

**THE
CANADIAN
SOCIETY
OF
PRESBYTERIAN
HISTORY**

**PAPERS
1989**

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THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY

PAPERS 1989

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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Ernest Nix , formerly Deputy Archivist of the United Church of Canada, Toronto, is the author of Mission among the Buffalo

Ruth Compton Brouwer teaches in the Department of History, University of Toronto

Calvin Augustine Pater is the Professor of Church History, Knox College, Toronto School of Theology

Norman F. Cornett , a doctoral candidate in Church History at McGill University, is pastor in the French-speaking Plymouth Brethren Church and formerly a pastor in France and Algeria

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ROBERT MAGOWAN, PASTOR, FUND-RAISER, CONCILIATOR

by Ernest Nix

Robert Magowan, a Presbyterian and United Church minister whose ministry was almost entirely in south Alberta, though early perceived to be "of somewhat retiring disposition" yet left an enduring imprint on his time and province.(1)

Robert Magowan was born 8 June, 1879, at Drumbo, Lisburn, about seven miles from Belfast in county Down, northern Ireland. His father, James Magowan (1849-1919) and his mother, Rebecca Newell (1855-1917) farmed about a hundred acres, a good-sized farm in that locality. With prospects of the portions becoming too small when divided among four siblings, after his early schooling, in 1896, when he was seventeen years of age, Robert was apprenticed as a clerk with the Belfast Ropework Company, rope and twine manufacturers. A brother, James, junior, was apprenticed to a Belfast linen manufacturer. Robert completed his five years' apprenticeship and was immediately hired on permanent staff. When he left them after four years more, the company secretary recommended the young clerk as having given "the utmost satisfaction in the discharge of his duties."(2)

Unfortunately, little is known of Magowan's family, boyhood and early years in Belfast. It is said that he attended meetings held by travelling evangelists and heard them in all seriousness. He was active in a Presbyterian congregation and was presented with a gift book by the Sunday School in January, 1905. Doubtless he was impressed by the repeated appeals being made for new recruits for the Church's missions in western Canada. It is entirely possible that he may have heard two famed Canadian recruiters in person, Charles W. Gordon (Ralph Connor) and James Robertson, the dynamic superintendent of western missions, when they made their tours of England, Scotland and Ireland in 1893, 1894 and 1896.(3 Both emanated from Winnipeg, where young Magowan, after emigrating in 1906, would in time enter college for his theological training.

Magowan was appointed as student missionary in the Tongue Creek locality near High River, Alberta. Here, during 1906-1907, he served four preaching points comprising

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1. Manitoba College Journal, May, 1911, p. 12. Magowan Personal Papers, (hereafter MPP) courtesy Eileen Shortt, Calgary, a niece of Magowan's.
 2. General letter by W. Irving, 25 January, 1905. MPP.
 3. C.W. Gordon, The Life of James Robertson, D.D.; also C.W. Gordon, Postscript to Adventure, pp. 131-137.

about twenty-seven families, while he saved as much as he could of his slender stipend toward his future college expenses. He passed with flying colors the critical scrutiny of his farming parishioners, who were always dubious about the practical skills of the stripling preachers sent to them. Years later he recounted to a child who was interviewing him for a school local history project an episode which may have happened during his student days. "Once he had a horse which would not pull the buggy, but instead always jumped out of his shafts. He thought the horse was useless, but he found that when it was saddled, it rode beautifully." This, he analogized, teaches the lesson that "people do their best work at jobs for which they are suited."⁴

Magowan registered as an Arts student in Manitoba College, Winnipeg, as a member of the class of 1911, indicating that he had some "catch-up" work to do as well in the matriculation department. During the summer terms he again became a student missionary in the western fields, at Gladys, Alberta (1907-1910), at Moore Park, Manitoba (1911-1912) and at Prairie Grove, Manitoba (1913). His fellow students at college remembered him as a diligent student who excelled in the Hebrew classes (over 90%). In student activities he was president of the student YMCA in his fourth year, and was a member of several debating teams. His most notable classmate was J.G. "Jimmie" Gardiner, the class valedictorian, later to become premier of Saskatchewan and a war-time member of the federal cabinet.

Following his graduation in Arts, Magowan continued his studies in Theology at Manitoba College. At the end of his first year he was awarded the John Mark King prize of sixty dollars. At his graduation in 1914 he received the Robert Carswell prize for Hebrew as well as a minor prize for public speaking and reading and his certificate in theology among a class of six.

Events followed swiftly for Robert Magowan in the momentous year 1914. On 29 April he was ordained a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in the Chalmers Church, Winnipeg, to which he had been called. On 22 July he and Harriet Florence Ormond, a deaconess of the Presbyterian Church, were married.⁵ Their fortunes swung westward again

4. Anne Ewing, "An Interview with Dr. Robert Magowan," unpublished paper, unpagged. Copy owned by E. Nix, courtesy of James Shortt.

5. Harriet Ormond was b. 28 July, 1879, in Pembroke, Ontario. She was trained in Toronto, and served (1906-1916) in North Winnipeg. Their only child, named Robert Ormond, was born July, 1917, and died in the same month. Harriet died in Calgary, 18 October, 1956. MPP

in the spring of 1916 when he accepted an invitation to become supply minister for one year in the Hillhurst Presbyterian Church in Calgary.

A brief review of the history of the young Hillhurst congregation reveals some serious stresses. The previous incumbent, Peter A. Walker, had come to them in 1911 when the congregation had been founded for only four years but was already outgrowing its first building on Kensington Road. The new subdivisions of Hillhurst and Sunnyside, fronting on the Bow River, had been opened in 1906. Three new congregations, St. Barnabas Anglican (1906), Hillhurst Presbyterian (1907) and St. Paul's Methodist (1907) had been founded in the area, each assisted at the outset by the land developer E.H. Riley, who owned the subdivisions. It seemed a promising prospect for the new Hillhurst Presbyterian church. By February, 1912, the annual meeting noted fifty-one new members received in the preceding year, and they had become self-sustaining financially. They decided to seek a new site and build a much larger building. The thought was to build a new church to seat five hundred "to which a gallery could afterwards be added which would seat three hundred more."⁶

It would be hard to exaggerate the optimism and ebullient spirits shared by Calgarians generally in 1912. A book published to encourage prospective British emigrants declared "In Calgary, radiant hope sits on every countenance. It is the city of buoyant youth and optimism. Everyone has come West to make his fortune, and everyone is convinced he is going to make it soon."⁷

The time had come when the rapidly growing city could no longer be adequately served by a few large downtown churches. The years 1906-1912 had seen a ring of new congregations spring up in the surrounding subdivisions. The Hillhurst congregation had been one of three new Presbyterian causes in Calgary inaugurated in 1907 in Bankview, Hillhurst and Crescent Heights subdivisions.

The Hillhurst Presbyterians in their expansion of 1912 selected George G. Irvine as their architect to adapt plans already used by St. Andrew's church in East Calgary "with alterations to suit our proposed site." The chief builder was Robert Patterson, at a contract of \$18,871. Two contracts for furnishings were with the Globe Furniture Company of Walkerville, Ontario, for fine curved oak pews, and with the Warren Church Organ Company of Woodstock, Ontario, for a

6. Minutes, Hillhurst Presbyterian Church Board of Managers, April, 1912. Province of Alberta Archives (hereafter PAA).

7. Calgary. Twentieth Century Cities, p. 12.

pneumatic pipe organ for \$4,200 at \$1,000 cash, the balance a six months' note at 6 1/2% renewable. The organ contract was to prove a major source of grief to all concerned.(8

The new Hillhurst church was dedicated on 19 January, 1913. The total cost, including land, building and furnishings, was about \$38,000 of which \$1,535 had been raised. The sad fact was that at the beginning of 1913 the fantastic boom of 1912 in Calgary had already burst. By July the Hillhurst board of managers were feeling the pinch, with numerous accounts payable. A local Hillhurst merchant, William Ross, a generous contributor, came to the rescue with the gift of a block of land in Capitol Hill which could be sold "to raise sufficient money in the mean time to relieve the present financial stringency in the church funds." (9 By September the organ account was \$900 overdue, payments on the mortgage were \$800 overdue, and Sam H. Adams, chairman of the managers, had interviewed the mortgage company about it. (10 He was told that \$400 must be paid within days. The managers found half of that amount among themselves and the remainder was raised. It was a forecast of things to come; the managers would stagger on from one financial crisis to another for the next six and more years.

An evidence of the severity of the struggle was that by January, 1914, the church was in arrears for the minister's salary, the first claim on their resources. By the following September they were in arrears for the organist's salary as well. The old church property was still unsold and was being rented to the Separate School Board for use as a school, but the rental of \$50 a month did not cover the taxes and interest. The recession into which the country generally had slid was fully felt when the Hillhurst managers applied to the Northern Trust Company for a loan of \$20,000 but were refused "owing to financial stringency." By November the Warren Church Organ Company was threatening to take court

8. Accounts, Hillhurst Church Board of Managers, pp. 99-113.

The pipe organ specifications were for a two manual console, twenty-three ranks of pipes, 1453 pipes in all, with eight couplers. Originally designed by T. Newman West, the Hillhurst organist at the time, the organ, after being rebuilt twice over the years, is still giving good service over seventy-five years later. PAA.

9. ibid. Inside lots were priced at \$240 each and corner lots in pairs at \$530. PAA.

10. Samuel H. Adams served as chairman of the Hillhurst church board of managers 1912-1925. A lawyer, he was elected alderman in 1914, and mayor of Calgary 1921-1922, then retired from the city council. He remained a member of the Hillhurst church until he retired from business in 1955 and left the city. He died in 1975 at 97 years of age.

action to secure payment, and in December they issued a notice of writ.

The dreams of the Hillhurst congregation which had sought to build a church "worthy of the work and suited to the needs of a growing community, a seven-day-a-week church", had hit the earth with a resounding thump. Nothing had been stunted in suburban church building as then conceived: neo-gothic style, fully furnished with pews and pipe organ, Sunday school auditorium and classrooms, gymnasium, dining room, kitchen, parlor and pastor's study. Yet it was a relatively modest structure as compared with the elegant stone building being erected at the same time by Knox church across the river. On the other hand, there were far more cautious congregations, such as St. Paul's Presbyterian on 15th Avenue and 2nd Street West, who had built themselves only a basement in which they would conduct all of their activities for the next forty-five years.

Added to the difficulties caused by the general recession came the outbreak of world war in August, 1914. The enormity of this new calamity was reflected at the Hillhurst church by the clerk of the session Dr. R.B. Francis. At the end of 1914 he spoke of that year as one in which "the troubles of everybody were multiplied many times... We need to put our trust in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the God of the whole earth who alone understands the full meaning of these days." (11 Six members of the men's bible class had enlisted in the armed forces. Another keenly felt loss was the death of the generous William Ross. At the close of 1914 sixty-three new members had been added to the roll, for a total of 274. But the church's income was small, an average of \$47.15 per week, or \$2,594 from all sources for the year. The assets were now reckoned at \$62,384 against liabilities of \$45,093. But even in the face of these heavy odds, the annual meeting of 1915 expressed hearty confidence in its managers.

The Warren Church Organ Company continued to press for payment through their solicitors, Lougheed, Bennett, McLaws and Company. In their distress early in 1915 the Hillhurst presbyterians made an appeal for help to the national home mission and financial board of the church. While doubtless sympathetic, the Toronto brethren were themselves hard pressed to maintain their many missions throughout the west. Their reply was that the Hillhurst church "must stand or fall only through its own efforts."

But the officials of the Hillhurst church knew that they had to look beyond their own slender resources if they were

11. Minutes, Hillhurst Church Annual Meeting, 13 January, 1915. PAA.

to stand. More pressure must be applied, so an influential friend, William Shearer, superintendent of missions for central Alberta, wrote an urgent letter to A.S. Grant, secretary of missions and finance in Toronto. Shearer was concerned that the solicitor for the Loan Company, to whom the church owed \$18,200, had returned from Toronto "with instructions to execute judgment on the bondsmen immediately." Shearer had met with the Hillhurst board and he knew their predicament intimately. They were "very sore and bitter" to be left at the mercy of their creditors if no intervention were made on their behalf. There was also \$13,787 owing to the Bank of Nova Scotia. Dr. Grant had apparently promised to interview these note-holders on the church's behalf, but seemed not to have done so. Shearer reminded him of the sad consequences if judgment were to be executed: "the disgraceful obliteration of this congregation... putting Presbyterians in such a light in Western Canada that future development in the way of buildings and equipment will be paralyzed."(12, (13

Having launched this heroic appeal by way of William Shearer, the Hillhurst treasurer, J.H. Fairley, clutched at an even more distant straw. Having read an article in the Saturday Evening Post, he wrote to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Fairley described their plight:

"a large number of our congregation (which is composed of the working people) have had very little or no employment, so much so, that a lot have had to reduce their weekly offering, while others are unable to contribute at all. This has made it impossible to even pay the interest on the loan, with the result that they have entered suit for and judgment against, not only the church but also the bondsmen, execution of which is to be started the first week of July. This fact has made things harder as a number have become discouraged seeing no possible way to meet the demands."

Fairley's request was for a loan of \$45,000 at 3%, giving Rockefeller a first mortgage on the church. He pleaded that it was to save both the church "from being put under the hammer" and the bondsmen, who stood to lose everything "even to their homes."(14 Rockefeller politely refused, saying that they had found it "impracticable to respond directly to appeals from churches, except the churches of which we are members or adherents."(15

12. Correspondence, W. Shearer to Dr. Grant, 20 May, 1915.

Italics are Shearer's. PAA.

13. ibid.

14. Correspondence, Fairley to Rockefeller, 27 May, 1915.

PAA.

This particular crisis was averted by a meeting of the minister Peter Walker with Dr. Grant at the General Assembly meeting in Kingston. It was agreed that if the congregation "would undertake to pay the arrears of principal amounting to \$1,250 during the next year, the financial board of the national church would take care of the arrears in interest of \$3,000." (16 Plans were then made for a diligent canvass of all supporters, with \$864 being pledged. Further appeals were made to the bondsmen, and all organizations in the church were requested to "contribute all monies in their possession... over and above running expenses to the board of managers." While the congregation had endorsed this new campaign, there was now some dissent. Mr. Adams and Mr. Fairley were both being harassed personally by the creditors' many demands for payment. One of the church managers, Mr. Scotland, felt that the proposition of raising \$1,250 "was an impossible one and that it would be better to close the church." The Sunday school officers objected that they were not in a position to turn over their funds to the managers. At the end of the year, again in arrears on the minister's salary, the managers held a frank discussion among themselves. Mr. Scotland, seconded by Mr. Fairley, moved that "the Board tender their resignation in a body... on account of lack of support and discouraged by the lack of interest and attendance." (17 The motion was carried unanimously and signed by the nine managers present.

At the annual meeting held in January, 1916, the nadir of the struggling church's fortunes was reached. One of the auditors moved that the church go into "voluntary liquidation." Several prominent members, a representative from the presbytery, and A.S. Grant by letter, opposed this course of action, and the motion was withdrawn "amid great applause." The resignation of the managers was accepted, appreciation was expressed to them, and a new and smaller board of managers was elected.

Peter Walker resigned very soon thereafter as minister and returned to eastern Canada. Following a three months' vacancy, Robert Magowan agreed to come into the precarious situation as supply, beginning in May, 1916.

Less than a year later, two hundred and fourteen members and a hundred and eighty-five adherents signed a "very hearty

 15. Correspondence, Rockefeller to Fairley, 5 June, 1915, PAA. Rockefeller was generous to his own church. H.E. Fosdick, The Living of These Years, pp. 177-180.

16. Minutes, Joint Meeting of the Hillhurst Managers and Session, 14 June, 1915. PAA.

17. Minutes, Hillhurst Board of Managers, 12 December, 1915. PAA.

and unanimous" call to Magowan to become their inducted minister. The indomitable little Irishman responded that he "had enjoyed the work at Hillhurst very much, and that the heartiness of the call cleared the way for his acceptance of it."(18 He was inducted at the church 14 March, 1917.

Very shortly after his induction, Magowan and Sam Adams began the course of action which would finally turn the church's desperate financial situation around. They placed the matter of the church's debt, which by this time had reached \$49,000, before the Calgary presbytery. They requested that permission be granted the church to make an appeal to the Presbyterian churches of Canada for "at least \$35,000."(19 The request was granted and preparations began. The local campaign was inaugurated with a banquet at the church to which ministers and representatives of churches in the presbytery were invited. Later, the presbytery sent forward a similar request to the synod for the right to appeal to constituent churches in the synod, with the hope that the Synod would transmit the request to the General Assembly.

A paid advertisement headed "WILL YOU HELP TO SAVE THIS CHURCH?" was placed in The Presbyterian and Westminster. The Presbyterian Record was appealed to for support.(20 The Record outlined the situation without undue enthusiasm:

"The past five years have been hard years for many a church in the West. Both the business depression and the war have, for various reasons, told more heavily upon the West than upon the East. Some in the West have been harder hit than others, Hillhurst Church harder than most...

In the exceptional circumstance, the Presbytery of Calgary has also undertaken to assist... and has sent out an appeal, signed by its Moderator and Clerk, welcoming even the smallest aid.

The Presbytery also feels that to hold this place of worship for so large and needful a community is of concern to the whole Church and it sends out its S.O.S. to 'Whosoever will.'"(21

Unfortunately, I have not discovered any records generated by the Hillhurst Church Fund, administered by A.W.R. Whiteman of Knox church, Calgary. The general appeal undoubtedly met with a mixed reception. While the High River presbytery (Alberta) granted Magowan free access to all of its churches, the Edmonton presbytery offered no help, instructing the clerk "to intimate to the Hillhurst

18. Minutes, Calgary Presbytery, 18 April, 1916. PAA.

19. ibid., 27 July, 1917.

20. Presbyterian and Westminster, 11 October, 1917, p. 364.

21. Presbyterian Record, November, 1917, p. 328.

congregation that owing to the peculiar condition in which many of our own churches are placed at the present time, the Presbytery feels unable to render any assistance." (22

By February, 1918, Whiteman reported that about \$3,000 had been received from "friends both east and west... but there is a great deal still to do." Evidently a more direct effort was required, and at February 1st Magowan was granted leave of absence from his pulpit "in order that he may canvass among the members of all the congregations that are willing to receive a visit from him." D. Marshall of Didsbury was secured as supply in Magowan's absence.

