral and cultural superiority, and believed in their undisputed right to bring progress to ignorant peoples by teaching them Western values, knowledge and technology, to make good Christians of the 'dishonest heathens'.¹⁰⁰ Because of the strict etiquette governing exchanges between unrelated men and women in many cultures, the male missionaries sometimes found themselves rendered ineffective; for example, a male doctor could not examine female patients in China.¹⁰¹ Therefore, opportunities arose for women who previously had limited options for extremely meaningful employment to engage in further education and to fulfill their ideals of living in service to Christ, while having a mighty exciting time.

Missionary work had special appeal to women in the chaos that followed both world wars. There was a large decrease in suitable marriageable men for the young women back home, leaving them with the probability of life as a spinster.¹⁰² More importantly to them perhaps, was the contemplation of what they themselves would be willing to give their lives for, as so many young men had.

There was also an underlying opportunity for women to demonstrate competence in spheres far from the domestic front, particularly for university graduates in medicine.¹⁰³ A significant number of Canadian 'lady doctors' at that time attained their experience while serving in Africa, China and India.¹⁰⁴ Their professional practice in the context of Canadian society would have been contentious, but the un-challenged religious idealism of missional fieldwork was a great 'cover' for such unfeminine aspirations as medicine or administration.¹⁰⁵ Both at home and abroad, where women had never before been able to find a place economically and emotionally for themselves as single professional people, the female missionary was an important role model.¹⁰⁶ In societies where polygamy was common, women found liberation in opting out of such mergers. "For African women," said lifetime WMS member Katharine Hockin, "and in

⁹⁸ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 106.

⁹⁹ Mary Rose Donnelly and Heather Dau, *Katharine Boehner Hockin: a biography*. (Canada: Wood Lake Books, 1992), 14.

¹⁰⁰ Donnelly and Dau, *Katharine Hockin*, 15.

¹⁰¹ Donnelly and Dau, *Katharine Hockin*, 25.

¹⁰² Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 81.

¹⁰³ Margaret Gillett, "Goals of Canadian Women's Organizations", 8.

¹⁰⁴ Margaret Gillett, "Goals of Canadian Women's Organizations", 9.

¹⁰⁵ Gillett, "Goals of Canadian Women's Organizations", 9.

¹⁰⁶ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 135.

China and Japan, it [single life] held up a freedom from the old marriage, and the chance to be joyously single.”¹⁰⁷

The WMS attained some level of “another culture” with its unique blending of roles as family and employer, boss and church, community and friend, old and young.¹⁰⁸ They trusted that God had a hand in all they did, and carefully listened to their women to help them discern that call. Despite its high standards of conduct, there was also a great deal of flexibility when it came to leaving the fold to get married, and financial support for regular sabbaticals for rest, study and deputation.¹⁰⁹ Despite the fact that the women were not paid as much as men doing the same work for the UCC, not a woman among them would admit to resenting it.¹¹⁰ It was because they felt loved and cared for as part of a sisterhood that was creating a better world, not because they were lacking in self-esteem.¹¹¹ Ferne Graham, working in the residential school system, declared, “I really didn’t think there was enough money in Canada to pay what I was worth,” signifying no lack of self-worth in the work she was doing.¹¹²

The missionaries’ imperialistic views of the people to whom they were ministering were tempered over the years. Katharine Hockin recalls the day when “the resentment penned up in my own spirit seemed to flow away as I came to realize that if I myself were one of the Chinese people, I would in all probability hate me too!”¹¹³ She realized that the question was not whether the missionary liked a particular society, but how a Christian should in obedience respond to the environment in which they found themselves. The blind imperialism of former times faded as a more critical look of the WMS missional past shed new light on the defensive stance of hearers of the word in far off places, leaving them less open to new insights.¹¹⁴ Katharine’s own insights about the sharing of the word was disseminated in her teachings and training of others within the WMS as she explored new patterns of sending and receiving missionaries.¹¹⁵ The sisterhood of front-line missionaries was trusted by the Dominion Board who listened carefully to their overseas charges and were progressive enough to struggle through the self examination and revamping necessary to unbind themselves from their own intrinsic imperialism and self protection.¹¹⁶

Thus, while the women working in missions across the globe may not have seen themselves as pioneers in “another culture” they were indeed fine examples of assertive, effective and idealistic women, working outside the home for a good greater than their own.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 135.

¹⁰⁸ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 84.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 90.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 100.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 100.

¹¹² Ibid, 100.

¹¹³ Katharine Hockin, “*My Pilgrimage in Mission*” International bulletin of Missionary Research 12, 1 (January 1988): 27.

¹¹⁴ Hockin, “*My Pilgrimage in Mission*”, 27.

¹¹⁵ Hockin, *My Pilgrimage in Mission*, 28.

¹¹⁶ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 91.

