Canadian Society of Presbyterian History

Papers 2023

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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, more than 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 2023 Papers

Charles Alexander (Zander) Dunn is a retired minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He has also been a long-time member of this society with a particular interest in the mission history of the denomination. He has written on mission in Guyana. His paper on the effects of church union on the mission fields of the PCC, "The Great Divorce and What Happened to the Children" (1977) is featured on our CSPH website and continues to be downloaded and read.

Russell Myers currently serves in pastoral leadership at Pelham Community Church—a pastoral charge of the United Church of Canada. Having received his M.Div. from McMaster Divinity College, Russ was ordained by the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec in 2001, before being admitted into the order of ministry of the United Church of Canada in 2023. He has more than 25 years of ministry experience in various contexts, from Air Force Cadet chaplaincy to pastoral ministry in a church on the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve. He shares in ministry with his wife, also ordained, and together they parent three amazing teenagers.

Ian McKechnie is a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Lindsay, Ontario, where he was baptized on Mother's Day in 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.

Angie Song is a minister with The Presbyterian Church in Canada and served in an English Ministry congregation in a Korean-Canadian church near Toronto for 13 years before returning to school. She recently graduated from the Vancouver School of Theology with a ThM degree, writing a thesis on faith formation in the Korean-Canadian church within the secular context in Canada. Angie will continue her studies this January in a conjoint PhD program at the University of Pretoria and VST to further research on second-generation immigrant congregations in Canada.

Robert Revington is the current president of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History. He completed his PhD at Knox College in 2023. He is currently a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Postdoctoral Fellow at Queen's University; for this project, he is researching the history of Canada's contribution to biblical studies and this work will likely turn into at least one book. He is a sessional faculty member at the Vancouver School of Theology and serving as the 2025 president of the Canadian Society of Church History. He is the author of an upcoming biography of Lucy Maud Montgomery (under contract with William B. Eerdmans Publishing) which is focused on her identity as a Canadian Presbyterian. Along with Sarah Travis, Robert is also co-editing a book of academic essays in honour of The Presbyterian Church in Canada's 150th anniversary. Finally, Robert is an elder at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Aurora, Ontario, and a men's league hockey player and Hamilton Tiger-Cats season ticket holder.

John Vissers is a Presbyterian minister and currently serves as Professor of Systematic Theology at Knox College, University of Toronto. He was Principal of Knox College from 2017–2022 and served previously as Principal of The Presbyterian College, Montreal, at McGill University, from 1999 to 2013. In 2012–2013 he served as Moderator of the 138th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Alexander Dunn:
Pioneer Missionary in British Columbia

Charles Alexander (Zander) Dunn

My great uncle, the Reverend Alexander Dunn, about whom this paper is written, came to Canada in 1875, and later encouraged his relatives to move from Scotland to British Columbia. The main family settled in Arthur, Ontario, although three sons eventually got as far as B.C. There are some initial background, dates, facts, and things you should know:

1. Although Alexander Dunn was born in 1843, his story in Canada begins in 1875.
2. Alexander Dunn's roots have been traced back to John Dunn in 1718.
3. According to Dunn lore there has always been a Dunn in the Presbyterian ministry going back to the time of John Knox.
4. At one time there were seven Dunn ministers active in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.
5. One son of that family was Alexander Dunn, my grandfather. His son, my father, was named James and he and my mother, Frances Robinson, missionaries in British Guiana from 1935 to 1940, followed the Scottish custom and named me, the first-born son, after my two grandfathers, Charles and Alexander. My mother, who did not like either name or any shortened form of the two names, decided to call me Zander. So many people asked if I was Dutch (Zander of the Zuider Zee) or German (Hans Zander) that I told my mother she should have called me Sam. We discovered later that would have been appropriate because one of our earliest Dunn relatives was named Samuel Dunn. My great uncle, my grandfather and I were all named Alexander Dunn. My father, who lived during his teen years in New Westminster B.C. near Alexander Dunn, used to start the fires in the stove and fireplace for his great uncle every morning for several years. My father (1909–1983) gathered material about Alexander Dunn and had hoped to write a short book about him but left his research with me to complete the task. It was not until we moved to Toronto last year that I found the material and vowed to write this paper.

How Alexander Dunn Became a Missionary in British Columbia

Alexander Dunn was born to Jane Ritchie and her husband Peter Dunn on March 30, 1843. They were members of the Presbyterian Church near Leochel Cushnie in the county of Aberdeen. Their son was baptized on May 10, 1843, and given the Christian name, Alexander, which means "Defender of Mankind."

Alexander grew up on the family farm until he went to the universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow to study and to prepare to teach in the public schools. It was probably in Edinburgh that he was awarded the M.A. degree.[1] For a few years he taught in the schools of

[1] Norman Sherritt, *1990 and Counting: A History of Sharon United Church, Murrayville, B.C.* (Cloverdale, B.C.: Friesen, 1989), 93.

Aberdeen until he felt a call to the ministry. He went to the University of Glasgow to study theology and looked forward to ordination in the Church of Scotland.

The Church of Scotland had no presbytery in British Columbia at the time and had few ministers to serve and give leadership to the Church. For years, the few ministers in British Columbia had begged the Church in the old country to send ministers to help them, but their requests had never been answered in the affirmative.

The Reverend Simon McGregor, the minister of St. Andrew's Church in Victoria, suggested that he be sent to Scotland to present to all and sundry the desperate need for more ministers in British Columbia. He was pleasantly surprised when the General Assembly in Edinburgh in the Spring of 1875, with extraordinary liberality, agreed to send four young men to the field.

The five men boarded the ship from Scotland together and made the long voyage to New York. From there, they journeyed by several railways to San Francisco. There, they boarded the ship "The City of Panama," which took them on a four-day trip which got them to Victoria on August 31, 1875.[2]

The next day, the gathering that had greeted the four newcomers formed the Presbytery of British Columbia in connection to the Church of Scotland, and immediately ordained two young men into the ministry. Alexander B. Nicholson and Alexander Dunn were the last names added to the roll of the new presbytery. Alexander Dunn became the first Presbyterian minister ordained in British Columbia. (We do not know what happened to the other two who had already been ordained). We do know that Alexander Nicholson soon left his appointment to accept an offer to teach school in Victoria.

There was an eccentric character who lived alone in a small house and who claimed to have superior knowledge when it came to all matters ecclesiastical. He stated that he considered three of the four new men to be well-fitted for their roles. He did not consider Alexander Dunn to be good ministerial material, and said: "That chap Dunn is too tender and too gentle for this rough new country. Mark my words, that fighting, brawling crowd will have him out of there and out of the country in three months." This self-appointed expert knew that the Langley region where Dunn was to work was a rough place, but he did not realize that the gentleness of Dunn was stronger than the roughness he would encounter. Dunn was the only recently-ordained minister who lasted for more than six years. He lasted more than 50 years!

Dunn was assigned to the Langley area. It was huge in geography, but small in population; the population was spread thinly through the region. The first thing that Alexander Dunn set out to do was to arrange for living accommodation. The only house larger than a "but and ben" (or very small house) was the newly built residence of the Warden or Reeve, James Mackie, on old Hudson Bay Company land which he rented to Dunn at $30 a month, with two rooms and with all meals included.

Some in the presbytery felt that Dunn should rent a house in New Westminster where there lived a good population and the government was not as rough as everyone knew Langley to be. Dunn was adamant that he should live in the area in which he worked and should face the same difficulties as his parishioners. He won his case and took up residence in James Mackie's house.[3] This is what he faced:

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[2] Alexander Dunn, *Presbyterianism in British Columbia in Early Days* (Whonnock, B.C.: n.p., 1905), 10.

[3] Alexander Dunn, *Experiences in Langley and Memoirs of Prominent Pioneers* (New Westminster, B.C.: n.p., 1913), 4.

> Overwhelming stillness and solitude. Immense fir trees stood within a short distance of the dwelling. The underbrush was intensely thick. Pestilential mosquitoes were there in myriads. Seldom was a breath of wind felt. A whole week might come and go without seeing a traveler pass. When the short dark days of November came with long continued rains, the picture of desolation and isolation was complete.[4]

Alexander Dunn could not help but contrast what he had come from in Glasgow—the second city of the Empire—to the land in which he now lived. Glasgow was a big, bustling city of 600,000 souls who lived with deafening noise, moving crowds, and huge, complex industries. Langley's 100 souls slept in silence. Glasgow had stately public buildings and a famous university. Langley had cabins of split cedar. In Glasgow, visitors crowded the streets, museums and shops. In the Lower Fraser, in a journey of 50 miles, one would rarely meet even one traveler.

Dunn looked back to the days when he rode his horse every third Saturday from Langley to Upper Sumas—a distance of 33 miles—to be ready for service on Sunday morning. Only twice did he meet a traveler. Yet he never felt homesick, as did many of the people who lived around him. He was content to do the work assigned to him and he was always impressed and inspired by the 3, 000 acres of rich, black soil of Langley Prairie and the equally blessed Pitt Meadows, Lulu and Sea Islands, Sumas and Matsqui Prairie—all of which he knew would make their owners rich.

Alexander Dunn, Missionary Extraordinaire to British Columbia

To cover his territory, Dunn travelled the long miles from the American border in the south, to Yale, which was 100 miles in the north. His territory was many miles wide. He rode a horse, paddled a canoe, and walked through marked and unmarked trails (there were no roads). He often got lost, had accidents, was delayed by bad weather, and hardly met a soul on his trips. He gained stories and experiences to share with his parishes and friends. He always met his deadlines and worship times so that people depended on him and appreciated his ministry to them.

The first service he conducted at Fort Langley was at the house of Adam Innes, where in December of 1876 he ordained his first three elders (James Gordon McAdam, John Alexander MacDougal and Paul Murray). Dunn was surprised by two things. First, the people spoke in loud voices. This happened not only in church services. On another occasion, six to eight men were carrying a coffin to the grave and talking in loud voices. The minister spoke gently to the men to ask them to speak more softly and reverently befitting such a solemn undertaking. They agreed to tone down their remarks. Nobody could explain why the voices were so loud but all agreed that the noise they were making was not helpful.[5]

The second surprise came when the worshippers began to sing. Had it not been so weird it would have been amusing. The minister announced a hymn and the men, but not the women, rose to sing. Some sang in tune; others sang whatever tune they liked. The men started singing at different times. One sang fast, another sang slow. It seemed so droll that it was hard to keep from laughing. In this particular church, there was no changing the routine when hymns were

[4] Ibid.
[5] Sherritt, *1990 and Counting*, 32.

announced, so the minister learned to get used to the process. In other churches, there was good singing and women were influential in making good music. In another church, the song leader knew only two hymns and if he did not know or like the tune he refused to sing it. In other congregations there were good musicians and good leaders who "lined" the words so that everyone could carry on. Over the years great changes took place in music in many congregations. When Alexander Dunn arrived, only two of the many congregations had organs. When he left after 11 years, they all had organs. Other congregations had musicians who could play several instruments. Music was a great help to those who wanted to beautify worship. At first, in only two churches did choirs gather during the week to practice. Toward the end of his ministry almost all churches followed that example.

Alexander Dunn observed that good music has the power to move and meld people. One man who was poor often went to the evening service at St. Andrew's Church in New Westminster and re-learned the hymns he had sung as a youth in Scotland. He was changed by the music and the love of those who shared it with him. He gained so much that he died a grateful man—grateful to God and to the people of God.

In his travels to visit his people and to lead them in worship, Dunn was knocked off his horse by branches and by holes in the trail. He was told to put his feet up on the saddle to avoid getting wet when he rode through fords in rivers and creeks. But he feared if he put his feet on the saddle, he would fall off his horse into the water, so he kept his feet down on both sides of the horse and got his legs wet up to his thighs. He had to take off his boots, trousers, and socks, and wring them all out before continuing his trip. Although Alexander Dunn had learned how to paddle a canoe, he sometimes tipped himself into deep water. He blamed himself for his canoe problems. He felt he should have known better because he had learned from some Indigenous people how to travel in a canoe. On his first canoe outing, he sat in the middle of the canoe during a rain storm and found himself sitting in rain from his bottom to his waist. In one case, while paddling with a partner, their vessel ran aground in mud. His friend tried to carry him piggy-back to the shore, but they both fell into the muck and mud, to the laughter of their friends on shore. The two of them slipped and slithered through the muck until they gained the shore where they changed into clothes supplied by those same friends.

Alexander Dunn would conduct three or four services each Sunday and greet Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, and even Roman Catholics who benefitted from his ministry. At first, all the services were held in private homes, then the worship was conducted in schools and eventually in church buildings. There were some ancient, run-down church buildings, but most of them were unsafe. The state of religious buildings depressed the people who longed for religious support. The poor buildings and the lack of connection with Canadians beyond their homes saddened people of every denomination.

Before the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed in 1885, everyone was burdened by gloom. Alexander Dunn wrote: "The great majority of the people were in a state bordering on despair. Only a few maintained a brave, hopeful spirit."[6] That is why Alexander Dunn was so much appreciated by the people of every stripe and hue. He constantly visited them, often staying overnight or sharing a cup of tea. He married couples, baptized their babies, and buried the dead. That sounds like what a normal minister would do, but Alexander Dunn was no normal minister. His heart was in his work with the people and they saw God in him and loved him. He was always welcomed wherever he went. He listened to the depressed. He encouraged the dismayed. He joked with the downcast. He cared for the dying. He was "the friend" of all the

[6] Dunn, *Experiences in Langley*, 8.

people needed. In many ways, he conveyed the love of God to those who were hurting or doubting. In all he did he lifted the spirits of the people

Once, while crossing from New Westminster to Granville, the stage driver asked Dunn where he lived. The driver said, "I know most of the preachers in the province but I don't think we've met before." When Alexander told him he had recently come from Scotland to live in Langley and was on his way to visit a sick man, the driver said that Langley was a bad place to live: "When the boys at Maxi's saloon get to wrangling with each other over drinks, instead of saying, 'Go to hell, 'they say,'Go to Langley.'" Those words reminded Alexander Dunn of the observation by the so-called expert of religion who promised the rough and tumble people of Langley would send the young Reverend Dunn packing within three months.

Those rough people of Langley tried to divert Dunn from his religious work and get him involved in secular politics. In one case, a group was travelling along the Fraser River in a boat built to carry wood and other items rather than people. The passengers were drinking alcohol while the staff was piling wood outside, against the doors of the cabins. There was so much mayhem that fights broke out. The drinkers tried to get Dunn to stop the staff from piling wood against the doors—which would have blocked any exit in case of emergency. The staff argued that they needed to pile the wood outside the doors to get their goods across the river to their customers who were counting on the safe arrival of the items they had ordered. Dunn pointed out a better way to stack the wood and warned the drinkers if they did not stop drinking he would turn them over to the police who would enforce the law against drinking on board. It was an unhappy peace but it worked and chaos was avoided.[7]

Another political problem Dunn resolved by doing nothing. There were two sides in Langley seeking power to run the town as they wanted. They approached Dunn and tried to recruit him to stand with them. Dunn said it was not his business to decide political issues. His task was to serve the people by declaring the Gospel and he was not going to be persuaded to support either side. He was able to discern that the problem was being caused by one man and he felt the sooner that man was dismissed, the better it would be for the people of the town. He told both sides to come to an agreement in peace as soon as possible.

Because of various disagreements, William Gibbs was granted a retail liquor licence for the Langley Hotel. Shortly after that the council voted in favour of prohibition. That did not stop Gibbs, so Mackie, Justice of the Peace as well as Warden or Reeve, convicted Gibbs of selling liquor. That prompted Gibbs to run for the office of Warden and he defeated Mackie. Gibbs wore a white shirt, a black suit, and a tall hat, to show off his power and he was mocked by those who opposed him. A young Metis man, whose sister Gibbs had teased and insulted earlier, punched Gibbs in the face several times. Gibbs rose and made boastful remarks which provoked his assailant to punch him out again—and this time he stayed down much to the amusement of the spectators.

The popularity of Gibbs rapidly declined when, at the next council meeting, he awarded himself a liquor licence. Councilor Maxwell used some unparliamentary language to blast Gibbs—who warned him to stop talking. When Maxwell refused to be quiet, he accused Gibbs of giving a bridge project to a friend of the Warden at a cost much higher than it was worth. Maxwell argued the job Gibbs had given to a friend was so small it was like pissing and being paid for it. To make his point, Maxwell shouted that the creek was so slim he could piss halfway across that small body of water. When Maxwell was told he was out of order, he responded to Gibbs, "I know I'm out of order. If I were in order I could piss all the way across the creek."

[7] Ibid., 10.

Gibbs expelled Maxwell, who then walked out of the meeting with three other councilors. The whole population of the municipality was divided over almost everything.

Alexander Dunn, in his memoirs, recalled the situation. Feelings were so high that men did not talk to one another. But they needed to work together in emergencies. Both sides remained quiet as they helped their opponents with farming problems. Dunn was amused to see two men, who never said a word, working together to get a cow out of a hole. He was more amused when he watched an Englishman and a Scotsman trying to co-operate. At one point, the Englishman, in an unthinking moment, said something which disparaged the Scottish people. Almost immediately, he withdrew his words and asked the Scot to forgive him—which he did reluctantly.

Warden Gibbs became so arrogant that when he saw a pig walking on the steps leading to the hotel, he grabbed a pitch fork and stuck it into the pig shouting, "I'm the boy to kill pigs." Young, the hotel owner, saw and heard all this and told Henry Wark what had happened. Wark, the Hudson Bay Co. boss, examined the dying pig and charged Gibbs. The trial, which became known as "The Langley Pig War," was held in New Westminster. Gibbs tried to convince Magistrate Henry Edmunds that the pig had died of starvation but Edmunds refused to believe him.

Not long after that, members of Council, led by Maxwell, found that Gibbs had juggled the finances. Further examination of the books showed that pages had been cut out of the record. The council ran Gibbs out of Langley. But Gibbs returned, sick and desperate to get to the New Westminster Hospital. His enemies wanted nothing to do with him and his friends failed him. He was left to languish in Langley as a poor, diseased, helpless, and hungry outcast. As Dunn put it: "Some humane person, seeing his wretched condition, had pity on him and took him to the Hotel in a wheelbarrow and paid for his supper, which he ravenously devoured." His former friends refused to help him but paid two Indigenous men to take him, in the same wheelbarrow, to the hospital where he died soon afterwards.[8] Thus ended Alexander Dunn's political non-involvement in the corrupt shenanigans of a character who swindled a whole town for years. Dunn believed that if he had gotten involved in the political arguments and had taken sides he would have lost every congregation he served. He recalled:

> There were times—so strained were the relations between the two and so bitter the hostility—when the utterance of a word of criticism by me would have left me without a congregation. The congregations were in the course of formation, lacked cohesion and the dominating spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. I repeat, therefore, there were times when an expression of opinion by me, however sound or sensible, would have scattered the small congregations to the winds.

The good news was that with the death of Gibbs many things began to improve. People spoke to one another without fear or worry. A social was held for the first time. People enjoyed making friends. Dunn enjoyed his work and enjoyed meeting new people. Both men and women took a fresh interest in divine things. Many people were added to the church. Dunn declared: "During no period of my ministry of 30 years in the Province did so many persons profess to have received spiritual benefit." It should be noted that in 1882, Alexander Dunn went "back East" to a conference (the conference is not named; could it have been the General Assembly of that year?) and returned to British Columbia with a wife twelve years younger than himself.

[8] Ibid., 11.

Alexander Dunn was 39 years old when he met and married Anne (or Ann) Kern, who was aged 27. In some references, her name is listed as Catherine Kern. Perhaps her full name was Catherine Anne Kern. She was the daughter of Levi Kern of Forestville, Norfolk County, Ontario. Some of the stories do not even mention her name. She and Alexander Dunn are pictured sitting together but she is identified as Mrs. Alexander Dunn. Most wives in those days shared the name of their husbands but it seems strange to have most people identify her as nameless. She is referred to in awards to her husband but the only written credit she ever received for doing anything was from children who appreciated that when they visited her home she always had a pot full of cookies for them to eat.[9]

By 1886, Alexander Dunn was exhausted. He needed a change. He believed a younger man should be found to do the work. He had applied to the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) to receive him into the new Church into which the Church of Scotland had already been received. Before his membership was approved, he left in April to attend their General Assembly, which was held in Hamilton in June, 1886.

As he put it, he left B.C. as a minister of the Church of Scotland and he returned in November as a member of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. After the months of rest away from his work in the West, he rejoiced in the good health he had gained and felt ready to return to duty, but not to the old Langley field—which was too much for any man. Besides Langley, there were Upper Sumas (York Settlement), Matsqui (Maclure Settlement), Mud Bay (McDougall Settlement), South Arm (Ladner), North Arm (Richmond), Maple Ridge, Fort Langley and Langley Prairie. There were new settlements in formation at Aldergrove (seven miles east of Langley Prairie on the Yale road) and also on the Fraser River at Jones' Landing, Mount Lehman, St. Mary's Mission, and Johnson's Landing—all eastwards from Fort Langley, nine, 12, 15 and 20 miles respectively. Langley and all the other locations were growing because the Canadian Pacific Railway had opened the country up and every town was flourishing. But that meant newcomers were flooding into British Columbia and churches, schools, hospitals and stores were in need of more workers and leaders to meet the needs of all the people.

To Dunn, bruised and broken from the hard usage of the last 11 years, to return to the growing Langley area was impossible to imagine. "To Langley undivided" he said, "I will never return." Yet he had helped erect three new church buildings—one at Fort Langley, another at Mud Bay, and one at South Arm or Delta. Money had been raised, not only locally, but also in Victoria and New Westminster. These new church structures cost about $1,000 each and helped the denomination feel it had ownership in every congregation.

There were three smaller centres that would need his skills—Chilliwack and Clinton on the mainland and Alberni on Vancouver Island. He was invited to choose in which one he would work. He chose Alberni, which was beautiful and inhabited by intelligent and well-educated folk who welcomed their new minister with warmth and praise. Those who attended worship were not only Presbyterians; they were Episcopalians, Methodists, Quakers, Baptists and Roman Catholics, and all enjoyed being together. A Roman Catholic priest was sent, ostensibly to minister to the Indian population but also to win back those who had strayed to the Presbyterian fold. Those lost souls attended the priest's chapel but they also kept worshipping at the Presbyterian services.

Alberni had many advantages. It had excellent streams which nourished the many fruits and vegetables the rich land produced. The men and women who recognized these things were bright and hard-working. But there was no steamboat connection between Victoria and Alberni,

[9] Sherritt, *1990 and Counting*, 31.

which meant that there was no way for Alberni people to move their produce to market. Dunn agreed with the residents of Alberni that the government was mainly to blame. The government agreed to fix the problem but did nothing for years. From 1887 to 1889, only two families came to Alberni, but more than twice that number left never to return. In every other part of the province, everything was increasing thanks to the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Without government aid, Alberni was doomed. Government assistance was spasmodic at best. People were being ruined by government inaction. Newspapers in New Westminster and Victoria expressed disgust with government failure and reported how petitions had been ignored. The folk of Alberni could not understand how the government could do nothing for one of the most promising parts of the Province.

Meanwhile, the churches were finding they could not serve with the dwindling amounts of money their members were able to contribute. The presbytery spoke of removing the missionaries and sending them to other mission fields. Alexander Dunn was one of those the church would remove from Alberni. The people were horrified to think of losing their minister when they needed him most. Presbytery decided at its March 1887 meeting to assign Reverend Dunn to the Nicola Valley.

The hope was that Dunn could help members of both the former Church of Scotland and the new Canadian Presbyterian church to overcome their differences and co-operate in a new church. As soon as the Alberni folk heard of the action of presbytery, they drew up and got every member, in six hours, to sign a petition opposing Dunn's translation to Nicola. The people promised to raise the money necessary to pay Dunn for a year. He agreed to stay in Alberni for another year.[10]

But at the March Presbytery meeting in 1888, Dunn was appointed to Mount Lehman and Whonnock. Again the people of Alberni rallied so strongly against his withdrawal from them that he told the presbytery that he would stay one more year. But not much had changed financially. The government had done nothing, so when the 1889 meeting of Presbytery appointed Dunn to Mount Lehman and Whonnock, he agreed to go because there was sickness in his family which necessitated that he be near a doctor. (We do not know what that sickness was).