The following June Magowan was among the three elected commissioners from the Calgary presbytery attending the 44th General Assembly meeting in London, Ontario. The Assembly duly received the Alberta synod's overture expressing its "determination that the property of the Hillhurst congregation... shall not be lost, and we urge sessions and congregations to give all possible assistance to that church." The Assembly heard Magowan's personal statement "with much sympathy" and authorized him "to approach the congregations of our Church throughout Canada, and heartily commends him to the sympathy and liberality of our people." (23

Magowan later made his appeal before the Toronto presbytery, which commended his cause to "the sympathetic consideration of congregations and their members throughout the Presbytery." Hamilton presbytery acted in a similar fashion at a later meeting. While the Presbyterian and Westminster announced to its readers that Mr. Magowan was in Toronto and hoped "to address a number of the Toronto congregations and to call on some of our wealthy and liberal Presbyterians," a search of several Toronto daily papers did not reveal any of his engagements. Doubtless much of his visiting was done quietly and privately. (24 The Westminster presbytery, like the Edmonton, took a negative view. It recorded that "in view of the fact that First Church has an

22. Minutes, Edmonton Presbytery, 4 December, 1917, p. 113, (microfilm copy, United Church Archives).

23. Acts and Proceedings of the 44th General Assembly, pp. 66, 84.

24. Telephone interview with James Shortt, 1 August, 1985. Shortt, Magowan's nephew, said that his uncle wore out several pairs of shoes, and some of the money came from his own family. Perhaps Magowan's experience was similar to Robertson's in Scotland years before: "Nothing could be finer than the spirit shown in the Presbytery, but when you ask for an opportunity of addressing the congregation-- well, that is another matter." (Robertson to C.W. Gordon).

even more pathetic appeal than Hillhurst, Presbytery took no action save to refer the matter to the wisdom of each congregation."(25

A general factor which worked greatly in Hillhurst's favor was the Forward Movement of the Presbyterian Church, a program inaugurated by the General Assembly in 1916, to continue for three years. Its purpose was to deepen and strengthen the Church's work in all ways, "with a view to quickening the spiritual life of our people." It was vigorously promoted by the leadership of the Church throughout the country. The Alberta synod, for example, set a goal of 20% increase across the board for each congregation. Similar programs were used in the Anglican, Baptist, Congregational and Methodist denominations at the same time, and sometimes jointly.(26 A congregation in Glace Bay sent a contribution of \$50 to the Hillhurst church. By July, 1918, it was reported that "the prospects of success [of Hillhurst's appeal] are now bright." Notwithstanding this, the following January Whiteman was appealing again for "at least \$5,000 more to place the congregation on a working basis."

The January appeal to the Calgary presbytery brought in \$3,000 more. The old church property was finally sold to the Salvation Army for \$4,000 and payment of half the arrears in taxes. There must have been a collective sigh of relief when in July, 1919, Magowan was able to announce "that the congregation now feels itself able to handle its financial obligations. The total subscribed from all sources was \$19,366.20, and this, together with the \$4,000 realized from the sale of the old Church has put the finances of the congregation in such shape that the managing Board at its last meeting decided they would no longer appeal for outside assistance." He also reported a "steady increase in the liberality of our members and the new spirit that has taken possession of the congregation."(27 Welcome news indeed.

This successful outcome of the prolonged struggle was celebrated in the Hillhurst annual meeting of 1919 by raising Magowan's salary from \$1,200 annually to \$1,500. Sam Adams was thanked "especially for looking after the legal work, as apart from the services he had rendered free it would be very difficult to secure anyone to take the same interest to protect the church in the actions which had been taken." The church had indeed been saved.

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25. Presbyterian and Westminster, 19 September, 1918, p. 272.
 26. Presbyterian and Westminster, 6 February, 1919; see issue of P&W 18 September, 1919, p. 262 for the Inter-Church Forward Movement, called the United National Campaign.
 27. Presbyterian and Westminster, 31 July, 1919, p. 111.

Robert Magowan had another important service to perform for the Hillhurst congregation. As the increasingly acrimonious deliberations were taking place nationally which would lead to the formation of the United Church of Canada in 1925, conversations were taking place between the Methodists and Presbyterians of the Hillhurst area as to the advisability of forming a local union. Doubtless the severe financial stress under which the Presbyterians had labored for so long was a factor strongly favoring such a union. When a duly appointed joint committee met to consider the matter in February, 1925, it recommended a local union. They estimated that when all expenses were paid, an amalgamated congregation could anticipate a surplus of three thousand dollars a year.

Magowan was a staunch supporter of church union, and when the vote was taken in the Hillhurst congregation, the result was 99 in favor, 39 opposed, and 2 spoiled ballots. (28) The local union was consummated on 14 June in the former Presbyterian building. To facilitate the transition, Magowan accepted a call the following month to Memorial United Church in Medicine Hat. Needless to say, the new Hillhurst United Church never realized the predicted surplus of \$3,000. Several key and founding families did not favor the union and withdrew, and the membership losses were soon followed by the economic depression of the thirties.

But the Hillhurst union was pronounced a success. The next minister found them "well-organized and working happily together... the former Methodists excelled in praying, the former Presbyterians in paying, both essential and well combined." (29) The people took firm hold of the system of the eldership, a polity which Hillhurst United Church still maintains.

Magowan's own typically understated comment on his work at Hillhurst was proffered by request to St. Stephen's College, Edmonton, when they conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa. Magowan wrote:

"Perhaps the outstanding thing was that of assisting Hillhurst Church in their trying days to reduce their very heavy debt, and thus prevent foreclosure by the Mortgage Co. This I did by going out for a few months and raising a few thousand dollars. This effort did two things at the same time. It brought down the debt to a point, and raised the hopes of the congregation to

28. J.E. Nix, ed., Hillhurst's First Sixty Years, p. 7.

29. It is not surprising that Magowan favored Church Union. During his Arts course at Manitoba College the Principal was William Patrick, D.D., who with C.W. Gordon had been among the initiators of the Union movement. Magowan lived close to conflict. His brother-in-law, J. Shortt, a farmer near Olds,

a point where they were prepared, through much sacrifice, to save their building and free the congregation from all fear of a crushing debt. To the credit of the congregation, coupled with the fine leadership of my successors, this very thing they did."
(30

Robert Magowan, however, must be regarded as a conciliator par excellence. In Medicine Hat he considered it "a privilege and joy" to help consummate the union of the Washington Avenue Methodist and the Knox Presbyterian congregations. Perhaps it was this quality and skill in him that prompted also his next call in 1929 to the new St. Paul's United Church in south-west Calgary. This church was an amalgamation of the former Victoria Methodist and the St. Paul's Presbyterian churches, but the merger had not gone well. The Presbyterians had had a membership of 270 and the former Methodists 204, but following the amalgamation only 198 could be found. It was into the onerous struggle to retain old members and gain new that Magowan was called to be minister. Of that task he merely said in later years that he had "shared in the consolidation of the union already effected" between the two congregations.

Magowan later served United Churches in Pincher Creek (1936-1940), First, Lethbridge (1940-1946), and St. Paul's, Coleman (1946-1949). Following his retirement in 1949 he continued to serve for shorter terms in Knox, Winnipeg, and in United Churches in Medicine Hat and Calgary.

While serving in First Church, Lethbridge, Magowan was elected president of the Alberta Conference of the United Church. John M. Fawcett, a former Methodist minister, in reporting his election described him as "much beloved in the Church in Alberta," a deserved tribute. On his installation as president he told that body, "'Keep your loins girt and your lamps lit,' declaring that the need of the day was that we catch again the vision of the Burning Bush." (31 Such an obvious reference to historic Presbyterian roots, made in a senior court of the United Church less than twenty years after 1925, cannot be dismissed as mere pulpit rhetoric. It is the contention of the present paper that Robert Magowan was essentially a presbyterian by conviction and in practice throughout his life and ministry. (31

The honorary degree conferred on him in 1946 was generally applauded, but accepted by Magowan modestly. "I cannot myself find reasons why they should do this," he responded, but accepted it. The citation spoke of him as "a pastor whose life admirably expresses both love to God and love to man. He has carried out with a quiet joy the sometimes wearying task of house to house calling. To him it

30. Letter, Magowan to Dean D.J.C. Elson, 21 March, 1946. MPP

a point, and raised the hopes of the congregation to a point where they were prepared, through much sacrifice, to save their building and free the congregation from all fear of a crushing debt. To the credit of the congregation, coupled with the fine leadership of my successors, this very thing they did."(30

Robert Magowan must be regarded as a conciliator par excellence. In Medicine Hat he considered it "a privilege and joy" to help consummate the union of the Washington Avenue Methodist and the Knox Presbyterian congregations. Perhaps it was this quality and skill in him that prompted also his next call, in 1929, to St. Paul's United Church in south-west Calgary. This church was an amalgamation of the former Victoria Methodist and the St. Paul's Presbyterian churches, but the merger had not gone well. The Presbyterians had had a membership of 270 and the former Methodists 204, but following the amalgamation only 198 could be found. It was into the onerous struggle to retain current members and gain new that Magowan was called. Of that task he merely said in later years that he had "shared in the consolidation of the union already effected" between the two congregations.

Magowan later served United churches in Pincher Creek (1936-1940), First United Lethbridge (1940-1946) and Coleman (1946-1949). Following his retirement in 1949 he served for shorter terms at Knox United Winnipeg, in Medicine Hat and Calgary.

While serving in Lethbridge Magowan was elected president of the Alberta Conference of the United Church. At that meeting Magowan the pastor reported that good work was done among the Japanese-Canadian evacuees in the southern part of the province, and that the evacuees "had shown their appreciation by giving financial assistance to the churches ministering to them." The conference responded positively when they endorsed a strong resolution calling on the federal government to recognize the loyalty, lack of criminality and adaptability to Canadian ways of these people, to resettle them, and to assist them in occupational placements.(31 At his installation as president he told the court

"'Keep your loins girt and your lamps lit,' declaring that the need of the day was that we catch again the vision of the Burning Bush."(32 Such an obvious reference to historic Presbyterian roots, made less than twenty years after 1925 in a senior court of the United Church, cannot be easily dismissed as mere pulpit rhetoric.

 Alberta, probably never forgave him for being a unionist.

30. Letter, Magowan to D.J.C. Elson, 21 March, 1946, MPP.

31. R.O.P. 20th Annual Meeting of Alberta Conference, p. 37; Edmonton Bulletin, 27 May, 1944.

32. United Church Observer, 15 June, 1944, pp. 1, 15.

It is the contention of this paper that Robert Magowan was in essence a Presbyterian by nurture, conviction and practice throughout his life and work in both denominations.

One of the pleasures granted to him in his remaining years was the occasion of the mortgage-burning celebration at the Hillhurst church, 15-17 February, 1948. The final ten thousand dollars had been paid by the Women's Association of the church. Former ministers, Sam Adams, and the congregation gathered for the event. The story of the prolonged and painful discharge of that debt, while by no means unique, seems to me to deserve telling. The church's creditors had hardly suffered. It was calculated that over the years the church had paid \$40,072 in interest, and among the major donors had been the women's groups who had contributed \$29,951.⁽³³⁾ During my tenure as minister at Hillhurst Church (1958-1968) it was decided to build a new education wing on the church, and I invited William McLeod, a survivor of the W.W.I board of managers, to help turn the sod for the new structure. He declined, sadly. In no way could he contemplate placing another mortgage on the church. For myself, the story is a vivid reminder of how fragile the voluntary bodies in the community are, and as Magowan said, how essential are the sacrifices which are necessary to sustain them.

Robert Magowan's fellow students of Class 1911 got it right when they said of him:

"We might venture to say that there is no one of more truly Christian character or of more earnest purpose than Robert. And in the work of the Master the success which has so far attended his labor will not only be continued, but will increase with the passing years."⁽³⁴⁾

He died in Calgary 18 December, 1962, at eighty-three years. The large attendance at his funeral testified to warm regard for a man "much beloved."

33. H.M. Welch, "The Mortgage-- 1913-1947" in Hillhurst's First Sixty Years, pp. 30-32.

34. supra, n. 1.

"Their Hope . . . Sorely Tried": Presbyterian Foreign and Home
Missionary Concerns about the Treatment of South Asians in
Canada, 1907-1925

by

Ruth Compton Brouwer

In their 1985 book, Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada, Norman Buchignani and Doreen M. Indra observe that, with a few exceptions, even local clergy joined in the opposition to the first wave of South Asian immigration to Canada.¹ Their claim seems valid. By focussing on local clergy, however, Buchignani and Indra miss the fact that there was concern within the Canadian Protestant churches about the hostile treatment accorded to the immigrants. The concern arose within the foreign missions community in the first decade of the twentieth century as immigrants from India - largely male Sikhs - began arriving in British Columbia. It found practical expression in small missions to the immigrants and in a variety of efforts to make Canadian public opinion and federal and British Columbia government policies more favourably disposed towards them. These endeavours were begun by the Presbyterian Church and maintained after 1925 by the United Church, though other Protestant denominations also took a sporadic interest in the immigrants. Even at their best, the churches' efforts to reach out to the South Asian immigrant community were, it should be emphasized, small-scale undertakings by comparison with much

other missionary activity, and "their best" was a relatively short period. Nevertheless, these initiatives are worthy of study as a way of refining our understanding of the Protestant churches' response to Asian immigration and of locating that response within the framework of the churches' foreign missionary ambitions.

This article will focus on the origin of concerns about South Asian immigrants within the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the varied steps taken to give those concerns expression in the years before 1925. It will suggest that the decision to reach out to the immigrants reflected several motives: a desire to protect the church's missionary enterprise in India (and to a lesser extent the Raj itself) from the anti-Christian and nationalist backlash created by the immigrants' harsh treatment in Canada; a desire to convert the immigrants to Christianity, and, more immediately, to demonstrate that Christianity by offering a variety of forms of practical assistance. The paper will identify the church personnel involved in the work with the immigrants, focus on the years the First World War when the Komagata Maru affair and the escalation in Indian nationalism gave that work special urgency, and briefly describe and account for its decline in the post-war years. The paper supports the thesis, advanced in a 1974 article by W. Peter Ward, that Protestant missionaries to Canada's Asian immigrants held more positive attitudes towards them than did other Protestant clergy or the Canadian society at large.² It provides new insights,

however, by focussing specifically on South Asian immigrants and linking the Presbyterian church's interest in them not only to its concerns for Canada's future but also to its overseas missionary commitments and its support for the imperial cause.

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The first South Asian immigrants began arriving in British Columbia in 1903. They were primarily Sikh men who had been living in British colonial possessions in the Far East. By 1908, more than 5000 Indian immigrants had arrived in the country. The vast majority continued to be Sikhs, but now they were primarily men who had come directly from India. Most of the increase had taken place in 1906 and 1907. It was the sudden surge in numbers that gave rise to the concerted opposition to the immigrants that began to be manifested after mid-1906 and that led in 1908 to immigration legislation more discriminatory than that directed towards any other group of Asians. The opposition reached a dramatic climax in the Komagata Maru affair of early 1914 when a shipload of South Asian immigrants was prevented from landing at the port of Vancouver and ultimately forced to sail to India.<sup>3</sup>

Two major Canadian Protestant churches - the Presbyterian and the Baptist - had had foreign missionary work in India from the 1870s and thus had a particularly strong reason for taking an interest in immigrants from that country. It was the Presbyterians, however, who manifested the first and most sustained concern for the immigrants. More particularly, it was retired and furlough missionaries from the Presbyterian Church's

large mission field in Central India and from its mission to indentured East Indian labourers in Trinidad who most directly expressed the concern.

The first significant effort to reach out to the immigrants came in 1907 when the Reverend Alexander Nugent was home on furlough from Central India and residing in British Columbia. In letters to Associate Foreign Missions Secretary A. E. Armstrong on June 19 and 20 of that year, Nugent spoke of the desirability of establishing a permanent mission among the East Indians (as they were usually called), especially given their increasing numbers. Nugent attempted to counter the negative stereotypes of the immigrants that were already starting to become common currency. Dismissing complaints that they were rowdy, he argued that in fact no body of labouring men could compare to them for being law abiding and sober. (He did favour a ban on the sale of alcohol to the South Asian immigrants, as to Canadian Indians, in order to nip in the bud the risk of their becoming addicted to the "medicinal" use of liquor.) Despite all the talk to the contrary, there was, Nugent said, no likelihood of Canadians having to support "Hindoo paupers", since the majority had obtained a job the day after their arrival at \$1.25 to \$3.00 per day. Nugent regretted very much the discriminatory attitude of "select whites", an attitude which had prompted his landlord to forbid him from receiving any South Asian immigrant visitors in the quarters he was renting. Overall, Nugent's letters revealed

a genuine concern for the immigrants' spiritual and temporal welfare. Like other missionaries who wrote about them, he depicted the Sikhs as a particularly worthy and hardworking community of Indians and suggested that they were more at risk from, than a threat to, the larger Canadian community.<sup>4</sup>

In a formal report on East Indian immigrants in the Vancouver area prepared for the church in 1907, Nugent described the immigrants' religious identities, their past occupations, and future goals (many, he claimed, wanted to farm). He spoke of the opposition they were experiencing from the local press and the mayor's office, and especially from organized labour. Despite such opposition, he pointed out, many citizens were sympathetic to their plight and many employers eager to hire them. Indeed, the latter were prepared to pay them the same wages as whites if only organized labour did not prevent their doing so. Speaking of his own work among them, Nugent reported that they had received his overtures gladly, as those of a friend whom they had met unexpectedly in a foreign land. Finally, in what was to be a frequently repeated theme in India missionaries' correspondence, he spoke of the likely harmful effect on missionary work in India if word of the immigrants' harsh treatment in Canada got back to the subcontinent. Canada was also creating difficulties for imperial interests, he warned, by asking the British government to prevent Indian immigrants from entering Canada.<sup>5</sup>

Back in India in 1908, Nugent continued to be interested in

the immigrants. He was critical of information on East Indian immigration patterns provided to the federal government by Deputy Minister of Labour William Lyon Mackenzie King. King's contention that the number of Indian immigrants was declining, and that many of those who had come to Canada were returning home, was simply wrong, he asserted. Indeed, some 200 Indians had landed at Vancouver by CPR liner from Hong Kong on the very day in 1907 when King had assured the federal government that their interest in Canada was declining. King's figures and predictions, he seemed to imply, reflected wishful thinking rather than reality. Not only King, but many local clergy, were woefully ignorant of the real numbers and circumstances of the East Indian immigrants, he wrote. Finally, he pointed out that what he had anticipated with regard to reaction in India to the immigrants' bad treatment in Canada had in fact come to pass. "[T]he native press," he wrote, "is full of the immigration question."<sup>6</sup>

Nugent's India colleague W. A. Wilson was also on furlough in Canada in 1907. He, too, spent some time among the South Asian immigrants, though he evidently did not work among them in as concerted a way. Like Nugent, Wilson spoke of the desirability of setting up full-time mission work among the immigrants, both for their "individual good" and also "[to] help our work in India when they return to their own land". (In contrast to Nugent, he predicted that many would make the return

journey.) As Nugent had done, Wilson praised the immigrants' character and industry and befriended them. While en route to Canada he had travelled from China with some of the newest arrivals, and, in Vancouver, had accepted an invitation to attend the opening of a place of worship and give an address. Nugent had already "done a good deal in getting them [the immigrants] situations, and in giving other help", Wilson wrote, and also in gaining their confidence, so that the time truly was opportune for establishing Christian work among them.<sup>7</sup>

The Rev. J. Knox Wright, a former Trinidad missionary who had full-time congregational work in the Presbytery of Westminster but who was also much concerned about the plight of the East Indian immigrants, joined the two India missionaries in urging the importance of opening full-time work among them and in praising their stability and industry. Like Nugent, he believed that Mackenzie King's predictions of only temporary stays by the immigrants, and of declining numbers of new arrivals, were based on inadequate information and wishful thinking. Many of "the better class" would remain, he insisted, citing as evidence the fact that they were buying land and gathering money to build a temple.<sup>8</sup>

At the time that Nugent, Wilson, and Wright were calling for the opening of permanent missionary work among the East Indian immigrants, the specific church body to which they were looking was the Foreign Missions Committee (FMC), which, until 1912 when it was reconstituted as the Board of Foreign Missions (BFM),

retained responsibility for some "foreign" as well as native Indian work within Canada in addition to its overseas commitments. In May 1908, FMC officials received a petition from the Synod of British Columbia, formally recommending the appointment of a missionary to labour among the East Indians.<sup>9</sup> Later, they received direct and indirect communications from educated East Indian spokesmen and from some concerned Methodist clergymen in British Columbia on the subject of the need for better treatment for the immigrants.<sup>10</sup> Given these expressions of interest, it is appropriate to ask why no permanent mission work was opened among the immigrants until 1913 and why the FMC was reluctant to initiate or support strong calls for changes in iniquitous legislation and practices affecting them. There seem to have been several reasons.

