

**The
Canadian
Society of
Presbyterian History**

Papers 2001



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**Editor:
David R. Elliott
Box 704, Parkhill, Ontario N0M 2K0**

John A. ...
Presbyterian ...
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THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY (CSPH) 1975-2002

Dedicated to the study of Presbyterian and Reformed history, this religion-centered Learned Society, meeting annually on the last Saturday of September, was organized in 1975 in recognition of the centennial of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Message from the President

Historians and interested individuals from places as distant as the Maritime provinces will gather in Knox College, Toronto, September 28, 2002, to respond to the various papers which presenters deliver to an ever-attentive and spirited audience. The Annual Meeting of the Society and the election of officers for the coming year are scheduled for the after-lunch hour that day.

Appreciation is extended to Dr. David Elliott, editor, for arranging bound copies of last year's papers for the membership. Annual dues of fifteen dollars may be forwarded to the treasurer, Mr. Michael Millar, 292 Shanty Bay Road, Barrie, L4M 1E6, or given in at the September meeting.

The Presbyterian Committee on History expresses heartfelt thanks to CSPH members who contributed to the financial campaign of the National Presbyterian Museum. Construction has taken place continuously since September 2001, with occupancy in the Spring of 2002. The arranging of displays and the computerizing of the holdings will follow. Artifacts will be photographed and made via the internet to researchers around the world. On September 28, the opportunity is offered to members of CSPH and their friends to view the permanent facilities, situated across from Riverdale Hospital and the Don Jail.

Several volumes of historical significance are presently being prepared by church courts. Volume Two of *Gifts and Graces* contains seventeen biographies of Presbyterian women, including contemporary figures. It is encouraging to note that Volume One was a complete sell-out. The Presbyterian Synod of Southwestern Ontario has authorized the writing of its history by Drs. John Moir and Geoffrey Johnston. The former, the immediate past president of CSPH, is also completing a study of Presbyterianism in Ottawa as seen through St. Andrew's, the oldest Protestant church in our capital city. Other books, recently published and known to our members, could be brought for display and sale at our annual meeting.

The suggestion is also made that each member be encouraged to bring friends with an historical bent for the September meeting of the Society and tour of the Museum facilities. It is a most effective way, I believe, for encouraging the discovery and preservation of our past. Surely, *to know the past is to plan for the future!*

Yours sincerely,
John Alexander Johnston, Ph.D., D.D.
President
183 Chedoke Ave., Hamilton, ON, L9P 4P2
Tel 905-528-2730 Fax 905 526 8697

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Eldon Hay is a retired professor of Religious Studies at Mount Allison University in Sackville, NB. His book, *The Chignecto Covenantors*, was published by McGill-Queen's University Press in 1996.

Arthur Charles Dayfoot, a retired United Church of Canada minister and missionary, has served in Canada, China and the Caribbean. He is the author of *The Shaping of the West Indian Church, 1492-1962* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999.)

John Webster Grant taught church history for many years at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto. His many books on Canadian church history are highly regarded.

John A. Johnston is a retired minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and president of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History.

Michael Millar is a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. He is the Clerk of Session at St. Andrews Church in Barrie and has been a member of the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Committee on History since 1984.

John S. Moir is a Professor Emeritus of the University of Toronto where taught history at Scarborough College, Knox College, and Toronto School of Theology.

THE CANADIAN CAREER OF ROBERT MCGOWAN SOMMERVILLE

by

Eldon Hay

The Reverend Robert McGowan Sommerville (1837-1920) had been a Covenanter minister in Nova Scotia for twelve years when, in 1873, he went to the United States. Thirty-six years of age, he apparently viewed his ministry north of the border in a negative light. Nonetheless, he had an outstanding career in the United States as a Reformed Presbyterian [RP] clergyman - for a brief time in Cincinnati, followed by a long ministry in New York City. He was forced to retire in 1912, because of an accidental injury; he died in 1920. At the time of his retirement and again at his death, Robert Sommerville was recognized as a great figure among RPs - a distinguished churchman, an eloquent preacher and steadfast pastor, a mission visionary. This article focuses primarily on Sommerville's Canadian background: his upbringing and education in Nova Scotia and in Ulster, and his subsequent ministry in Nova Scotia. Robert was greatly influenced, if not dominated, by his father, Rev. William Sommerville (1800-1878). Secondly, and somewhat briefly, consideration is given to Robert's ministry in the United States.

Robert Sommerville was born at Horton, NS, 14 October 1837, and baptized by his father, Rev. William Sommerville,¹ on the first Sabbath in 1838. Robert was the oldest son and the fourth of ten children born to William Sommerville and Sarah Barry Dickey (1810-

¹See Eldon Hay, "Covenanter Relationships with Presbyterians: Sommerville and Stavely," *The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History Papers*, 1990, pp.1-18; "Cornwallis Covenanter: The Reverend William Sommerville," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, 37 (Oct. 1995), 99-116; "Covenanter Controversies in Planter Politics," in *Planter Links: Community and Culture in Colonial Nova Scotia*, edited by Margaret Conrad and Barry Moody (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 2001), pp.119-32.

1853).² (One of Sarah's brothers was Robert Barry Dickey [1811-1903], a father of Confederation).

Little is known of Robert's childhood, though "he received his early education under the direction of his father."³ Probably about the time Robert started to school, the *Novascotian* carried an 1844 account of William Sommerville's 'Lower Horton Combined Grammar School': "There were fifty scholars present The exercises of the day commenced about ten, and continued until three in the afternoon This admirable School only requires to be extensively known in order to be duly appreciated."⁴ William Sommerville, besides being a Covenanter pastor, was a teacher, running his own school.⁵

Robert apparently decided at a young age to become a Covenanter clergyman. When he had just passed his fourteenth birthday, he was presented to the Reformed Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Greater attention was given to a somewhat older candidate John Burgess Calkin (1829-1918). Calkin appeared "for examination prior to his entering College with a view to the ministry," while Robert Sommerville "with a view [in the future] to his being taken under the Presbytery's care as a student."⁶

Present at presbytery was Southstream/Barnesville pastor, Rev. James Reid Lawson (1820-1891), who a few days later, wrote to the Covenanters back in Ireland: "We received under our care two promising youths who are looking forward to the work of the ministry. One of them [John Burgess Calkin] is the son of an Elder in the Free Church, Cornwallis⁷ ... The other youth whom we received under our care is [Robert,] a son of Mr.

²Sommerville Bible, #61, New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, NB. William Sommerville's second wife was Jane Elizabeth Woodworth (1820-1913); in this family there were four children.

³W.M. Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* (Baltimore, 1888), p.678. Hereafter, *History*.

⁴Cited by the *Guardian*, 26 Jan. 1844, p.235. The account is annotated "Horton, 22d Dec'r, 1843 - *Novascotian*."

⁵William Sommerville ran a school, "to which ... pupils came from all parts of Kings, as well as from Colchester and other counties. For much of this time this school was the main support of his family ... In 1845, William Sommerville moved his family from Horton to ... Woodville ... Here he lived for eleven years, removing permanently to Somerset in 1856. During his residence in Horton, Woodville, and Somerset, until the adoption of the school law in 1864 ... Sommerville taught school" [A.W.H. Eaton, *The History of Kings County* (Salem, MA, 1910), pp.528-9].

⁶Reformed Presbytery of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Minutes, 20 Oct. 1851 (hereafter, Reformed Presbytery of NB and NS). Maritime Conference (United Church of Canada) Archives, Sackville, NB; hereafter, MCA.

⁷Calkin later married Martha (1833-1903), Robert's oldest sister [*Presbyterian Witness*, 11 Nov. 1854, p.179].

Sommerville. He is quite young yet, but has made considerable progress in his studies." Lawson was hopeful that these two young men would be the core of an indigenous North American Covenanter ministry: "I ... hope that the time will come, when the mission here will be self-sustaining, not only in money, but also in men."⁸ A little over a year later, when he was fifteen, Robert's mother, Sarah Barry Dickey, died in 1853.⁹ Although there is no mention of this significant occurrence in any of Robert's writings, there is a paragraph in the will of William Sommerville: "It is my last and earnest desire that all the children of my former wife ... and especially Rachel ... shall cherish gratitude and affection to Mrs. Fisher, wife of Geo. W. Fisher, Esq., who, when Rachel's mother deceased, leaving her, a babe of five months old, took her unasked, and nursed her with a mother's care, till she was weaned, making it an express condition, that she should hear nothing of remuneration."¹⁰

A year after his mother's death, when he was sixteen, Robert was over in Ireland, in 1854. The convenor of the Synod's Education Fund reported: "One excellent young person, Master Robert M'Gowan Sommerville, had been recommended by the Presbytery in the British North American colonies, and accepted as a beneficiary of the fund, and had been placed at the Cookstown Academy, under the care of Mr. John A. Smyth."¹¹ One source suggests "Cookstown Academy may have been a small, short-lived private establishment."¹² Apparently shortly thereafter, Robert entered Belfast Royal Academy.¹³

From the Belfast Royal Academy, Robert went to Queen's College. In the list of prizemen at the close of the 1858-59 session, Sommerville was identified as a third year Arts student; and as well as placing in several subjects, won a top ranking in physical geography.¹⁴ The *Presbyterian Witness* reported on Sommerville's academic record at that

⁸"Extract of a Letter," *Monitor and Missionary Chronicle*, 5 (Dec.1851), p.930 [Hereafter, *Monitor*].

⁹*Novascotian*, 21 Feb. 1853, p.4; William Sommerville, "Obituary Notice," *Monitor*, n.s.1 (April 1853), pp.289-90; and *Presbyterian Witness*, 21 May 1853, p.164. Sarah Barry Dickey was 42 when she died.

¹⁰*Kings County Wills*, Vol. 4: 1873-1890; p. 204-207, Nova Scotia Archives and Retrieval Management [hereafter NSARM], Halifax. The date of the will was 15 Feb 1875, probated 4 Nov. 1878.

¹¹RP Synod of Ireland 1854, *Monitor*, n.s.3 (Aug. 1854), p.93.

¹²Edward McCamley, Head of History, Belfast Royal Academy, email to author, 21 May 2001.

¹³"Belfast Royal Academy was the school Robert Sommerville went to before he started studying at Queen's College" (Siobhan Gunn [Communications Office, Queen's University, Belfast], email to author, 9 May 2001).

¹⁴Photocopy of Queen's College Belfast calendar, pp. xciv, xcv; sent to author by Siobhan Gunn, June 2001.

time and noted further that "Nova Scotia is likely to be the sphere in which his talents and acquirements will be employed."¹⁵

Sommerville "studied theology at the same time" as he was in Queen's College, Belfast, at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Hall in the same city,¹⁶ his professors being the Reverend Drs. Thomas Houston (1803-1882) and Josias Alexander Chancellor (1824-1895).¹⁷ In the summer/autumn of 1859, Sommerville asked for a certificate from the Eastern Presbytery in Ulster, intent on returning home to complete his studies in Nova Scotia. The certificate was given "on the understanding that he would return and finish the curriculum of studies in this country [Ulster]."¹⁸

Arriving back in Nova Scotia Sommerville laid "his certificate from the Eastern Presbytery on the table."¹⁹ The new world presbytery reported that "during the winter months, he [was] diligently engaged in prosecuting his studies.... Some of his collegiate exercises, and other addresses, have been delivered in public with much acceptance." The new world presbytery commended Sommerville "to the care and superintendence of [the Irish RP] Synod, and would most heartily rejoice if ... he, when licensed to preach ... should be directed ... to these provinces, where the harvest is great and the labourers few."²⁰

Going back over to Ulster, "Robert Sommerville graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Queen's College in 1860."²¹ (In his ministerial career in Nova Scotia, the designation 'B.A.' was seldom, if ever, used; in his education career, frequently, if not always.)

Now Sommerville, "having completed the course of study in the [Queen's] college & [Theological] Hall - all required to qualify for Synodical examination - [was] recommended to Synod."²² The Synodical examination was supervised by the Eastern Presbytery, who assigned to him sermons, studies and other "pieces of trial for license."²³ All of these being sustained with approval, Sommerville was licensed on 3 January 1861, the Reverend Dr. Houston being one of the presbyters present.

¹⁵"Young Nova Scotia," 30 July 1859, p.2.

¹⁶Glasgow, *History*, p.678.

¹⁷"[Obituary of] Rev. Robert McGowan Sommerville, D.D.," *Minutes of the RP Synod* (Pittsburgh, 1920), p.151.

¹⁸Eastern Reformed Presbytery, 30 Aug. and 29 Nov. 1859: Reformed Theological Hall, Belfast.

¹⁹Reformed Presbytery of NB and NS, 23 May 1860.

²⁰"Report of the NB and NS Presbytery," *RP Synod of Ireland 1860*: Reformed Theological Hall, Belfast.

²¹Gunn, email to author, 9 May 2001.

²²Eastern Reformed Presbytery, 26 June 1860.

²³*Ibid.*, 28 Aug. and 27 Nov. 1860.

Sommerville was subsequently appointed to preach in Ulster congregations - Lorne, Newtonards and Knockbracken - and in the Covenanter mission congregation in Manchester, England.²⁴ His pulpit performances "commanded the highest acceptance wherever he laboured;" not surprisingly, he received "a call from the very respectable congregation of Coleraine" in Ulster.²⁵ He declined this offer because "the Congregation of Horton & Cornwallis unanimously addressed Sommerville to become assistant and successor to his father, the Rev. Wm. Sommerville, our highly esteemed and excellent Missionary, who has so long laboured indefigably in the Colonies."²⁶ Robert Sommerville accepted. "That he should have such a call unanimously from the place of his activity, [is] one of the highest testimonials which any young minister could hope for."²⁷

Sommerville participated in one more significant event in Ulster, in mid-August 1861: "The students of the Theological Hall ... entertained Mr. Sommerville, at a public breakfast, and presented him with a number of valuable books, with an affectionate address, expressive of their high appreciation of his worth, and their interest in his welfare and success." Dr. Thomas Houston was present and spoke briefly, but the occasion belonged to the students. Sommerville's peers paid tribute to his character and depth of scholarship: "we have always found in you a loving companion - one whose manliness was admired by us, and whose good and kind spirit has frequently rendered our hours of relaxation pleasant and agreeable." In his reply, Sommerville addressed his peers as "my dear friends ... [whose] proofs of desirable friendship ... kind address and valuable presents, I receive with pleasure and gratitude." He concluded with "that lonely word - farewell. Hoping that we may all be blessed, and made a blessing to the Church and to society."²⁸

In NS, later in the same month of August, the new world presbytery prepared for the upcoming ordination, though Sommerville had not yet arrived.²⁹ When he did arrive, Sommerville "fulfilled ... appointments in New Brunswick," among them Saint John and Barnesville.³⁰

The ordination took place in the West Cornwallis church on 16 October 1861; when Robert McGowan Sommerville was ordained as "assistant and successor to his father the Rev. W. Sommerville, in the united Congregation of Horton and West Cornwallis." The clergy presbyters were William Sommerville; Alexander McLeod Stavely (1816-1903), of

²⁴*Ibid.*, 3 Jan., 8 May and 28 May 1861.

²⁵"Robert McGowan Sommerville," *Presbyterian Witness*, 24 Aug 1861, p.134.

²⁶Eastern Reformed Presbytery, 26 Jun 1861.

²⁷"Robert McGowan Sommerville," p.134.

²⁸"Theological Hall Presentation," *Covenanter*, 5 (Sept. 1861), pp.259-61. The presentation occurred on 14 Aug. 1861. Spokesperson for the students was James Dick Houston (1835-1910), a son of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Houston.

²⁹Reformed Presbytery of NB and NS, 28 Aug. 1961.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 28 Aug. and 16 Oct. 1861.

Saint John, moderator of presbytery; James Reid Lawson, of Southstream/Barnesville, who was clerk; and Robert Stewart (1819-1899), of Wilmot. The elders present were George Parker (d. 1870) and Solomon Woodworth (d. 1883) of Cornwallis; Daniel Morrison (d. 1875) and Hugh Kerr (d. 1906) of Wilmot.³¹ All the Covenanter clergy participated in the service. Moreover, "two ministers and a considerable number of the adherents of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces, were present to witness the proceedings." Robert's father, William, had been, "a short time previously, prostrated with severe illness, but his discourse was characterized with all his wonted point and power, and more than usual impressiveness.... There was something deeply affecting in witnessing the venerable, grey-haired, toil-worn father taking part in the ordination of his youthful son and consecrating him publicly to the service in which so many of his own years had been spent." Undoubtedly, noted the narrator, "our best wish to the young minister is that he may equal his venerable father in the faithful discharge of his duty."³²

It was an auspicious beginning. And for two years, the working relationship between the Sommervilles - father William and son Robert - in the united congregation of Cornwallis and Horton seemed to prosper.

Beginning in 1863, however, there were difficulties, at least four of them. First, finances; secondly, differing views as to the relationship of the RP Church in Nova Scotia to the church in Ulster, on one hand, and to the church in the United States, on the other; thirdly, Robert's marriage to Elizabeth Chipman (1837-1923), a Baptist, concomitant with William Sommerville's fully developed views on baptism; and fourthly, Robert's desire to build his own church.

We will deal firstly with finances. William Sommerville had been sent as a missionary to British North America in 1831, and the Irish Synod paid him a very modest annual stipend, throughout his career,³³ augmented by givings in his Nova Scotia congregation, and by fees from his school. But Robert Sommerville had been called as assistant to his father, and the Irish Synod made no provision for his payment - that was to be borne by NS congregants alone. Moreover, the united congregation of Cornwallis and Horton was not large or wealthy. The matter came to a head in 1863: Robert "asked [for] the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, subsisting between him and the United Congregation ... on the grounds of a failure on the part of Cornwallis section of the Congregation to fulfil their pecuniary engagements." The presbytery agreed, at the same time appointing Robert as "stated supply at Horton, to give the people there such portion of his time as might be agreed upon."³⁴ The arrangement worked well; significantly, all of

³¹All four ruling elders are noted in W.M. Glasgow, "Reformed Presbyterian Record," (1902), pp.177, 205: holograph, RP Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA.

³²"Ordination in Western Cornwallis," *Presbyterian Witness*, 26 Oct 1861, p.170; and *Covenanter*, 5 (Nov 1861), pp.315-6.

³³Stipends were also paid to Revs. A.M. Stavely, Robert Stewart and J.R. Lawson, so long as the NB and NS Presbytery was associated with the Irish Synod - until 1879.

³⁴Reformed Presbytery of NB and NS, 29 Sept. 1863.

Horton's "congregational pecuniary obligations were satisfactorily discharged."³⁵ It worked so well that "a call to Revd. R.M. Sommerville from the Horton branch ... as assistant to his father ... was read and sustained as a regular Gospel call. The call ... was ... accepted by him." The presbytery decided that Robert's induction was to take place in Horton in October 1864.³⁶ It undoubtedly took place, but no account of it survives.

Cornwallis had not met its financial obligations to Robert. In fact, the father William also undoubtedly noticed that his income was reduced; particularly after Robert had virtually sole responsibility for Horton. Over in Ulster, the Mission Board became aware of this situation: "We learn, from various sources, that [one of] our senior brethren in these Colonies ... Mr. Sommerville now retains only a fraction of his former congregation - the last division of it having been in favour of his son and successor, and the base of his [William's] supplies has therefore been diminishing."³⁷

Financial difficulties there were. Yet Robert acquitted himself well. In Ulster, the Colonial Mission Board knew this: "In his new charge [Horton], he [Robert] has laboured with much energy, and with favourable fruits. He diligently attends to several distant stations and, throughout the Province, he is highly esteemed as an able and eloquent preacher."³⁸

In Nova Scotia, a presbytery visitation took place in 1868, some four years after Robert had been inducted in Lower Horton. Questions were put to the congregation's office-holders. Mr. Davison was ruling elder answering for the session and Messrs. William Trenholm and Samuel Ranking for the people.³⁹ The usual queries having been answered, Presbytery gave Robert a clear expression of approval.⁴⁰ Small wonder that Robert was promptly elected Moderator of the presbytery for the succeeding year. The congregation also received a positive vote of confidence.⁴¹ There was one caveat: "Presbytery would however recommend those in charge of financial matters to take steps to secure payment of stipend regularly by all the members and adherents of the congregation,

³⁵*Ibid.*, 11 May 1864.

³⁶*Ibid.* "The induction was appointed to take place on the Fast day preceding the administration of the Lord's Supper in Horton in October next."

³⁷"Colonial Mission Report," *Covenanter*, 9 (July 1865), p.206.

³⁸"Our Colonial Mission," *Covenanter*, 1 (May 1866), pp.123-4.

³⁹Silas K. Davidson and William Trenholme (d. 1879) are noted as elders in the Horton branch of the united congregation, in Glasgow, "Reformed Presbyterian Record," p.139.

⁴⁰"Presbytery would express satisfaction with these as regards the Pastor and his faithful discharges of the various duties of his office in accordance with ordination vows," 6 May 1868.