¹¹⁷ Gillett, “*Goals of Canadian Women’s Organizations*”, 9.

Opportunities for girls

They say one who plants a tree does so not for themselves but for a future they may not see. The WMS is an organization that planted seeds for the future by recruiting young girls and grooming them for a future in missions potentially years or even decades away.

Winnifred Thomas was instrumental in organizing the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) in 1917 as an interdenominational girls' group long before the inception of the UCC, but through the WMS, it subsequently grew to become a movement whose membership and ethos was largely United Church in character.¹¹⁸ The CGIT motto was (and is) to “Cherish Health, Seek Truth, Know God, Serve Others and thus, with [Jesus'] help, become the girl God would have me be.” Pedagogy was an effective and intentional aspect of the WMS with well designed lesson plans and solid educational materials for Bible exploration, worship experiences, and literary publications such as *Canadian Missionary Heros*, *My CGIT Book*, *The Bookshelf*, and *The Missionary Monthly*.¹¹⁹ These materials suggested to young minds that the church was in need of workers in this and other countries, and offered up the possibility of women becoming doctors, musicians, and writers, releasing young women from the stereotypical roles of wife and mother than were prevalent at the time.¹²⁰

Thomas was aware that good pedagogy provides a sense of nurturing along with facts and skills, therefore, she fostered a system of intergenerational networking, encouraging expansive relationships among older women and young girls in the church community.¹²¹ This deliberate mentoring within the feminine membership encouraged young women in Explorers and CGIT to explore missional work as a vocation. *The Missionary Monthly* in April of 1959, included an article entitled “Would you like to be a Missionary?” which encouraged women to challenge the youth in their care. It asked:

Are you a Mother? Do you lead...Explorers or CGIT? Are you a Christian teacher...? If so, then you are in a most strategic spot, for daily you have the chance to say: “Jane did you know that nurses are needed in our mission hospitals?” “Helen would you like to be a missionary teacher?” Say it today!¹²²

The WMS was surely unique in its way of having the outgoing guard recruiting their own replacements! Education and nurture over many years kept the supply of female missionaries flowing.

How can living into “another culture” inform the life and work of the church today?

The world of the UCC has evolved enough that women are no longer relegated to the sidelines when it comes to worship leadership or to church governance. I believe that this happy change in culture would please the ladies of the WMS who managed their own parallel organization from church union in 1925 through to the formation of the UCW in 1962. Theirs was a different world, one of gender-based exclusion, and their formation of “another culture” empowered them

¹¹⁸ Airhart, “*A Church with the Soul of a Nation*”, 76.

¹¹⁹ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 61.

¹²⁰ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 65.

¹²¹ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 67.

¹²² Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 81.

to do so much that women in the church take for granted today. Their model of organizational behaviour can still inform our behaviour towards “another culture” of inclusion, faithfulness and support in the 21st century.

The more pragmatic lessons concerned business aspects. The preparation and control of large operating budgets and debt avoidance were modeled from the women’s experiences of handling household budgets. They were pragmatic about not over-extending themselves, and ensured they could fund programs before implementing them. This does not imply they were rooted in scarcity thinking; rather, because of their joy and enthusiasm in their good work, the money would appear for their upcoming programs, providing evidence of abundance thinking. Our stewardship activities could apply the WMS model in multiple ways. Sharing the good news of “another culture” of caring for others, enthusiasm for programs and inviting others to participate with genuine joy and faith are practices that communities of faith can employ to increase their ranks as well as their funds.

The women used human resource practices that were based on journeying with one another in each other’s various chosen roads without judgement, but rather with deep listening and an honest discerning for God’s voice as well as the women’s needs. Sabbaticals were the norm and provided time for rest, study and deputation and such furloughs prevented sickness and burnout. Standards for behaviour were high, but so was the availability for flexibility.

This model is appropriate for walking with students, interns and ministers as well as other staff such as musicians and support people, particularly during the recent pandemic where mental health concerns were rampant. Deep listening to fears and concerns as well as celebrating joys and successes can go a long way to supporting staff and in turn build loyalty and commitment. Staff need to feel reaffirmed in their call, or conversely, accompanied in their discerning to leave it, without fear of judgement.

The practice of study and deep listening to the experiences and insights of their overseas staff led the women to a greater understanding of the wider world and their place in it. The WMS began decades ago with the counsel of folks like Hockin to examine their imperialistic views. By coming face to face with their own biases, they were able to take steps towards inclusivity and empowerment of the marginalized, acting with ‘solidarity with’ rather than ‘charity to’ them. With greater understanding of biases, people can be led to a ‘metanoia’, a changing of their direction and former agendas. The church can use this experience to understand and change their views on issues such as ‘affirming’ by acknowledging their former views as oppressive, repenting of their hurtful actions, and starting down a more inclusive path.