The farewell tributes to Alexander Dunn were many and effusive. Tears were shed as the people of Alberni let their minister leave them. One presenter recalled the many good things they, under the guidance of Alexander Dunn, had been able to achieve. The people honoured him; they praised him; they professed their love for him. Alexander Dunn was overcome and thanked the people for their help and support during his years among them. These good feelings did not fade away but were raised again when, in May of 1892, he was asked to return to participate in the dedication of a church building in Alberni. An eight member choir sang, a few Indigenous people and Roman Catholics attended as did some young people whom Dunn had baptized as infants. A large congregation listened attentively as Alexander Dunn preached for 45 minutes and then baptized a baby into the Church.

When Dunn left Alberni, he took up a new ministry in Whonnock at the end of March 1889. His new charge included Aldergrove, Mt. Lehman, Yale, Agassiz, Harrison River, Nicomen Island, Johnson's Landing (Dewdney), St. Mary's Mission, and Whonnock. There is not much information about these years from 1889 to 1905. Dunn did some writing about the history of the Presbyterian Church in British Columbia because as he put it, "I believe I am the only person living who is in a position to give all the different items of information herein

[10] Dunn, *Experiences in Langley*, 15.

related. I have been an actor in many and a deeply interested spectator of most of the scenes described."

He became very busy preaching at various churches and telling the history of the Presbyterian church from 1875. He wrote articles about the pioneer years before the C.P.R. arrived. He was asked frequently to speak about the "Good Old Days," which were more dangerous than good. Dunn often contrasted the way things were when he arrived in the country and the way things were in the new, prosperous days they were enjoying. He harked back to no roads or trails, to terrible roads and narrow trails, to flooded land and horrible storms, to rowing conditions which were so rough it took a day to go one way and two days to row back, and to broken branches and fallen trees which blocked all travel in both directions. Sometimes, he spent hours walking 10 or 20 miles and on one Sunday only one man arrived for worship. After 11 years he was fatigued and depressed, but he was inspired by the newcomers who needed his ministry and direction. He was hailed as a hero.

People marveled that this gentle man had been able to go through so much. When he arrived he and the Reverend Robert Jamieson of St. Andrew's in New Westminster were the only Presbyterian clergy in the Fraser River area. When he told his stories thirty years later, there were 68 Presbyterian ministers at work. In the early days most people lived frugally mainly because they were poor. Dunn visited one couple at night to talk about the baptism of their child. He saw they were eating a supper which consisted only of potatoes and milk. There was no bread, no butter, and no tea. When he returned to baptize their baby, he brought with him a gift of food.

Dunn had some amusing memories too. One very cold day, he ran almost tance (two miles) to keep warm and to reach the point where he had arranged to meet an Indigenous man with a canoe. When Dunn got there the man was not in sight. To keep himself warm he began to dance. The Indigenous man, when he came into view, saw a man dancing and supposed it must be a stranger, never thinking that a priest would ever dance. The Indigenous man was amazed to find that priests and ministers can dance.

Dunn built a house in Whonnock for himself and his wife. He had previously bought land and built a house in Langley for them years before he had married. That Langley house was still standing 100 years later.

Dunn was very much involved in pastoral work for his many congregations. As usual for Dunn, the people of Whonnock pastoral charge were very grateful for all he did in ministering to them. They, like the people of Langley and Alberni, showed their appreciation by giving a purse of money to Mrs. Dunn and an effusive statement of admiration, gratitude and praise to Dunn.

In 1886, it had taken two days for the people in the Langley congregations to bid farewell to the Dunns. They wrote on March 15: "However strong our regret may be, it must ever be mingled with the deepest gratitude for the untiring patience and Christian zeal in which you have borne up under the sorest difficulties, braving without a murmur, the storms and hardships of pioneer mission work during the past years ..."

On March 16 they declared:

> Now that you are to sever your connection with us as our Pastor planting the church of our fathers in this far off land, we beg to assure you it is with feelings of sorrow and regret that we contemplate the prospect of parting with you. As a friend you have rejoiced with us when our hearts were glad and mingled your tears with ours as you performed the last sad rites at the graves of those dear to us. In the Sabbath School you have taught our

children, pointed them and us heavenward and have yourself always led the way. To you and to you alone we are indebted for the churches that we worship in ....

Three years later, in 1889, the churches in the Alberni charge stated:

During the years you have been labouring among us your counsel has been invaluable in the school and church and will be sadly missed when you leave us. We deeply regret that arrangements cannot be made to settle you permanently among us. But since all efforts in that direction have failed to bring about a satisfactory result we join in wishing you and your estimable wife health and prosperity, and the rich blessings of God's wisdom and favour in the field to which you are going.

Shortly before Dunn left Langley for his short stint in Alberni, he dealt with The Presbyterian Church in relation to the Church of Scotland. Dunn himself seemed always open to leave the "Auld Kirk" to connect with the PCC. He was not opposed to the Church of Scotland but the Presbyterians in British Columbia were no longer in Scotland. Dunn said they belonged to Canada.

He did, however, meet with two ministers connected with the Church of Scotland. They knew they had no power but the three of them came up with a resolution for others to consider. They thought the "general interests of Presbyterianism would be advanced by the union of all their congregations with the Canadian Presbyterian Church." They knew the congregations in Comox, Nanaimo and Victoria were opposed to union but they believed the future would see all the churches voting for union. Times had changed. The prosperity of the Gold Rush had disappeared, replaced by the better prosperity the C.P.R. had brought. All Presbyterians were closer together and would probably vote for union in one Presbyterian Church.[11]

The Presbytery of Westminster, at a gathering in 1911, gave the Dunns a magnificent chest of 98 Birks sterling silverware (Saxon pattern), with each utensil engraved with the letter "D." The metal plaque displayed these words:

Presented to
Rev. Alex & Mrs. Dunn
by the Presbytery of Westminster and other friends in
Recognition of Thirty-five years service
in the
Fraser River Valley
March 1, 1911

An illuminated scroll was included which stated:

For 35 years you have been a prominent figure in the Fraser Valley and there is not a community between Yale and Ladner in which your name is not a household word .... The brave cheerfulness which you endured privations and fatigue in preaching the "Gospel of the Grace of God" and in ministering privately to the unfortunates, the sick and the bereaved, secured for You a place in the People's Hearts and an influence over their lives that any man might envy. In all this work of Faith and labour of Love your

[11] Ibid., 20.

friends realize how loyally you have been supported by Mrs. Dunn, who has so patiently shared with you the hardships of frontier life.

Later, the Synod copied most of what the Presbytery and the General Assembly said in their presentations. It was pointed out that his whole ministry, except for two years and four months in Alberni, was spent in the Fraser Valley area. The Langley Mission extended from both sides of the Fraser River—a distance of 100 miles including eight preaching points. He travelled on foot, on horseback, and in canoe for eleven years in rain or shine, and always reached his destination on time. The work wore him out and forced him to seek a less onerous form of service.

After his retirement from his faithful and fruitful ministry, Dunn enjoyed a well-earned rest in New Westminster. Alexander Dunn was, "by nature, a quiet, modest, patient and retiring person and, by grace, a devout, humble, consistent Christian," said the General Assembly report of 1926.[12] A writer from Toronto praised Alexander Dunn for "his active ministry characterized by simple fidelity and uncomplaining devotion to duty. He did not despise the day of small things but gave himself loyally to his modest task, unnoticed and unknown."

In 1913, the Reverend Alexander Dunn was awarded the Doctor of Divinity degree by Westminster Hall (the theological college in Vancouver) for his outstanding work for the benefit of the Presbyterian Church. On that occasion, his presenter, in speaking about Dunn's qualifications for the Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree, referred to his 38 years of service since 1875, his active and zealous labour, his scholarship, his powerful preaching, and his commitment to Jesus and the Presbyterian Church.

As a further expression of confidence and goodwill, the Presbytery of Westminster planned to form a new Presbytery called the Fraser Valley Presbytery—which would include all the areas covered by both sides of the Fraser Valley as far as Yale, plus New Westminster—and make Dr. Alexander Dunn its first moderator. We do not know if that ever happened.,

There is one surprising part of the Reverend Dr Alexander Dunn's life yet to report. His nephew, the Reverend Alexander Dunn, had been called by the people of Haney, without preaching for the call, so excellent was his reputation. He had a distinguished career as a student at the University of Manitoba and won the silver medal for his scholarship. Young Dunn had been an assistant to Dr. Wilson of St. Andrew's, Calgary. He taught in India for two years and he preached in Fernie and then in Kelowna. He enjoyed a high reputation as a preacher of power and insight. Nobody had ever heard Alexander Dunn utter a platitude. Everybody hoped he would return to any church where he had been the minister. When Dr. Dunn heard about him, he was surprised and delighted to have him in the same presbytery. Dr. Dunn was pleased to be asked to speak at the young Reverend Dunn's induction into Fort Haney on December 12, 1921.

On April 10, Good Friday, in 1925, at the age of 82, the Reverend Doctor Alexander Dunn died suddenly in New Westminster, of heart failure. His funeral, attended by all members of presbytery and many others, was held on April 13, 1925, in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in New Westminster. Dr. Alexander Dunn's wife, Anne Dunn, died at 79 years of age in 1934 in New Westminster, after living in British Columbia 52 years. Alexander and Anne had no children.

[12] *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* [*A&P*], 1926, re: Rev. Dr. Alexander Dunn.

A Unique Ministry by Alexander Dunn

Early in his ministry, Dunn kept a record of all his comments at every funeral at which he officiated. He not only kept his own record of what was said at funerals, but he also kept a record of what other ministers said at the funerals that they led. Almost all the funerals of his day were reported in the newspapers. Most of the funeral reports were short but others, for important people, were long and detailed.

There were three reasons to keep a record of what was said at funerals. First, it gave Dunn the opportunity to preach the Gospel to comfort and console those who were grieving. Second, it gave him the chance to bring out the good things about the deceased; things others might not know about him or her. Third, Dunn used each funeral as an opportunity to describe life in the Fraser Valley. In that way people would learn a good piece of history. As he put it: "In other words, in outlining the lives of well-known residents of the Fraser Valley, I, at the same time give a glimpse of the state of things in different settlements during certain periods."

Rev. Dr. Alexander Dunn, minister of the Gospel, consoler of the bereaved, and historian, cut out of the newspapers the accounts of funerals, pasted many of them to light cardboard he harvested from cereal boxes and toy boxes and various small catalogues, and stored them for information. I have hundreds of these items—all of which fulfil the purposes he had for them. Much of the history of British Columbia is in those orations. Many of them could serve as bases for sermons.

For example, Dunn told the story of Mr. Jolly—one of the leading citizens of the Langley district. He had served in local government. He had worked for the peace of the community. He was a strong Christian leader. He and his wife "were careful to entertain strangers." Alexander Dunn went on to explain and encourage hospitality as a Christian virtue which any loving persons could employ. Alexander Dunn did not miss any chance to point others to God.

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Principal William Patrick:
Father of Church Union or Is there More to the Story?

Russell Myers

Significant and world-altering moments have sometimes been attributed to an individual in a particular time and place. For example, 19-year-old Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip—who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie on June 28, 1914—sparked a chain of events that led to the outbreak of the First World War by early August of that year.[1] American rocker Bruce Springsteen played a concert in East Berlin in 1988. Approximately halfway through, Springsteen spoke a few words in phonetic German, which, some say, marked the beginning of the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall 16 months later.[2] In both instances, historians are quick to point out additional factors which ultimately contributed to the outcome.

Then there was Principal William Patrick. Some say he was the "Father of Church Union"—directly responsible for the formation of the United Church of Canada—because of his address as a fraternal delegate to the Methodist General Conference on September 8, 1902. Is that true, or, as with other important historical events, is there also more to the story?

The Controversy over Patrick's Role

William Patrick was a clergyman and educator who was born in Glasgow, Scotland, on September 8, 1852,[3] and died on September 28, 1911, in Kirkintilloch, Scotland. He came to Canada in 1900 as the newly appointed principal of Winnipeg's Manitoba College. These are the facts that those who consider his role and place in history will readily agree upon. While those who supported and believed in the Union between the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational churches viewed that September 1902, night as being important, it was also just another step in a long unfolding of events leading up to Union. Rather than being the "Father of Church Union," to them, Patrick is seen at best as a sibling within a large family in the achievement of the Union of 1925.[4] Not surprisingly, those who opposed Church Union view Patrick and that night through a different lens.

N. Keith Clifford contends that "the controversy over Church Union began as an argument over the way the issue was introduced, handled, and justified by Principal William Patrick of Manitoba College."[5] Patrick is painted as a man who, because of the short duration of

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[1] *"Austria's Archduke Ferdinand Assassinated,"* History.com (A&E Television Networks, February 9, 2010), https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/archduke-ferdinand-assassinated.

[2] "How a Bruce Springsteen Concert Helped Bring down the Berlin Wall," CBCnews (CBC/Radio Canada, November 6, 2014), https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/how-a-bruce-springsteen-concert-helped-bring-down-the-berlin-wall-1.2825639.

[3] It is interesting to note that the General Conference meeting took place on the evening of Patrick's 50th birthday.

[4] Phyllis D. Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 35.

[5] N. Keith Clifford, *The Resistance to Church Union in Canada, 1904–1939* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), 13.

his time in Canada, "knew very little about the Canadian West and even less about Eastern Canada where 75 per cent of the church's membership resided."[6] To support this claim, Dr. Carman, the Methodist general superintendent, described Principal Patrick that night as a "tenderfoot." This is compared to Presbyterian Moderator Bryce who is called a "pioneer" and "old timer" because in contrast, he had more than 30 years of experience in the West.[7] The inference was that Patrick's speech was substantially different, reflecting his ignorance on the subject. Furthermore, the charge was also made that Patrick had completely overstepped in his role as a delegate:

> Patrick made his recommendation for Union without being authorized to do so by the Presbyterian Church. To be commissioned by the General Assembly as a fraternal delegate did not authorize an individual to do or say anything which might come to mind. The limits of such a commission were clearly established by custom. All that was expected was a few well-chosen pleasantries, spiced with good humour and generously sweetened with compliments and good wishes for the future. The occasion was understood by all parties to be a formal courtesy call and nothing more. Fraternal delegates were never authorized to communicate major proposals from one denomination to another. Therefore to introduce an issue like organic Union in this way violated both custom and the assembly's commission.[8]

As this lengthy quote from Clifford makes abundantly clear, there was a strong belief that Patrick defied custom and known conventional norms in his actions that night. There is an implied sense that Patrick, alone, initiated talk of Union and singlehandedly set the course that brought about the Union of 1925. To refute some of these accusations and open the pages to a larger story one must first begin by looking more closely at the night of September 8, 1902.

Moderator Bryce's Favourable Views on Union

To begin with, there is no question that Principal Patrick spoke about Union that night, and while it is recorded that he made "a most forcible and eloquent appeal for a Union of the two churches,"[9] he was not the only one who spoke directly about the two churches working together. Patrick's greetings followed Moderator Bryce, whose position on Union was widely known to be favourable. Earlier that year in *The Presbyterian Witness,* the visit of delegations from other churches was reported, with the Congregational delegates having gone the furthest in the suggestion of Union, and Moderator Bryce having "reciprocated the sentiments of Union."[10] When Dr. Bryce spoke that night, according to *The Christian Guardian,* he talked about how the

> two denominations which they represented had many common features. They were both here together to emphasize the evangelical in religious work. They had a common system of church government. Their fathers had fought side by side for civil and religious liberty,

[6] Ibid.
[7] "The General Conference," *The Christian Guardian,* September 17, 1902, 8.
[8] Clifford, *The Resistance to Church Union*, 13–14.
[9] "The General Conference," 8.
[10] Thomas Buchanan Kilpatrick, *The United Church of Canada: Our Common Faith* (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1928), 19.

> and they had entered into a common inheritance. They were both temperance churches, the Presbyterian, perhaps not so much so as might be desired, but still he thought they were a unit in feeling that the country ought to have prohibition. They were also one in missionary spirit. They were great missionary churches. They had the greatest responsibility in the evangelization of the great west. The next five years would settle the religious destiny of Western Canada, and to settle it aright would tax to the upmost the resources of these two churches.[11]

While it can be said that Bryce did not directly open the door to Union in his address, it cannot be denied that those who were listening would understand what he was implying. He spoke of what the two churches shared in both their structure and theological, social, and missional outlook. He pointed to shared similar issues and concerns going forward. Bryce's words were clearly more than "a few well-chosen pleasantries," for the essence of his address touched on some of the fears of the Methodist Church that had already been raised at the Conference—particularly regarding how to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding population with limited resources.

It must also be noted that, as Moderator, Dr. Bryce would have been well aware of the request that week at the Presbyterian Assembly to receive into the Presbyterian ministry a Congregational minister serving in Gretna, Manitoba—not to mention the "overture from the joint Presbyterian and Methodist congregation at Selkirk against overlapping."[12] As someone with extensive history in the West and as Moderator, Bryce would have been acquainted with the shortage of resources, not to mention the need to work together and not compete when it came to mission and ministry. The idea of Union would have seemed a natural one for Bryce, as he was seeing firsthand the practical difficulties raised by maintaining denominational distinctives, especially when, in his mind, there were more similarities than differences between the denominations.

Census Considerations

Those attending the Methodist General Conference, as well as Moderator Bryce, Principal Patrick, and the Rev. C. W. Gordon, would have been aware of the results of the 1901 census, which reported once again a decline in Methodist strength and the "barest advance for Presbyterianism."[13] As John S. Moir contends, these statistics, along with a marked rise in immigration, would have led to a renewed fear of Catholic domination. The population of Alberta and Saskatchewan increased by 400 percent or more in the decade from 1901 to 1911. The population of Winnipeg alone rose from 25, 637 to 179, 087.[14] The Conference had already wondered how they would meet the needs facing them as a Church, and it was no coincidence that Winnipeg was selected as the location for the Conference meeting that year.

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[11] "The General Conference," 8.

[12] Claris Edwin Silcox, *Church Union in Canada: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933), 121.

[13] John S. Moir, *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Burlington, ON: Eagle Press, 2004), 198.

[14] Neil G. Smith, Allan L. Farris and H. Keith Markell, *A Short History of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Centennial Committee, Committee on History, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1965), 57.

Other Voices

While Bryce spoke first out of the three Presbyterian delegates, the Rev. C. W. Gordon spoke after Principal Patrick. According to the summation found in *The Christian Guardian*, Gordon told "a story of a good Presbyterian brother who, when asked to name the two greatest hindrances to the cause of God in his district, he answered, 'Wheat and Methodism.'"[15] Again, Gordon may not have spoken directly of Union, but he did emphasize that "both churches should be one in contending for the supremacy of spiritual values."[16]

When one looks at that night, Patrick may have been the most forceful and direct concerning Union in his address. When taken together with addresses by Moderator Bryce and Gordon, according to Claris Silcox, they "really sum up the essential arguments adduced at the time for the organic unification of the religious forces, and incidentally suggest only one point where, perhaps, there might be some difficulty, viz., the prohibition issue."[17] Before putting too much weight on Patrick's address or the other addresses that evening, it should be noted that McIntire's essay on the formation of the United Church of Canada points out that, in addition to the Presbyterian delegate's emphasis on Union, the General Conference also had two other requests for Union—one from its Mission Board and another from joint Presbyterian-Methodist churches in Selkirk, Manitoba.[18]

Patrick's Insight into the Canadian Context

While the labelling of Patrick as a "tenderfoot" that night has been taken to imply a lack of knowledge on his part in terms of Union, the issue is not as simple as equating that with his limited time in Canada. It is conceivable that Patrick had already become convicted of the value of Union, as opposed to the cooperative option. Upon first coming to Canada in the spring of 1900, Patrick arrived in Winnipeg and described what he observed as follows:

> It was soon evident to the more discerning minds that no adequate or final settlement could be reached in this way (i.e. by cooperation), and that it would indeed be an easier task from the practical standpoint to unite the churches than to arrange and enforce any scheme of co-operation based on priority of occupation, delimitation of spheres, proportion of members to a district, or any other principle of division that could be stated.[19]

In his address, Patrick directly mentioned the committee that had been appointed between the two churches to look at the "home mission problem." In closing, he reminded the Conference that "Canada presented the first united Presbyterianism and the first united Methodism." This

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[15] "The General Conference," 8.

[16] Silcox, *Church Union in Canada*, 122.

[17] Ibid.

[18] C. T. McIntire, "Unity Among Many: The Formation of the United Church of Canada, 1899–1930," in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, edited by Don Schweitzer (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2012), 16.

[19] John Thomas McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875–1925* (Toronto: General Board, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1925), 250.

clearly shows more insight into the context of ministry in Canada than his critics give him credit for.[20] Clifford seems to miss that Methodist General Superintendent Dr. Albert Carman calling Patrick a "tenderfoot" was, in all likelihood, "tongue in cheek."[21] Not only that, but on the subject of Church Union itself, the creation of one national church was not something new but something others had been speaking about for decades.[22]

Likewise, when Patrick wondered in his opening if he might be found guilty of "sublime audacity" by asking if the "time had not come for the two churches to come closer together," he knew his question was anything but "sublime" or "audacious," but rather logical and natural given all the challenges facing the two denominations.

A Path of No Retreat?

Two more charges by Clifford deserve a response. On that September evening at the Methodist General Conference, Patrick not only broke the rules as a delegate by "communicating major proposals," but he also set the "church on a course from which it could not retreat."[23] In his examination of early attempts at Union in Canada, Silcox refutes such a notion by pointing out that "the agitation for organic Church Union in Canada across denominational lines was almost continuous for fifty years before 1902, when it entered the stages of actual negotiation."[24] Referring to the dates June 15, 1875, and June 10, 1925, McNeill comments that "throughout the entire half century, the Presbyterian Church in Canada has seen with growing clearness, and sought with deepening purpose, the consummation which is soon to be effected."[25] Clearly, the road to Union had started long before William Patrick and continued after his death in 1911, until it was completed in 1925.

The charge that Patrick had initiated a process from which there was no retreat does not seem to be warranted, as there does not seem to have been a need or desire to retreat. By the end of the General Conference, the Methodists issued an invitation to talk about Union and in a "matter of months each of the three churches had appointed study committees which, when combined, became the joint committee on Church Union for Canada."[26] The immediate response to the dream of Church Union, as well as the completion of a draft of the Basis of Union by 1908, demonstrated the willingness of the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists to finally fulfill their vision of being "one church."

Early Widespread Support

Despite the anti-Union supporters pointing to Principal Patrick's address on this night as being the beginning of the opposition to Church Union, Moir points out that by the General Assembly of 1905, no opposition to the Union negotiations had been seen publicly in the church, although a report from the West in *The Presbyterian* of August 13, 1904, indicated widespread hostility

[20] "The General Conference," 8.
[21] Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 36.
[22] Ibid., 37.
[23] Clifford, *The Resistance to Church Union*, 13.
[24] Silcox, *Church Union in Canada*, 103.
[25] McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 246.
[26] Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 198.

"from one cause or another."[27] The real division of the church into "pro" and "anti" Union factions came later in the wake of the 1910 Assembly because of the perceived feelings that the grassroots of the church had been ignored, even though the decisions of the Assembly were "legal and entirely Presbyterian."[28] Even if Principal Patrick had not spoken that night and was not part of the Union movement, there still would have been those who opposed the idea of a Union between the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Methodists because of their "absolute faith in the superiority of everything Presbyterian."[29] The belief that Principal Patrick invoked widespread hostility with his address that night is unfounded. Even throughout the growing hostilities, the majority supported and voted for Union.