⁴¹"Presbytery rejoices in accessions to their numbers and in the general state of the affairs of the congregation," 6 May 1868.

and further would remind session that members of the church who do nothing to support its ministry are proper subjects of ecclesiastical discipline".⁴²

The caveat was critical for, a few months later, "Revd. R. Sommerville intimated that owing to various causes, the salary received from his Congregation is insufficient for his support, and that, therefore, he would wish to be relieved from the pastoral charge of Horton Congregation, whilst he intended, at the same time to be employed in the work of the ministry wherever God in his Providence, might open a door for him." On the other hand, "the Commissioner from the Congregation having been heard Presbytery came to the conclusion that under present circumstances they [Horton] cannot approve of a dissolution of the relationship subsisting between Mr. S. and his present charge, but would, in view of the peculiar necessity of the case, consent that he should turn his attention to some other calling, not inconsistent with his ministerial status, that might supplement his salary."⁴³

Could Robert turn his attention to some other calling, not inconsistent with his ministerial status, a calling that might supplement his salary? Robert could and did. In December of 1868, he was appointed Inspector of Schools for Kings County.⁴⁴ A full-time position, Robert was diligent; one of his duties was submitting annual reports.⁴⁵ As school inspector, Robert wrote a good deal. As Covenanter minister in NS, no writings whatsoever survive - as long as he was in NS. Robert maintained his position as pastor at Horton, until 1871; when he intimated his intention to tender his resignation.⁴⁶ Somewhat delayed, the resignation was effected later.⁴⁷ William gave the reason: "My son has been relieved ... in Horton, at his own request, and with the consent of the people. They were not able to give him an adequate support, and as the office of Inspector of Schools was inconsistent with the full discharge of pastoral duties ... he did not think he ought to hold the office." However, he was "appointed by Presbytery as constant supply, and preaches as usual."⁴⁸ But by the end of 1872, Robert ceased even that attenuated responsibility: he "declined

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Ibid.*, 21 Sept. 1868.

⁴⁴Sommerville's appointment took place on 17 Dec. 1868: Minute of the Council of Public Instruction 17 Dec. 1868 (vol. 1, p.133) - NSARM.

⁴⁵Rev. Robert Sommerville, B.A., "Inspectors' Reports: Kings County," *Annual Report of the Common, Superior, Academic, and Normal and Model Schools in Nova Scotia* (Halifax, 1869), pp.20-24; (Halifax, 1870), pp.33-9; (Halifax, 1871), pp.9-12; (Halifax, 1872), pp.25-39; (Halifax, 1873), pp.7, 14. Any consideration of Robert's five-year stint as School Inspector lies beyond the scope of this article; although the evidence shows that he filled this responsibility very capably - sometimes in the face of difficulties: see *Presbyterian Witness*, 2 Sept. 1871, p.276.

⁴⁶Reformed Presbytery of NB and NS, 26 Sept. 1871.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 14 May 1872.

⁴⁸"Letter from Rev. W. Sommerville," *Covenanter*, 5 (May 1872), pp.154-5.

receiving from Presbytery any further appointment to supply that congregation [Horton]."⁴⁹ Financial considerations were at least part of the reason Robert left Cornwallis, to become more or less his own man at Horton; but then financial considerations were partially the rationale leading him to leave Horton as well.

The second problem related to different views as to the relationship of the RP Church in NS to the church in Ulster, on one hand, and to the church in the United States, on the other. Should the NB and NS presbytery remain under the Irish Synod, or transfer to the American Synod? William Sommerville was a native of Ireland and educated there. Although he was fully devoted to his mission in NS, the elder Sommerville remained fiercely loyal to his Irish roots. William had been one of the founders of the Reformed Presbytery of NB and NS in 1832, firmly under the umbrella of the Irish Synod.⁵⁰ And with William's propensity for the Ulster connection, it is clear that he wanted it to stay that way. But in 1866, a presbyter actually "gave notice that he would move that Presbytery take into consideration the desirableness of seeking connexion with the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in the United States."⁵¹ The presbyter was Rev. Robert Sommerville. The matter was raised again and again, even after Robert had left the region.⁵² It seems clear that William always opposed it, even after the Irish Synod favoured it.⁵³ The transfer was finally made, but not until after William's death in 1878.⁵⁴

The two differed as to how they saw their personal and professional futures vis-à-vis the church in the United States. Although William Sommerville had solid friends in the American RP church (many of whom had also been born in Ireland), he resolutely refused offers to go south of the border. A biography about William written after his death noted that, "among his papers are many letters from eminent ministers in the United States urging him" to go there. For instance, Rev. Dr. James Renwick Willson (1780-1853) wrote: "I have consulted with ... other brethren, and we ... all think you would be more useful ... in the United States than in any British Province. I invite you to be with us ... We hope to see you among us before winter.' But he [William Sommerville] withstood [all] their appeals" and remained in NS.⁵⁵ Sommerville made a few return trips to Ulster; but travelled seldom, if ever, to the United States.

⁴⁹Reformed Presbytery of NB and NS, 4 Sept. 1872.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 21 Apr. 1832.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 15 May 1866.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 5 Sept. 1866; 29 June 1875; 8 Sept. 1875; 4 April 1876; 21 Sept. 1876; 11 April 1877; 1 Oct. 1878; 3 Dec. 1878; 15 April 1879.

⁵³Eldon Hay, "Covenanter Controversies in Planter Politics."

⁵⁴The official date was 2 Jun 1879: "Transfer of N.B. and N.S. Presb. to U.S. Synod," *Covenanter*, 12 (Aug. 1879), p.266.

⁵⁵Robert Sommerville, "William Sommerville, A.M.," *Olive Trees*, (Mar. 1899), pp.91-2.

Robert eventually went to the United States, as we shall see, but it was only after all NS doors were closed. Clearly, going south of the border was an option. In May of 1867, he formally asked the presbytery "for leave of absence from his congregation for seven weeks with a view to visiting the United States and also requested presbytery to supply his pulpit during that time," a request complied with.⁵⁶ In April of 1873, during his last months in NS, a call to Robert Sommerville came from the RP congregation of Cincinnati Ohio, certified as a regular Gospel call. Presented to Robert Sommerville, it was declined.⁵⁷ By mid-summer of the same year, the initiative to go to the United States lay with Robert Sommerville himself: he "applied for a certificate of transference to the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in the United States,"⁵⁸ which was given him.

The third issue was Robert's marriage to Elizabeth Chipman (1837-1923), concomitant with William Sommerville's fully developed views on baptism. In September of 1865, William Sommerville officiated at the wedding of his son Robert and Elizabeth Chipman, eldest daughter of William H. Chipman. The wedding took place at the bride's home.⁵⁹ Elizabeth Chipman's parents, William Henry Chipman, M.P., (1807-1870) and Sophia Araminta Cogswell (1807-1878) had been "baptized in the First United Baptist Church in Upper Canard, NS, on Sunday, 8 September 1833 by Elder Edward Manning." The Acadia University archivist states: "There is no specific record of [daughter] Elizabeth's baptism in the 20 year period following her birth (16 March 1837). There are, however, references to anonymous persons 'sharing their experience with Christ' and then being duly baptized into the church. Elizabeth Chipman could well have been among these."⁶⁰ I assume as factual that, by the time she married Robert, Elizabeth had been baptized - as a Baptist.

When William Sommerville first came to Horton in 1833, the area was dominated by Baptist persons, parsons and principles. Sommerville's attitude towards the Baptist form of initiation evolved over time. He seems to have been stung by the claims of some Baptists who said that immersion was the only true form of initiation; sprinkling was, optimally, second best; at worst, invalid. Sommerville - avid scholar, writer and pamphleteer - in 1845 published *A Dissertation on the Nature and Administration of the Ordinance of Baptism*.⁶¹ In it, he was very critical of Baptist views of initiation, but did not question their validity. Twenty years later, in 1866, William Sommerville's final statement on the subject emerged.⁶² Put very briefly, in this work Sommerville turned the Baptist convictions upside

⁵⁶Reformed Presbytery of NB and NS, 8 May 1867.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 15 April 1873.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 1 July 1873.

⁵⁹*Presbyterian Witness*, 16 Sept. 1865, p.296. The wedding occurred on 13 Sept. 1865.

⁶⁰Baptist Archives Collection, Y670 C35 C2, Acadia University, Wolfville, NS.

⁶¹Halifax, 1845.

⁶²*A Dissertation on the Nature and Administration of the Ordinance of Baptism*. Enlarged edition (Paisley and Edinburgh). Acadia University Archives, Wolfville, NS.

down. Sommerville was now utterly convinced that the only valid scriptural form of Christian initiation was sprinkling; and that immersion was unscriptural and, therefore, invalid. The essence of his conviction was put in a few striking sentences: "*Baptism and immersion are opposite to one another. The idea of salvation is bound up in the one: the idea of destruction is bound up in the other. The Israelites at the Red Sea were baptized and saved. The Egyptians were immersed, and died.*"⁶³

William Sommerville put his full-blown beliefs into practice in 1866; though there was no support for him in the presbytery or in any other part of the Covenanter community.⁶⁴ Baptist persons who had been immersed, needed to be sprinkled - truly baptized - to enter the Covenanter congregation of Cornwallis or Horton. Among those Baptists was Elizabeth Chipman Sommerville, wife of his son Robert: "Elizabeth Sommerville Adult b. March 16th, 1837; baptized [i.e., properly sprinkled], May 4th 1867," in Lower Horton.⁶⁵

As to the thoughts or feelings of Elizabeth Chipman Sommerville about this or other events, nothing survives. As a couple, Robert and Elizabeth were childless. Elizabeth fulfilled the stereotypical role of helpmate: "In the work of his [Robert's] ministry, she had a full share; in it all she had a part and the two were ... actuated by common aims and purposes."⁶⁶ "No small measure of Dr. Sommerville's successful life is due unto her."⁶⁷

In his baptism policy, William Sommerville flew solo. Not quite: he had a somewhat reluctant co-pilot, his assistant and son Robert. It is clear that Robert went along with his father's idiosyncratic position on baptism - as long as he was assistant to his father in Horton, probably as long as he stayed in Nova Scotia. Later, when he ministered in Cincinnati, Ohio and in New York City, he did not. There, in the United States, his views were in line with the normal RP position on baptism. In NS, Robert almost certainly did not agree with his father in regard to baptism; though their divergence never surfaced publicly.

There were two parts to this enlarged edition; part one was an exact reissuing of the 1845 work; part two was new.

⁶³"Letter," *Presbyterian Witness*, 3 March 1866, p.65.

⁶⁴Stavely disagreed mildly, evidenced when he preached at Sommerville's funeral: *The Blessed Dead: A Sermon* (Saint John, 1878), Canadian Institute of Historical Microreproductions [hereafter, CIHM], 25832. Lawson clearly differed, but expressed his opposition after Sommerville's death: "Report of the Commission to visit New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Presbytery," *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, 21 (July/Aug. 1883), p.200.

⁶⁵"Register of Baptisms in Lower Horton" in Somerset, NS. Cornwallis Reformed Presbyterian Church, Minutes & Records, 1846, 1851-1934; includes Grand Pre, NS; Horton Reformed Presbyterian Church, Registers, 1851-1889. Mfm: MCA.

⁶⁶"Rev. Robert M. Sommerville, D.D. - New York City," 2-page document, MCA.

⁶⁷F.M. Foster, D.D., "A Great Life Done," *Olive Trees*, 34 (March 1920), p.51.

It was said of Robert that he "was a man of definite opinions, but made no public display of them."⁶⁸

Was there any other possibility of Robert being able to cope as a Covenanter clergyman in Canada, without the influence of a dominant father figure? That raises the final matter in which Robert's stance varied from that of his father.

That was Robert's desire to build his own church. If he could effect this new venture, Robert would be solely in charge. Early in 1867, at a cost of \$250, Robert Sommerville, clergyman, purchased a large lot in Wolfville,⁶⁹ on what is now called Prospect Street.⁷⁰ There is no mention in the deed as to the purpose of the purchase, but the word was soon out: "We are informed that preparations are being made to erect in Wolfville ... a place of worship for the use of the Reformed Presbyterians. Rev. Robert Sommerville ... on a recent visit to Halifax received from several friends, in aid of the undertaking, the sum of 412 dollars. Also in Truro, the further sum of 25.50."⁷¹ The building was to be exclusively Robert's own: "The erection of a church at Wolfville was carried through by *the instrumentality of Mr. Sommerville, junior.*"⁷² The Wolfville RP church was never mentioned in minutes of the Reformed Presbytery of NB and NS.

Robert went on canvassing funds for his dream church. The Wolfville church wasn't built in a day. Robert "collected funds and about 1869 built a church on Prospect Street."⁷³ The precise date is difficult to determine, for no word survives of its dedication or opening. Moreover, it was probably in use before being fully finished. A secondary source notes that while the church "was being built ... a violent gale, just previous to the noted Saxby gale [early in October 1869], blew up and tore the roof off, [though] this was soon remedied."⁷⁴ (The Saxby gale⁷⁵ occurred on 4 and 5 October 1869). Robert Sommerville

⁶⁸A.A. Samson, "A Great Life Done," *Olive Trees*, 34 (March 1920), p.50.

⁶⁹Kings County Registrar of Deeds, Kentville, NS, Book 28, pp.107-8. Date of deed 28 Jan. 1867; recorded 26 Feb. 1867. The deed does not identify Sommerville other than by the designation, clergyman.

⁷⁰An earlier name for Prospect had been Keen Street. "On December 3, 1895, petitions were read from ... Keen Street residents recording their approval of the change to Prospect Street" (Watson Kirkconnell, *The Streets of Wolfville 1650-1970* [Kentville, NS, 1970], pp.8-9).

⁷¹"Announcement," *Presbyterian Witness*, 9 Feb 1867, p.41.

⁷²"Report of the Colonial Mission for 1873," *Covenanter*, 7 (Aug. 1874), p.230; italics added.

⁷³G.W. Miller, "Wolfville and Grand Pre," *Presbyterian Witness*, 12 April 1913, p.1.

⁷⁴G.R. McKean, *St. Andrew's Church, Wolfville, Nova Scotia* [ca. 1945], p.30.

⁷⁵"From all quarters the same story comes - dykes broken, bridges carried away, cattle drowned, the country flooded" (*Novascotian*, 11 Oct. 1869, p.3); see James M. Whalen, "The Great Saxby Gale of 1869," *The Beaver*, Oct./Nov. 1995, pp.40-44.

"founded the first Presbyterian church in Wolfville in 1869."⁷⁶ With its roof remedied, the church was probably fully finished and furnished by early 1870. A new manse was built on the same Wolfville lot, the new home of Rev. Robert Sommerville and his wife;⁷⁷ it too had Gothic windows.⁷⁸ In 2001, the house is located at 23 Prospect St., has 6 apartments, and is owned by MacKay Real Estate.

The style of Robert's new RP church in Wolfville⁷⁹ - a "small but showy Gothic house"⁸⁰ with "high sharp-pitched roof"⁸¹ - was in marked contrast to the starkly plain church built by William at Grafton in the mid-1840s.

Early in 1870, three years after he had purchased the property, Robert and Elizabeth Sommerville mortgaged the property, with its church and manse, for \$500 - twice what he had paid for the original lot.⁸² William put the matter succinctly: Robert "is now oppressed with a debt upon *the house of worship which he erected* in Wolfville."⁸³ William had been completely silent about the building and the opening of the new Wolfville Covenanter church; yet he spoke not infrequently when the venture was going under.

Oppressed with debt and oppressed with work - Robert was School Inspector in Kings County, for a time supply at Horton (as associate to William), and sole minister of the debt-ridden church in Wolfville. Of the two Covenanter congregations, the old (Horton) and the new (Wolfville), Robert clearly favoured his own new congregation.⁸⁴ It is likely

⁷⁶*Sackville Tribune*, 7 March 1920, p.1. The column is headed: "His Father once lived at Pt. De Bute."

⁷⁷On Prospect Street "stood [the Reformed] Presbyterian church and the Manse," Kirkconnell, *The Streets of Wolfville*, p.9.

⁷⁸The former manse was 'curtain-hanging challenged' - conversation with Elsa Noble, 1988; she and husband William Noble had lived in that house while both taught at Acadia University, in the 1950s.

⁷⁹Photos of the church (somewhat remodelled by mainline Presbyterians in 1885/6) are found in McKean, *St. Andrew's Church*, pp.32 and 45.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p.30.

⁸¹Fred I. Woodworth, "The Author of the Diary," in *The Diary of Deacon Elihu Woodworth 1835-1836*. ed. Watson Kirkconnell (Wolfville, 1972), p.44.

⁸²Kings County Registrar of Deeds, Kentville, NS, Book 30, pp. 143-4. Dated 18 Jan. 1870; received and recorded 21 Jan. 1870. In the document, Sommerville is characterized as a "preacher of the gospel," and the land is described as "the lot on which stands the meeting house of the Reformed Presbyterian Church."

⁸³"Letter from Rev. W. Sommerville," p.155 (italics added).

⁸⁴At the meeting of presbytery, 3 Oct. 1871, Robert "tendered his resignation of ... the Horton congregation." But "due notice had not been given ... the congregation, [so] the acceptance of [the] resignation was deferred." Further, "a committee ... was appointed to meet at Horton on 8th November to take the whole case into consideration and act

that some of the Wolfville members formerly belonged at Horton. Since there are no surviving records of the new Wolfville congregation, it is impossible to know if Robert had an opportunity to break from his father's practice on baptism - probably not.

Oppressed with debt, Robert certainly put his hand to the plow: "The emoluments of his [Robert's] civil employment were consecrated to the Lord." But "notwithstanding the persevering efforts of the minister, in the way of begging throughout the church, [and] the efforts made by the Wolfville congregation themselves, a heavy debt still rest[ed] upon the building."⁸⁵ As a final desperate measure, the church "was offered to the [Covenanting] church [in Ulster, then] to the Covenanting Church in the States, subject to the debt still lying upon it, [but] neither [wanted to] incur the responsibility."⁸⁶ William feared the worst: "the house must eventually be sold ... a great grief to me."⁸⁷ "It is too late to redeem the [Wolfville] meeting-house."⁸⁸

Robert and Elizabeth walked away. In mid-September 1873, the sorrowing father wrote: "Next week, Robert leaves for Cincinnati."⁸⁹ For some time an option in Robert's mind, the exigencies of the situation nudged him to exercise this choice, he walked - to the United States of America. In NS, there were some immediate results of the departure of Robert and Elizabeth Sommerville.

First, "the members at Wolfville were certified to Horton congregation."⁹⁰ Secondly, abandoned as far as the Covenanters were concerned, the Wolfville church building was almost immediately "used as a house of worship by the [mainline] Presbyterians,"⁹¹ though it took some time before they actually purchased the church and manse,⁹² in April 1875.⁹³

accordingly." Presumably, that committee issued on the matter of Robert's resignation; for at the next presbytery meeting, 14 May 1872, Robert "was appointed to supply Horton." At an autumn presbytery meeting, 4 Sept. 1872, Robert "declined receiving from presbytery any further appointment to supply that congregation."

⁸⁵James Brown, "Our Colonial Mission," *Covenanter*, 6 (April 1873), p.112.

⁸⁶"Report of the Colonial Mission for 1873," p.231.

⁸⁷"Letter from Rev. W. Sommerville," p.155.

⁸⁸Cited in "Report of the Colonial Mission for 1873," p.231.

⁸⁹"Report of the Colonial Mission for 1873," p.231.

⁹⁰W.M. Glasgow, "Annals of the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Presbytery," *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, 33 (June 1895), p.130.

⁹¹"Report of the Colonial Mission for 1873," p.231.

⁹²"[Letter] to the Editor of the Western Chronicle," *Presbyterian Witness*, 3 Oct. 1874, p.313.

⁹³Kings County Registrar of Deeds, Kentville, NS, Book 36, pp. 211-13. The church was moved from Prospect to Main Street in 1885, reopened for worship in January 1886

Thirdly, Horton, weakened by the rise and fall of the Covenanter cause in Wolfville,⁹⁴ was taken over reluctantly but resolutely by William Sommerville: "In Horton I first cast anchor, and, if I am spared, Reformed Presbyterianism will not be superseded in that place without an effort to save it."⁹⁵ This meant that "double work ... devolved upon ... Rev. William Sommerville. The care of two congregations, lying 24 miles apart, upon one who has served faithfully in the field for 40 years, is more than could reasonably be expected." Besides, "to give to Horton part of his services, Mr. Sommerville was obliged to abandon two promising stations in the neighbourhood of Cornwallis."⁹⁶ William appealed to the Ulster Synod for assistance: "It would break my heart to abandon Horton. The members are few, but there are two or three places full of promise ... connected with it. Could you not send [someone] to take possession [of Horton] under my nominal pastorate?"⁹⁷ The plea went unanswered; William Sommerville soldiered on alone until his death in 1878.

Finally, Robert Sommerville's leaving altogether dashed the hope, voiced when he initially appeared as a student - the raising up of a native ministry - a self-sustaining mission, not only in money, but also in men.⁹⁸

(*Presbyterian Witness*, 16 Jan. 1886, p.18). The church "was completely destroyed by fire," in Aug. 1913 (*Presbyterian Witness*, 26 Aug. 1913, p.1). The building erected in its place was St. Andrew's Presbyterian, now United Church of Canada.

⁹⁴See Eldon Hay, "The Ministry of Rev. Thomas McFall," *Semper Reformanda* (forthcoming).

⁹⁵"Letter from Rev. W. Sommerville," p.155.

⁹⁶"Report of the Colonial Mission for 1873," pp.230-31.

⁹⁷Cited in "Colonial Mission Report," *Covenanter*, 6 (Aug 1873), p.244.

⁹⁸Robert Sommerville had been the most prominent of four NS men who, in the 1850s, came before the presbytery as candidates. James R. Miller (on 8 June 1852, 15 Nov. 1852 and 7 June 1853) and John W. Loan (on 7 June 1853) soon disappeared. John Burgess Calkin (1829-1918), after proffering for the ministry (on 20 Oct. 1851 and 8 June 1852), went on to a distinguished educational career in NS. Miller, Loan and Calkin (though not Robert Sommerville) studied theology under William Sommerville: W.M. Glasgow, *Historical Catalogue of the Theological Seminaries of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America: Together With A List Of Those Studying Privately* (Beaver Falls, PA, 1898), pp.18, 20.