Similarly, the WMS were all about creating right relations, fostering and nurturing relationships among females from the youngest Explorers to the most elderly of WMS members, from the most timid of teens to the most adventurous of missionaries. They intentionally created space and time for these relationships to grow, and mentored each woman to be the woman that Jesus wanted them to be. They allowed them to explore varying roles, and to fail in them, without judgement and with support.

This kind of unconditional love for people of varying capacities or backgrounds demonstrates how the church could be inclusive of others. By including people with learning disabilities as participants in worship, or including upbeat music to which energetic children can dance is a way to exemplify the kind of inclusivity of the WMS. There are countless ways the WMS vision of ‘another culture’, centered in loving God and loving one another, can be implemented in our communities of faith.

Conclusion

Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye would say that “the fundamental job of the imagination in ordinary life is to produce, out of the society we have to live in, a vision of the society we want to live in.”¹²³ Donna Sinclair, United Church author, would say that is what the WMS, through its complicated and inter-related web of education and nurturing, would do; it would create “another culture” where women could birth an alternative world where women were sisters, a world in which women loved one another, and worked toward a better world for all.¹²⁴ Without being explicitly and intentionally feminist, this group of women lived out the principles of empowerment for women, the sharing of knowledge and personal growth, and the equality among women and with men that is predominant in feminist thinking. The legacy that the WMS left us, carried on by the United Church Women (UCW) includes a strong spirit of inclusion, a wider global awareness, and a new understanding of mission which acknowledges the unpalatable tang of imperialism and Christian supremacy. These women, in their strong yet feminine way modeled solidarity with one another, education, by being with and supporting one another, and put their mission in Christ at the centre of all they did. Canadian ladies of the “first wave” of the women’s movement empowered women to make change, to develop their gifts, to be fulfilled in new and meaningful ways and to become leaders.

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¹²³ Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds*, 71.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 71.

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The (Non) Impact of the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation, A Subordinate Standard of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Peter Bush

Presbyterians have had substantive and often heated debates about the relationship between the church and the state, as to the role and responsibility of the church, and the role and responsibility of the government. This statement will come as a surprise to many Canadian Presbyterians who are likely to regard such a debate as boringly uninteresting, and the preserve of people interested in arcane theological debates. As he reported on his Facebook page, the most interesting question related to church-state matters the Rev. Dr. Ross Lockhart could find to ask his class on the Presbyterian tradition at St. Andrew's Hall in Vancouver was: "On the basis of the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation, how might an incoming, newly inducted minister reflect on the presence of the flags of Canada and Scotland being in the sanctuary?"

The last 5 years however have revealed a number of pinch points in the relationship between Church and State. It is not clear if the pinch points between Church and State have become more numerous since 2017, or if in the late 20th century and early years of the 21st century the points of friction seemed of less consequence. What is clear, is that describing the relationship between Church and State using the rhetoric of conflict has become more frequent since 2017. This rhetorical shift is not just an importation from the United States of America since a similar shift can be seen in Canada.

The following examples demonstrate the range of pinch-points.

a. In the summer of 2018, the Government of Canada required that any group receiving grants from the federal government to hire students for the summer must attest that "neither the job nor the core mandate of the organization opposed human rights, including those related to abortion, sexual orientation and gender identity." In 2019 the language was shifted so that organizations declared that they do "not actively work to infringe human rights." In setting this criterion, the government was privileging some religious groups over other religious groups, declaring some religious views were worthy of government support and not others.

b. The Government of Canada, during the height of the pandemic, invited religious leaders not just to obey, but to publicly endorse the government's vaccine policies. A series of Zoom meetings with religious leaders, hosted by the Prime Minister's Office, were held to encourage their endorsements. Meanwhile, on the other side, clergy were under pressure to condemn the government's public health policies that limited and sometimes stopped religious gatherings.

c. Another pinch point is the rise of language around "Christian Nationalism", and the deep political divisions which exist in the United States. These divisions are not just political;

they are religious as well. That merging of the political and the religious has appeared in the social media postings of Canadian clergy – and here I have nothing to point to but the social media postings of clergy who are supporters of the political “right” and those who are supporters of the political “left.”

d. And a final example, the death of the Queen in the Fall of 2022 brought to the surface questions about what was at stake in singing "God save the King" in a worship gathering. This question received very different answers given the practices of congregations, with some churches singing the anthem and others not singing it, but offering prayers for the new King. Still other congregations were completely silent about the death of the Queen and the ascension of a new King.

Against such a background this paper was researched and written. I am fully aware that may mean it is bad history. I will say that no matter how hard I have tried to be objective I am fully aware that my biases will show up. Further, I have been a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for over 30 years of the period under discussion and have at times been one of the actors in the story about to be told.

As we turn to the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation and its impact on the life of the PCC after its adoption as a subordinate standard, it is useful to at least briefly walk the well-worn path of how the Declaration came to be.