Additionally, in terms of whether Principal Patrick broke with the expected protocol as a fraternal delegate when he addressed the Methodist General Conference, it was not uncommon during these years for delegates from the various churches to bring greetings and speak of Union. At a meeting which took place in a Methodist Church in Montreal, the Presbyterian Dr. Ormiston closed his speech to conclude the Canadian Union of 1861 with these words: "May God grant that not in this church alone but in all churches the spirit of Union may prevail going out from Montreal as a centre, till it covers the whole land."[30] In fact, as Silcox goes on to point out, the impact of these fraternal delegates bringing greetings and emphasizing points of agreement between the churches over a period of years is "considerable and it must not be forgotten that several of the definite schemes for Union which stirred the Canadian churches were launched by such friendly overtures."[31] In light of what happened at the Methodist General Conference in 1902, Silcox's comments on Presbyterian delegates are particularly poignant: "The Presbyterian delegates in particular developed a habit of couching their greetings in the form of a suggestion for closer cooperation and Union."[32] What is fascinating is the example cited of what happened at the Congregational Union in 1892 when "some Congregational ministers took them at their word and instituted significant proceedings in 1892–1894."[33] Seen in this light, Principal Patrick's address was not as outrageous or as protocol-altering as Clifford alleges, but was more in keeping with the examples that delegates had set throughout the process to Union. It once more refutes his allegation that retreat was not possible.

Also, since 1893, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church had passed a resolution stating that the "General Assembly will always be ready to entertain the subject of Union with other evangelical churches."[34] This principle was affirmed again just prior to the Methodist General Conference in September, when the General Assembly met in Toronto in June 1902, and passed a resolution in support of Dr. Caven's speech on behalf of the Canadian Society of Christian Unity, "to actively pursue Union."[35]

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[27] Ibid., 199.
[28] Ibid., 203.
[29] Ibid., 204.
[30] McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 246.
[31] Silcox, *Church Union in Canada*, 104.
[32] Ibid., 105.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid., 112.
[35] Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 34.

Conclusion

There is no denying that Principal William Patrick's address to the Methodist General Conference on September 8, 1902, made for a momentous night, not just for those attending the Conference, but for the ultimate cause of Church Union. While there is no question that Patrick addressed Union in his speech, the subject of Union was neither new or novel nor completely dissimilar to what the other Presbyterian delegates spoke of both before and after him. Principal Patrick's speech was also not the only appeal for Union made to the General Conference. Patrick's behaviour as a delegate, despite criticism, was not contrary to the behaviour of fraternal delegates historically but was in keeping with the Presbyterian Assembly's own encouragement to speak to Union whenever the opportunity presented itself. Patrick also showed an understanding of the Canadian ministry context and the need for Union for which he is not given credit. While Patrick's continuing efforts as a leader within the Church Union movement would draw additional criticism as the movement progressed, one cannot but wonder if the real opposition to Principal Patrick's address that evening in September is that his message of Union was received and led to a decisive response, unlike in previous decades. It was not a new topic, as the subject had been raised before, but because the churches involved were finally ready to commit to and embrace the dream of a national united church—that was something that some Presbyterians could never accept.

Faith, Fun, and Friendship: The Last 50 Years of PYPS in the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda, 1968-2018

Ian McKechnie

On February 1, 2018, friends and alumni of the Presbyterian Young People's Society in the Synod of Central Northeastern Ontario & Bermuda[1] (formerly known as the Synod of Toronto-Kingston PYPS) opened up their email inboxes and found a sobering announcement from PYPS leadership:

> Hello PYPSers,
> Unfortunately, Winter PYPS will be cancelled. We are so grateful for your continued love and investment in this ministry—may that passion for service to God's creation and Godself be nurtured and only grow.[2]

That email, signed by co-presidents Stephanie Banks and Caleb McCarroll-Butler, marked the end of a significant chapter in the history of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). From its origins in the ashes of the long-forgotten National Young People's Society almost half a century before, through years of growth between the 1970s and early 2000s, to a period of decline after about 2013, this much-loved organization left its imprint on three generations of young Presbyterians. Five years on from its unceremonious demise, the time seems right to reflect on the history of CNOB PYPS.

This paper will begin with a brief overview of the historical backstory to the PYPS, remembered by Baby Boomers, members of Gen X, and Millennials. It will then travel back in time with an overview of the PYPS weekends that have been so firmly ingrained in their collective memory. From the memorable and nostalgic, it will turn to some of the challenges faced by the organization over the years, before analyzing the reasons for its decline and ultimate dissolution. Finally, through hearing directly from alumni, it will look back at the impact the PYPS had on its participants.

How It All Began: A Brief History of CNOB PYPS

Strictly speaking, the Presbyterian Young People's Society of Central Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda (CNOB) traces its origins to 1971, when the National Young People's Society was disbanded and PYPS was perpetuated by synods, presbyteries, and individual congregations. But the antecedents of PYPS are much older, and it is worth looking back in time to see the

[1] The Synod of Toronto-Kingston included St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Bermuda which was at the time part of the Presbytery of West Toronto. "A member of St. Andrew's Bermuda, attended University in Ottawa and became connected to the PYPS and then after school returned to Bermuda," recalls former executive member Karin Beaumont Cowan. "Contact was maintained with them and on a couple of occasions we actually had some youth from Bermuda come and attend Thanksgiving Conventions!"

[2] Email from CNOB PYPS, February 1, 2018.

similarities and differences between the organization as it existed from the late 1960s into the 2010s, and the Young People's Societies of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Young People's Societies had existed in one way or another since the PCC was formed in 1875. A "Young People's Home Missionary Society" was formed in 1891; during this period a number of congregations across the country formed local branches of the ecumenical Christian Endeavour Society, which also laid the groundwork for successive youth movements in the PCC. A Committee on Young People's Societies was formed in 1895, and by 1913, this had been rechristened as the Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies.[3] These groups oversaw a number of events that bear similarities to what members of the Toronto-Kingston and CNOB PYPS experienced over the last fifty years of its existence.

On November 10, 1908, for example, the twelfth annual convention of the young people's and sabbath school associations of the Lindsay presbytery met at St. Andrew's, Beaverton, for a day of business, devotion, and guest lectures followed by discussion. "The attendance of delegates was not as large as in former years, but the convention was nevertheless a splendid success," *The Lindsay Post* reported in its coverage of the event. One of the addresses was titled "The Abiding Amid the Changing in Young People's Work" and was given by the Reverend W. A. McTaggart of Wychwood Park, Toronto. McTaggart's talk's title was apt, for though much would change about the Presbyterian Young People's Society experience over the years, much more would abide for generations.[4]

Following Church Union in 1925, concerted efforts were made to ensure that Presbyterian young people were served by societies that not only offered fun and friendship, but also inculcated a desire to serve the Church and wider world.[5] In 1927, a constitution was issued by the Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies, which had as its goal the formation of societies within presbyteries.[6]

The first Ontario Presbyterian Young People's Conference took place at Knox Presbyterian Church in Toronto from October 6 through 8 1934 and was nothing short of a major event. An illustrated booklet was issued to participants, complete with well-wishes from the Rt. Reverend J. S. Shortt (Moderator of the General Assembly), the mayor of Toronto, and the Hon. Herbert A. Bruce (Lieutenant Governor of Ontario). "As members of the Presbyterian Young People's Society you bear an honoured name, and with it the responsibilities inseparable from the splendid reputation you already enjoy," His Honour wrote in a message to delegates. Moreover, the King's representative predicted that "the spiritual and moral life of this great province will be enriched by the example of your lives, by the power of your faith and by the labours of your hands in the service of mankind."[7]

After a period of decline, 1953 saw a significant shift in the direction of PYPS with the formation of the National Young People's Society (NYPS).[8] Fifteen years later, many of those who had been born during the first decade of the Baby Boom had reached, or were reaching, the

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[3] The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario, *Presbyterian Young People's Societies*, Historical Sketch. https://presbyterianarchives.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FA44.pdf.

[4] "Young People At Beaverton," *Lindsay Post,* November 13, 1908, 5.

[5] Rebecca Jess, "Young People and the Future of the Presbyterian Church: Rebuilding Post-Union," in *Canadian Society of Presbyterian History Papers 2020*, 27–36.

[6] Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, *Presbyterian Young People's Societies*, Historical Sketch.

[7] First Ontario Presbyterian Young People's Conference booklet, 1934, 3, 1982-1019-1-3 PYPS Convention 1934, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[8] Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, *Presbyterian Young People's Societies*, Historical Sketch.

age where they would be old enough to participate in the life and work of the NYPS, to say nothing of the broader church.[9]

In 1971, the NYPS was disbanded, its constitution was revoked, and the somewhat ungainly-named National Co-ordinating Body for Co-Educational Youth Groups was established.[10] As explained in the *Acts & Proceedings* of 1972, this development happened in response to changes in how the PCC carried out youth ministry:

> For some years, the changing pattern of youth activities and interests has brought many requests for review and revision of guidelines for youth and young adult ministries. Youth are maturing earlier. Mid-teen groups are increasingly co-ed and intermixed with the PYPS structures intended for those 18-25 years. There is a desire and need for less formal and more flexible guidelines that will be inclusive of the varied interests, concerns, and modes of functioning of *all* youth and young adults in our church.[11]

There had also been conflict between the administration of the NYPS and that of the synod. "We, the representatives of Toronto-Kingston PYPS, would recommend that Toronto-Kingston withdraw financial support and its representatives from the National Young Peoples," stated a National Council Report on September 28th, 1968. "We firmly believe National is concerning itself about problems that are not peculiar to the Toronto-Kingston Synod. We, also, believe that there is a tremendous amount of work in our Synod which our efforts could be concentrated on."[12]

The developments from 1968 to 1971 thus gave birth to an organization that would make its mark on countless young people in the synod for another half century.

Governance and Recruitment

For most of its existence, the Presbyterian Young People's Society was governed by an executive nominated by members. "The election of the executive is the responsibility of EVERYONE," intoned a report from Karin Beaumont in the June 1975 issue of the Toronto & Kingston PYPS newsletter. "It is a special responsibility of the voting members of Fall Council to elect them into office. It is my prayer that you would take this responsibility to heart and do something about it. If YOU don't do it, it won't get done."[13] In 2000, criteria for those wishing to serve on executive included at least "one year as an active participant of the Presbyterian Church in Canada" and "a

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[9] Young Presbyterians were keen to be involved in decisions affecting their denomination and were not hesitant to say so. In 1969, the NYPS expressed its disappointment that "the General Assembly did not take any significant action to appoint young adults to the various boards and committees [of the Church]." See *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* [*A&P*], 36.

[10] Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, *Presbyterian Young People's Societies*, Historical Sketch.

[11] *A&P*, 1972, 382.

[12] Council Minutes, September 28, 1968, 7, 1982-1019-4-9, Synod of Toronto-Kingston Council Minutes 1968–70, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario. The Toronto-Kingston PYPS cited "unconstitutional procedure and action of the NYPS" and the "uncompromising nature of the National Council" on matters pertaining to organizational structure, among other reasons for breaking away from the national body.

[13] "Nominations For Next Year," in *Synod of Toronto & Kingston PYPS [Newsletter],* June 1975, 1.

constant participant in weekend activities."[14] By the second decade of the millennium, though, serving on executive ceased to be the result of nominations and a formal election. Rather, those who wished to serve were invited to fill out an application form that would result in their appointment to the executive.[15] (This process, which in theory would bring some stability to the organization by having the same executive in place from one year to the next, would prove to be untenable as numbers declined sharply during the last few years.)

Of course, an organization such as PYPS could not function without people. How, then, were new people recruited or encouraged to join? As long as the "societies" existed at the presbytery level, word would spread among congregations through the concerted efforts of those overseeing these groups. As we shall see, this would become a challenge among some presbyteries throughout the 1970s. By the early 1990s, recruitment happened through both outreach to congregations and good old-fashioned word-of-mouth. "There was a synod group that would go around and visit youth groups at churches," recalls Mike Snider of St. Andrew's, Lindsay. "[They] brought a video for us—kind of like a recruitment drive. We had a whole crew go down [to a PYPS weekend]. I think we had a vanload or two. Then a bunch of us started going regularly. I think I went to every single weekend after that."[16] And what was it about those weekends that kept three generations of PYPSers coming back?

PYPS Weekends: Where Memories Were Made

For those who were involved in PYPS, three weekends in particular—Winter Weekend, Spring Fellowship, and Fall Convention—were much-anticipated events on their social calendars. As befitting a *Presbyterian* Young People's Society, tradition was vital to the life of the organization[17] and it is remarkable that there was little change in the overall structure of the events from the 1970s onward. While there were variations in the programme depending on location, venue, and season, each of these PYPS events followed the same basic "recipe" right up to the end.

Spring Fellowship 1977 (Sat.)[18]	**Fall Convention 2000 (Sat.)[19]**	**Winter Weekend 2015 (Sat.)[20]**
7:30 Rise and Shine	9:00 Songs	9:00 Arrive
8:00 Breakfast	9:30 Theme Address #1	10:00 Yoga
9:30 Singsong	10:30 Discussion Groups	11:00 Worship
9:45 Personal Devotions	11:00 Free Time	11:45 Theme Speak
10:00 Theme Address	12:00 Lunch	12:15 Disco Groups
11:00 Discussion Groups	1:30 Game	12:45 Lunch
12:30 Lunch	2:30 Couples Skit	1:30 Outside Activity

[14] PYPS Executive Meeting Minutes, June 18, 2000, 2001–2004 PYPS Executive & Council Meeting Minutes 1999–2000, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[15] CNOB PYPS, Facebook post, February 24, 2016.

[16] Mike Snider in discussion with the author, July 10, 2023, Lindsay, Ontario.

[17] Jeffrey Crawford in conversation with the author, July 20, 2023.

[18] Programme, "Being A Christian in A Non-Christian World," Spring Fellowship, May 20–23, 1977.

[19] PYPS Executive Meeting Minutes, June 18, 2000, 2001–2004 PYPS Executive and Council Meeting Minutes 1999–2000, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[20] Derived from a photo of a printed schedule taken at Winter Weekend 2015, and posted to Facebook, February 14, 2015.

2:00 Sports Competition 4:00 Free Time 5:00 Supper 6:30 Square Dance 9:15 Snack with discussion groups 9:45 Movie: "What's Up Josh?" 11:00 Clear the lodge, please! 11:30 Curfew	3:45 Discussion Groups 4:15 Supper 5:15 Get Ready for Wheelies 5:30 Wheelies 7:30 Movies/Cards/Board Games 9:30 Coffee Shop/Free Time 10:30 Devotion 11:00 Billets	2:15 Mission 3:00 Worship 3:30 Theme Speak 3:45 Disco Groups 4:15 Free Time 5:00 Dinner 6:00 Mystery Activity 8:00 "The Riff-Off" 10:00 Time to Leave

Winter Weekend (which occurred in mid-to-late February) and **Fall Convention** (which happened over the Thanksgiving weekend, or later on, the third weekend of October) traditionally took place at a church located somewhere in the synod. While more than a few were held in Toronto, concerted efforts were made to ensure that they were rotated among as many communities as possible.[21]

The program began on Friday night, usually around 7:30 or 8:00 p.m. with registration. During the 1970s, a typical registration form asked participants to indicate, in addition to the usual contact information, which presbytery and society they were representing. Those who needed a ride or who could provide one were also asked to indicate as much on the form.[22] By the 2010s, the registration forms were being circulated via email and were accompanied by a photo release consent form, a waiver and release of liability form, and a "guidelines for community life" form.[23]

After everyone had arrived, there would be a sing-song followed by opening remarks and refreshments. In later years, arrivals were followed almost immediately by a variety of high-energy "icebreakers" or get-to-know-you games; the official welcome and a service of worship would follow.

Billets began arriving later in the evening, taking their guests back home where tea and conversation sometimes transpired until close to midnight. (Who you got billeted with was always interesting—the author of this paper recalls walking into a Thornhill condominium at Fall Convention 2012 and spotting a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal displayed on a piano. The billet was none other than the late Warren Bailie, who for twenty years served as Chief Election Officer for the Province of Ontario.)[24] Billets were also responsible for providing breakfast the following morning, before driving PYPS participants back to the host church. For many years, a "Billet Form" was included with the registration form and was to be mailed separately to a billet coordinator from the host congregation.[25]

Saturday morning began with pleasantries and other warm-up activities before the song books came out once more. Called "sing-songs" in the 1970s, these musical interludes would eventually evolve into actual worship services led by the young people. As might be expected, PYPS worship services were fairly relaxed—while music was invariably drawn from

[21] Mike Snider in discussion with the author, July 10, 2023, Lindsay, Ontario.

[22] Registration Form, "Fall Afresh On Me," Fall Convention, October 10–13, 1975.

[23] PYPS Registration Form, Winter Weekend, February 12–14, 2016.

[24] Author's recollection. The late Mr. Bailie (1928–2015) was a longtime parishioner at Thornhill Presbyterian Church.

[25] Registration Form, "Fall Afresh On Me," Fall Convention, October 10–13, 1975.

contemporary sources (notably, the PYPS-published *Rejoice!* book, which dated to the early 1960s)[26] These services were generally not liturgical free-for-alls.[27] They followed a familiar order and included a mixture of songs, Scripture lessons, devotional texts, and responsive readings. Where Holy Communion was celebrated, it was occasionally done via intinction with a common cup and felt meaningful yet informal.[28]

Worship was followed by the first theme address, which in later years were known simply as "Theme Speaks." Over the years, speakers were drawn from a veritable who's who of PCC clergy, who took on an enormous variety of timely topics. Numbering among these speakers throughout the 1960s and 1970s were such well-known figures as the Reverend Calvin H. Chambers, the Reverend Dr. Max V. Putnam, the Reverend Dillwyn T. Evans, the Reverend Dr. Mariano DiGangi, and the Reverend Art Van Seters.[29] Among those who regaled participants with their wisdom during the last few years of the organization's existence were the Reverend Dr. Karen Dimock, the Reverend Alex Douglas, the Reverend Dr. Will Ingram, the Reverend Matthew Ruttan, and the Reverend Kristine O'Brien.[30]

Far from being dry theological lessons, these addresses were geared towards adolescents who were still growing in their faith. Dr. DiGangi's title at Fall Convention 1968 was "Achieving Christian Maturity," while five years later Dr. Putnam spoke about "The Changeless Christ."[31] Nor were current affairs far from the minds of speakers or their listeners. In 1973, Putnam alluded to twentieth century tyrannies in remarks prepared for that year's Fall Convention: "We have witnessed some of the most vicious dictators the world has ever known, as they rose to great power, and then disappeared in rejection and shame," Putnam wrote. "But the name of Jesus Christ loses none of its lustre, for those who know and love Him. Napoleon, having dominated and terrified the peoples of Europe for a generation, is reported to have said at his death, 'The Nazarene has conquered.'"[32] Putnam's words reverberated almost forty years later, when a speaker at Winter Weekend 2011[33] remarked that youth were living through a game-changing period in history—that event took place at the height of the Arab Spring[34]—and one wonders how PYPS would respond to current sociopolitical challenges.

Once the theme address finished, participants broke out into discussion groups, or as they were known by the 1990s, "Disco Groups." These half-hour sessions, which happened twice a day, were usually facilitated by a member of the executive, one of the conveners responsible for organizing the weekend, or some other duly chosen individual, and functioned much like a Bible study. When attendance at Fall Convention numbered in the hundreds and space was at a premium, it was not uncommon for large discussion groups to take advantage of any nook or

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[26] The *Rejoice* book included a mix of older hymns (such as "Hark! The Voice of Jesus Calling" and "To God Be The Glory") as well as such 1960s standards as Kurt Kaiser's "It Only Takes A Spark/Pass It On."

[27] Author's recollection. This being said, past P.Y,P.S. president Will Ingram recalls that the music of PYPS in the early 1990s was sometimes driven by "an anti-institutional attitude."

[28] Author's recollection of communion services held at Glen Mhor Camp during Spring Fellowship 2012 and at Riverdale Presbyterian Church during Winter Warm-Up 2015.

[29] Programme, "The Changeless Christ," Fall Convention, October 5-8, 1973, vii-viii.

[30] Author's recollection.

[31] Programme, "The Changeless Christ," Fall Convention, October 5–8, 1973, vii–viii.

[32] Ibid., iii–iv.

[33] Held at Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church, Toronto.

[34] Author's recollection. The Arab Spring took place over the late winter and early spring of 2011 and saw the authoritarian leaders of Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, among other countries, forced from office by popular uprisings.

cranny they could find in the host church. Jim McKechnie remembers participating in one such discussion group that met in a stairwell.[35]

Following the morning discussion group, everyone adjourned for a lunch prepared by volunteers from the host congregation. The Saturday afternoon session generally mirrored the morning, but with additional activities planned for outside. Especially in the 2010s, a mission activity was scheduled for the mid-afternoon; this could range from doing some cleanup work on the church property, to preparing care packages for those working on the streets, to writing letters for Amnesty International.[36] During Winter Weekend, Saturday ended with a delicious supper prepared by the host church before participants enjoyed an evening of fun and games, perhaps a movie, and additional devotional time. At Fall Convention, though, the highlight of Saturday evening (or Sunday, when Convention was a four-day event) was the annual banquet and, in later years, dance. This tradition traced its origins back to at least 1934, when the Ontario Presbyterian Young People's Conference was hosted at Knox Presbyterian Church, on Spadina Avenue.[37] On that occasion, participants gathered at Eaton's Round Room on College Street for a sumptuous feast of roast stuffed turkey and cranberry sauce, vegetable marrow, browned potato, rolls, and apple pie à la mode. Drinks included a tomato juice cocktail and coffee. The evening began with a sing-song, followed by introductions and greetings from each presbytery. Toasts were made—first to King George V, then to the Church, and finally the Young People. Speeches were given by the Reverend Donald MacInnes and the Reverend S. M. Scott—conveners of the Young People's Societies in the Synod of Hamilton and the Synod of Toronto-Kingston, respectively—before everyone rose to sing Auld Lang Syne.[38]

Years later, these banquets had dispensed with some traditions and introduced others. Gone were the formal toasts, but the head table—which included the guest speaker, the host minister and his spouse, and the Convention convener—was still piped in and a presbytery roll call still led off the evening, which included multiple sing-songs, the introduction of past speakers and executive members, trophy presentations, and the banquet speaker.[39] While the banquet was normally held in the host church, other venues were sometimes rented if the former lacked the space or necessary facilities.[40]

About the only traces in formality that survived into the last few years of CNOB PYPS were grace, formal dress, and nicely-set tables. Fall Convention supper fare in the 2010s invariably consisted of spaghetti and meatballs, or, more frequently, lasagna with a side of

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[35] Recollection shared by the author's father, who was involved with PYPS ca. 1969–1977.

[36] Author's recollection. Though a regular part of the programme by the 2010s, an increased focus on mission and outreach was apparent by the turn of the 21st century, as noted in a report from one Patricia Candy, ca. 2000. "Since August 1998, I have been working slowly but surely towards promoting Missions in a positive form to encourage more participation [by] PYPS members ... I am in correspondence with several Missions organizations to remain [a]ware of the possible opportunities that are available for PYPS members and present these in the form of the [Missions] table to the members." See PYPS Executive Meeting Minutes, June 18, 2000, 2001–2004 PYPS Executive & Council Meeting Minutes 1999–2000, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[37] First Ontario Presbyterian Young People's Conference booklet, 1934, 9, 1982-1019-1-3 PYPS Convention 1934, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Banquet Programme, "Christ Our Life," Fall Convention, October 11–14, 1974. The author's father recalls the tradition of participants standing up to indicate how many Conventions they had attended over the years.

[40] Karin Beaumont-Cowan, email message to author, July 24, 2023. This was certainly true of Fall Convention 1973, when events took place at both the Anglican and United Churches in Thornhill.