One additional, a NB native, John Toland (ca. 1823-1886), first appeared before presbytery on 1 July 1873; he was finally licensed, 27 May 1885 (*Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, 23 [July/Aug. 1885], p.275). See Eldon Hay, "John Toland, Passekeag Citizen Makes Mark on the World," *Generations - New Brunswick Genealogical Society*, 63 (Spring 1995), pp.35-41. Toland studied under Rev. James Reid Lawson (Glasgow, *Historical Catalogue*, p.25).

William grieved over the loss of his son; even though, in some ways, he had been the architect of Robert's departure. Financial difficulties, differing views over the place of the Covenanters - vis-à-vis Ulster or America - these were serious enough. The disagreement over baptism must surely have been difficult for Robert, though it didn't surface publicly. The attempt to build his own church was the final step - but the resources simply weren't there to make this venture feasible.

When leaving, Robert probably saw his Canadian ministry as a failure. Recall that, while in NS, he had not said a word about that ministry. Moreover, in the United States, he seems to have looked back, only fleetingly, to his experience north of the border. In 1883, a full decade after leaving Horton, the American Covenanter Synod,⁹⁹ with Robert as a respected member, decided once and for all against William's baptismal practice,¹⁰⁰ which had caused no little grief to his successor, Thomas McFall.¹⁰¹ In 1883, Robert made clear his essential agreement with William Sommerville's earlier 1845 work (which had been critical of Baptist practice, but had not questioned its validity). After the 1883 Synod, Robert wrote to a journal editor: "I send you father's [1845] work on baptism with the request that you will publish ... what he has written respecting the mode of administering the ordinance. The work is out of print, and was never circulated in the United States; and for many reasons I should like the ministers and members of our church to read for themselves what he wrote on the subject."¹⁰² The 1845 work was subsequently serially published.¹⁰³

In 1899, now well established as an eminent Covenanter clergyman, Robert was editor of a monthly journal, *Olive Trees*. A quarter century removed from NS, Robert looked back at the Covenanter experience in British North America. As Robert saw it, there were a number of dominant figures - his father was clearly one of them - and Robert was determined that their stories should not be lost. He arranged a series of articles, entitled 'Missionaries of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to the Lower Provinces of Canada.' Robert penned the historical biographies himself, with the exception of the first, Alexander

⁹⁹*Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, 21 (July/Aug. 1883), pp.236-7.

¹⁰⁰Eldon Hay, "A Canadian Contribution to Covenanter Practice," *Semper Reformanda*, 6 (Spring 1997), pp.3-22.

¹⁰¹Hay, "The Ministry of Rev. Thomas McFall."

¹⁰²*Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, 21 (Nov 1883), 390. The sentence preceding Robert's statement reads: "This father [William Sommerville] published in 1866 a treatise on the nature and administration of baptism, Paisley, Scotland, pp. 319. The Minutes of last Synod contains a letter on this subject to the congregation of which he was the pastor."

¹⁰³It was published, without notes, in the *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, 21 (Nov. 1883), pp.390-94; (Dec. 1883), pp.418-22; 22 (Jan. 1884), pp.12-16; (May 1884), pp.140-45; (Sept. 1884), pp.333-38; (Oct. 1884), pp.367-69. What was published was either the 1845 edition or part one of the 1866 edition: they are identical.

Clarke.¹⁰⁴ The other heroes, besides William Sommerville,¹⁰⁵ were Alexander McLeod Stavely,¹⁰⁶ James Reid Lawson,¹⁰⁷ and Robert Miller Stewart.¹⁰⁸ These were on the first rung of missionary greats. As Robert saw it: "To these men, under God, belongs exclusively the honor of planting the principles of the Second Reformation in that part of America. As the record of their life-work clearly shows, they labored with great fidelity in the face of many difficulties and ... accomplished results far-reaching and permanent."¹⁰⁹

There was a second rung of RP missionaries, among whom Robert Sommerville counted himself. "A brief reference to other laborers who were at different times associated with them [the original heroes] is necessary to complete the story."¹¹⁰ The other labourers, besides Robert Sommerville himself, were Alexander Charles Stuart (1823-1897),¹¹¹ Thomas McFall (1848-1929),¹¹² Armour James McFarland (1836-1918),¹¹³ Thomas Patton (1852-1920),¹¹⁴ and William Thomas Knox Thompson (1870-1948).¹¹⁵ Robert Sommerville sketched each and noted their contributions,¹¹⁶ though obviously his account of Thomas McFall was incomplete. Of the ministry of another of the lesser lights, A.C. Stuart and himself, Robert wrote: "These two are named simply that the story may be complete. Their assistance was merely nominal and only serves to bring out more clearly that the progress of Reformed Presbyterians in the Lower Provinces of Canada ... was due in a large measure to the labors ... of the pioneer missionaries from Ireland." Speaking of

¹⁰⁴Lavinia Clarke Baird, "Alexander Clarke, D.D." *Olive Trees*, (Jan. 1899), pp.19-23, 31. Baird was a daughter of Alexander Clarke.

¹⁰⁵"William Sommerville, A.M.," *ibid.*, (March 1899), pp.88-92, 98.

¹⁰⁶Alexander McLeod Stavely," *ibid.*, (Aug. 1899), pp.248-53.

¹⁰⁷James Reid Lawson," *ibid.*, (Oct. 1899), pp.306-12.

¹⁰⁸Robert Miller Stewart," *ibid.*, (Dec. 1899), pp.373-77.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, (Sept. 1900), p.276.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, (Dec. 1899), p.388.

¹¹¹Stuart, coming from Ireland to the British colonies, served at various places in NB from 1847 to 1850; he then left the region, later dying in the United States.

¹¹²McFall served Horton from 1881 until 1894; Cornwallis from 1881 until 1929.

¹¹³McFarland served in Saint John from Aug 1882 until Sept. 1894.

¹¹⁴Patton served in Barnesville from May 1887 until Sept. 1891.

¹¹⁵Thompson served in Barnesville and Saint John from May 1898 until May 1905.

¹¹⁶"[A.C. Stuart, R.M. Sommerville, Thomas McFall, A.J. McFarland, Thomas Patton, W.T.K. Thompson]," *Olive Trees*, (Sept. 1900), pp.276-80.

himself directly he noted: Robert Sommerville "did little more than preach on the Sabbath, the ... inspection of public schools in Kings Co[unty] ... engaging his whole attention ... he cannot be regarded as having been ... a factor of any importance in the work of the ministry."¹¹⁷ Robert took pride in his role as School Inspector, though he held it for but five of his twelve years in Nova Scotia.

When he left NS in 1873, Robert probably considered himself a failure as a minister, not without some reason. Over a quarter century later, when he finally wrote about it, Robert hadn't changed his mind.

When he departed from NS in 1873, Robert went to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he served as stated supply for several months,¹¹⁸ then, in 1875, to New York in a similar situation in a large congregation there.¹¹⁹ In that city, he was virtual associate to Rev. Andrew Stevenson (1810-1881), whose "continued ill-health forced him to seek permanent release" in October 1875.¹²⁰ (Stevenson was a close friend of William Sommerville's, the two coming from Ireland on the same vessel in 1831).¹²¹

In December 1875, Robert was installed pastor of the Second RP Congregation, New York City. If Robert was considered something of a failure in NS, there was no evidence of it a little over two years later, for the congregation was "the largest in the RP Church in America. It was in excellent condition, and had an efficient corps of officers and an intelligent body of active Christians."¹²² In particular, "he had a remarkable session - a blessing which Sommerville greatly appreciated."¹²³

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp.276-77. In general, as Robert saw it, RP fortunes in the Maritimes had waned: "If [the] congregations are to recover the lost positions of influence in the communities where they are located and were once and for many years vital forces, each one must have its own pastor. And surely the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America has some responsibility in this matter" (*ibid.*, p.280).

¹¹⁸"R. Sommerville is continued as stated supply to the congregation of Cincinnati" ("Report of Lakes Presbytery," *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, 12 [July 1874], p.237).

¹¹⁹"Rev. R. Sommerville was certified to the New York Presbytery at his own request" ("Report of Lakes Presbytery," *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, 13 [July 1875], pp.229-30).

¹²⁰"Report of New York Presbytery," *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, 14 (July 1876), p.233.

¹²¹"Dr. Sommerville came to us as a young man, the worthy son of Dr. Stevenson's intimate and life-long friend": "Rev. Robert M. Sommerville, D.D.," MCA. See Eldon Hay, "The Rev. Andrew Stevenson - Covenanter of Three Countries," *Reformed Theological Journal*, 8 (Nov. 1992), pp.31-42.

¹²²"Installation of the Rev. R. Sommerville in Second Congregation New York," *Our Banner*, 3 (15 Feb. 1876), pp.66-67.

¹²³F.M. Foster, "A Tribute to Dr. Sommerville," *Christian Nation*, 14 Apr. 1920, pp.6-7.

Sommerville brought into his work as preacher and pastor "a fine, literary, cultured mind; a heart in love with Christ."¹²⁴ Three facets of his witness are particularly noteworthy.

First, he was "one hundred percent preacher ... His messages were prepared with care and were delivered with power."¹²⁵ In his sermons, he was "a most careful expounder of scripture.... An address on an assigned topic meant a gem in thought, composition and delivery."¹²⁶

Secondly, he was a compassionate pastor. "His heart and hand were ever open to sorrow and need." To a close friend, he shared that "while he had no child of his own, he thought he felt toward the children and youth of the congregation as a father does to his children."¹²⁷

Perhaps influenced by his Canadian background, Sommerville did not participate in "the public work of the city to any considerable extent. He was not a member at any time of the ministerial associations of the city."¹²⁸ Nor, could he be spoken of "as participating largely in Presbyterian or Synodical work."¹²⁹ Nevertheless, "for twenty-eight years he was a member of the Board of Superintendents of the Theological Seminary, and for seven years its Chairman."¹³⁰ He was elected Moderator of Synod in 1889.¹³¹ Probably in contradistinction from his father, "who just didn't believe in honorary degrees,"¹³² Robert received an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Geneva College in 1892.¹³³

Thirdly, Sommerville was committed to Foreign Mission work. "He was elected a member of the Board of Foreign Missions in 1878."¹³⁴ A year later, four years after

¹²⁴F.M. Foster, A.A. Samson and Henry O'Neill, "Resignation of Dr. R.M. Sommerville," *Christian Nation*, 2 June 1915, p.14.

¹²⁵R.J. Bole, "In Memory of Dr. Sommerville," *Christian Nation*, 14 Apr. 1920, p.6.

¹²⁶Foster, "A Great Life Done," p.51.

¹²⁷Samson, "A Great Life Done," p.50.

¹²⁸Foster, "A Tribute to Dr. Sommerville," p.6.

¹²⁹Foster, "A Great Life Done," p.52.

¹³⁰"Minute on the Death of R.M. Sommerville," *Minutes of the RP Synod* (Pittsburgh, 1920), p.112.

¹³¹*Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter*, 27 (July/Aug. 1889), p.206.

¹³²"I have been told William Sommerville refused an honorary degree from Edinburgh. He just didn't believe in honorary degrees" (Ruth Lumsden [d. 1997], letter to author, 1 March 1988. Ruth Lumsden was a great granddaughter of William Sommerville.

¹³³"Geneva College bestowed on Rev. R.M. Sommerville the Doctor of Divinity degree in 1892" (Florence Fattal [Beaver Falls, PA], letter to author, 29 Jan. 2001.

¹³⁴Foster, "A Great Life Done," p.52.

beginning as pastor in New York, he was called to the office of Corresponding Secretary, or Executive Officer, of the Board of Foreign Missions.¹³⁵ "His 'Reports,' prepared for Synod on behalf of the Board, were comprehensive and thorough.... To each missionary he was a firm friend and he carried on voluminous correspondence with practically all of them."¹³⁶ "He steadied the helm in many trying times."¹³⁷ "He visited the missions in Syria, Cyprus and Armenia from time to time¹³⁸ and hoped to reach China, but this was denied him."¹³⁹ "Missions was his consuming passion.... In this 'he moved and had his being'.¹⁴⁰

Directly related to his foreign mission commitment, Sommerville founded at his own expense a monthly journal, *The Herald of Mission News*, in 1887. This was no solo effort: it was published with the approval of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. The name of the magazine was changed, in 1898, to *Olive Trees*.¹⁴¹ Sommerville was its first and most eminent editor, contributing "more than ten thousand dollars for the support of the magazine."¹⁴² In the initial issue, Sommerville outlined the purpose of the magazine:

its specific object is to furnish the churches with reliable missionary intelligence and to advocate more earnest and faithful endeavor to extend throughout the world a knowledge of Christ ... Brethren of large experience in the ministry have promised to contribute original articles on the work of evangelism.... Letters from Christian workers will set forth the needs and prospects of the several fields to the cultivation of which they have devoted their lives.... In this faith and with a desire to be true to our profession and loyal to our King, we offer to serve the Church as a herald of mission news.¹⁴³

"It [the magazine] occupied a unique place in the church, and did much to strengthen and extend the cause of missions."¹⁴⁴ In at least two issues, one of the contributors was John

¹³⁵"Resignation of Dr. R.M. Sommerville," *Christian Nation*, 2 June 1915, p.14.

¹³⁶Foster, "A Great Life Done," p.52.

¹³⁷"Resignation of Dr. R.M. Sommerville," p.14.

¹³⁸Robert Sommerville, "A Trip Through Our Mission Fields," *Olive Trees*, Dec. 1896, pp.217-36.

¹³⁹"Rev. Robert M. Sommerville, D.D.," MCA.

¹⁴⁰Foster, "A Great Life Done," p.52.

¹⁴¹The first issue of *The Herald of Mission News* was Jan. 1887; the last issue of *Olive Trees* was Sept. 1928.

¹⁴²Samson, "A Great Life Done," p.49.

¹⁴³*Herald of Mission News*, (Jan. 1887), pp.1-2.

¹⁴⁴Foster, "A Great Life Done," p.52.

Burgess Calkin, of Truro, NS, by that time a mainline Presbyterian and noted educator.¹⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, Sommerville wrote much - numerous articles, editorials, reports and sermons - largely in connection with foreign missions, though he authored no books.¹⁴⁶

Sommerville's active life ended in 1912. In the last days of the preceding year, he "met with an accident in the lower part of the city, in passing through a congested business section. He was thrown from his feet and suffered a scalp wound."¹⁴⁷ Another account says that he was "made ineffective by an express team of horses running him down on the streets of New York."¹⁴⁸ He resigned the pulpit in 1912, and was named Pastor Emeritus; when health permitted, he worshipped in the congregation. He resigned from the Board of Foreign Missions in 1915.

Sommerville retired, a semi-invalid. Speaking primarily of his last years, his successor in the pulpit, Rev. Arthur Argyle Samson (1872-1924), wrote: "Prayer was the atmosphere in which he lived. He prayed regularly for the pastor, people and work of the congregation, for the institutions and work of the Church in our own and other lands."¹⁴⁹ "Perhaps his service in retirement was the greatest of his life. There he had nothing to do but pray ... this man and his beloved wife, alone with God in continuous prayer."¹⁵⁰

A brief comparison should be made between Robert Sommerville, the son, and William Sommerville, the father. Not surprisingly, they were of different temperaments. One of Robert's closest friends wrote that "to know and understand him thoroughly, one needed intimate acquaintance; otherwise he might be regarded as distant."¹⁵¹ On the other hand, William was "kind and genial in private intercourse."¹⁵² Robert was "a man of definite opinions, but made no public display of them."¹⁵³ William was also a man of definite opinions, prone to go public with them. Robert was "a man of sound judgement, but held it in reserve until sought by others."¹⁵⁴ William was also a man of judgements, but held them in reserve for no one. Robert "would not impose suggestions; but once asked, his

¹⁴⁵"Christian Work a Necessity to the Christian," *Herald of Mission News*, Jan. 1889, pp.10-12; "Strength," *Olive Trees*, Jan. 1903, pp.53-56.

¹⁴⁶He edited, from the original manuscript, William Sommerville's *State Recognition of Christianity* (New York: 1886).

¹⁴⁷"Note," *Christian Nation*, 3 Jan. 1912, p.10.

¹⁴⁸"[Obituary of] Rev. Robert McGowan Sommerville, D.D.," p.151.

¹⁴⁹"A Great Life Done," p.49.

¹⁵⁰McFeeters, "A Great Life Done," *Olive Trees*, (Mar. 1920), p.51.

¹⁵¹Foster, "A Great Life Done," p.53.

¹⁵²Eaton, *The History of Kings County*, p.529.

¹⁵³Samson, "A Great Life Done," p.50.

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*

counsel was wise and comforting."¹⁵⁵ William proposed suggestions often, and was not above attempting to impose them.

Robert Sommerville died in New York, 3 February 1920. Elizabeth Chipman Sommerville died three years later, on 12 March 1923. They are buried in the Bronxville Cemetery, Bronxville, NY.¹⁵⁶

In conclusion, a brief assessment by Samson, the minister coming to the congregation following Sommerville's crippling injury: "As his successor [in Second New York], I had good reason to tremble, but he soon put me at ease by cordial and sympathetic word and effort. Very kindly and tactfully he tried to help in every way possible. He would not allow any one to put him to the front, but turned every influence to the advantage [of me] the younger man. It must have been hard for him at times, but I never detected a shade of criticism and I did receive many words and deeds of help from him. I loved him for it."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵Foster, "A Great Life Done," p.53.

¹⁵⁶The tombstone reads: ROBERT M. SOMMERVILLE, D.D./ Born Oct. 14, 1837/
Called to Rest Feb. 3, 1920/ Pastor of the 2nd Ref. Presby./ Congregation N.Y. 45 Years/
ELIZABETH SOMMERVILLE/ Died March 12, 1923

¹⁵⁷"A Great Life Done," p.50.

PRESBYTERIANS IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN

by

Arthur C. Dayfoot

Who and where are these "Presbyterians"? At the present time, there is one Presbyterian Church with a Synod and Presbyteries, the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago.

In Guyana there are two Presbyterian churches, each with a single presbytery: the Presbytery of Guyana (i.e. the traditional "Church of Scotland in British Guiana"; and the Guyana Presbyterian Church (the former "Canadian Mission").

The oldest and largest Presbyterian Church, in Jamaica and Grand Cayman, joined in 1965 with the Congregational Union of Jamaica to form the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman. This merged in 1992 with the Disciples of Christ to become the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

The Presbyterian Church in Grenada, once the Church of Scotland in that colony, for about two decades after 1961 became part of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Grenada. It is now independent, except for ministerial leadership from outside. It has a "Presbytery," but only one minister, to look after "the Kirk" in St. George's and two or three rural congregations.

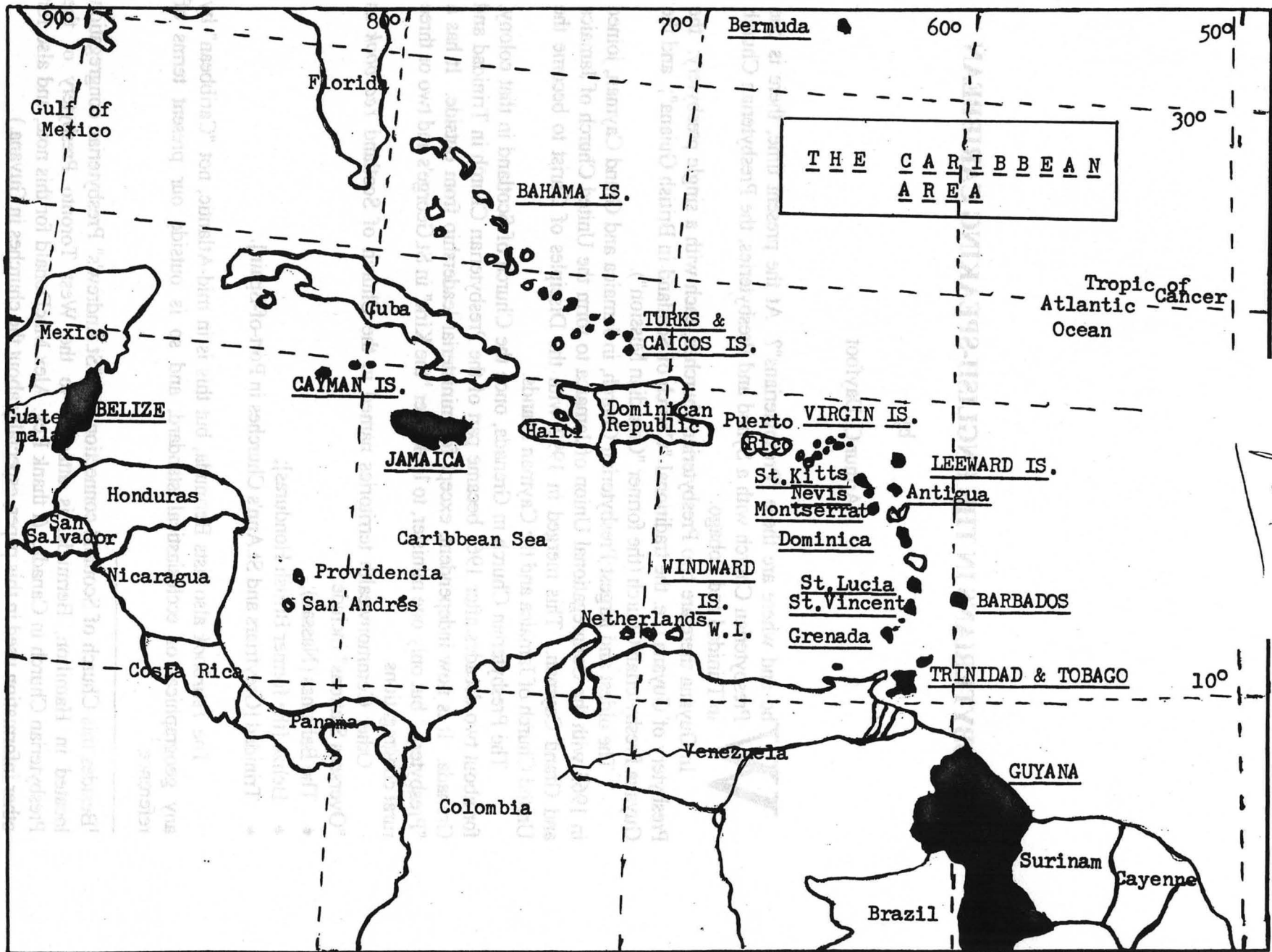
Other Commonwealth territories named in the Church of Scotland *Yearbook* as "Overseas Stations" include:

- The Bahamas (Nassau);
- Belize [the former British Honduras];
- Trinidad [Greyfriars and St. Ann's Churches in Port-of-Spain].