In 1875, when four branches of Presbyterianism in Canada came together, the decision was made that the interpretation of Chapter 23 of The Westminster Confession of Faith (Of the Christian Magistrate) would be a matter of “Liberty of Opinion”. Liberty of Opinion meant there was liberty of both conscience and action for Presbyterians, including both teaching and ruling elders, on these matters. In essence, no guidance was being offered by the church on the relationship between Church and State. That a Presbyterian denomination would arrive at such a position is both surprising and understandable. Church-State relations, as already mentioned, are an area of long debate within Presbyterian circles, so to lay aside those debates is surprising. However, setting aside the highly controversial topic as a matter of no denominational opinion was the only way to get the four branches of Presbyterianism in Canada to merge.

This official no opinion position, for to give liberty of opinion to everyone is in fact to have no official opinion, remained unchallenged until 1939. The sweeping of much of German Lutheranism into the religious cult of Nationalist Socialism (Nazism), which was a form of Christian Nationalism, had begun in earnest in 1933. This hijacking of Lutheranism had been challenged and confronted by the Confessing Church and the Barman Declaration of 1934. But Canadian Presbyterians paid little attention to what was happening theologically in Germany, for the Canadian church was distracted by the struggle to survive the one-two punch of Church Union in 1925, which had left the denomination short of clergy, and the coming of the Depression in 1929. Not until the late 1930's were Canadian Presbyterian voices like W. W. Bryden, M. M. MacOdrum, James Smart, and Arthur C. Cochrane able to gain traction as they raised the alarms about the deification of the state in Nazi Germany and The Presbyterian Church in Canada's lack of a theological confession to resist such state attempts to usurp the place of Christ as the only Ruler and Head of the church.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ William Klempa, “*Church and Nation Declaration Revisited*”, *Canadian Society of Presbyterian History Papers*, 2005, 1–22.

In 1939, the so-called "Paris Deliverance" was sent as an Overture to General Assembly, to be followed in 1942 by a Memorial on the same topic, and finally, in 1954, the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nations was adopted as a Subordinate Standard, thereby eliminating the official no opinion stance of the denomination on the matter of Church-State relations.¹²⁶ The twelve paragraphs of the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation (hereafter DFCCN), together with the Scriptural references, became the statement of the church on the matter. This paper is not a commentary on the Declaration. Instead, it asks what impact the DFCCN had on the way the church responds to the government and in shaping the church's theological understanding of its relationship to the state.

While this paper is not a commentary on the Declaration, some themes of the DFCCN are important to highlight for the subsequent discussion. The Declaration strongly affirms that the state and the church each have important yet distinct roles to play in working towards the well-being of the citizens of the nation. These distinct roles should not be confused for a separation of church and state, for the two work together while they remain distinct. Among the distinctive markers of the church is that it is loyal first, foremost, and always, to Jesus Christ, the only Ruler and Head of the church, while the church's commitment to the state is always qualified by its loyalty to Jesus Christ.

The adoption of the DFCCN as a subordinate standard led to two immediate questions from Presbyteries. The first, was there still liberty of opinion regarding Chapter 23 of the Westminster Confession of Faith? The Assembly never stated that the liberty of opinion regarding Chapter 23 had been removed, but that liberty of opinion was moot because the Declaration superseded Chapter 23. The liberty on chapter 23 became an historical artefact and nothing more.¹²⁷ The second, more complicated question, was what authority did a subordinate standard have? This led to the Articles of Faith Committee writing the preamble to the ordination vows, and a re-writing of the ordination vows as a means of explaining the authority and limits of a subordinate standard. That process took more than a decade and is beyond the scope of this paper.¹²⁸ Yet neither of these questions explored the application of the DFCCN to the life of the church.

¹²⁶ The General Assembly in 1954, following a significant debate and some final amendments to the text of the Declaration, adopted the statement with a Declaratory Act and sent it down under the Barrier Act for approval by the presbyteries (*Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly* (hereafter *A&P*), 1954, p. 65). A Declaratory Act is binding for one year and requires a two-thirds majority of the Assembly voting in favour. The Declaration was adopted on a vote of 129 to 1 (the one negative vote was from the Rev. H. Lloyd Henderson who also submitted reasons for his dissent). The original motion, that the Declaration be adopted as an Interim Act and sent down under the Barrier Act having been divided, it was necessary to vote on the second motion to send the Declaration down to the Presbyteries under the Barrier Act "for conclusive review and report this year, with a view to final adoption as part of our subordinate standards." This motion was also adopted. The vote was not recorded. (*A&P*, 1954, p. 65).

