

**THE  
CANADIAN  
SOCIETY  
OF  
PRESBYTERIAN  
HISTORY**

**PAPERS  
1990**

**THE  
CANADIAN SOCIETY  
OF  
PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY**

**PAPERS**

**1990**

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Eldon Hay teaches in the Department of Religion at Mount Allison University

Tim F. Archibald is a recent graduate of Knox College

C. Mark Steinacher is minister of Living Word Congregational-Christian Church in Brantford, and a doctoral candidate in the Toronto School of Theology

Geoffrey Johnston is Director of Pastoral Studies in The Presbyterian College, Montreal

## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The papers printed here were read at the Society's annual meeting in September 1990. The reproduction of the papers is solely for the convenience of members, and copyright for the materials remains exclusively with the authors.

The Society normally meets in Toronto in September, and invites papers that deal with any aspect of Presbyterian and Reformed Church history. New members are welcome. Annual dues are \$10.00, payable to

Rev. Ernest Nix  
4112 Pheasant Run Drive  
Mississauga ON  
L5L 2C1

Anyone desiring further information about the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History is invited to write to the above address.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH

In this paper, this paper is  
Relations with Presbyterians and other  
By the American college  
the work with  
Paul Alexander  
1830 to  
not exclusively  
of  
TABLE OF CONTENTS  
Presbyterians differed  
an outline

Eldon Hay	1
Covenanter Relationships with Presbyterians: Somerville and Stavelly	
Tim F. Archibald	19
Remaining Faithful: Church Union 1925 in the Presbytery of Pictou	
C. Mark Steinacher	39
Some Influences of the Student Volunteer Movement on Canadian Presbyterianism, 1886-1925	
Geoffrey Johnston	64
Honan for the Record: Letters from Honan Missionaries in <u>The Presbyterian Record, 1888-1911</u>	

## COVENANTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH PRESBYTERIANS: SOMMERVILLE AND STAVELY

Eldon Hay

The object of this paper is to outline the relationship between Reformed Presbyterians and other mainline Presbyterian bodies in the British North American colonies of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, as exemplified in the work witness and writings of Rev. Wm. Sommerville (1800-1878) and Rev. Alexander McLeod Stavely (1816-1903). The period covered is roughly 1830 to 1880. The relationship is described largely, though not exclusively, from Reformed Presbyterian sources, from the writings of Sommerville and Stavely. Sommerville and Stavely have a great deal in common, but their views on relationships with other Presbyterians differed, subtly and not so subtly. In this paper there is first, an outline of Covenanter-Presbyterian relations before either Sommerville and Stavely came; secondly, Sommerville's early experience, followed by Stavely's; thirdly, a comparison of the two men's attitudes; finally, an attempt to understand their positions, particularly that of Wm. Sommerville.

### A. Before Sommerville and Stavely

The first Covenanter missionary to Canada was the Rev. Alexander Clarke, who came to minister to a Covenanter society in Saint John, N.B. in 1827. Although Clarke established, or re-established the Covenanter Society in that city, his ministry in Saint John lasted for only a few months, for Clarke found a situation much less promising than he had hoped. Some of the Covenanters, who had been reported there, had left the city, the remainder were scattered. And Clarke found the attitude of the Kirk clergyman, the Rev. George Burns, at the least unfriendly, at most positively hostile. Nor were British governors particularly open to the Covenanters. As Clarke notes:

The spirit of Toryism was . . . quite rampant in St. John, so much so, indeed that it was not an easy matter for an R.P. minister to get into a church to preach at all. I asked Dr. George Burns for the use of his church for a collection sermon in aid of a new church at Hammond River. He said very dryly that I might have the church if I could get the leave of the governor.

No doubt Clarke replied tartly and sharply that

I had the leave and authority of the universal Governor to preach everywhere, and would not ask the leave of any local governor to preach anywhere. Of course, I understood the doctor's remark as a refusal of the church . . . contemptuous to me and the church I represented.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, according to Clarke's account, Burns was not wholly averse to Clarke's efforts in the Hammond River area.

Doctor [Burns] advised the people in the country to hold on to me, allowed I was a good hand to gather the people together, advised them to go on with the [proposed new] building, and by the time it would

be finished, he would have a minister from Scotland when my services would no longer be required. How marvellously thoughtful, honourable, kind and generous a doctor of divinity!<sup>2</sup>

Clarke left Saint John within a year, going to Amherst, N.S.; where although there had been Presbyterian clergy in the past, there were none in 1828. Clarke went to Amherst, delivering a back-handed compliment to Burns "that charitable Christian minister [who] did fully his share to send me to the place where God intended I should sow the evangelical seed and wait for the harvest."<sup>3</sup>

Clarke settled in Amherst, although he did not entirely sever his relationship with the small Covenanter society in Saint John. And in 1835, that small group was erecting a place of worship. Robert Wilson, a Kirk clergyman in that wrote in July to the Glasgow Colonial Society, urging that another Kirk clergyman be sent out.

. . . If we do not ourselves endeavour to supply the wants of the presbyterian population, many of them from want of accommodation will be obliged to join other denominations--and others will endeavour to supply them. Indeed already the Covenanters, who are of themselves a very small body in the city (not perhaps exceeding 20 individuals) have yet exerted themselves so much as to carry on the Erection of a place of worship--and intend when they are able to obtain a Cameronian minister from Ireland. If they obtain a popular clergyman, they will most probably gather up all the Presbyterian stragglers--and perhaps draw off some from our own body. Now if we could forestall them, which we wish to do. . . .<sup>4</sup>

On Oct. 11, 1835, "the Reformed Presbyterian Meeting-House was opened, by the Rev. Alexander Clarke."<sup>5</sup> This, notwithstanding the forestalling of the Kirk folk, and, according to the New Brunswick Courier, "notwithstanding the coldness of the House, from its unfinished state. [T]he attention of the congregation was uninterrupted by even the slightest degree of impatience."<sup>6</sup> Writing a month later, the Rev. Alex. MacLean, a Kirk minister in St. Andrew's, N.B., to the Glasgow Colonial Society, notes that "a Reformed Presbyterian church has lately been built in St. John, and Mr. Alexr. Clark obtained as its Minister."<sup>7</sup>

#### B. The Arrival of Sommerville and Stavely

Sommerville came out from in 1831, and was a roving associate of Clarke's until 1833, when he was tentatively invited to Horton and Cornwallis, in the Annapolis valley. Sommerville's association with Clarke was not been altogether unfruitful. In April of 1832, the two had combined, with elders, to form the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Reformed Presbytery; in June of that year Sommerville married Sarah Barry Dickie, a member in one of the congregations Clarke had founded. At the same time, the two Covenanter clergy contended not a little, though the precise reasons evade us.<sup>8</sup> Clarke alone opened the Saint John R.P. church in 1835, though he indicates "Mr. Sommerville was . . . invited but did not come."<sup>9</sup>

Clarke had been very anxious to put some geographical distance between himself and Burns; Sommerville was not indisposed to be somewhat removed from Clarke. Sommerville's wishes seemed capable of fulfilment when he received the tentative invitation to come to Horton and Cornwallis in the Annapolis Valley.

In the early 1830s, the Presbyterian congregations of both Cornwallis and Horton were facing a difficulty. Their beloved Church of Scotland licentiate-minister, the Rev. William Forsyth, was quite ill. One could say that he was close to being "superannuated in mind and body."<sup>10</sup> Another minister, at least to assist the ailing Forsyth, was clearly called for. A small number of persons came together from the Horton and Cornwallis congregations to discuss the matter; and Elihu Woodworth of Horton became their spokesperson.

What were the possibilities? Perfect Presbyterian parsons were non-existent; even good ones were scarce. Had the committee heard of William Sommerville? It is clear that they had. Maybe because Alexander Clarke had visited and "preached in this community [of Horton] several Sabbaths" in 1829.<sup>11</sup> Clarke had already made a name for himself in Amherst and beyond. And his Covenanter colleague, the Rev. William Sommerville, and was in the Amherst area when Woodworth wrote to him in October 1832.

As Elihu Woodworth's letter of Oct. 1832 makes clear, the committee had heard that Sommerville "might be prevailed upon to labour" in this Horton-Cornwallis area of "the vineyard of the Lord."<sup>12</sup> But in approaching Sommerville, the committee had to be clear about two matters.

First, considering that Mr. Forsyth was still on the scene, it was important to secure his consent; else the object the committee had in mind "could not be obtained."<sup>13</sup> Could old Mr. Forsyth get along "with a . . . Presbyterian Minister not of the Church of Scotland?"<sup>14</sup> Well, Mr. Forsyth assured the three members who came to see him that he was quite willing to work "in harmony with the Revd. Mr. Sommerville or any other pious Presbyterian Minister who held to the central doctrines of faith and practice of the Church of Scotland."<sup>15</sup> Second, quite apart from Mr. Forsyth's sensibilities, there was a concern coming from the committee members themselves. "Both the Horton and Cornwallis congregations made use of Watts version of David[']s Psalms and the Paraphrases connected thereto" and the Committee want to know from you, Sommerville, if you "have any objections to the same?"<sup>16</sup>

Sommerville was a careful, canny, cautious character; and completely committed to Covenanter convictions. However much he wanted to go Horton, he could not and would not forget those convictions. So when asked, first, 'Are you in essential harmony with the doctrine, faith and practice of the Church of Scotland?' Sommerville could answer in all good conscience,

To the doctrines and practice of the Church of Scotland, as they are exhibited in her Standards, I was attached by education, conviction and ordination.<sup>17</sup>

When Sommerville was asked, second, 'Have you any objection to Watts' Psalms and Paraphrases?' the answer was slightly more ambiguous. Sommerville's reply,

with your present practice I will not rudely interfere; [although] I cannot compromise a religious obligation for the sake of any situation. In the event that I come to Horton, I will bring the matter immediately before the congregations; and I am disposed to believe them willing with promptitude to choose the better part, having it brought before their notice.<sup>18</sup>

How did the Horton-Cornwallis committee feel about Sommerville's response? All committee members were delighted that he upheld the same essential standards as those of Mr. Forsyth's. Over the second matter, there was no such unanimity. Cornwallis officially withdrew from the negotiations with Sommerville. Horton would have to proceed on its own.

Horton continued the negotiations with Sommerville: but with due caution. They called him for one half of his time and for one year only, which meant services on alternate Sabbaths.<sup>19</sup>

And Sommerville came to the Annapolis Valley in May of 1833. In the church that is today somewhat ironically known as the Covenanter Church, and in his first service on May 12, 1833, "Sommerville spoke against the use of 'uninspired hymns'."<sup>21</sup> And how was Watts' version to be handled? In Sommerville's (slightly amended) words:

The first time I opened the book in the place of public worship, [I] accompanied [it] with a declaration of the principle, that in the [public worship or] social services of the House of God, I could recognise none other than the [Psalms of David or] Songs of Zion as the divinely authorised matter of praise; that some of Watts' . . . might be regarded as a version of [Hymns or] Scripture Songs, and as such I used them [only] till the subject was brought under their particular consideration.<sup>22</sup>

And Sommerville did not let the matter drop there. Again, I take up Sommerville's words:

Proceeding from house to house, and conversing with the people on the subject, all manifested a willingness to have the Psalms of David introduced, provided it might be done unanimously, and without alienating the affections of one from another. Of this I gave them assurance; as from the beginning I had determined that, if they did not agree respecting this matter, we must part company.<sup>23</sup>

Obtaining their individual consent, he embodied the decision in a statement, and then a second time 'proceeded from house to house,' requesting signatures. "None refused to sign."<sup>24</sup> So that "after only three Sabbaths of public worship, or six weeks, elapsed . . . Watts was shut up."<sup>25</sup> Sommerville published his first pamphlet on the subject, The Psalms of David, Designed for Standing Use in the Church.<sup>26</sup> It was apparently widely read.

The whole procedure of removing Watts' version, and replacing it with proper Psalms of David has evoked various responses from historians. Watson Kirkconnell says that the Horton congregants "found themselves suddenly locked in a Scottish refrigerator by an iron-willed young Covenanter."<sup>27</sup> W.M. Glasgow writes that the Horton congregation "agreed to sing the Psalms of David and comply to other practices of the church, and gradually the congregation became in theory and practice a Covenanter congregation."<sup>28</sup>

I personally have no doubt whatsoever that the latter is far closer to the truth. The proof of the pudding is found in the fact that "on March 18, 1834, just 10 months after he had accepted an invitation to preach for them for a year, the congregation made out a formal call [for Sommerville]

to the pastoral office. . . . And the relationship then formed was only severed by his death."<sup>29</sup> And Cornwallis, which had withdrawn from the original negotiations altogether, later, in 1835, called him for a quarter of his time; and that congregation too entered into a relationship with Sommerville which ended only with Sommerville's death. Indeed, in the early 1840s, Cornwallis replaced Horton or Grand Pre as the central focus of Sommerville's activity, a new church was built there, and the congregation reconstituted.

Whereas Sommerville went to a non-Covenanter Presbyterian area and gradually won a niche for Covenantism in the Annapolis Valley; Stavely came to Saint John to a small congregation that had long prayed for and looked forward to a resident Covenanter clergyman. The city's Covenanters were never a large group, but they did have a tenacity. Clarke helped with the building of the church in that city; but it was erected by Clarke in a marginal sense only. After he came to the new world, Sommerville visited Saint John from time to time; but it was largely lay folk who persisted in keeping Covenantism alive. And the congregation of Saint John kept appealing regularly to the Irish Synod for someone to come.<sup>30</sup> The Irish Synod noted that

the society in St. Johns . . . continues to adhere steadfastly to the cause which they have espoused. They meet regularly in fellowship meetings, attend to other religious duties, and their conduct, as far as is known to us, is such as becomes their profession.<sup>31</sup>

The identity and self-discipline of the congregation in Saint John is attested to by an incident that occurred in the winter of 1840-41, a few months before a minister finally arrived and while the congregation was not yet under the government of a Session:

There was [a] family in the [Covenanter] church engaged in the sale of spirituous liquors. Although they were spoken to by . . . members respecting the immorality of the traffic, they persisted in it. Their plea was that in the other Presbyterian churches the members were allowed to sell liquors, and why should not they? The contention continued for some time. At length the more zealous members were determined to carry their point, if possible. A strong, outspoken document was drawn up, in which was contained a resolution that no one, man or woman, master or servant, should be recognized as a member of the church who followed the practice of selling intoxicating liquors. A meeting of the whole church was held for the purpose of formally deciding the question. After having been fully discussed and put to the vote, the measure was carried by a large majority. The parties engaged in the traffic departed in great displeasure, declaring that they would leave and have no more to do with such a people. They repented, however, came back and continued, as before, worthy members of the church.<sup>32</sup>

At last, the prayers of the Saint John Covenanters for a full-time missionary were answered. Alexander McLeod Stavely, of a distinguished Covenanter family, and who had offered his services as a missionary to Saint John, was ordained for that purpose on May 12, 1841. As part of that ordination service

The Rev. William Toland gave a narrative of the state of the mission to St. Johns, and of the steps that had been taken by the Directors

of the Missionary Society to provide a pastor for the people, and read a very interesting letter which contained the affectionate invitation of the society to Mr. Stavely to become their pastor, and a pleasing statement of their present prospects.<sup>33</sup>

### C. Sommerville and Stavely: A Comparison

Throughout their ministries in Canada--Sommerville in the Annapolis Valley from 1833 until 1878, Stavely in Saint John from 1841 until 1879--the two missionaries bumped up against and were in contact with, other Presbyterians. But it is important to remember the beginnings of their respective ministries. Sommerville entered an existing Presbyterian congregation, and by his ministry--as a sympathetic historian puts it--"gradually the congregation became in theory and practice a Covenanter congregation."<sup>34</sup> He held services in a building that had not been erected under Covenanter auspices; and it was not until 1843 that a new, wholly Covenanter building, was erected in Cornwallis. From 1843 on, Sommerville's ministry was marked by the slow but steady incursion of other Presbyterian congregations in communities near and surrounding him. On the other hand, Stavely's ministry, from the outset, was anchored in a small but cohesive Covenanter congregation, with its own church building. And that congregation continued to hold its own during Stavely's time there, situated amongst other Presbyterian congregations, both established and new.

The strict customs and discipline of Covenanterism did not particularly facilitate the growth of their respective congregations:

[A] year after Mr. Stavely's settlement, the Irish members of St. Andrew's Church, having . . . become dissatisfied, withdrew from its fellowship, went in a body to the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Lower Cove and in a single day filled the little house to overflowing. Their children attended the Sabbath school, and on the whole they appeared well satisfied and many might have remained but for one circumstance. In a short time one after another would inquire: 'When would it be convenient to christen the little one?' When informed that the usage of the Covenanter Church was to baptize the children of members only and that in the face of the congregation, they soon left, and identified themselves with a new [Presbyterian] organization in the vicinity.<sup>35</sup>

Elihu Woodworth, the man who first entered into correspondence with Wm. Sommerville, and who led negotiations to bring him to Horton, gives us a quite clear picture of the daily goings-on of Wm. Sommerville in the wonderful wee work edited by Watson Kirkconnell, The Diary of Deacon Elihu Woodworth 1835-1836.<sup>36</sup> Here's one snippet, in Woodworth's words.