The FMC's initial response to Asiatic immigration generally, and to East Indian immigration in particular, came, most typically, from the Committee's veteran full-time secretary, R. P. MacKay, or from his associate, A. E. Armstrong. Both men, but especially MacKay, showed a tendency towards inconsistency in their thinking and writing on the subject, a tendency to veer from sympathy for the plight of Asian immigrants in Canada on the one hand towards a concern to protect the country from being "orientalized" on the other. In their sympathetic mode, the two secretaries were consistent in their desire to show preference for the "better class" of Asiatic immigrants, and for those among

them who were most vulnerable and least threatening. Thus, in 1909, R. P. MacKay wrote to Mackenzie King to express the FMC's satisfaction that the "poll tax" on Chinese students in Canada was being dropped.<sup>11</sup> In 1911, the Committee evidently joined other Canadian mission boards in asking Minister of the Interior Robert Rogers to respond positively to educated Sikh leader Dr. Sundar Singh's petition against the legislation that was preventing the wives and children of immigrants from joining them in Canada, and in arguing that Sikhs, especially, deserved favourable consideration as immigrants, given their fine record of military service to the British Empire.<sup>12</sup>

But there were countervailing tendencies that militated against sympathy and early action on the part of FMC officials. The fact that there were conflicting reports from clergy and missionaries in British Columbia about the size and likely permanency of the East Indian community there understandably led the Toronto-based officials to temporize about establishing a permanent mission among them. (When even someone like the Reverend J. S. Henderson, who was on the ground in New Westminster and moderately sympathetic to the immigrants, cautioned in 1908 against establishing a permanent mission, there seemed reason to hesitate before acting.)<sup>13</sup> In early 1912 there were further concerns when Principal John MacKay of Westminster College in Vancouver reported that Dr Sundar Singh, far from being a legitimate spokesman for the Sikhs, was, in fact, a fraud (though the fact that John MacKay was a confirmed opponent of

Asian immigration may initially have made his testimony about Singh somewhat questionable for the FMC officials).<sup>14</sup>

Most significant, perhaps, in explaining the FMC's hesitation was the fact that in 1912 R. P. MacKay acknowledged that, like "Canadians generally", he himself was changing his attitude and "rather falling in with the exclusive sentiments of British Columbia" on the matter of Asiatic immigration. In a letter to India missionary A. G. McPhedran he stated that while he sympathized with the needs and ambitions of the would-be immigrants, he thought that Canada had the potential, given its resources, to become "the greatest country in the world", if only it continued to develop along Anglo-Saxon lines, and hence the need for caution about accepting other immigrant strains.<sup>15</sup> The foreign missions secretary would continue to be torn between a mission-building vision that recognized the desirability of assisting Asian immigrants within Canada if missions in their homelands were to prosper, and a much more widely shared nation-building vision that could not accommodate substantial numbers of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants within its purview.

As strong as his commitment to Anglo-Saxon nation-building was at this time, R. P. MacKay was not prepared to associate himself with Principal John MacKay's calls for the total exclusion of Asian immigrants. In March 1913 he wrote to the Toronto Daily Star to make that point clear when the newspaper mistakenly attributed the latter's views to him.<sup>16</sup> But neither

was he willing to support pleas for better treatment for South Asian immigrants if those pleas came from individuals or groups about whose character or motives he was at all uneasy. Thus, neither he nor A. E. Armstrong endorsed a pamphlet entitled An Appeal for Fair Play for the Sikhs in Canada, written in 1913 by retired India missionary Isabella Ross Broad. In the pamphlet Broad argued strongly for the rights of the Sikhs, as British subjects, to equitable treatment in Canada and warned that the persecution to which they were being subjected would create a backlash against missionary work in India. The latter argument was, as noted, one that carried considerable weight with the two FMC officials. But Broad's approach to mission politics made them uncomfortable. She was, MacKay observed, "a good deal of the new woman type", and she appeared to be channelling money that she had received from the Women's Missionary Society on grounds of personal indigency into "the publication of literature on the Hindu question".<sup>17</sup> Her association with Dr. Sundar Singh further undermined her credibility.

It was within this broad context - furlough and retired missionaries agitating for better treatment for the Indian immigrants and for a permanent mission to them; FMC officials vacillating in their attitudes between sympathy for, and fears about, the immigrants; and some prominent Presbyterian churchmen joining the chorus of Canadians calling for a total ban on all Asiatic immigration - that small-scale but permanent mission work was opened among the East Indians in Vancouver in 1913 under

the administrative umbrella of the church's Home Missions Committee (HMC). The man appointed to the Vancouver work was Kenneth Grant, an elderly retired Trinidad missionary. Two years later another former Trinidad missionary, W. L. Macrae, would open similar work in Victoria.<sup>18</sup>

Foreign missions officials did not, of course, cease to have reasons for interest in the East Indians in British Columbia when responsibility for work among them passed under the control of the HMC. The Komagata Maru affair in early 1914 and the outbreak of the First World War some months later ensured that. Both events heightened their India missionaries' concern about the hostile treatment meted out to Indian immigrants in Canada and about the potentially negative effects of that treatment on missionary work in the subcontinent and the security of British rule there.<sup>19</sup> In responding initially to the Komagata Maru affair, the two Board of Foreign Missions secretaries argued that the Canadian government had a right and a duty to enforce the country's immigration laws and not to be pressured into admitting unlimited numbers of immigrants. But they regretted the fact that the immigrants had been detained aboard ship in the harbour at Vancouver, and ultimately turned back, both because of the spillover effects in India and because of the harshness of their treatment. "The Komagata Maru incident", A. E. Armstrong wrote, "makes all true Canadians feel humiliated".<sup>20</sup> While this scarcely constituted an outpouring of compassion, it reflected a

more humane tone than that shown in a truly harsh and racist editorial on the subject in The Presbyterian Record in May 1914.<sup>21</sup> The editorial, in turn, appears to have been in line with popular and journalistic attitudes reflected in the secular press. Moreover, in favouring a "gentleman's agreement" with India on the number of immigrants to be sent to Canada annually (along the lines of a similar agreement with Japan) rather than a policy of total future exclusion, both foreign secretaries seem to have been at least a step beyond popular attitudes in terms of their response to the Komagata Maru crisis.<sup>22</sup>

As time passed, the impact within India of Canada's inhospitable treatment of East Indian immigrants became clearer to the two foreign missions secretaries. Not only their own missionaries, but others as well, worried about the future effects on mission work in the subcontinent of Canada's harsh immigration policy.<sup>23</sup> At the level of imperial politics, it became evident just how important Canadian racism was to furthering the cause of the small but zealous group of radical Indian nationalists who were seeking by violent means to overthrow British rule in India. Indeed, some of those nationalists had been sojourners and activists in North America, and had been detained and arrested on their return to India.<sup>24</sup> It behoved the foreign missions officials, then, to strengthen their support for improved treatment for the East Indian immigrants, not only to protect the Protestant churches' missionary efforts in the subcontinent but also as a means of

preventing the erosion of British control in wartime India.

This is not to suggest that it was strategic considerations alone that prompted the two BFM secretaries to express greater concern about the immigrants' plight during the war years. The sympathetic testimony of their missionaries and repeated reports of the Indian Army's splendid contribution to the war effort seem to have increased their ability to think of the immigrants as human beings like themselves rather than simply as dangerous foreigners or potential converts. Nevertheless, it does appear that it was the pragmatic and public relations elements that were uppermost in their minds as, during the course of the war, they bestirred themselves somewhat more than they had previously done to try to effect alterations in public opinion and government policies with regard to the East Indian immigrants. Nothing perhaps demonstrated that response as clearly as A. E.

Armstrong's 1916 proposal to University of Toronto President Robert Falconer that the famous Indian poet Rabindrinath Tagore, who was then travelling in the United States, be invited across the border and awarded an honorary degree by the University as a way of offsetting the damage done to Canada's reputation in India by the Komagata Maru affair.<sup>25</sup>

R. P. MacKay's and A. E. Armstrong's willingness to be somewhat more concerned with the East Indian immigrants' problems evidently did not lead them to participate in any significant cooperative strategies with educated Indian immigrant leaders.

Thus, in 1915 they distanced themselves from Dr. Sundar Singh and from those, including a group of Toronto Friends and an organization called the "Canadian Hindu Imperial Committee", who had associated with him in an effort to secure the entry into Canada of immigrants' wives and children.<sup>26</sup> Like Principal John MacKay several years earlier, R. P. MacKay and Armstrong had become convinced that Singh was a self-serving manipulator who had exploited members of his own immigrant community as well as sympathetic Canadians.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the cause of reuniting immigrants with their families was one that did commend itself to them. In 1916 a memorial on the subject was forwarded to the federal government by the Presbyterian General Assembly. Prompting had come from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in India through the medium of the BFM,<sup>28</sup> as well as from missionaries on the ground in British Columbia. The latter spoke of moral problems and intense personal suffering among the immigrants as inevitable results of their being deprived of the opportunity for normal family life.<sup>29</sup>

The BFM's most important practical step in assisting the East Indian community in British Columbia came in 1915 when it agreed to join the HMC in financing missionary work in Victoria by the Reverend Alexander P. Ledingham, home on extended health leave from Central India and anxious to do what he could for the immigrants. Between 1916 when he began systematic work in Victoria, and late 1918 when he returned to India, Ledingham showed himself to be a compassionate advocate and friend of the

Indian immigrant community. In a letter to R. P. MacKay, written in July 1916, he made two general points about that community, the first calculated to inspire hope, the second, a warning that the church should have limited expectations. The immigrants, he wrote, appreciated the Presbyterian Church's outreach to them, and it was helping to heal the wounds created by the opposition they had encountered. But at the same time, that opposition had created much more of a sense of religious and national community among them than would otherwise have been the case. It had effectively solidified them into a cohesive group, determined to maintain their religious and national identity.<sup>30</sup>

Ledingham adopted various strategies for assisting the Indian immigrant community. In a February 1917 letter he described his general approach: "[I]t seemed that our only thing to do was to lay ourselves as fully as possible at the disposal of these men in any way in which they might think we could help them. We encouraged them to come to classes and taught English writing & arithmetic or the vernacular and read in the Bible with any who would read with us. Our classroom was used in the afternoon and evening." Ledingham also visited the men in their dwellings and invited them to his home, "day or evening and specially Sabbath afternoon". He opened a "kind of club or Rest Room" in Victoria for them as a drop-in centre, since they were barred from most hotels.<sup>31</sup> In company with colleague W. L. Macrae and nine other members of a deputation, he called on the

Premier and Attorney General of British Columbia in an effort to persuade the province to press the federal government to let the immigrants' families join them. Describing the latter effort shortly after it had taken place, he told R. P. MacKay, "I am hopeful that not only the smaller question of the families, but that the whole question of Indian Immigration may be taken up."<sup>32</sup> Subsequently, he learned that the British Columbia government was not prepared to present any such case to the federal government, and that the federal government in any event was in no mood to consider such a proposal.<sup>33</sup> He attempted to publicize the General Assembly's memorial urging the reunion of immigrants and their families, both as a strategy for bringing more Christians on side for that cause and as a way of convincing the immigrants themselves of the existence of at least some concerned Christians. In order to challenge the hypocrisy of the situation whereby Indian immigrants were described as British subjects and yet denied all citizenship rights, he accompanied an educated Indian who met the usual requirements for naturalization to the Registrar's office and asked first about getting him naturalized and then about his right to vote.<sup>34</sup>

As a devoted family man himself, Ledingham agonized over the dilemma of immigrants deprived for years on end of the comforts of family life. The following account from a letter to R. P. MacKay suggests the sincerity of his concern about their plight:

One day shortly after my coming I said  
to one man whose hair was an iron gray  
well - are you living fairly comfortably

in our land? He hesitated but finally said well Sahib with no wife to cook my food and keep my house tidy and no children to make merry it is not much comfort a man can have without these. On further talk it turned out that his son was that very day being married in India and the father was not there to oversee the festivities and hospitalities of such an occasion. There is not a heathen civilization on the face of the earth so far as I know that makes a law that comes in and separates the father and husband from the children & wife. That is reserved for Christian Canada. The family relationships of the whole round earth cries [sic] out against this kind of stupidity and inhumanity - and we are slowly it may be but none the less surely blackening our national name and our Christian name in the great land of India.<sup>35</sup>

In what appears to have been his last letter to R. P. MacKay on the subject of the East Indian immigrants before his return to India in 1918, Ledingham made two final points, one reflecting a sensitive Christian missionary's insight, the other a political observation. In the first, he told MacKay that in attempting to Christianize the East Indian immigrants instead of the Canadian population, the church had been adopting the wrong approach:

I have been compelled to see more and more that we have been putting our main strength on the wrong end of the work. We have been working chiefly among the Hindus [Indian immigrants] themselves. I have felt right along that our first work is among and with ourselves. It is we who are wrong in our attitude to the East Indians. We need as a whole to understand this and take the means to get right and show the East Indians that we are working in this direction.

It was, Ledingham continued, "useless" to preach the gospel to men under the existing conditions. "They say first show us the spirit of the gospel then preach the gospel. I simply acknowledge our wrong - and I say Our Christian people send me here to acknowledge this wrong. We are moving as we can to mend matters. But their hope has been sorely tried and Hope deferred [sic] maketh the heart sick."

In terms of his second, political, point, Ledingham urged that better treatment of East Indians in Canada would facilitate peaceful rather than acrimonious relations with India in the inevitable day when it obtained the independence for which it was understandably and legitimately striving. "If Canada could now be just and generous, world-wide not provincial", he wrote, "what a different position she would be in with India when she gets the controlling power in her own hands."<sup>36</sup>

The compassion and indignation that was evident in Ledingham's correspondence about the East Indian immigrants seems to have left R. P. MacKay largely unmoved. Indeed, by 1918 MacKay appeared to have retreated to the cautious position of the immediate pre-war years in terms of his attitude towards more liberal immigration laws and improved treatment for the Indians. He was clearly reluctant to see any significant pressure put on the federal government to alter its immigration legislation regarding Indians before the end of the war. Even on the matter of admitting wives, he allowed himself to be convinced that the government was right in its determination that only individual

cases should be entertained, since only in that way could government officials ensure the non-admittance of "other women . . . who are not bona fide wives".<sup>37</sup>

With Ledingham's return to India in 1918, the heart went out of the Presbyterian Church's work among East Indian immigrants. Ledingham's recently retired India colleague, W. A. Wilson, was posted to Vancouver to replace Kenneth Grant, who had retired in 1917 and returned to his native Nova Scotia. Wilson's prime interest, however, was still in the kind of intellectual and theological work he had done as head of the Central India mission's seminary in Indore. He was not temperamentally equipped to give the East Indian missionary work the kind of emotional and practical day-to-day commitment that its effective prosecution required.<sup>38</sup> When he retired from the work in 1922, Macrae was left to carry on alone in both Victoria and Vancouver, holding services in the two cities on alternate Sundays, attracting an average attendance of about thirteen in the former city and very little better in the latter.<sup>39</sup> For its part, the Foreign Mission Board's interest in the East Indian work had become so weak that when the outstanding Indian Christian leader Yohan Masih was visiting Canada in 1923 under the Mission Board's sponsorship, R. P. MacKay was unprepared to promise Macrae that he could spare Masih for even a brief visit to his missions among the immigrants.<sup>40</sup>

From a purely pragmatic point of view, the lack of

commitment to the East Indian immigrant community in British Columbia made sense. By 1924 the total community had dwindled to somewhere around 800 or 900 people, and the expectation was that it would continue to decline.<sup>41</sup> It had yielded virtually no returns in the form of Christian conversions, and because it was almost entirely a womanless and childless community, it offered no hopeful possibilities for the future. (The absence of women and children, in turn, had meant that there had been no formal involvement by the church's women's missionary societies, demonstrably the most important collective force for the stimulation of missionary zeal within Canadian Presbyterianism.<sup>42</sup>) In a time of shrinking financial and human resources for missionary work, the East Indian community was, quite simply, a poor investment. The transfer of responsibility for it to the newly created United Church of Canada in 1925 can scarcely have seemed a serious loss to even the strongest of missions enthusiasts within the continuing Presbyterian church.

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The Presbyterian church's involvement with the East Indian immigrant community in British Columbia was by no means the most glorious chapter in its long history of missionary enterprise. A few devoted missionaries, of whom A. P. Ledingham was the most outstanding, were moved by humanitarianism and true Christian compassion to work on behalf of the immigrants, but the involvement of foreign mission bureaucrats seemed to be characterized more by unsteadiness and pragmatism than by

devotion to the interests of the immigrants. As one educated Indian spokesman shrewdly observed, there was something deeply ironic in the fact that the church could find the resources to send many missionaries to Indians in India but almost nothing for those who had come to live among them.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, once one moved beyond the small circle of missionaries and missions bureaucrats, there were prominent and respected Presbyterian clergy whose favoured strategy for dealing with the would-be immigrants was simply to exclude them from Canada's shores.

Nevertheless, for some eighteen years the Presbyterian church had provided at least some sort of witness to Christianity among the East Indian immigrants. Motivated in part by a desire to protect its overseas missionary enterprise and the interests of the Raj, and in part by genuine Christian concern, the church had reached out to a group of men who, despite their nominal status as British subjects, had arguably been subjected to greater humiliation and deprivation than any other immigrant group.

## Notes

1. Norman Buchignani and Doreen M. Indra, with Ram Srivastiva, Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada (Toronto: Ministry of Supply and Services, Canada, 1985), 32, and note 1, p. 47.
2. W. Peter Ward, "The Oriental Immigrant and Canada's Protestant Clergy, 1858-1925", BC Studies, 22 (Summer 1974), 40-55.
3. Buchignani and Indra, Journey, 7, 18, 23-24, 53-58. The immigration legislation was directed against Japanese who had been making the journey to Canada from Hawaii as well as against South Asians. It required a continuous journey to Canada from the immigrant's country of birth. For a detailed account of the Komagata Maru affair see Hugh Johnson, The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979).
4. United Church Archives (hereafter UCA), Presbyterian Church in Canada, Foreign Missions Committee, Western Section, Central India Mission, General Correspondence (hereafter India Correspondence), box 7, file 95, Nugent to A. E. Armstrong (hereafter AEA), June 19 and 20, 1908.
5. UCA, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions, Mission to East Indians in British Columbia (hereafter Mission to East Indians), "Report Re Hindoos at Vancouver", 1907.
6. India Correspondence, box 7, file 97, Nugent to AEA, March 25, 1908. The report by King to which Nugent referred was evidently an informal prelude to his two official reports to the federal government in 1908 on the subject of Asian immigration.
7. Mission to East Indians, file 1, W. A. Wilson to AEA, May 11, 1907.
8. Ibid., Wright to AEA, November 13, 1907; and file 2, Wright to AEA, February 12, 1908. In the latter, Wright reported that the Sikhs had built and paid for a temple costing \$6000.
9. Ibid., file 2, extract from record of seventeenth synod of British Columbia.
10. Ibid., file 3, draft letter to the Hon. R. Rogers, Minister of the Interior, December 23, 1911, from Prof. Taja Singh, L. W. Hall, et al; and letter to R. P. MacKay (hereafter RPM) from Egerton Shore, December 23, 1911, endorsing the letter to Rogers.
11. UCA, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Foreign Mission Board, General Correspondence (hereafter General Correspondence), box 3,

file 50, May 27, 1909, RPM to King.