The *Yearbook* also lists Bermuda, but this is in mid-Atlantic, not "Caribbean" by any geographical or ecclesiastical standard, and so is outside our present terms of reference.¹

¹Besides this Church of Scotland connection, the "St. Andrew's" Presbyterian congregation located in Hamilton, Bermuda, is attached to the West Toronto Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. (I thank Rev. Alex MacDonald for this note, and also for other information used in this paper, especially about the churches in Guyana.)

MAP 1 -- The Caribbean Area



In short, Caribbean Presbyterians are located mainly in the large countries of Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, and Guyana. Except for Grenada, none are found in the Lesser Antilles.²

If we think in terms of a broader "Reformed" definition, we might include the Congregational Union of Guyana. Since Dutch speakers in the Caribbean often communicate in English, we could add the Protestant Church of the Netherlands Antilles (centred in Curaçao) -- a church which includes people of the Reformed tradition and also Methodists.

Associations in which Presbyterians and these other Reformed Churches participate include the Caribbean Assembly of Reformed Churches (CARC), the Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (CANAAC), and the Caribbean and North American Council on Mission (CANACOM).

HISTORICAL BEGINNINGS

No Presbyterian churches became settled in the Caribbean until the 19th century, but the Reformed tradition was not unknown in earlier times. In the 17th century, Puritans (i.e. English Calvinists) were concerned about colonial development in the West Indies.³ Before settling in what is now Massachusetts, the "Pilgrim Fathers" had considered moving to Guiana. However they decided that it was prudent to go to a place farther from the hostile Spaniards, and they landed at Plymouth instead. Presbyterian colonists who followed made Puritanism strong in New England. But it never made a deep impression in the Caribbean.⁴

Before the English Civil War, Puritans tried to establish colonies in (Old) Providence, near Central America, in Trinidad, and in Tobago, but these attempts did not

²In the Leeward Islands and Barbados, the earliest English islands to be settled, the Church of England was early established, for the white population. Many of the African slaves were Christianized in the 18th century by Moravians and Methodists, before any Presbyterian missions appeared in the Caribbean. In the Windward Islands, which were originally French colonies, most of the population, white and black, remained Roman Catholic after these islands were ceded to Great Britain in 1763. The Methodists began the earliest Protestant missions thereafter.

³This concern is evidenced in Richard Baxter's *Christian Directory* (London: Robert White, 1672-1673). Part II includes an exhortation to slave masters "in Barbado's or other islands or Plantations" to care for the religious and temporal welfare of their slaves. Living far from West Indian sugar estates, he considered these people to be part of the master's "family"!

⁴William Bradford, *History of Plimouth Plantation* (facs.ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1896), p.55; James A. Williamson, ed., *English Colonies in Guiana and on the Amazon, 1604-1688* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p.73.

survive.⁵ Later, Cromwell's "Grand Design" led to the capture of Jamaica (1655), but that also failed to bring about a lasting Puritan influence, since it became a royal colony five years later. The few Puritan clergy who found their way to the Caribbean as freelancers in the later 1600s were not very successful in gaining a following.⁶

One episode which Congregationalists regard as the beginning of their history in the West Indies was the arrival in Jamaica of some deportees after the Monmouth rebellion (1685). They established an Independent congregation under the leadership of John Coad, but as time went on most of them returned to England.⁷

The first genuinely Presbyterian effort to gain a footing in the West Indies was an appeal by a few residents in Barbados to the Presbytery of Laggan in Ireland. Rev. Francis Mackemie went to Barbados in response to the invitation. After a time he published a booklet, "Truths in a True Light" (1699), addressed to the people of Barbados, to persuade them of the Calvinist stance of the Thirty-nine Articles. That effort failed, and to this day Barbados has no Presbyterian church. Mackemie went to the mainland colonies, where he became one of the founders of the earliest North American Presbytery.⁸

In 1698 and 1699, expeditions from Scotland set out to found a colony, "Caledonia", at Darien (on the Isthmus of Panama). The Church of Scotland gave instruction to four clergy who went out to form a Presbytery, but the entire venture failed because of Spanish (and English) opposition, and also internal dissention. This disaster in fact hastened the union of England and Scotland (1707).⁹ It then became possible for Scots to settle with equal rights in what were now British colonies. However, at first, their numbers were few and most of them accepted the dominant position of the established Church of England. A few Scottish clergy became ministers of parishes. They had to be ordained and approved for appointment by the Bishop of London.

Consequently, until the 19th century, neither Presbyterian nor "Independent" congregations gained a foothold in the English-speaking Caribbean.

⁵A.P. Newton, *Colonizing Activities of the English Puritans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1914). Also co-published by Oxford University Press, London.

⁶Babette M. Levy, "Early Puritanism in the Southern and Island Colonies" in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 70 (1960), pp.69-548.

⁷John Coad, *A Memorandum of the Wonderful Providences of God* (1st pub. London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1849).

⁸Francis Mackemie, *Truths in a True Light* (Edinburgh: Successors of Andrew Anderson, 1699); Maurice W. Armstrong, L.A. Loetscher, & C.A. Anderson, eds., *The Presbyterian Enterprise* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), pp.11-18.

⁹Alan Burns, *History of the British West Indies* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1954), pp.401-410; John Prebble, *Darien: the Scottish Dream of Empire* (Edinburgh: Berlinn Ltd., 1968), esp. pp.224-225, 246-251.

LOCAL PIONEERS OF "CHURCH OF SCOTLAND" CONGREGATIONS

The earliest Presbyterian congregations were started on the initiative of Scottish residents in some colonies. The first was in Kingston, Jamaica, where "Scots Kirk" was organized in 1813, and a church erected with government aid. This large building includes a very high balcony, which was originally intended for slaves!¹⁰

Three years later in Demerara the Church of Scotland was founded by local initiative, also with government support. In 1818 St. Andrew's Kirk in Stabroek (later renamed Georgetown) opened for worship. The first minister, Rev. Archibald Browne, arrived in the same year. He not only served in that parish but extended the Scottish Church in other parts of what was later called British Guiana. There were then a good many Scots in the colony, and this was a kind of "planters' church", like the Church of England for English colonists. Yet some slaves were baptized, and some free blacks taken into membership, as early as 1821.¹¹

After the slave revolt at Le Resouvenir in 1823, the colonial government divided the colony into "Scottish parishes" and "English parishes." These were established churches with government financial support. By 1842 there were eight Scottish parishes and ten English parishes. The Scottish parishes became the Church of Scotland in British Guiana. After 1870 both English and Scottish Churches were disestablished, and gradually disendowed.¹²

Scottish residents also organized Presbyterian congregations in Grenada (1830), in British Honduras [now known as Belize] (1850), in Nassau in the Bahamas, and even in St. Vincent.¹³

In Trinidad an attempt was made to follow this pattern about 1834.¹⁴ However when the Rev. Alexander Kennedy, a missionary sent by Greyfriars Church in Glasgow,

¹⁰Arthur C. Dayfoot, *The Shaping of the West Indian Church 1492-1962* (Kingston: The Press - University of the West Indies, 1999), p.102. Also co-published by the University of Florida Press, Gainesville.

¹¹Dale A. Bisnauth, *A Short History of the Guyana Presbyterian Church* (Georgetown: Labour Advocate Printery, 1979), pp.12-14.

¹²This was the beginning of the system of "concurrent endowment" which was extended to other churches and spread to other colonies. It has not entirely disappeared from the West Indies even today.

At first, parishes were to have been assigned to the Dutch Reformed Church (from Dutch colonial times), but it was too weak to assume such responsibility, and ultimately (1860) it ceased to exist as a separate body. It turned over its Communion ware and most of its membership to the Scottish congregation in Georgetown. (*Ibid.*, pp.10-11; Paul Beatty Jr., *History of the Lutheran Church in Guyana* (Berbice & South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1970), p.54.

¹³The St. Vincent Kirk dwindled away in the 20th century and allowed the Seventh-Day Adventists to take over the building.

arrived in Port-of-Spain in 1836, he refused any government support on the principles of his own church, the United Secession Church. As a result Presbyterianism in Trinidad has never had an "established" church.

Although historical priority must be given to the earliest of these Scottish Kirks, they do not now figure prominently in the picture of Presbyterianism in the Caribbean. In Guyana the Church still continues, although its membership and ministerial leadership have been "creolized" so as to be mostly of African ancestry. In Jamaica the Kirks in Kingston, Falmouth, Montego Bay and one or two other places became part of the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman about 1940. The status of Greyfriars and St. Ann's Churches in Port-of-Spain and their outstations is still uncertain, since the Church of Scotland is not happy to encourage a denomination separate from the larger Presbyterian Church in Trinidad (the former Canadian Mission).

MISSIONARY OUTREACH FROM SCOTLAND

Presbyterian missions in the Caribbean began after the founding of several missionary societies in Great Britain, at the end of the 18th century, as a consequence of the Evangelical Movement. Two of these, the London Missionary Society and the Scottish Missionary Society, were intended to be interdenominational, but in effect they produced churches in the Reformed tradition, Congregational and Presbyterian respectively.

The Scottish Missionary Society decided to begin work in Jamaica in 1800, but this met with failure at first. Two missionaries died soon after their arrival, and Mr. Reid, a lay missionary, was prevented from preaching by local laws that denied the right to preach to any but ordained clergy of the Church of England. He had to become a teacher.

In 1808 the London Missionary Society began work in what became British Guiana. John Wray and later John Smith are well known for their winning of many slaves to Christianity, and for their criticism of slavery. The Congregational Union in Guyana is an indigenous fruit of the London Missionary Society.¹⁵

The Scottish Missionary Society finally succeeded in establishing work in Jamaica. In 1824 Rev. George Blyth, invited by Scottish planters, settled at Hampden (in the north of the island), and was soon followed by others. The mission was closely associated with the United Secession Church, and most of its personnel came from this evangelically minded group.¹⁶ In 1823 the British government had initiated a policy of the "Amelioration" of slavery, but it was resisted by the plantocracy in the colonies. The Presbyterian missionaries, like the longer-established Moravians, Methodists and Baptists, were obstructed by local laws and persecution. However a missionary Presbytery was formed in 1832.

¹⁴Gertrude Carmichael, *The History of the West Indian Islands of Trinidad and Tobago* (London: Alvin Redman, 1961), pp.200-202.

¹⁵Dayfoot, pp.137-138; Juanita de Barros, "Congregationalism and Afro-Guyanese Autonomy" in Patrick Taylor, ed., *Nation Dance: Religion, Identity and Cultural Difference in the Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp.89-103.

¹⁶George Blyth, *Reminiscences of Missionary Life* (Edinburgh: Oliphant & Son, 1851).

When emancipation took place in 1834, the mission shared in the euphoria of the new age, which brought something like a mass movement of freed slaves to the Christian churches. Many church primary schools were established. A significant development for Presbyterians was the opening in 1844 of a secondary school, the Montego Bay Academy. Advance was made in the education of local leaders, teachers and preachers. Ministerial training continued, in other locations over the following decades, until theological education developed on an ecumenical basis in the 20th century.¹⁷

Another initiative was the sending of missionaries from Jamaica (both Scottish and Afro-Jamaican) to West Africa. This led to a long association of Jamaica with the Scottish Calabar mission (in the present Nigeria). An unexpected byproduct of this enterprise was the shipwreck in 1845 off the Cayman Islands of the mission ship on its first voyage, before it could cross the Atlantic. This mishap led to the establishment of a successful Presbyterian work on Grand Cayman, as part of the Jamaican church.¹⁸

A Jamaica Synod was formed in 1849, with four (later five) Presbyteries. By this time, in Scotland, the United Secession Church had joined with the Relief Church to form the United Presbyterian Church, and the church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman also took on the United Presbyterian name.

As already mentioned, Alexander Kennedy in 1836 began a mission in Trinidad, for Scottish people and for ex-slaves. This was augmented in 1845 by the arrival of Protestant refugees from Madeira. They had been converted by Dr. Robert Kalley, a Scottish doctor in that island. Persecuted by the Roman Catholic authorities, six hundred of them escaped by boat and landed in Port-of-Spain. The Greyfriars congregation welcomed them to hold Portuguese services in their church. They later founded St. Ann's Church as a Portuguese-speaking congregation.¹⁹ Most of these Madeirans later moved on to the United States, and St. Ann's, in connection with the Free Church of Scotland, gradually became a second English-speaking Presbyterian Church in Port-of-Spain.

A Presbytery, formed in 1845, had four ministers from Greyfriars, St. Ann's and their outstations, and beginning in 1868, when Canadian missionaries arrived to work among the East Indians, they were welcomed into this "Presbytery of Trinidad."

MISSIONARY OUTREACH FROM CANADA

We have seen that significant Presbyterian growth began among the Scottish and African populations in Jamaica and Trinidad around the time of emancipation (1834), a

¹⁷George Robson, *Missions of the United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh: U.P.C., 1894), pp.47, 60, 71-75, 121; Union Theological Seminary, Cross Roads, *St. Colme's Hostel: Souvenir of Dedication* (Kingston: Gleaner Co., 1955). Twelve years later the larger ecumenical United Theological College of the West Indies opened, near the University of the West Indies.

¹⁸Dayfoot, pp.182, 175-176.

¹⁹William B. Forsyth, *The Wolf from Scotland: the Story of Robert Reid Kalley -- Pioneer Missionary* (Darlington, Co. Durham: Evangelical Press, 1988).

date which of course is a landmark in all aspects of West Indian history.

It should also be mentioned that shortly after this the Associate Presbyterian Church in the United States in 1843 started a small mission to ex-slaves, at Iere Village in south Trinidad. Frustrated by the illness and death of missionaries, this effort is largely remembered now because the American church later donated its property in Iere Village to the Canadian Mission, and thus became a part of the story of that new missionary venture.²⁰

Emancipation of the slaves had led to the bringing of thousands of indentured workers, mostly from India, to labour on Caribbean sugar estates -- since many of the slaves did not want to continue as wage labourers for their former masters. The story has often been told of how Rev. John Morton, a minister of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces of British North America, while recovering from diphtheria, went from Nova Scotia to Trinidad. He observed that the "East Indian" people lacked knowledge of the Christian gospel, and he came back to Trinidad in 1868 to found "the Canadian Mission", along with local Trinidadian co-workers, Rev. Kenneth Grant and other missionaries from Nova Scotia who followed.²¹

Although prior to this some efforts had been made by other churches to reach out to East Indians -- notably by the Anglicans, and in British Guiana by the Methodists -- those efforts had not met with great success. Why then did the Canadians reach a larger number of the Indian people? One reason was that they made a particular approach to this one community by learning their language (Hindi and some Urdu) and becoming familiar with their culture, including the religious traditions they had brought with them from India. Not only did they speak daily with the people as well as preaching and teaching in Hindi. They encouraged the use of that language -- at least until the government-oriented schools and the British colonial environment slowly made the descendants of these immigrants English-speaking, even in their homes.

Another reason for success was the stress on education as well as evangelism. "C.M. schools" gained a reputation for excellence, and pupils (including those who retained their Hindu or Muslim religion) came to recognize that education was an asset in this society where they were now living. Education also prepared local leadership for churches as well as schools. The training of teachers, and catechists for church work, began from the first year of Morton's residence in Iere Village. It continued as an important part of each missionary's task, then as a special assignment to Rev. John McLeod until his death in 1885, and finally by the opening of Presbyterian Theological College (now St. Andrew's Theological College) in 1892. A Teacher Training College and secondary schools were added later. These institutions in the following decades produced scores of catechists (some of whom were later ordained), school teachers, and other lay leaders in church and community life.

Also important was that missionary wives, and women sent by the Woman's Missionary Society in Canada, developed leadership among women through the schools and women's groups, thus contributing to church and family life. Local "Bible women"

²⁰Dayfoot, pp.176; James B.Scouller, *Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, 1751-1881* (Harrisburg, Penn.: 1881), p.604.

²¹Sarah E.S.Morton, *John Morton of Trinidad* (Toronto: Westminster Co., 1916); Kenneth J.Grant, *My Missionary Memories* (Halifax: Imperial Pub. Co., 1923).

(and later deaconesses), Naparima and St. Augustine Girls' High Schools, the Iere Home for Girls, and the vocational Archibald Institute shared with the missionaries in this development.

Most of the Indians preferred to remain in their new country after fulfilling their indenture, rather than return to India. They acquired land for farming or went into business. Schools and churches were established under leadership of teachers and catechists, and became centres of village life throughout the island, as well as in the larger centres. Finally the British government brought the indenture system to an end in 1917.²²

While the Presbyterian mission was growing in Trinidad it began to give attention to the East Indian population in other territories. On invitation of a Missionary Society which had been formed by the Church of Scotland in British Guiana, John Morton visited that colony in 1880. Rev. John Gibson was sent from Canada to Trinidad to learn Hindi and methods used in mission work. Tragically he died soon after he reached British Guiana in 1885. Only when Rev. James Cropper moved there in 1895 did the mission become fully established. More missionaries were sent from Canada, and for a generation there was close co-operation between the two missions in the Southern Caribbean.²³

Rev. James Muir of the Kirk in Grenada in 1883 invited the Canadian Mission to help with work among East Indians, and for decades Hindi-speaking catechists were sent over from Trinidad as pastors for its rural congregations.

In St. Lucia contact was first made by a convert from Trinidad named Jageshwar, who began to witness to his faith. An appeal was made to Trinidad in 1886 to send teacher-catechists to establish an evangelistic and educational program. (It was in St. Lucia that James Cropper was recruited. He later moved to British Guiana and, as already mentioned, became the leader of work there.) About 1916, after a decline in the numbers of East Indians in St. Lucia, the work in this island was turned over to the Methodist Church.

Help was also sought from Trinidad by the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, in connection with evangelism among East Indians. Contact was made through Rev. Kenneth Grant, and in 1892 Hindi-speaking catechists began to be sent to work in Jamaica. Some were also sent from Jamaica to attend the Theological College in Trinidad, in preparation for church work on their return to Jamaica.²⁴

The Canadian Missions in Trinidad and British Guiana, under the Presbyterian Church in Canada, kept in contact with one another. When Church Union took place in 1925, mission authorities in Canada, without consultation with the churches in the Caribbean, decided to divide the fields. As a result, the United Church carried on the connection with Trinidad, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada with British Guiana.

²²Dayfoot, pp.192-196 and notes thereon.

²³Bisnauth, Short History....; Charles Alexander Dunn, "The Canadian Mission in British Guiana, 1885-1927" (M.A.thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 1971).

²⁴Dayfoot, pp.176-177; (Mrs.) Carmen J.Thomas, *The East Indian Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica 1893-1951* (Kingston: United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands, 1999).

This unfortunate decision brought disunity for Presbyterians in the Southern Caribbean, at least until the first Consultative Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in the Caribbean in 1957.²⁵

In British Guiana a theological training school, Bethel College, had been opened in 1942 for the Canadian Mission by Rev. James Dickson in New Amsterdam. Its first graduates were ordained in 1945, and a Presbytery was established in that year. Later, candidates for the ministry were sent to Union Theological Seminary in Jamaica, and then to its successor, the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI).

SOME SPECIAL TOPICS:

1) DIVISION BETWEEN EAST INDIAN AND "CREOLE" CHURCHES, IN GUYANA AND IN TRINIDAD

Although the Canadian Mission to East Indians in Trinidad and in British Guiana began in co-operation with existing Scottish-related Presbyterian Churches, as time went on the "East Indian" and "creole" churches remained apart. This may be compared to the cultural-racial tensions within these Southern Caribbean societies, which are even more divisive in political life. For a time the difference between Hindi and English (and creole) languages helped to maintain the division, but the use of the Indian language diminished. Yet differences of a social and economic nature remained. The connections with the Church of Scotland Colonial and Continental Committee on the one hand, and the Canadian churches on the other, made for economic rivalries.²⁶

In other countries Presbyterian church divisions have often been due to controversy over theology or church polity, but here this is not the case. In theory some may argue that cultural differences between people of African and Indian background are a source of division. Others would counter that "European" (including North American) or "missionary" influence has remained strong in the Reformed churches, in contrast to some Pentecostal and Independent or Spiritual Baptist groups. Cultural characteristics that may be called "African," such as "jumping up" or "shouting", are not found in Presbyterian congregations. On the other hand, customs that come from an Indian background such as home "prayer meetings" and "thanksgivings", melas, or even the Jesu katha (a musical presentation of the gospel), are welcomed or at least acceptable among non-Indians.²⁷

²⁵Zander Dunn, "The Great Divorce and What Happened to the Children" in *Canadian Society of Presbyterian History Papers*, 1977, pp.58-96. The Consultative Assembly resulted from a visit by missionaries James Farris and Robert Duncanson from British Guiana to the Trinidad Church in 1956.

