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OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. Eldon Hay teaches in the Department of Religious Studies at Mount Allison University, (Box 249, Sackville, NB, E0A 3C0), and is particularly interested in the Covenanters in Canada.

The Rev. Heather Jones (Box 879, Winchester, ON, K0C 2K0) holds degrees in psychology, English and education, and is minister of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Winchester, and Knox Presbyterian Church, Mountain

Robert John Gordon (10 Larksong Court, Toronto, ON, M4A 2T6) is history student at Scarborough College, University of Toronto, and his article is based on a senior research paper he completed in connection with his studies

David J. Goa is Curator of Folklife at the Provincial Museum of Alberta (12845 102 Ave., Edmonton, AB, T5N 0M6) and a frequent lecturer in Religious Studies. A.J. Armstrong is Senior Researcher for the United church of Canada Artifact Collection Project

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

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4112 Pheasant Run
Mississauga ON
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SAMUEL CROTHERS MURRAY--WORK AND WITNESS IN THE WEST

by

Eldon Hay

I consider three segments in the life of Samuel Crothers Murray (1857-1945). First, Murray's Maritime Covenanter upbringing, his becoming a member Presbyterian Church in Canada and his theological education (1857-1885); secondly, his ministry in Neepawa, Manitoba (1885-1893); thirdly, his work as District Home Mission Superintendent for Manitoba (1911-1920). I conclude with a brief assessment of the man and his ministry. In this essay, extensive use has been made of Murray's autobiography.[1]

A. Maritime Beginnings

Samuel Crothers Murray was the second of three children born at Murray Corner--the family name had been given to the community[2]--to Samuel Murray and Sarah McMorris (18); the family also included six step-siblings from Samuel Murray's first marriage (8). Samuel Murray had a Scots and Presbyterian background, Sarah McMorris had an Irish background: "the McMorris family came from County Donegal, Ireland. The head of the McMorris family was named Matthew. His wife's maiden name was Carothers--a name transmitted in a shortened form" to the chief figure in this address (12). And the McMorris family were Reformed Presbyterian or Covenanter.

> I have in my library ... book[s] called "Reformation Principles Exhibited", and "The Hind let loose"--written by a Dr. Shields--about 1680. It deals with the conflicts of the Covenanters against the Papacy and Episcopacy. These latter volumes were evidently added to the family stock by my mother (18, 19).

Of course all the Murray family had become Covenanter in Chignecto, largely through the missionary efforts of Rev. Alexander Clarke, who had come to the region in 1828 from Saint John, N.B., consequent upon an urgent invitation by Matthew McMorris, maternal grandfather of S.C. Murray.[3]

Murray studied at local schools--he paid high tribute to one teacher, Rufus W. Goodwin, "an old time Dominie, with a reputation for making scholars" (41). In the autumn of 1873 Murray "conceived the idea that I could run a school by myself, tho' I was just nicely beyond my sixteenth birthday" (46). Obtaining a temporary licence, he taught at Chapmans Corner over the next winter. The following year, 1874-75, he attended the Provincial Normal School and received his certificate. Murray taught from May 1875 until October 1876 in Murray Corner school, ultimately becoming convinced that he must return to study. During that period,

> after many misgivings--and many dark days--I had about settled the matter of life's calling. I had made a public profession of faith, and had united with the Reformed Presbyterian Church at Murray's Corner, my home congregation. At that communion season [22 October 1876][4] ... there were twelve young persons received. Of those, three of us entered the ministry (52-53).

At 19 years of age, Murray joined the RP Church at Shemogue, just after the former minister of the congregation, Rev. Samuel Boyd (1824-1897), and a significant part of the congregation had demitted and were establishing a Presbyterian Church in Canada congregation in the community.[5]

Murray's next objective was university: "I decided on Mt. Allison" (53), from which he graduated on 5 June 1881 (56). During his student days, Murray had continued to teach school and, upon graduation, he again took up teaching, this time in Salisbury, N.B., leaving that job "at the end of October 1882." Then he "went directly to Princeton, New Jersey, to study theology" (66-67). No reason for going to Princeton was advanced by Murray, he was certainly the first Covenanter-born Chignecto native to go there.[6] Murray found his studies challenging, particularly when combined with demanding summer pastoral work. Some time after going to Princeton--he obtained his certificate of demission from the Shemogue RP church.[7] His reason? "The Reformed Church had grown weak, and at this time was carrying on no Foreign Mission work. If I remained with the Covenanters, I cut myself off from missionary work in a foreign land. Such limitation was counter to the Master's commission. I decided that I should be identified with an expanding church" (101). Murray, therefore, "asked for a transfer to the home congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Canada"--Zion Church, Oultons Corner [Little Shemogue] (82).

At this juncture a few moments' reflection on Murray's move from the Covenanter to The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Although Murray left his Covenanter past behind, it seems to have made a deep impress upon him. In the 75-year history of the Covenanters in Chignecto--from 1828 when Clarke the first

Covenanter missionary and minister came definitely to settle in the area--until 1905 when Rev. Joseph Howe Brownell the last Covenanter pastor led the few remaining Covenanters into The Presbyterian Church in Canada--no fewer than 24 clergy came out of Covenanter families.[8] Seven of these (for shorter or longer periods) became Covenanter clergy; and seventeen (for shorter or longer periods) became clergy in other than Reformed Presbyterian congregations. Samuel Crothers Murray was one of the latter. Yet none of the two dozen clergy wrote so much about the Covenanters,[9] and none more positively. As an example, the Covenanter view of the Sabbath. One of Murray's neighbours, Rev. Frederick William Atkinson (1876-1937),[10] spoke of the Sabbath in very negative terms.

> Never will I forget the cold, blank "Sabbaths" of my early youth, made miserably dreary by the exactions and the "thou-shalt-nots" of organized religion. With a sense of suffocation the day was greeted, no matter how bright it might have been in natural sunshine--indeed, its very brightness served only to make its restrictions more unnatural and unbearable. Its black hours, each one a long eternity, dragged themselves away at last; but how anything so endless could finally pass was always a mystery to my childish mind. In the end, however, a new day would dawn when it was not sinful for little children to play and be happy.[11]

Not surprisingly, Frederick William Atkinson, the author of these observations, found that at Sabbath services, "it was excruciating to sit in hard seats and try to amuse myself while he [the minister] labored through his long sermon." Attempts to alleviate the situation rarely worked: "once I fixed my attention on some beautiful cherries on [the] hat of a woman in the front seat next. I felt that I must touch them to see of what they were made. I did so, and was in disgrace for remainder of the day."[12] The Sunday

atmosphere which Samuel Crothers Murray experienced was very different. By the time Murray was writing, in the late 1930s, it had become fashionable to enlarge upon the austerity and severity of the Reformed Presbyterians--especially their strict Sabbatarianism: "We have been told that not only was all labor banned, but play as well. There must be no cooking, and whistling was the unpardonable sin. How much foundation these grim charges had in fact I cannot say. I was reared in the Covenanting faith, and I knew nothing of this Covenanter attitude toward the Sabbath" (27). Slightly condensed, Rev. Murray's version reads,

> In our home the Sabbath was 'a delight'. Work was reduced to a minimum but I have yet to meet the boy or girl who would be grieved on that account. On a Saturday afternoon I [would] have piled the wood box high with wood so as to eliminate the process for the whole of the following day, when I would have my best clothes on. What boy ever mourned over a whole day of freedom from heaving wood? If for any reason the supply of wood ran short before the Sabbath ended, there were no compunctions of conscience about replenishing the supply. As boys we preferred to be under no such necessity.
>
> We rose on Sunday morning almost as early as on week days, because stock needed care. The care of the stock was also reduced to a minimum. Feed necessary for Sunday was so placed Saturday that it could be handled with least effort. Of course stock had to be watered, and some work had to be done, but the less the better in <u>Sunday garb</u>. Stable operations were not good for Sunday clothes--and we put on our best on the Sabbath. What youngster ever found it irksome to appear in his best suit?

Sunday was memorable because the dinner was special:

> When I say that we looked forward to the day as a delight, no one will wonder [because] there was a deliberate aim to make the Sunday dinner the choicest meal of the week--cause of sadness surely to healthy growing boys. But again that dinner was put on with a minimum of Sunday work. All possible preparation was made Saturday. If a roast of beef or pork or a goose, was made ready Saturday it was not an arduous job to place it in the oven Sunday morning. In my Covenanting home about every Sunday in the year [we had] the best meal of the

> week with the least expenditure of energy in its Sunday preparation. If some table luxury could be afforded only occasionally, that luxury was reserved for the Sunday dinner. What young person would regret the recurrence of the Sabbath, spent in that way? ... [Sunday] evenings were spent pleasantly--reading, conversing, singing. There was nothing gloomy or awe inspiring in the manner of our Sabbath keeping. In [these] ways the day was honored, distinguished from the other days (27-29, 35).

Nonetheless, Murray demitted the Covenanters, with this epitaph:

> The Covenanters had done a great work. We should cherish their memory. They addressed themselves with heroic determination to the problems of their own day. They had won the battle for spiritual freedom and independence of the church, and I came to the conviction that we could best honour their memory, by using what they had won, for the solution of the problems of our own day. The past was glorious, yet Forward be our watchword (101).

For Murray, the Covenanters were passé. Murray was to turn his Covenanter past into a gain for The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Still studying at Princeton, Murray wrote: "In the spring of '84 I applied for a mission field in Saint John Presbytery and was selected for Dorchester and Rockland, only forty miles from home" (81). Moreover, "before I left [Dorchester] I visited the Presbyterians of Sackville, a small group that still adhered to the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Covenanters). I induced them to cast in their lot with the Canadian Church [The Presbyterian Church in Canada], and [Sackville] became one station of the Dorchester charge. I preached three Sundays and from that time forward, the Sackville Presbyterians were associated with the Presbyterian Church" (81). During the summer plans were laid for the building of a new church at Dorchester.[13] Under the leadership of Murray, the

congregations in the immediate area flourished within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Small wonder that Murray was characterised as "a very successful catechist."[14] As he noted, "with a church at Dorchester as well as at Rockland--and now with the Sackville Presbyterians added to the mission it seemed possible to ... call a regular pastor. I was asked if I would consider a Call on completion of my course. I did not commit myself. I returned to Princeton" (82).

His last year of study at Princeton (1884-85) was to turn out significantly for Murray's future. During that winter, Rev. James Robertson (1838-1902), superintendent of Presbyterian Missions in Western Canada, was sent to Union and Princeton Theological Seminaries in search of ordinands, to feed the demands of the Canadian West mission. The result was a meeting between Robertson and Murray--a vivid re-creation of the dialogue is contained in Charles William Gordon [alias Ralph Connor], The Life of James Robertson D.D.[15] The outcome of this dramatic meeting was that Murray committed himself to the western mission. Evidence suggests that the tall, well-built, straight-speaking theologue was a welcome recruit for Robertson. In May 1885 Murray was received by Saint John Presbytery, duly examined, and licensed to preach (83).

Before going west, Samuel Crothers Murray figured prominently in two events--one public, the other personal. The first was a communion season at Zion Presbyterian Church in Canada, Oultons Corner [Little Shemogue]:[16]

> During all these years of preparation I had never preached in the home congregation. The first Sunday of July [1885] was the regular communion Sunday. I consented to assist. The Session arranged for an old fashioned communion. Services Thursday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday--with one their own boys as guest speaker. For the congregation it was a great occasion--for myself, something of an ordeal. It was a farewell to the past, and the facing of an untried future. The Monday service was in the forenoon, at the close of which there was much hand shaking and many good wishes, and not a few tears ... Next morning I took the train at Aulac--went to Point du Chene, [and] got the boat to Summerside (86).

Murray was on his way to P.E.I. to attend his own wedding. His bride-to-be was Ella Phinney (1862-1929), daughter of a Methodist minister then settled in Little York. Murray had known Ella Phinney from their student days at Mount Allison, and they had agreed to further their acquaintance by correspondence after graduating.

"The wedding was to be in the church [in Little York, P.E.I.] ... All and sundry had been invited and all and sundry came. This was Wednesday, July 8th, 1885" (88). The newly-married couple went by train to Charlottetown, the first part of a long and memorable journey to Manitoba, where the Murrays were to minister.

B. Murray's Ministry at Neepawa 1885-93

The Murrays arrived in Neepawa on 24 July 1885. In Murray's own words:

> We reached Neepawa about 4 p.m. [that day]. We were met by Mr. George Clare and a Mr. McLeod, the student who had been holding the fort until I arrived. A picnic was in process, in honour of the volunteers recently returned from the [Riel] Rebellion ... The safe return of the soldier boys somewhat overshadowed the arrival of the new minister and his young bride, but we were well received, and <u>seen</u> by everybody ... The following Sunday I preached my first sermon in Manitoba (92).

In October Murray was ordained into The Presbyterian Church in Canada by Brandon Presbytery and inducted into Neepawa and associated stations. "While church services had been held in and around Neepawa since 1879 or earlier, [Samuel Crothers] Murray seems to have been regarded as the first 'settled minister' for the Presbyterian Church in Neepawa."[17]

Murray saw himself as a vigorous pastor: "some may have grown careless--others found church attendance difficult on account of distance or through lack of convenience--but everywhere the minister was accorded a hearty welcome" (107). Murray was glad to see the arrival of the Salvation Army in February or March of 1887, encouraged them and cooperated as fully as he could. "There was another special work of grace that effected the entire district, the Revival under Crossley & Hunter in May 1891 ... The community many miles out was moved. I received 65 persons into the Presbyterian Church on profession of faith" (126). It was "this 'stirring of the dry bones' that made the building of Knox Church a necessity and a possibility" (126). In Chater, Manitoba a new minister's wife, Mrs. McTavish, had organized a W.F.M.S. [Women's Foreign Missionary Society], then she reached other congregations. "In the spring of '87 it was arranged that she visit Neepawa," which meant that Murray had to drive to Chater for her. "Mrs. McTavish remained over Sunday, met the ladies of the congregation, and organized an auxiliary of the W.F.M.S. It was a fine experience" (125-26).