In 1955 the Committee on Remits reported to the General Assembly that the Declaration had been approved by a majority of the Presbyteries and could therefore be adopted by the 1955 Assembly "as a declaration setting forth the teaching of Holy Scripture on the subject of Church and Nation." The Assembly did that with "over two-thirds" of those voting being in favour. The 1955 General Assembly understood itself to be confirming the actions of the 1954 General Assembly, and therefore the Preamble to the Ordination Questions states that the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation was adopted in 1954.

¹²⁷ *A&P*, 1954, 242.

¹²⁸ *A&P*, 1956, 502–503.

The adoption of the Declaration led in the 1960's to further exploration of what it meant for the church to add a subordinate standard. Dr. Stanford Reid submitted a Commissioners Overture in 1962 that argued the Declaration left too many questions and needed to be tightened.¹²⁹ The Presbytery of West Toronto argued that if the theological understanding of the relationship between church and nation could be stated "with modern relevance" then could the church do the same about the matter of divorce?¹³⁰ In 1968 similar arguments were raised about what the Westminster Confession said in relation to the Pope.¹³¹ The Articles of Faith Committee in 1966 presented a Draft Statement of Faith – which would eventually become *Living Faith* – which would itself be adopted as a subordinate standard. The adoption of the DFCCN as a subordinate standard made it possible to imagine the development of other standards which would join the Westminster Confession of Faith.

This paper uses the reports and debates found in the *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly* as the primary barometer to examine the ways in which the DFCCN has or has not shaped conversations about church and state within the PCC after 1955. Presbytery minutes have not been examined, nor was the *Presbyterian Record* read to find references to the Declaration, and Session minutes for the period under study are still closed. A study guide produced by the Board of Congregational Life on the Declaration will be referenced later in the paper.

The first attempt to apply the Declaration to the policies and life of the church, that could be found, took place in 1969. The Board of Evangelism and Social Action brought a brief statement on the role of protest and violence in society. The backdrop was the violent protest of the summer of 1968, which was still reverberating in June of 1969. The Board's statement made no reference to the DFCCN. The recommendation that was introduced stated: "That the General Assembly respect the right of lawful protest and stand opposed to violence whether an instrument of protest or in the form of brutal suppression, of protest." The Rev. Prof. Joseph McLelland moved an amendment:

that this statement and recommendation be sent back to the Board for further study and report, with particular reference to those social and political-economic conditions which may provoke violent protest. Such "abuse of power" is referred to in our Church's Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation, articles 4,5 and 6... Our Church does not teach a doctrinaire pacificism, and the abuse of civil power in many places today, notably in certain parts of Africa and South America, may well demand overt violence toward the establishment of more democratic forms of government. Finally, our problem in the Province of Quebec needs sympathetic treatment since the question of violence is at this moment a burden on the consciences of many Christians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant.¹³²

McLelland's comments allude to Africa, which included the conflict in Biafra, and the food aid, and sometimes munitions, which were being flown in by Canadian relief. These actions were receiving significant support from The Rev. Ted Johnston and others in the PCC. The Board immediately withdrew its motion and the following morning introduced a longer statement

¹²⁹ *A&P*, 1962, 102–103

¹³⁰ *A&P*, 1965, 504.

¹³¹ *A&P*, 1968, 240. This is in reference to Overture 17, 1967.

¹³² *A&P*, 1969, 36–37.

which explicitly referenced the Declaration on the "abuse of power". A portion of the new statement read:

Violence. We believe that physical violence is neither a proper expression of protest nor a proper response to protest. We believe that those in places of power and responsibility who reject or neglect the just aspirations of others and thereby provoke them to physical violence are themselves guilty of violence against human personhood. In its Declaration of Faith concerning Church and Nation our Church recognizes that there may be occasions when the only remedy for tyranny, whether political, economic, or ecclesiastical, is rebellion. In such circumstances all Christians are obliged to be obedient to Christ, to be agents of reconciliation, "bearing public witness to the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ and to the freedom of all persons in Him."¹³³

This is the first extended reference to the Declaration that could be found, and it was raised first not by a Board of the church, but by one of the church's theological faculty.

The Committee on Church Doctrine offered, in 1974, an early response to liberation theology and the "theology of violence". The discussion opened with a quote from the Declaration: "Every abuse of power constitutes a breach of trust, destructive to the abuser and injurious to the glory of God among his creatures." But the quote is more a proof text than an invitation to engage with the full DFCCN.¹³⁴

The election of the Parti Quebecois in the Province of Quebec in 1976 led to two overtures asking the church to act. The one from the Presbytery of Westminster alluded to the Declaration: "although the church professes no allegiance to any political or social system *per se*, the fragmentation of our country would be another tearing apart of the fragile human mosaic of this nation."¹³⁵