²⁶Alexander S.MacDonald, "A Divided Church in a Divided Nation: British Guiana." (S.T.M. thesis, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1960), pp.81-137, esp.117-122.

²⁷Dayfoot, pp.190-192, 198-199.

Another proposed explanation is that differences are more a matter of class than of race, and that they reflect tension between rural (and mostly poor) people on the one hand, and urban (or middle-class) attitudes, on the other.²⁸

(2) INDIGENIZATION ("FROM MISSION TO CHURCH") AND THE END OF THE COLONIAL ERA

As in "second generation" mission churches throughout the world, there has been a necessary period of transition in Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana, from the time of the early missionaries to that of an indigenous or independent church. Depending on circumstances and personalities, such a transition can be gradual and amicable, or stressful, sometimes even antagonistic.

Over the decades in the Caribbean colonies, signs of restiveness among local people about missionary "domination" appeared from time to time. In Jamaica, where the Scottish mission began as early as 1824, the transition was slow and gradual. The mission to East Indians came to an end in 1951, since their smaller numbers in that island were considered assimilated in the creole society.

To take a significant example, we may describe in more detail the changes which took place in Trinidad. In 1900 -- at a time when the mission in British Guiana had barely begun -- notice of the problem of "devolution" came forward with a petition to the Presbytery of Trinidad, asking for "justice, fairplay and equal treatment" of local church workers. It protested the appointment of Rev. Harvey Morton, rather than an experienced local pastor, to be the successor to his father Rev. John Morton. Later, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the mission (1928), a petition was made to the Mission Board of the United Church of Canada, as a result of which control of church affairs was transferred in 1930 from Mission Council to a remodelled Trinidad Presbytery. The first local Moderator of Presbytery was Rev. C.D.Lalla, who had been a leader in the movement for more East Indian participation.²⁹ The "Church of Scotland" congregations withdrew from the reconstituted Presbytery at this time, although the monthly magazine "The Trinidad Presbyterian" continued to be jointly published.

By the 1950s, pastoral charges were becoming more self-supporting. Control of "Canadian Mission" schools was transferred to Presbytery, and they were renamed "Presbyterian schools." New missionaries, more accustomed to follow rather than to lead, gradually replaced retirees. The title of "Field Missionary" -- who had been a sort of regional bishop! -- was changed to "Field Secretary." Then with the formation of a "Synod of Trinidad and Grenada" in 1961, new presbyteries took over regional supervisory functions formerly carried out by missionaries. Mission Council was disbanded. Most of

²⁸It is interesting that the Church of Scotland in British Guiana has had a sugar estate, and that the Port-of-Spain churches have included some wealthy businessmen.

²⁹Idris Hamid, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad 1868-1968: the Struggles of a Church in Colonial Captivity* (San Fernando: St. Andrew's Theological College, 1980); Geoffrey D. Johnston, "The Canadian Mission in Trinidad 1868-1939: Studies in a Colonial Church" (Th.D. thesis, Knox College & T.S.T., Toronto, 1976), esp. ch.IV.

the remaining catechists one by one were licensed and ordained as ministers. Meanwhile theological education was changing from the long tradition of catechist training in Trinidad, to theological colleges in Canada, then to Union Theological Seminary in Jamaica and its successor, the UTCWI. (Finally in the 1980s ministerial training was taken back to St. Andrew's Theological College in Trinidad.)

In the 1960s political independence further hastened the movement away from the colonial patterns of the past. In 1965 Rev. Garth Legge, who was about to become Regional Secretary of the Board of World Mission of the United Church of Canada, made an extended visit to the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Grenada, and produced a report which looked forward to the end of the missionary era.³⁰ This led by mutual agreement to the withdrawal of missionaries and grants from Canada by 1977.

Before this time the Canadian Mission Church in British Guiana had been following a somewhat similar transition, both before and after the formation of the Presbytery (1945). Some ten years after this, when Rev. Edward Johnson came to the General Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Canada he strongly supported the aspiration to local self-government. In May 1964, in the political circumstances of the time, the Canadian Mission schools were turned over to the government. Shortly before the independence of British Guiana the name of the church became the Guiana (later Guyana) Presbyterian Church.³¹

(3) ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

A Consultative Assembly of Presbyterian Churches in the Caribbean was held in Trinidad in 1957, with representation from the "Canadian" and "Scottish" churches in Trinidad and in British Guiana, and the (undivided) churches in Jamaica & Grand Cayman, and in Grenada. Further Assemblies were held in later years which included Congregationalists and the Dutch Protestant church in Curaçao, but – especially after the Federation of the West Indies broke up in 1962 – they remained mainly as consultative bodies.

In the 1950s, two ministers (Rev. Joseph Doman and Rev. James Radhakissoon) from the Trinidad Presbyterian Church became oversea missionaries. They responded to appeals from the Moravian Church in Suriname for a period of service as Hindi-speaking missionaries among the East Indian community in that Dutch territory.

Along with contact with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Caribbean Assembly of Reformed Churches and the Caribbean and North American Area Council were organized.

³⁰Garth Legge, *The Report of a Preliminary Survey of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Grenada* (Toronto: Board of World Mission, United Church of Canada, mimeographed, 1965).

³¹Bisnauth, pp.20-35; Charles Alexander Dunn, "The Canadian Mission in British Guiana: From Mission to Church, 1927-1967" (Th.M. thesis, Knox College & T.S.T., Toronto, 1975); Edward H. Johnson, *Focus on British Guiana* (Toronto, Committee on Missionary Education, General Board of Missions, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1942).

Meanwhile wider ecumenical consultations were taking place in the region. A "Caribbean Consultation" in Puerto Rico (1957) led to the forming of the Caribbean Committee for Joint Christian Action (CCJCA), the publication of Sunday School lessons for use in the West Indies, and other joint activities. In 1971, a widely representative Caribbean Ecumenical Consultation for Development was held at Chaguaramas (Trinidad) and in 1973, the Caribbean Conference of Churches was established. This included -- for the first time in such regional Councils -- the Roman Catholic Church as one of the founding members. In all this there was close co-operation with the World Council of Churches.

(4) CHURCH UNION IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

Discussions with a view to church union in Jamaica began as early as 1927. In 1952 a Church Union Commission was formed by Congregationalists, Methodists, Moravians and Presbyterians, and later the Disciples of Christ, to advance this goal.³²

In 1965 Presbyterian and Congregational churches came together. Although this was about the time of the formation of the United Reformed Church in England, it was decided to leave the way open to wider unity, and the name chosen was the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman (UCJGC). In 1992 this further merged with the Disciples of Christ in Jamaica (which was founded by American missionaries in the 19th century), under the name the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI).

These unions took place with little or no local difficulty. Presbyterians had been strong in the western part of the island, while Congregationalists and Disciples were located more in the east.³³

(5) THEOLOGICAL THINKING AND WRITING

In colonial times theological thought in the West Indies was heavily dependent on that of the "mother churches" in Europe and North America. Local theological writing was almost non-existent. Society in general and the churches in particular were intellectually starved by the lack of any English university in the region, until in 1948 the University College of the West Indies (later the University of the West Indies) was established. The churches and theological colleges had been dependent on European and North American expatriate leadership and a few local leaders who had been able to study abroad.

³²Jamaica Church Union Commission. *Proposed Basis of Union, with "Venturing for Christ. Why unite?"* (Kingston, 1957).

³³On the other hand, Methodists and Moravians had a problem in that their denominations had always been organized on a Caribbean-wide, not just a Jamaican, basis. They had to think about their relations with other parts of the Caribbean, whereas the Presbyterian churches (and also the Disciples) had not been actively organized in the region as a whole. Moreover the Methodists only became independent of the British Methodist Conference in 1960, as the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA). At the same time Methodists and Anglicans in Britain, and also in the West Indies, were having talks about union (which did not materialize).

The 1950s, 60s and 70s brought in a new age. Political developments, along with the ecumenical awakening which led to the production of interdenominational Sunday School lessons and founding of the United Theological College of the West Indies, culminated in the Caribbean Conference of Churches (1973). One by one expatriate teachers, as they withdrew or retired from theological seminaries (UTCWI, St. Andrew's and also Codrington College and the Roman Catholic seminaries) were replaced by local scholars. There came also a search for "a Caribbean Theology."

In this new age of political independence and ecumenical consultation among churches, Presbyterian and other Reformed Church leaders have been very actively involved. While loyal to the theological principles of the Reformation, their attention is directed to the ideas of this new age of awareness.

Among these leaders we may mention some examples. From Trinidad, the Rev. Idris Hamid issued a seminal booklet, *In Search of New Perspectives*, for the Chaguaramas Consultation in 1971.³⁴ He edited two books of scholarly papers presented at ecumenical Caribbean-wide conferences on theology and missiology, in which he was a leading figure, under the biblical titles: *Troubling of the Waters* (1973), and *Out of the Depths* (1977). Before his untimely death in 1981, he published his *History of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad*.³⁵ The Rev. Roy Neehall, first General Secretary of the Caribbean Conference of Churches, wrote articles on contemporary topics, some of them published under the title *Come and Let us Reason* (1975).³⁶ From Guyana, the Rev. Dale Bisnauth, in addition to his *Short History of the Guyana Presbyterian Church* (1979), wrote *A History of Religions in the Caribbean* (1989).³⁷ In Jamaica, Rev. Ashley Smith published *Real Roots and Potted Plants: Reflections on the Caribbean Church* (1984).³⁸ Ashley Smith also wrote for the "Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies", and as President of UTCWI edited this periodical for several years. Rev. Lewin Williams published his thesis on Caribbean Theology (1994) and a World Council of Churches "Gospel and Culture" pamphlet, *The Caribbean* (1996).³⁹

In the new age of independence, new books and university courses have stimulated study of Caribbean sociology and history. North American "Black Theology", and the "Liberation Theology" of contemporary Latin American theologians, naturally attract the attention of thinkers in the Caribbean. Some West Indian leaders have been recognized as members of the new group of "Third World Theologians" of the later 20th century.

³⁴Bridgetown, [Barbados], Caribbean Ecumenical Consultation for Development, 1971.

³⁵(1) Conference on Creative Theological Reflection, Kingston, Jamaica, and San Fernando, Trinidad, 1973; (2) San Fernando, I. Hamid, [ed.], 1977; (3) Idris Hamid, note 29, above.

³⁶Trinidad: Tapia House Printing Co. for Caribbean Conference of Churches, [1975].

³⁷Kingston: Kingston Publishers, 1989.

³⁸Williamsfield [Jamaica]: Mandeville Publishers, 1984.

³⁹(1) New York: Peter Lang, 1994; (2) *The Caribbean: enculturation, acculturation and the role of the churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996).

The phrase "Caribbean theology" may sound strange to Canadian Presbyterians and United Church people -- as indeed might the term "Canadian theology." Yet it merits our attention. We may recognize elements in common, even though different in detail, between Canada and the Caribbean. Among these are:

- (1) serious reflections on Church and society, after emerging from colonial times; and
- (2) finding our place, among old and new Christian communities, alongside other religious traditions, within the multiracial and multicultural nations of the western hemisphere.

THE AND ALL THAT

John Robert Grant

2

one year ago I was sitting at a conference table with Fr. Wilfred Bachner, a Presbyterian minister who is well known to this society. There had been many wounds, and we were able to discuss the causes and consequences of the 1975 union without embarrassment on either side. We found ourselves in complete accord on a number of matters on which we might have been expected to disagree. We agreed, for example, that at the time of its formation the United Church was more homogeneous in outlook than the continuing Presbyterian Church. This discovery, on its face, suggests that some in the circumstances the United Church had come into being largely to carry out a program that had been approved by all of its constituent churches. The continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada represented the coming together of people who had declined to accept that program. The reasons for their refusal varied a great deal, rather like those of the occupants of the cave of Adullam who rallied to David when they were best by common enemies -- bringing their peculiar harmoniously in one ecclesiastical body had not been without its difficulties.

Both at the time and afterwards the events of 1975 have provoked a massive literature both polemical and scholarly, and I have no desire to add to it. My primary concern is with what has happened since in the two successor churches. My major focus that is to say, is on "all that" rather than on the events of 1975. My desire is to be as objective as possible, although no member of either successor church can avoid some assumptions of which he or she is unaware. I take it as inevitable that although both have valid claims to continuity, neither is identical in outlook or priorities with the Presbyterian Church in Canada as it existed before 10 June 1975, and that neither has remained unchanged since. As Omit Karyson put it, "The memory of 1975 has been moved on." All the same, both churches have continued to be affected by the memory of 1975 and the futures to which they confronted themselves then. These have been formative in shaping their identities and establishing their commitments. Not

1925 AND “ALL THAT”

by

John Webster Grant

Some years ago I was sitting at a conference table with Dr. Wilfred Butcher, a Presbyterian minister who is well known to this society. Time had healed many wounds, and we were able to discuss the causes and consequences of the 1925 union without embarrassment on either side. We found ourselves in complete accord on a number of matters on which we might have been expected to disagree. We agreed, for example, that at the time of its formation the United Church was more homogeneous in outlook than the continuing Presbyterian Church. This discovery, on its face surprising, made sense in the circumstances. The United Church had come into being largely to carry out a program that had been approved by all of its constituent churches. The continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada represented the coming together of people who had declined to accept that program. The reasons for their refusal varied a great deal, rather like those of the occupants of the cave of Adullam who rallied to David when they were beset by common enemies. Bringing them together harmoniously in one ecclesiastical body had not been without its difficulties.

Both at the time and afterwards the events of 1925 have provoked a massive literature both polemical and scholarly, and I have no desire to add to it. My primary concern is with what has happened since in the two successor churches. My major focus, that is to say, is on “all that” rather than on the events of 1925. My desire is to be as objective as possible, although no member of either successor church can avoid some assumptions of which he or she is unaware. I take it as inevitable that although both have valid claims to continuity, neither is identical in outlook or priorities with the Presbyterian Church in Canada as it existed before 10 June 1925, and that neither has remained unchanged since. As Omar Khayyám put it, “The moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on.”¹ All the same, both churches have continued to be affected by the memory of 1925 and the futures to which they committed themselves then. These have been formative in shaping their identities and establishing their commitments. Not

¹Stanza 71.

least, they have bequeathed mythologies in the light of which succeeding events have been interpreted. If this seems terribly abstract, let me give you an example.

In Exodus 3:2, we read of a bush that was burned but not consumed by the flames that surrounded it. It figured prominently in the mythology of resistance to church union. The Presbyterian Church, in this version, was burned by the defection of many members but lives on in the continuing church. At the inauguration of the United Church, by contrast, an impressive episode was an exchange in which representatives of each uniting church offered what it regarded as its special contribution to be fulfilled in the larger entity. Thus in a symbolic way each was burned but not consumed. To add a further touch, the burning bush appears on the frontispiece of the biography of Archbishop Taché of St. Boniface,² thus insisting that the French presence persisted in western Canada despite the preponderance of anglophone immigrants.

Since the proposal for union necessarily preceded the opposition to it, it seems logical to begin with it. Among the circumstances that suggested the church union that eventually took place in 1925, two seem to me to have been of special importance. One was that both Presbyterians and Methodists had gone through a process of consolidation that was generally believed to have been successful and gave rise to a vocabulary that was available in later situations. I was brought up in Pictou, where a regional union of Free and Seceder bodies had been consummated. On that occasion representatives of the uniting churches met in a hall that was surmounted by two banners. One of these read, "For Christ's Crown and Covenant," the other "That they all may be one."³ Thus a good deal of the rhetoric that would be employed by unionists in 1925 was already available. Proposals for even more ambitious unions across denominational lines, although nowhere as advanced as they would be in Canada, were getting some support elsewhere.

Another significant factor, in my opinion, was the wave of religious revivals that had taken place in many parts of the world shortly before. A notable feature of these revivals, and one that was widely publicized, was the involvement of several denominations in them. Closely associated with them, and with the union movement, were crusades on various moral issues such as the protection of the Lord's Day and the prohibition of alcoholic beverages. Many prominent unionists, such as Charles W. Gordon, were both reformers and products of revival. A further factor, not so much in itself creating union sentiments as easing its acceptance once it had been proposed, was a widespread assumption that history is a one-way process leading inexorably to ultimate fulfilment. The Canadian background of successive unions encouraged the application of this pattern to the Canadian case.

But what would this united church be like? Since the United Church of Canada came into being through a union and bore the word "United" in its name, it thus was born with a natural bias toward whatever promised to advance unity among Christians. For a long time the outlook for fulfilment was far from promising. Not only did the Presbyterian split serve as a warning to anyone who might contemplate a similar venture, but the size and confidence of the United Church could seem threatening to other Canadian churches. Nevertheless the United Church responded eagerly to any unitive

²Paul Benoit, *La Vie de Mgr. Taché* (Montreal: Beauchemin, 1904).

³*Presbyterian Witness*, 6 October 1961.

development that seemed promising. Outstanding among such was the ecumenical movement, to which the United Church responded positively from the outset. When the World Council of Churches and the Canadian Council of Churches were formed, there was never any question but that the United Church would be one of the founding members.

Being in some ways a younger church has also affected attitudes to churches that have emerged from missionaries' activities abroad. United Church missionaries and head office officials have been guilty of condescension and even of prejudice as much as others, but in recent years they have taken the initiative in handing over responsibility to churches in the Third World. "Partnership in mission has become a part of the ethos of the United Church," Lois Wilson could say with some justification.⁴

The World Council provided a dramatic example of the difference church union could make. It has commonly provided opportunities at its sessions where representatives of each denominational family can meet together. But where should United Church representatives go? Assigning them to any one of the denominational groups seemed inappropriate, dividing them up by denominational background no better. In the end a special session was arranged for representatives of united churches, and those of the Canadian body found themselves to their delight in a group where they were overwhelmingly in a sea of colours.

Although the hope of the founders was that the United Church would be the pioneer of a widespread movement has not been fulfilled, it has bequeathed considerable openness to Christian traditions, other than their own. Some years ago an English Methodist visitor attended a former Methodist meeting at Berwick, Nova Scotia. When the congregation at a sing-song was asked to suggest hymns, he was dumbfounded when the first three requests were for "The Lord's my shepherd" to as many tunes. This openness could, for many at least, give a sense of ownership of the whole Christian heritage. A graphic illustration is the presence at the former United Church headquarters of an icon that was presented by Orthodox visitors some years ago. I felt it vividly myself when, during a stay in India some years ago, I was invited to be part of a rota of celebrants in a congregation of the Church of South India whose background was high Anglican.

Openness to all Christian traditions is a noble ideal, but it has not come without a price. The Basis of Union sets forth a doctrinal standard, and in recent years considerable has been heard of it. Applying it, however, has not been easy. Those who entered the union were of various backgrounds, and it was difficult to know what would have been generally acceptable. The Congregationalists had successfully insisted that applicants for membership should not be required to subscribe to a written creed.⁵ In fact the Congregationalists had been rather fussy in examining the beliefs of applicants. Their point was that the church rather than the individual should judge acceptability, but in

⁴Sermon on the 75th anniversary of the United Church of Canada, *Touchstone*, 18:3 (Sept. 2001), p. 13.

⁵The uniting churches "shall be free to continue to organization and practices (including those relating to membership...enjoyed by them at the time) of union."

United Church practice the decision on this has ordinarily been left to the applicant. Besides, controversy in the Presbyterian Church had left many open wounds, and there was a natural tendency not to ask too many questions. The United Church became known as an open church, one that almost anyone can join on almost any terms. Much can be said for this openness, but it leaves many questions as to what one is actually joining. Having always appreciated this openness, I was disconcerted one day when a theological student told me that he was embarrassed when meeting students from other colleges. They knew where they stood, he complained, but he was hard pressed for an answer.

This openness was never understood to mean willingness to let people stay as they were. One of the purposes of union had been to make available greater resources for missionary outreach. Almost from the outset, however, the United Church was forced to retrench. One reason for this was that a large proportion of missionary funds came from Ontario, where resistance to union had been strongest, while depression and crop failure made for greater demands on resources. A further blow was disillusionment with Christian missions abroad, which had been the source of much enthusiasm for union in the past. A fair amount of energy was expended in rebutting charges in a self-appointed study, the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, which from a bureaucrat's point of view castigated Christian Missions as inefficient and ineffective.⁶ More serious, although not yet so evident, was a widespread suspicion that the whole enterprise was misguided and that the so-called "heathen" were better served by their own traditional religions – a charge that hit hardest at churches of a more liberal disposition. During a period of financial constraint, too, retrenchment fell with the hardest force on the recruitment and retention of missionary personnel. My own application for missionary service abroad seems to have been quietly laid aside.

When missionary work abroad lost much of its cachet, the conversion of society gained new prominence. During my brief stint as editor of the Ryerson Press I was brought into intimate contact with members of the sales staff. I soon discovered that there was no doubt in their minds as to what feature of the United Church made the greatest impression on them. It was moralism, and especially opposition to the consumption and sale of alcoholic beverages, and almost without exception they disliked it. They were not entirely mistaken in their picture of the United Church. In my student days I would look at a picture on the college wall of a recent Pine Hill graduate who had been refused ordination because it came out that he was not a total abstainer. I hoped that certain questions would not be put to me, and they had nothing to do with doctrinal orthodoxy. The image of the United Church among outsiders, and to a certain extent among members, was shaped by the reputation of J.R. Mutchmor, the long-time secretary for Evangelism and Social Service, who was known as a crusader against drinking and other disapproved habits. This had been the stand of all the churches involved in the union, although with the least approach to unanimity among the Presbyterians. Pressure on the morals of individuals was not the only social issue that attracted attention. A few, especially in the depression years, insisted that the problems that were troubling society resulted not from individual sins but were built into the structures of society. They

⁶*Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry After One Hundred Years* by a Commission of Appraisal chaired by W.E. Hocking (New York: Harper, 1932).

received little sympathy from leaders such as George Pidgeon, who throughout his career took an active interest in rescuing drunks, prostitutes, and other casualties of society. They received even less from captains of industry, who saw to it that some of the most conspicuous radicals lost their jobs. The general stance of the United Church in the post-war years – or at least of most of its members – would probably best be described as a moderate reformism. Apart from its stubbornness on the liquor issue, it corresponded closely with the general mood of the time.