Murray was an organizer and a builder. Mention has been made of the building of Knox Church, of which Murray was the first minister--in 1993, Knox Presbyterian Church. Much more colourful however, is Murray's account of the building of the manse. For a first brief period in Neepawa, the Murrays had been invited to the home of "Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Hamilton, where we spent a delightful two weeks, until we got domiciled in the shack that had been secured for us" (92). Murray went on:

> The first winter we lived in a small house, 12 x 24--two rooms below & two above. I could stand erect in the centre of the upper rooms, but out of the centre my head would bump the ceiling ... There was a small cellar--a cube of about six feet. During the winter anything affected by frost had to be put down cellar. When the fire went out it was as cold inside as outside. A cupboard had been built into the corner of the north room, three or four feet from the cookstove. It was not uncommon to find that milk put in this cupboard after breakfast, would be frozen at noon, tho there had been a fire in the cookstove all the forenoon. In the colder days Mrs. Murray would wear her fur court when working in the north room ... In the shack our eldest son--Rev. P.N. Murray was born. On the day of his birth, the annual congregational meeting was held. When the business was through, and it was proposed that we adjourn, I requested the little group to remain. I mooted the building of a manse, I mentioned that about the time the meeting convened there had been a new arrival in our home, and I did not feel justified in venturing another winter in our present quarters ... The matter was clinched by Mr. J.A. Clare. It so happened that one evening in January Mr. & Mrs. Clare, with a few others had been invited to tea and to spend the evening. It also happened--or may be it was specially designed by Providence--that this particular night of our house party was the coldest night of that cold winter. The official reading of the thermometer being 53.2 below zero. Mr. Clare recalled that otherwise pleasant evening, and stated that Mrs. Clare was afraid that her feet would actually freeze that night. That settled the matter. A committee was appointed to make a canvas, and to proceed with the work if the result of the canvas warranted. Six months later we were comfortably housed (108-110).

He was of course also a Churchman, and he wanted to be up to date. That meant having an organ. It happened in this way:

> [In] the spring of 1886 ... a stranger came to Sunday school [and] ... later to the regular [Church] service ... This stranger was Mr. Thomas Whitehead, who had come to open a general store in Neepawa, a gentleman of exceptional musical ability, trained in one of the city churches in England. He was a man of fine Christian spirit, with a fine appreciation of the praise part of public worship. Mr. Whitehead introduced himself and almost immediately suggested forming a choir, and a small choir was formed. Then he said, "Can't we have an organ?" Even at that date there were those in the Presbyterian fold who seriously objected to instrumental music in the services of the Sanctuary. A subscription list went quietly into circulation, and the response was cordial. In about three months, the organ arrived. There was no question about its use in Sunday School. But what about its use in the Congregation? The matter had never been discussed, officially by the session, or Congregation. The organ had developed spontaneously--had sort of come in on its own responsibility--some thought a vote of the Congregation should be taken as to its use. Mr. Whitehead never tried to force his ideas of church music on others. He understood. As we were about ready to open [one Sunday], he said to me, "What shall we do--wait for a vote or use the organ this morning?" "Give them Old hundred[th], very softly", I said. Mr. Whitehead had a beautiful touch and appreciation of musical expression. I announced "All people that on Earth do dwell", and "Old Hundred[th]" floated out sweetly upon the ambient air. It was evidently regarded a more appropriate <u>start</u>, than the clearing of the precentor's throat. The Congregation followed the new lead in a truly devotional spirit. There were two possible sources of opposition--<u>so we thought</u>. When the benediction was pronounced, Mr. John Dempsey, approached Mr. Whitehead who remained beside the organ, and said, "Man that's a fine one", and congratulated Mr. Whitehead on his skill. As Mrs. McNab passed through the door, she said, "What have they got that thunnerin' thing there for?" Our two suspected sources of opposition had been heard from--50-50 (112-14).

Would Mrs. McNab come on side?

> There never was any open opposition though Mrs. McNab did not become fully reconciled for some time. [A friend of Mrs. McNab's] ... spent the following winter at his old home in ... the part of Scotland from which Mrs. McNab had come. Immediately upon his return he visited the McNabs, and reported conditions in their old home community. Among other things he told how in all the Scottish churches there were organs. In fact Scotland was <u>farther advanced in the matter of instrumental music than Canada</u>. After that Mrs. McNab was

> quite satisfied with "that thunnerin' thing" called the organ, and when a movement was made to show material appreciation of Mr. Whitehead's fine leadership, her name was very near the head of the list (114-115).

Murray was also a social activist, and his chief cause in this regard was the temperance movement.

> What times we did have with the liquor problem. The Province of Manitoba, when first organized covered a very small area--Neepawa was not included. It was still a part of the North West Territories--where prohibition prevailed. As soon as the provincial boundaries were enlarged Neepawa took advantage of Local Option and remained under prohibition. Temperance sentiment was strong, but there were those who liked a dram. The general traffic did all in their power to break down local temperance sentiment, and to bring prohibition into disrepute. With open bar-rooms at Minnedosa, Carberry and Gladstone, it was easy to secure liquor. On public holidays and on Fair days, when people came from a distance, liquor flowed freely and visitors carried away an unfavourable opinion regarding the success of Local Option. From time to time tbere were convictions, but it was not easy to secure reliable evidence. On the occasion of an Election the law was [again] violated. Information was laid and a trial was arranged. Politics intensified the excitement. Though not guilty I was suspected of being the Informant. One evening I was in my stable fixing my pony for the night. It was midwinter, a man walked into the stable in agitated voice, said, "I came to ask you a straight question and I want a straight answer." "Did you lay that whiskey information?" "Well", I replied, "you are welcome to think anything you like on that matter." "You know where my sympathies are." "But if you didn't do it, why don't you say so, and clear yourself." "Well if I deny doing it, you will go and mount some one else, so the game may as well stop right here." My inquisitor became furious. He suggested removal of ribs from my backbone, with his boot heels. I intimated that he might find such surgery more difficult than he suspected. After more violence [in language] he retired. That evening he came to the manse with a subpoena, summoning me as a witness in the liquor case. The regular constable hesitated to deliver the summons and this other volunteered his service which was quite legal. If they got me into the witness box they might worm something out of me. When court opened, I was present, and the hall was packed. R.G. McBeth, then a young lawyer, later a prominent minister, came up from Winnipeg to defend the case. Immediately Mr. McBeth pointed out that this case was <u>ultra vires</u>, of a magistrate's court. Immediately the case was called off, and the name of the informant remained a secret (116-117).

Murray was also strongly oriented to the missionary expansion of Presbyterianism.

> My own work was not confined to the Neepawa Congregation. When I came to Manitoba, there were only four Presbyteries west of the great Lakes--and one of these--Regina--had been organized that summer. Brandon Presbytery covered half of Manitoba, and a large section of Saskatchewan--or what was then the North West Territories. There were few settled ministers, and young men undertook work, that in the east would have been done by men of riper years. In my second year I was appointed clerk of Brandon Presbytery. We had frequent meetings, and long drives. In addition to the clerical work I was usually convenor of some of the more important committees. When Brandon Presbytery was divided, I by act of Assembly was a member of the new Presbytery of Minnedosa. There was no question about the clerkship. By this time however the Synod clerkship had become vacant, and I had fallen heir to that work as well--a service that I continued to render for over twenty years. In 1892 ... the duties ... of convener of the Presbytery's Home Mission Committee ... were [also] laid upon me ... There were over sixty missions stations. To keep in touch with these and with the men in charge required time and energy. The grants had to be distributed, accounts kept, and many of the fields had to be visited (127-28).

Partially because it was the first pastorate, Neepawa was significant in style and substance, as well as in memory and reminiscence, for Murray's further career.

> Our roots had struck deep into the Neepawa soil. Here I was ordained, here I performed my first Baptismal service ... Here I first administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Here too I presided for the first time over a session, and here too I performed my first marriage ceremony. Here also our first children were born,[18] and here also we had our first baptism of sorrow when our little Bessie was taken from us--passing away on Easter Sunday, Apr. 2nd, 1893 (115-16).

It was in the same Riverside cemetery in Neepawa that was the final resting place of Mrs. Ella Phinney Murray, when she died in 1929,[19]

and of Murray himself, when he died in 1945.[20] In the same Neepawa Cemetery, the "body [of Margaret Laurence] is buried."[21]

It is tempting to take a short side-glance towards Margaret Laurence (1926-1987), especially noting in passing her grandfather, John Simpson (d. 1953). As a child, Margaret Lawrence hated and feared the man; and, as she admits, "devilized him for years."[22] John Simpson had married Jane Bailey "in Portage La Prairie ... in 1886 ... The couple [then] moved to the burgeoning town of Neepawa, where John became an undertaker, as many cabinet-makers did, and ran a furniture store."[23] John Simpson was to reappear in various guises in Laurence's work--he "models for Vanessa's Grandfather Connor [in A Bird in the House], and forms part of Hagar [in The Stone Angel] and Morag [in The Diviners]."[24] So even if the Scot John Simpson was not formally a Presbyterian,[25] Murray would have known John Simpson, the undertaker. Unfortunately, Murray never mentions him.

I am virtually skipping over Murray's long and successful pastorate in Port Arthur (1893-1911). Of course, it is deserving of some notice. Obviously, Port Arthur represented a great change for the Murrays. "I had been ushered into a new world ... I had been transferred to a fairly wide open community Centre. Here was a Lake Port, depending on shipping, fishing, lumbering, mining, prospecting, railroading, with a modicum of agriculture ... Many nationalities were represented (133). In Port Arthur, Murray dealt with some congregational difficulties over his views on Higher

Criticism. He chaired a contentious Board of Conciliation affecting workers in the cities of Port Arthur and Fort William, which Board was successful in averting a costly strike: "the confidence reposed [in me] was one of the richest rewards that have ever come to me" (155). His efforts in this regard garnered a congratulatory letter from the then federal deputy minister of labour, William Lyon MacKenzie King. It was during his tenure in Port Arthur that Murray was also awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by Manitoba College, Winnipeg.[26] Certainly his interest in, and service to, Home Mission work continued unabated. Murray himself related:

> Through all the years at Port Arthur I [was] clerk of Synod, which served to keep me in touch with the Presbyteries of Manitoba. I had been convenor of the Home Mission Committee of Superior Presbytery for years, and had the work at my fingers' ends, and membership in the Synodical Mission Committee gave me general knowledge of the work entrusted to my oversight (157).

C. District Home Mission Superintendent 1911-1920

Murray commenced his work as District Home Mission Superintendent for Manitoba late in 1911. Earlier in 1911, the General Assembly, in face of expanding work, had decided that in addition to Dr. J.A. Carmichael, Superintendent for Manitoba and Saskatchewan, "two [additional] superintendents be appointed for Manitoba and Saskatchewan and that their territories be defined by the Home Mission Committee of the Synods" of those two provinces.[27] Murray was one of those recommended. "I undertook the work on condition that I be given Manitoba as my district and that I be allowed to live in Neepawa. The conditions were granted ... I

resigned the pastorate of St. Paul's ... effective" 31 October 1911 (156). Dr. Carmichael, already in failing health, died in the autumn as well. As Murray put it,

> We [my colleague in Saskatchewan and myself in Manitoba] had been selected to assist ... but our leader had passed on. There were eight Presbyteries in Manitoba ... In view of the rapidly developing work in Saskatchewan, the mission work in Manitoba had note received the close oversight that was considered necessary, and each convenor had specially pressing work for the new District Superintendent (157).

There are several aspects of the work as District Superintendent that Murray mentions and illustrates, not only in his biography, but in a pamphlet issued by the Committee of the Forward Movement of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1920, entitled <u>The Challenge of the Prairie Provinces</u>.[28]

There was 'the stranger within our gates,' the witness to non-Anglo Saxons. To Murray, this was both a religious and cultural task. These folk, "in order to acquire Christian Canadian citizenship ... not only needed conversion, but ... required revolutionizing, mentally, socially and nationally ... A new environment, more liberal education of the young folk and contact with Canadian life, would tell in time" (158). About the Ruthenians, Murray wrote:

> They are not pagans; they are intensely religious. Their conceptions, however, have developed under conditions so different from ours that we have failed to appreciate the barriers in the way of their evangelization.[29]

Murray further relates:

> We had a Ruthenian Mission at Rossburn. There had been a change of minister. The new man was not efficient. I visited the field, attended service Sunday morning. At the close of service I was interviewed. They were not satisfied. "He no good. Can't teach noting." I said, "He seemed to speak well this morning, what was he preaching about?" "He no preach at all, just a lot o' speak." These people were hungry for knowledge. Many of them could not read. They needed oral instruction and the man in charge had little teaching power. He was succeeded by an educated man, who knew the scriptures and they appreciated his work (167).

Murray found increasing satisfaction with this phase of the work: "As the years passed I at least began to sympathize with these 'strangers within our gates', and I could enjoy their fellowship" (158). Murray makes no mention of the 1913 effort by the Winnipeg Presbytery to come to terms with, and make use of, ministers of the Independent Greek Church;[30] at least nineteen of whom of whom became ministers of the Presbyterian Church during the year following and who performed "quiet, faithful work."[31]

"Our Indian work," was also mentioned by Murray:

> The Boarding schools at Birtle, Portage la Prairie and the Lake of the Woods, and the Reserves at Beulah, Rossburn, Elphinstone, Rolling River, Pipestone, Swan Lake and Long Plains, also the Sioux village on Portage la Prairie. I had been in touch with the work at Portage since its beginning in 1886. The change in physical condition, ideals, and outlook, that have taken place in half a century, I suspect has been greater than had taken place in our forefathers in any corresponding period, and while the Indian Instincts persist, yet these people in fifty years have simply been revolutionized. They can never again sink to the level of those who participated in the "Minnesota Massacre" (168).

In the booklet at the close of his career as superintendent, Murray wrote:

> We have <u>old</u> Canadians as well as <u>new</u>. The Indians are Canada's oldest citizens. We are bound by civil contract, as well as Christian obligation, to educate and evangelize them. We have done something, but there is still much to be done. There must be no halting, but a forward movement all along the line for many years.[32]

Murray made certain definite assertions about progress, yet he did not assess his personal witness among the indigenous peoples, and there are no anecdotes about it.

Murray noted that during his superintendency "our city problems had grown rapidly" (159), but the only sustained treatment comes at the conclusion of his superintendency.

> What of the challenge of our growing cities? We know something of the moral conditions of old-world centres of population. Will we, in Western Canada, with all our God-given ground floor, build cities with reeking slums? We have the elements from which slums will develop, if we stand idly by. To prevent these moral plague spots, we must awaken now, for in a little while it will be too late. Surely we should build better than our sires! It future generations are to rise up and call us blessed, we must act quickly. In our urban centres non-Anglo-Saxon elements complicate the problems. In Winnipeg one school had pupils of twenty-four different nationalities! What is true of Winnipeg is true, in greater of less degree, in every Western city. Social unrest abounds. The only way to permanently allay this spirit is to meet it in the Spirit of Christ. Self-preservation challenges us to renewed consecration.[33]

Murray candidly admitted that "I was not adapted to the city work." Conversely, "the rural work was in good shape" (170).