The resulting special committee was made up of prominent and politically engaged Presbyterians who reported to the 1978 Assembly. The resulting two-page statement made extensive use of the Declaration. Paragraph 8 with its call, "the church must not merge or confuse the Gospel with any political, economic, cultural, or nationalistic creed" became a reminder that the church should not endorse or reject any particular constitutional proposal, but rather have the "divinely appointed mission as the conscience of the state." The church "has the responsibility to speak out on behalf of the principle of unity in difference." This led the Committee to take the stance that "The Presbyterian Church in Canada neither affirms nor denies the right of self-determination for the Province of Quebec, or any other part of Canada." And while the Declaration in paragraph 3 affirmed the right of the state to use force "against internal disorder", the committee contended that the Christian response is "to shun the use of force of arms or any other means of coercion." The committee acknowledged the failures to hear the cries of the minority groups within the country, and recognized the need for reform as highlighted in paragraph 11 of the DFCCN. This statement on National Unity, printed in both French and English, is one of the few examples of extensive engagement with the DFCCN to address a particular matter being discussed by the state, and therefore of interest to the church.¹³⁶

¹³³ *A&P*, 1969, 60. The final quote is from paragraph 6 of the DFCCN.

¹³⁴ *A&P*, 1974, 393.

¹³⁵ *A&P*, 1977, 418 (Overture 13, 1977), 423–424 (Overture 17, 1977).

¹³⁶ *A&P*, 1978, 367–372.

In 1980, the International Affairs Committee brought the question of social violence and revolution before the Assembly, with a study document which opened with: “The Westminster Confession (Art. 23/2) holds that a Christian magistrate may lawfully wage war.... In the same way the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation allows for the possibility of just revolution (Art 6).” The use of chapter 23 of the Westminster Confession appears out of place since that chapter of the Confession had been overlaid by the DFCCN. The Committee argued from these two statements:

Historically then the church has accepted violence as an unfortunate necessity in a just cause. But justice is not something that can be defined in advance. Justice has to be worked out as the response of love in a given situation.

Continuing the argument, the document went on to apply that understanding to the context of the revolutionary violence taking place in Africa without naming the continent.

The existence of revolutionary violence probably indicates the existence of prior governmental violence, for people do not take to the barricades without serious provocation. The legitimacy of revolutionary violence has been accepted by the church, with caution and reluctance, in the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation. Christians who accept that violence may be an unfortunate necessity have the further responsibility of deciding when it is legitimate and when it is not. While we have not had to make such a choice for ourselves in many years others have, and their appeals for assistance have come to churches around the world.

The implication here is that there were times and contexts where Christians should actively support revolutionary violence. The committee had used the DFCCN to make such a case, using it not simply as a proof text, but by actively engaging with portions of the document.¹³⁷

In 1981, the Committee on Statements and Studies of the Board of Congregational Life produced the study guide “Church and Nation.”¹³⁸ The guide opens with a brief history leading up to the Declaration, and then offers a brief commentary which highlights the central themes of Christ's headship over both the church and civil society, noting that each are called to serve Christ's purposes in the world in distinct, yet overlapping, ways. The Guide then discusses the emergence of the nation state, the rise of competing forms of nationalism, and introduces the 1961 Canadian Bill of Rights, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Statement on National Unity adopted in 1978 by the Assembly. The Guide then outlines the content for six study sessions, including fourteen questions that take participants deeper into the Declaration and other material. The questions invite a challenging of the Declaration rather than a reflection on how as a subordinate standard it could shape the thinking and public life of the church and individual Christians. The questions included:

¹³⁷ *A&P*, 1980, 339–341.

¹³⁸ Committee on Studies and Statements, The Board of Congregational Life, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, “*Church and Nation: A Study for Congregations*”, 1981.

Is it meaningful, let alone realistic, to assert, in Canada in the 1980's, that Jesus Christ is “both Head of the Church and Head of the Civil State”. Discuss your answers.¹³⁹

And

Do you understand the language used in Paragraph 12 [of the Declaration - about the eschatological resolution at the end of time]? Is it meaningful, convincing, or useful in a document addressed to the Church and The Nation in the 1980's?

And finally

Now that you have studied these statements, do you feel that the church needs to revise the Declaration? Which parts would you change? Why?

While serious reflection and analysis are required when applying an historical doctrinal statement to a given present moment context, the tone of the questions seemed more to undermine the Declaration than to find ways of applying it in the new moment of the 1980's. The tone of the study guide seemed out of step with the careful reading the Special Committee on National Unity was engaged in.

In 1985, the Consultation on Church and Society wrote a brief to the Hon. Michael Wilson, Minister of Finance, to do two things. First, to “[i]nform him of our theological view with regard to church and nation and the concurrent responsibilities of the government and the church”, clearly a reference to the Declaration. And second, “to convey concern for the priorities of the employee fair taxation, meaningful employment, the poor, and the budget deficit.” The Consultation on Church and Society saw the DFCCN as theological ground allowing it to address the state. Further the Consultation believed that the Minister of Finance, an agent of the state, needed to be informed of this theological foundation.¹⁴⁰ Such an articulation of the authority which the DFCCN gave to the church to speak to the government has been rare in the history of the denomination. The church more usually speaks to power without any reference to the theological grounding which enables such a “thus saith the Lord” statement.