Whereas it is fairly easy to find a common pattern among those who opted for the United Church of Canada, those who opposed the union did so for a variety of reasons that were not always compatible with one another. There were those who were satisfied with the existing situation and not easily reconciled to the prospect of change. Among them, I suspect, were the McCulloch sisters, who venerated the memory of their good father and saw the union as a betrayal of it. There were some who had been in favour of union but found aspects of the Basis of Union unacceptable, were repelled by what they felt as undue pressure, or who felt that the amount of dissent would make the union little more than a shift from one denomination to another. There were even a few like D.J. Fraser who found the Basis of Union too conservative and feared that it would shackle the United Church to an outmoded theology. Almost certainly, too, there were those who feared, not unrealistically, that the union might have some unanticipated consequences they were not prepared to risk.

Once the union had taken place, it was necessary for those who had resisted it to get together in a continuing church. Despite great enthusiasm for the cause, the task was not easy. It is probably always easier to bring together those who are committed to a program than those whose common feature is that they oppose it. How to bring together liberals such as Fraser with people like Ephraim Scott, who insisted that Presbyterianism had existed before the flood? When Knox College had been assigned to the non-concurrents, the unionists had taken the entire faculty with them. Those recruited to take their place were notoriously unable to find much in common, with the result that their disagreements were a constant embarrassment to the church.⁷ On what, then, was the church to stand? Inevitably there was favour at the outset for whatever could be identified as distinctive attributes of Presbyterianism.

One feature that conspicuously marked Presbyterianism as I recall it from my early years, and to some extent marks it still, was a close association with Scotland. Canadian Presbyterianism has many other strands, notably Irish and continental, but it was Scotland of which I heard repeatedly. This may have had something to do with the circumstance that I was raised in Pictou, Nova Scotia, a community in which it was important to be able to point to a Scottish and preferably Highland ancestry. Even now, with the Kirking of the Tartans and other symbols traditional or invented, the denomination has something of an ethnic flavour. This gives it the advantage of a ready-made target audience, but with the danger of distracting it from the problems of the contemporary world. The kailyard school is out of favour now, but for some years sentimentality about things Scottish was a brake on realistic thinking.

⁷On this point and elsewhere I have depended gratefully on John S. Moir, *Enduring Witness* (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1974).

On a deeper level, the union revealed some significant differences in mentality between unionists and anti-unionists. There exists in Presbyterianism a tradition in which dissent is permissible and in some situations obligatory. When the 1925 union was proposed to the Methodist conference, there was a significant amount of disagreement, but never an attempt to organize opposition once it had been decided. Was the Methodist conscience more pliable? I think not, but rather that the Presbyterian, as a general rule, was more disturbed by what it saw as error than by a lack of harmony. This reluctance to accept authority as given was reflected after union in a widespread distrust of those in charge of denominational policy. It could be seen in the government of the continuing church, which at first deliberately excluded ordained ministers from having a say in the finances of the church.⁸ Previous to the union, by contrast, lay elders had been notoriously scarce at meetings of the General Assembly, partly through their own negligence and partly because they had been required to pay their own railway fares. In any event, they were determined in the aftermath of union not to let this happen again.

Perhaps reflecting their reduced numbers as well as this resistance to authority, Presbyterian bodies have typically given remarkable opportunities for both fellowship and infighting. Knox College convocations that I have attended have been marked by an intimacy and informality absent from those of Emmanuel and indeed not desired there. This reflects in part a Scottish tradition but is also, I suspect, a holdover from the days when the Presbyterians thought of themselves as an embattled minority.

Beyond such defensive attitudes Presbyterianism has always stood on a theological base, and this they have owed chiefly to John Calvin. Those who continued naturally made a good deal of him, and some of them named their churches for him. Ephraim Scott, the first moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada after the break, was a stalwart if not very imaginative upholder of Calvin's theology. More prominent, however, was biblical conservatism and even fundamentalism, as many gaps in the ministry were filled from conservative seminaries in the United States. Serious theological searching, however, seemed in short supply. Then, according to a number who have spoken to me, the gap was filled by the appointment in 1927 of W.W. Bryden to be principal of Knox College. Bryden drew on the current revival of Calvin's theology in Europe to give Canadian Presbyterianism a theological base not only to survive but to stand proud. Bryden was one of a number, among whom I should eventually include myself, who sought to recover for Protestant Christianity a more positive message than was typical of the liberalism of the time. With this development the name of Karl Barth has most frequently been associated, and indeed Barth's emphasis on the word of God as creative of the church has been enormously important. For me, and to some extent for Bryden, a significant catalyst was the English Congregationalist P.T. Forsyth. Although Forsyth obviously never had an identical effect on me, this development was an important factor in turning Bryden against church union. Of course one should not suppose that Bryden's influence affected all Presbyterians or indeed that all whom he did affect ultimately remained satisfied with all of his ideas. Nevertheless, Bryden did inspire a number of students who were to become leaders in their denomination, thus giving the Presbyterian Church in Canada a theological basis it badly needed. His

⁸*Ibid.*, p.226.

graduates presented a very different face of continuing Presbyterianism from the nay-saying that had marked the first generation after church union.

Bryden's influence may have had something to do with a special interest later taken by Canadian Presbyterians in the struggle of the Confessing Church in Germany against Nazism. This concern was shared by most other Canadians, but through their Calvinist heritage Presbyterians were most likely to express their objections in explicitly theological terms. This also helps to explain why in 1955, after years of heated and sometimes acrimonious debate, The General Assembly adopted "The Declaration of Faith concerning Church and Nation," and in 1970 acknowledged it, beside the Westminster Confession, as one of the church's subordinate standards. The United Church has also issued statements of faith at various times, but they have never seemed as crucial to the church's self-image.

The challenges that faced the United and Presbyterian churches in 1925 were in some respects similar, in others remarkably different. Each needed to build a church, in the case of the unionists out of a movement, in that of their opponents out of resistance to it. In many respects the task of the unionists was simpler, if not necessarily easier. They had the advantage of intending to continue a movement, one that had already been in progress ever since the Evangelical Revival and was striving for a goal that was already well understood in general terms if not always in some of its details. It stood for the evangelization and reformation of Canadians, both as individuals and as a nation, and those engaged in it understood one another fairly well. Canada and Canadians were to be made increasingly moral, religious, and idealistic. The vision on which the United Church was based was thus essentially goal-oriented, geared to change in individuals and society, and to a great extent that is what it became. To read the minutes of its general councils is to encounter programs, proposals, activities, and resolutions in abundance. Little attempt was made to enforce, or even to examine, the beliefs of those involved in these programs. The important thing was to have them enlisted in the cause of transforming Canada into a more Christian nation, and any who responded were welcome.

Resistance to church union, unlike support for it, was based not on a single vision but on a sense that a number of important values was under threat. "What we have we hold" was a widely used watchword, one that was not specific as to what values were to be defended. In harmony with this scarcity of specifics, much was made of ethnic backgrounds, historic sites, and founders of the tradition in Canada and beyond, all of which called for identification rather than precise definition. Similarly, appeal was made to the Westminster Confession and even further back to the Bible without always being too specific about what aspects were in mind. A good deal was also made of contacts with other churches of the tradition. In general, one can say that the emphasis was on where Presbyterianism had come from rather than where it proposed to go. To use a contrast that has become familiar, Presbyterianism in the years after 1925 was essentially a church of memory rather than a church of hope. An exception, perhaps, was that the missionary impulse that was an important factor in suggesting union also provoked much of the opposition to what was seen as an expression of liberal ideas. After union the Presbyterian Church took up the missionary cause with considerable vigour.

Thus in the long and bitter controversy over the church union the two sides operated on different assumptions. Unionists were thinking of what the church is called

upon to do, their opponents in terms of what is called to be. Since these contrasting criteria seemed obvious to those who operated on them, those on the other side often seemed not only mistaken but blind or even ill-willed. Inevitably, too, the churches that emerged developed vocabularies to fit the cases they were making; and thus the other side was not merely discredited but demonized. Now that tempers have long since cooled, however, it should be possible to recognize that each side had hold of one aspect of the truth that the other could not or would not see. Indeed, the years after 1925 were marked by the appearance in each church of an inclination to modify some extreme positions. The minutes of United Church general councils abound in statements in which the traditions of all components were carefully balanced. In its first hymnal after union, for example, the United Church's *Hymnary* contained roughly two metrical psalms and paraphrases for every two hymns of the Wesley brothers and one of the Watts and Doddridge. Among the Presbyterians, similarly, a number of younger delegates were able to insist, over the reluctance of some veterans, that the church should take an active part in the ecumenical movement.

In the course of the controversy and the following years each church developed a character that, whatever claims to continuity it might make, neither was identical in either its actions or its spirit with the Presbyterian Church in Canada as it had been before 1925. The continuing church was for a long time self-consciously on the defensive whereas in Robertson's time its predecessor had been optimistic and expansive. The United Church, especially with the admixture of other traditions, has understood itself more in terms of general outlook than of doctrinal stance. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has remembered 1925 too well, while the United Church has practically forgotten it. Each church has also taken on some characteristics that previously had been less prominent or absent altogether – in the case of the Presbyterian Church in Canada a deepened concern for developments in continental Europe, in that of the United Church a strong tincture of social radicalism.

In 1943, when I was a newly ordained minister of the United Church of Canada, I attended my first session of the Maritime Conference. To my delight I was named to the sessional committee on Evangelism and Social Service. It was exactly where I should have liked to be, for this was the committee that dealt with the political issues of special interest to me. The committee turned out to consist largely of people with particular axes to grind. There was the temperance lobby, those alarmed by the growing disregard for the Sabbath, those who wanted to revive flagging interest in evangelism, and of course the social activists like me. We didn't quarrel. Instead, the partisans of each special interest mobilized the support of the others, and only one resolution of too radical a cast failed to pass the plenary session. These interests, greatly as they varied in subject matter, were all phases of the impulse that had given the union movement its initial thrust. They still reflected a broad consensus, although I can see that they prefigured more serious disagreements in the future.

In retrospect I can see that our ambiguity represented an early stage of what would increasingly become a dichotomy between those who emphasize the renewal of society and those who represented a more conservative and even fundamentalist orientation. The former dominated and still dominate church assemblies. I once served on a committee that was asked to envisage the future of Canadian society. The first requirement we decided on was that it should be radically different from what we have

now, and that premise was widely accepted. The dichotomy was never complete. The more radical were distinctly dominated by Christian convictions, whereas the more conservative, even some of those who eventually felt themselves obliged to leave it, insisted that they valued the freedom that United Church provided. In the last few years there have been signs of a desire to do justice to both concerns. Problems that have arisen in our relations with the native peoples have been a graphic reminder that good intentions are not enough, for most of the missionaries involved had excellent intentions. The United Church has been wrestling with such issues as it has never had to before.

Of more recent developments in the Presbyterian Church in Canada I have little to say, leaving to you the task of continuing that story or correcting what I have said. My impression is that you have faced many of the same issues and, with some notable exceptions, come to roughly the same conclusions. Repeatedly in Presbyterian history the same issues or ones much like them have come up with roughly the same or similar conclusions, with variation in detail from country to country and from time to time. Calvin himself, though chiefly remembered for his severity, devoted much of his energy to improving the moral and social climate of Europe, not without considerable attention to helping citizens to get on their feet. In Scotland also there were those who devoted their lives to raising the standard of church membership and others who specialized in welcoming people in. In more recent times we can see it symbolized in the banners that marked the union of 1860, one reading "For Christ's Crown and Covenant," the other "that they all may be one." A church needs both, in proportions that vary with conditions of time and circumstance. My hope is that the United Church of Canada and the Presbyterian Church in Canada will be effective both in proclaiming a prophetic word and in publishing Christ's offer of free salvation. If they can do both together, so much the better.

THE ROLLINS' WAY OR NO WAY: THE *EVOLVEMENT* OF CHURCH ACCOUNTING AND FINANCING

by

John Alexander Johnston

From time *im memorial*, Christians believed that their bound duty (God's Will) was to proclaim the gospel (*euaggelion*-mission), enlighten the saints (*didache*-teach) and care for the corporeal needs (*agape*-charity) of the less fortunate. Jesus himself sent his disciples into the world preaching and teaching, while Paul, in his first letter to the church in Corinth, records collections being made by the faithful for the relief of the needy in Jerusalem.

The Church of Jesus Christ has always depended on her followers for its financing. Support for her life and mission was usually in response to favours desired, or favours received. The church of St. Sophia in Constantinople, financed by the Emperor Constantine, is but one of thousands of sanctuaries, cloisters and religious houses built by thankful individuals whose prayers had been answered. In many countries when Christianity became the official state religion financial help was also provided by the government. The history of the Vatican is the saga of a strong partnership of church and state. In England, religious bodies became the largest landowners in the country and were the employers of countless artisans and agricultural workers. Local church buildings were often erected and maintained by the liege lord who appointed the incumbent and whose word was law.

Through much of the Christian era, only the wealthy, a tiny minority of the population, were in a position to finance the building of religious edifices, set up endowments or underwrite missionary projects. The peasantry was born into servitude as tenant farmers, or served as staff in the households of their lords and masters. Some were more adventuresome or greater was their despair, and so became soldiers or sailors. Devoid of disposable funds, the poor could contribute only themselves as ordinands in various religious orders and in public worship. In time, trades such as itinerant tinkers emerged. Guilds came into their own with the result that financial resources were more widely dispersed.

With the gradual growth of towns and the development of a middle class, the circulation of currency came into wider use among those engaged in trade and industry. More and more people had resources with which to support the church. Gifts were expected when ordinances of baptism, confirmation, marriage and death were conducted. However, financing continued to largely depend on the generosity of the wealthy and the developing middle class until relatively recent times.

In Canada's farming communities, thanksgiving offerings were collected at the time of harvest. They often accounted for a sizable portion of the annual income of a congregation. Rural ministers might be partially paid in kind, as specie was limited. Annual visitations were made to the homes of members to receive contributions. Subscriptions were solicited for special projects. Pew rents were the chief source of hard currency in many congregations. Collection boxes might be placed at church entrances, and were a recognized but minor source of financial support.

When annual reports of congregations began to be printed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the final pages often recorded names of individual contributors, together with the total of their offerings listed for the twelve month period. Particular Sundays were set by church courts for receiving gifts for one or other of the *schemes* of the church, i.e. Home Missions, Foreign Missions, French Evangelization, Colleges, *etc.* Raising funds in the nineteenth century was usually makeshift, with shortfalls at year's end being met by last minute gifts from a small number of well-to-do, loyal, individuals who might be, but not necessarily were, trustees or served as members of the Board of Management.

The above described traditional methods of financing the life and mission of the church proved less than satisfactory for many congregations. The same is true for the recording of births, marriages, confirmations, deaths and even communicant memberships. Various persons, such as the minister, kept records which were often incomplete or non-existent. Record secretaries, using books of all shapes and sizes, might fail to turn over materials to their successors, considering their data as personal, not congregational property. Who were members and who were not did not appear to be a high priority, except when distributing tokens of admission to the Lord's Supper, or as in 1844, 1875 and 1925 when ballots were distributed (and contested) based on communicant membership. Frustration, sometimes chaos, resulted when the Roll was not up-to-date. Now James Rollins comes to the rescue!

James Rollins was born in 1865 in Madoc, Ontario, of Irish parentage. His father was a farmer in Hastings County. James graduated from Campbellford High School and in 1887 at the age of nineteen he entered Queen's College, on a scholarship provided by a Kingston benefactor. A top student, Rollins also served as the part-time business manager of *Queen's Quarterly* and as assistant librarian. He was awarded the scholarship in Systematics and the post-graduate scholarship in theology in 1895. (Note how the term *systematic* is associated with James Rollins so early in life).

Accepting a call from the Elmvale-Flos, ON, pastoral charge upon graduation, James Rollins remained for eight fruitful years, contributing greatly to both congregation and community. Mr Rollins displayed his organizational ability by establishing and becoming chairman of the first public library in Elmvale. It was he who whipped the congregations in Barrie Presbytery into oversubscribing the *Century Fund* of the denomination in 1900. During this time he conceived and later patented what became

known as the *Rollins System of Records* which revolutionized record keeping in the Presbyterian Church in Canada as well as in other denominations. His later pastoral ministry included the pulpits of King Street First Presbyterian Church in London (1903-10), St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Peterborough (1910-22), Renfrew Presbyterian Church (1923-28) which he led into union in 1925, becoming the minister of Trinity-St. Andrew's United Church (1929-30) at which time he retired. His funeral was held in the chapel of Queen's Theological College, Kingston in 1943.

The Rollins System of Records

First to appear was the *Treasurer's Record Book* which enabled offerings to be recorded on the date of receipt, with amounts tallied quarterly and statements forwarded to contributors four times a year. Every three months, donors were reminded of their givings to date. This system encouraged people to make weekly offerings. Boards of Management recognized the advantages of the *Rollins System*. *The Sector Plan* and other similar programmes trained church men and women to hold annual visitations, encouraging members to commit themselves to regular (weekly) support through their Time, Talents and Treasury. Offerings increased dramatically. After 1927 when governments authorized receipts issued by churches to be eligible for Income Tax purposes, the Rollins Register proved indispensable.

Gradually, Roll Clerks were chosen by Sessions to replace most ministers as keepers of communicant membership records and attendance at the quarterly Sacramental services. When General Assembly stated that absence from the Table for two consecutive years could result in a process of removal from the Roll of such persons, the *Rollins Roll Book* became a necessity, especially when Sessions conducted their annual membership reviews. A *Rollins Baptismal Book* was also designed and patented. It is still widely in use although its orientation today is more inclusive of both sexes.

The *Rollins Marriage Book* is still the most widely used book of its kind in Protestant Canada. Prior to the patenting of the Rollins system, uniformity of data collection and retention was unknown. The Government of Ontario, recognizing the need of accurate statistics, loans each church (and some individual ministers) an official *Marriage Register*, while the *Rollins Marriage Book* became the locally owned official record in many congregations.

After one hundred years the Presbyterian Church in Canada still displays an entire table of the Rollins Record Books in its bookroom at Church Offices. These volumes continue to be sold widely and used by countless congregations. The United Church Observer memorialized James Rollins as a *good presbyter...a brother beloved...ever ready to help his brethren in the ministry...fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*. I would add a special word of commendation for the contributions of this unsung and largely unknown individual, on behalf of all the record keepers and financial gurus of the Canadian church.

DISSENT IN THE PRESBYTERY OF PICTOU – 1875:

The Story of the Continuing Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime

Provinces in Connexion with the Church of Scotland

by

Michael Millar

This paper can be regarded as being two things. One – it is very definitely a “work in progress” and, two – it can be regarded as an adjunct to the Continuing Kirk Synod paper I had the privilege of presenting to this Learned Society in 1996.

Of the four groups who united on 15 June 1875 to form the present day Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), the smallest was the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime Provinces in connexion with the Church of Scotland. For simplification purposes I am going to refer to this Synod throughout this paper as the Maritime Kirk Synod. There were, however, several differences between the dissent within the Kirk Synod in Ontario and Quebec and that within the Kirk Synod in the Maritime Provinces. In the course of the next few minutes I hope to be able to draw these out.

On the eve of union, the Maritime Kirk Synod consisted of twenty-nine ministers; one missionary labouring within the bounds of the Presbytery of Halifax; one minister not in a pastoral charge, the Rev. Charles McDonald, M.A., serving as Professor of Mathematics in Dalhousie College; and five catechists. The latter were not evenly distributed; three were labouring within the bounds of Pictou Presbytery and two within the bounds of Halifax Presbytery. These ministers had the oversight of some fifty-three congregations, of which eleven were vacant. The Synod was organized into six Presbyteries – Pictou, Halifax, Prince Edward Island, St. John, N. B., Miramichi and Restigouche.¹ Unlike the other Maritime Synod, it does not appear to have had any involvement in foreign missions. Nor did they count among their number a single

¹Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime Provinces in connexion with the Church of Scotland, St. Andrew's Church, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 5 June 1874, pp.273-275.

congregation in Cape Breton Island although – as we shall see later – they did appear to have a number of supporters in the Loch Lomond area of the island.

The opposition to Union within this Synod does not appear to have had the same degree of bitterness and animosity that marked the proceedings of the Kirk Synod from 1871 to 1875. While more research on this point is required, the proceedings at its Synod meetings appear to have been conducted “decently and in order.” In 1874 the Synod met in St. Andrew’s Church, Halifax. The basis of Union agreed to by the Joint Committee in 1873 came on for discussion and vote. From this exchange it becomes clear that Synod was aware that the Presbytery of Pictou was not in favour of the proposal. The Minutes record the following:-

... explaining the changes made in the Basis of Union adopted by the Synods both in the Upper and Lower Provinces at their meeting in 1873.

After a very full discussion in which most of the members of Synod took part the following Resolution was moved by [the] Rev. G. M. Grant [St. Matthew’s Church, Halifax] and seconded by [the] Rev. Dr. Brooke [St. Paul’s Church, Fredericton]:- *viz* – “That the Synod adhering to its forms Resolutions in favour of *Re Union*, resolves to take the following steps towards its consummation:- Whereas the Synod of our Church in the Upper Provinces, and the General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church at their recent meetings in Ottawa adopted a Preamble to the Basis on Union and made sundry changes in the Basis and accompanying Resolutions, this Synod accepts the said Preamble and assents to the changes, approving of the same as eminently satisfactory to all who are attached to the Constitution and to the procedure of the Church of Scotland, and this Synod also approves and accepts the name of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, by which it is proposed that the *re* united Church shall be called.