Not surprisingly, Murray found greatest satisfaction in rural areas among Anglo-Saxons: "To me the rural work was most congenial and attractive":

> I had no difficulty in getting into sympathetic touch with farmers, visits to the outposts were not simply official. I would remain on a field several days. I would meet people in their homes, discuss with them their own problems, and explain to them the problems and the methods of the church. I made a personal canvas of scores of our mission fields and augmented charges, always with good results financially. The people thus got a wider vision, and came to realize that they were a part of a larger concern. There were weaker fields manned by students, stronger ones occupied by ordained ministers, and augmented charges, receiving a grant in aid, tho' ministered to by a man of their own choice. When a congregation was advanced to augmented status, and allowed to call their own minister, the tendency was to feel they had reached their goal. Many ministers shrank from urging increased contributions to salary, so that someone representing the church as a whole was required to show the way to self support (159).

Murray has several illustrations--the Sitz im Leben was always a situation in which a mission field or congregation was struggling, congregants were dispirited and could see little chance of more funding, funding which was urgently needed for other aspects of the work. The long pericope has Murray coming in, calling for a real canvass, and personally assisting in it. The miracle always happened in the way Murray had secretly felt it would and should. And there were many such situations, presbytery convenors continually clamouring for more of Murray's time.

There can be no doubt about Murray's ardor and zeal for the work. "More than one student missionary felt sore after his [Murray's] departure, as the results of vigorous tramps through the forests."[34] In 1916, "Dr. S.C. Murray ... addressed the Assembly, communicating much detailed and important information regarding mission work in the district under his care."[35] He himself wrote:

Again, Murray's witness tended to be in areas dictated by his personal needs and satisfactions rather than in an objective consideration of the demands of his post. Of course, there was always more to do than even his prodigious effort could surmount; and undoubtedly presbytery convenors were continually beckoning. Again, although in Port Arthur he was "suspected to heresy regarding Jonah" (149), Murray's efforts were not primarily theological in any profound sense. He was, after all, one of those chosen by Dr. James Robertson; part of whose success "was due to his deliberate policy of recruiting only young, robust and practical clergy as missionaries." As Robertson told his wife, 'I would far rather have a man know less Latin and more horse'."[40] Murray knew horse. Finally, from our perspective, Murray seems not to have distinguished between Christianizing persons and Canadianizing them--along lines Murray never fundamentally questioned. In short, Murray was largely a culture-Protestant.

In closing, I quote part of a tribute paid to Murray by Hugh McKellar in 1924. I pick up the quotation at that point when Murray was still in Port Arthur, at that point when the Superior Presbytery was organized and

> Mr. Murray became its Home Mission Convenor. This young presbytery extended from White River on the east to the boundary of Manitoba on the west and included the Rainy River District. Before the railroad had entered this district Mr. Murray had gone through all the settlements at least twice, reaching on the second of these trips as far as Mine Centre, forty miles east of Port Francis. He visited the majority of the homes in the pioneer settlements, before there were either churches or schools. He conducted services in private houses and in Government road camps. He baptized scores of children for the early settlers--when the only means of transport was

by canoe on the river or on foot over the bush trails leading to the settlements ... He had a hand in the organization of this entire district. He would be absent from his pulpit as long as three weeks--but his congregation was sympathetic and cheerfully accepted such supply as could be locally secured ...

It was this genius for hard work and organization that suggested Dr. Murray as Home Mission Superintendent for Manitoba in 1911. He resigned St. Paul's Church after a pastorate of eighteen years ... and gave eight and a half years' of hard work ... to the work of Superintendence, and once more realizing that the strain was too wearing, sought relief in a quiet rural pastorate at High Bluff and Prospect, where he has labored for the past four years.[41]

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NOTES

1. Samuel Crothers Murray, "A Biography [sic]" (ca. 1940). 195 p., holograph photocopy, United Church Archives, Toronto; typewritten transcript, Mount Allison University Archives. Original in possession of Mrs. Eleanor Phillips, Calgary, AB. In this essay, page citations from the "Biography" are included in the body of the text.

2. G.A. Colpitts, "Fifty Years in Ministry is Record of Dr. S.C. Murray," Winnipeg Free Press, 23 July 1932, 24.

3. Samuel Crothers Murray, "An Old Time Missionary by A Modern Old Timer" (ca. 1923), 5-7: holograph photocopy, 24 p. (provenance: Helen Dixon, Sackville, N.B.), typewritten transcript, Mount Allison University Archives, 2-5.

> [Rev. Alexander Clarke] came first to the city of St. John where he served for a time in the ministry. A few years prior to his arrival Mr. Matthew McMorris, had emigrated from the North of Ireland, and with his family had settled on Grindstone Island near the head of the Bay of Fundy. He went into the quarrying business, and with a small schooner carried on a coasting trade, frequently visiting St. John. On one of these occasions he met Mr. Clarke. An intimacy sprang up between these two fine Irish Covenanters. Conditions at the Head of the [Cumberland] Bay were discussed--the lack of gospel ordinances dwelt upon, and finally an urgent appeal was made to transfer the scene of his labors to the settlements forming near the Isthmus of Chignecto. It was a bold suggestion ... and eventually the appeal was responded to. There was no rail road in those days, nor roads of any other kind. The only way to reach this new field was by schooner ... He [Clarke] landed at Fort Lawrence and from that point made his way to the little Village of Amherst ... In the meantime Mr. McMorris had removed from Grindstone Island to Shemogue on the north shore [of Northumberland Strait]. Here a new settlement was forming--the settlers coming from Scotland and the North of Ireland ... McMorris kept in touch

with his friend, and in due time invited him to visit the North Shore. Once more the suggestion was acted upon, and the summer of 1829 witnessed the first visit of a minister to that part of the province.

4. See "Statement certified by S.C. Murray, July 20th, 1941," Shemogue Covenanter Collection, Mount Allison University Archives: Names of Communicants received by the Session of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, by Rev. S.D. Yates of Amherst in autumn of 1876, the year of the Division of the Presbyterian congregation. 1. W.Y. Chapman ... 5. S.C. Murray ... 8. McCurdy Stephens ... Certified by S.C. Murray, July 20th 1941.
See "Botsford News," Chignecto Post and Borderer (Sackville, N.B.), 2 November 1876, n.p.: "The Reformed Presbyterians held their sacramental feast, for the second time this year, in the Church on the 22nd [October] ult."

5. "Presbytery of Wallace," Presbyterian Witness (Halifax), 12 August 1876, 249.

6. The later ones were William Young Chapman (1859-1926), Roland Davidson (1864-1931) and John Yates (1879-1957).

7. Shemogue Reformed Presbyterian Session minutes: copy, Mount Allison University Archives.

8. See Eldon Hay, The Chignecto Covenanters: A Regional History of Reformed Presbyterianism in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, 1827 to 1905
(soon to be published--hopefully!).

9. The two have already been cited--Murray's "Biography" deals a good deal with Murray's Covenanter upbringing; his "An Old Time Missionary by A Modern Old Timer" deals exclusively with Rev. Alexander Clarke's early missionary career.

10. Atkinson studied theology at the Bangor Theological Seminary becoming a Congregationalist licentiate and, for a short time, a Unitarian minister. Leaving the Church altogether, the greater part of his career was spent as a journalist and publisher in California.

11. Frederick William Atkinson, The Disintegrating Church (New York, Broadway Publishing Co., 1911), 48-49.

12. F. W. Atkinson, "My grandmother" (n.d.), copy of holograph, sent to the author by Atkinson's daughter, Alice May Jordan of Watsonville, California, 19 December 1992.

13. "Before I got away the foundation was laid and the church [in Dorchester] assured" (81, 82).

14. "Foundation Stone Laid [at] Dorchester," Presbyterian Witness (Halifax), 4 October 1884, 316.

15. (Toronto, 1909), 261.

16. William Duncan and Mary (Duncan) Lane, "Our Presbyterian Heritage," 3 vols. (ca. 1964), 2: 124. Mount Allison University Archives. Three holograph notebooks (provenance: Doreen Lane, Moncton, N.B.) contain information about Reformed Presbyterian, United Presbyterian and United Church of Canada congregations in Shemogue.

17. P[ercy] N[orman] Murray, "The Rev. S.C. Murray Family," Kelwood Bridges the Years (1967). Rev. P.N. Murray (1886-1979) was a son of S.C. Murray.

18. Percy Norman, 31 March 1886 and Bessie Lavinia, 6 October 1891.

19. "Passing of Mrs. S.C. Murray," Neepawa Press, 18 June 1929, 1. Mrs. Murray died on June 13.

20. "First Minister Knox Church Buried Here Today," Neepawa Press, 15(?) November 1945, 1. Murray died 12 November.

21. Patricia Morley, Margaret Laurence: The Long Journey Home (Montreal and Kingston, 1991), 184.

22. Margaret Laurence, Dance on Earth: A Memoir (Toronto, 1989), 10.

23. Clara Thomas, The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence (Toronto, 1976).

24. Morley, Margaret Laurence: The Long Journey Home, 138.

25. See Margaret Laurence, A Bird in the House (New York, 1970), 17:

> Grandfather [Connor] had started out a Methodist, but when the Methodists joined with the Presbyterians to form the United Church, he had refused to go because he did not like all the Scots who were now in the congregation. He had therefore turned Baptist and now went to Grandmother's church [Baptist].

26. "Convocation at Manitoba College: Degrees Conferred," Manitoba Free Press (Winnipeg), 29 March 1907, 11: "Rev. S.C. Murray B.A., who was born in Eastern Canada ... was granted the degree of Doctor of Divinity." Secondary sources disagree as to when the honorary doctorate was conferred.

27. "Report of the Board of Home Missions, (Western Section) 1910-1911," Presbyterian Church in Canada Acts and Proceedings (Toronto, 1911), 10.

28. United Church Archives, Toronto.

29. "Work Among the Ruthenians," The Presbyterian Record 43 (February 1918): 36.

30. "Report of the Board of Home Missions, (Western Section) 1912-1913," Presbyterian Church in Canada Acts and Proceedings (Toronto, 1913), 7.

31. "Report of the Board of Home Missions, (Western Section) 1913," Presbyterian Church in Canada Acts and Proceedings (Toronto, 1914), 5.

32. The Challenge of our Prairie Provinces, n.p.

33. Ibid.

34. Hugh McKellar, Presbyterian Pioneer Missionaries in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia (Toronto, 1924), 81.

35. Presbyterian Church in Canada Acts and Proceedings (Toronto, 1916), 28.

36. All the children of S.C. Murray and Mrs. Ella Murray were Percy Norman (1886-1979), George Wishart (1887-1966), Heber Langille (1889-1965), Bessie Lavinia (1891-1893), Sarah Tryphena (Mrs. Morley Malyon) (1894-1978), Wilfred Crothers (1898-1954) and Sidney McMorris (1904-1962).

37. Western journalist G.A. Colpitts was a Chignecto native; he wrote at least two articles about Murray: see "Fifty Years in Ministry is Record of Dr. S.C. Murray," Winnipeg Free Press, 23 July 1932, 24, and "Dr. S.C. Murray, a Pioneer Minister of Manitoba, To Celebrate 80th Birthday," Winnipeg Tribune, 24 July 1937, 9. Brandon's Dr. Robert Harvey wrote "From Manitoba's History--Dr. S.C. Murray of Kelwood," Brandon Sun, 1 September 1962, concerning the opening of a church (on 29 May 1962) named after him--Murray [United] Church, in Oakland, Manitoba.

38. Although not directly mentioned in the Biography, there can be little doubt about Murray's opinions on the matter. He had served on the Joint Committee of the Presbyterian Synod and of the Methodist Conference in Manitoba: see "Co-operation in Manitoba--A Statement," Presbyterian Record 43 (March 1918): 68-69.

39. Excerpted from a letter written by Murray to his daughter, Mrs. Sarah Malyon, of Olds, Alberta, at the time of church union (provenance of copy: Mrs. Eleanor Higham, Winnipeg, Man.)

40. Cited by John S. Moir, Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2nd ed. (Toronto: 1987), 160.

41. Presbyterian Pioneer Missionaries, 81-82.

Presentations of Presbyterianism: The Presbyterian Church and Theology in L.M. Montgomery's 'Anne' series

by
the Reverend Heather Jones

Lucy Maud Montgomery was an active and committed Presbyterian all of her life. In her home town of Cavendish, Prince Edward Island, she was a Sunday School teacher and church organist and choir director. In 1911 she married the Reverend Ewan MacDonald, and continued her service to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The course of our church's history has been formed and lived by the thousands of people who have served in similar manner and with equal dedication.

However, Lucy Maud Montgomery was also a world-renowned author who portrayed all aspects of rural Canadian life in her novels and short stories. Reflecting the level of integration of church in society in the times in which her works are set, denominational loyalties and church activities are included in her works. The vast majority of her characters were Presbyterians. Within her twenty-one books and hundreds of short stories, lies a portrait of contemporary Canadian Presbyterianism. Whether or not it is an accurate portrait remains a question.

The works of L. M. Montgomery have been widely circulated throughout the world for almost eighty-five years, and have been translated into thirty-six different languages. Has there ever been any other world-wide promotion of our denomination? It is obviously useful for those interested in Canadian Presbyterian history to have some knowledge of how our church has been presented

to the world.

Thorough study of L. M. Montgomery's writing is made difficult by the sheer volume of works, and by the broad scope of subject matter. Within her many novels she has dealt with much that is pertinent to her portrait of Canadian church life. There is also a considerable amount of supportive documentation and secondary literature in the form of her multi-volume personal journals, published collections of much of her personal correspondence, biographies, and her own autobiography. The limits to the current study will be the eight novels of the "Anne" series. Supporting documents will receive only peripheral attention. The focus of the paper will be on the presentation of Presbyterian church and its leaders, and the theology that informs the various characters.