When McLelland had raised his concerns in 1969, the question of violence was present in North America. Canadian clergy had marched with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King during the 1960's, the FLQ crisis was about to explode. The question of violence was raw and real in North America. By the mid-1970's and into the 1980's the violence was taking place in Central and South America and in Africa, and the response of the Canadian church was more academic and

¹³⁹ The phrase that Jesus Christ is “both Head of the Church and Head of the Civil State” had been a source of contention from 1954 on. The Rev. H.L. Henderson in 1954 had objected that “[Jesus Christ] is Lord both of the Church and of the Civil State” was a more accurate description. In 1980, the Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington, almost certainly at the instigation of the Rev. Hans Zegerius, reported by overture that it had studied the wording of duly headship and had found it both confusing and lacking. (A&P, 1980, 459, Overture 24, 1980) The argument being that if Christ is Head of the church and also Head of the state, how is it possible to argue later on the DFCCN that the Church and the State have different relationships to Christ? In its 1982 response, the Church Doctrine Committee rejected the request for clearer wording. (A&P, 1982, 229–231)

¹⁴⁰ A&P, 1985, 414.

less visceral. The Church Doctrine Committee responded in 1987 to *The KAIROS Document*, (1986), a document on the political crisis in South Africa.

Following a 1,500-word analysis, which at times reveals the North World biases of the analysts, the Church Doctrine Committee stated:

We make these comments and raise these questions in the spirit of Christian sisterhood and brotherhood. Along with other Christian communities we continue to pray for the victims of oppression and injustice in South Africa, Lesotho and Namibia. As Christians who live in societies whose freedom has been gained by wars and revolutions we dare not be self-righteous but would affirm:

It is the Church's duty to denounce and resist every form of tyranny, political, economic, or ecclesiastical, especially when it become totalitarian. A citizen is not barred from disowning any government or organ of power which usurps the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, and indeed may be obliged by God's word to rebel against it. But if involved in such action, the church must remember that the weapons of her warfare are finally out of this world. Led by Holy Spirit she [the church] will in any situation bear public witness to the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ and to the freedom of all [persons] in Him.¹⁴¹

The final paragraph of the quotation above is paragraph 6 of the DFCCN. Here then was an example of differing applications of the Declaration. In 1969, those in authority who used physical violence in response to protest were guilty of violence, and in the face of such tyranny the DFCCN stated that at times rebellion was "the only remedy". A similar view had been expressed in the 1980 International Affairs Committee Report. Now, in 1987, the same paragraph that had underlain the 1969 and the 1980 statements was being quoted to suggest that the church might have at its disposal instruments of transformation which were not of this world, not weapons of violence, instead spiritual weapons available only to the church.

The recommendation from the Church Doctrine Committee was that *The KAIROS Document*, together with the commentary prepared by the committee, be recommended for study within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The Assembly amended the recommendation, dropping the commentary, and sending *The KAIROS Document* as a recommended study document without any reference to the DFCCN.

As the Clerks of Assembly, in 1989, informed the church they had begun a redrafting of Chapter 9 of the Book of Forms, which is the "Church's procedures on Church Discipline", they stated,

In our Book of Forms, we seek to maintain principles such as:
The lordship of Jesus Christ over Church and State and individual conscience;
The worth of every person under God;
Equity;
Mutual consent of the governed;
The repudiation of every form of tyranny and totalitarianism as a denial of human freedom.
A fuller listing of principles is found in our Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ A&P, 1986, 248–250.

¹⁴² A&P, 1989, 264.

Evidently, the Clerks of Assembly were aware of the Declaration's assertion that ecclesiastical tyranny was to be resisted as firmly as any other form of tyranny. Exploring the claim that the principles delineated in the Declaration were lived out in the Book of Forms is beyond the scope of this paper, but if true would suggest that the principles in the Declaration are deeply embedded in the life of the church courts. Interestingly, the section on Judicial Process, the most recent redrafting of Chapter 9 which took place in the 21st century, makes no explicit reference to the Declaration, and the principles underlying it.

The International Affairs Committee of the Assembly during the 1990's and the first decade of the 21st century continued to reference the Declaration in support of its calls to peace and justice in various contexts around the world. Anecdotally an individual who was a member of the committee in the first part of the 1990's and who grew up in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, when they heard this paper was being prepared, stated that they did not know of the Declaration until they joined the International Affairs Committee. The Life and Mission Agency used the DFCCN in a similar way in its 2006 response and overture about churches providing sanctuary.¹⁴³ These uses of the DFCCN read as though the Declaration is to be used as a proof text rather than as a partner in the reflection regarding what the church should say and do.