[Sabbath] Jan. 18. [1835] Attended Mr. Sommerville's [church] meeting. Dined at Mr. Sommerville's. Went with him about 7 o'clock in the evening to Oliver Fuller's mill, found him grinding wheat for Mr. Wm. Borden to take to Halifax on Monday morning. After I had given Mr. Fuller a very severe exhortation on the impropriety of thus breaking a divine command, Mr. Fuller solemnly promised he would never again grind on the Sabbath. Young Mr. Borden coming for his flour while Mr. Sommerville was at the mill received also a gentle but truly [reproachful] rebuke for his conduct. Mr. Sommerville concluded his exhortation with a divine prayer in the mill.<sup>37</sup>

The young man thus rebuked and prayed over by Mr. Wm. Sommerville was Mr. William Borden (1811-45), an uncle of Robert L. Borden, later prime minister of Canada.<sup>38</sup> It is perhaps not altogether surprising that premier Borden's memories of Rev. Wm. Sommerville are not entirely positive.<sup>39</sup>

Sommerville's siege mentality, and Stavely's relative steadfastness is reflected in their reporting of events. It is perhaps not surprising that Sommerville complained that the cup was half empty, and Stavely maintained that it was half full. The two disparate attitudes are captured in the report of 1868. Sommerville is complaining in Cornwallis:

We do not do more than hold our own, if that. But what is more painful to me is the degree in which we are succumbing to the prevailing spirit of the age. It would seem to be an accepted principle that, instead of the Church giving spirit, character, and form to the age, it is the duty of ministers and people to take character and form from it. It seems to be sufficient to secure condemnation that any thing is old; and to labour for the old way, however good it may be, is to row against the stream. . . . In the religious world, the desire for union among Presbyterians here is so strong that there seems to be little time and less inclination to settle terms. We must be one; and . . . this is demanded in the name of liberality. . . . It is treated as absurd to claim liberty of conscience in opposition to union on any terms.

At the same time, Stavely seems to be rejoicing in Saint John:

Throughout this Province (New Brunswick) there is a good feeling among Christians of all denominations, and in the country districts especially. I have often seen the Episcopalian, the Wesleyan, the Baptist, and the Presbyterian convened in the same sanctuary, to worship the Christian's God; and have heard them sing, as with one voice, the tune the Martyrs sung to the Scotch version of some of our good old Psalms. Such union seasons are always refreshing to my heart and remind me that the whole family in heaven and on earth is ONE.<sup>40</sup>

The cup--half empty, or half full? Stavely's attitude tends to cooperation. In 1845, a church was opened at Hammond River, a hamlet some distance from Saint John. Meant to "be the vehicle of religious intelligence for Christians, particularly for Presbyterians, of all denominations," it received the name of "St. Andrew's Church in connection with the Free Church of Scotland." Stavely participated.<sup>41</sup> A decade later, Stavely actively supported the erection of another such venture in Carleton, N.B.<sup>42</sup> Sommerville's conduct was more confrontational. In 1859/60, Sommerville went to court to attempt to obtain for the Covenanter cause a glebe; some land which had earlier been bequeathed to 'a Presbyterian body.' The land, Sommerville reasoned, ought obviously to belong to the Covenanters; though the Free Presbyterians begged to differ. The court case could be seen positively from a Covenanter viewpoint, and is so described in a presbytery report of 1861: "a suit at law with the Free Church in reference to Glebe land, has led to a more general acquaintance in many places with our peculiar principles."<sup>43</sup> Sommerville pursued the court case, although we are told that

Mr Sommerville's [own] people wanted to leave the matter in dispute to arbitration but he [Mr. Sommerville] said there was nothing to leave to arbitration for they [the other contestants] had no claim.<sup>44</sup>

On that occasion, Sommerville was wrong--the land did not come to the Covenanters. And however much the case increased knowledge and understanding of distinctive Covenanter principles, this did not lead to accessions to the Covenanter cause. For early in 1861, Sommerville writes that "the general attendance in Cornwallis is not so large, upon the whole, as it once was."<sup>45</sup>

Half-empty, half-full? Stavely's attitude to Christians other than Covenanters may have partially arisen out of the situation of the indebtedness of the Saint John congregation. A new church building was being erected in Saint John in 1850. Directly related to that effort, Stavely went off to the United States on what can only be called a money-raising venture. In a letter to his sister written from Atlanta Georgia on April 9, 1850, Stavely mentions a number of places, and Presbyterian parsons of many different schools:

I furnish you with a brief outline of my wanderings during the last four weeks. . . . My first stage was to Washington, in the district of Columbia the Capitol of the United States. . . . I . . . found my way to the house of Rev. Mr. Smith, New School Presbyterian Minister. . . . I left for Charleston, South Carolina. . . . On Sabbath (next day) forenoon I preached for the Revd. Dr. Smythe . . . I thought it better to remain for a time in Charleston, as I had not yet been able to make any collections there. . . . [On the next] Sabbath I preached once for Mr. Forrest Scotch Kirk Minister, & once for Dr. Smythe. . . . The following Monday was decidedly the best day in money matters that I have had since I came to the States. Altogether Charleston yielded about (\$160) one hundred & 60 Dollars to my general Building fund. On the following day Tuesday the 28th of March I left for Savannah. . . . On the following day I made collections & in the evening preached for Dr. Preston the Presbyterian Independent Clergyman it being his weekly Lecture. I had very considerable success in Savannah. The British Consul Mr. Mollyneux gave me twenty Dollars & Several others 10 each. I remained over Sabbath and preached on it for Dr. Preston, who has the largest congregation in the place--the most splendid of all splendid Churches, and a salary of some \$600 per annum I likewise preached for Mr. Ross, the old School Presbyterian Minister. . . . I feel that I have done all in my power to raise funds & hope to make the people nearly \$400 the less in debt by my absence. . . . Collecting money for any purpose & more especially for a church in another country is no easy task. There is a great deal of labour & anxiety and I long for the end of my exertions in this way.<sup>46</sup>

And this was the first of two or three such financially-motivated forays south of the border. And clearly, in these dollar-driven dealings, Stavely spoke in churches other than those strictly Covenanter. Sommerville seems parsimonious by contrast. He made no such money-making missions: he was quite scrupulous about accepting money and was suspicious of the source of money. "I do not like to see a man coming with the Bible in one hand,

and the other stretched out to receive something; do not care to imitate the example, and receive as a pauper what should come from the love of God."<sup>47</sup> So Sommerville seems to have discouraged pew rentals, donation visits and the like. He preferred receiving support "from church members, and the gratuitous liberality of a very few individuals."<sup>48</sup> Yet he could be sharp about the liberality of church folk. He noted that "the time of poverty is made an apology for the want of that liberality which a time of plenty did not exhibit."<sup>49</sup>

The cup--half empty or half full? Stavely's location in Saint John meant that his home was visited by many--particularly those of Irish background--whether they came from the old world or the new. The urbane Stavely was often a gracious host: he never lacked companionship.<sup>50</sup> Sommerville's geographical location was more isolated, and so was his psychic and psychological condition. He remonstrated:

I don't like to find fault, but I cannot forget how many have crossed the Atlantic, of our ministers, and have returned without turning aside to look at us, though they could have done so with a small sacrifice of time or money, and their visit would have had a large moral and social influence.<sup>51</sup>

Half empty or half full? Sommerville noted that persons once considered faithful to the Covenanter cause could yet leave that communion.

The Head of the Church has, in my experience of . . . nearly 28 years in King's County, Nova Scotia--raised me up helpers--effective helpers, from whom I anticipated much, and in whose co-operation I exulted; and after a temporary adherence, they are gone.<sup>52</sup>

One of Stavely's closest personal friends was John Boyd, once a prominent Covenanter in the Saint John congregation,<sup>53</sup> who probably because of his expanding position in public life, and coming into conflict with Covenanter state-church convictions, left the Covenanters. The friendship between the Stavely and Boyd did not lessen, rather, if anything, the relationship seems to have deepened. "The Hon. John Boyd, lieutenant governor of New Brunswick . . . being for many years a member of Stavely's church [was] to the last his 'trusty frere.'"<sup>54</sup>

Sommerville and Stavely differed in the way they responded to Alexander Clarke, the earliest Covenanter Irish missionary. It was Sommerville who greeted Stavely on his arrival in Saint John, Clarke not counted in, in any way. Later, Clarke voted in an election in the mid-1840s and left, or was expelled from the Irish Synod, subsequently joining the New School Reformed Presbyterian Synod in the U.S. Sommerville's wife had come from one of Clarke's congregations, but the two had not fully seen eye to eye from the time Sommerville came to the area. After 1848, they seemed to have kept an even more frigid distance between them. Stavely's practice seems to have taken a different turn. Stavely's pulpit was opened to Clarke several times over the years.<sup>55</sup>

In his siege mentality, with Presbyterians closing in, particularly towards the end of his ministry, Sommerville was particularly perturbed by the attitudes of what Sommerville saw, in some sense at least, as his

fellow Presbyterians. They tended to patronize the Covenanters. In his 1869 booklet entitled The Social Position of Reformed Presbyterians or Cameronians<sup>56</sup> Sommerville gives example after example of how grateful Presbyterians ought to be for the pioneering work of the Covenanters--there is his own case, of course. But also the work and witness of Robert Stewart in Wilmot, and his own son, Robert M. Sommerville. Yet, interestingly enough, the chief example that Sommerville gives is, Alexander Clarke. Speaking of how Clarke is being treated by fellow Presbyterians, Sommerville mockingly adopts the condescending tone he catches from these Presbyterians:

Our brother, Dr. Clarke, has served his generation well, and as to his continuing the Covenanting ministry any longer, in our presence, it is not necessary. We bear the same testimony for truth before the world as our Covenanting brethren.<sup>57</sup>

Clarke, once a distrusted fellow Covenanter, who left the Old School Irish Synod for the New School American Synod--Clarke, ignored and spurned for years--now is back in favour in Sommerville's view. Perhaps the fact that both Sommerville and Clarke are pressed and threatened threw the erstwhile competing contenders together as allies.

Half full or half empty? Both Stavely and Sommerville urged the Irish Covenanter Synod to send more missionaries, more clergy. The fact that very few came meant that areas at one time open to Covenanter influence, were slowly and steadily taken over by others. Stavely notes the phenomenon in this fashion:

We write home urging for more labourers, but as our appeals are all in vain, we have just to look on quietly and silently as places are occupied by others, to which under other circumstances we would have [had] a prior claim.<sup>58</sup>

Clearly, Stavely is saddened, but there is no feeling that all is lost. That is hardly the situation with Sommerville, who experiences growing discomfort. A close friend saw Sommerville's struggle:

In later years, as he became sensible of the infirmities of age, and felt the difficulty of advancing the cause which he greatly valued, through the want of labourers, he gave expression to painful anxieties about the Covenanted cause in the Colonial field. He spoke at times with sadness of others entering in and reaping fruit of labours which, with a larger supply of missionaries, would have been gathered by the Church. He expressed dread of declension in the attachment to a Scriptural testimony among the members of the church. Anticipating coming trials and temptations, and lamenting an observable decay of heartfelt interest in the grand principles of our fathers' testimony, he spoke of the possibility of not a few relinquishing a Scriptural profession in the hour of temptation. "We may not," he added, "conceal from ourselves the prospect of seeing the standard of a Covenanted Testimony in the hands of a much fewer number, and these poorer and less influential than those who profess at present to hold it."<sup>59</sup>

In spite of their difference in attitudes, Sommerville and Stavely

worked together in the N.B. and N.S. Reformed Presbytery from 1845/6 until Sommerville's death in 1878. Stavely preached a long sermon about Sommerville in the Cornwallis R.P. church.<sup>60</sup> Stavely is unstinting in his praise for his older colleague. Geographical distance allowed for attitudinal differences. The only area where some divergence publicly emerged was the matter of switching the N.B. & N.S. Presbytery from the Irish to the American Synod. Stavely patiently paved the way, Sommerville persistently blocked the path. When Sommerville died, the presbytery plopped into the American Synod. Then Stavely went back to Ireland. He may have hoped that the American connection would guarantee the Maritime Covenanter future. It was not to be the case.

One other factor. Sommerville had burned his bridges between Ireland and Nova Scotia. He was not going to build any others. He had determined to be buried where he laboured. So as Covenanter fortunes waned, his anxiety about the future of the cause did battle with his conviction that all was in God's hands. Stavely's commitment permitted more options. It is true that the Great Fire of 1877 seems to have been that calamity which drove Stavely from Saint John to the homeland across the sea.<sup>61</sup> He might well have returned there anyway. So perhaps Stavely was not so committed to 'success' in the new world. He could face the future with much more equanimity than his Nova Scotian counterpart.

#### D. Understanding Stavely and Sommerville

Stavely seems relatively easy to understand. Stavely

was an ideal arbitrator. . . His dispositions were amiable. His manners were bland, kind, and courteous. . . He was a lover of peace. . . He was . . . judicious and conciliatory.<sup>62</sup>

Sommerville is the real challenge. What are we to make of him, the compleat Covenanter, the man with apparently no margin beside or beyond or behind his convictions? "Mr. Sommerville belonged to the strictest sect of the Covenanters, and never concealed for a moment what he was."<sup>63</sup> In matters of doctrine, he was "as inflexible as iron,"<sup>64</sup> in matters of faith and order he was "merciless."<sup>65</sup> "Theologically and ecclesiastically he was a man of 1689."<sup>66</sup> In the present Covenanter community in the United States, Sommerville is remembered as being particularly persistent and conservative in regard to Covenanter ideas and ideals.<sup>67</sup>

A somewhat older American colleague of Sommerville's was James Renwick Willson. Willson, like Sommerville, was always in ecclesiastical controversies.<sup>68</sup> And, like Willson, some saw Sommerville

as a staunch, uncompromising defender of the truth, while others claimed he was . . . vindictive and categorically unwilling to change either his mind or an iota of tradition.<sup>69</sup>

I am glad to acknowledge the work of Elizabeth Carson about James Renwick Willson in attempting to understand Sommerville.

J.D. Douglas's description of the Scottish Covenanters, "with their inordinate sense of history and their contempt for the suggestion of reasonable compromise when principles are at stake,"<sup>70</sup> provides a succinct

statement of Sommerville's standpoint. Sommerville absorbed the character, traditions, and principles of the Scotch-Irish Covenanters, and these formed a significant part of his identity. Throughout his ministry he was convinced that to give in on any points of Covenanter doctrine would mean that Renwick and others had died in vain. His inflexible adherence to the Covenants remain a significant part of Sommerville's position.<sup>71</sup>

Sommerville was utterly convinced of the Covenanter belief that God Almighty has given Messiah authority to govern nations, and that Messiah, in the exercise of his authority, has issued his laws in the Bible.<sup>72</sup> The Bible laid down certain principles with clear implications for society. If one could not accept them, how could he still claim to believe in the Bible? For Sommerville, issues were always clear-cut. He could not acknowledge that others might take a biblical principle in another direction or that his own logical progression might not be as automatic as it seemed to him.

The Bible provides a blueprint for the laws of the land. What if people vote against it? Or what about the rights of a minority who may not want it, though the majority does? Sommerville did not face these questions squarely, although it's clear that he believed implicitly that a polity which honoured God would also be most beneficial to its subjects. He had no doubt that society, as well as all of creation, would function best when following biblical principles. Of course, this would demand a great change in public opinion. And those who proclaimed God's truth had a special responsibility. God alone changed hearts and minds, but God used the preaching and testifying of his word to accomplish it.

Sommerville's message was clear, and his convictions well honed. Nor did he depart from them. But, in large part, his religious and theological hearers were few; and their long term impact minimal. Sommerville never wavered in his proclamation, but the public was not listening.<sup>73</sup> I think that may well have accounted for Sommerville's growing anxiety.

Two final points.

First, Sommerville's legacy in Nova Scotia is not primarily religious. He was so financially straitened that he taught school for some twenty years. One of his brightest students was John Burgess Calkin. Calkin greatly angered his teacher when he eloped with Sommerville's oldest daughter; but he later re-won his teacher's respect and admiration. And Calkin went on to be a great figure in the educational life of Nova Scotia.