12. Ibid., box 4, file 60, Canadian Mission Boards to Rogers, December 26, 1911.

13. Mission to East Indians, file 2, J. S. Henderson to AEA, February 11, 1908, and, for an opposing view, J. Campbell to AEA, February 7, 1908.

14. General Correspondence, box 4, file 60, AEA to Rob Monro, February 27, 1912.

15. India Correspondence, box 10, file 113, RPM to McPhedran, April 1, 1912.

16. General Correspondence, box 5, file 71, RPM to Daily Star, March 19, 1913.

17. Isabella Ross Broad, An Appeal for Fair Play for the Sikhs in Canada (Victoria: Victoria Society of Friends of the Hindu, 1913); India Correspondence, box 12, file 143, RPM to W. Leslie Clay, October 4, 1915.

18. Mission to East Indians, file 7, K. J. Grant, "Hindus in Canada", August 15, 1917; India Correspondence, box 12, file 134, RPM to Janet White, January 17, 1915.

19. For example, India Correspondence, box 11, file 131, J. Fraser Campbell to RPM, October 23, 1914.

20. Ibid., file 130, AEA to F. J. Anderson, September 28, 1914; also RPM to J. Fraser Campbell, September 12, 1914.

21. "Oriental Immigration", Presbyterian Record, 39 (May 1914), 193.

22. India Correspondence, box 11, file 130, RPM to J. Fraser Campbell, September 12, 1914.

23. Mission to East Indians, RPM to J. F. Steele,, March 9, 1914; see also E. Stanley Jones, The Christ of the Indian Road (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1926), 125.

24. Buchignani and Indra, Journey, 59-61; India Correspondence, box 12, file 137, W. A. Wilson to RPM, April 29, 1915, and file 139, F. J. Anderson to RPM, June 11, 1915.

25. India Correspondence, box 13, file 154, AEA to Falconer, September 28, 1916.

26. Mission to East Indians, file 5, RPM to Arthur Hawkes, April

- 23, 1915; see also file 4, AEA to S. Singh, January 22, 1914.
27. Ibid., file 5, AEA to Principal MacKay, April 16, 1915, and RPM to W. L. Macrae, May 4, 1915.
28. The Acts and Proceedings of the Forty-Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1917, Minutes, 57, 95; Mission to East Indians, RPM to A. P. Ledingham, August 10, 1916.
29. Mission to East Indians, file 6, K. J. Grant to RPM, June 1, 1916, and A. P. Ledingham to AEA, March 7, 1916; J. S. Henderson, "Orientals in B.C.", Presbyterian Record, 41, (June 1916), 247. In an interesting reversal of the common view that Asian male immigrants constituted a moral threat to white women, Henderson reported that while eight of the East Indians had recently married white women, it was "in every instance to their hurt, industrially, socially and morally".
30. India Correspondence, box 13, file 152, Ledingham to RPM, July 28, 1916.
31. Ibid., box 14, file 159, Ledingham to RPM, February 3, 1917.
32. Ibid., February 2, 1917.
33. Ibid., February 3, 1917; box 14, file 166, AEA to A. P. Ledingham, September 7, 1917.
34. Ibid., file 159, Ledingham to RPM, February 3, 1917, and file 171, Ledingham to AEA, undated.
35. Ibid., file 159, Ledingham to RPM, February 3, 1917.
36. Ibid., file 173, Ledingham to RPM, April 9, 1918. For a variant on Ledingham's view that priority in missionary work should probably be given to teaching Canadians the true spirit of the Christian gospel rather than trying to convert the East Indians, see Kenneth James Grant, My Missionary Memories (Halifax: Imperial Publishing, 1923), 189.
37. India Correspondence, box 14, file 173, RPM to A. P. Ledingham, May 9, 1918.
38. See, e.g., box 15, file 190, W. A. Wilson to RPM, September 19, 1919. Wilson had retired from his work in India only because of his wife's ill health.
39. Presbyterian Witness, March 1, 1923, 8.
40. Mission to East Indians, file 8, RPM to Macrae, December 17, 1923.

41. "Church Life and Work", Presbyterian Witness, September 11, 1924.

42. Regarding these societies see Ruth Compton Brouwer, New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914, forthcoming, University of Toronto Press, 1990, Chapter 2.

43. Mission to East Indians, K. S. Akali to "Dear Sir", April 1, 1914.

## THE VIRGIN MARY IN THE REFORMATION

by

Calvin Augustine Pater

### 1. Popular Views of the Virgin

In the early sixteenth century, marian veneration centred around the cult of the "Beautiful Mary," (Cf Songs 1: 15,16), the pregnant madonna, and (most popularly) the mantle madonna, while, of necessity, the lactating madonna was usually depicted in paintings.

The pregnant madonna came equipped with a little door that opened up to reveal the contents of her womb, namely all three persons of the trinity. This reveals a popular but crude misunderstanding of Mary as Theotokos, God-bearer, or Mother of God. The doctrine of Theotokos had been adopted at the Council of Ephesus in 431 following a christological dispute. Nestorius (d. 431) had argued for the designation of Mary as primarily Anthropotokos or Man-bearer, to show that Mary was the mother of Christ's human nature, but not of the eternal Logos, Christ's divine nature. Nestorius did integrate the human and divine in Christ; thus he viewed Mary as Anthropotokos by nature, but Theotokos by manifestation.<1>

In 451, the Council of Chalcedon refined the doctrine of Theotokos. There was no particular intention to elevate the status of the Virgin, or to counter Nestorius's claim that Mary was the source of Christ's human nature, for it was not claimed that Christ's divine nature proceeded from her. However, the Council of Chalcedon misunderstood Nestorius as dualistically splitting the divine from the human nature of Christ, and for balance declared that Mary was Theotokos only in respect of Christ's human nature.<2>

Thus the madonnas who bore the trinity, undermined the Council of Chalcedon by applying to Christ's divine nature and then, by extension, to the entire trinity, what was deliberately predicated of Christ's human nature.

The mantle madonnas depicted the Virgin with a broad mantle or skirt behind which or in whose folds believers clung for protection from Christ, who was about to smite them at the Final Judgment.<3> In this case, the Virgin usurped the role of Christ as mediator. The mantle madonnas had carried this development to the extreme that the Virgin had become the sole refuge of sinners. This popular view was consonant with the hymn "Salve Regina," some versions of which addressed the Virgin as "our sole refuge."

The lactating madonnas would have been based on the common belief, not yet dogma, that Mary's body had been assumed into heaven. Thus no relics could have survived, except her hair, milk and clothing. Dehydrated

particles of the Virgin's milk were venerated at popular shrines; from this it was only one more step towards the lactating madonnas.

A famous collection of marian relics was established by Frederick the Elector of Saxony in the seventh isle of the Castle Church of All Saints in Wittenberg. On display were for example particles of the Virgin's town, home, the balsam tree under which she had suckled the Lord, clothes like her night-shirt, girdle, skirt, and veil sprinkled with Christ's blood, wax from the candle that she clutched on her deathbed, and several yarns that she had spun.<4>

The Reformers wasted little time attacking relics, although John Calvin did write a Treatise On Relics, which alone of all his writings is suffused with a spirit of gentle humour.<5> The lactating madonnas likewise were mostly ignored, but the Reformers opposed the mantle madonnas, and the image of God and Christ that they called forth led Luther towards reformation.

The mariology and theology of the mantle madonnas found its logical conclusion in Ulrich Tengler's Laienspiegel published in Augsburg in 1509. In its opening scene the advocates of Satan appear before the Trinity with such powerful accusations, that the Trinity is persuaded to condemn the church.

Enter the Virgin as defence lawyer. She demands a mistrial, following a lengthy rebuttal on behalf of the church, whose sole refuge she has become. She refutes the advocates of Satan in a brilliant appeal, and in her summation, the three divine persons, already chastened, are told to obey the Mother who bore them all. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are thus humbled into permanently seeking the counsel of the Mother of God. In the final scene the Virgin is crowned Queen of Heaven, co-ruler with the Trinity.<6>

The mantle madonnas had their negative side; they could undermine God's benevolence without compensation, in that traditional theology did not well support the newly inflated role of the Virgin. For some, like Luther, this led to doubts about God's mercy. Others worried less about mercy, and removed the embarrassing tension between the Virgin and the Trinity. Then the Virgin became aligned with a wrathful Trinity, and mediation vanished once again.

A case in point involves a biblical play that was performed on Sunday, 25 April 1322, in the vicinity of Eisenach. The Wise Virgins who had trimmed their lamps are admitted by Christ to the bridal feast, but the foolish virgins are cast out. Distraught, they decide that their only hope lies in invoking the Virgin, but then the Virgin scolds them for assuming that she would accept those whom her son has cast out. During the final chorus the Foolish Virgins wail:

We are deserving of God's wrath  
Thus we are lost forever

Count Frederick of Thuringia, who attended this play, arose and cried out: "What good are our beliefs, when God shows no mercy, nor Mary, nor the Saints!" Frederick then suffered a stroke which disabled him permanently, and soon he followed the Foolish Virgins into the hereafter.<7>

Luther, too, grew up with an angry God and Christ. Saint Ann had saved him in the meadow in Stotternheim, but the Father had nearly struck him with a thunderbolt. Christ gave him no comfort either. Therefore he approached the saints:

I chose twenty-one saints and prayed to three every day when I celebrated Mass. Thus I completed the number every week. I prayed especially to the Blessed Virgin who with her womanly heart would compassionately appease her son.<8>

None the less, the Virgin failed to console him, and he kept searching for a merciful God. From this came his Tower or Garden experience:

The words "righteous" and "righteousness of God" would strike my conscience like lightning. When I heard them I was exceedingly terrified. If God is righteous he must punish. But when by God's grace I pondered over the words "whoever through faith is righteous shall live (Rom 1:17) and "the righteousness of God" (Rom 3:21) I soon came to the conclusion that if we, as righteous people, ought to live from faith, and if the righteousness of God should contribute to the salvation of all who believe, then salvation will not be our merit but God's mercy. Thus my spirit was cheered. For it is by the righteousness of God that we are justified and saved through Christ.<9>

With access to a merciful God restored, Luther turned against the mantle madonna, though not the biblical Mary whom he still called blessed. Later, he recalled: "Was it not a great and awful heresy, that we placed all our trust in Our Dear Lady's mantle, seeing that she did not shed her blood on our behalf?"<10>

The reduction of the Virgin's role also reduced one source of anti-Semitism. This source came from Evagrius Scholasticus (died ca 594) who told the tale of a Jewish boy who by chance ate of communion bread, and was cast into a fire by his parents. There the Virgin shielded the boy. This material was elaborated long after in middle-English verse, and from it came the idea of the Virgin's special role in converting the Jews.<11> England was virulently anti-Semitic and from there the Jews were first expelled.

Centuries after the expulsion, verses were still composed about a Jew in France who had a vision of the Virgin and was instantly converted. Other verses exposed the Jew who was struck dead after he insulted the Virgin's image.<12> The theme of the Jews' special hatred of the Virgin and her special solicitude for their conversion was also known in Germany.

In Regensburg, an imperial city, the Jews were tolerated as lenders to the Holy Roman emperors. Since most Jews there were rather wealthy from usury (they charged as much as forty-three percent interest per year) and since the Christian populace experienced a period of financial depression, the tinder was there for the fire. The fire came from the fanatic preaching of Doctor Balthasar Hubmaier both against usury and the Jews specifically.

Since Jews have not been notable devotees of the Virgin, they were especially hated for casting aspersions on the chastity of Mary. Among the

ditties that the populace began to sing when they encountered Jews was the following:

A highly learned Doctor, named Mister Balthasar,  
Says all of you are swindlers who mock the tender Virgin.  
How do you like that, you Jews! <13>

When Emperor Maximilian died in 1519, the populace used the resulting vacuum of power to turn violently upon the Jews who were driven out while their synagogue was levelled. On the same spot the Church of the Beautiful Mary was erected. The following years witnessed scenes of mass hysteria. A contemporary chronicler has left a lively even colourful account of the pilgrims that descended on Regensburg :

Men came running, women, children, servants, maids, of whom some had gone on a long journey without eating anything. They came, still clutching their tools, with sickles, pitchforks, rakes, milking pails, whatever they happened to have had in hand. They came spontaneously and directly from their domestic labours, or from the fields. Many were caught up in this even during the night, when they went on pilgrimage hardly covered by a shirt. Some ran without ceasing day and night, mostly in silence, and let it be known that they found rest impossible. When they saw the Beautiful Mary, they burst out screaming and crying, also dancing in a frenzy until they fell to the ground, exhausted. Also people from the city, who came only to watch, were caught up in the same kind of frenzy. They mixed with the strangers and danced until they fainted. Then sacrifices were brought to the image of Mary, gold, silver, or whatever they could afford. <14>

By 1521 Balthasar Hubmaier, still wrapped up in the quantitative approach to religion, so characteristic of especially the late Middle Ages, had scrupulously tabulated forty-five miracles. Ultimately even Luther was consulted. He wrote back (26 August 1523) declaring all the miracles to be authentic: authentically the work of the devil. After that Hubmaier's ardour turned to ashes. He was converted, joined the Anabaptists, and was burned at the stake in Vienna.

## 2. Two Humanists

Of the northern humanists, Erasmus, though ultimately disowned by all, had the greatest impact <15>. Since he never experienced the piety of the mantle madonnas, Erasmus never knew a wrathful God or Jesus. Thus Luther's struggles to find a merciful God were fundamentally alien to him. Erasmus's scholarship was humanistic, but the piety of his youth had been shaped by the Brethren of the Common Life.

Notable among the Brethren was Thomas à Kempis, who wrote the great best-seller of the late Middle Ages, the Imitatio Christi, which has stood as a spiritual landmark for Catholics and Protestants alike. In his Soliloquy, however, Thomas was traditional in appealing to the Virgin as "the expiator of all the things I have committed" and "my only hope." <16>

Despite that, his Imitatio Christi gradually became so widely read that it appears to have prepared the way for the change from the mariological piety of the fifteenth to the christological piety of the sixteenth century.

One of the founders of the Brethren of the Common Life was Wessel Gansfort. He hardly ever concerns himself with the Virgin, except as the emblem of virginity, which is important to him as a priest. Still, Wessel notes that the virginal priesthood "of the Thrones, of the Cherubim and the Seraphim, and of the Virgin Mother was made more holy and perfect through the priesthood of Christ." <17> Thus Christ eclipses the virtues of the Virgin.

For Wessel, the virtue of virginity does not abase marriage at all. He approves of Augustine's remark "The merit of continence in John, who had no experience of married life, is the same as that of Abraham who begat sons." He also comments: "We see Peter called to apostleship in marriage, while Timothy, who was far below him in the fruit of the Word of God, was called to discipleship in celibacy." <18>

Wessel hardly refers to the Virgin, and he tries to cool ardent marian devotion. Wessel's successor, Gerhard van Cloester, related to Albert Hardenberg, Wessel's biographer, the following event:

In the convent there was a very pious monk, especially devoted to the Virgin Mother, as the times then were, who often urged Wessel to some special worship of the Virgin. To this on one occasion Wessel replied: "Father, why do you not rather lead me to Christ, who so graciously invites all the heavy-laden to come to him." <19>

This comment reveals the tendency of the Brethren to move from the Virgin to Christ. Striking is the parenthetical observation that (at least among the Brethren) special devotion to the Virgin had virtually disappeared in two generations.

This also clarifies Erasmus's stance towards marian devotion. Erasmus, like the Brethren of the Common Life, was devoted to Christ, but growing up in an environment where special devotion to the Virgin was regarded as outmoded, he felt no profound inclination to attack it either.

Irreverent, Erasmus was, however, towards any form of abuse that he thought he found in the church. Some claimed that Erasmus resembled Luther. In Apologia pro Pietate, published in 1531 in Antwerp, Eustachius van Zichem found a link between Erasmus and Luther with regard to the Virgin. <20>

Peter Canisius, who succeeded Ignatius of Loyola as leader of the Jesuits, disesteemed Erasmus's attitude towards the Virgin. He found offensive Erasmus's Letter of the Virgin to Glaucopluton, that is Ulrich Zwingli, in which she praises Luther (!) for opposing the invocation of the saints. Canisius also disliked Erasmus's qualms about vows made to the Virgin and the saints, and was angered by Erasmus's mockery of some of the Virgin's titles, as well as an Erasmian reference to the Virgin as "Venus." Thus Erasmus showed a spirit of "Lucianic mockery," and he unfairly said that popular devotion elevated the Virgin above Christ. <21>

Erasmus's spirit of mockery appears in A Pilgrimage for Religion's sake (1526). Besides satirical references to all sorts of marian devotions, there is an argument about the historical basis for believing that the milk particles at the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham are genuine. At last the argument is settled by an appeal to "the nun of Constantinople who gave the milk."<22> In view of the reputation of Eastern nuns in the west, Erasmus implied that the nun had donated her own milk.

However offensive this is, Erasmus was not lacking in spirituality; rather, his spirituality clashed with popular marian devotion. In 1526 he positively stated his own intent, which is reminiscent of Wessel Gansfort's already cited advice to the marian devotee. Erasmus's positive and irenic treatise On the Immensity of God's Mercy begins as follows:

Some of you might wish that I would here begin with a prayer to the Virgin Mother, whom we must agree is worthy of the highest honour. Yet, considering the subject matter, I feel that it would be more suitable for you to repeat this little prayer:

O Jesus Christ, Almighty Word of the eternal Father, You have promised that where two or three have come together in your name, you will be among them, see how many of us have come here together. Therefore in keeping your promise, allow the Holy Spirit to be poured out into the hearts of all, that we may more fully understand the greatness of your mercy. Grant that at the same time we may render thanks for this mercy so often experienced by us, that we may beg for it in all our needs and finally that in our dealings with all others we may emulate it.  
Amen.<23>

This illustrates Erasmus's consistency, for what he said in 1524 more clearly, was on his mind in 1514 when he published The Complaint of Jesus. For there Jesus tries to recover the honour of which he has been robbed by the veneration of the saints, including his own mother. This poem shaped Ulrich Zwingli's view of Mary.<24> Despite this, Erasmus did not wholly challenge the doctrine of the invocation of the saints, for he still maintained that the Virgin Mother was "worthy of the highest honour."

Let us now compare Erasmus's attitude with that of Thomas More, who, by traditional standards, is regarded as a saint. A striking feature is that although More never bantered about popular marian veneration as did Erasmus, there is a lack of serious discussion of the Virgin. In fact, when More's complete works will have been published, the references to Venus may well outnumber those to Mary.