A new pattern around the DFCCN appeared in the first decade of the 21st century as Presbyteries and Sessions asked, by means of overture, for the church to apply the Declaration to various aspects of church action. Overture 8, 2002, used the Declaration's call "to denounce and resist every form of tyranny" including economic, to have the investment policies of the church shaped by "ethical guidelines".¹⁴⁴ The response of the Assembly Council did not deal with the theological questions raised by the Overture 8, 2002, instead choosing to describe the decision-making processes involved in making investment choices. In the end the Assembly Council brought a recommendation that the overture be "not granted."¹⁴⁵

Overture 9, 2007, used the Declaration's delineation of the distinct roles of church and state to ask that "Ministers of Word and Sacraments within The Presbyterian Church in Canada no longer serve as agents of the state with the legal authority to act as civil officials" when performing marriages.¹⁴⁶ The Presbytery of Lanark Renfrew made extensive use of the Declaration in its overture, citing four of the Declaration's paragraphs in its argument that it was time for the church to get out of being an agent of the state at weddings. The Church Doctrine Committee responded in 2009, and here I need to be transparent, as I was the lead author of this part of the Church Doctrine Committee's response. The response recognized the conflicting pastoral and civil functions that face clergy when performing weddings and through a study and report process asked presbyteries and sessions for their response to this fraught question.¹⁴⁷ In 2011, the Church Doctrine Committee reported that "The overwhelming view of the church

¹⁴³ A&P, 2006, 320.

¹⁴⁴ A&P, 2002, 514–515 (Overture 8, 2002).

¹⁴⁵ A&P, 2003, 214–216. At the 2006 General Assembly, I brought an additional motion seeking to embed the DFCCN in the investment making processes followed by the church. A&P, 2006, 21.

¹⁴⁶ A&P, 2007, 522 (Overture 9, 2007). In 2005, the Presbytery of Montreal sent an overture (A&P, 2005, 581, Overture 11, 2005) which cited the DFCCN in relationship to the church being free of the state regarding the definition of marriage.

¹⁴⁷ A&P, 2009, 243–253.

across the country is ministers in The Presbyterian Church in Canada should continue to sign marriage licenses.”¹⁴⁸

In 2009 the loyal address to Prime Minister Stephen Harper cited the DFCCN, outlining the role of the state and the role of the church, stating, “We understand that the state is not to be misconceived as a political instrument of the Church, nor is the Church to be misconceived as a religious agent of the state.” The loyal address went on to say, “Yet we are bound together in mutual support of one another's distinct ministries under God.” This is the only reference found when the Assembly addressed the Prime Minister in the Loyal Address referencing the Declaration and the roles of church and state. It was a throwback to the 1985 brief sent to Michael Wilson, Minister of Finance. The Rev. Karla Wubbenhorst was convenor of the Committee on Loyal Addresses in 2009.¹⁴⁹

The seemingly renewed interest in the Declaration in the first decade of the 21st century might have been expected to continue into the 2010's. But that was not the case. In 2013, the printed obituary for The Rev. Stuart Coles, mentioned he was part of the committee that wrote the final version of the Declaration.¹⁵⁰ And with that there was silence about the DFCCN in the work of the Assembly.

The silence regarding the DFCCN was so complete that the Committee on Church Doctrine, in their "Understanding and Interpreting the Bible: An Aid for Those Wishing to Better Understand the Bible's Authority, and for Those Wishing to Study and Interpret It" referenced the other two Subordinate Standards but left out the Declaration.

The period from 2019 through 2022, was a time when the Declaration could have been useful in the conversations about vaccine mandates, closing and opening of in-person worship services, convoys, and the rhetoric all of those matters created. But the Declaration was absent. In the Summer 2022 edition of *Presbyterian Connection* an article written by the Associate Secretary for Justice Ministries entitled "What is Christian Nationalism?"¹⁵¹ made no reference to paragraph 8 of the Declaration, “The Church must not merge or confuse her Gospel with any political, economic, cultural, or nationalistic creed”. In fact, the article made no reference to the Declaration at all.

The silence of the DFCCN from the life of the church in the present moment stands in contrast to the role the Declaration played during the separatism crisis of the 1970's. Further, it appears that the work of the Assembly and its committees in 1985 and 2009 to educate political leaders about the relationship between church and state, is now needed with the leaders of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

¹⁴⁸ *A&P*, 2011, 240–241.

¹⁴⁹ *A&P*, 2009, 44–45.

¹⁵⁰ In conversation with Stuart Coles, he was proud of his role in the creation of the DFCCN.

¹⁵¹ Allyson Carr, “What is Christian Nationalism?”, *Presbyterian Connection*, Summer, 2022, 20.