My last point has to do with the fact that, in the Maritimes, much of what was once Covenanter--Old School and New School--is today largely United Church, not Presbyterian. Sommerville, the Old School Covenanter, and Clarke the New School Covenanter, left that kind of legacy. (This is not true of Saint John, Stavelly's stamping ground.) I have seen no comment about this in Sommerville's Annapolis valley. But Samuel Crothers Murray, speaking about the Chignecto area, noted that in the late 1870s, there had been

a long and bitter strife [between Covenanters and other

Presbyterians], which required 30 years to heal. When about fifty years later the question of Organic Union between Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalist, was causing discussions in many places, these once loyal Covenanters, passed quickly into the United Church of Canada without the formality of a vote. They had their fill of fighting.<sup>74</sup>

Sommerville, a man out of time? Rev. John Spratt wrote from Musquodoboit in 1865:

My old countrymen, the Rev. Drs. Clark and Sommerville, are ministers of talent and acquirement, but it is difficult to engraft their peculiar views upon a floating population like Nova Scotia. At home the hands of Reformed Presbyterians are strengthened by the traditions of the country and the tombs of the martyrs, but here, in Nova Scotia, our history is little further than the battle of Bunker's Hill.<sup>75</sup>

## END-NOTES

1. Alexander Clarke, Autobiographical Sketch. Written 1872. NBSaM, J.C. Webster Papers, 7001/23. Typed 7-pg. ms., p. 3.
2. Ibid., 4.
3. Ibid.
4. Robert Wilson, "Letter," addressed to the Glasgow Colonial Society, July 22, 1835. The Glasgow Colonial Society Correspondence, Book 5, No. 152. OTCC.
5. New Brunswick Courier, Oct. 12, 1835.
6. Ibid.
7. Alex MacLean, "Letter," addressed to the Glasgow Colonial Society, Nov. 10, 1835. G.C.S. Correspondence, Book 5, No. 193. United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.
8. In 1833 the two men were not in agreement. See Wm. Sommerville, 'Letter to Dr. J.R. Willson, Aug. 8, 1833.' Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Willson papers, box 7.
9. See A. Clarke, 'Letter to Rev. Jas. R. Willson, Wed. Oct. 14, 1835.' J.R. Willson Papers, Box 7.
10. William Sommerville, The Social Position of Reformed Presbyterians or Cameronians (Londonderry: James MacPherson, 1869), p. 3. Hereafter, Sommerville, The Social Position.
11. W.M. Glasgow, History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America (Baltimore: Harvey & Harvey, Publishers, 1888), p. 172. Hereafter, Glasgow, History.
12. Letters and Papers of William Sommerville regarding his relation to the Presbyterian Church at West Cornwallis, 1832-1860. Document 'A.a'. NSWA. Hereafter, "Letters and Papers of William Sommerville." Acadia University Archives, Wolfville, N.S. Hereafter, Letters and Papers of William Sommerville.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Wm. Sommerville, "Report," 163.

18. Ibid. I have slightly amended the text, to make it a statement in the present tense. The original reads:  
 with their present practice I would not rudely interfere; that I could not compromise a religious obligation for the sake of any situation; that in the event of a removal to Horton, I should bring the matter immediately before them; and that I was disposed to believe them willing with promptitude to choose the better part, having it brought under their notice.
19. Letters and Papers of William Somerville, Document 'C.c.'
20. Watson Kirkconnell, ed. The Diary of Deacon Elihu Woodworth 1835-1836 (Wolfville: The Wolfville Historical Society, 1972), p. 39. Hereafter, Woodworth, Diary. As Kirkconnell comments:  
 It is an irony of history that the Meeting House on Kirk Hill, Grand Pre, built by a Church of Scotland minister and his non-Covenanter congregations, should now be universally known as "the Covenanter Church," after the solitary alien who destroyed its New World traditions. The term is apparently a very recent tourist gimmick, unknown during the lifetime of the church itself.
21. Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, "The First Church Founded by New-England People in Kings County, Nova Scotia," The New-England Historical and Genealogical Register, Vol. XLVI, 1892, 219-26.
22. Wm. Somerville, "Report," 164.
23. Ibid., 165, 166.
24. Ibid., 166.
25. Ibid., 167.
26. William Somerville, The Psalms of David, Designed for Standing Use in the Church (Halifax, J.S. Cunnabell, 1834).
27. Woodworth, Diary, p. 42. The words are from editor Kirkconnell.
28. Glasgow, History, p. 173.
29. Robert Somerville, "Missionaries of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to the Lower Provinces of Canada: William Somerville, A.M." Olive Trees, 1899, 88. Hereafter, Robt. Somerville, "William Somerville."
30. See Minutes of RP Irish Synod, Moneymore, July 19<sup>th</sup>., 1836. Item 12 notes that:  
 The Rev. Thomas Houston, one of the Secretaries of the Missionary Society . . . lays on the table of Synod . . . a letter from the Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and a petition to that Presbytery from the Congregation at St. John's.
31. "Eleventh Annual Report of the Reformed Presbyterian Home and Foreign Missionary Society: British North America Colonies," Covenanter, 1839, 229-30.

32. Robert M. Sommerville, "Missionaries of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to the Lower Provinces of Canada: Alexander McLeod Stavely," Olive Trees, 1899, 251. Hereafter, Robt. Sommerville, "Stavely." Sommerville cites his source for the story by noting that:  
 through the courtesy of Mr. J. Ewing, of St. John, a manuscript history of the Presbyterian churches of that city, written from memory by Elder Robert Ewing a short time before his death, is in my possession. It supplies a few facts.
33. "Ordination of a Missionary for the British North American Colonies," Covenanter, 1841, 142-3.
34. Glasgow, History, p. 173.
35. Robt. Sommerville, "Stavely," 251.
36. Woodworth, Diary.
37. Ibid., p. 2.
38. Ibid., p. 40. This information is given by Watson Kirkconnell.
39. Robert Blair Borden: His Memoirs (Toronto: The Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1938), p. 6. Of William Sommerville, Borden relates:  
 I well remember him, a stern old man whose presence was awesome to children of tender years. He was a "Covenanter" and he succeeded in imposing upon the greater part of the Presbyterian congregation at Grand Pre the peculiar views of his sect respecting the relations of Church and State. The influence of [this man] upon the community was clearly discernible in my boyhood days. . . . I frequently went with my mother to the Presbyterian Church and attended the Presbyterian Sunday-School where I was inducted into the mysteries of the Shorter Catechism and the Confession of Faith.
40. "Colonial Mission For The Year Ending June 30th, 1868," Covenanter, 1868, 218-20.
41. See "Correspondence," Guardian, Mar. 14, 1845, 293.
42. See 'Announcement,' Presbyterian Witness, Nov. 11, 1854, 178.
43. 'Report of the Reformed Presbytery of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick,' "Minutes of the R.P. Synod of Ireland," 1861.
44. See Letters and Papers of William Sommerville. Document dated 7 Nov., 1860, the deposition of Stephen Burgess.
45. "Colonial Mission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland.-- North American Colonies," Covenanter, 1861, 107-9. The article consists largely of a letter from Sommerville, dated Feb. 4, 1861.
46. See 'Letter from Alex. M. Stavely to his sister, April 9, 1850, from Atlanta Georgia.' Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast, 1792/E/6.

47. "Colonial Mission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland.--North American Colonies," Covenanter, 1861, 109.
48. Ibid., 109.
49. "British North American Colonies: Extract of a letter of the Rev. William Sommerville, Cornwallis, Nova Scotia," Monitor and Missionary Chronicle, 1848, 342.
50. For instance, the New School Brooklyn minister, S. Moffett, passed through the city in 1871 on his way to the Clarke-dominated Chignecto region.  
After stepping off the boat we espied the Rev. S. Houston, who was awaiting our arrival on British soil, and in whose house for the time being we found a home. After sharing the hospitalities of Rev. S. Houston and Rev. A.M. Stavely, we left for Amherst on Saturday morning. ("How Our Holidays Were Spent," Reformed Presbyterian Advocate, 1872, 8).
51. Wm. Sommerville, "Letter from William Sommerville," Covenanter, 1872, 156.
52. See "Colonial Mission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland.--North American Colonies," Covenanter, 1861, 107-9.
53. See "First Annual Report of the St. John Reformed Presbyterian Missionary Society, Read at the Meeting, on the evening of January 5, 1847," Monitor and Missionary Chronicle, 1847, 46-8. John Boyd is secretary of the meeting, and quite likely the author of the report.
54. "Former St. John Minister Dead," Saint John Telegraph, July 31, 1903.
55. See announcements in New Brunswick Courier, Oct. 5, 1850; May 10, 1851; June 19, 1858; July 30, 1859.
56. Londonderry: James MacPherson, 1869.
57. Sommerville, The Social Position, p. 3.
58. 'Letter of Alex. M. Stavely to his sister, dated Wed. July 2, 1873.' Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast, D/1792/E.
59. Thomas Houston, "Memorial Sketch of Rev. William Sommerville, A.M.," Covenanter, 1878, 395; the same sketch appears in Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter, 1879, 47ff.
60. Alex. McLeod Stavely, The Blessed Dead, a sermon preached Oct. 6, 1878 in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Cornwallis, N.S., on occasion of the death of the pastor, Rev. William Sommerville, A.M. with a Biographical Sketch. St. John, N.B. Barnes and Co., and R.A.H. Morrow and New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Company, c. 1878. 48 p. CIHM, 25832.

61. "By the great fire of 1877 which swept over St. John, our brother lost not only his church, but also his manse furniture, and books, and being much discouraged, he demitted his pastoral charge into the hands of the Presbytery and returned to Ireland, followed by the best wishes of his people and the whole community." (J.R. Lawson, "Our Church in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia," Olive Trees, 1880, 124-6.
62. "Alexander M'Leod Stavely," Olive Trees, 1903, 344-7. A virtual parallel appears in the Reformed Presbyterian Witness, 1903, 361-4.
63. William Gregg, History of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion of Canada from the Earliest Times to 1884 (Toronto: Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Co., 1885), pp. 352-353, cites a source which he identifies as Year Book, 1879. I have been unable to find this source.
64. A.W.H. Eaton, The History of Kings County (Salem, Mass: The Salem Press Co., 1910), p. 529.
65. Woodworth, Diary, p. 39. The opinion is of course that of Kirkconnell.
66. "Death of Rev. William Sommerville," Presbyterian Witness, Oct. 5, 1878, 313.
67. Shared in a conversation with David Carson in Pittsburgh, December, 1987. David M. Carson is the author of Transplanted to America: A Popular History of the American Covenanters to 1871 (Philadelphia: Board of Education and Publication, ?1979).
68. Sommerville was an admirer of Willson's. See Wm. Sommerville, 'Letter to Rev. Dr. J.R. Willson, Dec. 12, 1838.' Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Willson papers, Box 7.
69. Elizabeth F. Carson, "An inordinate sense of history" James Renwick Wilson 1750-1853. M.A. Thesis, The College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1987, p. 2. Hereafter, Carson, Inordinate sense.
70. J.D. Douglas, Light in the North: The Story of the Scottish Covenanters (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 7.
71. Carson, Inordinate sense, pp. 34-5.
72. Ibid., p. 51.
73. Ibid., p. 116.
74. Samuel Crothers Murray, A Biography. c. 1940, p. 101. United Church Archives, Toronto. A 195-page handwritten book devoted to Murray's career, including his early days.
75. John Sprcott, "The Fathers of a Past Generation," Reformed Presbyterian Magazine, 1865, 328-9.

REMAINING FAITHFUL:

CHURCH UNION 1925 IN THE PRESBYTERY OF PICTOU

TIM F. ARCHIBALD

In 1773 the Hector sailed into Pictou Harbour, loaded with Scottish migrants who were anxious to make a new start in the British Colony of Nova Scotia. Being the first of a wave of Scots to settle in the North Eastern part of the mainland, these people very quickly established themselves and their institutions as the norm in this new land. Scottish Roman Catholics who arrived in Pictou, for the most part were ushered farther east into what later became the County of Antigonish; Scottish Presbyterians were left to people the hills and glens of what became Pictou County. The result was the creation of a strong Scottish Presbyterian community.

This paper seeks to examine briefly the rejection of Church Union of 1925 by this strong Scottish community within the bounds of the Presbytery of Pictou in Nova Scotia. Although the majority of the ministers in the presbytery accepted union, the greater part of the laity rejected the advice of their spiritual leaders. Significant forces in this action were the concentration of Scottish Presbyterians and the historical vitality of the Scottish tradition in this section of Nova Scotia. Local newspapers fought bitterly the battle of union as no other newspapers in the province. According to James Cameron, prior to 1925 the concentration of Presbyterians in Pictou County was proportionally greater than in any other area of comparable size in Canada.<sup>1</sup> The actions of the presbytery to minimize the

influence of the anti-unionist movement in its court added further fuel to a fire of discontent.

In 1925 when it seemed that the United Church of Canada would obliterate the Presbyterian Church, the laity of Pictou Presbytery responded in defence of their heritage and convinced of the reformed Presbyterian doctrines, they were willing to endure the bitterness of division that had been so much a part of their past. It was this commitment to the Presbyterian Church on the part of the laity, especially in rural and less industrial areas, that allowed for its strong future persistence in Pictou Presbytery.

Figures from the 1871 general census of Canada show that in that year 82 percent of Pictou County's 32,114 persons identified themselves as Presbyterians and 84 percent claimed to be Scottish in origin.<sup>2</sup> Sharing a similar homeland and religious background did not, however, bring unity to this group in the new world. To a greater extent it propagated old divisions from Scotland which had little applicability in Nova Scotia. The division between the Secession Church and the Kirk, so pronounced in the old country, had early found expression in Eastern Nova Scotia. As early as 1829, the Kirk established a separate presbytery in the Pictou area and by 1833 had its own Synod. With the Disruption in Scotland in 1843 further divisions were effected among Pictou County Presbyterians. By 1850 of the 47 preaching points in the area, fifteen adhered to the Secession Church, 20 to the Kirk and twelve to the Free Church.

After the Presbyterian Church in Canada came into being in 1875, Presbyterian divisions remained prevalent in Pictou County. Although the Kirk Synod of the Maritimes officially joined this union, locally all of the Kirk congregations refused to enter the Presbyterian Church in Canada.<sup>3</sup> In 1913 the last Kirk Church in Pictou County united with the Presbyterian Church in Canada, a time when a larger union was in progress.

In spite of the friction created by religious division D. Campbell and R.A. MacLean argue that this struggle between Presbyterians was beneficial:

...for the tension was creative, new ideas did develop, discussion flowed and the intellectual tone was raised to a high standard.<sup>4</sup>

As early as 1820 Thomas McCulloch established a Theological Hall at Pictou for the training of ministers. Between 1830 and 1920 the Presbyterians of Eastern Nova Scotia contributed just short of 500 ministers to the church.<sup>5</sup> The tension present in this strong Scottish Presbyterian area brought a certain vitality which overflowed the religious boundaries into other endeavours, notably education and politics.<sup>6</sup>

Early discussions concerning a union of the Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist churches in Canada began just after the turn of the twentieth century. By 1906 these talks had produced a proposed Basis of Union. Receiving discussion in Pictou Presbytery, objections to the proposal were few.<sup>7</sup> As union moved closer to reality resistance became more pronounced. By January 1911 direct opposition to union was voiced in the Presbytery.

The local press was quick to take sides on such a stirring issue. When the first vote concerning union was held in 1912 there appeared full propaganda campaigns by the New Glasgow newspapers. The Evening News and its associated weekly The Free Lance, edited by Mr. Sutherland (an elder of St. Andrew's Church, New Glasgow) took the side of union. The Eastern Chronicle, edited by Mr. Fraser, (an elder of United (Westminster) Church, New Glasgow) took the side against union.

By the 1915 congregational vote on the Basis of Union a split was visible between the church's spiritual leaders and the laity. The leadership of the church showed a considerably greater enthusiasm for union.

TABLE 1

1915 Voting Results - Presbytery of Pictou

Status of the Voters	In Favour of the Basis of Union	Opposed to the Basis of Union
Presbytery	76.8	24.8
Elders	51.	49.
Members	35.	65.
Adherents	33.	67.

(Taken from John R. Cameron, "The Story of Church Union of 1925 in the Presbytery of Pictou," B.D. diss. Presbyterian College, 1969, p.101.)

Members and adherents were nearly as opposed to union as the clergy dominated presbytery was in favour of it. The elders, under the direct influence of the ministers were in the middle almost equally divided.

Recognizing this gulf between the laity and clergy, in 1916 New Glasgow United (Westminster) Church sent a memorial to the 41st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. In it was expressed the frustration that the grassroots of the church was not being heard. The memorial pointed to a paradox that seemed evident in Pictou Presbytery: in the 1915 vote a 2000 vote majority was recorded against union (65% opposed), yet all the commissioners to the 1916 General Assembly from the presbytery voted in favour of union.<sup>8</sup>

Audrey Walker in her study of Church Union in Prince Edward Island concludes that the ministers in that province held a great influence over the way their congregations voted.<sup>9</sup> This was not so true in the Presbytery of Pictou. Church Union within Pictou Presbytery was largely a clergy led movement which had less influence on the laity. It was under the direction of a small minority of ministers that the majority of the laity were lead in opposition to the movement.

To help cool off the developing divisions, in 1917 the General Assembly declared a moratorium on all debate and propaganda by either party. By 1921 the union conflict was revived. In Pictou Presbytery a group opposing union urged that an overture be sent to the General Assembly suggesting that union negotiations be broken off or suspended until such time as another vote could be taken.<sup>10</sup> The motion was not accepted. By this time the wide gulf between the laity and the church's leadership was common public knowledge locally. A writer to the

Eastern Chronicle states:

It is certainly a sad, sad sight to see a decent church in the hands of conspirators and those conspirators its own ministers.<sup>11</sup>

In 1923 again a minority in presbytery attempted to voice its concern about unrepresentative commissioners to General Assembly. A motion was presented declaring the presbytery to be against the "coercive measures that were forcing members and buildings automatically into the United Church."<sup>12</sup> The motion was defeated.