Caesar salad and garlic bread—all prepared by the ladies (and gentlemen) of the host congregation.[41]

In the 1970s, the Convention banquet might have been followed with an additional theme address. By the 1990s, it was followed by a dance, which has aptly been likened to high school prom. The Fall Convention dance often took place in the parish hall of the host church, though circumstances sometimes dictated that it be held offsite or elsewhere in the church. Former executive member Mike Snider remembers that the first PYPS dance he attended, in Whitby took place at a lakeshore pavilion, rather than the host church.[42] In 2011, the hall at St. Andrew's, Markham, had been booked for another event after supper, so Convention-goers went for a chilly walk across Main Street to the Markham Seniors' Activity Centre—a block and a half west of the church. Two years later, at St. Mark's, Don Mills, the dance was held in the church's Christian education wing.[43] Every PYPS dance had one person serving as "disc jockey" (sans the discs by the 2010s!), while another was appointed to be the "bartender" for the evening. The "bar" at PYPS functions was always dry, and usually offered pop, water, ice cream floats, and assorted snacks.[44] In spite of the dry bar, these dances generally defied stereotypical Presbyterian objections to fun and frivolity. John Calvin—who in his Ordinances for the Supervision of Churches in the Country threatened anyone who sung songs that were "unworthy, dissolute or outrageous, or [spun] wildly round in the dance" with imprisonment[45]—would surely have raised eyebrows at some of the selections his spiritual descendants picked for these dances: Kelly Clarkson's "Stronger," Fun's " Are Young," Billy Joel's "Piano Man," and the Swedish group Rednex's interpretation of Cotton-Eyed Joe were all standards played at almost every PYPS dance during the last few years Fall Convention took place.[46] Calvin might also have objected to the mock weddings that sometimes transpired as part of these dances. One is listed on the itinerary for Fall Convention 2000, while another took place at Fall Convention 2012.[47]

The last day of Winter Weekend and (in later years) Fall Convention began with morning worship at the host church. While many congregations made a point of incorporating some element of youth leadership into their services (for example, an anthem),[48] others turned much of the service over to the youth. When St. Andrew's, Fergus, hosted Winter Weekend in 1976, everything from the organ prelude to the children's story and scripture readings was carried out by members of PYPS.[49]

Sunday morning worship was followed by a lunch, and perhaps another devotion, before participants bid adieu to one another and headed for home. As long as Fall Convention took place over the Thanksgiving weekend, activities lasted into Monday. There might have been one more theme address and another round of discussion groups in the morning before the new

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[41] Author's recollection.

[42] Mike Snider in discussion with the author, July 10, 2023, Lindsay, Ontario.

[43] Author's recollections.

[44] Ibid.

[45] John Calvin, "Ordinances for the Supervision of Churches in the Country, February 3, 1547," in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, Library of Christian Classics 22, edited by J. K. S. Reid (London: SCM Press, 1954), 81.

[46] Author's recollections.

[47] The mock wedding is a type of folk drama common to many parts of the United States and was apparently quite popular at several American women's colleges during the 19th century. In 2012, the author was recruited into playing the part of the "father of the bride" at one such PYPS mock wedding, held at Thornhill Presbyterian Church.

[48] Mike Snider in discussion with the author, July 10, 2023, Lindsay, Ontario.

[49] Order of Service, Winter Weekend #2 Sunday Service, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Fergus, Ontario, February 29, 1976.

Executive was installed and Holy Communion celebrated ahead of an early afternoon luncheon.[50] During the last few years, Fall Convention might have ended with an uproarious session of a "Kangaroo Court," in which participants were subjected to any number of "punishments" for various "infractions."[51]

Planning for both Winter Weekend and, especially, Fall Convention, took many months and over the years the process became a well-oiled machine. Karin Beaumont-Cowan remembers:

> Because of the scope of convention mostly being over 200 attendees, the Convention Committee connected and worked very closely with the hosting church and those involved there during the year. Planning for Convention would start almost as soon as one ended and we'd be looking ahead to the next year. Hours of hard work went into planning an event of this size. Of course as part of the event there were various group discussions following the main speaker's address for which we needed to arrange for group discussion leaders. We also arranged for music leaders for the event. Booklets were produced and the excitement of the registrations being received and always being so amazed at the wonderful support throughout the entire Synod for this event and to see new names coming in was a real joy![52]

In addition to all of the activities scheduled at the weekends, time was set aside for business meetings. Among the items that sometimes came up was the question of whether or not an underage participant could attend, especially after Synod set an age limit. Usually, this could be resolved via a letter of recommendation from the participant's minister and Kirk Session, with the final decision resting with the PYPS executive. "The first letter we dealt with was from St. Andrew's, Islington, requesting permission for an underage youth by the name of John Vissers to attend," recalls Cowan. "That request was honoured, and little did we know where the Lord would lead John from that time on!"[53]

In between the winter and fall weekends was **Spring Fellowship**, which took place over the Victoria Day long weekend in May. It followed the same format as Winter Weekend and Fall Convention, complete with a guest speaker, discussion groups, and the usual rota of sing-songs and assorted games.

The main difference, of course, was the location. Spring Fellowship customarily took place at Glen Mhor Camp on the shores of Lake Simcoe (and Echo Lake, east of Baysville, when the camp relocated there in 1978)[54] and included a number of activities suitable for a camp setting. Canoeing, campfires, and scavenger hunts were all part of the Spring Fellowship experience. Meals took place in the dining hall and were led off with one of the graces typically used at camp. When Glen Mhor was located on Lake Simcoe, a two-storey lodge was the hub of

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[50] Programme, "The Changeless Christ," Fall Convention, October 5–8, 1973.

[51] Author's recollection. These "punishments" included such things as having a pie thrown into one's face, as happened to one participant at Fall Convention 2012.

[52] Karin Beaumont-Cowan, email message to author, July 24, 2023.

[53] Ibid. Vissers would go on to serve as the Senior Minister at Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto (1995–1999), Principal of the Presbyterian College at McGill University (1999–2013), Moderator of the 138th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (2012–2013), and Principal of Knox College at the University of Toronto (2017–2022).

[54] Programme, Dedication Ceremony, Glen Mhor Camp, Echo Lake, June 24, 1978.

operations, and also the backdrop for a famous photograph in which a pair of participants standing on the upper storey emptied a large bucket of water onto the unsuspecting crowd below—just as the camera clicked![55] This was by no means the only water-related practical joke remembered by PYPS alumni: Janice Jarrett, née Ross, among others, recalls that one Ian Shaw was infamous for pushing people into the lake at Spring Fellowship.[56]

What Are We to Do Between the Weekends? Other PYPS Events

While Winter Weekend, Spring Fellowship, and Fall Convention were the annual mainstays, a number of other events were organized by Toronto-Kingston/CNOB PYPS over the years. After all, three months passed between the February weekend and Spring Fellowship, and another five between that and Fall Convention. These "in-between-the-weekends" events were a useful means of sustaining interest in the organization throughout the year, serving specific age demographics within PYPS, and reaching people who might not normally come to one of the weekends.

Those who attended PYPS during its sunset years were likely unaware of when Winter Weekend was held not once but *twice* a year. In the 1970s, when a significant number of participants were being drawn from the northern Ontario presbyteries, the executive decided to hold a Winter Weekend in a northern location around New Year's. This was quite an experience, as Karin Beaumont-Cowan remembers:

> The first couple of years people from the "south" drove but with the freezing cold and the necessity to remove batteries from cars and keep inside to prevent freezing up, we switched to going by bus—which always gave us a wonderful time of fellowship with youth from the various churches coming and going. [It was] likely more quiet on the return trip as all were so tired from the activities of the weekend![57]

One of the best-remembered events of this period was the annual Week Camp, which took place over the last full week of August. According to Beaumont-Cowan, this event was geared towards university students who would soon be returning to their studies and likewise those who had been working during the summer. Week Camp was reminiscent of Spring Fellowship and each day included a theme address and discussion groups followed by an afternoon of free time that was taken up with boating, shuffleboard, and other activities. Devotionals and a campfire closed out the evening. For a number of years, Week Camp took place at Haliburton Lodge; later, a participant's family connections with Wenona Lodge on Sparrow Lake saw the event moved there by the mid-1970s.[58]

A few weeks before Week Camp was the August Retreat, which took place over the Civic Holiday weekend. In 1969, the retreat took place at Glen Mhor Camp, where some 40 youth gathered to hear the Reverend Donald MacLeod expound on the theme of "All The Lonely

[55] Recollection shared by the author's father.

[56] Janice Jarrett, email message to author, September 17, 2023. The Ian Shaw mentioned here would go on to serve as a Presbyterian minister, retiring from St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Simcoe.

[57] Karin Beaumont-Cowan, email message to author, July 24, 2023.

[58] Ibid.

People"—a title derived from the title of a song made popular by The Beatles.[59] Six years later, August Retreat took place at the Sinclair Farm outside of Orangeville, and perhaps in view of the venue was limited to 25 people.[60]

The executive overseeing PYPS during its last few years also tried organizing a few events apart from the big three. In February 2009, an event called Synergy brought together CNOB and SWO (Southwestern Ontario) PYPS for a weekend that attracted upwards of 50 or more participants.[61] Synergy was revived in 2012, but was limited to participants of high school age and took the place of the traditional Winter Weekend.[62] Three years later, on January 10, 2015, a one-day event called Winter Warm-Up was organized at Riverdale Presbyterian Church, in the Presbytery of East Toronto. Winter Warm-Up, which included a mix of devotions, games, and a delicious luncheon of homemade soup prepared by the Reverend Alex Bisset,[63] wrapped up with a service of Holy Communion in which fifteen participants partook. It was the last of the "in-between-the-weekends" organized by CNOB PYPS and brought some much-needed warmth to an otherwise bitterly-cold day.[64]

Challenge and Change

As with any organization within or without the Church, not all was rosy in the annals of PYPS. Over its last half century of existence, the organization was faced with a number of challenges. Three of the recurring ones involved questions of theology, structure, and communication. First, there were concerns about whether it was too charismatic or "evangelical." Second, there were concerns about its future at the presbytery level and whether this might have undermined its effectiveness. Third, there were concerns about how to effectively reach people—both newcomers and those who had "aged out."

Theological Emphases: Too Charismatic? Too "Evangelical?"

We begin with theological concerns. By the late 1960s, the so-called "Jesus Movement" was in full swing and its charismatic emphases were soon felt within the nominally-Reformed confines of PYPS—permeating everything from its music to its theology.[65] Altar calls, with people being invited to come forward and commit their lives to Christ, were not uncommon throughout the 1960s. For some participants, these were moving events in their faith journey. Looking back to her first PYPS experience at Fall Convention of 1964, held in Parry Sound, Karin Beaumont-Cowan remembers:

> St. Andrew's [Parry Sound] has a balcony, and there were youth both downstairs and upstairs. During the singing of "And can it be" we were sitting during the

[59] Weekend Retreat report, Synod Council Meeting, September 20, 1969, 4, 1982-1019-4-9 Synod of Toronto-Kingston Council Minutes, 1968-70, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[60] Presbytery Newsletter, July–August 1975.

[61] Facebook post, February 18, 2009.

[62] Author's recollection.

[63] By 2015, Bisset was filling the role of Synod youth advisor left vacant a couple of years before by the Reverend J. Crawford, but this was not a full-time position as it had been under Crawford's tenure.

[64] Author's recollection.

[65] Stuart Macdonald, email message to author, August 21, 2023.

> sing song, but in that particular one, when it came to the verse "I rose, went forth, and followed Thee," both levels rose to stand when we sang that stanza—a very moving moment.[66]

By at least 1966 and onward, "there was a definite change to a more conservative/evangelical movement" within PYPS, and numbers grew by the hundreds.[67] As the decade wound down, though, this focus on evangelical (or at least charismatic) religion was viewed by some as a liability. For some, the "experience" of participating in an altar call became something remembered with a certain degree of spiritual smugness.[68] Reflecting on the apparently "evangelical" atmosphere at a PYPS event organized at Glen Mhor Camp during the Civic Holiday weekend of 1969, Sandra Percy wrote:

> Another area which possibly turned kids off was the strong Evangelical Christian emphasis which prevailed throughout the camp. This could have been caused by the fact that there was a strong representation of truly dedicated Christians present and they were making the most of the time together for pure, joyous Christian fellowship, thus causing those who were possibly younger, or weaker in the faith or those who know not [sic] Christ to shy away or possibly feel misplaced. From this I would like to put forth the question—Do you think this is a problem or not, and if so, can it in any way be corrected?[69]

Reverberations of the charismatic and evangelical movement were still being felt in PYPS twenty years later. "In the late 80s, there was a speaker who was not Presbyterian and who took the weekend in a weird, charismatic direction," recalled a former PYPS president. According to his recollections, this particular speaker and weekend managed to turn a number of people away from PYPS.[70]

This kind of experience may explain why later executives took a guarded approach to who they selected as a particular weekend's theme speaker. Minutes from meetings held over the winter and spring of 2000 indicate that there was considerable discussion about the propriety of having a speaker who was not Presbyterian address that year's Fall Convention. "[It] should be a Presbyterian minister because we are the Presbyterian Young People's Society," noted the minutes of an executive meeting held on April 1, 2000.[71] "We have to consider the congregation," the recording secretary noted—perhaps in deference to the fact that host churches were not likely to take kindly to youth groups that deviated too far from predictable Presbyterian parameters.

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[66] Karin Beaumont-Cowan, email message to author, July 24, 2023.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Stuart Macdonald, email message to author, August 21, 2023. Macdonald remembers going forward for an altar call at one PYPS event: "[It was] the only time I ever did. But, I would have understood that more as a renewal of my faith. I became more uncomfortable with that experience when some of my friends who'd also gone forward kept going on and on and on about it year after year. Always looking back to it. That's what raised questions for me—how people later responded to and remembered the event."

[69] Weekend Retreat report, Synod Council Meeting, September 20, 1969, 4, 1982-1019-4-9 Synod of Toronto-Kingston Council Minutes, 1968-70, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[70] Will Ingram, in conversation with the author, August 24, 2023.

[71] PYPS Executive Meeting Minutes, April 1, 2000, 2001–2004 PYPS Executive & Council Meeting Minutes 1999–2000, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

A decade on, CNOB PYPS could hardly have been considered "charismatic" or even "evangelical" in its theological colouring. Altar calls had long since fallen by the wayside and while emphasis was still placed on faith formation and personal spiritual growth, there was a growing focus on current issues affecting church and society. Care of creation, the impact of social media and electronic devices, and human sexuality, all numbered among the topics covered in weekends during the last few years of the organization's existence.[72] Indeed, a petition circulated in 2014 under the banner "Hospitality and Justice for All in the PCC," which sought to make the church fully inclusive regardless of sexual orientation, counted more than a few members of CNOB PYPS among its signatories.[73]

Structural Challenges: Wither Presbytery-Based PYPS?

Another challenge facing the Synod of Toronto-Kingston PYPS during the 1970s was the gradual withering of the society at the presbytery level. Throughout the 1960s, it seems, these groups had been fairly active; within less than a decade, they were hemorrhaging members and struggling to stay afloat.

In 1975, for example, it was reported that "the participation of the youth in the Presbyterian Church of the Presbytery of Brampton in the Synod of Toronto-Kingston Presbyterian Young People's Society has dwindled to a few regulars and has been non-existent on a presbytery level for some time."[74]

At Fall Convention 1974, it was suggested that participants gather into groups representing their respective presbyteries to gauge the numerical strength of each. "We in our group totalled three," wrote David Harley in his report to Executive Council. "How shameful. It was very disappointing and alarming. What had happened to the Brampton Presbytery PYPS that had been formed in the spring of 1966 and had blasted its way through the Synod with large numbers of energetic young people?"[75]

Up north, the folks in the Presbytery of Timmins reported that "our meetings have been carried out on a regular schedule, but the meetings are coming to a dry spell. It is assumed that this is due to a large number of our most active members leaving us to attend college"[76]—a factor that would prove problematic at synod-level PYPS more than forty years later, when faced with a drought of youth.

East Toronto "held four events with limited success," which apparently lost money. Coffee houses and carol-sings organized by the group garnered low attendance on account of what Robert McAndless attributed to a massive communications gap. "We feel contact between us, as the executive, and people at Synod is important and contact at events is key to our getting to most people. The contact at Convention was not very effective for us," McAndless pointed

[72] Author's recollections. Another timely topic that was occasionally discussed was the PCC's relations with Indigenous peoples. According to Nancy Risebrough, "the moderator of the Presbyterian Church came to visit us on one of the weekends in the 1980s and asked us if we felt if the church should say sorry for its role in residential schools—we all said of course, yes." Comment in "Toronto-Kingston PYPS 1980-1990" Facebook group, July 2023.

[73] Author's recollection. This marked quite a change from the early 1990s, when at least one former PYPS participant felt homophobia was only too apparent in some quarters of the organization.

[74] Presbytery Reports, Synod Council Meeting, January 25, 1975, 17. 1982-1019-5-1, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[75] Ibid., 17.

[76] Ibid., 21.

out. In response to this communications crisis, East Toronto reviewed its mailing list and concluded that three quarters of those on it actually hailed from outside of the presbytery. "Immediately we are starting a campaign to call the churches within the presbytery and find out exactly what we have to work with," McAndless noted.[77]

The frustration of West Toronto's PYPS leadership was palpable in a 1971 report to Executive Council. Tom Coon, President of West Toronto PYPS, did not mince words: "In West Toronto, we are faced with indifference to and opposition to young people's work, in particular PYPS work, by most of the congregations."[78] While noting that communication with the presbytery's Christian education committee had seen significant improvement, questions about the group's *raison d'être* were being asked. "Was our object to link Young People in Christian Fellowship or to recruit new adherents for the sake of posterity and the record?" inquired interim chairperson Nancy Norman on May 8, 1971. "We have learned that many Young People are involved in functioning societies in West Toronto congregations," Norman continued. As a result, it was determined that West Toronto PYPS would suspend operations effective May 31, 1971, and be reinstated only "at such time as the need for and interest in this type of Presbytery fellowship is expressed by the congregations in the Presbytery." Fingers were pointed not only at indifferent congregations, but also at indifferent Synod leadership: "Our executive has been disappointed throughout this year by an apparent lack of interest on behalf of the Synod executive to our problems," the report concluded. "We would have appreciated greater interest or assistance from our Synod consultants."[79]

West Toronto's PYPS group had fallen into abeyance when, at Fall Convention '74, a group met to discuss the feasibility of reviving it. A six-person steering committee was subsequently formed in a meeting held at St. Andrew's, Islington, to chart a course forward. Upon investigation, this committee discovered that only about 40% of the churches in this presbytery had active youth groups, though about ten congregations had youth who reportedly expressed interest in PYPS[80] As steering committee members John Vissers and Ron Bannerman optimistically noted in their report to Executive Council, a resurrected PYPS in this presbytery would prove advantageous on numerous fronts:

> We feel that an active PYPS in West Toronto would greatly [strengthen] the fellowship of Christian Young People in West Toronto. It may also be an instrument by which local congregational youth groups are started. It will be used as a channel whereby youth programmes and events will be publicized throughout the presbytery … It would also give more identity at Synod events as well as increasing the number of attendants from West Toronto to Synod events.[81]

Significantly, the steering committee also pointed out that "we feel that it is especially important that we do not become too over-active so as to 'rob' the individual youth groups of their members and identity." Ironically, as presbytery-level PYPS groups declined in importance by the 1980s and

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[77] Ibid., 19–20.

[78] Presbytery Reports, Synod Council Meeting, May 8, 1971, 19, 1982-1019-4-10, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[79] Ibid., 11–12.

[80] Presbytery Reports, Synod Council Meeting, January 25, 1975, 23, 1982-1019-5-1, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[81] Ibid., 24–25.

1990s, the "individual youth groups" would fill the vacuum and in some cases prove to be stronger on their own than as merely a component of synod-level PYPS. The situation faced by West Toronto PYPS in 1971, when sidelined by already "functioning societies," is an example of this phenomenon at work, as is the success of PYPS at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Lindsay in the 1990s and into the 2000s.[82]

Al Clarkson, who served as Communications Director for Toronto-Kingston PYPS 1982–1983, points out that presbytery-based PYPS also faced some competition from camps. "While the PYPS did a lot for the camps, [a] criticism from congregations was that the Glen Mhor and Iona 'cliques' did not help individual youth groups where kids were involved in other summer activities—especially other camps (Pioneer, Fairhavens, and, in the 80s, Muskoka Woods)," he explains.[83]

The health of PYPS groups at the presbytery level was thus hit-and-miss throughout the 1970s—a fact sometimes obscured in memory by recollections of the blockbuster synod-level PYPS events. Yet the presbytery-level PYPS groups fulfilled a unique function in the structure of the PCC; they offered something more than a congregational-level youth group, yet were not so big as to be unmanageable. Indeed, as late as 2000, it was being noted that "Synod is far too big to reach youth."[84]

Communication Challenges: How to Reach Old Members and New?

One of the issues PYPS wrestled with throughout its history was what to do about those who were on the upper end of the age bracket—or, indeed, those who had "aged out." Will Ingram addressed this question in a past-president's report circulated at a meeting of executive that was (fittingly) held on All Saints' Day in 1992. While noting the importance of getting new members involved, Ingram was cognizant of how the organization's structure was not sufficiently focused on serving four groups of people, who he identified as follows:

- People who had served on executive, finished their term, and were finding that there was no place for them to serve.
- First-timers in the 21–25 year old age category—these people were discovering PYPS for the first time but unlike their younger counterparts were no longer facing the pressures of high school and university.

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[82] The story of PYPS in Lindsay is an interesting one. St. Andrew's hosted Fall Convention in 1958 and within a year a Young People's group had been formed. A report in the 1959 *Annual Report* indicated that the group had sold coffee and sandwiches at a local sale, had sold Christmas trees, and had entertained a group of young people from "the Chinese Church in Toronto." In the 1961 Annual Report, we read that "the youth group was organized under the capable leadership of Dr. R. Watson in October of 1960." Members of this group met twice monthly and "participated in many educational discussions." No more was heard about a youth group at St. Andrew's until 1972. Participation in Synod PYPS events ebbed and flowed during the 1980s and increased during the 1990s; during the pastorate of the Reverend David Whitecross, who served as assistant minister from 1994 to 2001, PYPS at St. Andrew's was a going concern, attracting enormous crowds of young people who attended not only Synodical PYPS weekends, but also Triennium events in the United States. By the time the author was old enough to participate in PYPS at St. Andrew's, the group had not participated in Synod-organized events for several years. Indeed, until St. Andrew's hosted Fall Convention in 2010, the author assumed that PYPS at the Synod level had long since disappeared.

[83] Al Clarkson, correspondence with the author, September 13, 2023.