Thomas More was traditional in his view of the Virgin. He believed in her sinlessness, her perpetual virginity, and against Tyndale, More upheld the Virgin's assumption into heaven. Eager to assert the Virgin's perpetual virginity, More found that most Protestants of the first generation agreed with him. More used this point to argue that it can only be accepted on the authority of the Church, for Jerome had not disproved the claim of Helvidius that the perpetual virginity of Mary does not come from Scripture. Jerome merely showed that it did not contradict Scripture, and that the Church will be led into all truth (John 14:16).<25>

More, however, may have had more in common with the Protestants whom he attacked than he publicly allowed. More was probably uncomfortable in asserting a doctrine that he knew was not based on Scripture, for in his Dialogue Concerning Heresies (1531), More bases Mary's perpetual virginity on a scriptural argument that is as strained as similar arguments from Ulrich Zwingli:

Syth she mervayled howe it myght be that euer she sholde conceyve and have a chylde, it must nedys be that her answeere ment that she neuer wolde medle with man.

Also interesting is More's opposition to Luther's rejection of the marian hymn Salve Regina, for More merely expresses disagreement and does not at all rise to defend its basic teachings.<26>

Consequently, one must support Garry E. Haupt:

One focus of highly affective or sentimental spirituality was the Virgin; in the Treatise and De Tristitia More mentions her only in passing, and she is largely absent from his other works, even though we know More visited her shrines.<27>

In More's written legacy there is no evidence of practical devotion to the Virgin. Though More did fault Luther for not accepting the Virgin as advocata nostra he did not appeal to her in the hour of his death. As a prisoner in the Tower of London he left this final prayer:

Give me thy Grace, good Lord  
to set the world at nought  
Gladly to be thinking of God,  
piteously to call for his help  
To lean unto the comfort of God  
Busily to labour to love him...  
Gladly to bear my purgatory here,  
to be joyful of tribulation  
To walk the narrow way that leadeth to life  
To bear the cross with Christ  
To foresee and consider the  
everlasting fire of hell,  
To pray for pardon before the judge come  
to have continually in mind the  
passion that Christ suffered for me,  
For his benefits uncessantly to give him thanks....<28>

Compared with Erasmus, More lacked humour and sarcasm, and was more combative towards Protestants. They were in agreement on many issues, though, also in how they assessed the Virgin. More and Erasmus did not need the Mantle Virgin or Martin Luther, for their trust was founded on a benign God and Christ. More and Erasmus were lifelong friends. It would seem that they knew more than those who turned the one into a saint and the other into a skeptic.

### 3. Early Protestant Demolition of Marian Dogma

Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt was the first Reformer to discard the intercession of the saints and consequently of the Virgin. In a rare mood, Luther credited Karlstadt with having accomplished this. Already in 1517 Karlstadt was first among the Wittenbergers in attacking the veneration of Saint Francis, and his arguments could just as well have been applied to the Virgin as to any other saint.<29>

However, Karlstadt moves slowly, perhaps to avoid giving offence, or because he himself had felt an emotional attachment to the Virgin. His greatest, though indirect, contribution to the reduction of the Virgin to Mary's biblical rôle is made when Karlstadt in 1520 publishes his Booklet on the Canonical Scriptures. Not only does Karlstadt eject the Apocrypha, but far more significantly, the canon became the exclusive court of appeal, and Karlstadt repudiated Augustine by placing the Scriptures above the church. Thus the concept of canon is different in Protestantism. Catholics supplemented the canon with deuterocanonical works, tradition, papal decretals, etcetera, but the Protestant canon was exclusive: the Word of God versus the words of humans.

When the confrontation over marian dogma began, this had become axiomatic for Karlstadt's thought, but he never denounces the specific source of much marian dogma, namely the Proto-Evangelion of James. Even Matthew Zell of Strassburg never mentioned the Proto-Evangelion by name, but he was the first to disown it with reference to marian dogma when he in a sermon in 1523 attacked the traditional names of Mary's parents, Ann and Joachim, as unbiblical and based on "fables."<30>

The second cornerstone of marian dogma was the doctrine of Theotokos, which assumed in Christ a communication of human and divine properties, and which by later extension attributed many of Christ's properties, often exclusively, to the Virgin. Because of its extra-biblical status, Karlstadt did not try to explain a communication of properties even in Christ himself, and thus the logical outcome was a split in the Reformation over the Lord's Supper. All Protestants agreed, however, that the attributes of Christ could not simply be conferred on Mary. In On the Intercession of Mary (July 1523) Karlstadt argues:

I would gladly honour Mary, but I do not want to deprive her Creator and Lord of their honour, and attribute to Mary that which she would repel.<31>

That this was consciously directed against the Theotokos doctrine becomes clear when one considers the titles that Karlstadt uses in his sermon. He begins by referring to the traditional doctrine concerning the Mother of God, but when he describes his own position he only uses the expression Mother of Christ.<32> Later when Calvin argues that the term Theotokos as used at Ephesus was technically correct, he nevertheless observes that he prefers the term Mother of Christ.<33> Thus Protestants preferred Nestorius's terminology, and the Mother of God became the Mother of Christ.

Later reinterpretations of the Theotokos doctrine, coupled with the doctrine of the communication of properties, led to the establishment of the Virgin as mediatrix of all graces. Karlstadt repudiates this doctrine on the basis of Biblical texts that refer to Jesus Christ as exclusive mediator. Acts 4:12 refers to only one name under heaven by which believers are saved. Karlstadt also appealed to 1 Timothy 2:3 "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"<34>

For Karlstadt, Christ's own attitude towards his mother outweighs all tradition:

I am amazed that the devotees and money-grubbing servants of Mary make such firm comparisons between Mary and Christ. They would have to be offended by the words of Christ when he said to his parents: "Do you not know that I must be occupied with the things of my Father?" [Luke 2:49]. I mean that was written down [in Scripture]! And elsewhere: "They are my mother, brother, and sisters, who do the will of my Father." Christ rebukes his mother and also compares her to every Christian, whether young or old, who fulfills the will of God [Mat 12:46-50].<35>

After all, Mary is a human being, and Jeremiah says "Cursed are they who put their trust in humans" (Jer 17:5). Christ told us not to serve more than one master. The intercession of the Virgin presumes the intercession of the saints, but the Bible demands that one call on God in times of trouble, not on Abraham or Saint Peter. Conclusion: We pray to the living God, not dead saints.<36>

Finally, Karlstadt opposes prayers and hymns addressed to the Virgin. Christ wants prayer to be specific: "whatever you ask in my name," but Hail Marys contain no petition: "The prayer Ave Maria is partially cited from the Bible and partially contained in it. That does not turn the Ave Maria into a prayer, since nothing is contained in the Ave Maria than a story that relates how much goodness and grace God has shown to Mary." The Salve Regina, because it ascribes to Mary what belongs to Christ is heretical. Therefore it should be erased.<37>

Extreme biblicism inspired John Eberlein, whose Utopian state Wolfaria was ruled by such perfect regulations as the following: "We command on pain of beheading that no one is to teach the people any prayer other than the holy Pater Noster."<38>

Further developments included Zwingli's setting aside of the church calendar in 1520, in favour of serial preaching.<39> Since this became the common practice in Reformed and Anabaptist churches alike, the festal days for the Virgin were dropped, and Lutherans restricted their number.

Many Protestants of the first generation continued to endorse the perpetual virginity of Mary, but in 1524 John Locher of Munich probably became the first to reject the traditional strict definition, which included the notion that Mary's "seals" remained unbroken. In a Christmas sermon he observes:

This mother Mary bore Christ our redeemer in a natural way just like any other woman, except that she bore him without sin and sorrow, in this respect not participating in the curse of Eve.<40>

Locher did not intend to strike at the biblical doctrine of the virgin birth; thus these lines, though seemingly ambiguous, make sense only if Locher did not believe that Mary was a virgin post partem in the traditional, strict, sense. for he also asserted that Mary was exempt from original sin. However, even this is due to the grace of God, for of herself Mary would have been unworthy.

A remarkable diffusion of humanistic biblical exegesis is now also taking place. Locher also notes:

The Ave Maria was not a prayer for grace; it is a blessing and a greeting. Attribute grace to God alone. Nor should we ever desire to receive grace other than from the plenitude of Jesus Christ.<41>

Christ, not Mary, has the plenitude of grace. Thus Locher removes the "Hail Mary." It began with: "Ave Maria, gratia plena (Hail Mary, full of grace)." In the fifteenth century the philologist Lorenzo Valla rejected the gratia plena of the Vulgate in favour of the Greek kecharitomene: not "full of grace," but "gracious one." Erasmus had edited and published Valla's Annotations. Luther used these for his translation of the New Testament, and thus Mary's plenitude of grace was now being dismissed by more than a coterie of scholars.

Another twist on Mary's unworthiness to receive grace came from a sermon of Andrew Keller. God's favour towards Mary was the result of predestination rather than her own deeds. Keller, too, followed Valla, Erasmus, and Luther, in translating kecharitomene as "gracious one."<42>

The Hebrew text also corroded the traditional Vulgate text on which the church had relied to prove the invocation of the saints. The Vulgate version of Psalm 150 went "praise God in his saints," but Adam Pastor notes that the Hebrew should be translated as "Praise God in his holiness."<43> Neither does Pastor maintain "Hail Mary" as a greeting, for the circumstances in which it had originally applied were unique.

In Dutch there survives an anonymous treatise, undoubtedly translated from German, entitled Refutation of Salve Regina. In it the famous marian hymn "Hail O Queen" is subjected to a line-by-line analysis in which every phrase is refuted with a set of scriptural verses.<44>

The only major issue to be resolved was that of Mary's perpetual virginity for which there was no biblical basis, as even Thomas More at first had rightly argued. It was up to the second generation of Protestants to opt for Helvidius's solution and to claim that after the virgin birth of Christ, Mary had children by Joseph, who are referred to as Christ's brothers and sisters in the gospels. Thus the virgin birth was now detached from the perpetual virginity of Mary. This distinction was diffused so rapidly that in 1556 even a common labourer in Antwerp, Claes de Praet, is familiar with it.

Here follows an account of the final interrogation after which he was burned at the stake:

Priest: Do you believe that Mary is a mother and virgin? Claes: I do. The priest banged his hand on the table and grew very excited and said: "You will not be able to prove that for nothing is written about that in the Scriptures." Claes: Isaiah prophesied that he would be born of a virgin. Moreover, Gabriel said to Mary: "You will conceive and bear a son. Mary replied, How can this be for I know no husband?" Priest: Yes you can grab some text here and there, but that she was a virgin until her death... Claes: "I do not say that." Priest: "But that's what I meant."<45>

Although this summarizes how Protestant mariology was reduced to its Biblical components, one radical development should not be dismissed, for Melchior Hoffman's final christology, though generally rejected by Protestants, in an ironic way illustrates the fall of the Virgin who was Queen to one who was compared with an oyster.

In a brilliant if unconvincing attempt, Hoffman, the furrier, resolved the problem of Christ's two natures. Christ had only one nature, and the Virgin Mary was not his mother. Crucial for Hoffman was John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Noting that the Word **became** flesh, and thus **did not take on** flesh, Hoffman believed that inside Mary the spiritually pre-existent Christ had become flesh of his own volition, free from the Adamic nature that God had cursed. "Mary the Virgin was the seed that the Son of the Highest took on to be his mother, and inside of her he became a bodily tangible and visible Word of God."<46> Thus the "Word of the Spirit becomes visible like water that is crystallized by the frosty wind from the North." However, Hoffman's most famous analogy was based on Pliny's Natural History:

Now we must seriously consider how a pearl is dew from heaven, and such a one was born from Mary, as clearly as Pliny explains nature, in describing how the dew from heaven drops into an oyster, and inside the oyster the drops congeal and give birth to pearls without absorbing any other matter, for only from the watery dew grows a pure and hard pearl. This is an image of the eternal Word, which was a genuine heavenly dew that proceeded from the mouth of God invisibly and intangibly, but through the Holy Spirit he drops into the wild oyster of the Virgin Mary, and in her became a Word that is the tangible, visible, and carnal Word and spiritual pearl without any derivation.<47>

Although Hoffman's heavenly flesh christology was original, it had some precedent in the Christian tradition. Hoffman could exploit the strong spiritualizing tendencies of John, and Matthew did refer to Christ as "the pearl of great price" (Matt 13:45f). Thus Clement of Alexandria (fl. 3d Cent) also connected Christ, the Pearl, with the traditional understanding of the oyster, without, however, working out any mariological implications.

The interpretation of the pearl as dew of the oyster was handed down through the Middle Ages in the Physiologus, the Etymologies of Isidore of Seville, bestiaries, and emblem books dealing with the symbolism of precious

stones. In short, Hoffman would probably have argued that his elaboration of the theme of the pearl and the oyster was at least as legitimate as the movement from Theotokos to Mantle Madonna; besides, the pearl of great price is found in Scripture, but not the Theotokos.

Hoffman's mariology, if not his christology, does reveal what happened in Protestantism. To Protestants, the Virgin had become the oyster that they had exchanged for the pearl, Christ. In some ways Protestants accepted even less than biblical evidence would have allowed. None of the Protestant women who wrote ever wrote in defence of the Virgin. Perhaps not untypical was Simon Haferitz whose 1525 sermon of over thirty pages discusses all the verses in the infancy narrative in Luke without mentioning Mary even once.<48> Despite that, attempts were made to salvage what could be salvaged.

#### 4. Early Protestant Reconstructions

##### a. Mary as Exemplar

In 1523, Matthew Zell discards the Proto-Evangelion of James as a credible source for marian dogma. As a result, he twice notes that he was being accused of "having violated the Mother of God." Perhaps somewhat frightened at how little support Scripture provided for mariology, Matthew Zell tries to rescue the concept of Theotokos:

Mary produced the matter out of which the humanity of Christ was miraculously made and formed; therefore we truly honour her above all creatures as the one whom God also honoured above all creatures, when she alone of all creatures was chosen to be the mother of God. Which unique honour (that she is the Mother of God) is praise inexpressible, and in itself sufficient reason why we, during our lives must meditate on this. It would be impossible to grant her greater honour than this, that she is the Mother of God--an honour which Scripture also bestows on her. We should not and can not doubt this.<49>

A similarly heroic effort was Ulrich Zwingli's forty folio page sermon in defence of the perpetual virginity of Mary. As one commentator has it:

It is a little curious that having written a treatise which rejected the concept of the nun as the virgin dedicated to God, he turns in September 1522 to a lyrical defence of the perpetual virginity of the Mother of Christ.<50>

Zwingli even attempted to retain the "Hail Mary." It was not really a prayer, but since it is based on Scripture it can be repeated.<51>

Even though Zwingli clings to more mariology than the Scriptures yield, some doctrines are just obviously absent from Scripture. Thus even while Zwingli writes a most extensive praise of the Virgin, he notes that he can not accept the doctrine of Mary's immaculate conception. This is to be explained by Zwingli's opposition to Augustine's notion of original sin. Since the sole purpose of the notion of the immaculate conception was to safeguard against original sin, Zwingli did not need it.

Ultimately both Zell's attempt to save the Theotokos and Zwingli's attempt to save the perpetual virginity were doomed to failure, for lack of scriptural support. Even where it threatened the national symbols, Scripture challenged mariology. In Zwingli's Switzerland, for example, the original oath of confederation on which the Swiss nation was based could no longer be enforced, because Protestants refused to recite the clause that appealed to "Mary and the Saints," while Catholics would not remove it.<52>

Protestants, of course, did accept the Mary of Scripture, including the miracle of the virgin birth, because Luke had recorded it. Thus Karlstadt, for example, accepts the Lucan infancy narrative at face value:

The Scriptures record that the Holy Virgin Mary was greeted by the angel, and God poured into her the plenitude of grace, and she became the mother of Christ, and tells us similar things as to how the fruit of her womb was blessed, which she received out of faith.<53>

The biblical material was rather intractable, however, for the virgin birth was not an event to be repeated. But Karlstadt can at least salvage Mary's act of faith in believing the angel, and he even saw in Mary an example as Christbearer to be copied by all Christbearing believers:

Therefore, they conceive Christ spiritually who dilligently and reverently hearing the Word of God also have become Mothers of Christ. It is more important to bear Christ in the heart spiritually than physically. "The flesh profits nothing, but the Spirit gives life." All moreover who adhere faithfully to the Word of God, being no strangers to tribulation, bear the Word [i.e. Christ] from the word [i.e. Scripture]. I do not at all broadcast this because I intend to detract from the honour of the Virgin. She is most holy, for she conceived Christ carnally as well as spiritually. For when she believed the word of the angel, the angel praised her as blessed.<54>

This statement, perhaps more than any, shows the contradiction between traditional reverence for Mary, and a theologian's new insights. The first generation of Protestants often experienced this clash. Later Protestants moved beyond this, however, because they did not have the traditional marian reverence ingrained in them.

Protestants then believed themselves justified in opposing traditional marian devotion. If one existentially appropriates Mary, one goes to the same source on which she relied, namely God whom she called her Saviour. Therefore one must drink from the well of which all the saints have drunk.<55> Again, this is nothing but the humanistic cry: Ad fontes!

Even the image of Mary as a model of sturdy faith, is modified by Haug Marschalck, in that he regarded Mary as the model for questioning, perhaps even doubting faith, when she asked: "How can this be?"<56>

John Locher of Munich also saw in the Mary and Jesus who were turned away at the inn, models of those who are despised by the world and experience contempt, but who nevertheless may hope because God will not forsake them. Besides this, Locher made three other points in which Mary is exemplary for believers: Mary allows us to see God's completely free mercy

and grace in action; Mary preserved the words of the angel in her heart, so we must preserve the Word of God and follow it; Mary is a very mirror of faith. The exemplary language is essential. For Locher did not want to adore Mary or the saints, but he intended to follow them wherever he could existentially.<57> Thus Mary remained to be followed.

#### b. From Mary to Christ

This represents the major compensation for the gap that the Virgin had left. Even though Luther regarded the Mantle Virgins heretical, they were not heretical because they offered grace and mediation, but because they took this role away from Christ. Thus the Mantle Virgins mostly survive in the Protestant Christ, while the late-medieval Christ, the Judge, partially survives.

Matthew Zell of Strasbourg echoed Erasmus in remarking that "among many simple Christians, Mary is more highly esteemed than Christ himself."<58> Of itself this sort of sentiment does not reveal a censoring of the Virgin, but opposition to a Christ without mediatorial role. As Zell said, there was no disharmony between the real Christ and Mary: "The Mother of God does not want to help us against the will of Christ."<59> He also modifies the traditional Stabat Mater theme:

When we hear what Christ says about bearing the cross and temporary troubles that are useful for our salvation, then we run to the Mother, and are under the illusion that we can play her off against him, and make a liar out of him, and show us a way into heaven other than that which Christ depicted in the gospel. Tell me, what is this, to play off his mother against him? Do you think that this pleases her? Do you think that such help proceeds from her, rather than from the wrath of God? We read that Mary stood under the cross of Christ... Dear friend, place yourself under that cross, believe me, there you will find yourself more grace inasmuch as you do not shake off the cross by way of which the only road to heaven is found. Why don't you call on Mary to help you bear your cross with its sin? <60>

Thus Mary is aligned with her Son and she has become an androgynous figure who helps believers not to hide from life and its trouble, because grace and the cross are interrelated. Conversely, Christ also becomes an androgynous figure who is aligned with his mother even if she is no mediatrix. Diepold Perringer noted:

Mary is no mediatrix for Christ speaks (Matt 11:28) "Come to me all who are sorrowful and burdened, for I will refresh you." Note: Christ does not point to Mary or some other saint, but he says that we are to come to him for he will help. God also speaks through the prophet Isaiah (42:8; 48:11) "I shall give my honour to no other." This is affirmed by Mary in the Magnificat (Luke 1:49): "He is mighty who has done great things for me, and holy is his name." Similarly Elizabeth: "Blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:42). Christ teaches in John 10:1: "I am the door, if anyone does not enter through me, but in another way, he is a thief and a murderer." Therefore he alone is the one mediator before God through whom we must enter (1 Tim 2:5): "There is one

mediator between God and Man, namely the Man Christ Jesus," for he has been sent for our redemption: not to condemn but redeem us, as Christ says (John 3:17): "I have not come to judge but to redeem the world." Therefore we do not need to fear him as we would a stern judge, but we should take him for a good and gracious father, whom alone we must invoke (Rom 10:13).<61>

Thus Protestants demoted the late-medieval stern Christ and merged the biblical Jesus with the traditional Virgin. The already mentioned treatise that refuted the "Salve Regina," in the end reinstated it totally, except what was said of the Virgin is now said of Christ:

The true "Salve" well founded on the Scriptures: Hail to you Jesus Christ, King of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. Hail to you! To you we cry out, we your wretched children. And on you we call, as we sigh, weep and wail in this valley of tears. Lo, because you are our intercessor and mediator, turn your merciful eyes towards us, and direct us to the face of your blessed father, and your promise to lead us from this sorrow to eternal glory. O gracious, O sweet Christ, Son of the Virgin Mary.<62>

Obviously, when the image of the Virgin is at least in part constructed by derivation from christology, and when the Reformers reapply the marian categories to Christ, the Christ of historical Protestantism becomes an androgynous figure.