Each of these topics must first be set within the context of the series. Millions of people are now aware of the character Anne through the CBC/PBS television adaptation of the early books of the series, released almost ten years ago. However, this study will deal with the 'real' Anne found in the novels. When first introduced to the reader, Anne Shirley is an adolescent orphan from Nova Scotia who is adopted by a middle-aged brother and sister in Prince Edward Island. *Anne of Green Gables* tells the story of Anne's first years with the Cuthbert's, through to achieving her teacher's license and the eve of her teaching career. Subsequent novels describe her teaching years (*Anne of Avonlea*), her days at Redmond College (*Anne of the Island*), her years as Principal of Summerside High School (*Anne of Windy Poplars*), her early married life (*Anne's House of Dreams*), and her middle married life (*Anne of*

Ingleside). The last two books in the series focus more on Anne's children - their early years (*Rainbow Valley*) and the adolescence of Anne's youngest daughter, who 'grows up' during the first World War (*Rilla of Ingleside*). An appendix is included with this paper which gives a few details about the significant characters of the novels.

As mentioned, each of the novels portrays rural life in Prince Edward Island. Anne would certainly not be appropriately described as 'average', but it is still true to say that the background in which she lives her life is typical of Canadian village life at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.

When Anne first arrives at the Cuthbert's, she is "next door to a perfect heathen" (*Green Gables*, p. 52). She has been able to recite a few lines of the Westminster Catechism, but knows nothing about prayer. Through the Cuthberts, Anne receives an introduction to religious education and to Presbyterianism. Anne's initial impression of the church reflects many of the stereotypes which exist about Presbyterianism. Upon Anne's arrival at the church the young girls in her class whisper among themselves: "Nobody made any friendly advances." Anne's teacher "had taught a Sunday School class for twenty years" and is described as "stern". (*Green Gables*, p. 80) The Sunday School Superintendent leads prayer in the church. Anne explains why she didn't pay much attention: "He was talking to God and he didn't seem to be very much interested in it either. I think he thought God was too far off to make it worth while." (*Green Gables*, p. 81) Anne makes similarly incisive comments about the sermon:

> The sermon was awfully long too. I suppose the minister had to match it to the text. I don't think he was a bit interesting. The trouble with him seems to be that he hasn't enough imagination. I didn't listen to me very much. (*Green Gables*, p. 83)

The support that L. M. Montgomery gives this criticism in the book is reflected in Marilla Cuthbert's reactions to these speeches:

> Marilla felt hopelessly that all this should be sternly reproved, but she was hampered by the undeniable fact that some of the things Anne had said, especially about the minister's sermons and Mr. Bell's prayers, were what she herself had really thought deep down in her heart for years, but had never given expression to. (*Green Gables*, p. 83)

Early in Anne's stay at Green Gables, Avonlea church goes through a vacancy and calls a new minister. The kinds of criticisms offered of the supply and candidate ministers shows the kinds of criteria considered important in rural communities. Some of these points are clearly Anne's unique thoughts, particularly obvious when the comments are focused on the level of 'imagination' displayed. Mrs. Lynde, the community busybody and pillar of church and village life, is used to summarize the views of all other members of the community. Her criteria are "sound theology" and appropriate marital status (married). The minister who receives the call is approved of by all. Anne says:

> I'm very glad they've called Mr. Allan. I liked him because his sermon was interesting and he prayed as if he meant it and not just as if he did it because he was in the habit of it. Mrs. Lynde says he isn't perfect, but she says she supposes we couldn't expect a perfect minister for seven hundred and fifty dollars a year, and anyhow his theology is sound because she questioned him on all points of doctrine. And she knows his wife's people and they are most respectable and women are all good housekeepers. Mrs. Lynde says sound doctrine in the man and good housekeeping in the woman make an ideal combination for a minister's family. (*Green Gables*, p. 170)

Mr. and Mrs. Allan are not major characters, but their influence is significant throughout the first three books of the series. There are repeated references to them, but particularly to Mrs. Allan as a role-model for Anne and her friends. At one point Anne says "It's as good as an extra conscience to have a minister's wife for your friend" (*Green Gables*, p. 234)

Within these relationships, there is an emphasis on the value of the moral teaching of religion which seems to reflect something of L. M. Montgomery's own understanding of faith. At one point, Anne, when talking about writing stories with her friends, says "The moral is the great thing - Mr. Allan says so" (*Green Gables*, p. 211). At various points in collections of her personal correspondence, Montgomery refers to the importance which she invests in teaching morals through her fiction.

Much information is given throughout the series regarding the position that clergy have within society. There are many references to the expectations placed on ministers. In one instance, it is a casual comment that Anne's friend Miss Cornelia makes. In reference to the town doctor's lack of tact, Miss Cornelia says "If he'd been a minister instead of a doctor they'd never have forgiven him. (*Anne's House of Dreams*, p. 48) Another point through which these attitudes are made clear is in the stories of one of Anne's college classmates who becomes engaged to a candidate for the ministry. The chaperon aunt who lives with the four students says that 'Rev. Jo' is "very nice, but ministers ought to be graver and more dignified" (*Anne of the Island*, p. 163). Phil, the fiance of the man in question, counters the

assertion: "Can't a man laugh and laugh and still be a Christian?" The aunt replies "Oh *men*, yes, but I was talking about *ministers*."

Similarly, minister's wives are expected to be different from other 'mere mortals'. After Phil and Rev. Jo's engagement is announced, the Aunt Jamesina makes another comment: "If you are going to marry a minister, you will have to give up such expressions as 'dig in'". Phil responds "Why? Oh why must a minister's wife be supposed to utter only prunes and prisms?" (*Anne of the Island*, p. 205)

Readers get a taste of some of the difficulties that ministers' families face through the children of the manse in *Rainbow Valley*. When faced with the possibility of having to leave Glen St. Mary becasue too many people have stopped 'paying to the salary', Faith says

> "It's awful to be a minister's family. Just as soon as you get fond of a place you are torn up by the roots. I'll never, never, *never* marry a minister, no matter how nice he is." (*Rainbow Valley*, p. 107)

While the Presbyterian Church's attitudes and theology are depicted throughout the series in terms similar to those described earlier, the two main clergy characters are presented more favourably - more in line with the inclusive, loving God. The first significant clergy character is Mr. Allan of the earliest books, who is, in fact, secondary in significance to his wife as a character in the books. The second clergy-figure is Mr. Meredith, who first appears in the seventh book, *Rainbow Valley*.

Mr. Meredith, an eccentric widower with four children, is called to the local Presbyterian church in Glen St. Mary, where the mature Anne lives with husband Gilbert, and their six children. As

was shown in the description of Mr. Allan's arrival in Avonlea, discussions of the new minister reflect the values of the community with respect to clergy. Once again, marital status is considered important. However, during the search process, the Glen St. Mary people made the mistake of assuming that because Mr. Meredith spoke of his four children, he must be married. As Miss Cornelia, a Mrs. Lynde-like character, says of Mr. Meredith's widowed state

> "There's no Mrs. Meredith. That's just the trouble.... If we had known that I don't suppose we would have called him, for a widower is even worse in a congregation than a single man." (*Rainbow Valley*, p. 8).

Other descriptions of Mr. Meredith reflect other values:

> He is very nice - and very learned - and very spiritual. But, oh Anne dearie, he has no common sense!... Well, there's no doubt he is by far the best preacher we ever had in Glen St. Mary church, ... I suppose it is because he is so absent-minded that he never got a town call. His trial sermon was simply wonderful, believe me. Every one went mad about it. (*Rainbow Valley*, p. 8)

A good part of the rest of the book is filled with examples of Mr. Meredith's absent-mindedness and some of the results of it, as displayed in the behaviour of his children. Despite his extreme eccentricity, Mr. Meredith is still presented in a positive light in the book. In one incident in the book, Mary Vance, an orphan who has run away from her caretaker/employer who has been abusing her, has been living in the manse for a week without Mr. Meredith noticing. Miss Cornelia finally takes it upon herself to inform Mr. Meredith of the situation, and tells him that he must deal with it. Mary is called into the minister's study:

> Mary obeyed, looking literally ghastly with fright. But she got the surprise of her poor, battered little life. This man, of whom she had stood so terribly in awe, was the kindest, gentlest soul she had ever met. Before she knew what happened Mary found herself pouring all her troubles into his ear and

> receiving in return such sympathy and tender understanding as it had never occurred to her to imagine. Mary left the study with her face and eyes so softened that Una hardly knew her.
>
> Your father's all right, when he does wake up. It's a pity he doesn't wake up oftener.... But anything your father says goes with me after this. (*Rainbow Valley*, p.59)

Not all clergy in the Anne books are such positive characters. A minister who can be said to represent the established, conventional church visits Glen St. Mary for a pulpit exchange and is described as "certainly not handsome and a very tiresome, pompous sort of a person." (*Rainbow Valley*, p. 133) In the incident that follows, Mr. Perry is portrayed as something of a villain in the way that he behaves toward the Meredith children. Even though Mr. Perry speaks for the Presbytery in his attitude toward Mr. Meredith, he is not accepted by the people of the Glen. One of the adults, discussing Mr. Perry's visit with one of the manse children says "If a minister doesn't behave as a gentleman we are not bound to respect (him)." (*Rainbow Valley*, p. 140)

The difficulties that the Glen St. Mary church Board members have in dealing with their absent-minded minister also form a considerable proportion of the stories in the *Rainbow Valley* book. The picture of church life presented there is dominated by the need not to offend those who 'pay to the salary'. Those who are more solidly committed to the church put considerable effort into attempting to ensure that the precarious financial stability of the church is maintained. Various escapades of the children, and the unintentional neglect of the pastor often jeopardize the situation. These incidents make up much of the story line of the book.

Anne's own theology, which emerges over the course of the eight novels, does not refer to any particularly unorthodox

beliefs, but the emphasis is somewhat different than is found in most formal religious education. Possibly the most notable point is the almost total absence of references to Jesus Christ. While there are many references to religious topics and issues in the books, the foci are on God and the church. Anne, throughout the series in which she figures, is able to find God in beauty and peace of creation.

When Anne is first told to say her preayers at Green Gables, Marrilla tells her to kneel down. Anne obeys, but states

> "If I really wanted to pray, I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd go out into a great big field all alone or into the deep, deep woods, and I'd look up into the sky -up-up-up into that lovely blue sky that looks as if there was no end to its blueness. And then I'd just *feel* a prayer." (*Green Gables*, p. 51)

Later in the story, Anne works all night nursing her best friend's little sister who came down with croup when her parents and the doctors were away at a political convention. Anne, walking home through the glittering frost on the winter fields says "Oh Matthew, isn't it a wonderful morning: The world looks like something God has just imagined for His own pleasure, doesn't it?" (*Green Gables*, p. 144)

Near the end of the first book, Anne returns to Green Gables, having completed her teacher's course at the Academy. Marilla has set a rose in Anne's bedroom which Anne describes as "a song and a hope and a prayer all in one." (*Green Gables*, p. 290)

In the second book, *Anne of Avonlea*, after a day of excitement, Anne describes the scene she sees as she looks out the window: "Marilla, look at that big star over Mr. Harrison's maple grove, with all that holy hush of silvery sky about it. It gives

me a feeling that is like a prayer. (*Avonlea*, p. 149) On a walk with Diana to call on neighbours, the girls encounter a woods that they must travel through:

> They found a road leading into the heart of acres of glimmering beech and maple woods, whiehc were all in a wondrous glow of flame and gold, lying in a great purple stillness and peace.
> "It's as if the year were kneeling to pray in a vast cathedral full of mellow stained light, isn't it?" said Anne dreamily. "It doesn't seem right to hurry through it, does it? It seems irreverent, like running in a church." (*Avonlea*, p. 183)

In *Anne of the Island*, Anne and her friends take an afternoon away from their studies to go for a walk. Describing the pines of the park and the road that twisted and climbed around the harbour shore, Anne says "The silence here is like a prayer." (p. 46) On another walk in that same park later in the book, Anne again says "The woods were God's first temples. One can't help feeling reverent and aadoring in such a place. I always feel so near Him when I walk among the pines." (*The Island*, p. 173)

There is much that Montgomery says about other kinds of prayers throughout the books. Particularly when one of the characters is trying to explain God to children, questions about prayer are raised. In these discussions, the dominant picture of God is the loving, accepting, creator. While it is clear that the deep questions of theology are difficult for the young characters to struggle with, it is also apparent that the children must be assured of God's care for them, and God's willingness to hear their sincere prayers.

Perhaps the most lucid example of this is given when Una Meredith tries to explain to Mary Vance how God hears and answers

prayers The initial discussion takes place the first night that Mary is at the manse, when Una suggests that they should pray that Mary will not have to leave Glen St. Mary and return to her abusive home. Mary explains that she does say 'the old rhyme' every night, but

> 'I never thought of asking for anything in particular though. Nobody in this world ever bothered themselves about me so I didn't suppose God would. He might take more trouble for you, seeing you're a minister's daughter.'
> Una explains 'He'd take every bit as much trouble for you, Mary, I'm sure. It doesn't matter whose child you are. You just ask Him - and I will too.' (*Rainbow Valley*, p. 38)

A further feature of Presbyterianism portrayed in the last four books of the series is that of the rivalry between Methodists and Presbyterians. This theme is present, but very low key, in the first four books. With the introduction of Miss Cornelia in *Anne's House of Dreams*, the attention to the issue is significantly increased. It is interesting that this book was published in 1922. The two churches were heavily into negotiations regarding church union by this time. However, the setting of this book would have been a number of years earlier - somewhere around 1895.

Throughout the second half of the series, Miss Cornelia is a major character, and she espouses a deep-seated contempt for any one who is not Presbyterian, with special venom for Methodists. There are many other characters who moderate Miss Cornelia's views, but the basic attitude of denominational rivalry is taken for granted. There is development on the topic, however. The final book of the series (which was published earlier than *House of Dreams*) is set in the war years. Toward the end of that book,

there is a Union prayer-meeting proposed, to mark the sending off of the latest crew of army trainees. Miss Cornelia attends, and explains "I used to hate Methodists, but I don't hate them now. There is no sense in hating Methodists when there is a Kaiser or a Hindenburg in the world." (*Rilla of Ingleside*, p. 173).

There were many factors which affected the process of Church Union negotiations. L. M. Montgomery, who lived through those painful years, presents a believable, although unprovable, scenario. Whether or not the war had any significant effect on attitudes toward Church Union, it is at least true that Montgomery has portrayed an aspect of Canadian Presbyterian Church life to an audience which would otherwise know very little, if anything, about the issue.