[84] PYPS Executive Meeting Minutes, January 22, 2000, 2001–2004 PYPS Executive & Council Meeting Minutes 1999–2000, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

- People who had not served on executive in any capacity, but who had otherwise been actively involved.
- Married couples who had yet to "age out" but who were no longer attending events because they felt that they no longer "belonged."[85]

To all of these groups, Ingram's question was the same: "are we doing enough?" The answer, apparently, was no. To resolve this, Ingram, in typical Presbyterian fashion, recommended that a committee be struck to tackle the matter. The committee would be responsible for, among other things: spiritual leadership development, a revamped communications plan (including an alumni newsletter), more "in-between-the-weekends" events, and, perhaps most importantly, "encouragement for older members of the society to stay involved in the society and in the church."[86] Even after "aging out," Ingram implied, PYPS alumni still had much to give to the church. "One role of this committee," Ingram said, "could be to investigate and guide older members of the society into what 'their next step' in the church could be."[87]

The opposite challenge, of course, was how to effectively reach people who were new to PYPS—especially where congregations and/or presbyteries had not actively promoted the organization. Indeed, one of the challenges noted in Ingram's 1992 report—one that kept coming up throughout the remainder of the decade—was that of communications. "Why don't people know about PYPS?" it was asked at a January 22, 2000, executive meeting. Discussion followed about whether a brochure, membership database, promotional video, and even a "PYPS Bus" could mitigate some of the communications challenges.[88] Five months later, the matter again came up at an executive meeting. "PYPS needs to advertize [sic]" it was stated. "We have an image problem, no-on knows who we are!"[89]

Fortunately, promotion would become easier with changes in technology that were making inroads in the years leading up to the new millennium.[90] The first PYPS email communique was sent around 1996, and in due course regular postage was relegated to mailing cheques when registering for events. By the 2010s, PYPS had entered the social media age, first with a Facebook group and later with an official Facebook page.[91] For nearly a decade, social media and email—along with a blog and website—were the primary means of communication among members of the PYPS community. In 2014, a series of short YouTube videos were also developed, primarily as

[85] Past President's Report, PYPS Executive Meeting Minutes, November 1, 1992, 1994–2011 PYPS Executive & Council Meeting Minutes 1999–2000, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] PYPS Executive Meeting Minutes, January 22, 2000, 2001–2004 PYPS Executive & Council Meeting Minutes, 1999–2000, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[89] PYPS Executive Meeting Minutes, June 18, 2000, 2001–2004 PYPS Executive & Council Meeting Minutes 1999–2000, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[90] Karin Beaumont-Cowan, hailing from the Presbytery of Algoma-North Bay, recalls the challenges of communications technology in the 1960s: "In 1966 I went to Toronto and became involved in PYPS on a Presbytery level (East Toronto) and it totally amazed me that they talked about 'communication problems' and given at the time they could call about 90% of their churches without it being long distance, I always said they'd no idea about communication problems given that where I came from there were many, many miles between our church and all were long distance calls!!"

[91] Facebook "groups" tended to be invitation-only affairs; "pages," meanwhile, could be joined by anyone. By about 2014, virtually all official CNOB PYPS correspondence was being handled through the latter.

recruitment tool.[92] These promotional videos were timely, as recruitment had become a pressing concern for those entrusted with seeing this once-vibrant youth ministry into the second decade of the 21st century.

The End Is Nigh: Stagnation and Decline, 2013–2018

Despite all of the slick social media posts—to say nothing of the dedication lavished on the organization by its executive—PYPS was in trouble. Weekend registrations were in decline, and within just a few years the society went from running three events annually to organizing only one.

Fall Convention was the first to go. Almost 50 people were in attendance when St. Andrew's, Lindsay, hosted from October 15–17, 2010. The following year saw about 40 youth assemble at St. Andrew's, Markham; similar numbers were reported in 2012, when Thornhill Presbyterian Church was hosting. By 2013, that number had plummeted to 27.[93] Few of those who gathered at St. Mark's, Don Mills, from October 11–13, 2013, likely realized that this would be the very last Fall Convention organized under the auspices of CNOB PYPS.

That is not to say that it was gone for good. An announcement issued through Facebook on October 2, 2014, implied that Fall Convention was merely on temporary hiatus. "We have new exciting things ahead for PYPS, and in order to bring the best we can ahead, there will be no Fall Convention," the message read.[94] A year went by, and on September 20, 2015, another announcement appeared on Facebook—one that not only appeared to seal the fate of future Fall Conventions, but also hinted at one of the challenges that would ultimately undermine the organization, namely, the time commitment required of an executive that was increasingly occupied with the demands of post-secondary life:

> Welcome back to school everyone! Fall is a busy time for not only you, but our executive as well. Throughout this transition, we are sorry to announce that there will be no PYPS event this Fall. Our exec has decided instead to focus our energy into reflecting on how [to] provide better services and events for the PYPS community, including taking the time to plan a fantastic Winter weekend for all of you. As this will be the second year without Fall Convention, we are considering restructuring events to different times during the year. We will continue to update you on this in the future however, in the meantime, we greatly appreciate your prayers and your feedback![95]

Perhaps realizing that Fall Conventions would not be returning, executive shifted the annual dance—always a hallmark of the October event—to Winter Weekend in 2016. While those who twirled about in the parish hall of Erindale Presbyterian Church in the evening of

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[92] All of these videos appear to have been shot on the same day at the same location: https://www.youtube.com/@presbyterianyoungpeoplesso8153.

[93] Because no records of registrations from the 2010–2017 period appear to exist, these figures are approximate and were derived from manually counting individual people in the group photos (where available) taken at each weekend.

[94] CNOB PYPS Facebook post, October 2, 2014.

[95] CNOB PYPS Facebook post, September 20, 2015.

February 13, 2016, no doubt enjoyed themselves, there was certainly a feeling that the end of an era was nigh.[96]

Spring Fellowship, which by this point in time was often branded as "May Camp," was also experiencing fluctuations in attendance. May Camp 2011, which was to have had as its theme "The Big Guy and You," was cancelled outright.[97] Only about two dozen registrants came to May Camp of 2012—barely enough to justify a weekend. Even so, this smaller and more intimate crowd seemed to dovetail nicely with the Reverend Will Ingram's theme address on unplugging from the hustle and bustle of a busy world and experiencing the quietness of God's presence.[98]

For 2013 and 2014, May Camp was organized jointly by CNOB and SWO PYPS and took place at Camp Kintail. A cursory glance at group photos taken on both occasions, though, reveals that less than half of those in attendance typically hailed from the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda. These joint events represented an interesting attempt to collaborate with the sister synod, yet neither contributed to much-needed growth in PYPS east of Kitchener.[99]

A year later, in 2015, May Camp returned to Glen Mhor/Cairn with nearly 40 participants signed up. Not since Fall Convention of 2012 had a weekend had so many registrants. But this was merely a flash in the pan. Any hopes of revival were dashed when a planned 2016 spring camp was cancelled on account of "low registrations."[100] Spring Camp was cancelled for a second year in row in 2017—with no rationale given.[101] Never again would a CNOB PYPS event happen at one of the synod-run camps.

That left Winter Weekend, which was held continuously over the last five years of the organization's existence. Attendance was not great, usually hovering between 20 and 29 people, and with both Fall Convention and May Camp on their way out, Winter Weekend's fate was all but sealed. The very last of these events—and what turned out to be the final event ever organized by CNOB PYPS—took place at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, in February 2017. When that weekend wrapped up, a mere 19 participants posed for the traditional group photo.

Following the aforementioned cancellation of Spring Camp 2017, seven months passed without a word from the executive. On December 11, 2017, the executive issued a statement announcing the formal dissolution of CNOB PYPS after more than half a century:

> Recently the Synod of Central Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda had their annual meeting and decided to pull funding from our ministry. We felt that, in the face of declining attendance, the money that has been allotted to PYPS in the past could be more faithfully distributed among other missions of the church. While we are saddened by the end of this ministry that has changed our lives so positively, we understand and respect the decision that was made and know that the church will use the money to help our hurting world faithfully and with love.

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[96] Author's recollection.

[97] CNOB PYPS Facebook post, May 5, 2011.

[98] Author's recollection.

[99] During the author's time in PYPS, most attendees seemed to come from congregations located in Kitchener-Waterloo and parts of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), with a few coming from Barrie.

[100] CNOB PYPS Facebook post, May 5, 2016.

[101] CNOB PYPS Facebook post, May 15, 2017.

> We are proud of this ministry and of the way we have affected the lives of those involved over the years. Although CNOB PYPS is no more, we know that God will still work through us to change the world for the better. We will not stop living for the well-being of creation because that is the purpose of conscious human life.
> Thank you so much for all of your support over the years, be you a participant, an alumnus, a church, or simply a fan. Without you, we could not have made the difference we made and we will never stop thanking God for that.[102]

A final salute to PYPS, planned for current friends and alumni, and held at Knox Presbyterian Church, Oakville, was cancelled on February 1, 2018—not surprisingly, due to low registrations.[103] Five days later, another message appeared on Facebook: "Hello dearest PYPS community!," the message began. "There has been a suggestion that, in the wake of Winter weekend's cancellation, we invite you all to come out to Knox Oakville's Sunday Service to spend some time in fellowship as one last CNOB PYPS hurrah. See you there!" The post generated next to no response, and there is no record of any official representation at this service.[104] After half a century, CNOB PYPS was no more.

The Perfect Storm: Declining Attendance

So what accounted for this downturn in registrations, and in numbers of people coming to PYPS events over the last five or so years of its existence?

The obvious answer can be traced to what was going on in the denomination as a whole; namely, there were fewer and fewer youth populating the pews in churches across the synod. In the 1970s, a critical mass of Presbyterian young people still existed across the synod—even though some presbyteries might well have struggled with maintaining regional young people's societies. The same could not be said for the mid-to-late 2010s, with fewer baptisms and confirmations, decreasing Sunday School attendance, and increasingly smaller youth groups being the rule rather than the exception.

Much has been written about the factors precipitating this phenomenon,[105] but a few key shifts are worth noting here, shifts that combined with general denominational decline to create a perfect storm:

1. **Was PYPS undermined by the lack of Synod staff support?** Some people who had otherwise been faithful attendees at PYPS weekends were never seen again after Synod ceased to fund a Youth Ministry Coordinator position halfway through 2013.[106] This might have been a mere coincidence—or might this change in leadership have caused some to have doubts about the organization's future? Conversely, it has been suggested by one alumnus that PYPS "started to get less youth-run and more adult advisor-run by the end of 2012, and perhaps

[102] CNOB PYPS Facebook post, December 11, 2017.
[103] CNOB PYPS Facebook post, February 1, 2018.
[104] CNOB PYPS Facebook post, February 6, 2018.
[105] For example, see Brian Clarke and Stuart Macdonald, *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017).
[106] Author's recollection.

that led to less desire or need for youth to actually get involved, but that's mostly conjecture."[107]

2. **Was PYPS undermined by archaic polity or structure?** As noted, relegating PYPS to Synod—especially as the presbytery-based societies faded away—might have been part of the problem.[108] Most of the PCC's rank-and-file are likely to interface with their denomination in the context of their home congregation, perhaps in their presbytery, and certainly through decisions that come down from General Assembly. By contrast, few are aware of Synod's function within church polity. A strong local youth group might have functioned well independently of a synod-sponsored society—and connections among youth who grew up together in their home communities (or, especially, camp) were inevitably going to be stronger there than in something as geographically vast as a synod. This in turn might have created a barrier to participation, with cliques forming among attendees.[109]

3. **Was PYPS undermined by the PCC's inability to come to agreement on questions of full inclusion?** "I think a huge factor in the demise of PYPS was not being welcomed for being who we were," reflects Stephanie Banks, who served as the group's co-president in 2017. "There were many LGBTQIA+ members who didn't feel welcomed by the church. Many of us were allies, and spent countless hours trying to make a safe space for everyone. While PYPS was a safe space for our community, the church community they returned to wasn't."[110]

All of this in turn had a direct impact on the governance of PYPS—not least because of its mandatory "retirement age" of 25. Imagine if, upon reaching mandatory retirement, senators and Supreme Court justices simply were not replaced. Neither institution would be able to function. The same was true with CNOB PYPS, particularly when it came to the composition of executive.

For more than a decade, executive positions had not been filled through a formal election process. Rather, those wishing to serve in this capacity were invited to step up and volunteer for the job. An application form issued in 2016 spells out the various roles and responsibilities of the executive and offers some subtle clues about the challenges facing an organization with dwindling membership.[111]

There were two presidents, one internal and the other external. The former was not only responsible for things like chairing meetings and managing leadership recruitment, but it also appears that they were increasingly responsible for tasks that, in a previous age, would have been delegated to a treasurer (such as "overseeing PYPS finances and inventory"). The external president, meanwhile, was saddled with tasks that in any other organization would have been handled by a communications secretary.

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[107] Rosemary Brett-Horn, correspondence with the author, August 30, 2023. This was not merely conjecture, either. Mike Snider made the same observation in his July 10, 2023 interview with the author.

[108] Ingram, in conversation with the author, August 24, 2023.

[109] Crawford, in conversation with the author, July 20, 2023.

[110] Stephanie Banks, correspondence with the author, August 8, 2023.

[111] CNOB PYPS Leadership Application form, posted to Facebook, February 24, 2016.

So, PYPS was faced with a double challenge: not only were registrations going down, but few people were apparently stepping up to fill much-needed roles on the executive. This state of affairs is confirmed in recollections from Ms. Banks, the former co-president: “There weren't enough younger youth to fill the positions needed or to keep PYPS going,” she explains. “As the exec team aged out we all became busy with school and life, with little to no support.”[112]

The Perfect Storm: Logistical Issues

While “declining registrations” was the main reason cited for recurring cancellations after 2013, a number of logistical issues also combined to undermine CNOB PYPS.

For one thing, it was apparently becoming a challenge to find congregations that were willing and able to commit the time and resources necessary to running a weekend. One alumnus recalled that “it was tricky to find congregations to host everyone” by about 2012, when she aged out.[113] Another alumnus was even more blunt about the matter: “Waning interest from congregations,” she said, when asked about reasons for decline over those last few years. “It seemed more and more apparent that congregations didn't want to help youth thrive in the church,” she concluded.[114] The same indifference from congregations faced by presbytery-based PYPS groups four decades before was coming back to haunt the organization. By the late 2010s, though, this had implications vis-à-vis the PCC’s Leading With Care policies. Fewer billets and adult supervisors meant less overall supervision, which in turn led to events being cancelled.[115]

There were also concerns about cost.[116] This had long been something of an issue for PYPS, going back several decades. By the waning years, it was costing between $60 and $65 to attend a Winter Weekend event, with Spring events costing anywhere from $75 to $90 per person (early-bird registrations usually received a discount).[117] These costs may well have made going to PYPS inaccessible for some participants—particularly if they were not subsidized by their home congregation.

A Challenge for the Church Today

Rising costs. Fewer congregations willing or able to host weekends. An aging executive faced with no obvious succession plan. Disillusionment with the PCC on questions of inclusion. The migration of PYPS from presbytery into Synod and the corresponding lack of visibility in congregations with existing youth groups. Lack of support from Synod. Lack of interest from youth. Enormous demographic changes affecting mainline denominations in Canada. The evidence suggests that all of these factors combined to spell the end of CNOB PYPS.

There is one more thing to consider: was PYPS a victim of the so-called “one-eared Mickey Mouse model of youth ministry” (in which youth ministry is tangential to the Church,

[112] Banks, correspondence with the author, August 8, 2023.
[113] Brett-Horn, correspondence with the author, August 30, 2023.
[114] Banks, correspondence with the author, August 8, 2023.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Brett-Horn, correspondence with the author, August 30, 2023.
[117] This information was gleaned from assorted CNOB PYPS event fliers posted to Facebook between 2014 and 2018.

rather than something integrated into the institution)?[118] The difficulties faced by several presbytery-based PYPS groups in the 1970s—as well as their counterparts on executive after about 2013—in trying to stir up interest among congregations, seems to suggest as much. But so does the absence of any organization into which PYPS alumni could "graduate" after aging out. Where is the equivalent organization geared towards young Presbyterians in their 30s and 40s? Are there ample enough opportunities for "the young people" to get involved in the life of their church once they have crested the magic age of 25? Were (and are) intergenerational connections lacking in (some) congregations? Perhaps.[119]

All of these questions are vital for the PCC to consider, particularly as it undergoes reimagining and reinvention. "What was PYPS preparing young people for by the end?" asks Dr. Blair Bertrand. "The church that it originally aimed for ended in the mid-60s and so there were modifications and updates but nothing could, in the end, escape the inevitable."[120]

Conclusion

The Presbyterian Young People's Society in the Synod of Central Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda has long since been consigned to the ash heap of ecclesiastical history. While it is gone, those wonderful weekends a distant memory, it leaves behind a rich legacy that is still fondly recalled by alumni to this day. It is fitting, then, that we wrap up this paper with some of their reflections:

> *Overall, I always felt the Holy Spirit present at the PYPS weekend retreats. The worship services, meals and sleeping arrangements were well organized by the local congregations. The music also helped to prepare us to hear the professional presentations by our speakers. The topics were relevant, and fellowship was so important to our spiritual growth!*[121]
>
> – Janice Jarrett (née Ross)
>
> *PYPS kept me in the church, opened me to camp, and mission work. It was a place where faith wasn't a taboo subject, where friendships and relationships were significant. It offered spiritual formation at a time in life when that could be uncomfortable. There was a pride in being able to say "I am among Presbyterians."*[122]
>
> – The Reverend Dr. Will Ingram

[118] "In a 1989 article for *Youthworker Journal*, Stuart Cummings-Bond declared, 'Churches with strong youth programs have usually controlled adolescence by corralling it, by institutionalizing it—and not within the daily rhythm of the church, but outside of it, in a smaller circle that is tangent to the larger one, like a one-eared Mickey Mouse.'" See John Berard, "Mickey Mouse and Youth Ministry," *Rupert's Land News*, https://rupertslandnews.ca/mickey-mouse-and-youth-ministry/

[119] Crawford, in conversation with the author, July 20, 2023.

[120] Blair Bertrand, email message to author, July 21, 2023.

[121] Jarrett, email message to author, September 17, 2023.

[122] Ingram, in conversation with the author, August 24, 2023.

Meeting people and friends from all over Ontario was my favourite part ... The leadership skills that I developed while convening, or at least being on committees are skills that I still use today. Because of camp weekends, it helped grow my love for the outdoors ... I love that part of my life and it was at PYPS that I really got introduced to my God.[123]

– Dallas Green

The PYPS ministry happened because of dedicated folks who loved the Lord and were willing to become involved so that these events could continue on and bring others to Christ. We give thanks to God for the way He lead all of us through those years. So grateful for the many, many congregations who were willing to play hosts to the events; to the hundreds of folks who were involved in billeting; too many areas to touch on all of them. Without that this ministry wouldn't have been possible.[124]

– Karin Beaumont-Cowan

When I started going to PYPS in 2005 (I was 17), I was in a really dark time in my life. Meeting the people I did and having the first experience I had at Camp Glen Mhor (or Cairn as it's known now), I felt like I was waking up for the first time in a long time. It gave me a place where I felt I belonged, which I had never really felt before, even in my own congregation. Now that I'm a Sunday School teacher, I still draw on the way people treated me to make sure my own kids know that they are loved and accepted, and that the church can me a community, not just a place you go on Sundays. The thing I will remember PYPS for the most is that feeling of belonging, not just socially, but that God actually cared about me, and wanted me to feel loved and that I was a part of something.[125]

– Rosemary Brett-Horn

It was such a safe space to be yourself. My favourite portions of the day were the morning songs. All the youth so tired to be up early, but the exec being so energetic and made everyone ready for the day. Additionally, the open conversations with other like minded youth. It was a huge portion of my life and definitely helped make me the person I am today.[126]

– Stephanie Banks

For more than fifty years, PYPS nurtured faith, fun, and friendship among the youth of this Synod until circumstances made it impossible to carry on as before. But God moves in a mysterious way. In the fullness of time, perhaps the legacy of this storied organization will kindle

[123] Dallas Green, correspondence with the author, September 12, 2023.
[124] Beaumont-Cowan, email message to author, July 24, 2023.
[125] Brett-Horn, correspondence with the author, August 30, 2023.
[126] Banks, correspondence with the author, August 8, 2023.

a passion for new forms of youth ministry and inspire a new generation of Canadian Presbyterians to take up their cross and follow the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

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A Korean-Canadian Presence in The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Angie Song

The history of a Korean-Canadian Church relationship in The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) dates back to the late 19th century with the arrival of Canadian missionaries in Korea. The partnership in ministry has spanned more than a century and the connection continues to this day with the diaspora Korean church in Canada. In the early years of immigration, the church became the centre of the Korean immigrant life and the PCC welcomed the new community into its own. This history will be explored in this essay—how the relationship has transformed all involved and evolved over the years. First, we will study the PCC missionary connection in Korea that began in 1898 and the mission that moved to Koreans in Japan after Church Union in 1927. Secondly, the experiences of early immigrant life for Koreans in Canada will explain the need for the church and its role in those years. Then, the growth of the Korean churches necessitated the establishment of Korean Ministries in Canada, an official ministry of the PCC in 1984. Discussions during its annual consultations led to the establishment of the Han-Ca presbyteries in 1997—two Korean language presbyteries that stepped out of the church's historical practice. Lastly, we will survey the denominational involvement of Korean leaders and churches in the PCC outside the Korean church context.

PCC Missionary Connections

Soon after the advent of the PCC in 1875, Presbyterian missionaries arrived in Korea to share the Gospel. James Scarth Gale, sent from the University of Toronto's YMCA in 1888, translated parts of the New Testament into Korean and established a school. Oliver Avison, who went through a Presbyterian board in 1893, went as a medical missionary and established the Severance Hospital. After reading about Korea in a book, William John McKenzie of Cape Breton went as an independent missionary without the PCC's support and ministered in Sorae from 1893 to 1895. Sorae was host to one of the earliest Christian communities in Korea and became the cradle of Protestant Christianity in Korea.[1]

After a number of distinguish Canadians had been there before them, the first official party arrived in September 1898. So Kyung Jo, one of the first Korean Presbyterian ordained ministers, befriended McKenzie and wrote a letter to invite Canadians to come to Korea.[2] In his book *Missionaries for the Record*, Geoffrey Johnston writes: "McKenzie's romantic story, plus the appeal from the Christian community in Sorae, kindled a remarkable enthusiasm in the Maritimes."[3] A. F Robb, a student in Halifax who later became a missionary, took up the cause and convinced the Synod of the Maritimes by 1897. The field was officially adopted and

[1] Geoffrey Johnston, *Missionaries for the Record: Letters from Overseas to the Presbyterian Church in Canada: 1846–60 (*Bellville, ON: Guardian Books, 2005), 373.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., 374.

supplied by the PCC.[4] The PCC's Women's Missionary Society (WMS) was particularly touched by the need of Korean women and the society in the Maritimes said, "We will take up the work."[5] The first team arrived in Korea in September of 1898 with William Grierson, Duncan McRae and William Foote. Canadians entered into a field that eventually extended all the way up the east coast of Korea from south of Wonsan to the Chinese border and even followed migrating Koreans across the border into China and as far as Vladivostock, Russia.[6]

Korea became the church's third major mission field after India and China. The WMS also gave a glowing report of the work in Korea in *The Story of Our Missions*. "Wonderful stories were coming from the missionaries. No other non-Christian land had heard the gospel so quickly or so gladly."[7] In reviewing the PCC's magazine, *Presbyterian Record*, Geoffrey Johnston notes:

> The Canadians arrived in time to take part in one of the most significant accessions to the Christian faith in the 20th century. Missionary reports speak, at times almost breathlessly, of trying to keep up with the rapid expansion of the Christian church. What they could do by themselves was limited; the expansion of the community and its nurture was almost entirely in the hands of the Korean colleagues, some of whom are named, many of whom simply appear as "workers."[8]

Johnston writes that a number of articles stressed the qualities of the Korean church: "It kept the Sabbath, read the Bible, paid its own way, prayed fervently and witnessed to the neighbours." He also suggests that the main reason noted in the literature is that Christianity offered deliverance from the spirits of an animistic worldview.[9] David Kim-Cragg suggests that the New Testament translated into *hangeul*, the common language of the Korean people, and distributed by 1884 gave political inspiration even before Protestant missionaries arrived in Korea. Kim-Cragg notes that Christianity was *a mixed bag for Koreans* and the relationship, "while marked by real warmth and deep mutual respect was also a relationship fraught with tension … Many found the missionaries who promoted it a welcome support in a time when their country was isolated and their national pride crushed by Japan's Machiavellian annexation of their homeland." [10] Yet when the early missionaries to Korea remarked on the similarities between Manchuria and the Canadian prairies, "they did so without awareness of the fact that the colonial commitments of the Mission Enterprise on display in Canada's northwest ran directly counter to the political aspirations of the Koreans to whom they professed to minister."[11]

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[4] John S. Moir, *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Burlington, ON: Eagle Press, 2004), 154.

[5] Lois Klempa and Rosemary Doran, *Certain Women Amazed Us: The Women's Missionary Society, Their Story, 1864–2002* (Toronto: Women's Missionary Society, 2002), 79.

[5] Ibid., 375.

[6] Johnston, *Missionaries for the Record*, 373.

