The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History

Papers 2003

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Message from the President

2003 was an unusually busy year for the Society; for the first time in our history we met twice. The regular annual meeting was held as usual in Toronto on the last Saturday in September, and a few weeks later we met in Pictou, Nova Scotia to talk about Thomas McCulloch, a name to conjure within Nova Scotian and Presbyterian history. He was also one of the ancestors of Canadian humour. For an excellent day in Nova Scotia we are indebted to the hard work of our treasurer, Michael Millar, and the hospitality of the good folk at First Presbyterian Church in Pictou .

Because we met twice this is a double-barreled edition of the "Papers," including the papers given in Pictou as well as those from Toronto. Coincidentally, the Synod of Atlantic Canada met in New Glasgow the week after our gathering in Pictou. The Clerk invited me, as President, to give one of three addresses to the Synod. Naturally I talked about McCulloch, and "The Gospel According to Mephibosheth Stepsure" appears also in this edition.

As you will see in the 2003 minutes, the Society decided to proceed with a proposal put forward by Paul Laverdure to publish a selection of papers dealing with the post-1925 Presbyterian Church in Canada. Dr. Laverdure, Dr. John Johnston and myself were appointed a committee to do the necessary work. At the time of writing, February 2004, we have made a good start on the selection. It is always easier to write a book than find the money to publish it, but we hope to report significant progress by the time of our next meeting.

The Society will meet again in Knox College, Toronto, on September 25th. The list of papers is not yet complete, and I would be happy to hear from anyone who would like to present at the address below. Our Secretary Treasurer, whose address is also given will be very happy to receive your annual membership fee, either in the mail or in person at the next annual meeting.

I look forward to seeing you all at the September meeting. The papers we have lined up promise a most enlightening day.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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David R. Elliott is a church historian who has focused on fundamentalism and radical politics. He also operates Kinfolk Finders, a genealogy and historical research firm.

Stuart Macdonald teaches Presbyterian History at Knox College, Toronto.

Allan Dunlop was formerly Associate Provincial Archivist of Nova Scotia.

Barry Cahill is Senior Archivist, Government Documents for Nova Scotia. He is presbytery historian for the Presbytery of Halifax and is working on a history of Presbyterianism in Halifax before and after the watershed of 1925.

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Geoffrey Johnston was director of Pastoral Studies at Presbyterian College in Montreal.

Jack Wytock is Dean and Resident Tutor at Haddington House, Charlottetown, PEI.

Editor's Note: There were two other papers delivered at the meetings but they were not ready for publication.

ELDERSHIP IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

by

William Klempa

The office of the elders is the distinctive contribution of John Calvin's reformation in Geneva and of John Knox's in Scotland. Through this office, both Calvin and Knox, following the lead of Johannes Oecolampadius in Basel and Martin Bucer in Strasbourg, sought to give lay people a significant role in church discipline and government.[1] "Each church," Calvin stated in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, "....had from its beginning a senate, chosen from godly, grave, and holy men, which had jurisdiction over the correcting of faults ...[T]his sort of order was not confined to one age. Therefore, this office of government is necessary for all ages."[2] It was this permanent office or order of elders that Calvin's reformation endeavoured to restore.

Elders became, and continue to be, the distinguishing feature of those churches which stand in the Calvinistic tradition. When the First Presbyterian General Council met in Edinburgh in 1877, in part, a realization of Calvin's dream of a council or confederation of Reformed churches[3], it adopted a constitution for "The Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian system."[4] The name "Presbyterian," is, of course, derived from the Greek word for "elder," πρεσβύτερος. "System" means government by presbyters or elders,

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[1] This essay is in honour of Professor David E. Demson's long and distinguished career as Professor of Theology at Emmanual College, the Toronto School of Theology. During the 1970s when Dr. James D. Smart and I were colleague ministers at Rosedale Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Professor Demson served faithfully as an elder and member of one of the finest Church Sessions, I had the privilege to co-moderate. My high estimation of the eldership has been determined by this and similar experiences with other fine Church Sessions. The Eldership is not only a venerable, but also Presbyterianism's most valuable institution.

[2] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XX1, edited by John T. McNeill, translated by Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 4.3.8.

[3] *Cranmer's Works* (Parker edition), Vol. II, pp. 430-433 where Calvin says he would "readily pass over ten seas" to unite the churches that "are so widely separated from each other...."

[4] *Report of Proceedings of the First General Presbyterian Council*, edited by J. Thomson (Edinburgh: Thomas and Archibald Constable, 1877), p.9.

a polity which the Alliance undertook to commend as scriptural, and as "combining simplicity, efficiency, and adaptation to all times and conditions...."[5]

As might be expected, the discussion of the eldership, its theory and practice, came to occupy an important place on the agenda of the first and subsequent meetings of the General Council.[6] It became evident from the outset that there were significant differences in the understanding of this office, its function, and in particular, its relation to the office of the pastor or teacher. Extravagant claims were made for it by some World Reformed Alliance speakers. Professor Samuel Wilson, an American, for example, asserted at the1880 Philadelphia Council Meeting, that

> Jehovah sent Moses down to Egypt to convene the Presbytery. Through the elders, the representatives of the people, he was to act, and through them he did act. From the burning bush at Horeb Moses went to Presbytery. There were Presbyterians ages before Peter was born, or Rome was builded or Prelacy or Papacy was ever heard or dreamed of.[7]

Some churches, Professor Wilson contended, may boast of apostolic succession, Presbyterians, however, can claim patriarchal succession. At the Edinburgh Council, a Bohemian Brethren pastor boasted, "Ere John Calvin was born, the Brethren had elders, and what was more, they had female elders too."[8] Other speakers were more restrained but held that the eldership has justified itself in history, serving different generations as they needed to be served. This office was worth keeping, strengthening and adapting to the church's new missionary situation.