In a recent article, Mary De Jong has identified such themes as "Christ the Lover," "the Gentle Jesus," and "Christ the Bosom Companion," etcetera, as particularly characteristic of Victorian Protestant hymns. Since such hymns were also blamed later for the lack of enthusiasm that males began to have towards the church, there was in the United States a reaction with a call for a new, "masculine Christianity."<63>

These were extreme developments, which reveal that when Protestants lose their biblical and historical moorings, the originally androgynous Christ of the Reformation can equally well develop in a female or a male direction.

Clearly traditionally Catholic in his feelings about distinct male and female rôles, Karl Barth (not understanding the source of Protestantism's androgynous Christ) felt revolted by "that well known and frightful mixture of masculine and feminine traits."<64>

### c. From Mary to the Church

The first Reformer to have concerned himself especially with this theme was Melchior Hoffman. Since he was the first Protestant to write commentaries on the Song of Songs and Revelation, he was a pioneer in this area.

In his commentary on Revelation (1530), Hoffman considered the portent of the Woman clothed with the Sun of Revelation 12. Traditionally applied to the Virgin, Hoffman interpreted the Woman as an emblem of the church. He regarded the Sun as a symbolic representation of Christ, while the moon

under the Woman's feet was identified with faith in God which is the foundation of Zion.<65> All Protestant interpreters after Hoffman have similarly identified this image with the church, rather than Mary.

Since Rupert of Deutz, especially, the bride of the Song of Songs was seen, not only as a symbol of the church, but also of the Virgin. It is in the Song of Songs, for example, that we should look for the antecedents of the cult of the Beautiful Mary (Songs 6:4; 7:1), which we saw was promoted by Balthasar Hubmaier in Regensburg.

However, Hoffman interpreted the bride as the church without reference to the Virgin. He stressed the close relationship between church and Christ by making their properties interchangeable, again ascribing to Christ what had been claimed for the Virgin. Thus the lactating breasts of the church are joined with the lactating breasts of Christ!<66> Similarly Hoffman emphasized the mystical eating of Christ by the church and the church by Christ in the Lord's Supper.<67> Thus Christ is not a single individual but he is mutually one with the church. Again one is left with the joining of the particular and the universal, Christ and the church, male and female, forming an androgynous unity.

Naturally, the joining of male and female occurs in marriage, rather than celibacy. Thus the Protestant Reformers refused to regard the celibate estate as superior. To Karlstadt, who was the first to propose marriage even for monks, the celibate estate was in fact inferior and demonic.<68> But I shall leave the discussion of the advantages of marriage, also for women in the Reformation to Jane Dempsey Douglas.<69> Here at least it may be noted that the downfall of the Virgin in the Reformation, removed the primary symbol of celibacy as a superior estate.

#### d. From Queen of Heaven to Queen Elizabeth

Since Elizabeth I of England ascended a contested throne, she decided to tap the reservoir of marian devotion on behalf of herself. Although historians might point to contrary evidence, Elizabeth required of her subjects an act of faith in her perpetual virginity:

To me it shall be a full satisfaction both for the memorial of my name, and for its glory also, if when I shall let my last breath, it shall be engraven upon my marble tomb, "Here lieth Elizabeth who reigned a Virgin and died a Virgin." <70>

In the British Museum, I once copied a woodcut with the effigy of Elizabeth and the following verses, which were no doubt published with approval from the royal censor:

Loe here the pearle, whom God and man doth loue  
Loe here on earth, the only starre of light:  
Loe here the Queene whom no mishap can moue:  
To change her mynde, from vertues chief delight:

Loe here the heart, that so hath honord God:

That for her loue, we feel not of his rod:  
 Pray for her health, such as good subiects bee:  
 Oh Princely Dame, there is none like to thee.

The reference to the pearl would signify Elizabeth's purity. The reference to Elizabeth as the only star of light on earth, is an attempt to go even beyond the Virgin who in the famous hymn Ave Maris Stella was merely "Star of the Lake." And then there is Elizabeth as mantle virgin of the English nation; for having honoured the Father with her heart and single minded pursuit of virtue, she protects England from the rod of God.

No one knows how successful such propaganda was, but at least Elizabeth retained her throne. Interesting is the parallel with modern times, where during an age of revolution, Protestant rulers in Northern Europe (often women) have ruled without revolution. Do European Protestants channel some of the devotion that Catholics bestow on Mary towards their queens? At any rate the answer to such questions can not be given by historians who always plod among the ambiguities of history. It should therefore be left to the psychohistorians.

The summing up of these developments, before a discussion of the better known Reformers, should not be attributed solely to the perversity of the author, for others preceded the better known Reformers in the formulation of basic Protestant attitudes in this area. Luther and Calvin, for example, made their own contributions, for no one among the lesser Reformers treated the subject as comprehensively as Luther and Calvin did. Moreover, the writings of the early lesser known Reformers were not reprinted, and thus Luther and Calvin especially reinforced the reduction of mariology to biblical norms for later generations.

None the less, the major Reformers were reluctant to censure the Virgin. Luther, by his own admission, rejected the intercession of the saints only in later life; Zwingli and Bullinger retained considerably more of mariology than most Protestants; and even Calvin's attacks on mariology date almost entirely from the last five years of his life, but then (also speaking for the second rather than the first generation of Protestants) he did so with an unusual thoroughness and with the vehemence and bitterness that characterized his final years of physical disintegration. Thus there is good reason to stress the contributions of the so-called "minor" Reformers.

Else one becomes involved in such chronological absurdities as the claim (still often made) that Luther's marriage to Katherine of Bora set the example that was followed by Reformers who wanted to get married. To the contrary, Luther was late in getting married, and clerical marriage was already so well established among Protestants, that even if Luther had returned to the monastery in 1525, this would have made no difference.

As to Luther's views on mariology, he is more flexible than some Reformers, seeing that he allowed for tradition as long as there was no direct clash with the biblical data. Luther therefore keeps some marian feasts on his calendar, and his material on the Magnificat is fairly extensive. Like Zwingli and Calvin he upheld Mary's perpetual virginity.

Despite this, Luther stressed the passivity of Mary, as the Magnificat did too, and in that sense Mary was an example of one who lived by faith. Despite that, Mary was not really the original model for the believer; instead Luther fastened his independently acquired belief in passive salvation by faith on Mary, and thus she did yeoman service for Luther's theology. Still Luther retained a life-long love for Mary, and he affectionately shortened her name from Virgin Mary to Maid Marge. There are several monographs available on Luther's mariology, however, at least one of which is quite satisfactory.<71>

Far less material is available on Calvin, and although Calvin represents the second generation of Protestants, he remained rather independent in his mariology. Therefore I shall now consider him without further reference to Luther.

## 5. The Anti-Mariology of Calvin

### a. Calvin and the Tactic of Evasion

Catholic commentators are understandably disappointed with the fact that "Calvin only rarely discussed the Virgin Mary,"<72> or that "his writings, specifically on Mary are much fewer in number than those left by Luther."<73> Even a Reformed Protestant like Jean Cadier notes: "Calvin (and this is astonishing) said very little about the Virgin Mary."<74>

Cadier's astonishment should be answered with a quotation from Calvin that Cadier himself had cited. Having discussed his opposition to any intercessor besides Christ, Calvin notes the lack of scriptural support for the veneration of the Virgin: "In the whole of God's word there is not a shred of evidence to support their position."<75> Thus for Calvin the relative meagreness of his comments on the Virgin Mary, merely reflects a similar situation in Holy Writ.

In his final address to the ministers of Geneva, Calvin claimed never to have falsified a single passage of Scripture.<76> His scruples were extreme, but (and this must also be noted) whenever Calvin had his doubts, he feared to advance what might just be a false interpretation, and his commentaries contain many evasions.

As far as mariology is concerned, Calvin never wrote a commentary on Revelation. He did not excise this book from the canon, for he regards it as authoritative in referring to it. Despite that Calvin never refers to Rev 12:1-6, the portent of the woman who was clothed with the sun, and who stood on the moon. Calvin would have known representations of this passage as applied to the Virgin. Why did Calvin eschew all reference to her? Had he (like Melchior Hoffman) been convinced that the image applied to the Church, Calvin could have made this plain. But perhaps he was not sure. No doubt, some features of the woman represent the church, but some aspects are more suitable to the Virgin. Calvin may have thought that the image was indeed applicable to the Virgin, but he accepted the prohibition of images in the Ten Commandments as unabrogated and divine law. Thus the portent may have

embarrassed him. Anyway, Calvin was silent; this probably was the silence of evasion.

Similarly, Calvin never wrote a commentary on the Song of Songs, doubtless because his preference for dealing with the literal sense of Scripture clashed with his understanding of the Song as allegorical. When Sebastian Castellio seriously applied the literal sense to the Song of Songs and concluded that it was a profane love poem that did not belong in the canon, Calvin arranged for his speedy departure from Geneva.<77> So Calvin did not take the Song literally. Then again, with allegory all things are possible, and Calvin would also have had to face up to a long tradition that found its apogee in Rupert of Deutz (1075-1129) who applied the entire Song to Mary.<78> Thus Calvin evaded another challenge to his mariology and methodology by remaining silent.

Sometimes, Calvin seems evasive when he is not. Thus there are several allusions to the Magnificat in his writings; his favorite being the reference to the casting down of the mighty from their thrones and the exaltation of those who are of low degree. Calvin always fails to note the marian context.<79> However, what seems like evasion is omission, for Calvin credited Mary with always giving God the glory also for her own exaltation.

#### b. Calvin and the Tactic of Inversion

The principle of the Virgin as Theotokos had led to the often exclusive transfer of Christ's attributes to the Virgin. Calvin rejects this unbiblical terminology. He will refer to Mary biblically as "Mother of the Lord" or combine texts to arrive at "mother of the only begotten Son." In using these terms, though, Calvin was thinking of Theotokos:

[Elizabeth] calls Mary "the Mother of her Lord" which signified the unity of the person in Christ's two natures, as if she had said that he who is born a mortal man in Mary's womb, is at the same time eternal God.<80>

Avoiding the term, Calvin still indicates his understanding of Theotokos: He takes the word in its original strictly conciliar sense; therefore it can only be applied to the unity of Christ's human and divine natures. Any transfer (and here is the root of all traditional mariology) is cut off altogether. As Calvin says: "Christ in repulsing Mary at Cana, did not even call her "mother," but "woman," for He openly warns all humans not to transfer to Mary what belongs to God."<81>

To the leaders of the French Church in London, Calvin explained why the term Theotokos should be avoided:

I assert that the title "Mother of God" being commonly applied to the Virgin in sermons is to be frowned on. For myself, I cannot think such language either right or proper or useful. Sober-minded people will not use such a term. Thus I can not persuade myself that you would use such terms in your church. Else you might just as well speak of the blood, the head, and the death of God.<82>

60  
Calvin once used the Nestorian term Christ-bearer with reference to Luke 11:27-28. The woman who blessed the womb of Christ's mother, stressed Mary's rôle in bearing Christ, but (Calvin says) this is an act of giving physical birth, which is eclipsed by Mary's spiritual rebirth, which she owed to Christ. Similarly, the spiritual nourishment that Christ provided Mary is superior to the milk that Christ suckled at his mother's breast.<83>

Consequently, the honours associated with the term Theotokos, which had elevated the Virgin above all creatures, have now been transferred back to Christ, and the relative inferiority of Mary's physical rôle as Christotokos is underlined. Although Calvin would no doubt have objected to the use of this unbiblical term, his view of the relationship between Mary and Christ turns Christ into a spiritual Mariatokos, for "Mary's total happiness and glory are based on her being a member of her Son, and to be reckoned among the new creatures by the Heavenly Father."<84>

Since Mary is "among the new creatures," she has lost all special status. Yet Calvin does not despise physical motherhood. It provides Mary with one mark of honour, for she is to be called "blessed:"

She deserves to be called "blessed," for God considered her worth of singular honour, to prepare His son for the world, in whom she was spiritually born again.<85>

There was still another positive result. By insisting on the concept, if not the word, Theotokos, solely with reference to the unity of Christ's two natures, Calvin rejected the Mary who was no mother, as found in Melchior Hoffman, Michael Servetus, and Menno Simons. Mary was still mother of the human Christ.<86> Against the Aristotelians, Calvin argued that Mary contributed her own seed; thus Christ was of "the seed of David" by intermarriage with the Levites. On the whole though the Theotokos was eclipsed by the Mariatokos, and Mary was now regarded as simply another believer, except for her special honorific of being "blessed."

### c. No Ave Maria

Many of Calvin's comments criticizing the cult of the Virgin, are scattered brief attacks on excerpts of marian hymns with which his original readers were familiar, as well as refutations of traditional titles of the Virgin. There is only one prayer (a prayer Luther and Zwingli tolerated) which Calvin refuted in its entirety, namely the "Hail Mary." Calvin attacks the frequent recital of the prayer, noting: "It seems that there is no prayer as valuable as it. It is true that the Lord's Prayer is accorded first place, but ten Hail Marys are said for each Lord's Prayer."<87>

Regarding the salutation "Hail Mary" Calvin finds it presumptuous to take on the task of the angel, whose words were not intended as a prayer. By far Calvin's most serious objection is one so obvious to him that he just states it in passing: Nowadays, "Hail Mary" addresses one who is absent.<88> This is a very serious claim, grounded in Calvin's own objection to the Virgin as Theotokos. Since there is no communication of divine properties to Mary, she is not omnipresent.

Thus Mary exists like the soul of any other dead believer who dwells in heaven. Calvin did believe that the saints there are conscious, for against the Anabaptists (and also against Luther) he denied the sleep of the soul. Likewise he denounced the Italian mortalists who believed that the soul died with the body until the day of resurrection. This he had expounded in his treatise of 1534, Psychopannychia.<sup><89></sup> Moreover, in his Treatise of Relics Calvin poked almost Erasmian fun of Mary's bodily Assumption into heaven, showing its advantage, in that it reduced the number of Mary's relics. Since Calvin localized all souls (thus also Mary's) in heaven, she and all other saints can not hear the prayers addressed to them.

The second phrase of the "Hail Mary," which attributes to her the fulness of grace, had already been undermined by Lorenzo Valla, and following him Erasmus and Luther. The Greek Kecharitomene does not refer to Mary being full of her own grace, but to her having been graced by God. The official doctrine of Mary as "The Treasury of all Graces" took for granted Jerome's mistranslation in the Vulgate. On it was also based the doctrine of Mary as "The Mediatrix of all Graces."

Calvin followed Valla here. He also noted that the "plenitude of grace" is found only twice in the New Testament, not in respect of Mary, but with reference to Jesus Christ (John 1:14), and in a derivative sense Stephen the Deacon (Acts 6:8). Thus "the plenitude of grace is found in Christ who is the fountain from which we all must draw."<sup><90></sup>

Thus Kecharitomene shows that Mary is agreable, that is acceptable to God, having been predestined to receive grace. If one still assumes that this confers a special honour on Mary, Calvin counters this at once by noting that Kecharitomene also occurs in Ephesians 1:6, where it is applied to all believers.<sup><91></sup>

Calvin of course does agree with the following scriptural phrase: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is Jesus, the fruit of your womb." He immediately notes that this does not place Mary's blessing on a par with Jesus. Rather, because Jesus was blessed of himself, Mary received the blessing. Since he felt that much superstition was built on these words, however, Calvin shows himself rather averse to the terminology of "Blessed Mary." There is only one instance in the Bible, where a woman called Mary blessed, and Jesus reproved her (Luke 11:28). Thus Calvin wonders why the "sluggish Papists" chant the words "Blessed are you among women," without adding Jesus' retort: "Rather, blessed are they who hear the word and observe it."<sup><92></sup>

The final section of the "Hail Mary" in which the Virgin is petitioned to intercede for "us sinners, now and in the hour of our death" has already been vitiated by Calvin's comment about the absence of Mary.

Again, an adrogynous Christ, who even gives spiritual birth to the Virgin, absorbs the characteristics that mariology had derived from Christ. For Calvin Christ is the only mediator of intercession and redemption. In his Fourth Sermon on the Ascension, Calvin argues that the whole basis for the veneration of Mary would have been removed if the Ascension of Jesus had been properly understood. Christ continues to be our advocate (1John 2:1);

he intercedes even now at the right hand of God (Rom 8:34), and like Karlstadt he cites 1 Tim 2:5 to establish Christ as the sole mediator.<93>

Placing Mary at the same level as some obscure saints of his native town, Noyon, Calvin inquires:

Under what pretext will they defend calling upon Eligius or Medard to look down from heaven, and help their servants or the holy Virgin to bid her Son do what they request?<94>

The crux of the problem is that mariology devolves into mariolatry, and the devotees of Mary do not please her when they make her into an idol that steals from the Father and the Son the spoils they appropriate for her:

As often as the traditionalists think of honouring her [i.e. Mary], seeing that they turn her into an idol, it is certain that Mary becomes their mortal enemy. She will arise at the last day to demand vengeance on account of the offence and injury that they assume she has done, to despoil God's honour, to blaspheme and say that she has taken the place of the One who created her and redeemed her. Do we think that she will permit such blasphemies? Thus it must be certain that the Virgin Mary will accuse the traditionalists at the last day on account of the outrage that they now commit in respect of her.<95>

Although Michael O'Carroll in his article on Calvin in his encyclopedia Theotokos alludes to this statement and takes it at face value, it is doubtful that Calvin is to be taken with full seriousness here. No doubt Calvin was serious about the main point that he was trying to make, but there is no real evidence that Calvin accorded Mary a special rôle at the final judgment.

What Calvin had done was to cloak a serious point with pulpit humour. The members of his congregation would have understood at once the honour intended as Calvin constructs a macho counter-madonna, so much like the macho Christ of late medieval lore.