[7] Klempa and Doran, *Certain Women Amazed Us*, 79.

[8] Ibid., 375.

[9] Johnston, *Missionaries for the Record*, 401.

[10] David Kim-Cragg. *Water from Dragon's Well: The History of a Korean-Canadian Church Relationship* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), 7–8.

[11] Ibid., 51.

By 1907, the Presbytery of Korea was established and ten years later, missionaries in *The Presbyterian Record* remarked that the moderator and most of the committee work and speaking on the floor was accomplished by Korean church leaders in the General Assembly of 1917 in Pyeng Yang.[12] The mission grew and matured unusually well in these years. WMS missionaries Louise and Elizabeth McCully established the Martha Wilson Memorial Institute to train Bible women for the church, greatly adding to the church's strength. Schools were built, especially for girls who had little opportunity to learn.[13] Canada sent nurses to train Korean nurses and built new hospitals. In 1905, there were 492 members which grew to 2095 members by 1916 and 6015 members by 1924.[14] The Korean church developed toward self-reliance much more quickly than other Asian churches.[15]

This movement of Christian growth happened under the years of Japanese rule while Koreans attempted to gain independence. Though Korean church leaders criticized Canadian missionaries for upholding their privileged status with the Japanese occupiers, the WMS's resolution in 1919 to the General Assembly expressed "sympathy for the Korean church and protested against methods employed by Japanese officials in dealing with unarmed and unresisting Koreans, and against the brutal treatment of prisoners and more especially against such treatment of women and children."[16]

The PCC's ministry in Korea did not last much longer. During Church Union in 1925, when the majority of the PCC churches joined others to form the United Church of Canada, only three out of 49 missionaries in Korea remained with the PCC. The Federal Council of Churches and Missions in Korea had long felt concern for the many Koreans emigrating to Japan during occupation. Some Korean congregations had sent missionaries to Japanese cities where Koreans were concentrated, but an organized approach was needed. Luther and Miriam Young, former PCC missionaries in Korea, arrived in Kobe in 1927 with denominational support and began working with the Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC).[17] Under Young's leadership, Korean Christians in Japan were able to establish 72 churches and prayer meeting places with 3, 192 Christians, 24 night schools and 9 kindergartens by the end of 1934.[18]

The Korean churches in Japan soon asked for their central governing body to be established in Japan and created a new denomination—Chosen Christian Church—with three presbyteries and a general assembly.[19] Though the new church flourished, it was not long before Imperial Japan began to "flex her political, economic and military muscles—a process which was to continue until the outbreak of the Pacific War."[20] Korean and Japanese Christians and foreign missionaries suffered under the pressure of the government. The Religious Bodies Law of 1939 was a step towards the control of all religions in Japan and the elevation of Shinto, the national religion of Japan. All churches were required to amalgamate, register and speak Japanese in all their meetings and worship. Missionaries returned to Canada before the war broke

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[12] Johnston, *Missionaries for the Record,* 400.

[13] Klempa and Doran, *Certain Women Amazed Us,* 80.

[14] Ibid., 379.

[15] Johnston, *Missionaries for the Record,* 401.

[16] Klempa and Doran, *Certain Women Amazed Us*, 157.

[17] Robert K. Anderson, "Burning Bush and Chigge—The Presbyterian Church in Canada and The Korean Christian Church in Japan," *Renewal Fellowship*, February 13, 2001, https://renewal-fellowship.ca/92/.

[18] "Brief History of the Korean Christian Church in Japan," Vision Fellowship, 2017, https://www.visionfellowship.org/ko/재일동포-캐나다-선교사-전시관/

[19] Anderson, "Burning Bush and Chigge."

[20] Ibid.

out, Koreans were drafted to work in jobs left empty by those enlisted in the military, and Korean pastors were imprisoned and sent to work camps or martyred.[21]

The "underground" Korean church re-emerged after the war in 1945 and the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) disassociated from the Union of Churches of Japan and was re-instated. Three years later, the PCC sent a team of visitors in response to an appeal from the Koreans in Japan to assess the future of church partnership. Missionaries like the Youngs and Paul and Jean Rumball returned to Japan, but under different a premise. KCCJ now held all the executive power and the shift led to tensions and differences of opinions with the Canadian denomination. Eventually, "the PCC and the KCCJ were recognized as 'sister churches' rather than 'sending' and 'receiving' churches. It is this relationship which remains to this day."[22] The two churches worked together under the Church-to-Church Agreements in initiatives like the Scholarship Programme, which offered training in Canada for promising leaders, and The Fingerprinting Abolition Movement in the 1980s, aimed to abolish the fingerprinting requirement for Koreans in Japan.[23] As an associated member of KCCJ, the PCC continues to partner with the Korean Church in Japan. Most recently, the KCCJ Moderator addressed the 2023 General Assembly with David MacIntosh, son of long-time missionaries Jack and Beth MacIntosh, who works with the denomination.

Early Immigrant Life and the Church

Thanks to sponsorships of Canadian missionaries serving in Korea, there were a number of Korean students studying in Canada in the early 1900s. Some of these students remained in Canada as professionals and pastors. But immigration did not see significantly increase until after the Korean War (1950–53), with a growing number of foreign students supported by nongovernment and civilian aid agencies.[24] Korea encouraged emigration because of the poor living conditions, food shortages pressured by a fast-growing population, high unemployment rate, political instability, and a military dictatorship in Korea at the time.[25] In 1963, official ties were made between countries and Korean immigration to Canada began. Canada opened their doors wider in 1967 by enacting the Immigration Act to accept more visible minorities and Canada's official multiculturalism policy of 1971 took it a step further.[26] The majority of Koreans immigrated from 1973 to 1979 with a second wave in the late 1990s.

In an interview, Cheol Soon Park, a retired minister of Vancouver Korean Presbyterian Church and former moderator of the General Assembly, shared his immigration experience. Park left Korea because of the political turmoil of Chun Doo-hwan's regime; Chun was an authoritarian dictator who shut down all the universities in Korea due to the student demonstrations against his oppressive methods. This happened after Cheol Soon Park's first semester of his MDiv degree. In disagreement of the political regime and criticism for the church

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Robert K. Anderson, *Kimchi and Maple Leaves under the Rising Sun* (Belleville, ON: Guardian Books, 2001), 333; 358.

[24] In Kee Kim, "A Brief History of the Korean Immigrant Church in Canada," in *People of Faith, People of Jeong (Qing): The Asian Canadian Churches of Today for Tomorrow*, edited by Nam Soon Song et al. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2020), 30.

[25] Lauren Lee and Sarah Choe, "From Korea to Canada: A Journey of Faith," in Stories of Faith: Blog Series by St. Timothy Presbyterian Church, June 3, 2019, https://timothypc.com/korea-to-canada/.

[26] Kim, "A Brief History," 31.

in Korea, Park immigrated to Canada in 1983 with hopes to serve in the Korean immigrant church. Park appreciated his education and participation in the PCC. During his early years in the PCC, he was told, "since you came to Canada, you have to become Canadian. Forget about Korea, leave your past behind." Park noted his own naivety as well as his goodwill towards the church. Everyone, including himself, was learning in those early days.[27]

As In Kee Kim—minister at St. Timothy Presbyterian Church in Toronto—writes in the book *People of Faith, People of Jeong (Qing)*:

> They came to Canada for a better future for themselves and for their children. The first Korean immigrants came to Canada with great expectation and hope. But immigrant life was not as easy as they anticipated. What they discovered when they landed in this foreign land was a very harsh reality.[28]

Living in a different culture with a language barrier was a challenge for new immigrants. Many had university degrees in Korea, but without a bridging program and lack of English proficiency, menial labour jobs were their only option. Long work hours, loss of status, racial discrimination, and social isolation made the early years difficult. Kim writes: "This was a very dehumanizing environment and experience. The church was like an oasis in the desert. The first community the Korean immigrants established was the church. It is not an exaggeration to say that Korean immigrant history is church history."[29]

Kim suggests that perhaps Koreans sought out the Presbyterian Church because the earliest Koreans arriving in Canada were seminary students sponsored by Canada's Christian missionaries.[30] The Education for Mission office of the Board of World Mission suggests in a leaflet that "many new Korean Canadians come from the Presbyterian church of Korea, the largest Protestant denomination in the nation. It is natural then, for them to gravitate to the Church as they seek spiritual and social nurture."[31]

The first Korean churches in Canada were established in Montreal and Vancouver, starting in 1963.[32] Korean immigrants in Toronto worshipped at Knox Presbyterian Church on Spadina Avenue, but desired a service in their own language. In partnership with the PCC, 75 worshippers gathered for the inaugural service of Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church in September 1967.[33] The church was more than a place of religious worship; it was like a community centre that offered settlement services with social, psychological and spiritual benefits. Church members were eager to help other Korean immigrants. For example, church members would go to the airport when a Korean Airlines plane landed and take in strangers for the night. They would help newcomers find low-income housing, work, school for their children, and settle into their new life in Canada, which included inviting them to church.[34]

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[27] Cheolsoon Park, in discussion with the author, May 2023.

[28] Kim, "A Brief History," 30.

[29] Ibid., 31.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Board of World Mission, "You Are There … Korean Ministries in Canada," in *Education for Mission* (Toronto: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1985).

[32] Kim, "A Brief History," 32.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 34.

The church was a home away from home where you could speak the language, eat Korean food, be encouraged through the Scriptures, and find strength with others who were experiencing similar challenges. According to Kim, people dealt with fear by insulating themselves within the church as it became a refuge from the hostile society, as "Korean immigrants worked in Canadian society but their 'real' life happened in the church. They were in this society to survive but they were in the church to enjoy 'life.'"[35]

Sukhyon Han, a minister emeritus of Vaughan Community Church, recalls being awakened by his brother-in-law on the day after he arrived in Canada in 1974 to go to a church choir practice. After having attended a large and established church in Korea, the immigrant church in Canada seemed to him disorganized, immature and "unchurchly" in comparison. At first Han felt uneasy and angry about the situation. But after a powerful encounter with Jesus, he and his wife, Theresa, were called to serve the Korean immigrant church in the PCC.[36]

Korean ministers often interpreted the immigrant life as a calling from God and understood that suffering was not just for their own survival but for God's holy purpose. Kim writes: "They believed that they were sent by God to this land to be blessed. They believed that this blessing would pass on from one generation to the next generation."[37] The higher and nobler purpose was to live God's purpose for them here in Canada and the world through an interest and investment in mission work.

But the early years of the Korean Church in Canada were also fraught with division and fighting. Kim believed that many sought recognition in the church for their diminished existence in other areas of their lives: "Pains, hurts and struggles in society were poured out into the church. The church tried her best to absorb their pain but sometimes it was too much for the church to bear."[38] Leaders not elected as elders felt devalued, hurt, and deeply disappointed, showing "how diminished their existence had been in their immigrant life."[39] The church was also divided on whether the pulpit was a place to talk about the political turmoil in Korea, causing distress within the community.

Han estimates that approximately 1/5 of the Korean population in Canada at that time were Christians and at least 50% of Korean immigrants in the church were not Christians before arriving in Canada. This remains a reality today. According to the 2021 Gallup Korea poll, 17% of South Koreans identify as Protestant; this is about 8.5 million people. About two-thirds of these are Presbyterians.[40] This is contrasted by Statistics Canada's report of the same year which notes that 58.3% of Koreans in Canada reported a Christian religion.[41] The role of the Korean immigrant church in Canada can account for this significant difference.

But the church was the social centre of immigration life, which meant many new church members were not rooted in Christian and church culture, causing friction and division. Han suggests that denominational and structural clashes occurred as people came from different

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Sukhyon Han, in discussion with the author, May 2023.

[37] Kim, "A Brief History," 35.

[38] Ibid., 37.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Gallup Korea, "Korean Religion 1984–2021 (1) Status of Religion," May 18, 2021, https://www-gallup-cokr.translate.goog/gallupdb/reportContent.asp?seqNo=1208&_x_tr_sch=http&_x_tr_sl=ko&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc.

[41] Statistics Canada, "The Canadian Census: A Rich Portrait of the Country's Religious and Ethnocultural Diversity," October 26, 2022, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026b-eng.htm.

Christian traditions as well as leadership misconduct led to a mistrust of pastors and elders. In parallel experience to the United Church of Canada's relationship with the Korean church, Kim-Cragg writes:

> The development of Korean Christianity had a significant impact on the UCC and the Canadian religious landscape … With regard to the function of Christianity in preserving a distinct Korean culture, just as the early Korean congregations had done in Korea, Korean Christian communities in Canada used the church as a way to preserve and promote their culture and language in a strange land.[42]

The Emerging Korean Ministries in Canada

In an article about the PCC's ministry in the early 20th century as new immigrants were moving to western Canada, Peter Bush writes: "The Presbyterian Church had a reputation for trying to reach immigrants who are not part of their traditional ethnic base."[43] This openness to other ethnicities continued with the mid-century immigration of non-European newcomers. Korean Christians sensed the PCC's willingness and desire to be a more diverse church and did their best to accommodate a new people group amidst tensions and misunderstandings.[44]

By 1985, the PCC recognized the significance of the Korean immigrant church in Canada, which had twelve Korean congregations, five of them in the Toronto area.[45] A leaflet by the Education for Mission office of the Board of World Mission communicated to the Presbyterian church that 30% of the Korean population of 40 million were Christians with "Biblical knowledge, evangelical zeal exemplified in personal witness and stewardship commitment" that resulted in "their ever increasing numeral growth and in the independent spirit that inspires them to strive through tithing for congregation self-support and self-propagation."[46] Of the 80, 000 Korean immigrants in Canada in 1985, 40, 000 resided in the Toronto area. After 20 years of immigration, there were about 100 Korean Christian congregations worshipping across Canada, of which half were independent congregations with no Canadian denominational affiliation.[47]

The first consultation of the Korean Ministries in Canada (KMC) was a small gathering of Korean ministers and elders in PCC churches "who realized that Korean church leaders should have a support system."[48] In 1984, Rev. Andrew Lee was appointed the director for Korean ministries by the PCC and the annual consultations began to take more formal shape as well as the ministry. The General Assembly supported these consultations financially, but the majority of the support came from Korean PCC churches.[49] As a director, Lee served as a liaison between English-speaking and independent Korean congregations, assisting Koreans to establish

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[42] Kim-Cragg. *Water from Dragon's Well*, 235.

[43] Peter G. Bush, "'Why Should the Church Confine Her Labours to those Who May Show a Presbyterian Pedigree?': The Presbyterian Church Responds to the Non-English-Speaking Immigrants in western Canada, 1893–1925," in *The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History Papers 1997*, 29.

[44] Han, in discussion with the author, May 2023.

[45] "You Are There."

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Andrew Lee, KMC Consultation Report, Preface, Korean Ministries of Canada, Toronto, Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, 1992.

[49] Ibid.

congregations, find ministers and help with the education of PCC procedures. The role was to help independent Korean congregations without a denomination join the PCC as well as incorporate split churches that went independent. The goal of the ministry was to also promote fellowship among Korean churches within the PCC and help them transition and settle into the new denominational governance structure.[50]

It is interesting to note that the KMC initiative came at a time when the General Assembly (GA) was discussing the declining numbers in the PCC. In a GA report in 1982 titled "Church Growth to Double in the Eighties," the denomination planned to focus on planting new congregations and "home missions," responding to outreach opportunities to "minorities in their midst."[51] A special report given during that same GA by Korean Christian Church in London, Ontario, states that the congregation had grown numerically as well as spiritually: "Of about 600 Koreans living in the London area, 90% are now Christian, most of them having been converted since coming to Canada."[52]

The table of contents from the KMC consultation in 1992 reveals that Korean church leaders were discussing the community consciousness between the Korean churches and the upper courts. Part of this conversation included a discussion with Glen Davis about a Korean-Canadian presbytery.[53] That same year, the Korean Ministries Advisory Committee reported to the General Assembly that "a major concern for members of this Committee is how the Korean constituency can take its place within the larger context of the Church. The Committee has struggled with this at a number of levels."[54] These conversations were leading to the establishment of Korean-language presbyteries in the PCC.

As the Korean churches were forming their identity within the PCC, a second wave of Korean immigration arose in the late 1990s due to a national financial crisis in Korea and an influx of foreign students learning English in Canada. Unlike the first Korean immigrants who established new churches, most newcomers during those years joined existing Korean congregations and some churches grew exponentially large. During these years, Korean churches focused on buying or building their own facilities instead of renting from existing churches and increased their ministry for the second-generation children, youth and young adults.[55]

Establishing the Han-Ca Presbyteries

At the request of Korean congregations to the 1990 Korean Consultation, a Special Studies committee was created to research the Formation of a Korean language-specific presbytery. A report was presented a year later that was sent to Sessions for approval and then on to the 1992 GA. In it, the churches expressed gratitude for being able to minister within the PCC as immigrants to Canada, noting the long mission history and their desire to fulfill their responsibilities as PCC members. But with its growing needs, the Korean Church also recognized challenges in continuing on that journey. The report cites such reasons for the difficulties in denomination participation as cultural and language barriers, a lack of denominational belonging, and a weak sense of unity in ministries and missions within their

[50] Han, in discussion with the author, May 2023.
[51] *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* [*A&P*] 1982, 240.
[52] Ibid., 457.
[53] Lee, KMC Consultation Report.
[54] *A&P*, 1992, 571.
[55] Kim, "A Brief History," 33.

presbytery. The report states: "It is also causing many Korean congregations who have hoped to join PCC to hesitate and turn away."[56]

Though the Korean churches were growing their local congregations and ministries, the leaders felt a limitation in their denominational involvement. Due to cultural difference and a language barrier, Korean churches were functionally congregationalist and growing discontented at the non-contextual support the presbytery offered and their own inability to participate in the matters of church business. Criticism came from the presbyteries at the low attendance and participation of Korean church leaders, which was equally met with the frustration of being disregarded due to cultural and linguistic differences. There were incidents of the presbytery's ineffective mediation when involved in conflict resolution within a Korean church due to the struggle to understand the issue from a cultural standpoint. And at times, receiving ministry support was conditional upon upholding a polity that was often inaccessible to Korean churches who needed help learning new processes.[57]

The report by the Special Studies Committee states this purpose for the formation of language-based presbyteries:

> Our vision is to join the mainstream more actively with the preservation of our identity. We do not wish to remain an ornament, a part of an assortment of goods for the PCC, rather we hope to contribute and serve in greater capacity by becoming a full-fledged member of the church. We hope to become a church that fulfills the vision of forming a multicultural church in line with reality. We hope to bring out our unique and creative qualities and our passion and diligence, which are some of the qualities of Korean immigrant Christians. Thereby, we want to serve our churches, our communities, and our society in large as more enabled and structure members.[58]

Because of the decision-making authority that exists at the presbytery level, they believed that allowing a Korean-language presbytery would give church leaders a voice, empowering them to participate in the ministry of the denomination.

There were reservations and resistance in the denomination to the idea of a language-specific presbytery. First, there was no precedent for this type of presbytery and many feared that it would create unnecessary division. What would stop each ethnic group from asking for their own presbyteries and then creating even deeper separation between the various groups in the PCC? In *Enduring Witness*, John S. Moir writes:

> In that year and the following one, the clerks of the general assembly opposed the basis of this organizational structure because it departed from the definition of Presbytery used by the reformed churches for more than four centuries and left the way open for the establishing of other types of non-geographic presbyteries.[59]

Second, many were worried that it would create a separation of Koreans from the rest of the church. Members of presbyteries felt that the creation of a separate presbytery for Korean

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[56] Special Studies Committee on the Formation of Han-Ca Presbytery, *Special Study for the Formation of Han-Ca Presbytery: Report* (Toronto: Presbyterian Church in Canada, November 25, 1991), 113.

[57] In Kee Kim, online discussion with the author, May 2, 2023.

[58] *Special Study for the Formation of Han-Ca Presbytery: Report*, 115.

[59] Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 289.

churches would be a loss of fellowship and did not want them to separate. But Korean pastors argued that the separation already existed and there were feelings of isolation from a lack of fellowship. Another argument concerned the second and third generations who would no longer have need for a Korean-language presbytery and could be double marginalized as English speakers. They did not want to create a barrier for English-speaking Koreans to participate in the denomination. Women's ordination was the other major issue that the wider church wanted to hold the Korean churches accountable to.

Upon its creation, each Korean church would have the choice to join the language-specific presbytery. Although there were a few reservations, all were in favour of the creation of a language-specific presbytery. Sukhyon Han recalls that the Korean churches in Montreal and Nova Scotia were concerned that Toronto was too far to attend presbytery meetings and would result in an inability to participate. Some churches were concerned at the loss of support from their current presbyteries and questioned the level of support that a presbytery of immigrant churches could realistically give. But they saw the necessity of forming a new presbytery. The Committee consulted with the Korean Presbyterian congregations in the United States who had a longer immigration history and had created language-specific presbyteries in the PCUSA. The report was presented to the General Assembly and initially rejected. It was recommended that they create their own synod, which would have been beneficial for fellowship but lacked the ability to self-govern.[60] In 1997, the GA voted for the creation of the presbyteries of Eastern and Western Han-Ca (*Han = hanguk,* Korea(n); *Ca* = Canadian). Andrew Lee, the director of Korean Ministries in Canada, became the first Moderator in Eastern Han-Ca. All the Korean churches in the PCC at that time joined the two Han-Ca presbyteries—Eastern and Western—though Kitchener-Waterloo Korean Presbyterian Church later split off to create Kitchener Joonim Church because of their desire to stay within the local presbytery.[61] An early commentary on the creation of the Han-Ca presbyteries remarks:

> In the opinion of some, this new structure would have a divisive and separatist impact on the church, but if the first three years of the existence of the Han-Ca presbyteries is any indication, all developments pointed towards greater integration into what might be termed modern mainstream Presbyterianism. By 2002, Western Han-Ca had grown to 13 congregations and almost 7000 members, and Eastern Han-Ca had a similar membership in 14 congregations.[62]

Jinsook Khang, a minister at Vaughan Community Church, noted that her ordination in 1998 was the first for a woman minister within the Presbytery of Eastern Han-Ca. She remembered how lively the growing churches were during the early years of the new presbytery. Participation and engagement increased significantly as ministers and elders were able to speak without barriers about church matters and deal contextually with conflicts in churches. There was a collegiality and mentorship among leaders and churches were encouraged through fellowship. The privilege of having a language-specific presbytery came with a responsibility to uphold the denominational polity and the leaders were willing to take it on. There were many educational opportunities for church leaders through the presbyteries to learn about denominational polity

[60] Kim, online discussion with the author, May 2, 2023.
[61] Han, in discussion with the author, May 2023.
[62] Moir, *Enduring Witness,* 289.

and to discuss the identity and role of the Korean church in Canadian society.[63] The Han-Ca presbyteries became an incentive for independent Korean congregations to join the PCC (through the Han-Ca presbyteries) and the number of congregations increased.[64] A five-year trial period ended in 2003 and the two presbyteries were given a permanent status in the PCC.

Korean Leadership in the PCC

A growing number of leaders are serving in a context outside the Korean church within the PCC. Kevin Lee, minister at Wychwood Davenport Presbyterian Church, wrote an article detailing his drive from Toronto to Calgary with visits to Korean pastors serving in English-speaking churches along the way.[65] Lee explains the joys of serving a growing congregation and the challenges of pastors leaving their families to serve in smaller rural communities. He writes, "knowing that many of them are not from rural communities to begin with, and when you consider their isolation from their culture, food, and friends, you begin to realize the scope of the challenge they have willingly embraced."[66] Many Korean ministers understand the reciprocal relationship with the PCC, serving churches in a denomination that once traveled abroad to serve theirs. According to Lee's article, there were approximately twenty Korean pastors ministering in non-Korean congregations across Canada in 2015.[67] Korean leaders and churches have supported these pastors working in a different context. Jonathan Kwon created a network and Sukhyon Han's church supported this network with retreats, giving the leaders opportunities for dialogue, mentorship and encouragement.[68]

As for executive leadership roles, Victor Kim—a Korean minister who served in English-speaking congregations—became the Principal Clerk in 2022. Cheolsoon Park was the first Korean Moderator of the General Assembly in 2008 and Daniel Cho was elected in 2018. In an interview with Park, he stated that it was a privilege and honour to serve the denomination in this capacity as a member of the Presbytery of Eastern Han-Ca. During his time as Moderator, Park learned about the history, tradition, and church life of the PCC through visits with local churches. He expressed his appreciation for their life, struggle and contribution to their communities and was particularly moved by the commitment and faithfulness of small, rural churches. "Their hearts and minds are really committed to the denomination. They are sincere, humble, passionate and proud people."[69] He encouraged Korean pastors to share their energy, passion and prayer with the national church by learning and getting involved.