Throughout Pictou Presbytery "pro-union" and "anti-union" meetings were held by both sides. The purpose of these gatherings seems to have been more to stir up enthusiasm for the side advocated, like a political rally, rather than to present facts for the undecided. For example in East River, St. Mary's, the meetings of the pro-unionists and anti-unionists were held on the same night in different buildings of the community.<sup>13</sup>

By 1924, as the prospect of union drew nearer, conflict became evident in a number of congregations throughout Pictou Presbytery. On 1 July 1924 the Clerk of Presbytery reported that a communication had been received from certain members of the Presbyterian Church opposed to Church Union. This delegation advocated the withholding of funds from the General Assembly's budget for a time and requested to be heard on the floor of presbytery. The request was refused. This denial added fuel to a burning fire of discontent. The Eastern Chronicle reported:

I have been in attendance at the meetings of the Presbytery for a number of years; this is

the first time in my experience that a delegation of Church Members appearing before the Presbytery were refused a hearing.<sup>14</sup>

The Eastern Chronicle presented repeated arguments in favour of continuing Presbyterians. This position was supported on points such as church doctrine, theology, government and the church as the tradition of the area's forbearers. The paper provided consistent support and encouragement for those who stood in opposition to the leadership in their church which one writer felt was dominated by unionist "Church Dictators."<sup>15</sup> The laity of the presbytery grew increasingly frustrated with what they saw as "coercive measures" on the part of the clergy to force their congregations into the United Church of Canada.

In accordance with the provision allowed by the Federal Government, all congregations in Nova Scotia were given the option of holding a vote in the six months prior to 10 June 1925. If the majority were opposed to an organic union, the congregation could legally opt out of the union. On the eve of these congregational votes, in November 1924, Mr. P.A. MacGregor, an elder, was brought before Presbytery. The church court wished to know further details concerning his widely circulated letter which made allegations about the presbytery's clergy. In their opinion MacGregor's statements had "made serious reflections upon the motives and conduct of ministers."<sup>16</sup> Speaking on his own behalf MacGregor explained his main objective as being to: "impress upon the people the necessity of acting for themselves in this important matter of Church Union."<sup>17</sup> Presbytery's

actions added to the frustration of many congregation members and made them more determined to "act for themselves." The local paper commented:

We must congratulate Mr. Peter A. MacGregor for his escape alive from this Holy Inquisition and thereby failing from being the first and last martyr of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.<sup>18</sup>

After 10 December 1924 congregations throughout the presbytery met for votes on the question of union. On 9 January 1925 the Eastern Chronicle boosted:

The vote is coming along quite satisfactorily and there will be a virile Presbyterian Church body left in this section, in which over a century ago there was laid the Presbyterian Groundwork whose influence was left over Canada.<sup>19</sup>

When the results began to come in, it became clear that in the Presbytery of Pictou the people had said "no" and the clergy had said "yes" to union. The laity were nearly as determined to stay out of union as the ministers were to enter the union. Of the congregations in Pictou Presbytery - 72% voted against union, while 83% of the ministers of the churches voted to enter the United Church of Canada.

In none of the areas where the minister was against union did the church vote to proceed into the United Church. In most of these charges the percentages against union were over 80 percent. In one church 99 percent of the members were recorded to have voted against union. The greatest support for union in an area with an anti-union minister was in Sherbrooke, where 33 percent were in favour of union. This was the only church, where

considerable unionist momentum was generated a part from the minister. The local doctor took the side of Union and a United Church was built there shortly after 1925.

TABLE 2

Proportions of Rural and Urban Votes - Presbytery of Pictou 1925

Locale	Total # Voters	% of Total Voters	% Favouring Union	% Opposed To Union
Urban	3816	34.8	48.8	52.8
Rural	7281	66.	31.	69.
Total	11097	100.8	37.	63.

(Taken from Presbytery Returns, 1925 - see Appendix)

There were very marked differences in the vote results between rural and urban areas. The greatest support for union was generated in the towns. Of the eleven "town" churches, six entered union (55%). Of the 35 rural churches seven entered union (20%). Of the five Presbyterian churches in the two other "established towns" of Pictou and New Glasgow, none became property of the United Church of Canada: two in Pictou and all three in New Glasgow. In the "newer" more industrial and mine based towns of Westville, Stellarton, and Trenton - all the Presbyterian Churches went into the United Church. The more completely labouring and less Scottish populations of these towns had less established interests in the area and were more willing to join the United Church.

In the Roman Catholic town of Antigonish the

Presbyterian Church entered union voting 82% in favour, the only other congregation to vote so enthusiastically for union was the small church at Millsville. In the face of this larger Roman Catholic presence, Presbyterians in Antigonish County seemed more eager to be a part of a larger stronger Protestant Church.

Whereas before union in the Presbyterian Presbytery 24% of the churches had been urban and 76% rural, in the United Church Presbytery after union the division was 50-50. Rural people in Pictou Presbytery showed a greater tendency to vote against union. While urban people were more likely to vote in favour of union there was still a majority of them opposed to Church Union in 1925 in Pictou Presbytery.

Although the minister did have influence in his congregations, the people in the Pictou area were not afraid to question the decision of the minister. No clear reasons emerge as to why certain rural churches were more favourable to union. Looking at the congregational votes geographically (See Map p.12), if one excludes the industry towns of Trenton, Westville, and Stellarton, one can see that the area around this Heart of Pictou County which represented a stronger Scottish concentration was more completely desirous of remaining Presbyterian.



Some ministers in rural areas seem to have had greater influence. For example:

Cariboo, Cape John	Rev. S.H. Sulston
Scotsburn, Lyons Brook, Millsville	Rev. G. Ernest Forbes
West Branch River John	Rev. C.J. MacInnis
Hopewell, Lorne	Rev. M.C. MacDonald
Bridgeville, Springville	Rev. W.F. Partridge
Glenelg, East River St. Mary's	Rev. J.H. Kirk
Lochaber, Union Centre	Rev. H.S. Raynor

Because they had considerable sway with their people, these men were able to secure at least one of the points of their pastoral charges for the United Church. This personal influence that the minister had was an important factor. J.H. Kirk, for example, was able to secure the church in Glenelg for the unionists, after a great deal of controversy. He was not able to gain the one in East River St. Mary's. Kirk had grown up in Glenelg and had a network of extended family in the Glenelg congregation. The strength gained for the unionist cause in the above areas is proven by the fact that in most of these minister's charges, even if some churches remained Presbyterian, usually a United Church was later built.

Because of the greater adherence to union by those in the church's leadership roles, by the spring of 1925 some congregations in the presbytery found themselves completely bereft of their former leaders. In First and St. Andrew's churches, Pictou the two ministers and all session members resigned in protest because the church members voted to continue in the Presbyterian Church. In the few months after the December voting the presbytery received the resignations of eight of its

ministers.

At the March 1925 meeting of Pictou Presbytery the appointing of commissioners to the General Assembly was discussed. After some deliberation it was agreed that the rules governing the election of Commissioners to the assembly would be suspended for the year. Eight commissioners were elected, seven in favour of union and one against the union. Four alternates were also named, all of whom were pro-union. Relations between unionist and anti-unionist parties continued to deteriorate. This incident in presbytery simply gave further impetus to the fire of allegations of "fixing" in presbytery.

On 10 June 1925 the United Church of Canada came into being and the official parting of the ways took place. The immediate outcome for continuing Presbyterians was a drastic shortage of ministers. Of the 30 ministers with congregations in Pictou Presbytery, only 5 continued as Presbyterians, one of whom retired (See Appendix). This meant that four ministers were left with the pastoral responsibilities of the majority of the presbytery's people. Students were used to fill the vacancies temporarily where they could be found.

For some churches it was not immediately clear as to whom the church properties belonged. At Glenelg, for example a vote had been taken in December 1924.

TABLE 3

## Church Union Vote December 1924 - Glenelg Presbyterian Church

	Members	Adherents	Total
Favouring Union	47	8	55
Against Union	44	17	61
Totals	91	25	116

(Taken from Glenelg Papers, Maritime Conference Archives, Halifax, N.S.)

When the total number of votes (members and adherents) were counted the church at Glenelg continued Presbyterian by a majority of six. However, when only member votes were counted the church entered the United Church by a majority of three. The continuing Presbyterians accepted the former figures, while the unionists accepted the latter figures. So on 10 June 1925 both the United Church and the continuing Presbyterians claimed the church property.

After a local confrontation the unionists were refused entry to the church by the continuing Presbyterians. The issue was only settled in December 1925 when the case appeared before the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. The Court ruled in favour of the United Church of Canada judging that only member votes were legal in the pre-union votes. In support of the congregation the New Glasgow paper addressed the loss at Glenelg:

...but as long as we have congregations the question of buildings is a smaller matter. Our Fathers worshipped under the blue canopy of heaven and in log churches and the Presbyterians of today who have gone through

persecution and hardship for their convictions and for vital principles, are made of the same stuff as their Fathers—they may take our buildings from us but they cannot take away from us "The building not made with hands eternal in the heavens."<sup>20</sup>

That same month in the County Court at Pictou the congregation of Saltsprings found itself deliberating over possession of the church property. The congregation had voted against union in December 1924 by a majority of fourteen. In the summer of 1925 the unionist dominated session declared the first vote void. Without official passage of session these unionist elders held a second vote, under supervision of the United Church Presbytery of Pictou. Continuing Presbyterians did not attend the vote and the unionist session declared victory. Taking possession of the building they refused entry to the continuing Presbyterians.

The County Court ruled in favour of the second vote and the property passed to the United Church of Canada. In March 1929 this decision was appealed by the continuing Presbyterians to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. Ruling in favour of the first vote the provincial court over turned the earlier action. The property was returned to the Presbyterians. The United delegation appealed this decision in February 1929 to the Supreme Court of Canada without success. A second appeal was made to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of London in June 1930 without success. The property remained in the hands of the Presbyterians on the basis of the first vote.

The decades after union brought many difficulties for

both the continuing Presbyterians and unionists in rural areas. In some locations congregations were reduced by almost half, which meant that it was difficult to pay ministers and to keep up buildings that seated more people than was needed.

First Presbyterian Church, New Glasgow was the presbytery's largest congregation in 1925, with almost 1500 individuals under pastoral care. Responding to the increased industrialization about the turn of the century in New Glasgow the church had erected a new building in 1914. The structure was Pictou County's largest church and was built to accommodate 1200 people. Nearly \$60,000.00 was spent on construction and furnishings.

At the time of Church Union it was only by a majority of 51% that this church continued in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. From 1925 to 1926 the number of families in the church dropped from 369 to 210. The remnant faced a debt of \$27,400.00. The following years were difficult, particularly with the depression of the 1930s.

In other parts of the presbytery continuing Presbyterians were faced with the construction of new buildings. Presbyterians worked together. This is demonstrated by the list of contributors to the building fund of the continuing Presbyterians at Glenelg:

East River St. Mary's Congregation	\$ 243.00	
Friends in New Glasgow	345.00	
Caledonia and Smithfied Congregations	217.00	
Others Outside the Congregation	520.00	
W.M.S. (Pictou Presbyterial)	100.00	
Anderson's and Sons, Sherbrooke	100.00	
Mrs Torrey, Pictou	20.00	
	<hr/>	
	\$1545.00	21

The Presbyterian Presbytery of Pictou used Glenelg as an example of what continuing Presbyterians were able to accomplish working together. The Eastern Chronicle reported with enthusiasm the church's dedication service on 21 November 1925:

Glenelg was the mecca for Presbyterians of Eastern Nova Scotia, when the new Presbyterian Church was dedicated after a true Presbyterian fashion....Perhaps the largest attendance at a church service in a rural community within recent years.<sup>22</sup>

The guest preacher in his sermon stressed the importance of the continuation of the Presbyterian Church, and made an attempt to smooth over the troubles within the community that continued to fester for years later. The report quoted the preacher:

This pulpit must put the emphasis on the old gospel, the Presbyterian doctrines and ideals. You people in Glenelg have left the church yonder rather than sacrifice principle. At sacrifice and cost you have built this church. Canada today needs the Presbyterian Church, her ideals, her doctrines incarnated into the life of her people. We must work not to beat a rival church, rather to build up a spiritual life in our own community and in our nation.<sup>23</sup>

The laity of Pictou Presbytery refused to let go of the Presbyterian Church, and in spite of the advice of their

spiritual leaders refused to concur with the United Church of Canada.

In Pictou Presbytery, Nova Scotia, the greater portion of congregation members did not follow their ministers into the United Church of Canada. Support for the continuing Presbyterian Church was especially strong in the rural areas and in the more "established" towns of Pictou County. These were Scots who had been accustomed to acting on their own initiative in church matters. They had lived through church divisions before. These experiences, combined with the vitality of the Scottish culture and traditions, became important reasons for non-concurrence to Church Union of 1925 in Pictou Presbytery. The local newspapers provided extra fuel for the fire of conflict and division, as did the restrictive actions of the Presbytery. It was the strong commitment on the part of the laity and the leadership offered by a small minority of ministers that allowed the Presbyterian Church to strongly persist in the Presbytery of Pictou.

- APPENDIX -  
CHURCH UNION VOTE 1925 - PRESBYTERY OF PICTOU

Place	Union Votes		Percentage in the Majority	Minister's Allegiance
	For	Against		
Antigonish	86 X	19	82.8	Union
Barney's River	33	103 X	75.	Union
Blue Mountain	1	80 X	99.	Anti-U
Garden of Eden	2	50 X	96.	Anti-U
Cape John	17	40 X	70.	Union
Cariboo	25 X	23	53.	Union
East River, St. Mary's	29	57 X	66.	Union
Glenelg	47 X	44	52.	Union
East River-Springville	17	68 X	80.	Union
Ferrona (independent)	-	1 X	-	Union
Gairloch	22	94 X	81.	Union
Middle River	19	42 X	62.	Union
Hopewell	87	107 X	55.	Union
Lorne	103 X	72	59.	Union
Little Harbour	21	82 X	80.	Anti-U
Pictou Landing	2	42 X	95.	Anti-U
Merigomish	52	111 X	68.	Union
French River	7	45 X	87.	Union
McLellan's Mtn.	8	42 X	84.	Union
McLellan's Brook	5	17 X	77.	Union
Mulgrave	13	18 X	58.	vacant
New Glasgow - First	291	301 X	51.	Union
- St. Andrew's	163	287 X	64.	Union
- United	73	336 X	82.	Anti-U
Pictou - First	151	207 X	58.	Union
- St. Andrew's	88	214 X	71.	Union
Saltsprings	55	69 X	56.	Union
West River Station	12	32 X	73.	Union
Scotsburn	103	117 X	53.	Union
Lyons Brook	45 X	28	62.	Union
Millsville	27 X	5	84.	Union
Sherbrooke	24	48 X	67.	Anti-U
Stellarton -St. Johns	137 X	114	55.	Union
-Sharon	294 X	178	62.	Union
Sunnybrae	32	81 X	72.	Union
St. Paul's	10	57 X	85.	Union
Thorburn	19	126 X	87.	Anti-U
Sutherland's River	9	21 X	70.	Anti-U
Trenton	190 X	55	78.	Union
Union Centre	58 X	18	76.	Union
Lochaber	18	18 X	50.	Union
Westville -Carmel	160 X	122	57.	Union
-St. Philip's	182 X	168	52.	Union
West Branch River John	14 X	9	61.	Union
Green Hill	41	58 X	57.	Union
Durham	31	102 X	77.	Union

(This list not including Mission Points)

X - denotes final decision on the church property

## NOTES

1. James M. Cameron. Pictou County's History. Kentville: Kentville Publishing, 1972, p.41.
2. Canada Bureau of Statistics. Census Summary, 1871. Ottawa: 1872, vol.1, 242.
3. John Cameron, "The Story of Church Union of 1925 in the Presbytery of Pictou." Unpublished B.D. thesis, Presbyterian College, Montreal, 1969, p.90.
4. D. Campbell and R.A. MacLean. Beyond the Atlantic Roar. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974, p.197.
5. Ibid., 199.
6. Ibid., 205.
7. Minutes of the Presbytery of Pictou, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 12 February 1907.
8. Cameron, p.105.
9. Audrey P. Walker, "The Presbyterian Church and Union, 1925: Prince Edward Island's Response to the Call." Unpublished B.A. (honours) thesis, Adacia University, Wolfville NS, 1975, p.80.
10. Minutes of Presbytery, 1 March 1921.
11. Eastern Chronicle (New Glasgow, NS), 7 June 1921.
12. Minutes of Presbytery, 4 September 1923.
13. Eastern Chronicle, 11 July 1924.
15. Ibid., 7 November 1924.
16. Minutes of Presbytery, 4 November 1924.
17. Ibid.
18. Eastern Chronicle, 7 November 1924.
19. Ibid., 9 Jnuary 1925.
20. Ibid., 25 December 1925.
21. Ibid., 23 November 1926.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acts and Proceedings, 1923-28. Toronto: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1923-28.
- Cameron, James M. Pictou County's History. Kentville: Kentville Publishing, 1972.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "After 200 Years, New Glasgow's First Church Continues." Presbyterian History, Volume 30, Number 2, October 1986.
- Cameron, John. "The Story of Church Union of 1925 in the Presbytery of Pictou." B.D. dissertation, Presbyterian College, Montreal, 1969.
- Campbell, D. and R.A. MacLean. Beyond the Atlantic Roar: A Study of Nova Scotia Scots. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974.
- Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Census Summary 1871, Volume I, Canada, 1872.
- Church Union Controversy. "Record of the Vote (1925)." Maritime Conference Archives, United Church of Canada, Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax, N.S.
- Eastern Chronicle, 1921-1926. New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.
- Minutes of the Presbytery of Pictou, 1907-1925. Presbyterian Church in Canada.
- Walker, Audrey P. "The Presbyterian Church and Union, 1925: Prince Edward Island's Response to the Call." B.A. (Honours) dissertation, Acadia University, Wolfville, N.S., 1975.
- Yearbook and Record of Proceedings, 1926-28. Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1926-28.