Further, the Synod orders that the Amended Basis be printed and sent down to Presbyteries at once that they may, without any delay, ascertain the minds of the Congregations within their bounds, and to secure if possible, unanimous consent to the proposed *re Union*, appoints [the] Revds. Alex McLean, R. J. Cameron, Thomas Duncan, James Anderson, J. F. Campbell and Geo. M. Grant as a delegation to those congregations in the County of Pictou that form the minority of the Church, to explain the position of Synod, and to urge the great importance of unanimity on our part in the sight of the whole Church, and in the sight of the Great Head of the Church; and further appoints a special meeting to be held in New Glasgow on the 3rd Wednesday of Oct. next at 10 o’clock a.m. to receive the returns of the Remit, and also to receive a draft of the proposed Legislation referred to in Resolution V., [the] Revds. D. McRae and J. Campbell, and D. A. Fraser and J. S. McDonald Esqs. being a Committee to prepare such draft of proposed legislation.

It was moved in amendment by [the] Rev. R. McCunn [St. George’s Church, River John], seconded by the Rev. C. Dunn [St. John’s Church, Stellarton and

St. Phillip's Church, Westville], that the returns to the remit do not warrant the Synod in taking immediate steps towards consummation of the proposed *re* Union, but that in the altered circumstances of the Basis and Resolutions the Synod agrees to the plan suggested in the Resolution just moved.

The Rev. Mr. Grant declared that Mr. McCunn's resolution was not an Amendment to his motion, and could only be put as a Substantive Motion, as he was sure the whole Court would assent to it. He accordingly withdrew his that he might vote for Mr. McCunn's which was then past [sic] and carried unanimously.

Mr. Grant then moved his original motion which was also put to the meeting and Carried, *nem. con.*"

What transpired in New Glasgow on 21 October requires further research as do the proceedings in the Synod meeting in Montreal in June 1875. What is known, is that when the Rev. William McMillan, the Maritime Kirk Synod Clerk, called the Synod Roll at the Victoria Skating Rink on the 15th of June, all of the ministers within the Presbytery of Pictou, with the exception of Mr. McMillan, the Rev. James Murray and the Rev. John M. Sutherland, were absent. Mr. McMillan did not join the Presbyterian Church in Canada. He possibly felt that as Synod Clerk he had a responsibility to be in attendance at the meetings in Montreal; once his duties there were discharged he returned to his congregation at Salt Springs and continued his connection with the Church of Scotland. Two congregations and their ministers in the Presbytery of Pictou did go into the Presbyterian Church in Canada at this time. These were Mr. Murray and his congregation at Wallace and Mr. Sutherland and his congregation at Pugwash.

What took place in Pictou between 1875 and 1880 is subject to some speculation because we have no extant minutes of any proceedings of the continuing Synod in that five year period. The Archives of the United Church of Canada, Maritime Conference, in Sackville, New Brunswick has the Minute Book of the continuing Maritime Kirk Synod. This book commences on 27 February 1880 and goes through to 1895, although there are no minutes for 1892 or 1893. The first sixty-five or so pages in the book are numbered, but for and from the 1891 Synod meeting they are not. The first entries in the book are Presbytery Rolls and from this we find that the much reduced Maritime Kirk Synod had organized itself into two Presbyteries, Pictou and Egerton – obviously named after two of the three townships in Pictou County. From the rolls of these two Presbyteries it is possible to construct rolls for the years 1876 to 1879 because many of the ministers were in the same congregations in 1880 as they had been in 1875. From the minutes of this meeting we can also note that William McMillan was Synod Moderator for 1879/80. The minutes also show there was interest by some ministers and congregations in Prince Edward Island towards uniting with the Maritime Kirk Synod. The minutes record the attendance at Synod in 1885, 1886 and 1887 of the Revs. John Goodwill and John Hutchinson at De Sable and Orwell. They were not put under the care of either Presbytery because Synod had intentions of establishing a Presbytery on Prince Edward Island when more congregations and ministers joined. This did not occur and there are no further references to Prince Edward Island after 1894.

From reading the minutes it is obvious the continuing Synod carried on more or less as it had before 1875, albeit with greatly reduced numbers. It continued to publish its magazine – *The Monthly Record of the Church of Scotland* – until December 1890. Unlike the Upper Provinces Kirk Synod's unsuccessful attempt to seat one of its members on the Board of Queen's College at Kingston, when the Rev. Gavin Lang's term expired, the Maritime Kirk Synod was successful with Dalhousie College. It appointed the Rev. Neil Brodie in 1882 to represent its interests on the Board of Governors.² The following year it was recorded that Dalhousie had accepted Mr. Brodie's appointment.³ Unlike the Kirk Synod, the members of the Maritime Kirk Synod did not appear to harbour any ill-will towards the Presbyterian Church in Canada. There are a number of recorded visits by Presbyterian Church in Canada ministers to Synod from time-to-time and, upon introduction, being "cordially welcomed by the Moderator and invited to sit and deliberate with the brethren." Finances were a problem and the minutes do record on occasion a minister bringing his concern regarding the lack support by his congregation to the notice of Synod.

On the other hand there are many recorded instances in *The Monthly Record* of parishioners bringing gifts to the minister and his family, of glebes and other farm lands being worked for him and – perhaps most importantly – large supplies of wood for the winter being brought in and stacked. Of greater concern was financial augmentation to some of the smaller congregations. Some money was still being received from the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland. In 1881 this ceased. In a letter dated 10 March 1881⁴, the Rev. Robert McCunn, the Synod Clerk, wrote to the Committee expressing concern that if the grant was further reduced it may cause four of the eleven ministers to demit their charges. A reply, sent by the Committee Secretary, George B. Wilson, on 20 April, advised Synod that the grant would be reduced to £66/2/-. The letter stated further:-

It is my painful duty to further inform you that this amount be regarded by your Synod as the last contribution which can be made from the Colonial Committee's fund. This finding was adopted with the deepest regret and reluctance, but the circumstances in which the Committee are placed compel them to practice the most rigid economy, and to retrench on every hand.

One of the groups affected by this decision was the small group of Kirk adherents in the Loch Lomond area of Cape Breton. While not an organized congregation of the Maritime Kirk Synod, nevertheless they had been ministered to occasionally by Synod ministers. In June 1882 Synod appointed the Rev. William McMillan a delegate to Cape Breton "especially to Lochside congregation, Loch Lomond." By the end of that year

²Minutes of the Continuing Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime Provinces in connexion with the Church of Scotland, 27 June 1882, p.24, Maritime Conference, United Church of Canada Archives, Sackville, N.B.

³*Ibid.*, 31 January 1883, p.25.

⁴Mr. McCunn's letter and Mr. Wilson's reply are set out in full in the minutes of the 28 June 1881 meeting.

financial constraints caused even this small supply to be terminated. At the 31 January 1883 meeting of Synod the Rev. Neil Brodie of St. Andrew's Church, Gairloch, reported visiting the Lochside congregation. He told Synod that he had advised these people that because of lack of funds and ministers they should make arrangements with the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Presbytery of Cape Breton for regular supply. This situation was touched upon by the Rev. John Murray in his excellent *History of The Presbyterian Church in Cape Breton*, published in 1921. Towards the end of the chapter dealing with Loch Lomond and its Ministry he writes:-

Unfortunately, in the early sixties of last century [19th] there were divisions among the people of this lake, as there were among the Corinthians in the days of the Apostle Paul. But these divisions are all healed now and have been for many years past.

For too long a time, the people of the north side of the lake and the people of the south side of the lake spoiled their tempers and wasted their energies over fancied distinctions between Kirk Church and Free Church.

Now, however, there is entire harmony and cordial cooperation all round those peaceful and beautiful lakes, illustrating "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."⁵

Still, despite its financial difficulties, the Synod continued to be able to attract and receive ministers, as shall be noted when I deal with the congregations. However, it was almost a foregone conclusion that with the withdrawal of support by the General Assembly's Colonial Committee, the Synod could not survive. At the Synod meeting on 24 June 1890, a proposal *re* union with the Presbyterian Church in Canada was tabled to the 1891 Synod.⁶ The proposal was lifted from the table on 30 June 1891. No formal action was taken on the union proposal, but it was agreed that individual congregations were free to make their own arrangements, if they wanted to do so.⁷

The first congregation to leave was St. Paul's, East River, received into the Presbyterian Church in Canada on 12 January 1892. This congregation had been vacant for almost three years, following the death of the Rev. William McMillan. 1894 saw two more ministers and their congregations go over to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The first to leave was the Rev. Archibald Bowman, and St. Andrew's, New Glasgow. They were received from the Presbytery of Egerton by the PCC Presbytery of Pictou on the 6th of March. They were followed on the 3rd of July by the Rev. Robert McCunn and his congregation, St. George's, River John. Mr. McCunn and his congregation were also received by the PCC Presbytery of Pictou. Unfortunately Mr. McCunn did not long

⁵Rev. John Murray, *The History of The Presbyterian Church in Cape Breton* (Truro, N. S.:1921), p.160.

⁶Synod minutes, p.25.

⁷*Ibid.*, no page number.

enjoy his new affiliation, dying on 28 February 1895. Ironically the 1895 *Acts & Proceedings* records both he and his congregation being received, as well as his death. His obituary notice in the same *A & P*, while giving a number of biographical details, such as the fact that he had been at River John for thirty-one years, makes no mention of his continued adherence to the Church of Scotland until eight months before his death.⁸

Synod was also very much aware of the Kirk Synod's struggle to regain control of both the Temporalities Fund and Queen's College. The Synod Commission met in St. Andrew's Church, New Glasgow on 1 August 1881. The Minutes of this meeting are entered as an appendix at the back of the minute book. A partial abstract is given below:

Mr. Burnet gave in his report, as convenor of the Widows' and Orphans' scheme, and, after a long and interesting discussion, it was unanimously resolved that the matter be left in abeyance until the decision of the Privy Council in the Temporalities case should be known.⁹

At its meeting on 17 April 1882, Synod offered assistance to the Kirk Synod in this cause and dispatched the Rev. Robert Burnet to Ottawa.¹⁰ Mr. Burnet reported back to Synod on 27 June 1882 concerning his trip to Ottawa "... but was sorry to have to state that the matter having been prejudged, his mission was unsuccessful. The Rev. N. Brodie followed up Mr. Burnet's report with very interesting and important statements."¹¹ As major players in the Kirk Synod's fight to keep its identity and its assets, both men were fully aware of the issues and personalities involved in the upper Provinces.

In the mid-1880s Synod was visited by two ministers from Prince Edward Island, John Goodwill and John Hutchinson. Both men expressed a desire to join their congregations at De Sable and Orwell as well as a number of Preaching Stations with the Maritime Kirk Synod. They felt there was enough interest in the Island towards the "Kirk" that a separate Presbytery could be formed. Nothing was done by Synod towards that end although I have listed the De Sable and Orwell congregations for 1885 to 1887 because they were listed on the Synod Rolls for those years. Although it is not recorded in the minutes Synod must have applied to the Church of Scotland's Colonial Committee for funding assistance for Prince Edward Island. The minutes of 29 June 1887 record that the Colonial Committee declined to provide Grant Aid to Prince Edward Island "... in present circumstances."¹² Just what was meant by "present circumstances" is not spelled

⁸*Acts & Proceedings*, 1895, Appendix 29, pp. i, iii. The *A & P* consistently spelled his name as McCann. His name was correctly spelled as McCunn in the obituary notice. See Appendix 34, p.i.

⁹Synod Minutes - appendix, 1 August 1881, no page number.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 17 April 1882, p.17.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 27 June 1882, p.21.

¹²*Ibid.*, 29 June 1887, p.48.

out. In 1894 the matter of a Prince Edward Island Presbytery was raised again when Mr. Goodwill, along with Presbyterian Church in Canada licentiate Donald M. Campbell, appeared at a meeting of Synod held on 25 September with a request:-

Rev. Donald M. Campbell, a graduate of Pine Hill College, licensed by The Presbyterian Church in Canada, labouring in Prince Edward Island, asked to be received into the Synod. Rev. Goodwill explained that Mr. Campbell and Mr. [Daniel] McLean were labouring under him. Mr. Goodwill stated that as each of them was about to receive a call from portions of his large congregation he hoped the Synod would grant the request. Mr. Goodwill hoped with permission of the Synod to form a Presbytery in connection with the Church of Scotland in Prince Edward Island when Messrs. Campbell and McLean were ordained and inducted. Mr. Mackichan and Mr. Burgess were appointed to proceed to Prince Edward Island and in conjunction with Mr. Goodwill to hold a meeting of Presbytery for the purpose of licensing said Mr. McLean and of ordaining said Messrs. McLean and Campbell and form a Presbytery in connection with this Synod.¹³

16 October 1894. Rev. Mr. Putnam¹⁴ reported the committee had gone to Prince Edward Island, had ordained and inducted McLean and Campbell. They did not form a separate Presbytery but placed their names on the Roll of the Egerton Presbytery. Mr. Burgess explained that he would take no part in the ordination of Mr. Campbell as he was opposed to some of his methods of conducting public worship.¹⁵

There were no congregations mentioned in connection with the above recorded events and neither Campbell's nor McLean's names appear on the 1895 Egerton Presbytery Roll. Mr. McLean's name appears on the roll of the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Presbytery of Prince Edward Island, as being appointed Ordained Missionary to Campbellton and West Cape on 12 May 1898.¹⁶ Mr. Campbell's name appears on the roll of the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Presbytery of St. John, N. B., as being appointed to the congregation of Springfield effective 1 May 1899.¹⁷

In conclusion it can be stated quite fairly that the continuing Maritime Kirk Synod did achieve a degree of success and was far more successful than the continuing Kirk Synod in Ontario and Quebec. They were a compact group of congregations in an area

¹³*Ibid.*, 25 September 1894, no page number.

¹⁴There is no indication in the minutes as to why Mr. Mackichan was replaced by Mr. Putnam.

¹⁵Synod Minutes: 16 October 1894, no page number.

¹⁶*Acts & Proceedings*, 1898, p.553.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 1899, p.555.

roughly forty miles long by twenty miles wide. They were ministering to a people with a deep attachment both to the Church of Scotland and their ministers. Nor was the Synod involved in a financially ruinous series of legal actions over property and the Temporalities Fund like the Kirk Synod in the upper provinces. It was, however, inevitable that eventually these congregations would either come into the Presbyterian Church in Canada, merge with another PCC congregation in their community, or simply pass out of existence. By 1907 or 1908 at the latest, the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Maritime Provinces in connexion with the Church of Scotland was no more.

Appendix

A summary of the attrition year-by-year is given below:

- 1881 – Sutherland's River and Vale Colliery, amalgamated with local PCC congregation, n.d.*
- 1888/89 – Fisher's Grant, Bethesda, appears to have amalgamated with local PCC congregation, n.d.*
- 1892 – East River, St. Paul's Church to PCC, 12 January.
- 1894 – New Glasgow, St. Andrew's to PCC, 6 March.
- 1894 – River John, St. George's to PCC, 3 July.
- 1895 – Earltown, West Branch River John and The Falls, St. Andrew's to PCC, n.d.*
- 1896 – Barney's River, to PCC, 3 March.
- 1896 – Salt Springs, St. Luke's to PCC, 5 May.
- 1903 – Westville, St. Phillip's to PCC, 5 May.
- 1906 – Stellarton, St. John's to PCC, n.d.*
- 1907 – Gairloch, St. Andrew's to PCC, n.d.*
- 1907 – Pictou, St. Andrew's to PCC, n.d.*
- 1907 – Rogers Hill (Scotsburn), St. John's congregation amalgamated with Bethel Presbyterian Church, Scotsburn upon the retirement of Rev. William Stewart, n.d.*
- 1908 – Cape John, St. David's to PCC, n.d.*
- 1908 – McLellan's Mountain, St. John's to PCC, n.d.*
- 1908 – West Branch East River, St. Columba to PCC, n.d.*

* Indicates the actual date of reception/amalgamation is not known. The year given is the first year the congregation is listed in the Presbyterian Church in Canada's *Acts & Proceedings*, or as otherwise indicated.

The congregations and their ministers:

ALBION MINES, St. John's: See Stellarton.

BARNEY'S RIVER: The Rev. Alexander John Mackichan had been inducted into this charge on 22 September 1864. Up to 1875 it had been part of a two-point charge with a congregation in Lochaber. There is no mention of the latter congregation in the Synod

minutes nor in the *Monthly Record*. I am assuming it amalgamated with the Synod of the Lower Provinces congregation in the village at the 1875 union. Mr. Mackichan and this congregation were received by the Presbyterian Church in Canada on 3 March 1896.¹⁸ Mr. Mackichan demitted the charge on 1 September 1896,¹⁹ retired to Winnipeg and passed away in 1898.

CAPE JOHN, St. David's: See Roger's Hill and Cape John.

DE SABLE, Prince Edward Island and ORWELL, St. John's, Prince Edward Island: These were MacDonaldite congregations. They were shown in the Synod minutes, but not on either Presbytery Roll, for the years 1885, 1886 and 1887. It is difficult to say just how serious Goodwill and Hutchinson were in their stated intention to join the Maritime Kirk Synod. John Goodwill had at one time been connected with the Synod of the Lower Provinces both at Scotsburn and Hardwood Hill, Presbytery of Pictou and as one of that Synod's Aneitium, New Hebrides, missionaries. Ill-health caused him to return to Nova Scotia in 1874. Shortly after this he was admitted to the P.E.I. charges formerly held by Donald MacDonald. He ministered to congregations at Coleman, Cape Traverse and De Sable until 1903, when he retired.²⁰ He died on 22 January 1905.²¹ John Hutchinson had been a PCC minister in the East End congregation, Montreal in 1877 and was at Perth, Ontario from 1881 to 1885, when he went to P.E.I. He was at De Sable (and presumably Orwell) from 1885 to 1891.²² There are no further references to any P.E.I. congregations after 1887, although the final entry in the minute book reads "The Moderator [Rev. Homer Putnam] declared the next meeting of Synod would be held on the last Tuesday of June 1896 in the church at Lot 48 Prince Edward Island."²³ (emphasis added) Was this meeting ever held? In the absence of any continued minutes, we don't know.

EARLTOWN: This was part of a three point charge with WEST BRANCH RIVER JOHN and THE FALLS, St. Andrew's. The Rev. James MacColl had been translated to

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 1896: Appendix 27, p.xxxii.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 1897, p.499.

²⁰A. E. Betts, *Our Father in The Faith; Being an Account of Presbyterian Ministers Ordained before 1875* (Halifax, N. S.: Oxford Street Press, 1983), pp. 45-46.

²¹Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ, The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation, vol. VII, Synods of Ross, Sutherland and Caithness, Glenelg, Orkney and of Shetland, the Church in England, Ireland and overseas*. New and rev. ed. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1928), p. 619. Hereafter referred to as *Fasti*, VII.

²²*Ibid.*, p.620.

²³Synod Minutes, 25 June 1895, no page number.

this charge on 14 November 1872 from De Sable, P. E. I. He declined to join the PCC in 1875 and returned to Scotland.²⁴ These congregations are shown on the 1879 Pictou Presbytery Roll with the Rev. Duncan McKenzie as minister. The charge may have been vacant for four years because Mr. McKenzie's ordination date is given as July 1879 when he joined the PCC in 1907. From this we can assume that he was inducted into this charge at that time. Late in 1886 Mr. McKenzie was called to the Kirk Synod congregation of St. Columba, Kirk Hill, Ontario in the Presbytery of Glengarry. The charge was then vacant until 30 July 1890 when the Rev. Angus McKay was ordained and inducted. On 25 September 1894 he was suspended, *sine die*, by Synod because of alleged irregularities with the Foreign Mission Funds collected in his congregations. At the Synod meeting held on 16 October Mr. McKay confessed to misappropriating the Foreign Mission Funds. Synod ordered that the charge be declared vacant, McKay's status be reduced to that of licentiate, and that he refrain from the discharge of all ministerial duties within the bounds of the Pictou Presbytery. The charge was shown as vacant at the 1895 Synod meeting with the notation "no representative from Earltown." It is not clear at this point what happened to this charge, all three congregations just seem to disappear. A search through the *Acts & Proceedings* has failed to find any of these congregations coming into the Presbyterian Church in Canada, although The Falls, St. Andrew's is still an active congregation with the PCC today. More research is required.

EAST RIVER, St. Paul's: This charge was vacant in 1875. The Rev. William McMillan was translated from St. Luke's Church, Salt Springs on 26 April 1876. As has been noted earlier, he had been Clerk of Synod leading up to 1875. He died on 8 February 1889. After a vacancy of almost three years, the congregation was received by the PCC on 12 January 1892. Effective with this reception, the PCC Presbytery of Pictou made the following amalgamation: "Springville, St. Paul's and Sunny Brae united into one pastoral charge, to be known as the United Congregation of East River, March 22, 1892."²⁵

FISHER'S GRANT, Bethesda: This congregation is mentioned in the Synod minutes from 1880 to 1888, but does not appear to have had a settled minister. The PCC had a congregation at Fisher's Grant. There is no record in any of the *A & Ps* in this period to indicate the Bethesda congregation being received, so it would appear that an unrecorded amalgamation occurred sometime in 1888 or 1889.