Montgomery has painted a word picture of rural Canadian life which includes many scenes related to the church. Questions have been raised as to how accurately the picture represents Canadian Presbyterianism. Since the purpose of the novels was to entertain, not to explain the church, we must be cautious about our interpretations and extrapolations. However, it is reasonable to believe that since the description of the church is secondary - is an undercurrent rather than a theme - the presentation would not be a distorted one. The view we get of the church and contemporary theology is incidental, but the fact that these issues pervade the novels shows that Montgomery fully expected her audience to understand and relate to them. It is true the overall picture of the church is flattering, even attractive. It would seem that Montgomery has kept a promise made in one of her letters to "always

do what [she could] to help [the church's] cause."

There are many questions raised in this study, the answers to which would benefit the church and the student of history. This survey has provided an introduction. More detailed analysis of a larger range of Montgomery's work could raise further questions. Another possible area of further study could compare the work of Montgomery to that of Ralph Connor, who has dealt with some similar issues in some of his fiction.

Our church has an image created by it's presence in fiction. It serves us well, as members, to know what impressions of our church exist in society so that we can build on them, and so further the work of spreading our faith.

Appendix A - List of Characters

The following chart of characters may be helpful to those who are less familiar with the series. Characters are listed under the novel in which they take on significant roles in Anne's life, or in the communication of theological or faith issues.

Green Gables

Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert:
brother and sister, Anne's adoptive guardians.

Rachel Lynde:
neighbour, busybody, pillar of the church

Diana Barry:
neighbour, Anne's 'bosom friend'

Rev. & Mrs. Allan:
newly arrived minister and Sunday School teacher

Avonlea

Davy & Dora Keith:
6 year old twins distantly related to Marilla, adopted by her

Paul Irving:
student of Anne's

Gilbert Blythe:
was Anne's enemy in *Green Gables*, now her friend and colleague

Mr. Harrison:
new eccentric neighbour

The Island

Priscilla Grant Stella Maynard, Phillippa Gordon:
classmates and housemates of Anne's

Aunt Jamesina:
Stella's Aunt, lives with the students as chaperon

Jonas Blake:
student minister, becomes engaged to Phillippa

Windy Poplars

The Pringles:
dominant family in Summerside, originally enemies of Anne, but later 'won over'

Aunt's Chatty and Kate, Rebecca Dew:
residents of Windy Poplars, where Anne boards

Miss Elizabeth:
little girl next door, being raised by very stern grandmother

Catherine Brook:
vice-principal of Summerside High School

House of Dreams

Miss Cornelia:
neighbour, pillar of the church, man-hater, Methodist-hater

Captain Jim:
retired sailor, wise old man

Susan Baker:
housekeeper for Anne and Gilbert

Little Jem:
Anne and Gilbert's son

Ingleside
Walter, Nan and Di (twins), Shirley, Rilla:
Anne and Gilbert's other children
Aunt Mary Maria:
Gilbert's Aunt who visits for many months

Rainbow Valley
Rev. John Meredith:
new minister in Glen St. Mary
Jerry, Faith, Una, Carl Meredith:
the children of the manse
Mary Vance:
orphan girl found by manse children, adopted by Miss Cornelia
Rosemary West:
marries John Meredith (at the end of the book)

Rilla
Miss Oliver:
Glen St. Mary school teacher, boards with Blythes
Jims Anderson:
a 'war-baby' taken in by Rilla after his mother dies
Ken Ford:
Rilla's beau

THE ATTITUDE OF THE CLERGY

TO HIGHLAND SETTLERS IN UPPER CANADA

BY: ROBERT JOHN GORDON

The definitive history of the Scottish Highlanders' experience in Upper Canada has yet to be written. Indeed, with the exception of Marianne McLean's The People of Glengarry Highlanders in Transition, 1745-1820 published in 1991, little has been writen for some period of time. This paper, therefore, will examine one aspect of Highland settlement. Namely, the attitude towards Highland settlers along with the pivotal role played by the clergy in the use and preservation of Gaelic culture. In accepting their charge from the Glasgow Colonial Society, to become missionaries in Upper Canada, clergymen were fully aware of the attachment of the Highlander to his native tongue. In the wilderness of Upper Canada, a Gaelic society could and did in fact in many places exist. Moreover, the clergy were to find the Gaelic language a usefull instrument in the promotion of the Christian faith. Only to abandoned the language when it no longer served their purpose.

There was not a common experience regarding the need for emigrating. The Glengarrian, who came to Upper Canada in 1784, were refugees of the American revolutionary war. In 1804 Lord Selkirk attempted to found a Gaelic speaking settlement at Baldoon. Baldoon was to be peopled by Highlanders' from Sutherland who were among the first to experience the Highland clearances. That economic disruption that had depopulated the Highland's and replaced them with Blackface and Cheviot sheep. Commencing in 1818, Colonel Thomas Talbot, actively, promoted the settlement of Highlanders in Dundwich and Aldborough townships. These people came from Argyleshire. Once started, the chain reaction of following, kith and kin, sustained a momentum that enlarged the Gaidhealtachd (Gaelic speaking area) into surrounding townships. Moreover, this settlement, known as the Argyll Settlement, was to be supplemented by refugees from the illfated Selkirk settlement in the North West.

From the 1820s, a lessor known land speculator, Donald Cameron of Glengarry, Upper Canada, was engaged in importing poor Gaelic speaking Highlander. In Upper Canada land without people was virtually valueless.

Cameron had succesfully obtained permission from the Government of Upper Canada to settle Highlanders' from the overpopulated, and unemployed, Island of Islay, where following the Napoleonic war the kelp industry had collapsed. These settlers were placed in the townships of Thorah in the Home District, and Eldon in the District of Newcastle.

Finally, the potato famine that commenced with the failure of the crop in 1845 and continued for succesive years, resulted in an influx of destitute settlers. These settlers came from the islands of South Uist, Barra, and Benbecula in 1848,1849,and 1850. The majority of whom were Roman Catholic. In actuality these Gaelic speaking Highlanders' were deported by the infamous Colonel John Gordon. They were to settle in William township on lands of the Canada Company.

Transplanting the culture

Bheir mi nis anns a chromh-dhunadh
Cliu do righ nan airdean,
A dh'fhosgail dhuinne duthaich ur
'Us cuisean tha gu'r fabhar.
Faodaidh daoine cur'us buain
Gun uamhas romh na mail orr',
'Sdo'n duine bhochd chan'eil fo'n ghrein
'Ga fheum an tir is fhearr dha.
Hugh MacCorkindale.[1]

Now in conclusion I will render
honour to the God above,
who opened up for us a new country
and circumstances favourable to us.
People may sow and reap
without dread of rents,
and for the poor man there is not under the sun
a land better suited to his needs.

The Highlanders' need to honour God in their own native language is the most tangible expression of Gaelic culture to be practiced in what was a new land. Even without a clergy, the settlers gathered in their log homes and shanties to give thanks to the almighty; the service was conducted by elders. The arrival of a missionary invariably meant that the fiery cross, if not in fact, at least in spirit, was sent round a township announcing a meeting for worship the following day.

One such missionary was the Rev.John Carruther who on his first tour in 1832, rode 300 miles visiting 16 townships.[2] In ministering to the Highlanders Carruther laboured patiently, for he did not speak the Gaelic. At West Gwillimbury, on July 22, 1832, Carruther met with the Sabbath School, examined the children and youths on the Shorter Catechism and 20th chapter of the Book of Exodus. The examination was bilingual; "Questions and answers were given in both languages -viz Gaelic and English." In 1827 Carruther had taught day and Sabbath school in West Gwillimbury. He had been suceeded by John Mathewson as teacher of the Sabbath School, whom Carruther describes as " an excellent translator of sermons into the Gaelic tongue...".[3]

Carruther's diary reflects a sensitivity towards the Highlanders, (a trait not always found in the clergy.) On arrival in Thorah, on August 19,1833, when the settlers were in the midst of the harvest, Carruther realized that it was an inopportune moment to hold a public meeting for worship. Leaving his horse behind because of the poor conditions of the roads, Carruther proceeded to the township of Eldon. He was to record in his diary that tragedy had occured in June. A plague of caterpillars had done great damage to a number of farms. The hay, oats and corn crop had been devoured. There was no hay for the horses and cattle. Fields lay black and desolate. The settlers were forced to dig ditches, in what must have been a desperate attempt to prevent the insects entering their homes.4 The winter ahead would be difficult.

Carruthers' rides were to take him as far east as Reach township near Lake Scugog and as far North as Penetanguishene on Georgian Bay, where he held services for the 79th Regiment, a Highland Scottish regiment. Carruthers' rides also took him as far westward as Lake St. Clair. The Rev. John Carruther and other itinerant preachers, thus provided not only for the spiritual wants of their flock, but equally important, formed a cultural link with news and information among different Gaelic settlements. Therefore, despite distances of hundreds of miles, Highlanders were aware of each other,

and there was considerable internal migration.

Much of the early work carried out in ministering to the settlers was performed by catechists. Unable to perform the sacraments, baptisms or marriages it naturally followed that once a community had emerged from the forest, there became a need to build a church and attract a pastor.

In a letter to the Rev. Robert Burns, of Montreal, May 23, 1825, the Rev. John Burns appealed for assistance in filling a post at Martinstown, Glengarry. John Burns stated that the settlers were able to afford 200 pounds currency and provide a handsome Manse and Glebe of about 12 acres of land. It would be, however, a great advantage to be " able to officiate in Gaelic one half of the day as that language is generally spoke [Sic] by the lower orders of the old settlers."5

The Rev. John Burns letter reveals a great deal about prevailing attitudes of the day. To be unilingual, Gaelic speaking, was to be placed in a sub strata of class. Furthermore, the inference is that linguistically the English language is superior. The tone of Rev. John Burns letter suggests that in comparison to native-born Upper Canadians, people from the old country appear very clownish. What is more, they prefer a preacher to be able to deliver his sermons without reference to notes "...as they are generally averse to reading."[6]

Of course not all Gaelic-speaking people were literate in the modern sense of the word. That is, able to read or write their own language. Certainly many could read the Gaelic language. The widespread use of the Gaelic Bible is evidence of that. Carruther, while visiting Zorra, a Highland community in October 1833, says how upon entering a log building without doors, fireplace or windows, " I was struck with the number of persons closely seated together on boards and benches to the number of nearly two hundred, with their Bibles in their hands".[7]

What the Rev. John Burns failed to take into account is that until the latter part of the 18th century, Gaelic was largely an oral language. Those

who addressed gatherings, such as storytellers and bards, were held in high esteem. Committed to memory was the genealogy of a people. Recorded deep in memory were the triumphs, tragedies and customs of the past. A man who was expected to hold the attention of many people was not judged on his ability to read, but on his ability to speak, and for a preacher this could be for two or three hours. Although the Gaelic Bible and other religious works were in existence, the Gaelic culture was still in transition, between an oral and literate state. Thus it was not unusual that clergymen would be viewed through traditional eyes, and judged accordingly.

It would be unfair, however, to single out John Burns alone, for the Rev. William Proudfoot, of Iderlton, near London also had strong views regarding the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders. Proudfoot was a Presbyterian of the United Secession Mission, a Scottish Lowland-based church. Proudfoot did not speak Gaelic and would appear to have very little patience in understanding the people. On November 22, 1835, Proudfoot preached in the home of Thomas Smith at Tilbury. Following the service twenty-seven members present signed a petition requesting a supply of sermon.
Much to Proudfoot's disgust, the Highlanders refused to sign the petition. As members of the church of Scotland they wanted their own institution where services could be held in their own native language. Proudfoot recorded in his diary. "These ignorant Highlanders are a hinderance to improvement wherever they go - about them there is an obstinacy which nothing can move and then that Gaelic - alas for the Gaelic!"[8]

Even when a Highlander happened to be bilingual, the preference was to worship in the Gaelic language. On January 16, 1836, Proudfoot interviewed a Mr Thomson, late of Nova Scotia, who wanted to have his child baptized. Proudfoot explained that according to the confession of faith baptism was not possible, unless Thomson became a member of his church. Thomson was agreeable. However, because it was the custom to give a testimonal of good standing to anyone moving to another congregation, upon the conclusion of

their discussions, Thomson asked that if a Gaelic minister came to the district, would he be free to transfer to another congregation. Proudfoot's response was adamant: not if the Gaelic minister was of the Church of Scotland.[9]

This attitude between branches of Scottish churches in Upper Canada, was a divisive segment of Highland settlers' society. In 1821 the people of Beckwith township, Lanark County, petitioned the Presbytery of Edinburgh, Scotland, for a Presbyterian minister. The petition was prepared by the Rev. William Bell of Perth in Lanark County. Fifty-four names were subscribed promising to pay two bushels of wheat yearly. Bell wrote that money for the past year had almost disappeared. It was necessary to resort to barter. There were stringent requirements, the minister had to be a medical practitioner able to "expound the Scriptures". It was necessary for him to speak both English and Gaelic.[10] With the merest hint of possible troubles ahead, Bell wrote from Upper Canada that disputes on "the subject of the Kirk have not yet been introduced among us."[11]

The man who answered the call, the Rev. George Buchanan, M.D. was to move from the sophistication of Edinburgh to the backwoods of Beckwith. Born in 1761 on a farm at Cuspar-Angus, Buchanan grew up bilingual in Gaelic and English. An honours graduate of the University of Edinburgh, Buchanan was fluent in Latin, Greek and Hebrew.[12] Buchanan, his wife and ten children sailed from Greenock in May 1822, aboard the Earl of Buckinghamshire along with four or five hundred passengers. The voyage has been described as tedious taking thirty-eight days to reach Quebec. Even more tiring was the journey by barge up river, the boats were pulled by horses through the canal at the Lachine rapids. The Buchanans destination was Franktown, Upper Canada, which they believed to be a village. Franktown consisted of three shanties in a clearing and McKim's log tavern.[13]

Buchanan's first service in Beckwith was not held in a church, for none had been built. A number of trees had been felled, the stump of one sawn

flat, upon which rested the Bible. Logs, were drawn up facing the "pulpit" upon which sat the congregation. The first service was in English, followed by an intermission for lunch, and the same congregation reassembled to listen to the Gaelic service. For many in the congregation it was an emotional occasion, as many Highlanders held that Gaelic is the language that "the devils don't understand and the angels praise God in."[14]

In June 1824, William Bell, the unilingual Presbyterian minister at Perth, invited Buchanan to assist in giving the sacraments in Gaelic at the morning service. In the afternoon service, before a packed church, Buchanan held a Gaelic service. The first Psalm given, was the popular One Hundredth, " Togadh gach tir ard-islach ghlavidh, do Dia Jehobah mor."[15]