SOME INFLUENCES OF  
THE STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT  
ON CANADIAN PRESBYTERIANISM,  
1886-1925.

By C. Mark Steinacher

The purpose of this paper is to explore some of the influences of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions on the Presbyterian Church in Canada. While difficult to isolate such influence, it may be demonstrated that the Volunteer Movement's impact on Canadian Presbyterianism was as a part of a larger movement with which it shared several features. While Presbyterian students actually served overseas in larger proportions than the membership of the Presbyterian Church would suggest, in general they did not volunteer disproportionately, certainly not as readily as members of the Methodist Church. The record of the Baptists was mixed, while Church of England students were significantly underrepresented. This lack of participation suggests the Volunteer Movement appealed to a particular wing of the Presbyterian Church. It is the contention of this paper that the Movement drew primarily, though not exclusively, on the fundamentalist element in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, especially upon those with what may be called "pentecostal" tendencies.

Information is sketchy, but the relationship of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Student Volunteer Movement may be traced through three types of evidence. Biographical material highlights the lives of Jonathan Goforth (1859-1937) and James Gale (1863-1937). Literary evidence, especially the published proceedings of the 1902 Student Volunteer Convention in Toronto, further establishes the link between the Volunteer Movement, the Presbyterian Church in Canada and fundamentalism. Finally, statistical evidence of Presbyterian involvement in the Volunteer Movement may be traced by examination of the records of students sailing for foreign mission fields. These lists, covering the period 1906-1923, coupled with Canadian Student Volunteer Forms (some dating as late of 1925) on deposit in the Archives of the United Church of Canada, are of great value in determining denominational participation rates.

The genesis of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions was a gathering of students near Northfield, Massachusetts, the birthplace of Dwight Lyman Moody (1837-1899). Later Moody founded two "prep schools" there and sponsored conferences annually, inviting young people to hear various popular speakers of the day. At the 1886 meeting, the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions was born<sup>1</sup>. By 1888 the movement had become formally organized with John Raleigh Mott (1865-1955)<sup>2</sup> as chairman and with "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation" as its slogan. An international union was formed in 1892<sup>3</sup>.

Jonathan Goforth was one of the first respondents to the Volunteer call, coming forward in the fall of 1886<sup>4</sup>. Accompanied by the Rev. Dr. James Frazer Smith, M.D., they arrived in China in 1888, followed shortly by Drs. William McClure and Donald MacGillivray and yet again in a year by a further eight missionaries<sup>5</sup>. Goforth was influenced by D.L. Moody<sup>6</sup>, and by other prominent conservatives, such as A.T. Pierson, a leader of the Student Volunteer Movement, with whom Goforth shared a "Believers' Conference" podium at Niagara-on-the-Lake<sup>7</sup> in 1885. As neither Goforth nor Pierson's names appear on a list of speakers, it is not clear if this is the same "Prophetic Bible Conference" mentioned by Ronald Sawatsky<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand, both Conferences laid heavy emphasis on the Second Coming of Christ<sup>9</sup>, suggesting only one meeting took place. The noted Canadian fundamentalist and dispensationalist Henry Martyn Parsons (1828-1913), minister of Knox Church, Spadina, was a personal friend of Goforth and performed his wedding<sup>10</sup>. He provides a further link between Presbyterianism and fundamentalism. Parsons' claim that "God had but one Son and He made Him a missionary"<sup>11</sup>, parallels the assertion of Dr. Adoniram Judson Gordon (1836-1895) that "Jesus Christ was the first Great Foreign Missionary"<sup>12</sup>.

Another mission pioneer, James Scarth Gale, shared a similar spiritual background. In 1887, Gale listened to Robert Parmalee Wilder (1863-1938)<sup>13</sup> and a Mr. Forman as they came to Toronto as emissaries of the Volunteer Movement<sup>14</sup>. Theologically conservative, he subscribed to the Evangelical Alliance's doctrinal basis. Although anachronistic to describe it as

"fundamentalist", the document included the five basic theological touchstones enshrined a quarter of a century later in the pamphlets<sup>15</sup>. He warmly praised uncompromising men such as Hudson Taylor (1832-1905), founder of the China Inland Mission<sup>16</sup>, the Scottish Reformer John Knox (1513-1572)<sup>17</sup>, and evangelist D.L. Moody<sup>18</sup>.

Gale's faith had a deep, if extreme trust in scripture, accepting both the existence of demons and of Jesus' power to cast them out<sup>19</sup>. This eventually expressed itself in what may be called "pentecostal" revivalism<sup>20</sup>. The term pentecostalism is coined to distinguish members of "mainline" denominations who affirmed a present intervention of God the Holy Spirit in the affairs of His people from advocates of Pentecostalism proper. The latter insisted upon the evidence of glossolalia (speaking in tongues) by each and every believer as the distinctive testimony of salvation and of "Holy Spirit baptism". Pentecostals, in contrast, did not make such an assertion, but were separated from other members of their mainline denominations by moving beyond a basic orthodox repetition of the reality of the third person of the Trinity to a visceral personal experience of what they interpreted to be supernatural interventions of God the Holy Spirit in the work of the Church. Admittedly the distinction must be made subjectively on occasion.

As an example of pentecostalism in Gale's ministry, one may refer to a long passage from his Korea in Transition which he devoted to describing a spiritual awakening in that Asian nation<sup>21</sup>. When pressed to describe the experience of the revival, an

unnamed missionary claimed "the atmosphere here seems like Northfield"<sup>22</sup>, referring to the East Northfield Conference of 1886. Goforth came from Manchuria to observe but arrived too late. Later as he related eye-witness accounts, however, a similar revival occurred in Manchuria<sup>23</sup>.

Goforth's own books basically consist of extended reports of Chinese revivals. By My Spirit sets out some of his pentecostal doctrine. "Though we speak of the manifestations at Pentecost as being abnormal, yet we maintain that Pentecost was normal Christianity....My conviction is that the Divine power, so manifest in the Church at Pentecost, was nothing more nor less than what should be in evidence in the Church today"<sup>24</sup>. The title of Goforth's autobiographical account of Chinese revivalism was taken from Zechariah 4:6, a verse which also appeared in an address to the Toronto Student Volunteer Convention in 1902 by the Rev. Dr. John Potts, a prominent Canadian Methodist<sup>25</sup>.

That Toronto Convention was the only one held in Canada, providing opportunity for direct Canadian input. As preparations for the Convention were being made, Caroline MacDonald, a Presbyterian, was President of the Toronto Volunteers<sup>26</sup>. She later sailed to Japan with the YWCA.

Principal William Caven (1830-1904), who represents a link with fundamentalism in general, spoke on the Movement's influence<sup>27</sup>. His "The Testimony of Christ to the Old Testament" was published post-humously in the Fundamentals. As with other figures who died before the polarization between "Modernists" and

"Fundamentalists" which would occur in the 1920s and 1930s<sup>28</sup>, Caven does not fit neatly into either of the categories "fundamentalist" or "social gospeler". Not opposed to scriptural criticism, he severely restricted its use<sup>29</sup>. In 1899 Caven was a special lecturer at the conservative Toronto Bible Training School<sup>30</sup>. He observed that the Student Volunteer Movement's benefits included deeper spirituality and increased mission awareness<sup>31</sup>. He even went as far as to state: "There cannot be too much zeal. There is no fear of...true zeal ever becoming excessive"<sup>32</sup>.

Robert Elliott Speer (1867-1947), Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States from 1891 to 1937<sup>33</sup>, in addition to giving the theme address and two other messages at the Toronto Convention<sup>34</sup> also contributed to the Fundamentals<sup>35</sup>. Unlike Caven, Speer opposed higher criticism<sup>36</sup>. Other Presbyterian contributors included Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921)<sup>37</sup> and John Timothy Stone (1868-1954), a one-time American Presbyterian moderator, who also apparently partook of the pentecostal view<sup>38</sup>.

This pneumatic thrust is not simply a retrospective insight. Of the earliest convention it was reported: "In days when the Church of God is charged...with ignoring or distorting the teaching of Jesus about the power of the Holy Ghost for service, it is noteworthy that the theme of Dr. A. J. Gordon's address, 'The Holy Spirit in Missions', was the subject emphasized as most important by nearly all present"<sup>39</sup>. Gordon averred "I know nothing like it since the day of Pentecost"<sup>40</sup>.

Potts evinced a similar pentecostal stream in the Canadian Methodism of the day: "The great need of the Church...is a mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit....Let us rejoice in the thought that we are living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit; that...Pentecost in all its spiritual power may come to us in richer measure than ever before"<sup>41</sup>. There was a firm expectation of the believer's direct and practical experience of the power of God the Holy Spirit.

Books most frequently noted on volunteers' forms were A.H. Smith's Uplift of China, Gale's Korea in Transition, Mott's Decisive Hour and India Awakening. Uplift and Transition have pentecostal elements, supporting the contention that the Student Volunteer Movement appealed to a fundamentalist constituency. Gale's Transition is the more lurid of the two in its extensive description of a spiritual revival<sup>42</sup>. Overall, Uplift takes a more scientific approach, although the author clearly states that those "who are needed are those who have first been infilled by the Spirit of God"<sup>43</sup>.

Of necessity in a limited study, one must portray the situation with broad brush-strokes. It must be remembered that not all Presbyterian volunteers were fundamentalists. This variety may be demonstrated by comparing articles by two Presbyterians who later entered union in 1925 and contributed to Forward with China, which detailed United Church work in China at the time of missionary expulsions in 1928.

T.A. Broadfoot, who sailed in 1907<sup>44</sup>, tended to fundamentalism, stressing the "deep and satisfying truths of the Christian religion"<sup>45</sup>, and remarking that "the Gospel of God's love and saving power [is] being proclaimed to needy and sin-burdened souls. Many...have been born again and the fruits of the Spirit are being manifested in their changed lives."<sup>46</sup>. SVM influence surfaces in an allusion to Speer's address to the Detroit Convention<sup>47</sup>.

At the other end of the spectrum was Andrew Thomson (1880-1957), who sailed in 1906<sup>48</sup>. Although taking due note of the Volunteer Movement's part in Goforth and Smith's arrival in Honan<sup>49</sup> and mentioning the "quadrennial conferences touching every student generation", the call for "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation", the effects of the Laymen's Missionary Movement, the Woman's [sic] Missionary Societies, and the Mission Bands<sup>50</sup>, one cannot escape the sensation that they are but dry statements of fact. Totally absent from any of the more than one hundred pages written by Thomson is anything smacking of fundamentalism. The Cross does not figure and the only reference to the Holy Spirit is to the "pneumatica" of leadership<sup>51</sup>. Thomson is also significant, because his chosen field was incorrectly indicated in the records of the Rochester Convention<sup>52</sup>. This error, as well as two fully registered volunteers not being noted as such<sup>53</sup>, remind the researcher to use the primary documents cautiously.

Not all of the evidence linking the Presbyterian Church, the Volunteer Movement and fundamentalism is subjective. The large

volume of Student Volunteer forms (in excess of six hundred) stored in the United Church Archives lend themselves to quantification and comparison with objective standards. Various levels of commitment to the Volunteer movement were possible. Many who sailed did not sign the volunteer pledge at all. Others signed, but did not register with the Canadian organization. Those actually registering were few<sup>54</sup>. In his treatment of Church Union, Claris Edwin Silcox provided an Appendix listing the "Ratio of Specified Denominations to Total Population in Census Years"<sup>55</sup> from 1871 to 1931. Of interest to this paper are his figures for 1911 and 1921, the heart of the period in which Volunteer forms have been preserved.

As only Protestants participated in the Student Volunteer Movement, it is inappropriate to refer to the size of various denominations in relation to the general population. Figures must be adjusted to indicate the relative strengths of each body within the Protestant realm. When Adventists, Buddhists, Confusians, Doukhobors, followers of "Eastern Religions" and the "International Bible Students", Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic and Orthodox Christians, Jews, Mormons, "pagans", and Unitarians are removed from the sample, the remainder represents the percentage of the population which could be defined as "orthodox Protestants". In 1911 orthodox Protestants comprised 55.95% of the population and rose slightly to 56.55% by the next census<sup>56</sup>. The two largest Protestant bodies in 1921 were the Presbyterians and the Anglicans, both representing a little more than twenty-eight per-cent of the narrowed population. In the same year Methodists has slipped to just over twenty-three

per-cent of the Protestant spectrum and the Baptists had also declined to approximately eight and a half percent.

It could be argued that Presbyterians, who represented roughly 28% of the Canadian Protestant population in the period 1911-1921, responded with reasonable enthusiasm, representing 27.4% of all Canadians sailing<sup>57</sup>. Their rate of participation was virtually equal what population would indicate. However, if fully registered volunteers are considered, eighteen of a total of fifty-five (32.7%) were Presbyterians<sup>58</sup>, indicating they were far more likely to follow through on the initial commitment than members of other bodies. By contrast, the Church of England in Canada responded poorly. Representing 26 to 28% of the population, they accounted for less than thirteen per-cent of those sailed, less than half what one would predict, based on their proportion of Protestant population. Baptists tended to volunteer in large numbers (almost 26%, cf. App.4), but were far less likely to follow through on that commitment by sailing: only 5.5% of fully registered Canadian Volunteers sailing were Baptists.

The greatest ratio of general missionary volunteers sailed to population was achieved by the Methodists. They produced a rate of participation roughly one and a third times their strength in the general population<sup>59</sup>. If fully registered volunteers are used, the Methodist response appears even stronger, accounting for nineteen of the fifty-five registered volunteers. This almost thirty-five percent of sailed Volunteers equals almost one and a half times more than their share of total

Protestant population.

One wonders why Presbyterians, while responding strongly, did not reach the levels set by the Methodists. Neglect is the suggestion of one writer. As early as 1903, W.H. May of the Presbyterian College Journal wrote: "The volunteer movement has been open to criticism, through the unfaithfulness of many of its members, and our Church does well to take some steps to organize the volunteers within its fold, and to do what it can to have them hold fast to their purpose"<sup>60</sup>.

It is also possible that this situation reflected theological differences in Presbyterianism. Given the strong link between the Volunteer Movement and fundamentalism, it appears the movement especially appealed to this narrow portion of the spectrum. One must remember that not all registered volunteers were fundamentalists: more than one proponent of muscular Christianity offered to "help as an all-round athlete"<sup>61</sup>.

Yet many volunteers often gave graphic depictions of their spiritual experience. Vivid pentecostal imagery surfaces on the forms of at least two volunteers who entered Home Mission work, where they speak in pointed terms of experiencing God's call. Rose Bolton relates her decision was made in "Sept 1908. Under the guidance of the Spirit after struggling against it for many days"<sup>62</sup>. Similarly, Adeline Sharpe maintains that "the Spirit of God was pleading with me for several days". No less bold is the language of other volunteers, such as F.M. Walker's claim

that she had been guided "by the Holy Spirit striving in my heart and through a revelation in the word of God". Phrases such as "I have not consulted with flesh and blood" (J. Lindsay), "it was the Spirit of God which spoke to me" (M. McKnight); and "It was through the Holy Spirit working in my heart and mind" (E.M. Valens) suggest powerful, almost tangible, experiences. This profound faith included a belief in God's ability to redirect events "opening the way" for service<sup>63</sup>.

Presbyterian Volunteers sometimes adopted views and practices well outside the denominational mainstream. For example, Jessie Duff assured those processing her forms that "I believe in Divine Healing and have been healed several times". Another unusual practice noted by a small percentage of Presbyterian Volunteers was baptism by immersion<sup>64</sup>. Thomas Lindores, writing in 1923 noted his denomination as "Presbyterian: [but] I was baptized lately at Pentecostal Assembly". How long he remained a Presbyterian in good standing is not known. An apocalyptic, dispensationalist belief that the world had entered the "Last Days" is recorded on the form submitted by Joseph Lindsay: "While true Christians are realising their responsibilities and living nearer to Christ, we are living in perilous times. Evil men and seducers are waxing worse and worse deceiving and being deceived. The world is an armed camp. Satan is gathering the nations together for war. The whole world lieth in wickedness and awful doom extends over it. If they believe not Christ's testimony neither will they believe ours. The sea and the waves are roaring - there is distress of nations with perplexity." In a more orthodox and

fundamentalist manner he also affirmed that the Bible was "the Word of the Living God...the infallible Word of God".

The conservative, fundamentalist connection of Presbyterianism and the Volunteers is strengthened by analysis of the colleges attended by Volunteers. No strong trend appears in the Volunteers who sailed: sixteen out of fifty-mention mention their school, with about one-third having attended McGill, one-quarter University College, Toronto and a fifth Victoria College. One sailed Volunteer noted having attended the Toronto Bible School (Laura Moodie).

The picture changes when the college affiliation of Presbyterian Student Volunteers who did not sail is considered. Of the forty-two who provided that information, more than half (twenty-two) attended the Toronto Bible College<sup>65</sup> and one attended the Moody Bible Institute (Lisa Glendenning). Fundamentalist Knox Church, Spadina was home to at least three student volunteers<sup>66</sup>.