GAIRLOCH, St. Andrew's: The Rev. Neil Brodie, who had been minister in this congregation since September 1868,²⁶ translated to St. Columba Church, Lochiel Township, Ontario in September 1874. The congregation remained vacant until September 1880 when Mr. Brodie returned from Ontario. He demitted the charge on 14 September 1886 and returned to Scotland. The charge then remained vacant until 11 July 1888, when the Rev. John Fowlie, a St. Andrew's educated native of New Dee, Scotland,

²⁴*Fasti*, VII, p.615.

²⁵*Acts & Proceedings*, 1892: Appendix 25, p.iii.

²⁶*Fasti*, VII, p. 613.

who had been in New South Wales, Australia since 18 August 1882, was inducted.²⁷ Mr. Fowlie, according to *Fasti*, remained in the charge until 1898. The congregation appears on the PCC roll of the Presbytery of Pictou in 1907 with Rev. J. C. MacLeod as minister.²⁸ It gives his ordination date as 20 May 1901 and the year of induction to this charge as 1904. It would appear, therefore, that the congregation remained vacant for six years prior to Mr. MacLeod's induction. More research is required.

HOPEWELL, St. Columba: See West Branch, East River.

LOCHSIDE, Cape Breton: See main body of text.

MCLELLAN'S MOUNTAIN, St. John's: This congregation is shown at various times in the Synod minutes and even to the present day as McLennan's Mountain. The Rev. William Stewart, a native of Foss, Perthshire, was the minister for the entire continuing Maritime Kirk Synod period. He was educated at St. Andrew's and Edinburgh and licensed by the Presbytery of Weem in 1859. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Dunkeld in May 1863, came to Nova Scotia and was inducted into this congregation in July of the same year.²⁹ He demitted the charge in 1905 after a ministry of forty-two years. The congregation appears to have remained vacant and came into the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1907/08, appearing on the roll of the Presbytery of Pictou in the latter year as a vacant congregation.³⁰

NEW GLASGOW, St. Andrew's: The Rev. George Coull, M.A. (King's College, Aberdeen), who had served the Church of Scotland for a time as missionary to the Jews at Smyrna, Asia Minor, had been in this congregation since 11 December 1873.³¹ He demitted the charge in 1878, joined the Presbyterian Church in Canada and was inducted into the Valleyfield, Quebec, pastoral charge on 6 February 1879.³² There must have been some dispute concerning the balance owing on his stipend. The May 1878 issue of *The Monthly Record* reported that "St. Andrew's, New Glasgow resolved to pay the balance of stipend from date of his resignation to middle of December to Rev. Mr. Coull." His successor was the Rev. George Murray, M.A. who was in the charge from 1878 to 1888 when he resigned and went to British Columbia.³³ He was followed by the

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp.588 and 614.

²⁸*Acts & Proceedings*, 1907, p.546.

²⁹*Fasti*, VII, p. 618.

³⁰*Acts & Proceedings*, 1908, p.543.

³¹*Fasti*, VII, p.614.

³²*Acts & Proceedings*, 1879, p.ccxxviii [228].

³³*Fasti*, VII, p.614.

Rev. Archibald Bowman and it was during his ministry that a decision was taken to join the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The minister and congregation were received on 6 March 1894.³⁴

PICTOU, St. Andrew's: Rev. Andrew Walker Herdman had been minister to this congregation since 1853 following his arrival in Nova Scotia from Scotland in 1849. He was adamantly opposed to union and only continued in the charge for another three years, resigning on 25 June 1878 and returning to Scotland.³⁵ The charge remained vacant until the Rev. Robert Burnet arrived from Ontario. There is no specific induction date given in the minutes but it took place between the Synod meetings of 25 of February and 29 June 1880. He was elected Moderator of Synod in 1880. Mr. Burnet demitted the charge on 25 June 1884 and returned to Ontario. The charge remained vacant for almost two years when the Rev. John Mann Callan, M.A., was inducted on 26 May 1886. Mr. Callan returned to Scotland in 1888³⁶ and was succeeded by the Rev. Robert Atkinson, who was inducted on 29 May 1889. Matters are somewhat unclear at this point. The Pictou Presbytery Roll for 1891 shows the congregation as vacant, with no demission date for Mr. Atkinson, who is not listed in *Fasti*. The next listed minister is the Rev. Andrew Armit, although the minutes show him as Arnot. *Fasti* gives his induction date as 11 April 1893.³⁷ He did not remain in the charge for long, returning to Scotland and being admitted to Monikie on 18 May 1896.³⁸ *Fasti* then indicates the Rev. W. T. D. Moss as being in this charge between 1898 and 1906.³⁹ The congregation came into the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1907 with the Rev. H. L. MacLean as minister.⁴⁰ Mr. MacLean appears to have been inducted into the charge in 1906. More research into the latter Maritime Kirk Synod period for this congregation is required.

RIVER JOHN, St. George's: The Rev. Robert McCunn had been inducted into this charge on 9 September 1863 and was there for the entire time the congregation remained part of the continuing Maritime Kirk Synod. In 1894 a decision was taken to join the

³⁴*Acts & Proceedings*, 1894: Appendix 27, p. iii.

³⁵*Fasti*, VII, p.615.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p.614.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p.613.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹*Ibid.*, p.617.

⁴⁰*Acts & Proceedings*, 1907, p.546.

Presbyterian Church in Canada. Minister and congregation were received by the PCC Pictou Presbytery on 3 July 1894.⁴¹

ROGERS HILL, St. John's and CAPE JOHN, St. David's: The Rogers Hill congregation is also known as Scotsburn and the congregation continues today in the United Church of Canada. The Rev. James William Fraser, M.A., was the minister for the entire period this charge remained part of the continuing Maritime Kirk Synod. He was a native of the area, being born at St. Paul's, East River in 1841. He was educated at Glasgow and was ordained by the Presbytery of Ayr on 25 July 1866. Following a tour of missionary duty in Cape Breton from 1866 to 1870 he was inducted into the Rogers Hill and Cape John pastoral charge in December 1870.⁴² He was Moderator of Synod in 1888. The following extracts from the history of Bethel Church, Scotsburn give us the rest of the story.

The roots of Bethel Presbyterian Church go back ... to the formation of St. John's Kirk of the Church of Scotland in 1822.

... In 1843, another serious disruption occurred in Scotland ... The impact of that disruption was felt on this side of the Atlantic and approximately one third of the families of St. John's Kirk, left to form a "free church." ... Relations between the new "free church" and St. John's remained reasonably cordial, and both congregations met in the same building until the present Bethel church was opened for worship in 1863.⁴³

By 1907 most of the remaining congregations of the Church of Scotland in Canada had been encouraged to join with the Presbyterian Church in Canada. That year coincided with the retirement of the Rev. J. W. Fraser of St. John's Kirk. It was voted to close historic St. John's and to merge with Bethel. The Sunday after his retirement, Mr. Fraser led his flock across the road to Bethel. With the reunion of the original Scotsburn congregation, after 64 years of friendly, but separate, existence, all of the Presbyterian elements of our community: "Kirkers," "Frees," "Burghers." and "Anti-Burghers," were worshipping as one congregation.⁴⁴

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 1895, Appendix 29, p.ii.

⁴² *Fasti*, VII, p.614.

⁴³ Kirk Session of Bethel Presbyterian Church, *Our Heritage of Faith: The History of Bethel Presbyterian Church, Scotsburn, Nova Scotia 1822 – 1975*: (Scotsburn, N. S.: 1975), p.2.

⁴⁴*Ibid*, p.4.

Cape John is not listed on the roll of the PCC Presbytery of Pictou for 1907, but St. John's is, with Rev. J. W. Fraser shown as minister.⁴⁵ St. John's is not listed in 1908 but Cape John is, as a vacant congregation.⁴⁶

SALT SPRINGS, St. Luke's: As has previously been noted, the Rev. William McMillan, the Synod Clerk, was the incumbent here in 1875. *Fasti* records that he had been inducted here in April 1868.⁴⁷ Mr. McMillan translated to St. Paul's, East River on 26 April 1876. The charge then remained vacant until for nearly three years. The Rev. James Fitzpatrick, B.A., was inducted on 4 January 1879. He was Moderator of Synod in 1887. At the moment I do not have a demission date for him, but it must have been right after the 1891 Synod meeting because *Fasti* gives the induction date for his successor, Rev. Alexander Roulston, as 30 June 1891.⁴⁸ Shortly after this a decision was taken to join the Presbyterian Church in Canada with minister and congregation being received on 5 May 1896.⁴⁹

STELLARTON, St. John's, and WESTVILLE, St. Phillip's: Stellarton was originally known as Albion Mines. Westville was disjoined from Stellarton on 31 December 1887. The Rev. Charles Dunn was inducted into this charge on 21 December 1870 and continued until 3 August 1887, when he resigned and returned to Scotland.⁵⁰ After a seven month vacancy the Rev. James Murray was inducted into the now single-point Stellarton charge on 19 March 1888. Mr. Murray had gone into the Presbyterian Church in Canada with the Wallace Maritime Kirk Synod congregation in 1875 but obviously decided to return to "The Kirk." He remained just a little over a year, but the date of his demission is not known at the present time. The Rev. Edward Blackmore Rankin was inducted to the charge on 12 September 1889. He remained just under two years, demitting the charge to go into the Presbyterian Church in Canada as minister at Falmouth Street Church, Sydney, Cape Breton. His induction date there, according to *Fasti*, was 26 August 1891. The Rev. Edwin H. Burgess was inducted prior to the 1892 Synod meeting. I do not have a demission date for Mr. Burgess, but he is shown on the list of PCC ministers in the 1904 *A & P* as being at Arrowhead, British Columbia. The Stellarton congregation with the Rev. D. M. Matheson is listed as a PCC congregation for the first time in the 1906 *A & P*.⁵¹ Mr. Matheson's year of induction into the present

⁴⁵*Acts & Proceedings*, 1907, p.546.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 1908, p.543.

⁴⁷*Fasti*, VII, p.616.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p.622.

⁴⁹*Acts & Proceedings*, 1896, Appendix 27, p. xxxii.

⁵⁰*Fasti*, VII, p.614.

⁵¹*Acts & Proceedings*, 1906, p.664.

charge is given as 1905. But there is no indication if this was before or after the congregation's decision to join the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

SUTHERLAND'S RIVER and VALE COLLIERY; These two congregations are shown on the 1879/80 and 1880 rolls of the Egerton Presbytery. The present-day Sutherland's River congregation has produced a mimeographed history of the congregation. According to it all of the Presbyterian bodies in the area paid for the building and used it for their worship services. According to the April 1881 issue of *The Monthly Record*, this congregation had decided to join with the PCC congregation. This is corroborated by the history mimeograph:-

... They were concerned with apportioning of time between the United and the Church of Scotland congregations ... "[the Church of Scotland] shall occupy the church every alternative Sunday in the forenoon till the first Sabbath in May inclusive. Whence the United congregation shall have the service in the forenoon till the end of the year. The Church of Scotland in the evening. Each to bear half the expense of the church." Two years later, in 1881, good sense prevailed: "a discussion arose as to the desirability of amalgamating the two branches of the church. A motion showed the meeting to be unanimously in favor [sic] of such a union."⁵²

I am not aware that there was a church building at Vale Colliery at this time, but it did continue to be part of the charge. It may have been the predecessor of the present-day Union Presbyterian Church at Thorburn.

WEST BRANCH, EAST RIVER, St. Columba: This is shown on Presbytery rolls from 1885 as Hopewell. This congregation was vacant in 1875, but it appears that the Rev. Peter Galbraith, a former British military chaplain, was inducted to the charge later that year.⁵³ At the present time we do not know when he demitted the charge, but it was vacant until 29 June 1881 when Rev. Peter Melville was inducted. Peter Melville, M.A., B. D., had at one time been assistant to Dr. Brooke in St. Paul's Church, Fredericton. He served in Cardigan, Georgetown and Montague Bridge, Prince Edward Island from October 1871 to November 1875 when he returned to New Brunswick. On 28 June 1881 he was received as a minister by the Maritime Kirk Synod and inducted into this charge. *Fasti* indicates he served at Hopewell until 1891, when he resigned and returned to Scotland.⁵⁴ He served as Synod Moderator in 1889. The charge appears to have been vacant for some three years. The Rev. Homer Putnam appears on the 1894 Roll as minister. Information concerning this minister is lacking and more research is required. The congregation was received by the PCC Presbytery of Pictou in 1907/08 and appears on its roll for the first time in the latter year with Rev. Christopher Munro, who had been

⁵²"A Brief History of the Presbyterian Church at Sutherland's River," p.3.

⁵³*Fasti*, VII, p.614.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p.622.

at Noel in the Presbytery of Halifax, as minister.⁵⁵ The roll indicates his year of induction to the charge as 1908.

WESTVILLE, St. Phillips – from 1 January 1888: The charge remained vacant until sometime in 1889 when the Rev. Thomas D. Stewart is shown as minister. *Fasti* indicates that he had a D.D. degree, but that he went into the charge in 1892.⁵⁶ Dr. Stewart was Moderator of Synod in 1890. When he demitted the charge is not known. The congregation came into the Presbyterian Church in Canada on 5 May 1903, listed in “Changes affecting Congregations,” as being received from the Church of Scotland in Canada. It is shown on the Pictou Presbytery roll as a vacant congregation.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Acts & Proceedings*, 1908, p.543.

⁵⁶ *Fasti*, VII, p.618.

⁵⁷ *Acts & Proceedings*, 1903, pp. 320-21, 491

APOLOGIA

by

John Moir

[Address at a banquet in his honour, held at Knox College, Saturday, 29 September 2001]

I want first to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to those who conceived and arranged this memorable event, and to all of those who are able to be present. Then I would ask your indulgence while I offer my *apologia* for a lifetime of history, teaching, researching and reading.

As a youth I inherited no historical interest from my family -- we had no famous ancestors to remember, and if the family had any particular cultural bent it was towards literature, especially poetry. I have no recollections of history as taught at high school, and I did not take history in my final year before university.

Arriving at the University of Toronto in 1944 to continue in modern languages, I was side-tracked into a new programme called Modern History and Modern Languages. There I soon discovered that I could manage the languages but was hopelessly immature when it came to the study of literature. Instead, thanks to the renowned medievalist Bertie Wilkinson, I became interested in history because of Bertie's explanation of its relevance to us -- "History is interesting because we are a product of it." I soon abandoned literature, but not the tool of language, and immersed myself in history, egged on by Bertie's technique of introducing us in our second year to the critical study of primary documents.

The next influence on my historical development was Donald Creighton who supervised my doctoral studies and showed by his own writings that history is branch of literature, a means of recording and communicating our collective experience. More than that, Donald's interest in me had been aroused by my Master's thesis on the interaction of church and politics. He was convinced that religion was a valid and vital aspect of history and he supervised my doctoral thesis on church-state relations in pre-Confederation Canada.

My early graduate researches were oriented towards Methodism, but a broader perspective was opened by my contact and friendship with Allan Farris who challenged me to broaden my approach and particularly to investigate Canadian Presbyterianism. My writings began to include Roman Catholicism, Baptists, Anglicans and topics which were multi-denominational. By the mid-1960s I was offering a graduate seminar at the

University of Toronto under the omnivorous title of "Canadian Religious Traditions," and I became active in a wide spectrum of religious and other historical societies.

I would estimate that in three decades I learned from perhaps one hundred and fifty bright and capable graduate students, of whom eight are here this evening. Those graduate students taught me most of what I knew then, but what I can't remember tonight. From that seminar came a stream of original research in Canadian religious history, and a large number of their research papers have appeared in print in subsequent years.

One further and equally important influence throughout the years has been my wife Jacqueline. Not only did she manage a thirteen-room home, eight children, three dogs, and a zoo of lesser creatures including chickens, rabbits, squirrels, fish, gerbils and Monarch butterflies, but she served as my unpaid but critical editor and as my tireless proof reader while ensuring that I had time to study and write in peace and quiet amidst the perpetual motion and confusion of that large household. She was also the one who decided that we should take the eight children, aged sixteen down to one year, and spend a year in Europe, four months of it camping with two tents and three suitcases. In retirement she has become my co-translator of volumes from French into English.

In retrospect I owe special thanks to Bertie Wilkinson, Donald Creighton and Allan Farris for introducing me to history, and an inexpressibly large thanks to Jacqueline for the five decades of unflagging moral and physical support that have made it all possible.

[The following text is a faint, mirrored bleed-through from the reverse side of the page, appearing upside down. It contains details of a meeting, including names like 'Rev. Dr. T. M. Kelly', 'John A. Johnston', and 'Kim Arnold', and mentions of 'Executive Committee' and 'Officers'.]

Michael M. Farris
Secretary-Treasurer

John A. Johnston, MA, BD, Ph.D., DD
President

THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY:

Minutes of the Annual Meeting 29 September 2001

The meeting was Called to Order by the President, the Rev. Dr. John A. Johnston, shortly after 2 p.m. The Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Michael Millar, acted as Secretary for the meeting. Twenty-three members were present.

The President opened the meeting by welcoming all who were present. He gave an overview of the activities of the Society since the last meeting. He indicated that he has expressions of interest from several people who would be prepared to present papers next year.

The President then called upon the Editor, Dr. David Elliott, who presented his report. All presenters last year gave him their papers on computer disk, making his task so much easier.

The President then called upon the Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Michael Millar, to present his report. A financial statement (attached) was presented showing that right now the Society's bank balance stands at \$2309.79. Mr. Millar pointed out that some of this money is to be paid to Knox College for the Dr. Moir dinner this evening. Following discussion it was Moved by Dr. T. M. Bailey, seconded by the Rev. E. Nix "That One Thousand Dollars (\$1000.00) be invested in a Guaranteed Investment Certificate." Carried. The meeting approved the presented financial statement.

The President then called for nominations for the Society Executive for 2001-2002. He indicated that all present Executive members were willing to stand, but that he would like to be relieved of his position next year. On Motion it was agreed that the following be the Executive for 2001-2002:- President – the Rev. Dr. John A. Johnston; Secretary-Treasurer – Mr. Michael Millar; Editor – Dr. David Elliott. It was further agreed that the following would be a Nominating Committee to bring in nominations for a slate of officers for 2002-2003 – the Rev. Dr. T. M. Bailey, the Rev. Dr. John A. Johnston and the Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Johnston. The Executive was thanked by the meeting with a round of applause.

The floor was then opened for a general discussion on the Society's affairs. Ms. Kim Arnold advised the meeting that she and the Secretary-Treasurer were going to conduct a membership drive in an effort to attract new people to join us. A discussion took place as to how we can best attract more people to both join the society and to offer papers for presentation. A number of different venues were suggested, with an advertisement in the *Presbyterian Record* finding the most favour. Moved by the Rev. Dr. William Klempa, seconded by the Rev. Dr. Eldon Hay "That we place an advertisement in the *Presbyterian Record*, such advertisement is not to exceed Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00)." Carried.

The President then terminated the business meeting and the regular business of the symposium continued.

John A. Johnston, MA, BD, Ph.D, DD.
President

Michael Millar, FRPSC
Secretary-Treasurer

MEMO TO THE MEMBERSHIP:

With reference to Dr. Bailey's motion that One Thousand Dollars (\$1000.00) be taken from the Society's bank account and be invested in a Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC), I can report as follows:

I investigated a number of different financial vehicles. One of these was a Canada Premium Bond. Unfortunately, because we are not a Registered Charity, with the requisite number, this option was closed to us.

In the end, the President and I made arrangements to take out a GIC with the Bank of Montreal – where we have our account.

We have a one-year Redeemable GIC in the amount of One Thousand Dollars (\$1000.00), taken out on 6 November 2001, maturing on 5 November 2002, at a rate of 1.3% interest. The advantage of a Redeemable GIC is that if interest rates do go up this GIC can be rolled over into one that is paying a higher rate of interest. For security purposes I have deposited the GIC in my bank safety deposit box in Barrie, Ontario.

On 30 November 2001, with all current expenses paid, our bank balance stands at \$1506.54.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Millar, FRPSC
Secretary Treasurer

1 December 2001

(Faint mirrored text from the reverse side of the page, including financial terms like 'Total Income', 'Bank charge in USA cheque', 'Knox College Catering', 'Printing costs - 2000 papers', 'Office supplies', 'Postage', 'Bus parcel charges - 2400 papers', 'Millar - Editor and Secretary-Treasurer', 'Deposit Knox College Catering', 'Cheques Gift Certificates - John Millar', 'Special Occasion Form, L.I.B.', 'Total Expenses', 'TOTALS', and 'Balance Forward 30 September 2001')'

THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY

Financial Report – September 2001

<u>Item</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
Balance forward 28 September 2000:	1,876.00	
Memberships 2000 and 2001 (49)	735.00	
Credit to 2001 membership	5.00	
Corporate memberships 2000 and 2001	165.01	
Sale of papers	95.00	
Donations	150.00	
Bank Interest	5.34	
John Moir dinner subscriptions	1,125.00	
John Moir gift donations	90.00	
From Committee on History	200.00	
 Total Income	 <u>4,446.35</u>	
Bank charge re USA cheque		2.75
Knox College Catering, 2000 meeting		53.36
Printing costs – 2000 papers		319.59
Office supplies		144.89
Postage		204.73
Bus parcel charges – 2000 papers		21.24
Mileage – Editor and Secretary-Treasurer		165.00
Deposit Knox College Catering		900.00
Chapters Gift Certificates – John Moir		250.00
Special Occasion Permit, LCB0		75.00
 Total Expenses		 <u>2,136.56</u>
 TOTALS:	 4,446.35	 2,136.56 = 2,309.79
 <u>Balance Forward 28 September 2001:</u>	 <u>\$2,309.79</u>	

Michael Millar, FRPSC
Secretary-Treasurer