The Rev. George Buchanan laboured arduously for twelve years before the dissention referred to in Bell's 1821 letter emerged in Upper Canada. After Buchanan's congregation had taken the decision to erect a comfortable stone church, a schism emerged Buchanan was asked to join the Old Kirk (that is the Church of Scotland) if he expected to preach in the new edifice. Buchanan a member of the United Secession Church refused to abandon his principles, that church and state should be seperate, and despite his years of loyal service as a pastor, a doctor and teacher, he was shabbily treated.[17]

A cowardly and dishonest anonymous letter to the Glasgow Colonial Society, from Beckwith, September 28, 1831, claimed " The present minister [George Buchanan] is disesteemed and he cannot preach in Gaelic."[18] In a letter written by the Rev. Matthew Miller, of York, Upper Canada, to the Secretary of the Glasgow Colonial Society, November, 1832, Miller tells of having visited Beckwith while the stone church was being roofed. The church became known as the church of the "Cross Keys" Miller relates that it was expected to be seated and ready for public worship within two months. Furthermore, Miller acknowledges the presence of a seceding minister (Buchanan is not named)

> ... but though this is a certainly a delicate point for me to touch upon I feel it right

> to say that his presence diminishes in no respect the urgent need which there is for a minister of our church in the township, for in addition to the circumstances of his being old and infirmed, the people considered themselves aggrieved from the first by his settlement among them,.... confirmed by his presence in their desire for a minister from the Church of Scotland.[19]

clear that the Church of Scotland was expansive in that it did not discourage dissidents; rather by attempting to accommodate the malcontents, it made the provision of Gaelic-speaking ministers more difficult, while at the same time duplicating the Christian communities spiritual resources. In requesting a minister from the Church of Scotland, the discontented Presbyterians of Beckwith asked that a supply of Gaelic Bibles, Testaments and Psalm books be included.[20]

In the London district, William Proudfoot and his associate the Rev. Mr. Skinner were handicapped by their inability to speak Gaelic and the tenacity of the Highlanders to cling to the Church of Scotland. Proudfoot was to write that Skinner did not have as great an amount of work to perform as had been expected. The eastern flank of his district consisted of "Free Will Baptists" who were Gaelic speaking, and in the centre, a large settlement of Scotch Highlanders, "...whose language shuts them out from the means of getting information respecting a better system."[21]

Despite Proudfoot's unmistakable dislike of his fellow countrymen's language, he was perfectly aware that it was necessary to attract bilingual ministers to the United Secession Mission. Through contact with a Gaelic-speaking, Nova Scotian, James McDonald, Proudfoot learned that there were graduates from McCulloch's Academy at Pictou Nova Scotia.[22]

The correspondence that transpired was trans-Atlantic, between the Rev. William Purdie in Scotland, the Rev D. McCulloch in Nova Scotia and Proudfoot in Upper Canada. As a result two Nova Scotian born, ordained ministers, Alexander McKenzie and James Fraser,[23] "...acquainted with the Gaelic language..." were induced to emigrate to Upper Canada.[24]

James Fraser arrived November 12, 1834, and delivered his first Gaelic sermon four days later, in the home of a Mr. D.McDonald, to an audience of 40 people. Later that day Fraser preached in English at Nixon's schoolhouse, 7th Concession, to about 80 people. Among the various mission stations that Fraser served, Gaelic and English congregations were in a ratio of two to one, English predominating.[25]

Riding into the township of Lobo, November 28, 1834, to preach the Gaelic, Fraser encountered the fanatical Baptists. He was to record in his diary "I fear the prospects of a station in Lobo are dark." Without their own church, many of the Baptists made their way to Aldborough and worshiped with the Church of Scotland. On December 11, 1834, Fraser journeyed on horseback 45 miles to the Scotch Settlement on the London & Goderich road, where he preached to 20 people in Gaelic and baptised two children.

December 27, 1834, the Rev. James Fraser attended a meeting of the Presbytery of the Canadas in Toronto. Fraser stayed at the Russell Abbey Hotel, at the corner of Princess and Palace Street. The following day, Sunday, Fraser preached by candlelight in English and afterwards, "in Gaelic to about 3 dozen of folk".[26]

Fraser was particularly active in January 1835, applying for his certificate from the Court of Quarter Session to enable him to perform marriages. A contentious procedure instituted by Lt.Governor Simcoe, that gave the established church, John Strachan's Church of England, rights unavailable to other protestant sects. That is, the right to perform marriages and baptisms. The statute was successfully challenged by the Church of Scotland on the basis that they too were an established church of the United Kingdom. Fraser's other activities included the encouragement of Temperance Societies. He addressed the Union Temperance Society, near London, and shortly afterwards heard of a Mr Cox, who consumed too much whiskey, who fell off his chair and almost immediately expired. Fraser was convinced that no more powerful argument could be made for combatting intemperance.[27]

As an itinerant missionary, Fraser visited Flamborough West in the township of Puslinch, Gore District. As a Gaelic preacher he was joyously received, but not rapturously enough for the Highlanders to switch their allegiance from the Church of Scotland to the Secessionist Church. In a report to William Peddie, Secretary of the church in Edinburgh, he confessed that although the Highland settlement was large, they were all attached to the old establishment, the Church of Scotland.[28]

But when the call did come from West Gwillimbury for James Fraser to take up a permanent congregation, he hesitated. His wife had just given birth to a child, and at that time Fraser was of the opinion that the journey would be too exhausting for her. In responding to Adam Goodfellow of West Gwillimbury Fraser wrote on June 19, 1835, regarding finding a station and his hopes that,

> ...a promising should open up soon in a place where I should not be under the necessity of laying aside the use of my mother tongue I should certainly In clear conscience bound to allow that consideration to have a great weight in the decision to which I shd [Sic] come with respect to the Highland folks in this place...[29]

By August 1835, the Rev. James Fraser had accepted the call from Adam Goodfellow. For two dollars a month Fraser had rented a small log house on the 5th Concession, West Gwillimbury. Fifty acres of land had been purchased on the 6th Concession, and the congregation had subscribed 43 pounds to build a meeting house. In June, Fraser attended the Newmarket fair and purchased a cow.[30]

The problem of providing bilingual missionaries and ministers to presbyterians in British North America fell largely upon the shoulders of the Glasgow North American Colonial Society which was established in 1825. This Society was later to shorten its name to the Glasgow Colonial Society. In order to attract Ministers, student preachers and teachers, advertisements were inserted in newspapers. The most frequent paper employed was the Inverness Courier.

In a letter dated March 23, 1829, to the Rev. David Welsh, a member of the Society, Don M'Gillvray of Lochgorthead, By Cairndow, suggested the name of Alexander Ross, a school master, as a suitable candidate. At the time, Ross was teaching at Kincardine by Bonnar Bridge in Ross-shire. In M'Gillvray's estimation Ross was superior to other candidates who had been sent to America. Not only would Alexander Ross be useful in establishing schools, but he could debate with Catholics intelligently.[31]

The Society obviously found Alexander Ross's credentials satisfactory. An offer of a bilingual Gaelic and English congregation at Dundas and neighboring districts in Upper Canada, was made to him March 28, 1829. Ross accepted, and had every intention of sailing in June following his anticipated ordination into the Church of Scotland 3[2] Furthermore, Ross recommended to the Society two other suitable candidates desirous of settling near Dundas. David Ross, who had been teaching a parochial school at Logie, and whose strengths lay in teaching "English grammatically" had made some progress at Latin, and was well versed in mathematical science. The second candidate recommended by Alexander Ross, was John Shaw, a Gaelic teacher who had been working for the Gaelic Society in a remote parish. Shaw was well versed in the principles of religion and Ross suggested he could be employed as a Catechist.[33]

It is clear by a letter directed to the Society, May 22, 1829, when he was not yet ordained, that Ross had to delay his departure for Upper Canada. Also it was necessary for him to find a substitute school master, something that might not be achieved by Martinmus. The Society had made other arrangements and Ross expressed his keen disappointment at not being able to accompany a Mr. Little to Dundas and Aldborough.[34] Fortunately these problems were resolved sooner than expected. For on July 9, 1829, aboard the ship "Smity" in Greenoch Sound, the newly ordained, Rev. Alexander Ross was about to sail for Montreal. In writing a letter of appreciation to the Society, Ross expressed his satisfaction at the arrangements made. Only one thing had

gone awry. In Glasgow, Ross had been given an English Bible. The night before sailing friends rectified this error, and delivered to him a Gaelic Bible.[35]

Alexander Ross arrived in Aldborough about September 20, 1829. The congregation had failed in their promise to provide a church or manse. Indeed the congregation members were in conflict with each other because some had started to build a log house, in Ross Alexander's words, " as an apology for a church....". The majority wished to erect a more suitable edifice at a location three miles distant. It was Ross's opinion that the congregation would be unable to meet his stipend of 100 pounds. The cost of building the church and the poverty of the Highlanders, whom Ross thought might be only able to raise 60 pounds. The answer, and the theme was constant throughout Ross's correspondence with the Society, was for the British Government to assist in the support of the church. Ross advocated that the Church of Scotland be given the same official status as the Church of England. Indeed Ross suggests applying pressure on the British Government through the General Assembly in Scotland, and through a memorial to the Lt.Governor of Upper Canada Sir John Colborne.[36] Although Alexander Ross does not preclude the necessity of his being removed to another station, his preference was to remain at Aldborough because "...there is no other congregation of the Church of Scotland between Ancaster & Dundwich, a distance of more than 200 miles...".[37]

Ross was to find that in a pioneer setting his Highland congregation lacked sophistication. The Sabbath was celebrated in the same slovenly clothes in which they had cut down a tree or ploughed a field. Clearly, Ross failed to appreciate the hardship of pioneer life. Writing in February 1831, Ross said the minds of the people still laboured under a heavy weight of ignorance and backwardness.[38] But not withstanding this image, Ross does record some improvements. Up until 1829 they could hardly obtain any money for their produce, now in 1830, the congregation had subscribed 200 pounds.[39] No Catholics had been found, to debate rationally with, instead Ross reported

the existence of "fanatical Baptists" in Lobo township. These settlers walked to Aldborough, and joined his congregation in worship. Furthermore, Ross had ordered from Scotland 30 Gaelic Psalm books and the same quantity in English.[151]

The great difficulty for all branches of the Presbyterian Church in Upper Canada was that their adherents belonged to two different linguistic groups. Scots they might all be but culturally, the Highlander, with a distinctive language and culture had no more in common with a Scottish Lowlander than with an Englishman. Belief in the one God was the only common denominator. Since census records indicating ethnic language were not instituted until 1930, it is difficult to determine whether Highland or Lowland Scot predominated. This writer is of the opinion that the Highlander was in the majority, although confined to the very edge of settlement.

In 1833, the Glasgow Colonial Society sent out to Upper Canada the Rev. Peter Macnaughton. Macnaughton arrived in Thorah and Eldon townships May 23, 1833 and immediately commenced preaching. On June 2, 1833 a public meeting was held, the purpose of which was to determine how much support could be mustered to establish a Church of Scotland. Support for this establishment was forthcoming. However, a controversy erupted over whether Macnaughton should be offered a ministerial charge for life, as was the custom in Scotland. Most of those at the meeting balked at such a suggestion. The Highlanders suggested instead that Macnaughton be placed on trial, for a limited number of years. To Macnaughton this was unacceptable. In a counter offer, Macnaughton suggested that the power of re-electing him be vested in the full communion with the church. At the time negotiations had been conducted between Macnaughton and elders. Once again the Highlanders rejected this suggestion, making it clear that if they were to provide his salary, they retained the power to remove him if he proved unsatisfactory.

While acknowledging that there was some people of piety. Macnaughton wrote to the secretary of the Society, August 27,1833.[40]

> ...the generality of the people of Thorah & Eldon seemed to me to be rugged as the rocks they left in Scotland and wild as the forests they possess in Canada. They seemed much given to drink, and if I judge from what I witnessed, a few of them are given to fight. Free from the restraints of religion & education they are growing up like wild beasts.[41]

This is an interesting description of the people of Thorah and Eldon. Like the people thus described Macnaughton is a Highlander, a member of the clergy, and bilingual. Macnaughton clearly expected to be treated as befit his station of life in Scotland. It must have been a rather humbling experience to be rejected by such "wild beasts". Fortunately, we are able to form our own opinion, since the very same year the Rev.John Carruther ministered among the settlers. John Carruther has left us a different impression. On more than one occasion, during winter and summer, Carruther visited the settlement. He described the gathering of the harvest, as well as the celebration of the Sabbath, and the service conducted in Gaelic by elders. Carruther's image is of God-fearing, industrious people.

Macnaughton did find himself a church ministering to the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders of Vaughan township. The congregation of Vaughan Presbyterian church accepted Macnaughtons' terms of employment for life, but in the ensuring negotiations an elder stated that he had never heard of any people in Canada who bound themselves so long.[42] In 1848, the Rev. Peter Macnaughton left Vaughan for Pickering, leaving behind a dispute as to the proportion between Gaelic and English preaching that was to be used.[43]

William Rintoul, minister of the Church of Scotland at Streetsville, Upper Canada, regretted that in sending out missionaries it was desirable that a minister have a knowledge of Gaelic, for as he observed "...the Highlanders cluster together in the same settlements, and, are, as you know, very tenacious of their native speech."[44] While in York four years earlier, 1831, in requesting books from the Society, Rintoul wrote that "...a Proportion of them should be of Gaelic Tracts."[45]

Another observer of Gaeldom was the Rev.Matthew Miller, who had visited

Vaughan township. Miller noted that many desired to have a Gaelic-speaking minister, and yet, with the exception of a number of older people, all understood English. Indeed because of their desire to obtain a minister, they were prepared to compromise, and accept a preacher who had not one word of Gaelic. From this Miller concluded that their attachment to language was not as strong as indicated.[46]

Bilingualism of course is a valuable asset. But it is important to view Gaelic in its proper perspective. The language was used in the home, in social gatherings, on the farm, in taverns and at the crossroads. Wherever Highlanders congregated Gaelic was a living culture. Its nadir was at the church and church functions. At such times hundreds gathered, men women and children of all ages. The acceptance of an English-speaking preacher can only be viewed as the first step in the erosion of an older culture. The impact would fall on the next generation, the children.