Many Korean leaders have contributed to the ministry of the PCC, but it was not until more recently that Han-Ca presbytery members began participating in the leadership of committees, boards, and even synods. As 1.5-generation (immigrated to Canada in adolescence) and second-generation Koreans with language proficiency grow in their leadership, the capacity for participation is increasing. This has often been at the encouragement of non-Korean members in the wider church who seek to grow diversity within leadership. Though there are challenges in

[63] Jinsook Khang, phone interview with author, June 2023.

[64] Han, in discussion with the author, May 2023.

[65] Kevin Lee, "Korean Pastors of English-Speaking Presbyterian Churches in Canada," *Renewal Fellowship*, March 13, 2015, https://renewal-fellowship.ca/1068/.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Han, in discussion with the author, May 2023.

[69] Park, in discussion with the author, May 203.

being heard and expressing a divergent voice, Han-Ca members believe it is important to share in the responsibility of denominational leadership. Most recently, Han-Ca presbyteries have raised their concerns to GA on the issues of human sexuality and racism. They do so in due diligence to their conviction and through the platform of the presbytery court within the denominational structure.

Conclusion

What will the future of the partnership between Korean and Canadian churches in the PCC look like? In the book *The Burning Bush and a Few Acres of Snow: The Presbyterian Contribution to Canadian Life and Culture*, William Klempa wrote:

> Presbyterians thus represent an important historical presence within Canadian society. Both in the colonial period and in the age of Confederation, Presbyterians were a vital, energetic, and influential force. They were essentially "mainstream" and they exercised influence by virtue of the social, economic, political, educational, and cultural advantages they enjoyed.[70]

Though the PCC may no longer find itself in the "mainstream" of Canadian society, the church continues to uniquely contribute for the sake of fellow Canadians in Christ's name. The diversity of the society we live, work, and serve in has significantly changed and, therefore, a diverse denomination enlivens the work of the church and strengthens our witness. Through a challenging century of global upheaval, the enduring Christian relationship between the PCC, Presbyterian Church in Korea and later Korean Christian Church in Japan, is a testament to a committed partnership. The welcome and denominational support for Korean immigrants in Canada has helped in the establishment of many congregations and their ongoing contribution to a relatively young nation. Though this has come with many challenges, an invitation for growth and witness in the PCC is open for all who participate in its calling.

[70] William Klempa, "There's More to a Presbyterian Than Meets the Eye," in *The Burning Bush and a Few Acres of Snow: The Presbyterian Contribution to Canadian Life and Culture*, The Carleton Library Series 180, edited by William Klempa (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1994), 9.

The Portrayal of Canadian Presbyterianism in W. O. Mitchell's *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon*

Robert Revington

Since its inception in the late 1940s, W. O. Mitchell's humorous story *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon* has existed in a variety of different forms: as a radio play, stage play, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) television production, and as a novella.[1] The work depicts a curmudgeonly Scottish man from Alberta who, with his mortal soul at stake, plays a curling match against a team featuring the Devil, Guy Fawkes, Judas Iscariot, and Macbeth. As one description of the play puts it, "it is based on the Faust legend transposed to the Canadian prairies."[2] The work is also notable for its fictional portrayal of Canadian Presbyterianism in the aftermath of Church Union in the first half of the twentieth century. Integral to this portrayal is the story's stubborn Scottish Presbyterian protagonist, who lives in a community dominated by the United Church of Canada.

This study will analyze how Mitchell's work portrays western Canadian Presbyterianism for a mass audience. I argue that, underneath its fantasy overtones and comedic tone, Mitchell accurately reflects the position of continuing Presbyterians and their isolated place in western Canada. This is because Mitchell represents western Canadian Presbyterians as scattered, statistically isolated, and skeptical of the "liberal" theology they saw in the United Church and these portrayals are consistent with other data and the existing scholarly literature.

Origin of the Story

When living in High River, Alberta, Mitchell first wrote *The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon* as a short story around 1947, then turned it into half-hour CBC radio play in July 1950, and expanded it to an hour for another radio broadcast in February 1951.[3] His biographers observe that this work "would become Mitchell's most popularly successful drama" and that "over a forty-five year period he reworked it in almost every medium, from original short story, to radio drama, to television, to stage, and finally to an expanded novella in 1993."[4] The CBC television version aired on 9 October 1955.[5] Another television version aired in 1962.[6] The stage

[1] For the play version, see W. O. Mitchell, "The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon," in *Dramatic W. O. Mitchell* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1982), 101–41; W. O. Mitchell, "The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon," in *The Devil is a Traveling Man: Two Plays*, edited by Ormond Mitchell and Barbara Mitchell (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1961]). I will primarily cite the version from *Dramatic W. O. Mitchell*, except where the novella differs. For the novella, see W. O. Mitchell, *The Black Bonspiel of Willie MacCrimmon* (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 1993).

[2] Rick McNair, "W.O. Mitchell: The Playwright," in *Magic Lies: The Art of W. O. Mitchell*, edited by Sheila Latham and David Latham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 301.

[3] Barbara Mitchell and Ormond Mitchell, *Mitchell: The Life of W. O. Mitchell: The Years of Fame 1948–1998* (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 2005), 63–64.

[4] Ibid., 65.

[5] Ibid., 128.

[6] Ibid., 177.

version debuted in 1966, but minor changes were made to the script over time.[7] In 1966, the play was also published, with other titles from Tennessee Williams and Herman Wouk, in the book *Three Worlds of Drama*, intended as a school textbook.[8] A student version of the play at Lakefield Boys' School won an Ontario Drama League Award in 1966.[9] In the stage version, Mitchell later added some Canadian political satire, adapting a line from Calgary mayor Ralph Klein for Satan himself.[10] Klein had said, "let the eastern bastards freeze in the dark," with reference to the National Energy Program; likewise, in Mitchell's play, Satan did not want to share Hell's thermal energy, and said: "Let those upper bastards freeze in the dark."[11] In 1976 and 1977, there were multiple professional versions of the play, the first of which was performed in Regina.[12] In addition, the 1993 novella version of the story was a bestseller and sold 10,000 copies in its first few months.[13] The novella added illustrations, a new opening section, and other material, and gave MacCrimmon's character more backstory, as well as a wife.[14]

Presbyterian and United Church Relations in the Story

The most interesting scene for our purposes is a discussion early in the story between MacCrimmon and the local United Church minister Reverend Pringle.[15] Mitchell describes MacCrimmon as a "continuing Presbyterian" in his fifties, and emphasizes MacCrimmon's Scottishness, describing him as "MacCrimmon of the MacCrimmons, Professors of Pibroch and Pipers to the Chiefs of Scotland."[16] Pringle is the "progressive" minister of Grace United Church.[17] The notes for the play say that it is set in the early 1930s.[18] Pringle asks MacCrimmon for a donation to the new United Church building.[19] MacCrimmon complains how Pringle worked to oppose Sabbath day curling.[20] Yet MacCrimmon emphasizes: "I still—am—Presbyterian. Continuin' Presbyterian."[21] Then, MacCrimmon says that he cannot attend the church because it has turned "Methodist!"[22] In the notes, Mitchell says that MacCrimmon's face "shows his distaste as though the word were sour in his mouth."[23] While Pringle corrects him that this church is "United," rather than "Methodist," MacCrimmon goes on: "I was not born nor was I brought up Methodist." [24] He barely misses hitting Pringle's hand with his cobbler hammer

[7] Ibid., 382.

[8] See W. O. Mitchell, "The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon," in *Three Worlds of Drama*, edited by Jack Livesley (Toronto: Macmillan, 1966), 107–56.

[9] Mitchell and Mitchell, *Mitchell*, 199.

[10] Ibid., 230.

[11] Ibid. See Mitchell, "The Black Bonspiel," in *Dramatic W. O. Mitchell*, 118.

[12] Mitchell and Mitchell, *Mitchell*, 276; 284.

[13] Ibid., 387.

[14] Ibid., 385.

[15] The character of the United Church minister was not in Mitchell's original short story, but was added for the longer radio version. See Mitchell and Mitchell, *Mitchell*, 65.

[16] Mitchell, "The Black Bonspiel," in *Dramatic W. O. Mitchell*, 103.

[17] Ibid., 108.

[18] Ibid., 104.

[19] Ibid., 109.

[20] Ibid., 109–10.

[21] Ibid., 110.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

and says: "I do not intend to live Methodist."[25] In the novella, MacCrimmon adds that he does not intend "to die Methodist" either.[26] MacCrimmon does not have a Presbyterian Church to attend and speaks regretfully of how he visited the other churches in town since "the loss of my own church."[27] Yet he says: "I long ago decided to remain what I am—continuing Presbyterian with the creed of my fathers, and what was a good foundation for my father is a good foundation for me."[28] In the novella, Pringle tells MacCrimmon that "everything must change," but MacCrimmon replies: "Not religion."[29] He adds that religion "is the foundation of the spirit, and a foundation cannot shift and change without damage to the structure above."[30] Hence, MacCrimmon objects to the theology of the United Church. As presented in the play version, Pringle tells MacCrimmon, "your father lived in a different world" and "believed many things that you don't believe in."[31] MacCrimmon corrects him: "No. My faith and my convictions are the same as my father's—the same as the day I sat beside him in church—hearing the minister's voice soaring and dipping grand as he painted for his congregation the hell that awaited all sinners."[32] Pringle tells him, "we believe in a religion of love today," but MacCrimmon objects to this religion's lack of Hell and the Devil.[33] While Pringle sees these things as symbolic, MacCrimmon tells him:

> Hell and the Devil. There's the foundation for a religion—the skeletal requirements you might say. Mr. Pringle, when you begin to preach sermons with some bones in them, when you can show me something besides the wishy-washy symbolical hells and symbolical devils—then Wullie MacCrimmon will be right alongside the other members of your congregation—taking communion with—in your new Methodist church![34]

After hearing this speech, Pringle concludes that he should not put MacCrimmon's name down for a donation to the new church building, but MacCrimmon says: "Hold on now. Don't be too hasty. Half a loaf is better than none."[35] Though Pringle objects to MacCrimmon's characterization of the United Church as "half a loaf," MacCrimmon nonetheless says: "A church is a church … Methodist or not."[36] MacCrimmon asks Pringle again what he believes about the Devil, and Pringle gives a vague answer about how "there is a force for evil abroad in the world."[37] MacCrimmon pushes him further, asking Pringle if he believes "in a three-dimensional, crackling, actually burning Hell to which we may or may not go … where we may roast in blazing fire from everlasting to everlasting … shrieking and writhing in torment and

[25] Ibid.
[26] Mitchell, *The Black Bonspiel*, 24.
[27] Mitchell, "The Black Bonspiel," in *Dramatic W. O. Mitchell*, 111.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Mitchell, *The Black Bonspiel*, 25.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Mitchell, "The Black Bonspiel," in *Dramatic W. O. Mitchell*, 111.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 112.

exquisite pain beyond all human comprehension" as Jesus looks down from Heaven.[38] Pringle finds this idea repulsive, but, of course, the Devil is a real character in the play.[39]

The rest of the story is focused more on the curling match with the Devil than theology. Indeed, Mitchell's biographers lament that the second half of the play loses some intellectual depth, as the tension between MacCrimmon and Rev. Pringle is not continued.[40]

There are some other additions and differences between the play and the later novella version, where MacCrimmon is called "Willie" rather than "Wullie."[41] The novella elaborates more on how "the loss of his Presbyterian church had been a lasting shock for Willie MacCrimmon, who was now one of a handful of Shelby's continuing Presbyterians with nowhere to pray locally."[42] The novella is set later chronologically, as MacCrimmon identifies Pringle as someone who would have been only "'a wee boy'" when Church Union happened, while in the play, Pringle has been the minister since the Union.[43] In the novella, with reference to Church Union, MacCrimmon says that Pringle would "not have a clear memory of what took place in Shelby … all of Canada but not south of the border nor in Scotland where the Presbyterian mother church held firm."[44] Also in the novella, when Pringle references "the birth of the United Church," MacCrimmon caustically comments that "birth often follows rape."[45] Regardless, the picture that emerges in both versions is that MacCrimmon is a stubborn Scottish man who opposes the theology of the United Church and lives without a church to attend, clinging to his identity as a continuing Presbyterian.

The Background to Mitchell's Portrayal

There are some connections between Mitchell's Presbyterian protagonist and his own family history. To that end, the definitive multi-volume biography of Mitchell was written by his son and daughter-in-law, Ormond and Barbara Mitchell.[46] The biography provides useful background information that informs our understanding of Mitchell's influences. The authors observe of W. O. Mitchell that "when his mother died, he and his brothers inherited the family heirlooms, but the most significant inheritances for Mitchell were intangible ones," including "a gift for telling stories, and a strong sense of Scots-Irish and Scots-Presbyterian heritage."[47] Indeed, in the nineteenth century, Mitchell's ancestors traveled to Canada from an area of Ireland heavily populated by Scottish Presbyterians.[48] Mitchell was born in 1914 and his biographers record that, growing up in Weyburn, Saskatchewan, his "home environment was one in which a Presbyterian and Victorian sense of propriety generally prevailed."[49] His grandmother was "described … as a strict woman who took her Presbyterianism seriously but not ostentatiously,"

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Mitchell and Mitchell, *Mitchell*, 331.
[41] Mitchell, *The Black Bonspiel*.
[42] Ibid., 6.
[43] Ibid., 23. See Mitchell, "The Black Bonspiel," in *Dramatic W. O. Mitchell*, 103.
[44] Mitchell, *The Black Bonspiel*, 24.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Barbara Mitchell and Ormond Mitchell, *W. O.: The Life of W. O. Mitchell: Beginnings to* Who Has Seen the Wind, *1914–1947* (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 1999); Mitchell and Mitchell, *Mitchell*.
[47] Mitchell and Mitchell, *W. O.*, 15.
[48] Ibid., 15–18.
[49] Ibid., 52.

though she did keep a John Knox plaque above her bed.[50] Mitchell recalled that she disparaged the Methodist habit of public confession and saw Methodists as "self-righteous and straitlaced."[51] When Mitchell was a child, his mother and grandmother "strongly opposed Church Union" and he remembered them saying: "If we lose our church we're not going to join the Methodists."[52] As it happened, their Presbyterian church in Weyburn (Knox Presbyterian) did not join the United Church.[53] W. O. Mitchell stopped going to church as often when he was twelve, but his biographers write: "The Scots-Presbyterian background of Mitchell's childhood stayed with him, and indeed may have 'chained' him in some very subtle and complex ways."[54] As an adult, W. O Mitchell moved to Castor, Alberta, in 1942, and while living here, he gained valuable "first-hand experience of the importance of curling in prairie-town culture and politics," which helped with this story.[55] Perhaps ironically, his wife Merna was the United Church organist in Castor.[56]

How the Play Accurately Reflects Its Setting

The context of Mitchell's story is rooted in truth. The scholarly literature tends to associate the United Church with a more "liberal" sort of theology than the continuing Presbyterians in Canada. Here, it might be noted that in his scholarship, Michael Gauvreau stays away from the terms "conservative," "liberal," "radical," "progressive," "orthodox," and "modernist" because he thinks that these words are too intertwined with American discussions of fundamentalism and evolution.[57] Yet in his study of the United Church, Kevin N. Flatt defines theological "liberals" as people who "out of an acceptance of elements of modern secular thought, a desire to preserve Christianity in the face of modern challenges, or both .. sought to remove or reinterpret inherited elements of Christian belief that clashed with modern naturalistic rationalism"—including higher critical conclusions that denied the miraculous.[58] Still, since the use of these terms can be contentious, here we use them in more of a comparative sense rather than to denote a specific set of beliefs. Regardless, in John S. Moir's history of Canadian biblical studies, Moir maintains that "most of those who would be classed as supporters of higher criticism, both professors and working clergy, left the Presbyterian church and along with liberal Methodists and Congregationalists created in the new denomination a climate highly sympathetic to critical biblical studies and to the propagation of a parallel receptive attitude among the United Church

[50] Ibid., 79–80.
[51] Ibid., 80.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 82.
[55] Ibid., 269.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Michael Gauvreau, *The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 294 n. 4.
[58] Kevin N. Flatt, *After Evangelicalism: The Sixties and the United Church of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 11. Phyllis D. Airhart reminds us that the term "social gospel" should not be treated as synonymous with "liberal theology." See Phyllis D. Airhart, *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 104.

laity."[59] Moir adds: "Popularly, and partly unjustly, the continuing Presbyterian church acquired and to a degree rejoiced in its reputation as being conservative biblically and theologically."[60] Mitchell's play reflects this popular perception. Similarly, Phyllis D. Airhart noted that "anti-union groups converged with anti-modernist theology to cast the Methodist and Congregationalist union partners in an unfavourable light."[61] Airhart adds that by identifying the unionists as "creedless," the anti-unionists helped fix an impression of the United Church that was difficult to overcome after Church Union.[62] Moir writes about the academic journal *The Canadian Journal of Religious Thought*, that for the seven years after Church Union, "before the Depression forced its cancellation, the *Journal* carried only one article by a Presbyterian, although W. W. Bryden contributed fifteen book reviews."[63] Although there were fewer Presbyterians to draw on, Moir nonetheless attributes the lack of Presbyterian contributions to "the *Journal*'s domination by the United Church, by liberal theology and a Social Gospel message which found so little support among Presbyterians."[64] Similarly, David B. Marshall writes that this journal "reflected the liberal heritage of most United church ministers" and maintained a "liberal faith in the goodness and perfectability of humans," but "the idea of human sinfulness and need for redemption … was rarely expressed."[65] Again, Presbyterians had little connection with it, perhaps in part because of some of the theological differences between the continuing Presbyterians and the United Church.

Of course, it is important not to caricature all Presbyterian theology as rigidly conservative in the face of a liberal United Church. After all, Walter Bryden was a dominant theological influence on Canadian Presbyterians, and, as Brian J. Fraser notes, the more conservative Canadian Presbyterians objected to aspects of Bryden's neo-orthodox theology.[66] Although Bryden critiqued liberal theology, he also was opposed to any kind of fundamentalist understanding of Scripture.[67] This led to opposition from more conservative types of Presbyterians—such as the Rev. R. Allan Killen.[68] Bryden wrote that a fundamentalist understanding of faith was "in that rationalistic category of interpretation which John Calvin, above all things, was anxious to avoid."[69] Barry Mack writes that, owing largely to Bryden's influence: "By the time of Bryden's death in 1952, the Presbyterian church as a whole had become committed to a socially conservative neo-orthodoxy."[70] Indeed, eventually, most of the

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[59] John S. Moir, *A History of Biblical Studies in Canada: A Sense of Proportion* (Chico, Calif.: Society of Biblical Literature, 1982), 61.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Phyllis D. Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 63.

[62] Ibid.

[63] John S. Moir, *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Burlington, ON: Eagle Press, 2004), 236.

[64] Ibid.

[65] David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850–1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 202.

[66] Brian J. Fraser, *Church, College, and Clergy: A History of Theological Education at Knox College, Toronto, 1844–1994* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 244 n. 34.

[67] John A. Vissers, *The Neo-Orthodox Theology of W. W. Bryden* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006), 162–63.

[68] Ibid., 165.

[69] Walter W. Bryden, *Separated unto the Gospel* (Toronto: Burns and MacEachern, 1956), 187.

[70] Barry Mack, "From Preaching to Propaganda to Marginalization: The Lost Centre of Twentieth-Century Presbyterianism," in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 151.

faculty at Knox and Presbyterian College were taught by Bryden.[71] Mitchell's stubborn MacCrimmon character is not the sort of person who would identify with neo-orthodoxy or Byden's theology, but he at least reflects the Presbyterian church's distance from so-called "liberal" theology.

On the other hand, it is telling that in the aftermath of Church Union, the famous American conservative theologian J. Gresham Machen was a strong ally of the continuing Presbyterians in Canada.[72] Machen wrote that in "the modern liberal Church … heaven has little place and the world really is all and all," although "the rejection of the Christian hope is not always definite or conscious; sometimes the liberal preacher tries to maintain a belief in the immortality of the soul."[73] On such points, Phyllis D. Airhart observes that "Machen's attacks on the 'program' of the modern liberal church in the United States was strikingly similar to what was being said in Canada about the proposed united church."[74] Machen also mentioned how "liberals" prioritized the moral teachings of the Sermon on the Mount but ignored Hell and Heaven.[75] These discussions are not unlike MacCrimmon's critique of Pringle's theology. Thus, the continuing Presbyterians did have ties with a leading figure in American fundamentalism in the years after Union.

Those Methodists and Presbyterians who supported Church Union were associated with "liberal" theology even before 1925. Although the dynamics were more complicated than this, it is notable that the American historian George M. Marsden identified "Presbyterian conservatives" as the strongest opponents to Canadian Church Union.[76] Allan L. Farris identified *four* types of people who rejected Church Union: hardline anti-unionists, people who Farris called "Federalists" (who believed in the unity of the broader church without combining denominations), "Ethical Critics" (who objected to the methods of the unionists), and "Theological Objectors."[77] Farris shows that Bryden and others who objected to Church Union did so because they saw a lack of sound theology behind Union.[78] Bryden wrote that unionists "appealed for Union on grounds of practical necessity," or "tolerance" and "broadmindedness."[79] Bryden lamented that "a doctrineless modernistic view of life" took precedence over doctrinal concerns.[80] Farris notes that in a November 1963 letter, Emmanuel College principal E. S. Lautenschlager told him: "The one valid reason for the Anti-Union sentiment in 1925 was, as I see it, the honest fear on the part of a good many theologically competent Presbyterians that the

[71] Ibid.

[72] Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 226; 234; 235; 253; Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 50–51; 54–55; 106–7; 325–26; 342 n. 1; 343–44 n. 15. See also, J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1923).

[73] Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 148.

[74] Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 54.

[75] Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 35.

[76] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870–1925*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 225.

[77] Allan L. Farris, "The Fathers of 1925," in *Enkindled by the Word: Essays on Presbyterianism in Canada* (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1966), 63–81. In this last group, Farris observes that, ironically, D. J. Fraser of Presbyterian College, Montreal, thought that the Basis of Union was not modern enough (78).

[78] Ibid., 75–81.

[79] Walter W. Bryden, *Why I Am a Presbyterian* (Belleville, ON: Essence Publishing, 1997 [1934]), 67–68.

[80] Ibid., 68.

United Church would move steadily to the left into a thinner and thinner liberalism."[81] Lautenschlager denied that this ever happened though.[82] (The jury is out on that judgment!)

In any case, other scholars associate the United Church with a perceived weak theology. Marshall maintains that the United Church of Canada did not have an equivalent to the fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the United States because "many of the most conservative elements in Presbyterianism did not join the union; they remained within the Presbyterian church."[83] Moir also says that many people with liberal theological beliefs moved to the new United Church.[84] Likewise, Marguerite Van Die observes that Church Union scholars generally agree that "doctrine was … of little concern to those who negotiated the Basis of Union."[85] Furthermore, Moir notes that before Church Union, Canadian Presbyterians feared that the Methodists were "theologically liberal, nondoctrinal and preoccupied with Social Gospel ideas."[86] Moir also says that so-called "liberal" theology was widely accepted by missionaries—who were predominantly pro-union.[87] Moreover, the Methodist pastor James Henderson could speak of rejecting "a material hell" in his preaching in Ottawa before 1912.[88] In addition, Phyllis D. Airhart's book *Serving the Present Age* shows that at the beginning of the twentieth century, Methodists began to lose interest in revivalism (associating it negatively with fundamentalism), in favour of what she calls "progressivism"—and that this interest in social Christianity (and social service) carried over into Church Union as well.[89] This book also reflects the perception that some Methodists had abandoned earlier theological concepts by the early twentieth century. In short, a so-called "liberal" theology was associated with what came to be the United Church of Canada and, again, Mitchell's play reflects this perception.