The only other institution noted by more than two Volunteers was Dalhousie University, where fourteen Volunteers registered<sup>67</sup>. This group underscores that the Student Volunteer Movement was not the sole preserve of the fundamentalists. Steeping themselves in the writings of Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969) and Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918), they represented the Social Gospel orientation in Presbyterianism. It is significant that no registered Canadian Volunteer from Dalhousie University sailed.

When the Rev. Charles Alexander Malcolm was refused by the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board, he lamented: "I have come in touch with men who have gone to the Foreign field and their story has been 'I hardly got there.' Almost all have the same story. Every possible obstacle is evidently placed in the way of the missionary enthusiast - to try his intentions perhaps...but more and more I think the Committees are made up of men gifted with much bluff and hot air who are not so anxious as they seem for men for the far field. Perhaps the Presbyterian Church of Canada is alone in this - I hope so for if all put up such a misleading cry they can expect no great results in Evangelising the world within the 20 twenty years or so".

When allowances are made for Malcolm's disappointment, he still provides a clue to the Presbyterians' lower rate of participation in the Student Volunteer Movement. If indeed the leadership of the Church was turning more to the Social Gospel, at the expense of the individualism of fundamentalism, then volunteers may have been actively discouraged. These would have sought mission placements elsewhere. Analysis of Canadian student volunteer forms adds weight to this theory. Only eleven of the eighteen registered Presbyterian volunteers sailed under the aegis of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Forty per-cent of identifiable Presbyterians served under different boards<sup>68</sup>. No other denomination suffered this high rate of loss to outside organizations (the Baptists' experience is not statistically significant because of the small size of the sample). Some denominations, such as the Church of England and the Congregationalists lost no Volunteers to independent boards,

while only two Methodists chose to serve outside of their denominational structure<sup>69</sup>.

It is impractical to attempt to trace how many Presbyterians went overseas with boards such as the China Inland Mission or the Sudan Interior Mission, although this may account for a large number of Presbyterians. Goforth's daughter Mary signed a volunteer pledge form indicating the China Inland Mission as an option. Her sister Ruth sailed with the Christian & Missionary Alliance<sup>70</sup>.

Few Volunteers sought information about missions through "official" channels. Although four mention the influence of the Rev. Dr. R.P. MacKay, Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, the less sedate James Gale received most credit as an influence (nine folk), followed closely by the equally free-wheeling Jonathan Goforth, noted by seven. Only five make mention of receiving missionary intelligence from the Presbyterian Record, none of whom sailed<sup>71</sup>. Volunteers tended to find information instead through books, several of which were published in the United States, bypassing denominational sources.

In summary, the vital link between the Student Volunteer Movement and the Presbyterian Church in Canada was a pentecostal fundamentalism. Displayed in the ministries of pioneers such as Goforth and Gale, it may also be traced through the writings of Presbyterians such as Speer and Stone.

Not all who sailed as volunteers shared that strain of Presbyterianism. Some, like Thomson, represented the practical, applied Christianity of the Social Gospel. As this theology gained popularity, Presbyterians began to seek other missions and avenues of service. Yet, the Student Volunteer Movement was a factor in Presbyterians sailing to foreign mission fields at a rate slightly greater than their representation in the general population. However, as it appealed primarily to a limited constituency, its impact was not as great as upon Canadian Methodists. On the whole, the Student Volunteer Movement benefitted the missions of the Presbyterian Church of Canada from the sending of Goforth in 1887 until the period immediately preceding union.

## Appendix 1:

Breakdown of Canadian students sailed, 1906-1923, by denomination:

Year:	P	M	B	C/E	O	Total
1906	9	10	5	1	-	25
1907	2	11	2	-	3	18
1908	4	13	4	-	12	33
1909	9	16	1	1	8	35
1910	10	11	2	3	7	33
1911	8	6	1	5	5	25
1912	10	12	5	6	8	41
1913	11	10	2	3	3	29
1914	16	9	-	-	7	32
1915	10	7	5	1	2	25
1916	6	6	5	4	3	24
1917	5	3	2	3	8	21
1918	2	3	7	4	8	24
1919	9	4	6	-	7	26
1920	13	10	1	5	8	37
1921	13	26	9	3	14	65
1922	4	11	2	1	8	26
1923	5	2	-	1	5	13
Totals	146	170	59	41	116	532
As %:	27.4	32.0	11.1	7.7	21.8	100

## Legend:

P = Presbyterian

M = Methodist

B = Baptist

(In each of the above, figures include Canadians who served with missions operated by their American affiliates.)

C/E = Church of England In Canada

O = Others

-two individual missions make up a significant minority:

-China Inland Mission: 17 (3.2%)

-Sudan Interior Mission: 16 (3.0%)

All information compiled from the printed reports of the Student Volunteer Conventions (New York, Student Volunteer Movement For Foreign Missions, 1910, 1914, 1924.)

## Appendix 2:

Breakdown of Canadian students, registered with Student Volunteer Movement who sailed between 1906-1925, by denomination:

Denomination:	Noted:	Per Cent of total:	Per Cent of Population	Sailed w/ Different Mission	Per cent of denomination
Methodists:	19	34.5	23.3-26.8	2	10.5
Presbyterians:	18	32.7	27.7-28.4	7	38.9
Church of England:	7	12.7	25.9-28.3	0	0
Baptists:	3	5.5	8.5-9.5	1	33.3
Congregationalists:	3	5.5	0.6-0.8	0	0
Others:	3	5.5	N/A	N/A	
Not given:	2	3.6	N/A	N/A	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100.0</b>		<b>10</b>	

(United Church Archives: SCM Collection, boxes 84-46 and 84-134.)

Information regarding ratio of Specified Denominations to Total Population range according to Census, 1911 & 1921 was derived from Silcox, Church Union In Canada, p.477.

## Appendix 3:

Breakdown of Students at Canadian Universities or sailing with a Canadian Mission, 1906-1925:

Methodists:	186 (30.3%)
Presbyterians:	174 (28.4%)
Baptists:	159 (25.9%)
Church of England:	44 (7.3%)
Mennonite:	9 (1.6%)
Congregationalist:	8 (1.4%)
Non-denominational:	8 (1.4%)
Not given:	6 (1.1%)
Disciples of Christ:	5 (0.8%)
Brethren:	5 (0.8%)
Others:	(2.0%)
Christian & Missionary:	4
Pentecostal:	2
Associated Gospel Church:	1
Free Methodists:	1
Nazarene:	1
Salvation Army:	1
"Union" (not specified):	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>615</b>

(United Church Archives: SCM Collection, boxes 84-46, 84-134)

Apper

Saile

Ainsw

Ander

(F

Annis

Bayth

Ch

Beato

Caldw

Campb

(M

Chapp

(M

Colli

Co

Cory,

Dowie

Pr

Edgar

Edmon

Me

Estab

Me

Evans

Fergu

(P

Foote

de

Forbe

Pr

Ganto

(P

Helli

Ch

Holla

PI

Hyatt

Kilbo

Kilbo

Kilbo

(P

Kilpa

Pr

Lloyd

Co

MacGi

Pr

McLac

Pr

McWil

Me

Moodi

(F

Murra

Murra

## Appendix 4:

ement.	Sailed Registered Canadian Student Volunteers, 1906-1925:	
	Ainsworth, Fred: Methodist	Powles, Percival:
	Anderson, Margaret Ogilvy:	Church of England
nt of	(Presbyterian) YWCA	Proctor, Samuel John:
natio	Annis, Stanley Ewart: Methodist	Presbyterian
	Baythell, John:	Reed, Frederick, Methodist
	Church of England	Rowswell, Arthur:
	Beaton, Kenneth John: Methodist	Church of England
	Caldwell, Mary Anna: Methodist	Sanderson, Joseph Roy:
	Campbell, Martha:	Presbyterian
	(Methodist) YWCA	Scruton, Ethel: Presbyterian
	Chappell, Martha Jean:	Shepley, Beulah May: Methodist
	(Methodist Episcopal) YWCA	Smith, Malcolm P.: Methodist
	Collins, Stanley Ralph:	Speers, Dr. Ada Belle:
	Congregationalist	Methodist
	Cory, May: Disciples of Christ	Sutherland, Frances Campbell:
	Dowie, Kenneth William:	Church of the Nazarene
	Presbyterian	Sykes, Grace: Presbyterian
ation	Edgar, Annie: Church of England	Thomson, Herbert Fergus:
h	Edmonds, Ernest Walter:	Presbyterian (USA)
	Methodist	Tippet, Richard:
	Estabrook, Alice Lossing:	Church of England
	Methodist	Trivett, Wilfred:
	Evans, Edward Jr.: Baptist	Church of England
dian	Ferguson, Marion B.:	Tucker, John Taylor:
	(Presbyterian) YWCA	Congregationalist
	Foote (Williams), Ethel Maud:	Walls, Victor Benjamin
	denomination not given	Waterman, Rosalie Agnes:
	Forbes, Harry Stewart:	Baptist
	Presbyterian	West, James Hinson: Baptist
	Ganton, William Merrin:	Whiting, Melvin Marcel:
	(Presbyterian) Regions Beyond	Methodist
	Helliwell, Paul:	Willmott, Leslie: Methodist
	Church of England	Wilson, Lorenia: Methodist
	Holland, Ethelwyn Jamieson:	Ziemann[?], Percy Patton
	Plymouth Brethren	[?] indicates illegible
	Hyatt, Mary Rankin: Methodist	handwriting in original
	Kilborn, Constance: Methodist	(United Church Archives: SCM
	Kilborn, Dr. Leslie: Methodist	Collection, boxes 84-46 and
	Kilborn-McClure, Dr. Janet:	84-134.)
	(Presbyterian) Methodist	
	Kilpatrick, Dorothy Hamilton:	
	Presbyterian	
	Lloyd, James Edward:	
	Congregationalist	
	MacGillivray, Edith Booth[?]:	
	Presbyterian	
	McLachlan, Jeanie Shira:	
	Presbyterian USA South	
	McWilliams, Wilbert Roy:	
	Methodist	
	Moodie, Laura Isobel Findley:	
	(Presbyterian) YWCA	
	Murray, Alexander: Presbyterian	
	Murray, Florence: Presbyterian	

## Appendix 5:

Presbyterian Student Volunteers who did not sail:

(SCM Collection, boxes 84-46 & 84-134)

Adsett, Charles  
 Alguire, William Mack  
 Anderson, Bessie  
 Anderson, John Franklin  
 Anderson, Llewellyn Kennedy  
 Appleton, Harold  
 Armstrong, Annie Lenora  
 Barrow, Albert  
 Beamish, Elton  
 Bit[?], Grover Livingstone  
 Black, Donald McIntosh  
 Bolton, Rose Anna  
 Bowman, Harry Isaac  
 Britton, Sydney William  
 Broatch, Sarah Alberta  
 Brown, Annie  
 Brown, Nellie Laidlaw  
 Burry, John Harris  
 Busby, Edward Maurice  
 Campbell, Agnes Wright  
 Campbell, James Ellis  
 Carruthers, Inez  
 Cassidy, Dimock Stanley  
 Chambers, Mary Lillian  
 Chisholm, Ethel May  
 Clouston, Donald Murdoc  
 Copeland, John Gardner  
 Cousens, Henry  
 Day, Dorothy  
 Day, Kathleen Maude  
 Duff, Jessie  
 Edmonds, Margaret Wetheral  
 Etherton, Alfred M.  
 Faris, Rhoda Susanna  
 Ferguson, Daniel John  
 Ferguson, Elizabeth Catherine  
 Faulkner, Gwyndolyne. Iloilo  
 Fawcett, Sara M.A.  
 Ferris, Roland Boyd  
 Fisher, Anna Marion  
 Foreman, Edgar  
 Francis, Mary Elsie  
 Fraser, Robert Howard  
 Frost, Elisabeth Stirling  
 Fry, Robert George  
 Gagnon, Nellie  
 Garraway, Zilla May  
 Gearheart, William Henry  
 Gillies, Flora  
 Gilmour, S.M.  
 Glendenning, Lisa  
 Gorrie, William Edward  
 Goforth, Mary Kathleen  
 Gould, Flora Milicent  
 Grant, Catherine Sutherland  
 Greig, Elizabeth  
 Gunn, Anna Mary  
 Hall, Robert  
 Helps, Winifred May  
 Heursh, Grace Inglis  
 Hogarth, Agnes Kilpatrick  
 Hugill, Mary Hannah  
 Inglis, George Roy  
 Jack, Jessie Christina  
 Jackson, Margaret R.  
 Jamieson, Howard Maxwell  
 Johnston, Harry  
 Johnston, Richard Smith  
 King, Alice M.  
 Lawrence, John Wilson  
 Ledingham, Helen Isabel  
 Leith, James Scott  
 Leith, Marjorie Jean  
 Leith, Mary  
 Lindores, Thomas  
 Lindsay, Joseph  
 Mabon, William Sydney  
 MacDougall, Isabella  
 Mack, Harold James  
 MacKay, Esther Elizabeth  
 MacKay, John  
 MacKay, Marguerite Anna  
 MacKenzie, Anna Sutherland  
 MacLean, Brenton Vans  
 MacLeod, Jessie  
 MacLeod, John Alex  
 MacLeod, Ruth  
 MacGregor, James Arnot  
 Malcolm, Charles Alexander  
 Matthews, Walter McNeill  
 McAulay, Lillie Margaret  
 McClure, Margaret  
 McConkey, (Prof.) Oswald  
 McCurdy, Isobel Gatherer  
 McEown, Ian  
 McFerran, William Thomas  
 McGill, Katherine  
 McKerchan, D. Ross  
 McKnight, Mary  
 McLean, William  
 McLennan, Suan Isabella  
 McMillan, Ivy Jean  
 McNab, John  
 McNaught, Thomas  
 McNeill, Anna Willard

McNu  
 McQu  
 Menz  
 Menz  
 Mill  
 Moff  
 Mood  
 Mont  
 Morr  
 Moth  
 New,  
 Nicke  
 Parke  
 Perr  
 Prest  
 Richa  
 Rinto  
 Rober  
 Rodge  
 Rumba  
 Russe  
 Ruthe  
 Sande  
 Scott  
 Scott  
 Selle  
 Simps  
 Siten  
 Skinn  
 Smith  
 Smith  
 Smith  
 Stewa  
 Strut  
 Strut  
 Sutte  
 Sylve  
 Timm,  
 Thurr  
 Turne  
 Valen  
 Vince  
 Wadde  
 Walke  
 Walki  
 Walla  
 Watt,  
 Wilso  
 Wood,  
 Yates  
 Young

156 n  
 Volun

McNutt, Harriet  
 McQueen, William Norman  
 Menzies, Alexander Morrison  
 Menzies, Mamie Jean  
 Milliken, Alberta J.  
 Moffat, Frederick Wm. Jr.  
 Moodie, Alexander Russell  
 Montgomery, Elsie Adair  
 Morrison, Donald John  
 Mothersill, John Elmore  
 New, Winifred Mary  
 Nickerson, James Stanley  
 Parker, Edith Helen  
 Perrie, Margaret  
 Preston, Edwin Ernest  
 Richardson, Blaine  
 Rintoul, Andrew Gordon  
 Robertson, Hugh Alexander  
 Rodger, Catherine  
 Rumball, Wilfrid Gladstone  
 Russell, John William  
 Rutherford, Kate MacGregor  
 Sanderson, Frederic DuVal  
 Scott, John William  
 Scott, Robert DeWitt  
 Selle, Claire Holley  
 Simpson, Harold Henry Hill  
 Siteman, Ella Rebecca  
 Skinner, Alexander Ross  
 Smith, Alice Margaret  
 Smith, Angus Charles  
 Smith, Oswald Jeffery  
 Stewart, Margaret Barbara  
 Struthers, Helen Gertrude  
 Struthers, May Thomesena  
 Sutherland, Mary Catherine  
 Sylvester, Susan Burns  
 Timm, Hannah Elizabeth  
 Thurrott, Elizabeth Hope  
 Turner, Jean Mabel  
 Valens, Edith Mary  
 Vincent, Jeanette Viola  
 Waddell, Gladys Alfreda  
 Walker, Florence Mary  
 Walkinshaw, Wingate Robertson  
 Wallace, Bryce Howie  
 Watt, Pearl Elizabeth  
 Wilson, William Robert  
 Wood, William James  
 Yates, Francis  
 Young, Norman Andrew Thompson

156 non-sailed Presbyterian Student  
 Volunteers in total.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Moody, Dwight Lyman" & "Student Volunteer Movement" in The Westminster Dictionary of Church History, (Philadelphia, 1971), ed. Jerald C. Brauer, pp. 571, 792.

<sup>2</sup> Mott was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Student Volunteer Movement, 1888-1920; and made honorary president of the World Council of Churches in 1948 as acknowledgement of his work with youth and missions. Westminster Dictionary of Church History, p.577.

<sup>3</sup> Westminster Dictionary of Church History, p.792.

<sup>4</sup> Rosalind Goforth, Goforth of China, (Toronto, 1937), p.53.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Thomson, "The North China Mission", in Forward with China, (Toronto, 1928), p.101.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Goforth, By My Spirit, (Toronto, no date), pp.10-11.