Miller's feelings may have been tempered by the fact that he saw the church in crisis. If the Church of Scotland could not provide preachers, some other sect would. He was opposed to the use of Gaelic in mixed linguistic groups where he argued that the majority would not understand. To bolster his argument Miller cited the experience of a Yonge Street Church, where, he reported, there was, " a good deal of dissatisfaction."[47]

Although it was Miller's belief that "...it is not desirable that there should be preaching in Gaelic..." Miller was forced to recognize that in some townships Highlanders were in the majority, and that it was among these settlements that other sects were active in recruiting a following. Thus Miller conceded, "...the charm of their native tongue would be irresistible & would probably be the means under God of saving them from delusion". To this end he recommended 2 or 3 more Gaelic speaking preachers, from Perthshire and Argyllshire.[48]

Miller's request that the clergy come from the counties of Perthshire and Argyllshire is interesting. Clearly, Miller was aware of the linguistic

differences in Gaelic brought about by isolation in the home country. These peculiarities of language, vocabulary, pronunciation, and idiomatic nuance, were transferred to Upper Canada. What was considered clannishness, was the desire to be comfortable, even in a Gaelic language atmosphere.

But it is important to recognize that the preference for the use of English by Rintoul and Miller was symptomatic of the prevailing attitude in Scotland. As early as 1616, an Act was passed calling for the establishment of parish schools, every attempt should be made to "abolish and remove" the Gaelic language. The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge instructed its teachers in 1701, throughout its charity schools to discourage pupils from speaking Gaelic. Indeed some members of the Society opposed a complete translation of the Bible into Gaelic, because it would perpetuate the distinction between Highlander and Lowlander.[49]

Clearly, it can be seen that the same rational can be applied to the Church whose congregation, in many cases, was divided by language. Rintoul's and Miller's preference for English would, as the passage of time has proven, resolve what was seen by many as a language problem. No longer would it be necessary to provide a bilingual ministry in Upper Canada.

But Gaelic is a tenacious language. At Knox Church in Zorra, where for the first forty years of the church's life, Gaelic, reigned supreme over the English language. The death of the pioneer generation, the establishment of a common school system, and the attitude of the church, all played a part in Gaelic's demise. The traditional time of starting the Gaelic Sabbath service at 11.00 o'clock, surrendered to English in 1873. Gaelic services commenced at 1.00 o'clock, not without much anguish on the part of the congregation. It was a recognition that the younger generation was losing its familiarity with the Gaelic tongue.[50]

The death of Gaelic was not sudden in Zorra despite the change in the order of service. The Rev. Gustavus Munro, born in Glengarry County, had been brought up in a Gaelic environment. Munro carried out fortnightly prayer

meetings up until about 1913 or 1914.[51]

Finally, this paper has not addressed the Gaelic speaking Baptists or Roman Catholics because they were less numerous than the Presbyterians. What is evident is that the church played a major institutional role in Gaelic life. Unfortunately its interests lay not in the secular life, but in the spiritual life of those it served. Despite the undoubted love by many ministers for their native tongue, this love did not transcend the objectives of the church; Gaelic served briefly as the churches' means to an end. The church did not involve itself consciously in the promotion or preservation of a culture. When Alexander Ross referred to the gross ignorance of his flock, he referred to their religious knowledge. As a former school teacher one might have expected Ross to have broader views. What then emerges is a picture of a bilingual elite, its persons of influence being not adverse to cultural change.

Notes

1. M.Macdonell The Emigrant Experience (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1982) p144-5.

2. J.Carruther Retrospect of Thirty-Six Years' Residence in Canada West (Hamilton: 1861) p12.

3. Carruther Ibid p6.

4. Carruther Ibid p159.

5. Glasgow Colonial Society Papers United Church Archives transcript 1.17

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7. Carruther Retrospect p63.

8. W.Proudfoot "The Proudfoot Papers" p153. Ontario Historical Society Vol 29.

9. W.Proudfoot "The Proudfoot Papers" p125. Ontario Historical Society Vol 30.

10. J.B.Campbell The Pioneer Pastor
(Franklin, PA: John L.McLaurin,1905) p10.

11. J.T.Kirkland Archives of Ontario
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12. Campbell The Pioneer Pastor p10-11.

13. Campbell Ibid p16.

14. Campbell Ibid p20.

15. Campbell Ibid p21-22.

16. E.A.McDougall Glasgow Colonial Society
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17. Campbell The Pioneer Pastor p41.

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21. S.D.Gill A Thesis presented to Guelph University
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"A Scottish Devine On The Frontier of Upper
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23. James Fraser Diary James Fraser 1834-1837 p27.
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25. Fraser Ibid

26. Fraser Ibid

27. Fraser Ibid

28. Fraser Ibid

29. Fraser Ibid

30. Glasgow Colonial Society Letter 45.

31. Ibid Letter 52.

32. Ibid Letter 67.

33. Ibid Letter 69.

34. Ibid Letter 82.

35. Ibid Letter 21.

36. Ibid Letter 116.

37. Ibid Letter 11.

38. Ibid Letter 138.

39. McDougall Glasgow Colonial Society "Transcriptions from Dr.E.A.McDougall" 1V.189

40. McDougall Ibid 1V.189

41. McDougall Ibid !V.189

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43. McDougall Glasgow Colonial Society "Transcriptions from Dr.E.A.McDougall" V.202

44. McDougall Ibid 111.63

45. McDougall Ibid 111.65

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48. Charles W.Dunn Highland Settler A Portrait of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1953) p34-35.

49.W.D. McIntosh One Hundred Years in the Zorra Church (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1930) p70.

50. McIntosh Ibid p49.

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From Here to Modernity: Identity in The United Church of Canada*

A.J. Armstrong and David J. Goa

In 1925, the United Church of Canada was formed through the union of the Canadian Methodist Church, the Congregational Churches of Canada, and the majority of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The resultant Church became a vital force, both as the largest Protestant denomination in Canada, and as an outspoken member of Canadian public life. The United Church has, since its inception, identified itself as a distinct and authoritative Canadian Church. However, Canadian self-understanding and expression have evolved, as have its cultural institutions. There has been, over the last sixty-eight years, a strong shift both in the United Church' role in society and in its conversation with its own tradition. What has emerged is a distinction between the tradition founded in the experience of congregants and the mandate, as an institution, to be the voice of a national conscience. Ultimately, this is manifested as a tension between what the church remembers itself to have been and what it imagines it must become:

> ... the protestant churches in the nineteenth century are usually pictured as having a centrifugal momentum. By their missionary activity, every move they made seemed to spin them out from a spiritual centre through a competitive principle to divisions all over the world.

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* This paper is the first of three studies growing out of the authors' research and collection project on the cultural memory and living tradition of the United Church of Canada. This is a joint project of the Provincial Museum of Alberta and the Alberta and Northwest Conference Historical Society of the United Church of Canada. The authors are grateful to the Historical Society and its President, Rev. Dr. Stephen Wilk, for the opportunity to work together on deepening the understanding of the challenges and genius of the United Church.

> In the twentieth century, their momentum has been centripetal: they noted the limits of their competition and division, experienced frustration in mission around the world, and began to draw back together in the ecumenical, or Christian Unity, movement.[1]

Origins

John Webster Grant observed that the 1925 union was the culmination of a long series of unions within the three denominations, and was the result of a Protestant concern to develop a national Church which began in the nineteenth century.[2] The Union itself was the result of a complex series of discussions, debates and controversy which goes back at least to 1904. Many of the difficulties arose because this was the first union attempted across denominational lines. There was deep concern among many members of the three communions that they were giving up their traditional identities in favour of an administratively composed union whose utility had yet to be proven.

Within the Presbyterian Church, this concern was reflected in a well-organized and erudite movement to prevent what they perceived as the destruction of the grand tradition of Presbyterianism. This anti-unionist movement emerged not as a critique of the other uniting denominations, with whom they maintained cordial relations, but as an energetic critique of those elements within the Presbyterian Church who actively campaigned for it to cease to exist. The anti-unionists' "purpose was to defend

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[1] Martin E. Marty, Protestantism in the United States: Righteous Empire (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), p. 237.

[2] see John Webster Grant, The Canadian Experience of Church Union (London: Lutterworth, 1967), esp. ch. II.

an institution rather than any particular theological position."[3] This critique of union did not proceed from any lack of ecumenical spirit or willingness for joint effort, but as a concern for the continuity of tradition.

Therefore The United Church, from the beginning, has manifested a basic tension between the weight of tradition as represented by the uniting communions and the desire to embody an institution which could function as the voice of reform Protestantism and, by extension, the ethical perspectives of Christianity in Canada. There are a number of manifestations of this tension within the polity, teaching, and worship of the United Church. One of the most profound of these is the fact that the form and content of worship has remained firmly in the congregation's control. Despite the fact that the General Council can legislate on matters of doctrine and worship, it can only do so with the consent of a majority of Presbyteries and in such a way "that the freedom of worship at present enjoyed in the negotiating Churches shall not be interfered with."[4] As a result, some United Church congregations still identify their worship tradition with a particular founding tradition.

Furthermore, the Basis of Union requires only that members accept doctrinal statements as "in substance agreeable to the Holy

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[3] N. Keith Clifford, The Resistance to Church Union in Canada, 1904-1939 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), p. 4.

[4] Basis of Union 8.6.2a in The Manual of The United Church of Canada (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1993), p. 25.

Scriptures."[5] This concession was added late, and with some difficulty, to the Basis of Union document in order to prevent the Congregationalists from withdrawing from union negotiations. It was a concession to their understanding that "written creeds might be used to declare the faith of the Church but never to test the faith of members or even ministers."[6] Thus a United Church member could say without controversy that the 1980 United Church Creed is "just a statement. It's already been changed as the Church changes. It'll be changed again."[7] Although such an attitude is well within the Reform tradition[8], it is clear that the structural nature of the United Church at its very conception compelled a significant *laissez-faire* attitude toward belief and worship. As a result, the United Church lacks effective mechanisms to legislate doctrine in all save the broadest principles[9].

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[5] Basis of Union, 2.0, p. 11.

[6] Grant, p. 38.

[7] Ralph Milton, This United Church of Ours (B.C.: Wood Lake Books, 1981), p. 14.

[8] A.C. Piepkorn, Profiles in Belief (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), Vol. II, pp. 275-276: "Reformed Churches did not see it necessary or desirable to settle on a single compendium of creedal statements and confessions as the Lutherans did in the Book of Concord. Reformed Churches in general have no conception of a corpus of doctrine that is hermetically sealed and permanently expressed for all time in a single document or set of documents. Their designation of the minister as a *teaching* elder and their firm reliance on the Scripture as Word of God point the way in which a written 'confession' is to be understood. ... Despite this view of confession in the Reformed Churches, efforts have been made to compile synopses and harmonies of the various Reformed confessions [Geneva, 1581; *Corpus et syntagma*, 1612]."

[9] Three generations later, this has combined with other cultural factors to produce a remarkable lack of theological interest within much of the Church.

However, Union did not produce merely a set of loosely affiliated congregations. There are distinct resonances with the antecedent traditions within this genuinely new religious understanding. Methodist concern for the experiential character of worship resonates in the understanding of the Holy Spirit's presence in praise and prayer. Presbyterian concern for the pre-eminence of Scripture and their remarkable understanding of the complexities of evil[10] informs the understanding of the authority for, and intent of, belief. Finally, Congregationalist understanding regarding the autonomy of individual communities is strongly resonant in the United Church's attitude toward belief and worship. Thus:

> ... regardless of denominational background, ... United Churchmen regard themselves as direct heirs of Knox, Milton, and the Wesleys, and draw freely upon the varied traditions they represent. They also rejoice, increasingly over the years, in a certain freedom from the uniting traditions. They are strangers to the cult of Wesley that flourishes in some Methodist circles, nor can they feel the same specific commitment to Reformed confessions and ways of worship as some of their colleagues in the Presbyterian alliance.[11]

A National Church

The Basis of Union describes the United Church's *telos* as "a Church which may be fittingly described as national."[12] Certainly an underlying assumption of the framers of that document was that they were preparing the initial intra-denominational union which

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[10] A number of years ago, reading C.S. Lewis' anthology of the theological writings of George MacDonald, the great Scots preacher and writer of Children's tales, one of the authors was struck by its profound and thorough examination of evil.

[11] Grant, p. 100.

[12] Basis of Union, 1.2.

could form the foundation for the unification of all Christian communions into a single polity. Although it is impossible to discern to what extent such an ultimate union was viewed as probable, it is certain that the documents outlining the 1925 Union were carefully worded to leave the possibility of further unions open. To this day, the identity and self image of the United Church is centred in the idea of a national church, a "united and uniting" institution which can ably function as instructor to, and speaker for, the moral and spiritual lives of Canadians.

Grant observed that "in nineteenth century Canada ... the Churches accepted a twofold responsibility for the national life. ... They sought on the one hand to lay the moral and spiritual foundations of nationhood, on the other to act as a conscience for the State."[13] The idea of a trans-denominational United Church seemed the best route to a national Church which could take up the implicit task of acting simultaneously as a foundation for the nation and as a conscience for its peoples. The Union sought to develop an institution which could ensure the possibility of universal moral instruction as well as address the particular moral and ethical concerns of Canadians. These perceived roles are well illustrated in the Basis of Union, which accords to General Council the mandate to "enact such legislation and adopt such measures as may tend to promote true godliness, repress immorality, preserve the unity and well-being of the Church, and advance the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world."[14]

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[13] Grant, p. 23.

[14] Basis of Union, 8.6.10, p. 24.

Nevertheless, the United Church has continued to treasure its self-expressed identity as a national Church. What has occurred is an observable shift in the manner in which this identity has been expressed. It is easy to understand how a religious institution that had strong ties to British traditions and was influenced by imperial images of Protestantism in the nineteenth century could imagine itself as having a national character in Canada of the early twentieth century. The Great War, which was contemporaneous with much of the Union negotiations, fostered such anglo-centrism through Canadian support of British and commonwealth efforts in the War, thus doing little to invoke cosmopolitan sentiments. With the important exception of the near-universally Roman Catholic French community in Quebec, the dominant public culture in Canada at the time of Union was Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. It is not surprising, then, that the image of a national Church took on those same characteristics.

What is curious about these origins is how they could produce a Church which can now be described from within in rather different terms:

> The majority of United Church members are white, middle-class, and complain about high taxes. But there are many ethnic and racial groups in our Church, and people of every variety you could imagine. ... The diversity of the United Church is a strength. It is also a weakness. Some of us are worried that we may stop seeing the church as a colourful mosaic, each piece contributing to the beauty of the whole. Sometimes it seems more like a tug-of-war, where one side will 'win' by dragging the other through the mud.[18]

Such concern for a functional mosaic of diversity is more a reflection of the modern concerns of multiculturalism, ecumenism,

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[18] Milton, p. 15.