Along a similar line of thought, in Flatt's study of the United Church of Canada, he concludes that from at least 1930 on, "most United Church leaders … regarded a higher-critical view of the Bible as normative and were skeptical of the literal reality of ancient (and allegedly outmoded) Christian concepts such as the virgin birth and the second coming of Christ."[90] Flatt thus believes that United Church leaders differed from older Christian beliefs—and we see this in the play as well.[91] Flatt argues in his book "that after a lengthy period in which United Church leaders promoted key evangelical institutional practices while themselves rejecting evangelical beliefs (roughly from the 1930s to the early 1960s), the public evangelical identity of the United Church was systematically dismantled from within by its leaders in a relatively short time and replaced by a new liberal one (between 1963 and 1971)."[92] Conversely, Mitchell's play was first written in the 1940s and early 1950s, but this perception of a "liberal" United Church clearly still existed at that time. Flatt identifies the 1960s as the time when the denomination publicly

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[81] Quoted in Farris, "The Fathers of 1925," 75 n. 36.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith*, 191–92. See N. Keith Clifford, *The Resistance to Church Union in Canada, 1904–1939* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), 183.

[84] Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 235.

[85] Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839–1918* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 146.

[86] Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 215.

[87] Ibid., 229–30.

[88] Salem Goldsworth Bland, *James Henderson, D.D.* (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 1926), 146.

[89] Airhart, *Serving the Present Age*.

[90] Flatt, *After Evangelicalism*, 12.

[91] Ibid., 13.

[92] Ibid., 14.

became more "liberal."[93] Yet Flatt notes that although the denomination's leadership had abandoned "evangelical" beliefs long before the 1960s, the church continued to carry out evangelical practices.[94]

Though partly describing a later period of time than when Mitchell's play is set, Flatt also argued that key United Church leaders did not believe in a literal Hell.[95] As far back as the 1930s, Flatt notes that the church's "Statement on Evangelism" would explain "that the urgency of evangelism derived not from some desire to save souls from 'ultimate punishment' in hell, but rather from the danger of imminent social collapse facing the nation if its moral values were not purified."[96] In other words, the people who wrote the statement prioritized "social salvation" over saving "sinners from hell."[97] The statement was also skeptical of demons and Jesus' resurrection.[98] Flatt contrasts the beliefs of United Church leaders after 1930 with past Presbyterian and even Methodist beliefs, as he writes: "evangelism in the Methodist and Presbyterian churches of the nineteenth century had been tied to and justified by a whole evangelical theological framework—namely, the belief that all people were sinners destined for hell who needed to be born again through a single experience of repentance and conversion in order to be reconciled to God, overcome sin, and receive eternal life," but "most United Church leaders of the 1930s and later no longer understood Christianity primarily in these terms."[99] Mitchell's play reflects this distinction, as MacCrimmon represents an older theological tradition, where sinners go to hell, while Pringle does not. To add to this, although after the time the radio play was originally written, it is relevant to note that the 1959 United Church publication *Life and Death: A Study of the Christian Hope* treated typical depictions of Hell as metaphorical and was open to the possibility of universal salvation, even if not fully endorsing it.[100] This publication generated some media attention and controversy, such as the headline "United Church Book Rejects Hell, Soul, Damnation Ideas."[101] Here, it is relevant to note that Rev. W. G. Berry of the denomination's Board of Evangelism and Social Service said that the theological views in the booklet were "no new trend in thinking in the United Church theological colleges."[102] A decade earlier, Mitchell's portrayal of a United Church minister already reflected that reality.

The picture of MacCrimmon's isolation in the play also reflects statistical realities in western Canada in the aftermath of Church Union. Moir notes that of the 784 Presbyterian congregations that did not join the United Church, "492 were in Ontario, 135 in the Maritimes, 52 in Quebec and only 104 in the four western provinces."[103] Continuing Presbyterian congregations "represented thirty-eight per cent in Ontario, twenty-one percent in the Maritimes," and "twenty-five percent in Quebec" but "less than five per cent" of the total in

[93] Ibid., 15.
[94] Ibid., 16.
[95] Ibid., 8; 26.
[96] Ibid., 30.
[97] Ibid., 31.
[98] Ibid., 29.
[99] Ibid., 190.
[100] A. G. Reynolds, ed., *Life and Death: A Study of the Christian Hope* (Toronto: Committee on Christian Faith, the United Church of Canada, 1959).
[101] "United Church Book Rejects Hell, Soul, Damnation Ideas," *The Kingston Whig-Standard*, 15 September 1959, 2. For more on the controversy, see Flatt, *After Evangelicalism*, 147–52.
[102] "United Church Book Rejects Hell, Soul, Damnation Ideas."
[103] Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 222.

western Canada.[104] In other words, continuing Presbyterians were a far smaller minority in western Canada than in the East. Moir notes that continuing Presbyterians were not only stronger in the eastern half of Canada, but also stronger "in urban as opposed to rural areas."[105] Mitchell's story is of course about a rural area in western Canada, so his portrayal again fits the evidence. In Moir's analysis of the 1931 Canadian census, he also notes the proportional superiority of Presbyterians in Ontario compared to western Canada, and the concentration of continuing Presbyterians in urban areas more than rural areas.[106] Moir concludes that, at this time, "a profile emerges of the church as a body of older than average people, generally city-dwellers and heavily concentrated in Ontario."[107] Similarly, N. K. Clifford wrote that the "typical Presbyterian minister who stayed out of the union was born in rural Ontario, educated at the University of Toronto and Knox College and graduated before 1908."[108] In other words, the continuing Presbyterians were strongest in an urban, Ontario-centric world. In fact, congregations in western Canada were supportive of interdenominational cooperation initiatives long before Church Union.[109] To that end, John A. Vissers observed that "the churches of Saskatchewan and Alberta were virtually unanimous in their support of Church Union."[110] Vissers draws attention to how in these western provinces, "the genie had already been let out of the bottle, long before 1925, with the creation of union congregations in towns that could not afford to support separate Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational churches."[111] Thus, Mitchell's depiction of a lonely continuing Presbyterian in Western Canada is again accurate.

In the decade after Church Union, the continuing Presbyterian church acknowledged that its western population was underserved by the number of churches. Again, Mitchell's play reflects this context. In a November 1936 *Presbyterian Record* issue, when offering a detailed statistical analysis, W. H Fuller wrote that "Presbyterian Membership in proportion to Presbyterian population is three times stronger in Eastern than in Western Canada" and "Presbyterian Congregations are three times more numerous in the East than in the West … yet the Presbyterian population is just over twice as large."[112] Hence, Fuller concluded that "the Church is not ministering as efficiently to its own people in the West as in the East."[113] He singled out "the problem of Western Canada" as "pressing insistently for attention."[114] Fuller built on these conclusions in a February 1937 article where he noted how "only 8.2% of the Presbyterian Population of Western Canada are church members" because they were scattered geographically.[115] Fuller explained: "This vast area has scattered over it 310 congregations, one in 3595 square miles. They must be widely separated. Only 43 are self-sustaining. The remainder

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[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., 239.
[107] Ibid.
[108] N. K. Clifford, "The Interpreters of the United Church of Canada," *Church History* 46, no. 2 (1977): 212.
[109] Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 206.
[110] Vissers, *The Neo-Orthodox Theology of W. W. Bryden*, 92.
[111] Ibid.
[112] W. H. Fuller, "The State of the Church. I. Membership," *The Presbyterian Record*, November 1936, 331.
[113] Ibid., 332.
[114] Ibid.
[115] W. H. Fuller, "The State of the Church at Home. B. As to Congregations," *The Presbyterian Record*, February 1937, 39.

must be congregations comparatively small in number."[116] In other words, the already smaller number of Presbyterians in western Canada still lacked a sufficient number of churches. MacCrimmon's isolation in the play reflects this—and the play is set roughly in the period Fuller was writing in.

Conclusions

To conclude, Mitchell's play successfully captured a popular picture of the relationship between Presbyterians and the United Church in western Canada. It accurately portrays the Presbyterians as a statistical minority in western Canada after Church Union and how some Presbyterians could be suspicious of the United Church or "Methodist" theology. In any event, the work attracted positive attention for decades. In a 1997 essay, Rick McNair—the artistic director of Theatre Calgary—observed that Mitchell's play had become "a standard play in the Canadian repertory, playing in large and small theatres all across Canada, enjoying a reputation for attracting people to theatre that are not of the usual audience" and had "played in every major centre, with the exception of Toronto."[117] McNair claims that one director described Toronto as "too sophisticated for the show," but he thought that the opposite was true, while also comparing this to Toronto's inability to support the Grey Cup (the Canadian Football League's championship game) compared with other parts of the country.[118] As of 2005, the play had been produced approximately fifty times.[119] In the end, in addition to Mitchell's witty dialogue, the story's success in many different formats owes something to its comedic, and in many ways truthful, portrayal of a certain type of stubborn Scottish Presbyterian.

[116] Ibid.
[117] McNair, "W.O. Mitchell," 301.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Mitchell and Mitchell, *Mitchell*, 300.

The Threefold Office of Christ (*Munus Triplex)* in Canadian Presbyterian Theology

John A. Vissers

The Preamble to the Ordination and Induction Questions for ministers and elders within The Presbyterian Church in Canada, adopted by the General Assembly in 1970, contains the following statement: "All ministries proceed from and are sustained by the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Prophet, Priest, and King, the Minister of the covenant of grace."[1] What is the significance of this reference to Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King? What is its origin, and what role has it played in the theology and practice of Canadian Presbyterianism?

The description of Jesus as prophet, priest, and king is called the "Threefold Office of Christ" (Latin, *munus triplex*). The *munus triplex* is found in five official documents of The Presbyterian Church in Canada: *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646); *The Westminster Larger Catechism* (1647–1649); *The Westminster Shorter Catechism* (1647–1649); [2] The Preamble to the Ordination and Induction Questions (1970); and *A Catechism for Today* (2004). It does not appear in *The Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation* (1955) and it is absent from *Living Faith* (1984). Of the four confessional statements adopted by The Presbyterian Church in Canada as "Parallel Standards" in 1962, only the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) contains it.[3]

The doctrine of the threefold office originated with the Protestant Reformer John Calvin in the sixteenth century and after Calvin the *munus triplex* became a staple of European and British Reformed theology. Calvin argued that in the Old Testament the covenant between God and Israel was mediated by prophets, priests, and kings, chosen by God, and anointed with oil and by the Spirit. In his person and work *(officium)* as the Messiah, Jesus fulfilled these three offices.[4] As a prophet, Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy; he is the prophet *par excellence*, the mediator of revelation, himself the Word of God, who proclaimed God's love, the one through whom we come to know God. As a priest, Jesus Christ secured salvation through his ministry of reconciliation and intercession by way of his vicarious suffering and saving atonement. He continues this ministry of intercession through his ascension at the right hand of

[1] Preamble to Ordination Questions, *The Book of Forms*, Standards and Subscription, PCC.

[2] *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, 8.1; *The Larger Catechism*, Questions 42–45; *The Shorter Catechism*, Questions 23–26. The Westminster Standards were adopted by The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1875 and 1889. It is not explicitly in the Westminster *Presbyterial Form of Church Government.*

[3] The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 12; Question 31. The Belgic Confession (Guido de Brès, 1559) refers to Jesus Christ as Priest and King but does not employ the threefold office. The Second Helvetic Confession (Bullinger, 1562–1566) also calls Jesus Christ King and High Priest, emphasizing the royal priesthood of Jesus, but does not use the threefold office. The Gallican Confession does not use the threefold office of Christ or refer to Christ as Priest or King. The Scots Confession (John Knox, 1560) does not mention the threefold office explicitly. It expresses a similar idea when it speaks about Jesus Christ "our Head and only Mediator … whom we confess and avow to be the Messiah promised, the only Head of his Kirk, our just Lawgiver, our only High Priest, Advocate, and Mediator ..." in whose "honours and offices no one should presume to intrude themselves."

[4] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* Book II, Chapter XV, 1-6. For Calvin, Jesus is the Mediator of the *one* covenant of grace in the *one* threefold office *(munus),* under the two dispensations of law and gospel.

God the Father.[5] As a king, the reign of Jesus Christ is spiritual and eternal. Through his royal office the Messiah accompanies and aids his people in the vicissitudes of this mortal life and prepares them for the life everlasting.[6]

Calvin was not the first theologian to speak of the threefold office, but he was the first to develop it into a robust account of the redemptive work of Christ. In early and mediaeval theology, examples of a triple office can be found.[7] During the Reformation, Erasmus referred to Christ as prophet, priest, and king in his *Commentary on the Second Psalm* (1522). In 1530, the Lutheran theologian Osiander—with whom Calvin quarreled extensively in the *Institutes*, used the threefold office in a written submission to the Diet of Augsburg to emphasize that righteousness and holiness do not rest in meritorious works, but solely in Christ's work as king, prophet, and priest. Calvin's adoption of the *munus triplex* was influenced by Martin Bucer—with whom Calvin worked from 1538 to 1541 in Strasbourg. Bucer referred to the three offices in his exegesis of John 1 and Psalm 45.

The first extended use by Calvin of the *munus triplex* was in the French Genevan Catechism[8] and he included a chapter on the threefold office in Book II of the 1559 *Institutes.* For the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, the *munus triplex* finds its finished form in the Heidelberg Catechism.[9] Most of what follows in the Reformed tradition from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries is theological commentary on the threefold office in relation to the redemptive work of Christ as set out by Calvin and Heidelberg. The inclusion of the *munus triplex* in the Westminster Standards as a description of Christ's redemptive work was decisive for Scottish Presbyterianism—and therefore for Presbyterians in Canada.

By the eighteenth century, the first serious cracks in the soteriological edifice built upon the doctrine of the threefold office in Protestant theology began to appear, initially among Lutherans. Johann August Ernesti (1707–1781) complained that the metaphorical phrases of the threefold office obscured rather than clarified Christ's work of satisfaction.[10] Furthermore, he argued, the three offices were insufficiently distinguished and therefore one title might justly cover them all.[11] In the late nineteenth century, Albrecht Ritschl levelled similar criticisms.[12]

J. F. Jansen's 1956 book *Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of Christ* summarized two criticisms of Calvin's use of the threefold office and its subsequent development in the Reformed tradition. First, it is not explicitly biblical. The two-fold office of Jesus Christ as priest and king has an explicit basis in Scripture (Hebrews 7). So too does the idea that followers of Jesus are members of a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6). It is also true that one can see in the New Testament the idea that Jesus is a prophet. But there is no explicit threefold office. Second, the development of the threefold office in the Reformed tradition represented what Jansen called

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[5] *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* Book II, Chapter XV, 3–5.

[6] *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* Book II, Chapter XV, 3-5.

[7] Eusebius (d. 339) connected the anointing of priests, kings, and prophets with the Messianic office of Jesus. Chrysostom (d. 407) argued that Christ surpassed Abraham (prophet and priest) and David (king and prophet) by possessing all three dignities. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) believed that Christ, as the Head of all, possessed the perfection of all graces, including those that belong to lawgivers, priests, or kings. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* III. Q.22, art. 1–2. Cited in Calvin, *Institutes,* II.16.1; Jansen, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of Christ,* 31.

[8] *The Genevan Catechism* (French 1541–1542, Latin 1545), Questions 34–45.

[9] Zacharius Ursinus, *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), Questions 31 and 32.

[10] Ernesti, *Opuscula Theologica,* 1773; *De officio Christi Triplici,* 1773.

[11] E. F Karl Muller, "Jesus Christ, Threefold Office of," *Christian Classics Ethereal Library,* Calvin College.

[12] Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine,* trans. H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1900).

an accretion of doctrine, i.e., it grew with the addition of layers of theological meaning beyond what Calvin had intended. By the time The Presbyterian Church in Canada was trying to find its theological way after Church Union in 1925, therefore, the *munus triplex* was an unlikely candidate to serve as a basis for doctrine. But it did. Why?

First, Roman Catholicism had adapted the *munus triplex* for the doctrine of the church. In the nineteenth century, John Henry Newman suggested that the threefold office of Christ extended to the body of Christ, i.e., the church. This aligned with the Tübingen Catholic theologians of the day, such as J. A. Mohler, who saw the church as an extension of the Incarnation.[13] Pope Pius XII in his encyclicals *Mystici Corporis* (1943) and *Mediator Dei* (1947) restricted the application of the threefold office to the ecclesial hierarchy and the sacerdotal system on the basis that these designations had been extended from Christ to the apostles.[14] In all this, the *munus triplex* was extended beyond the work of Christ (soteriology) to include the doctrine of the church and its ministry (ecclesiology).

Second, the influence of the theological renewal from the 1920s to the 1950s associated with Brunner and Barth was important. Emil Brunner employed the threefold office in his *Christian Dogmatics* to ground his Christology in salvation-history, which he interpreted through Christ's work in revelation, atonement, and divine sovereignty. Karl Barth adapted the threefold office in the dynamic tripartite structure of Volume IV (The Doctrine of Reconciliation) of his *Church Dogmatics*.[15] Through the influence of Walter Bryden and his students, the theologies of Barth and Brunner played a significant role in Canadian Presbyterian theology from the 1930s to the 1970s.[16]

Third, Presbyterians were influenced by the emergence of the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century. As already noted, the threefold office is not uniquely Reformed. The *munus triplex* was embraced by the Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox traditions. In his Warfield Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1948, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Willem Visser 't Hooft, expounded the kingship of Christ within the context of the *munus triplex* as the basis for church unity.[17] The Methodist theologian Geoffrey Wainwright has argued that throughout the twentieth century the threefold office of Christ provided a rich resource for ecumenical theology, especially in ecumenical dialogues concerning the church, ministry, and sacraments.[18]

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[13] Geoffrey Wainwright, *For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 115.

[14] The Second Vatican Council followed this approach. The 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes the church and its pastors as "a priestly, prophetic, and royal people" who participate "in these three offices of Christ and bear responsibilities for mission and service that flow from them."

[15] Initially, in *The Mediator,* Brunner did not employ the *munus triplex* because it had become so identified with Reformed scholastic orthodoxy. He changed his mind on this, however, and used it in his *Christian Dogmatics* as the basis for an exposition of the redemptive work of Christ. Barth used the *munus triplex* as the overall structure for his three volumes in *The Doctrine of Reconciliation.* In his descent and humiliation (Volume IV.1), Jesus Christ as Lord is Servant (*munus sacerdotale*—office of priest). In his ascent and exaltation (Volume IV.2), Jesus Christ as Servant is Lord (*munus* regium—royal office). In Volumes IV.3.1 and IV.3.2, corresponding to the *munus propheticum,* Jesus Christ is the True Witness.

[16] Walter Bryden (1883–1952) taught history and theology at Knox College from 1925 to 1952 and served as Principal from 1945–1952. He was instrumental in the reception of the theologies of Brunner and Barth in Canada. Many of Bryden's students served on the Articles of Faith Committee in the 1950s and 1960s.

[17] W. A. Visser 't Hooft, *The Kingship of Christ: An Interpretation of Recent European Theology: The Stone Lectures for 1947 Delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948).

[18] Wainwright, *For Our Salvation*.

This was the historical/theological context within which the Articles of Faith Committee met in the 1950s and 1960s. Following the adoption of the Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation by the General Assembly as a subordinate standard in 1955, the General Assembly directed the Articles of Faith Committee to begin work on "The Church's Relation to Her Standards." In 1963, the inclusion of the *munus triplex* appeared in the report to the General Assembly in the proposed "Short Preamble."[19] The sub-committee working on this included David Hay, Professor of Systematic Theology at Knox College. From 1944 until 1975 he taught most of the ministers of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

In lectures on "The Divine Institution of the Holy Ministry" at Knox College and Ewart College, Professor Hay argued for a robustly theological account of ministry grounded in the redemptive work of Christ. He did so by appealing to the Reformed tradition itself, namely the *Form of Presbyterial Church Government* (Westminster, 1645) and *The Westminster Larger Catechism* (Q.45). He noted that both documents grounded the order and government of the Church in Jesus Christ as the King and Head, and that Christ exercises his office as king through the church and its officers.[20] He argued, however, that the "kingly" concept by itself was inadequate and he proposed the *munus triplex* as the basis for a Reformed doctrine of ministry:

> We should amplify, qualify, and enrich the doctrine of the Westminster Divines by speaking of the ministerial office in connection not only with Christ's kingly office, but also in connection with his prophetic role (which obviously relates at once to preaching), and to his priestly role (which again, obviously relates to the administration of sacraments…[21]

To support this argument, Hay pointed out that the Westminster Divines described pastors as prophets who have charge of the word and as priests who have charge of the ordinances. Simply put, while the *Presbyterial Form of Church Government* did not explicitly name the threefold office, Hay believed that in practice it should be extended to the order of the church and the doctrine of ministry. Moreover, he saw a deep convergence between the Reformed tradition and the Roman Catholic tradition on this point.[22]

Following the introduction of the "Short Preamble" with the *munus triplex* to the General Assembly in 1963, it was finally adopted in 1970 along with the new ordination vows. Since 1970, the doctrine of the threefold office of Christ has been declared as the basis of the church's doctrine of ministry at every ordination and induction service of a minister and elder. As noted

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[19] Minutes of the Articles of Faith Committee, 1973-1014-15, Articles of Faith/Church Doctrine Committee fonds., The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[20] "The Preface," *The Presbyterial Form of Church Government*. *The Larger Catechism,* A. 45, "Christ executeth the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people for himself, and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them."

[21] David Hay, "Sign and Word," Lectures on the Reformed Doctrine of Ministry, n.d., 1999-5001-2-6, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

[22] David Hay also argued for the apostolic succession of ministry and emphasized the priestly dimension of the threefold office in its application to the ministry of Word and Sacraments within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

earlier, the *munus triplex* is not in *Living Faith*,[23] but it is included in *A Catechism for Today*.[24] In the new catechism it returns to its former place, as a doctrine which explains the redemptive work of Jesus Christ as Messiah and Mediator.

In sum, this brief paper is an origin story. It explains why a sixteenth-century European Reformed doctrine re-emerged with force in twentieth century Canadian Presbyterianism. The task of historical theology is to examine how doctrine originates and develops; how it functions, flourishes and fades. Chistian doctrines are sites where excavation and interrogation occur; meeting places—for conversation and interpretation about the history of the church. For Canadian Presbyterians in the 1960s, the doctrine of the threefold office of Christ was such a meeting place.

[23] One might expect to see the *munus triplex* in *Living Faith* in Chapter 3.4, "Jesus is Saviour," where Jesus is named as the Mediator, or in Chapter 7.2 "Ministry," where Jesus is named as King and Head. See *Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief* (Winfield, B.C.: Wood Lake Books, 1984).

[24] William Klempa was the convenor of the Articles of Faith Committee when the final report on the Preamble and Ordination questions was presented in 1969. As a Calvin scholar, Klempa knew the tradition of the threefold office in Reformed theology well and he had written about it in his doctoral dissertation on Calvin's doctrine of the covenant under Professor Thoman F. Torrance at Edinburgh in the late 1950s. It is worth noting that Klempa was also a member of the committee which drafted the new catechism but that he was not a member of committee which drafted *Living Faith*. But further work is required to understand the place of the threefold office in The Presbyterian Church in Canada after 1970. Further research is also required to find out whether the *munus triplex* had any pride of place in 19th century Canadian Presbyterianism, in official statements, and/or in preaching and teaching.