#### d. A Summary

Calvin included Mary among the normal believers who had received the plenitude of grace from Christ, and had been grafted onto him. Like others she was maculately conceived, suffered from original sin, also actively committing sin, as for example at the wedding in Cana, when she "exceeded her proper limits."<96> However, the Virgin is a good teacher and mirror for us in that she allows us to know ourselves; how we, of ourselves, and without the grace of God, are nothing.<97>

As to her rôle as mother, Calvin defended Mary's descent from David, applied to her the prophecy of Isaiah regarding the Virgin birth.<98> Like other early Reformers Calvin went somewhat beyond this. He did reject the medieval notion that Mary had taken a vow of perpetual chastity.<99> But he accepted Mary's perpetual virginity.

Still, Calvin, by implication, rejected the traditional, extremely strict idea, that "before, during and after her birth, her seals were unbroken." Calvin had a less rigorous definition of a virgin as one "untouched by man." Thus he avoided an extra-biblical miracle.

With reference to the text that Joseph did not know Mary until she had given birth, Calvin followed up with a total non sequitur as to the meaning of "until" and an interpretation of the Hebraic "know" as if it referred to a simple living together:

The adverb "until" has no extension beyond time past. Joseph did not go with his wife until she brought forth Christ. These words of Scripture do not mean that after his birth they cohabited as man and wife, but only means that Mary before the birth of her son was a virgin untouched by man.<100>

Calvin said that Helvidius was a disturber of the peace, and he preferred Jerome's interpretation of the references to the siblings of Jesus.<101> The weakness of his defence of the perpetual virginity was nevertheless obvious, as it was with Zwingli, whose argument covered up its lack of substance with a heavy coat of rhetoric.

At any rate, after having been shunned for a millennium, Helvidius now pointed to the future for Protestantism. Biblical criticism would do the rest, in undercutting the historical reliability of the midrash that is Luke's infancy narrative. If destruction seems almost complete, that is true with respect to Protestant mariology, but it should be underlined that the original reason for the development of mariology, namely fear of Christ, had also disappeared. The Protestant Christ combines much of both the late-medieval Christ and Virgin, in fact, even more of the Virgin than of Christ. Thus, the more things changed, the more or less they stayed the same.

NOTES

1. Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (1954): 157; Gabrielle Lenger, Virgo-Mater-Mediatrix (1980): 56f; Stephan Beissel, Geschichte der Verehrung Marias im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert: 404-15
2. Heiko A. Oberman, The Virgin Mary in Evangelical Perspective (1971): 14-15; V[ladimir] Lossky, Panagia, The Mother of God, ed E.L. Mascall (1949): 24: "The dogmatic subject of the Theotokos, as the name was affirmed against the Nestorians, is christological before it is anything else; that which is hereby defended against the gainsayers of the divine maternity is the hypostatic unity of the Son of God when he had become the Son of Man. It is christology which is directly envisaged here; it is indirectly that at the same time there is a dogmatic confirmation of the Church's devotion to her who bore Christ according to the flesh." Cf Lenger (n.1): 49-58
3. Luther's references to the Mantle Virgin are discussed in Hans Düfel, Luthers Stellung zur Marienverehrung (1968): 67-69, 223, 238. The woodcut from Ulrich Tengler's Laienspiegel (1508) is reprinted in Paul A. Russell, Lay Theology in the Reformation: Popular Pamphleteers in Southwest Germany 1521-1525 (1986): 43. Cf Joseph Lieball, Martin Luthers Madonnenbild (1981): 54-57, 156
4. Lucas Cranach, Wittenberger Heilthumsbuch: Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe Wittenberg 1509 (1969)
5. For Traité des Reliques see Jean Calvin: Three French Treatises (ed Francis M. Higman): 49-98
6. Paul A. Russel, Lay Theology (n.3): 42
7. Hugo Holstein, Die Reformation im Spiegelbilde der dramatischen Litteratur des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts (1886): 1
8. Theodore Gerhard Tappert, Table Talk (1967): 340
9. Ibid, 193-94
10. WA 47: 276
11. Beverly Boyd, ed. The Middle English Miracles of the Virgin (1964): 38-43, 140. For Germany see the numerous examples in Mary Ellen Goenner, Mary-Verse of the Teutonic Knights (1944)
12. Beverly Boyd (n.11): 126

13. Torsten Bergsten, Balthasar Hubmaier (1961): 55
14. Cited in H. Schreiber, Balthasar Hubmaier (1839): 16-17
15. For the most incisive brief study of Erasmus's mariology, cf J.M. Alonso, "Erasmus, hombre-puente en la historia de la devoción mariana," Estudios Marianos 36 (1972): 235-64
16. Jaroslav Pelikan, Reformation of Church and Dogma ("The Christian Tradition" 4) (1984): 40
17. Wessel Gansfort: Life and Writings (ed Edward Waite Miller and Jared Scudder) 2: 131
18. Ibid 2: 268
19. Ibid 2: 318
20. Eustachius van Zichem, Apologia pro Pietate (Antwerpen:1531): A4v-5v
21. Cf Marian Library Studies 11 (1979): 45
22. Craig R. Thompson, Ten Colloquies of Erasmus (1957): 73
23. John P. Dolan, The Essential Erasmus (1964): 226-27
24. Charles Garside, Jr, Zwingli and the Arts (1966): 94-98
25. The Complete Works of Thomas More 8/1: 287; cf 5/1: 88-89
26. Ibid, 6/1: 150, 359
27. Ibid, 13: cxvii
28. Mary Allen Willow, An Analysis of the English poems of St. Thomas More (1974): 275-76
29. Calvin A. Pater, "Lay Religion in the Program of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt," Leaders of the Reformation (ed Richard L. DeMolen) (1984): 103, 126 n.15,16
30. Matthes Zell, Christeliche verantwortung (1523): P3v, [P4v]
31. Cited in Calvin Augustine Pater, Karlstadt as the Father of the Anabaptist Movements: The Emergence of Lay Protestantism (1984): 71
32. In Fürbit marie (1524) Karlstadt employs the term Mother of God once (A2) in referring to the traditional viewpoint. He himself, however, uses Mother of Christ, A3v, B2 (twice)
33. See Jim Ernest Hunter, "Blessed art Thou among Women?," Review and Expositor 83/1 (1986): 40

34. Karlstadt, Fürbit Marie (1524): A2
35. Karlstadt, Fürbit Marie (1524): A3
36. Ibid: [A4-v]
37. Ibid: Bv: "Das aber das Ave Maria zum tayl in der Bibel erzelt, zum tayl begriffen; das macht das Ave Maria nit zu ainem gebett, weyl nichts anders im Ave Maria ist dann ain erzellung was guts und wie vil gnaden Got Maria erzaygt hat." Ibid: B2. Cf "Ein Sermon D.M. Luthers" (1523), WA 15: 451
38. Flugschriften der Reformationsbewegung (ed Adolf Laube, Annerose Schneider, Sigrid Looss) 1 (1983): 82: "Wir verbieten by kopf abhowen, das man das volck kein ander gebät lere dann das heilig pater noster."
39. Huldrych Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke 2: 145.21-25
40. Johannes Locher, Eyn liepliche Sermon Colligiert an dem Heiligē Christag (1524): A3v. This is a break with tradition dating back to the fourth century, when Ephraem the Syrian (died 373) claimed: "Ecce virgo facta est mater, servata virginitate et sigillis non solutis, gestat in utero foetum integris virginalibus" (Thomas Joseph Lamy ed, Sancti Ephraem Syri Hymni et Sermonis tomus II (Mechlinae: MDCCCLXXXVI): col. 612:20. Its classical western formulation was given by Bonaventure, Commentarium in evangelium Lucae (Quaracchi: 1901), Opera VII:56: "[Maria] est porta clausa ante partum, et post partum, et in partu..."
41. Johannes Locher, Vom Ave Maria Leuthen (1524): B2v
42. Andreas Keller, Ain Sermon auff dē tag der verkündung Marie (1524): B2
43. Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica (hereafter: BRN) V: 391-92
44. Refutacie vant Salve Regina, BRN (n.43) I: 15-26. The previous year Luther noted that the Salve Regina is "an idolatrous hymn," WA 15: 451
45. BRN (n.43): II: 251: "Pape. Gheloofdy niet, dat Maria moeder ende maecht is? Cla. Ja ic. De Paep smeeet zijn hant op de tafel, ende stac hem seer op, seggende: Dat en suldy my niet weten te betogen, men vinter nieuwens af geschreuen in geen Schriften. Cla. De Propheet Esaias heeft gepropheteert, dat hy soude geboren worden van een maget. Ende wederom, doen Gabriel tot Mariam seyde: Ghy sult ontfangen ende baren eenen sone. Maria antwoorde: Ic en bekenne geenen man, hoe mach dat geschieden? Pap. Ja, also muecht ghijt hier ende daer grijpen, maer dat sy maecht bleeft to haer doot. Cla. Dat en segge ic niet. Pape. Dat is mijn meyninge."
46. Melchior Hoffman, Magestadt [1532?]: Bv

47. Melchior Hoffman, Romerer (1533): [A6v-7]: "So moet men grondelic overleggen, dat die peerlen hemels dou zijn en ooc is wt solken hoer geboorte, als Plinius die natuer reyn verclaert, hoe dat de hemels dou in een mosschel valt en dan in der mosschel die dou droepkens to harden peerlen gewerct en geboren werden, sonder alle annemen anderer materien, mer allen wt water dou een claer ende hart coorn wort. Also ist effen een beelt gestelt op dat ewige woort, welc een warachtich hemels dou was wt godes mont onsienlic en ooc onbegripelic, mer door den heyligen geest in die wilde mosschel der joncfrou Maria viel en in hoer een gripelick sictelick vleischelic woort geestelick peerle wort sonder alle aennemen gelijck dan in der peerlen is afgebeeldet."
48. Flugschriften (n.38) 1: 316-47
49. Matthes Zell, Christeliche verantwortüg (1523): [P2v-3]. For the accusation that he had "violated" her, see Pv-2.
50. G[eorge] R[ichard] Potter, Zwingli (1976): 88, 204, 395. The sermon is found in Corpus Reformatorum 1: (385) 391-428
51. Ibid (Potter): 89
52. Ibid: 252
53. Karlstadt, Fürbit Marie (1524): B2: "Also meldet die geschriff auch wie die haylige Junckfraw Maria von dem Engel gegrüsst, von got voller gnaden geschütt, und ain muter Christi geworden ist, und erzelet der gleychen vil, nemlich wie die frucht ires leibes gebenedeyet ist, wölches sie auss dem glauben entpfangen hatt." (Note how Karlstadt still clings to the traditional view of Mary as plena gratiae.)
54. Karlstadt, Verba Dei (1520): Cv
55. Karlstadt, Fürbit Marie (1524): B2
56. [Haug Marschalck] (For authorship, see the final page: H[aug] M[arschalck] G[enannt] Z[oller]), Ein Edles schönes lieblichs Tractetlein vō dem rainen, hymlichen, ewigen wort (Verbum Domini) [Augsburg? 1524]: B3v
57. Johann Locher, Eyn lieplicher Sermon [1524]: B-2
58. Matthes Zell, Christeliche verantwortüg (1523): P, [P4v]
59. Ibid, Qv
60. Ibid, loc cit
61. Diepold Perringer, Ein Sermon von der Abgötterey (1524): B2v
62. BRN (n.43) I:26: "Dat rechte salve wel ghegrondeert inder schriftueren. Ghegroet zijstu Iesu Christe Coninck der barmherticheit, onse leven, onse soeticheyte ende onse hope weest ghegroet. Tot dy roepen wij

- ellendige kinderen Eve tot dy roepen wij ende suchten kermende ende weenende in dit dal der tranen. Eya daer om onse voorspraecker ende advocaet, keert dijn barmhertighe ooghen tot ons, ende wijset ons dat aensichte dijns gebenedide vaders. Als ghy ons belooft hebt nae desen alende in die eewighe glorie. O goedertieren O soete Christe ende soene des maechs Marien."
63. Mary G. DeJong, "I want to be Like Jesus," Journal of the American Academy of Religion 54/3 (1986): 461-84
  64. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics III/4: 161
  65. Melchior Hoffman, Offenbarung (1530): [07v]
  66. Melchior Hoffman, Cantica [!] Canticorum (1529): Re: Songs 1:13
  67. Library of Christian Classics 25 (1958): 193-94
  68. Calvin A. Pater (n.31): 71
  69. Jane Dempsey Douglass, "Women and the Continental Reformation," Religion and Sexism (ed Rosemary Radford Ruether) (1974): 292-318
  70. David Black, The Reign of Elizabeth (1959): 19
  71. Hans Dörfel, Luthers Stellung zur Marienverehrung, "Kirche und Konfession. Veröffentlichungen des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts des Evangelischen Bundes," 13 (1968)
  72. B.D. Dupuy, "La mariologie de Calvin," Istina 5 (1958): 479
  73. Michael O'Carrol, Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1983): 94
  74. Jean Cadier, "La Vierge Marie dans la dogmatique Réformée au XVI<sup>e</sup> et au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle," La Revue Réformée 9/4 (1958): 46
  75. Ibid: 47: "Or dans toute la Parole de Dieu, il n'y a pas une seule syllable de ce qu'ils disent." (= OC 14: 21)
  76. OC 9: 893: "Quant à ma doctrine, i'ay enseigné fidèlement et Dieu m'a fait la grace d'escripre ce que i'ay fait le plus fidèlement qu'il m'a esté possible, et n'ay corrompu un seul passage de l'Escriture..."
  77. Williston Walker, John Calvin: the Organiser of Reformed Protestantism (1906): 288-91
  78. J.P. Migne, Patrologia Latina 168: 837-962
  79. E.g. Supplementa Calviniana 2: 295, 302.1
  80. OC 45: 35: "Quod Mariam appellat Domini sui matrem, notatur personae unitas in duabus Christi naturis, ac si dixisset, eum, qui genitus est mortalis homo in utero Mariae, simul aeternum esse Deum."

81. OC 47: 39: "Hac Christi voce palam constat denuntiari hominibus, ne nominis materni honorem superstitiose in Maria evehendo, quae Dei propria sunt in ipsam transferrant."
82. OC 14: 364: "Cependant pour aller en rondeur fraternelle avec vous, ie ne puis dissimuler qu'on trouve mauvais que ce tiltre [mere de Dieu] soit ordinairement attribue aux sermons a ceste vierge, et de ma part ie ne scauras trouver tel langage ne bon, ne propre, ne convenable. Aussi ne feront toutes gens de sens rassis. Parquoy ie ne me puis persuader quil y ait eu tel usage en vostre eglise, car cela seroit autant comme de parler du corps, du sang, de la teste, de la mort de Dieu."
83. OC 45: 348: "Maiores enim praestantiae fuit, regenitam esse Christi spiritu quam Christi carnem utero suo concipere, Christum habere spiritualiter in se viventem quam eum uberibus lactare."
84. OC 45: 348: "Denique summa sanctae Virgines et felicitas et gloria in eo sita fuit, membrum filii sui esse, ut eam coelestis pater inter novas creaturas censeret."
85. OC 45: 35: "Merito tamen vocatur benedicta, quam Deus singulari isto honore dignatus est, ut filium suum, in quo spiritualiter erat regenita, mundo pareret."
86. OC 47: 13-15
87. OC 46: 63: "Car qu'a-on faict de l'Ave Maria? Il sembloit qu'il n'y eust priere si valable que ceste-là. Il est vray que le Pater a bien este mis devant: mais il faloit dix Ave Maria pour un Pater."
88. OC 45: 25: "Bis autem stulta aemulatio, quod absentem salutant."
89. OC 5: 164-232
90. OC 47: 15: "Plenitudo enim gratiae in Christi, fons ille est unde nos omnes haurire oportet."
91. OC 46: 65: "Nous voyons donc que la vierge Marie est tellement agreable en son degré, que cela s'estend en general à tous fideles."
92. OC 45: 349: "Mirus vero papatus stupor, quod in Mariae honorem cantillant haec verba, quibus tam diserte refellitur eorum superstitio: in agendis vero gratiis mulierculae vocem decerpunt omnia correctione."
93. OC 48: 618: "Pourquoy est-ce qu'ils ont tant de patrons? Pourquoy est-ce qu'ils ont recours à la vierge Marie? C'est pource qu'ils n'ont iamais entendu pourquoy Iesus Christ est monté au ciel. Car s'ils eussent entendu qu'il y est monté pour estre nostre Intercesseur, ils n'eussent pas dit qu'ils n'estoyent pas dignes d'offrir leur requestes à Dieu, et que pourtant il faloit avoir des avocats."

- 94. OS 4: 327.36-328.1 (=Inst. 3.20.22)
- 95. OC 46: 121: "Comme toutefois et quantes que les Papistes la pensent bien honorer, s'ils en font une idole comme on le void, il est certain qu'elle leur est ennemie mortelle, et faudra qu'elle se leve au dernier iour por demander vengeance de ce qu'ils luy auront fait un tel opprobre et iniure, qu'elle ravisse à son Dieu l'honneur, qu'elle soit sacrilege pour dire qu'elle soit mise au lieu de celuy qui a l'a creée, et qui l'a racheté. Pensons-nous qu'elle puisse souffrir tels blasphemes? Ainsi donc il est certain que la vierge Marie accusera les Papistes au dernier iour à cause de l'outrage qu'ils luy font auiourdhuy."
- 96. OC 47: 38
- 97. OC 46: 122
- 98. OC 46: 90
- 99. OC 45: 30
- 100. OC 45: 645: "Nec vero adverbium donec longius extenditur, quam ad tempus quod praecedit. Ioseph non est congressus cum uxore, donec illa Christum peperit. Non intelligit his verbis scriptura, post partum eos postea cohabitasse tanquam virum et uxorem sed tantum ostendit Mariam ante filii sui partum virginem fuisse a viro intactam."
- 101. OC 45: 70

## Zwingli's View of Natural Law Relative to the State

Norman F. Cornett

The purpose of this article is to briefly ascertain Huldrych Zwingli's (1484-1531) view of natural law through reference to his understanding of its role vis-à-vis the State.

In Zwingli's world picture natural law is the modicum of human behaviour necessary for the establishment and maintenance of society; as such it is the "bottom line" of community. It prevents the atomization of society by checking, through coercion, the centrifugal force of egoistic human nature in civilization, and thereby provides the cohesion requisite to community.

Importantly, it must be remarked that Zwingli considers human civilization, and by consequence, natural law of which it is the cornerstone, to be ordained of God; indeed the will of God for fallen humanity. Such a conception effectively precludes the modern theory of natural law, of which Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) was the founder with his famous proposition that natural law would retain its validity even if God did not exist. Certainly then, Zwingli cannot conceive of civilization and natural law independent of God and his volition. This is in keeping with Zwingli's holistic medieval world-view of which God is the epicentre. More specifically it is in accord with his Christian humanist concern for Western society in toto, and attendant vision for the moral reformation and ethical renewal of Christendom. Thus J. V. Pollet affirms, "...Zwingli ancrait dans la volonté divine l'existence de la société civile, et il assignait au droit humain lui-même un fondement et une origine divines."<sup>1</sup> So it is that Zwingli declares:

The law of nature is: What you do not want done to you, do not do to anyone else... Just as a father takes care that his beguiled daughter does not become altogether

common, so, in God's place, do the authorities take care that our life does not altogether turn to beastly irrationality...<sup>2</sup>

For if this poor righteousness should also escape us, as divine righteousness has, human society would be little better than the existence of dumb animals: the stronger would be right. Therefore judges and superiors are servants of God. They are teachers. Any person, whether spiritual or carnal,<sup>3</sup> who does not obey their justice, acts against God...<sup>3</sup>

...God gives the simplest commandment which a human society and community can tolerate: you shall not steal. We see from this commandment ... that God has given certain laws which, though we keep them, still do not make us righteous... He has given them so that human friendship and community may not disintegrate. ... He bridles our greed and commands us not to rob or steal so that human society be not destroyed because of our greed... To assure that no harm befalls anyone, he does bid the authorities<sup>4</sup> to punish you, should you try something like that.<sup>4</sup>

...the magistrate must see to it that practices are removed which harmonize neither with God's nor with this poor righteousness...which God has instituted merely to make living easier... For the poor, righteous people must cling firmly to the thread of righteousness or else life would be sheer murder, robbery and thieving.<sup>5</sup>

Significantly, Zwingli's fundamental and characteristic differentiation between the internal and external dimensions of religion, exemplified in his distinction between divine and human righteousness, true and false religion, as well as in his sacramental theology, permitted, nay persuaded him, virtually to equate natural law with satisfactory, or better yet, altruistic social behaviour, i.e. human righteousness; so that Zwingli considers the two concepts intrinsically synonymous. This is clearly demonstrated in his statements above.