Despite such generalized moral and ecumenical aspirations, the ecclesiology of the Church, as presented in its primary documents, is that of Reform Protestantism as it was manifest in Great Britain. The twenty articles of faith articulate a doctrinal framework which presents difficulties for union with the other major Protestant communions, and precludes union with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Furthermore, even among those communions which finally unified, the Congregationalist Church would not enter until it was understood that creedal statements were not binding *per se*, but only "in essence", local union churches were slow to accept external authority, and a major portion of the Presbyterian Church in Canada ultimately declined Union. The long courtship with the Anglican Church eventually failed, leaving the only significant advance to union to be the entrance of the Evangelical United Brethren in 1968[15].

The United Church has retained much of its English and Scots cultural character[16]. The name of the Church was not officially expressed bilingually on the Church crest until 1980, and the United Church did not have a Francophone presbytery until 1985.[17] Thus, the political actuality of this self-defined national Church fell somewhat short of the hopes that had been invested in it.

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[15] The major impetus for this was the Union of the American United Brethren with the Methodist Church in the United States, rather than any action on the part of the United Church of Canada. (Grant, p. 88)

[16] Although not quite as self-consciously so as the Anglican community.

[17] Steven Chambers, This is Your Church (Toronto: United Church, 1986), p. 41.

and egalitarianism than it is of the ideal of a completely unified national Church. What has emerged is a radical separation between the Church's self-image and its institutional mandate.

A Modern Church

The United Church of Canada has retained much of the character of its origins. It is still largely reflective of the white, emergent middle-class, Protestant communities out of which it was formed. What has emerged is a manifestation of its role as a "national" Church in terms of the expression and actualization of the popular morality and piety of mainstream Canadian culture. The shift is in the fact that the United Church no longer perceives the twin roles of moral foundation and evocative conscience in terms of its polity and institutional structure, but rather in social action. The Church frequently identifies itself as the speaker for communities (particularly ethnic, special interest, and economic) that do not of necessity participate in the United Church communion, when it perceives these communities are being treated in a less than just way within Canadian society. The United Church now places far less import on matters of ecclesiology or promulgation of Christianity as a religious institution than it does on a set of moral and ethical norms informed by Christian tradition but not bounded by the Church. In effect, the United Church's identity as a national Church has shifted from its original desire to be an agent for an emerging *polis* of institutional unity between relatively similar churches to a desire to be an actor for an emergent national moral *ethos*.

Of course, the United Church has not abandoned its polity. In fact, the structure of the Church has remained largely unchanged since its inception. The shift in emphasis is manifest in the changing roles of the political structures of the Church, not in their continuity of existence. The varied administrative levels of the Church have emerged as distinct bodies with particular mandates and concerns, each directed in a specific way to the actualization of the Church's mandate. What is most curious is the fact that upper levels of the polity have little or no capacity to legislate their decisions within the Church, and in fact the exercise of what authority remains to them is often perilous.[19] The result of such a vague concept of religious authority is that each level of Church government emerges with significant independence in expressing its mandate on the ethos of the church. This independence is a remarkable institutional feature which significantly affects the shape the Church has taken in Canadian society.

The Pastoral Charge, which retains control of the local mission activity of the Charge and manages its fiscal resources for local social action, is now the major way for the corporate ethos of each particular community to become manifest. Consequently, there is significant variance in the way in which the Church is

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[19] Philip Cline, The Concept and Practice of Authority in The United Church of Canada (MTh Thesis: St. Stephen's College, 1977). Cline describes the difficulty experienced by a Presbytery that had stepped in to remove a minister who had admitted to committing adultery with a member of the congregation. The controversy was not over whether the minister's behaviour was appropriate, but that the Presbytery had gone so far as to actually exercise its authority over ministerial settlement: "In a church which has a clearly stated order and court system, clergy and lay people alike are quick to claim their freedom, even their 'right' to order the system as they please" (p. 2).

expressed at this level, to the extent that Churches, separated by only a few kilometres, will display radically divergent characters. The Presbytery retains some control over the ministry, but this is strongly mitigated by the minister's relationship to his or her congregation, thus leaving the Presbytery to chiefly function as the conduit of communication between the Pastoral Charge and the upper levels of Church administration.

The Church's ethos is expressed as a regional concern under the aegis of the Conference. It is one of the major duties of the Conference "to have oversight of the religious life of the Church within its bounds, and to adopt such measures as may be judged necessary for its promotion."[20] This responsibility has largely manifested itself in adoption of resolutions concerned with the social concerns and activities of the Church. Because of decentralization of responsibility for the religious life of the faithful, the upper courts of the Church have increasingly expressed the concerns of the Church in terms of a series of social justice issues, not as theological doctrine or personal moral codes of conduct. Furthermore, this decentralization means that although Conference is selected from the Pastoral Charges, it does not represent a coherent community to the same degree that a Pastoral Charge does. Therefore, it is entirely possible for a Conference to express social concerns which do not reflect the actual activities of the Pastoral Charges or even the actual concerns of many members. However, Conference has emerged as the medium through which regional concerns of the Church are expressed to

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[20] Basis of Union, 7.6.9, p. 23.

General Council.

General Council has emerged as primary speaker for the general ethical sentiments of the Church. Indeed, General Council has become a voice for the Church to express its concerns about Canadian society, rather than a judiciary body of the Church. This has lead to some confusion about the Church in those outside its communion. For example, the United Church provoked significant discussion when, in 1984, General Council began a process which ultimately resulted in the 1988 declaration that the Church would ordain self-confessed homosexual persons. Yet, a recent Angus Reid poll indicates that only 59% of United Church members supported "changing the Canadian Human Rights act to give gays and lesbians legal protection from discrimination," less than that attributed to the Catholic (68%) and Anglican (63%) communities.[21] This discrepancy can occur because the United Church does not have a significant ability to legislate the declarations of General Council at the Pastoral Charge level and it is therefore possible for that body to make statements without being overly concerned about how they will affect individual communities.[22]

It is possible to discern in this something of the United Church's genius and ability to survive in, and respond to, the

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[21] Patricia Chisholm, "Sacred and Profane," MacLean's. (April 12, 1993): p. 41.

[22] It is interesting to note the discrepancy between this system of authority and that manifest by religious communities such as the Roman Catholic Church, which maintain a strong central authority. It is almost a truism that individual congregations in the United Church tend to be somewhat more "conservative" than the Church in general, the exact reverse of the situation confronting the modern Roman Church.

modern world. Increasingly, the information age has presented social issues with sudden clarity and telling import. Many Canadians, once they have perceived such issues, are less than accepting of institutions which do not respond in a timely and clear fashion. The United Church has developed a means of addressing social and moral problems rapidly, because such action does not necessarily have to affect, in any direct way, the entire institution or its members. Thus, the Church can confront the social problems of alcohol without requiring temperance of its members; it can decry the economic inequalities of Government-sponsored gambling while accepting that most members buy lottery tickets; it can ordain homosexuals without requiring individual congregations to employ them. Unfortunately the result for some United Church members has been the perception that General Council has become dominated by "marginal" social issues and has lost touch with its membership.

There are two emergent aspects of the United Church's polity which are increasingly shaping its identity. The first is the fact that each level of Church government can act with significant independence from the others, since their areas of concern and jurisdiction are limited and, what is most important, exclusive. The second is that the upper levels of the Church have become a medium for expression rather than legislation, to the point that the role of the moderator of the United Church can be described as "the official spokesperson of the Church."[23] Simply stated, General Council has become the authoritative representative of the

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[23] Chambers, p. 21.

Church but not the authority of the Church. Indeed, the primary aspect of the moderator's role has increasingly emerged as a voice in Canadian society rather than in the Church.

The Burden of Tradition

Although it is still possible to understand the identity of the United Church in terms of its historic aspirations to be a national Church, expression of that identity takes shape in terms of representation. The United Church, at the national administrative level, understands itself not as expressing a national institutional church, but as the means of expression for a national Christian ethos. As a result of this approach to representational authority and the isolation of the various levels of Church government, a significant tension occurs between the Church's professed public character and the actual experience and understanding of individual adherents. Such tension most frequently occurs in the form of a perceived conflict between the continuity of tradition (rooted in the founding churches) and the need to address contemporary justice concerns. The contact with the Native community that has marked the Church since its beginnings is illustrative. Initial pride in the heritage of the Methodist missions and residential schools shifted to a sense of responsibility and even guilt over what was later seen as inappropriate behaviour by the Church and its antecedents. This culminated in the 1986 official apology to Canadian aboriginal peoples and affirmation of a distinctly Native spirituality. Politically, this concern also became manifest in the 1987

inauguration of the Native Conference to ensure that Native concerns were represented at least equally with the regional concerns of the broad community[24].

The particular tension between current sentiments and tradition is, in the case of Native issues, being played out in the recent land claim dispute over one of the original McDougall mission sites near Morley, Alberta. It is interesting that the dispute is largely occurring *within* the Church, not between the Church and an external group. The All Tribes Presbytery of the Native Conference has moved that the mission lands be returned to the local Stoney tribe, but a local group of United Church members has reminded the Church of the historic significance of the site and its concern that the site remain available to the Church (including, of course, the local Native community). The confluence of these two concerns -- the aspiration for autonomy and the need for historic connection -- within the same Church is symptomatic of a conflict that has polarized the institutional Church: the need to remain current with modern ethical understandings and the requirement to preserve some continuity of tradition.

This polarization is further displayed in the massive conflict and division over the ordination of homosexuals and the moderator's somewhat curious response that:

> ... while the decision still causes pain, I have been very much enabled from the 1992 General Council to say strongly: our issue on this day is about abuse and

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[24] There has emerged a significant regard for the authority of Native tradition and 'spirituality' within some parts of the Church. Many who are seeking spiritual renewal within the Church are turning to a vaguely defined Native tradition rather than attempting to re-invoke the Church's antecedent traditions.

> harassment and inappropriate behaviour from people who are members of or who work for the United Church of Canada. These justice issues are now the things we should give passionate energy to.[25]

It is questionable whether knowledge that the issue is no longer current will comfort the individuals and congregations that left the Church over the issue or, for that matter, comfort gay and lesbian ministers who have yet to be accepted in a congregation. Nevertheless, Rev. McKay observed that The United Church is "very much in search of community, the community of faith that has very much been weakened and threatened by modern society."[26] The concern expressed here is that, in the confrontation with modernity, the Church has become divided between the need to address the modern world, and the need to retain its identity.

Somewhat congruent sentiments expressed by Rev. Terry Anderson concerning the liberal elements of the Church, that "in their passion for inclusiveness they won't acknowledge that they're thereby quite exclusive and people find them quite imperialistic."[27] This view is borne out by data from the recent Angus Reid poll, which indicates that one-third of the Church membership feel that it has become too liberal in its teachings.[28] It is quite clear that there is strong polarization within the Church between policy makers at the national level and the faithful

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[25] Moderator Rt. Rev. Stan McKay, cited in The United Church Observer, (August 1993): p. 24.

[26] Ibid. p. 23.

[27] Rev. Terry Anderson, Mandate, Special Edition 1993, p. 45.

[28] Maclean's (April 12, 1993): p. 49.

in local churches. This is perhaps the fruit of a Church where tradition is usually only manifest in the continuity of individual congregations, and where liberal sentiment is most cogently expressed in the activities of General Council, and there is little commerce between the two. As a result, the discrepancy between the national expression of the Church and its local manifestations is frequently displayed as a tension between the egalitarian aspirations of national conscience and traditional duty of a local community to nurture the moral foundation.

Memory and Imagination

Charles Taylor, in his lucid and penetrating discussion of modern western culture, identifies three representative characteristics of our milieu: individualism, the primacy of instrumental reason, and the shaping of the individual by forces which limit his capacity to affect society.[29] It is clear that the national character of the United Church has been significantly affected by modern culture. Individualism -- the autonomy of the individual on belief and concern -- is increasingly a primary characteristic of the Church and is strongly represented by the acceptance of individual modalities of belief and praxis, to the extent that they are no longer considered defining characteristics. Furthermore, the Church's continued and increasing sense of its role in the realm of social justice is that its effect in the world is not limited by the nature of society, but only by the extent of

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[29] Charles Taylor, The Malaise of Modernity (Ontario: Anansi, 1991) pp. 1-9.

the Church's understanding of the problems and work for their resolution. Clearly the Church, as a national institution, no longer expresses its identity in terms of commonality of tradition and belief, but as a common intent toward justice. The upper courts express the imagination of the Church that it can address the modern world, while in the congregation resides the Church's memory that it can exist in it. What results, then, is a distinctive dislocation between the institution and its members, a sense that the national Church is no longer a community of tradition but an actor apart from its community.

The United Church has emerged as a thoroughly modern institution. Taylor's categories apply so well to the United Church because they were written with reference to Canadian society, and the Church has always manifested that culture. We observed that the Church emerged as a reflection of Canadian society early in this century, and it has retained that reflective, and reflexive, character. The Church now encompasses distinct ethnic communities just as Canada does, and those communities are now accorded significant independence because multiculturalism has emerged as a modern Canadian concern. In its national institutions, the Church manifests the immediate social concerns of Canadian society, and in its congregations, it reflects the local understanding of communities. The tension between those somewhat isolated levels of the Church is a reflection of the tension between the national character of Canada and that of its regions, peoples, and individual citizens. What must ever be understood about the United Church of Canada is that it is a distinctly

Canadian institution, and partakes of all the complexities and confusions of Canadian culture.

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY

Financial Statement, 1990-91

Bank Balance, 22 November 1990	656.95
RECEIPTS	
Memberships, individual	180.00
Memberships, corporate	40.00
Bank interest	.80
Foreign exchange	2.69
Total receipts	223.49
EXPENDITURES	
Printing 1990 Papers	180.09
Duplicating	4.80
Postage	178.22
Bank charges	6.00
Supplies	35.79
Total expenditures	405.90
Bank balance 22 November 1990 + receipts	880.44
Less expenditures	405.90
Bank balance 23 August 1991	676.42
Less account outstanding to E. Nix (sundry items) [actual balance 23 Aug. 1991 594.92]	81.50

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Membership

	'89-'90	'90-'91
Individual	41	35
Corporate	9	11
Total membership	50	46