<sup>7</sup> R. Goforth, Goforth of China, p.56.

<sup>8</sup> Ronald Sawatsky, "Henry Martyn Parsons" in Canadian Society of Presbyterian History Papers 1982, pp.111-113.

<sup>9</sup> R. Goforth, Goforth of China, p.58; R. Sawatsky, p.111.

<sup>10</sup> R. Goforth, Goforth, p.64.

<sup>11</sup> William Fitch, Knox Church Toronto, (Toronto, 1971), p.43.

<sup>12</sup> Report of First International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Cleveland, Feb. 23-27, 1891, (Boston, 1891), p.7.

<sup>13</sup> "Intense, aggressive founder of the SVM...[who] supervised several generations of great international conventions of college-age Christians." The son of Indian pioneer missionary Royal G. Wilder, R.P. Wilder coined the slogan "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation", in Wm.P. Barker, Who's Who In Church History, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1969), p.305.

<sup>14</sup> R. Rutt, James Scarth Gale and his History of the Korean People, (Seoul, 1972), p.10.

<sup>15</sup> R. Rutt, J.S. Gale, p.11.

<sup>16</sup> James Scarth Gale, Korea In Transition (New York, 1909), p.135; Rutt, J.S. Gale, p.11.

<sup>17</sup> J.S. Gale, Korea In Transition, p.171.

<sup>18</sup> J.S. Gale, Korea In Transition, pp.171, 183.

19

J.S. Gale, Korea In Transition, p.89.

20

A precise, yet correct, term is difficult to find. In the original draft of the paper "proto-pentecostal" was used. It was, however, abandoned, as it suggested these people were merely in the first stage of a longer development. "pentecostal" was used during the address to the Society, but this too was not totally appropriate, as people were not concerned to hide their beliefs. In the end I defer to Dr. C.A. Pater, who suggested using simply "pentecostal". If one distinguishes between "pentecostals" who remained in their original denominations and "Pentecostals", who created new denominational bodies, the term can be useful.

21

Gale, Transition, pp.201-240.

22

Gale, Transition, p.240.

23

Gale, Transition, p.216.

24

Jonathan Goforth, By My Spirit, p.11.

25

World-Wide Evangelization, The Urgent Business of the Church: Addresses delivered before the Fourth International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Toronto Feb.26-Mar.2, 1902, (New York, 1902), p.24.

26

John MacNab, They Went Forth (Toronto, no date), p.142.

27

World-Wide Evangelization, pp.20-23.

28

Sawatsky, p.116.

29

The Fundamentals, A Testimony, Volume IV, (Chicago, no date), pp.55-57.

30

Canadian Society of Presbyterian History Papers 1977, p.41

31

World-Wide Evangelization, p.22.

32

World-Wide Evangelization, p.23.

33

Speer was also elected Moderator in 1927, Westminster Dictionary, p.782.

34

World-Wide Evangelization, pp.3f, 209ff., 273ff.

35

Fundamentals, Vol. III, pp.61ff.; Vol. XII, pp.64ff.

36

Fundamentals, Vol. XII, p.76.

37

Fundamentals, Vol. I, pp.21ff. In 1887 Warfield was Chair of Theology at Princeton where he "carried on the Princeton tradition of scholastic Presbyterian Fundamentalism developed by the Hodges" (Westminster Dictionary, p.856).

38

Fundamentals, Vol. XII, pp.26-28.

39

The Missionary Review of the World, ed. A.T. Pierson, old series Vol.XIV, #5; new series, Vol.IV, #5, p.354.

40

Report of the First International Convention, p.18.

41

World-Wide Evangelization, p.25.

42

Gale, Transition, pp.201ff.

43

A.H. Smith, Uplift of China, (New York, 1907), p.228.

44

Students And The Present Missionary Crisis: Addresses Delivered Before The Sixth International Convention Of The Student Volunteer Movement For Foreign Missions, Rochester, New York, December 29, 1909, to January 2, 1910, (New York, 1910), pp.517-521.

45

T.A. Broadfoot, "The South China Mission", in Forward with China, p.198.

46

T.A. Broadfoot, "South China", pp.205-206.

47

T.A. Broadfoot, "South China...", p.218.

48

Sixth Convention, pp.513-516.

49

Thomson, "North China Mission", p.101.

50

Thomson, "North China Mission", p.135.

51

Thomson, "North China Mission", p.139.

52

Sixth Convention, pp.513-516.

53

e.g. Ernest Edmonds and Dr. Janet Kilborn-McClure.

54

Peter G. Bush, The Foreign Missions Movement among Canadian Students, 1884-1923, (unpublished essay), p.21.

55

Claris Edwin Silcox, Church Union in Canada, (New York, 1933), p.477.

56

Application of the following formula provides the proportion of a denomination within the Protestant population:

$$\frac{\text{Raw percentage} \times 100}{\text{Total Protestant percentage}} = \text{corrected percentage}$$

e.g. In 1921, Anglicans formed 16.02% of the total population and Protestants represented 56.55% of the total population. Thus:

$$\frac{16.02 \times 100}{56.55} = 28.3\%$$

57

cf. Appendix 1.

58

cf. Appendix 3.

59

Silcox, p.477; Appendix 1.

60

"Reporter's Folio", in Presbyterian College Journal, Vol. XXII, February 1903, No.4; ed. A.W. Lohead, p.316.

61

Kenneth William Dowie (who sailed); W.G. Rumball and R.D. Scott (who did not sail).

62

All personal comments were derived from Volunteer forms in the SCM Collection, Boxes 84-46 and 84-134 at the United Church Archives. No further individual citations will be made.

63

Wm.M. Ganton; A.K. Hogarth and W. Trivett (the latter was Church of England).

64

J. Duff; T. Lindores.

65

B. Anderson; A. Barrow; R.A. Bolton; J. Duff; A.M. Etherton; E.S. Frost; N. Gagnon; Z.M. Garraway; M.K. Goforth; M. Leith; T. Lindores; J. Lindsay; M. McClure; K. McGill; Wm. McLean; E.E. Preston; A.M. Smith; O.J. Smith; H.G. Struthers; J.V. Vincent; G.A. Waddell; F.M. Walker.

66

A. Campbell; Z. Garraway; M. Goforth; H. Struthers; P. Watt.

67

E.M. Chisholm; D. Day; A.M. Gunn; G.R. Inglis; H.M. Jamieson; E.E. MacKay; J. MacKay; A.S. MacKenzie; J. MacLeod; I.G. McCurdy; A.W. McNeill; E.H. Parker; M.C. Sutherland; E.H. Thurrott.

68

cf. Appendix 2: one sailed with the Presbyterian Church, USA; another married and sailed with a Methodist; three sailed with the YWCA and another with a non-denominational board.

69

cf. Appendix 2.

70

Christian Students And World Problems: Report Of The Ninth International Convention Of The Student Volunteer Movement For Foreign Missions, Indianapolis, Indiana, December 28, 1923, to January 1, 1924, (New York, 1924), p.499.

71

C. Adsett; H.I. Bowman; A.M. Gunn; J.A. MacLeod; S.B. Sylvester.

## Honan for the Record

Letters from Honan Missionaries in The Presbyterian Record  
1888-1911

Geoffrey Johnston

### Introduction

The Honan Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada grew out of the general missionary enthusiasm of the late 19th century. In his autobiography Twenty Five Years in Honan, Murdoch Mackenzie, one of the pioneers, mentions such memorable events as Stanley and Livingstone, the Cambridge Band, the sending of 100 missionaries by the CIM in 1887, the publication of John Paton's autobiography, and closer to home, the work of James Robertson in the west and G.L.Mackay in Formosa. Students preparing for the ministry, especially at Queens and Knox, were moved to take matters in their hands and form a missionary society, but, for whatever reasons it was the Foreign Missions Committee that secured from the Assembly of 1887 permission to establish work, not in south China as first proposed, but in north Honan. The first people appointed were a hot gospeller from southern Ontario named Jonathon Goforth, and James Frazer Smith, a medical student at Queen's. Goforth and his wife left for China in January 1888 and were followed later in the year by the Smiths.

The next couple of years were spent reconnoitering and building up the staff. By the end of 1889 the original two had been joined by five more, McLure, MacGillivray, MacDougall, MacVicar and Mackenzie, with their wives, and two nurses Misses McIntosh and Graham. But they still had not entered Honan. Learning Chinese language and the ways of the land took time, and it was not until 1890 that they first secured rented premises in a small town called Chu Wang. It was not their first choice, but the one they decided to go for at that point<sup>1</sup>. The following year they also secured property at a second town, Hsin Chen. From these footholds, the mission spread until in 1912, at the end of the period of study it reported six stations, 37 outstations, eight Chinese ministers, a foreign staff of 42, including two in Shanghai and a Christian community of 1773.

The purpose of the present paper is to try to outline the picture of China the missionaries presented in the pages of the Presbyterian Record, the principal missionary organ of the Presbyterian Church. It is therefore an exercise in Canadian church history, one which tries to describe the view of China which Canadian Presbyterians could have through one of their principal windows on the outside world. I will pass no judgements on the truth of what the missionaries said, but rather concentrate on the texts themselves, and what they might suggest about the men who produced them.

---

<sup>1</sup>. the original idea was to settle in the "fu" cities, centres of government something like county seats. In 1890 they decided otherwise, because experience had indicated that resistance was stronger in those towns with a high proportion of "literati and officials" Acts and Proceedings of the general Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (GA) 1891, Appendix 10, page 14

The period under review covers the last years of Imperial China, from the first serious letter writing in the early 1890s to the fall of the Manchus, the Ch'ing Dynasty, in 1911. The period is divided almost in the middle by the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, the last desperate effort of conservative Chinese to maintain the old ways in the face of mounting pressures, principally from developments within China, but also from the impatient foreigners on the coast. The picture presented in The Record changes rather abruptly after 1900. Before then missionaries talk of hard sledding before Chinese indifference. After 1900, while real problems and difficulties continue, the prospects seem much brighter. My paper then divides into two, the bad news and the more or less good news, with the break coming in 1900.

For the first part, I shall concentrate on three letters from Murdoch Mackenzie, written between July 1892 and February 1893. From these letters it seems clear that Mackenzie and his listeners, although they lived in the same country, occupied quite different philosophical worlds.

He began his street preaching, he tells us, by finding a spot near a temple. When a crowd gathered to see this strange sight, a foreigner in an out of the way village, he would begin by asking questions about the temple. People were quite candid about the fact that they worshipped there, but when pressed for "theological reflection" the conversation died. "It was not their custom, they said, to inquire into such matters. Besides they were not able to read, and could not be expected to know."<sup>2</sup>

But, according to Mackenzie, the idols were all they had. People would refer to one lao-tien-yeh, the old Lord of Heaven, and say that all Chinese worshipped him because he made "the rain to descend and the wind to blow", but beyond that their notions seemed vague. He was not even the Creator. The Creator, called Pau Ku, was an even more shadowy figure. In short, Mackenzie's respondents seemed bereft of any notion that resembled the Christian idea of God as Creator. Diligent use of the Socratic method might elicit the idea that perhaps there was merit in such a concept, but there agreement ended. When he went on to talk about salvation the immediate response was "Why?"

Of sin as we understand it the Chinese have no conception. This need cause no surprise, as they know nothing regarding the true God. No advance is made by speaking to them of a Saviour from sin when they do not believe that sin is a very serious matter. They of course believe in doing good, in laying up merits for themselves. How? By burning incense, kneeling before the idols, reverencing parents, and worshipping Heaven and earth . . . <sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> The Record, November 1892, page 295

<sup>3</sup>. ibid

In the same way, they had no notion of a life beyond death. "When a man dies there is an end of him."<sup>4</sup> Preaching in such an atmosphere was tough sledding, and misunderstanding was easy. Missionary expectations should be modest.

He (the missionary) may have spent half an hour endeavoring to lead them to understand some elementary truth regarding God and Jesus and thinks he has succeeded fairly well. If he pauses most likely he will hear the remark "His religion and ours are the same. He has been exhorting us to worship Heaven and earth." precisely what he did not say is what they hold he did. <sup>5</sup>

The people Mackenzie dealt with were for the most part, ordinary, uneducated country folk. The scholars left the foreign teaching strictly alone. "As a class they are utterly indifferent to Christ and his gospel. They are proud and self satisfied. They imagine themselves the people, the custodians of the world's wisdom, and not requiring to be taught by foreign barbarians or devils"<sup>6</sup> Common people were easier to talk to, but they still could not get their minds around Jesus as a Saviour, as opposed to Jesus as some kind of European sage. Nor could they see any real reason to abandon the systematic worship of the traditional deities, even though they were hard put to it to explain what good such worship did.<sup>7</sup> In short, "It is strictly within the limits of accuracy to say, from our standpoint, that the Chinese are a Godless, Christless, hopeless people"<sup>8</sup> the Gospel is the first need "Until they believe in the Son of God it is not possible for them to attain to the true ideal of manhood."<sup>9</sup> After the gospel comes education. Very few people could read and even those counted as scholars "would cut a sorry figure alongside many ordinary schoolboys with you in Canada. What little they know is of things Chinese, of the outside world they know practically nothing."<sup>10</sup>

Such judgements are typical of the letters which appeared during the

---

<sup>4</sup>. ibid

<sup>5</sup>. ibid

<sup>6</sup>. The Record December 1892, page 322

<sup>7</sup> ibid page 323 and July 1893, pages 187-188

<sup>8</sup>. The Record December 1892, page 323

<sup>9</sup>. ibid

<sup>10</sup>. ibid

1890s<sup>11</sup> The Chinese as a godless hopeless people is the principal theme. But there are others, less prominent, but not to be forgotten.

The first is hostility. In March 1891 the Record published a brief account of an assault on the mission premises in Chu Wang. Almost a year later, in February 1892 Donald MacGillivray described a similar incident in the second station, Hsin Chen. These were isolated incidents, and were not repeated. From time to time<sup>12</sup> reports appeared describing in a very dispassionate manner the state of anti foreign activities in China as a whole, but before the dramatic tales of the Boxer affair, none of them, apart from the incidents mentioned above, directly concerned the Canadians.

The situation of Chinese women passed almost without comment in the Record during the 1890s. The one exception is a long article in the issue for July 1897. It is, however, a reprint from an American publication called the Missionary Review, written by a Mrs George S. Hays. It repeats the usual horror stories about the mistreatment of Chinese girls, first when their feet are bound, but especially by their mothers in law. It also goes on to describe a practice of spirit possession among women, some by the "wolf god" and some by the "fox god" Christian women are of course free from all these problems, brutal husbands and mothers in law, foot binding and canine demons of any sort.

The picture drawn by the mission staff is very gloomy. But they were careful not to paint everything black. In February 1895, for example, Donald MacGillivray spoke very highly of the quality of the Honanese peasantry, and saw a great future for them, if Christianized. In February 1899, Percy Leslie argued that, despite recent setbacks, progress had to come to China. Two months later, Donald MacGillivray was positively sanguine about the future. All this came before the crisis of 1900, when, for a time, everything seemed in ruins.

The Boxer Rebellion was the last gasp of conservative China. There had been something of a reform movement in official circles in the 1890s, culminating in a spate of reform legislation in the summer of 1898. But the Old Buddha, as the Empress Dowager was called, was too wily a reactionary to be taken in by a rash of decess. "She waited until nearly everyone in the establishment felt threatened, and then staged a military coup-d'etat"<sup>13</sup> Once in control, the Empress Dowager surrounded herself with the most die hard conservatives, some of whom were in contact with a peasant secret society called i-ho ch'uan. Ch'uan refers to a traditional kind of boxing, and i-ho

---

<sup>11</sup>. See, for example, Jonathon Goforth in The Record for June 1889, pages 162-163, J.F. Smith, May 1890, pages 129-130. D. MacGillivray, October 1892, pages 264-266, J.F. Smith, July 1894, page 186, and P.C. Leslie September 1898, page 234.

<sup>12</sup>. The Record October 1891, March 1892, May 1892

<sup>13</sup>. John King Fairbank, The Great Chinese revolution, 1800-1985, Harper and Row, 1987, page 135

means righteousness and harmony. That the court should be in touch with a secret society was most extraordinary, because most such societies were secret because they were anti dynastic. The liaison with the court was, however too good to be missed; the Boxer slogans shifted from "Overthrow the Ch'ing, wipe out the foreigners, to "Support the Ch'ing, wipe out the foreigners" For the court, to support such an organization indicated that the Manchus were at the end of their tether.

The Boxers had plenty to work on. North China is subject to both flood and drought, and the turn of the century was not a good time. Prospectors, railway builders and missionaries were all very active and very threatening. It did not take much to set off the brush fire that swept across North China, engulfing the Homan missionaries as it went along.