Such reasoning is in line with the acute civic conscience integral to Zwingli's modus operandi, and indeed to his socio-political perspective, from which the latter largely proceeds. Gottfried W.

Locher rightly remarks that, "Zwingli actually begins at the circumference. He starts with the political and social questions. From here, he works inwards to the centre - the divinity of God in the Lordship of Jesus Christ - in order to be able to take up politics again, working from this centre outwards."<sup>6</sup>

Here the influence of two complementary traditions, i.e. Christian humanism, and Swiss "civism", contributed respectively to the parallel theological and socio-political streams of Zwingli's thought; wherein their confluence is effected through the principle of human righteousness. Thus, the good Christian and the responsible citizen are one and the same person in a Christian city-state such as Zurich. This is evidenced in his theory of Christian education as enounced in his short essay, "Of the Education of Youth":

From early boyhood, then, the young man ought to exercise himself only in righteousness, fidelity and constancy: for with virtues such as these he may serve the Christian community, the common good, the state and individuals. Only the weak are concerned to find a quiet life: the most like to God are those who study to be of profit to all even to their own hurt.<sup>7</sup>

It is obvious from most of his declarations above, that Zwingli posits an organic relationship between natural law and the State. The former supplies the rationale for the latter. In fact, it may be said that natural law is quite literally the raison d'état. But Zwingli goes further still and projects natural law beyond the forensic justification of the State to actual, "across-the-board" identification with the State. There is in this equivalence of natural law and the State a sagacious element of the political realism which characterized Zwingli, since it implicitly recognizes and respects the primordial political axiom that a law is only as good as the guarantee of its execution.

In essence Zwingli telescopes the theory of natural law to the praxis of State, via the motif of human righteousness; whereby the latter is perceived to be crucial to the reconciliation of biblical theology and socio-political realities. Robert C. Walton observes; "It was natural for Zwingli to equate human righteousness with secular authority because he believed government embodied the norms of human righteousness sanctioned by divine revelation."<sup>8</sup>

When one recalls his profound conviction as to the divine origin of natural law in the will of God, to which is added its equation with the State, one realizes how integrally the divine sanction of the former thereby adheres to the latter, in Zwingli's thought.

He asserts in his sermon on "Divine and Human Righteousness" (July, 1523):

One must also be subject to and obedient to human righteousness according to God's commandment, though it is a poor righteousness and does no more than protect us from the gravest evils. A person is not righteous in God's sight, even when he does nothing against it, but when he acts against it he sins against God and humankind. Human righteousness or authority is no more than orderly authority which we call temporal power; ... Christ bids us be obedient to this human righteousness or authority in Matthew 22:21, 'Give to Caesar what you owe to Caesar and to God what you owe God.' ... One ought to apply this to one's respective authority.

In this way Zwingli veritably covers the State with the time-honored, noble, nay divine mantle of natural law. The sum effect is a puissant vindication of temporal authority--precisely what Zwingli intended, since this sermon came in the midst of his debate with his own radical followers led by Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, who were severely critical of the alliance with the magistracy which Zwingli advocated in reformation. In the introductory letter to this sermon Zwingli makes a pointed reference and riposte

to the Anabaptists:

But there are quite a few rebellious spirits who probably look to other teachings than the teaching of Christ;...

In this (work) you will see that the gospel of Christ is not over against the magistrate...Rather, it strengthens the magistrate (obergheit), teaches what is right, and maintains it in harmony with the people, as long as it acts in a Christian manner, according to to the measure set by God.<sup>10</sup>

Natural law as the apology for the State in response to the Täufer was an astute manoeuvre on Zwingli's part to expand the theological theatre of debate from the constrictive, literalistic, biblical epistemology of the Anabaptists, to the broad yet biblical epistemological basis of Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274); a strategy which John Calvin (1509-1564) and Richard Hooker (c. 1554-1600) respectively, would later employ in answer to Anabaptism and the Puritans. Zwingli's recourse to Thomistic theology, specifically in the socio-political realm, is not surprising when it is remembered that he was a student of Thomism, and nowhere more so than in the socio-political sphere. Jean Rilliet notes:

...at Basle, Zwingli worked especially on Thomas Aquinas and under the influence of this illustrious doctor came to feel the need for a solidly constructed theology in which reason is given a place of honour...

...Thomism brought the Basle student into contact with Aristotle, whom he studied very seriously. The volumes of his library which have been preserved contain among other things a copiously annotated copy of the edition of this author published at Venice in 1495. The original work of Zwingli contains many a proof of his Aristotelian training, from the conception of God presented in his De Providentia to the knowledge of physics and natural history which is shown here and there in various writings.<sup>11</sup>

Georges de Lagarde adds:

... il cherche dans Aristote les idées fondamentales de sa politique. Il reprend les distinctions d'Aristote

sur les formes du gouvernement, et la définition des constitutions vicieuses qui s'opposent à chacune d'elles. Il invoque son témoignage pour prouver la supériorité des constitutions aristocratiques du genre de celle dont jouissait Zurich. Il demande au philosophe grec les principes qui animent sa foi républicaine. Cette démarche rappelle celle de Marsile de Padoue... L'un et l'autre enfin cherchant dans Aristote le secret des phénomènes politiques.<sup>12</sup>

Zwingli's resort to Aristotle was in keeping, of course, with the ad fontes tenet of Christian humanism which was so formative in his thought.

Furthermore, the enlargement of the biblical epistemological orb through the expansive theological principle of natural law, enabled Zwingli to postulate a theory of positive law which, in the context of the Christian community, gives deference to eternal verities, yet adapts them to temporal, socio-political exigencies and cultural contingencies, so that through the precept of natural law the entire life of Christian society is brought into conformity with the former, all the while allowing diversity of application in the latter. Thus, natural law is the touchstone of positive law in the Christian community. It integrally maintains Christian truth therein, without however, making of the latter a social stumbling stone and a political rock of offense to fall over in the slavish attempt at biblical imitation.

Certainly Zwingli once again has the Täufer in mind at this point, and his concern is that positive law in Christian society be consonant with the spirit of Christian truth, but not shackled to its letter. However, as a magisterial reformer Zwingli's underlying interest here is theologically to provide a distinctly biblical rationale for positive law which is both socially viable,

and politically feasible. No reformer knew better than Zwingli how Christian ideals must come to terms with socio-political realities; nor were any more sensitive to this axiom of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Zwingli found such reasoning suitably furnished in the principle of natural law. In "The Exposition of the Sixty-Seven Articles" (July, 1523) which followed Zwingli's publication of the articles themselves (January 29, 1523) he affirms with respect to the magistrate:

Now he must not only pronounce judgment by the law of nature or by the law of neighbor in unexpected circumstances for which there is no law, but he must judge by the same law all ancient and former laws also, whether they are in keeping with the divine law of neighbor or nature (which are one and the same), or whether they are contrary to it. Now none of them will be in conformity, for none is exactly like it; but when it approximates it or is in some sense like it we say that it is in conformity... In this way, all his laws will be in conformity to the will of God, not exactly like it, but, in some measure in the form of the divine law and will.<sup>13</sup>

At this juncture Zwingli's recourse to natural law in the essay to reconcile biblical theology with socio-political realities, may be interpreted as a mere modus vivendi between his theological agenda and his socio-political schema; wherein the eternal verities of the former, ultimately succumb to the temporal necessities of the latter; albeit in the name of natural law. In sum, the secular takes precedence over the spiritual in Zwingli's reformation program. Such a conclusion is intimated by G. R. Potter, who proposes in Zwingli's regard:

He was...prepared to come to terms with the world if Christ's kingdom could be brought nearer or the Gospel message proclaimed for all to hear... From humanist to theologian, from theologian to politician and thence to compromise with secularism in order that his way might triumph, it is a story of conviction that failed...<sup>14</sup>

It is all too true that he was politician as well as scholar and that he sought to attain spiritual ends by human, and hence secular means.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time Zwingli can be readily interpreted as engaging in theological reductionism; wherein Christian truth, through practical identification with natural law, is subsumed to the latter, and in this way effectually confined to its ideo-epistemological boundaries. The implication is that Zwingli hereby endangers the supernatural character of Christian truth as divine revelation, by exposing it to naturalistic interpretation through the precedent of natural law. This conclusion seems all the more plausible in light of Zwingli's rationalist bent, and pronounced humanist penchant; to which E. Harris Harbison refers, "Logical, even rationalistic in his thinking and puritanical in his moral attitudes, he was much more directly influenced by Erasmus and the Christian Humanists than was Luther."<sup>16</sup> E. J. Furcha cautions, therefore, in reference to the young humanist's satire, The Labyrinth (1516), and Zwingli's exposition several years later of the thirty-ninth of his sixty-seven articles, which deals with the magistracy:

In the Labyrinth, lines 218-225 Zwingli's early understanding of the gospel as identical with the law of God and with natural law is apparent. While the exposition of this Article suggests continued adherence to this principle, it would seem that there is a qualitative shift which makes an unqualified equation of the Reformer's understanding of love of God and humankind with that of the humanist and reformer of the period up to 1520 no longer possible.<sup>17</sup>

Both of the above interpretations hinge on the fundamental inference that by virtue of the doctrine of natural law Zwingli compromised biblical theology in relation to the State. Such an assessment rests on the assumption that Zwingli's notion of natural

law proceeds from the methodology of natural theology, which posits a knowledge of God from the creation outside the bounds of revealed theology in the Bible. The suggestion, therefore, is that Zwingli alternately employs a natural theological method in relation to the State, but a biblical theological method in other matters. In short, then, there is a basic dichotomy in Zwingli's theological agenda; indeed an essential incongruency in his reformation program. Inevitably, the conclusion is that Zwingli in fact did not reconcile biblical theology with his socio-political schema.

However, this charge of temporization and inconsistency cannot be sustained on the theoretical plane of Zwingli's theology. It is fallacious to suppose that his understanding of the role of natural law vis-à-vis the State issues from the theological method of natural theology. This is clearly not the case. Quite the contrary; Zwingli is careful to point out to the magistracy that the locus of natural law is biblical revelation; and he is adamant in his insistence that a Christian political scheme which is consistent with natural law is essentially, nay decisively, delimited by biblical revelation. Zwingli exhorts:

Therefore all their laws ought to conform to the divine will...

Now, should you want to know, righteous prince or ruler, how you are to know the law, whether it is on God's side or against him, pay attention to the following:

First, do not even try to change or improve anything in the commandments which God has given... Rather, be sure that the divine commandment is fully shaped according to his will ... Do not criticize it; for you are not a judge over God's word and law. Rather, the word of God judges you.

Secondly, ... in order that you may not ever cut off a healthy member instead of a diseased one, or leave a diseased one instead of a healthy member, you are forever in need of knowing what health and what sickness are. And this you are able to learn from the law alone, that is, from the very law which God has given. This ought to be your pattern from which you must cut; but you are not to make your pattern, but simply cut along it. Therefore, should you find that your laws are not like the divine laws at all, you must not cut according to them either. Note this: 'All laws concerning the neighbor are to be grounded in the laws of nature.' What you would have happen to you, do that to the other also, Mt. 7:12. This he expressed later in even clearer terms, Mt. 22:39, 'You ought to love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>18</sup>

In Zwingli's thought not only are the parameters of natural law demarcated by biblical revelation, but furthermore they are discerned solely through the Spirit of God. These reciprocal concepts necessarily follow from the emphasis on the fallen, sinful nature, and consequent moral depravity of humanity which is determinative in Zwingli's anthropological perspective. Indeed, so inexorably iniquitous is human nature that the Christian tends surely to sin; an argument with which Zwingli answers the Täufer's contention that the Christian is above the law, and therefore beyond the State. He responds, "For Christ does not exempt a person from temporal authority just because he has faith in him. He knows well that our inclination to vice requires a school master."<sup>19</sup>

Most importantly, it is here that Zwingli breaks with Aquinas. Zwingli's doctrine of man, as enunciated in the treatise De vera et falsa religione (1524), turns sharply away from the Thomist assertion of the power and dignity of human nature. Reason as the starting point of theological discovery, is a corollary of the latter; thence the methodology of natural theology. So it is that reason

is definitive in the Thomistic conception of natural law. However, Zwingli's diametrically opposed anthropological doctrine practically undermines the presuppositions of natural theology's methodology, severely circumscribes the theatre of its operation, and plainly precludes the preëminence of human reason in the concept of natural law. Jacques Courvoisier observes, "... Zwingli also calls this 'the law of nature.' Zwingli uses the latter expression often, and in a sense quite different from that usually given it today... It is worth noting that Zwingli finds no support in Romans 2 for what we today call 'natural theology.'"<sup>20</sup>

In the realm of natural theology, and the accompanying question of the respective roles of reason and revelation in theological method, Zwingli largely reverts to Augustine's (354-430) assertion that all knowledge of God is revealed, and consequently emphasizes a strong view of special revelation. This is not surprising when it is remembered how crucially Augustinian premises informed the theological agenda of the Reformers.

Foremost therein, and equally a result of Augustinianism, is the precept of sola Scriptura, on which Zwingli particularly insisted in theological methodology; whence the absence of the adiaphora rationale. Zwingli's stress on biblical revelation as the primary referent of natural law is the concomitant of the sola Scriptura principle.

However, because of the obscurity of humankind's spiritual comprehension due to its depraved nature, biblical revelation, and with it attendant natural law, are hidden to humanity. Hence Zwingli's insistence on the correspondent tenet of sola fide as the exclusive mode to apprehend natural law; just as it is to comprehend biblical revelation. Zwingli contends:

... the law of nature is nothing other than the essence and guidance of the divine Spirit. Therefore, as Paul says in Rom. 2:14 ff, unbelievers have the law of nature written upon their hearts, and thus are not without a law; for God alone writes the law of nature upon human hearts...

... Thus we see that we ought not to think of the law of nature as coming from us or out of our heads, which we have from Adam, but as from God, the first father and creator of all things. But how can one understand something that comes from God when he does not believe that there is a God? For this reason, one who is to recognize the law of nature as from God, the fountain of all things, must first of all believe that God has created humankind. And should he believe that, he does not do so on his own strength or understanding. Rather, ...faith comes from God alone who draws us. Thus the believer also knows the law of nature for it can be known only from God. And no one can believe in him except for one who is drawn by God. Thus it follows that even knowledge of the law of nature comes from the Spirit of God alone.<sup>21</sup>

Now look at the law of nature and you will find that 'what you want to happen to you, that you will have to do to another also.' This you learn solely from God. Thus the law of nature, too, comes solely from God and is nothing other really than the pure Spirit of God who inwardly draws and illumines.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore a ruler who desires to know what is right or who wishes to pass good laws must, first of all, be one who loves God or who believes. Reason: He should never understand or believe rightly and surely the law of nature, ..., unless he knows the heavenly Father and believes in him.<sup>23</sup>

What could be more contradictory than Zwingli's predication that natural law is practically synonymous with biblical revelation, and discerned by faith alone, uniquely through the work of the Spirit of God?

Yet the contradiction is more apparent than real. For this notion of natural law is indicative of the basic Thomistic pre-supposition that Christian truth, that is to say revelation, both

natural, i.e. natural law, and special, i.e. biblical revelation, is ultimately one. Therefore reason and revelation are likewise inherently reconcilable; thus validating the mobile exercise of the former, congruent with the fixed norms of the latter. In this way a relevant socio-political schema may be formulated to meet the existential needs of society through the truths of eternity.

At the same time this understanding of natural law is representative of Zwingli's conviction that the moral depravity of humanity is the primordial socio-political reality. Thence the necessity of natural law in civilization, and the Spirit of God therein for its comprehension and operation.

Ambiguous? Superficially, yes; but on further reflection profoundly not; for throughout Zwingli's thought in this regard one remarks the unitary world picture which characterized the medieval mind in its essay to reconcile the reality of the human condition, to the supreme verity of God. Zwingli's view of natural law relative to the State, is an élan in this vein. For the point cannot be missed that through his insistence on the principles of sola Scriptura, and sola fide, as well as his concurrent emphasis on the role of the Spirit of God, Zwingli virtually spiritualizes the conception of natural law. Indeed, ironically he essentially supernaturalizes the very concept. Hereby it is perceived that in sum, Zwingli effects a theological tour de force in the reconciliation of biblical theology to socio-political realities, via the incorporation, en masse, of the idea of natural law, into the fundamental precepts of the reformed faith. Inevitably, the medieval notion of natural law is thus



FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>J.V. Pollet, Huldrych Zwingli et la Réforme en Suisse, p. 51.
- <sup>2</sup>E.J. Furcha; H. Wayne Pipkin, trans., Selected Writings of Huldrych Zwingli, 2 vols. vol. II. In Search of True Religion: Reformation Pastoral and Eucharistic Writings, trans. by H. Wayne Pipkin, p. 18.
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-17.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 17.
- <sup>6</sup>Heiko A. Oberman, ed., Studies in the History of Christian Thought, vol. XXV: Zwingli's Thought New Perspectives, by Gottfried Locher, p. 3.
- <sup>7</sup>G. W. Bromiley, ed., Zwingli and Bullinger, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. XXIV. p. 113.
- <sup>8</sup>Robert C. Walton, Zwingli's Theocracy, p. 161.
- <sup>9</sup>Furcha, Pipkin, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 21-22.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 4.
- <sup>11</sup>Jean Rilliet, trans. by Harold Knight, Zwingli Third Man of the Reformation, p. 27.
- <sup>12</sup>Georges de Lagarde, Recherches sur l'Esprit Politique de la Réforme, pp. 99-100.
- <sup>13</sup>E. J. Furcha; H. Wayne Pipkin, trans. Selected Writings of Huldrych Zwingli, 2 vols., vol. I: The Defense of the Reformed Faith, trans. by E. J. Furcha, p. 267.
- <sup>14</sup>George R. Potter, Zwingli, p. 418.
- <sup>15</sup>George R. Potter, Ulrich Zwingli, p. 45.
- <sup>16</sup>E. Harris Harbison, The Age of Reformation, p. 60.

17 Furcha, Pipkin, op. cit., vol. I, p. 269, #1.

18 Ibid., p. 263.

19 Furcha, Pipkin, op. cit., vol. II, p. 22.

20 Jacques Courvoisier, Zwingli A Reformed Theologian, p. 81.

21 Furcha, Pipkin, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 264-265.

22 Ibid., p. 265.

23 Ibid., p. 267.

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