Three separate accounts of the flight from Honan appeared in the Record, two in October 1900, some months after the events described, and one in June 1901. Despite the civil disorder which afflicted most of north China at the time, most of the trip from Honan to Hankow was quite uneventful. But on Sunday July the 8th, 1900 they were surrounded by a mob, and deprived of everything but the clothes they stood up in and their carts. Many in the party suffered some kind of injury, but only Percy Leslie, the surgeon, whose right wrist was badly damaged, was seriously hurt. Sunday was the worst. Tuesday they reached Hankow and took a boat down to Shanghai.<sup>14</sup> Not all the mission party went overland to Hankow. A second group, consisting of the McLures, James Menzies and Dr Margaret Wallace went east rather than south, reaching relative safety at Chefoo.<sup>15</sup>

It was all very dramatic, the sort of tale that is likely to stick in peoples' minds, at least for a while. But in the same October 1900 issue Donald MacGillivray, who by this time was working for the Christian Literature Society in Shanghai, a long way from the exciting events of North China, published precisés of ancient stories of filial piety, almost as if nothing was happening at all. And before long, the tone of missionary letters began to change, beginning with the return to Honan in September 1901.

A good deal of space in the first letters from Honan after the return deal with the nitty gritty of missionary life, the state of the buildings and the furniture. But two things stand out in particular. The first comes in a private letter from John Griffith to the Goforths.

Every deference was shown to us and since our arrival in Honan we have been visited and feasted by officials until we are tired of it. These thirty five course feasts would ruin our constitutions

---

<sup>14</sup>. P.C. Leslie in The Record October 1900, pages 314-317. Rosalind G Goforth in Goforth of China and Murdoch Mackenzie in Twenty Five Years in Honan also give accounts of the trip. Both Mackenzie and Mrs Goforth took part in the trip south from Honan to Hankow (Wuhan)

<sup>15</sup>. James Menzies in The Record June 1901, 244-248.

in a short time. At (Chu Wang) we were escorted from the boats to a specially fitted up kung-kwan by a great guard of horse and foot soldiers, while official carts carried ourselves and our stuff. The Nei Hwang Hsien and other officials entertained us in great style.<sup>16</sup>

The functionaries whose attitude a year earlier had been at best cautious and at worst hostile were now uniformly courteous. Griffith took it all with a grain of salt, but it was good news to begin with. A good deal of stolen mission property was returned, but most encouraging of all was the state of the church. The missionaries had been able to leave, the Chinese had to stay and face the music.

The sufferings of the native Christians, though not nearly so great as in some places have yet have yet been a severe test of their faith and faithfulness. Their houses and gardens have been pillaged. They have been beaten by neighbours and by the magistrates. Some have been suspended from trees for hours by their thumbs, or by their hands tied behind their backs until they consented to pay fines or even to sell all their land to satisfy their enemies. Women have been insulted and terrified until they attempted suicide. All have been persecuted in the various mean and exasperating ways which suggest themselves to a heathen mind.

But, in spite of it all, we know of no real renunciation of the Truth.  
.<sup>17</sup>

But Griffith would not let himself get carried away. At the end of his long account of the situation in Honan, written for the Record and not for the Goforths, he describes an aristocratic funeral procession he met on the way back from the coast

The body in a great catafulque with an immense dragon head and tail which looked very fierce as it moved along the road was carried by 48 bearers, in four relays, dressed in mourning. It was accompanied by the wife and son and other members of the family of the deceased and by a large company of soldiers and carts. The toil and trouble involved in this long and difficult overland journey of nearly a thousand miles from Hsian to the ancestral home in Peking were very suggestive of the sentiment or superstition which makes it necessary.<sup>18</sup>

This kind of guarded optimism was characteristic of the Record for the remainder of the period under review.

---

<sup>16</sup>. John Griffith in The Record, January 1902, page 18

<sup>17</sup>. John Griffith in The Record, April 1902, page 159. See also J. Goforth in The Record, May 1902, page 194 and D. MacGillivray in The Record, July 1902, pages 309-311.

<sup>18</sup>. John Griffith, ibid

Until the abolition of the Imperial examinations in 1905, the literature works a contrast between unregenerate and converted China. Traditional China remains bad news, but there are signs of hope among the Christians. We may take a series of letters that appeared during the summer of 1903 as typical.

Every year the missionaries made a point of having a strong contingent at the fair, as they called it, which took place at Hsun hsien shortly after the New Year at the end of January. The annual fair was a great centre of idolatry, they said, and the greatest centre was the temple of Lao Nai Nai, the Old Grandmother.

Prayers are continually being offered to her (Lao nai-nai) in the hope of obtaining male children. It is the most beautiful temple I have yet seen, and consists of a score of great buildings with many scores of idols. We saw many young men kowtowing before the Lao Nai Nai and burning before her small bundles of sticks of incense. One young man left a bundle of incense burning in the front court while he entered the inner sanctuary to bow before the idol and offer his prayer. When he returned, his incense was gone, having been stolen by the priest. He immediately began to revile the priest, and a great outcry was raised. But he was told that the Lao Nai Nai would accept his offering just as if it had not been stolen.<sup>19</sup>

Bruce had earlier described briefly the activities of the mission party, with particular reference to the energetic activities of Jonathon Goforth, the hot gospeller of the team. Readers of the Record had heard from Goforth a few months earlier.

There were some of tender years becoming confirmed in the ways of idolatry, but so very many had passed the limits of threescore and ten. Some of them seemed to be on the verge of eternity . . . I saw one old woman look wistfully to one of the stone grottoes and heard her murmur, "I can't climb that steep way." She had to turn away content with that much less merit. Pity them! They feed on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned them aside. . . .

So much for the bad news. But the good news was not far to seek.

Now as to the apparent effect of the Gospel on these idolatrous crowds, I have had considerable experience in handling Chinese crowds and have seen crowds moved deeply by the Spirit through the truth, but I have never seen such manifest moving by the Spirit as at times during the last few days of this fair. . . . As one of the native preachers remarked one evening after I had finished an address to a crowded room: "They just stood there with their mouths open as if expecting to eat

---

<sup>19</sup>. J.H.Bruce in The Record, August 1903, page 353

something." . . . <sup>20</sup>

One of the unique features of the 1903 campaign was the presence of a large number of Chinese preachers supplementing the missionary effort. J.H. Grant provided a thumbnail biography of them all. Hu I Chwang is a reasonably typical example.

I first heard the gospel in 1890 when I visited Mr MacGillivray and Dr McLure in the inn at Ch'u Wang. Here I saw the Ten Commandments hanging on the wall, and I said, this doctrine is right. . . . [For the next ten years, contact with the mission was slight] My brother, who was ill, believed and said it was a good doctrine. I replied that it was good enough for him, but I was not ill and did not need it.

In 1900, after the missionaries had fled, I fell ill, and felt if Dr McLure or Dr Leslie were here now I would soon be cured. They returned in September 1901. I went to Chang Te and was cured. There I heard more of the gospel and believed. I was recorded as a catechumen in April 1902. We have daily family worship in our home, my two wives and hired man joining with me."<sup>21</sup>

The theme of hope through conversion is picked up again by Donald MacGillivray. He told a story, which he assured the readers was authentic, of a Scot in the Imperial postal service who declared "The minute you tell me a Chinaman is a Christian, I want nothing more to do with him. He's no good". His interlocutor, who was both an Englishman and a Christian, then listed five Chinese in the postal service, all of whom were highly regarded by the Scot, and all of whom were Christians. "Oh, keep still, [said the Scot] That'll do." <sup>22</sup>

Although the missionary literature does not mention it, reform had been in the works since the failure of the Boxer rebellion. The first event to catch their attention, as it were, was the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905.

For thirteen hundred years Chinese education had been based on the mastery of the Confucian and other classics. Through an elaborate system of examinations at the county, provincial and imperial levels ambitious young men were prepared for the the most prestigious of careers in China, the civil service. The system had been under strain for years, as can be seen from the practice of allowing people of wealth but not learning to buy degrees, and in 1905, the court finally recognized that it could not continue. The missionary reaction to this momentous development was

---

<sup>20</sup>. J. Goforth in The Record, June 1903, page 259

<sup>21</sup>. J.H. Grant in The Record, July 1903, page 307. Grant adds that Hu was a literary man, and had been a writer of Chinese plays for some fifteen years.

<sup>22</sup>. D. MacGillivray in The Record, September 1903, 404-405

extraordinarily matter of fact. MacGillivray seemed more concerned with the logistical problems created for the Christian Literature Society by this shift to western style education. His own staff could now get better salaries than he could afford; the demand for books of all sorts would quickly outrun the limited resources of the Society. J.A. Mowatt, the other missionary to comment on the change, stressed the need for a "thoroughly equipped" teacher to take up the opportunities that were already appearing at Hwai Ch'ing, but his discussion of the abolition of an educational system that was over a millenium old, extended though it was, came in the context of the harvest, a bomb attack at the Beijing railway station and routine work among adolescents and women.<sup>23</sup>

MacGillivray had been on leave, and came back to China after a summer in Canada. Nevertheless, he sensed that something had happened while he was away.

The first impression, then, strongly borne in on us as we set foot once more on Chinese soil is that China is changing at a more rapid rate than when we left. As time goes on, the inertia against change is giving way, the desire for reform is growing, and the pace begins to get positively alarming.<sup>24</sup>

After 1905, the signs of hope in China lay not only in conversion, but in changes in the whole society. Consider, as an example, a 1909 letter from Murdoch Mackenzie.

The Empire can no longer be called "the changeless China". Even some of your Canadian Presbyterian missionaries wondered years ago whether they might live to see many changes worth noting in the Province of Honan. They can do so no longer. . . .

Mackenzie then ran through a long list of novel developments. The collapse of the old educational system, the flood of students first to Japan, where they "imbibed radically revolutionary ideas, got little worthy of the name of real education, and came back poorer, but not much wiser.". More recently, and more hopefully students had been going to Europe and America. He then went on to the campaigns against foot binding and opium, the rapid extension of the railway system, and the frequent appearance of foreign travellers in the interior. The Chinese, he continued are adopting all sorts of western customs, cigars, newspapers, boycotts, indignation meetings, strikes, commissions of inquiry and perhaps, a form of parliamentary government. Mackenzie was too good a Presbyterian to get carried away

It is with mingled feelings that many true well wishers of the Chinese view some items in this list. They must be confronted with the best

---

<sup>23</sup>. D MacGillivray in The Record, November 1905, pages 404-405, J.A. Mowatt in The Record, January 1906, pages 14-15.

<sup>24</sup> MacGillivray, op cit.

things known to the Christian civilization of the west. The Chinese should see and know the many and varied fruits of the beneficent gospel of the crucified Nazarene.

Naturally the letter closes with a reference to the growth and development of the church, and a call to prayer for China "China now needs the daily presence of God's believing people in every land. . . ." and compared the situation in China to that on the eve of Constantine's conversion.<sup>25</sup> Donald MacGillivray covered much the same ground, making reference to the promising beginnings of parliamentary government, great strides in education, the shift from Japan to the west as the location of choice for Chinese students, the spread of post offices, and the campaigns against domestic slavery and opium. And like Mackenzie, he was careful to end his letter on an appropriately missionary note,

In these days of social schemes, we do well to remind ourselves that Christianity is deeper than benevolence for it enables the poor to feed and clothe themselves, and for this reason that it touches the springs of manhood and self respect and transforms the whole man. Thus wherever the full light of the gospel shines, the blessings of the gospel abound also.<sup>26</sup>

In some respects the quote has a curiously modern ring, but there is reason to suspect that the exclusive language was not just the custom of the time. The letters referring to the changes in the status of women in this period, like those before 1900, are reprints, not from the hand of the Honan missionaries. In May 1909, for example The Record reprinted an article from the China Recorder which summed up the case admirably. Because of the work of Christian missions, Chinese women were now appearing "changed from head to foot, for they now appear with unbound feet and unbound minds." Education for girls was the main reason for this change, but the article acknowledged that men had to change as well, for there was no suggestion, in 1909, that a normal life for an educated woman excluded a family.

What then was the picture of China presented by these men in the twenty odd years under review?

The first must be of the Chinese as barbarous and uncomprehending, far from salvation whether cultural or spiritual. They were careful not to say there was no hope, for that would have brought the existence of the mission into question, but the stress before 1900 was clearly that Honan was hard work. After, 1900 the work got a bit easier, but the point was still the same: China's progress depended on conversion.

The second point is that as the pace of transformation picked up after 1905, a sea change takes place in the literature. No longer is conversion the prerequisite of change. Change is clearly happening of its own accord.

---

<sup>25</sup>. Murdoch Mackenzie in The Record, June 1909, pages 252-254.

<sup>26</sup>. Donald MacGillivray in The Record, August 1911, pages 378-379.

Conversion becomes the means whereby the changes taking place are kept on the right track. This leads to the third point.

The missionaries never deluded themselves that they were in control. China would be China despite them. They might be able to shape its development in some measure, but fundamentally they were spectators. It is true that many letters ended with appeals for more staff to do more shaping, but one does not get the feeling that they really believed they could manage the empire.

Finally the letters I have cited appear alongside many others, some describing routine mission work, and, after 1907, a series on Goforth's revivals. This is a church journal, written by churchmen for church people, and it seems fair to say that the authors in question were evangelical liberals.

They were evangelicals in that the starting point of their message was the importance of a direct, probably rather existential knowledge of God. It is unclear from this material whether they believed that that knowledge had to involve a deep sense of sin and repentance or not. Certainly Goforth's revivals laid a great stress on that point, but Goforth's revivals usually took place among the converted. But the impression is strong from the Record that the problem with China was idolatry, and conversion to some form of biblical monotheism was the essential starting point. Thus the comment from the preacher cited above, that the sign of his conversion was that he began to worship, not that he repented of his sins. His comment is typical of many others in the same letter. My point, however, is that a personal experience of God was an essential starting point. Starting from a personal experience of God one is led naturally to approval of personal achievement, whether it be ethical, as in shaking the opium habit, or secular. Thus men like MacGillivray could point with pride at the appearance in China of the achievements of nineteenth century individual enterprise, railways and degrees from western universities. Achievement per se was not an end in itself, MacGillivray and others were at pains to stress the importance of steering the new China in the direction of right achievement. But it seems fair to say that the missionary community saw the gospel working itself out most comfortably in a liberal society, that is, a society in which individual decisions, and therefore individual liberty are considered the cornerstone of civilization.

In June 1896 the Record published a speech entitled Freedom, Personal and Social, given by Principal MacVicar of Presbyterian College at Eglise St Jean in Montreal the previous month. His text was Galatians v:1 "With freedom Christ set us free; stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." All true freedom, MacVicar argued, comes from Christ. We are therefore free from guilt and condemnation, free from the tyranny of sin in our hearts and lives, free from burdensome ritual, and free from servile submission to the doctrines and commandments of men. Finally, toward the end of the speech, he came to social freedom.

. . . wherein does it consist? Negatively, in exception from arbitrary,

despotic, or autocratic control, especially in civil matters. Positively, it consists in the exercise, without molestation, of the right of private judgement and the right of free speech in the press and on the platform, in regulating our own affairs and those of the community and nation in which all are mutually concerned, the right of the free use of our property, or the products of our labour, subject at all times to certain well known legal limitations and restrictions essential to the existence and well being of society. . . .

There is, he continued, a true Christian socialism, which the demagogues of the day had missed, but which could be found in the work of men like Charles Kingsley, F.D.Maurice, Thomas Hughes, and others. He was not prepared to follow them on every question, but,

They were right, however, and in line with what I have sought to teach this afternoon, in holding that Christianity, in relation to the social fabric . . . should be carried into everyday life, and be applied with vital controlling force to all forms of human activity; that its power should be felt in regulating the production and distribution of all commodities for the use of society; that all men and nations should act as brothers in the one universal family; that the Christian household should be the unit and model of the social compact, that the strife between capital and labour should be terminated by acting on the one principle which John Locke, long ago, recognized as sufficient for the settlement of all social questions, namely, that we should love our neighbours as ourselves.

Then let the state be asked to make void all legislation hostile to this position, and to enact, from time to time, such regulations as shall effectually restrain individuals and corporate bodies from injuring and crushing one another.<sup>27</sup>

It is a noble vision, though few today would think it realizable. But it also rings true to the literature we have surveyed. That literature, like MacVicar's address, is primarily interested in salvation. Society comes second, in the latter part of the speech, and society is seen as best founded on the decisions of Christian individuals, people who will love one another as themselves. MacVicar insists that society must be liberal, in order to give room for Christian decision. But it must be shaped by Christians, for without restraint, preferably Christian, liberty becomes license.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup>. D.H. MacVicar in The Record June 1896, pages 143-145

<sup>28</sup>. The position of the Honan missionaries is distinct from, but not inconsistent with the position of most of their contemporaries in other Canadian Presbyterian missions. John Morton, the pioneer missionary in Trinidad was somewhat more conservative than his colleagues. See J.D. Mackay, Under the Southern Cross ed. Geoffrey Johnston, in the Presbyterian Archives, Toronto; The Trinidadian mission is discussed in G. Johnston, The Canadian Mission in Trinidad, unpublished ThD thesis, Toronto, 1977; Also useful for

License they mean when they say liberty;  
For who has that must first be wise and good.<sup>29</sup>

The Honan staff, including Harvey MacVicar, would have heartily agreed.

---

comparative purposes are G. Johnston, "Vanuatu for the Record" a paper presented to the Knox -Presbyterian College symposium on the contribution of Presbyterianism to Canadian Life and Culture, May 1989, and G. Johnston "Korea for the Record" in Canadian Missionaries and Korea: Two Case Studies in Public Opinion Working paper Series #2, University of Toronto-York University Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, April 1988

<sup>29</sup>. MacVicar. op cit