The aim of this paper is to explore the institution of the eldership as it was transmitted from Europe to Scotland and England and then to Canada, how it was understood and practised,

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[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Papers on "The Eldership: Its Theory and Practice" were given by Professor William Lee of Glasgow, Church of Scotland, Rev. William E. Moore of Columbus, Ohio, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A, and by Dr. Harper of Allegheny, Pa, United Presbyterian Church. See *Report of Proceedings, op. cit.,* pp. 98-122. Professor John Cairns of Edinburgh in his paper on "The Principles of Presbyterianism" stated that "The first distinctive principle... of Presbyterianism... is the authority of other elders to rule along with teachers... The presence of ruling elders, chosen by the Christian people, in all public administration, their parity in rule with all other presbyters, and their investiture with every spiritual function short of labouring in the Word and doctrine - gives to Presbyterianism a broad basis in Christian sympathy, and meets a want universally confessed, though sometimes otherwise supplied, in the Church of Christ." [p. 53]. At the Second General Council meeting in Philadelphia, the subject of the eldership was taken up again in the consideration of "The Distinctive Principles of Presbyterianism" and in a paper on "Ruling Elders, *Report of Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance*, edited by John B. Dales and R. M. Patterson (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Journal Company, 1880, pp. 148-156, 165-176. So many questions were raised that a commission was assigned to produce a comprehensive report to the Belfast Council in 1884. This did not materialize. The office of the elder continued to receive the attention of the WARC. The Princeton General Council in 1954 appointed a commission to study ordination. In 1967, the Executive Committee of the World Alliance mandated a study on the eldership within the member churches and appointed Robert W. Henderson to produce it. The result was *Profile of the Eldership: 1974* (Geneva: Department of Theology, WARC, 1975).

[7] *Report of the Proceedings of the Second General Council*, p.152.

[8] *Report of the Proceedings of the First General Council,* p.121.

and the important role it has played in the different branches of Canadian Presbyterianism. Before we do so, it is necessary to say something about the Continental and Scottish background.

Church discipline became a major concern of the Protestant reformers because of their conviction, based on the central text, Matthew 18: 15-18, that discipline is an essential aspect of proper church order. In Zürich, the Zwinglian reformation assigned church discipline to Christian civil magistrates. In Basel, as early as 1530, Johannes Oecolampadius created an ecclesiastical system of discipline that involved a committee of twelve: four pastors, four representatives of the magistrates and four representatives of the people, i.e., two-thirds lay.[9] Although this committee ceased after his death, it influenced the practice in Strasbourg and later in Geneva. In 1531, Martin Bucer introduced the office of elder or *Kirchenpfleger* in Strasbourg. Laymen were appointed by the city council to supervise the life of the church. Two-thirds of these lay people were appointed by the city council and one-third by the people. Bucer identified these *Kirchenpfleger* or church censors with the elders of the New Testament. He spoke of two kinds of elders, those who preached and those who admonished. Both kinds of elders, that is, pastors and laymen were shepherds, and they carried out their task as a collegium. Non-preaching elders not only had the task of governing but also the pastoral role of warning that they shared with pastors.[10]

These attempts to institute church discipline and to assign the task to a senate or collegium of pastors and laymen was taken up and developed further by John Calvin in Geneva. His view of the importance of discipline and of the office of the elders in administering it, along with pastors, had a profound and enduring impact on Reformed churches.

In his *Ordonnances ecclésiastiques* (1541), Calvin, following Bucer's lead, set out the four permanent offices of the church as pastors, doctors, elders and deacons. Of elders, he said: "Their office is to have oversight of the life of everyone, to admonish amicably those whom they see to be erring or to be living a disordered life, and where it is required, to enjoin fraternal corrections themselves and along with others."[11]

The importance for Calvin of Matthew 18: 15-18, for the theory and practice of church discipline cannot be over-emphasized. By the phrase "tell it to the church," Calvin understood a council comparable to the Jewish community's Sanhedrin to which was assigned the superintendence of morals and doctrine. As Calvin says in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, "the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin is for the future transferred to Christ's flock."[12] Such a council or consistory of twelve elders, and the nine ministers, was set up in

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[9]See Akura Demura, "Church Discipline according to Johannes Oecolampadius in the Setting of His life and Thought" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1964) quoted by Elsie Anne McKee, *Elders and the Plural Ministry* (Geneva, Librairie Droz S. A., 1988), p.18 and John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp.82-84.

[10]See Elsie Anne McKee, pp.18-19; Lukas Vischer, "Eldership - A General Survey" in *The Ministry of the Elders in the Reformed Churches*, edited by Lukas Vischer (Berne, Evangelische Arbeitsstelle, 1992), p.34; and John T. McNeill, pp.145 and 163.

[11]John Calvin, *Draft Ecclesiastical Ordonnances* (1541), Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XXII, *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, trans. by J. K. S. Reid (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), p.63.

[12]4.11.1. See also John Calvin's comments on Matthew 18: 15-17: [A]mong the Jews the power of excommunication rested with the elders, representing the whole Church....We know that from the time they returned from the Babylonian exile the Jews committed the censure of morals and doctrine to an elected council, which they called the Sanhedrin, in Greek *synedrion*. ... But it is certain that the lawful government of the Church was given to

Geneva. Although the elders were chosen from and appointed by the magistracy, in consultation with the ministers, they were entrusted with a task that in Calvin's view was spiritual and ecclesiastical. Contrary to the caricature of Calvin as the despot of Geneva, he emphasized that discipline is to be exercised in the spirit of the gospel. Its primary purpose was to correct and not condemn. Yet what distinguished Geneva from other centres of reformation was the success of the Genevan Consistory in enforcing morals.[13] This achievement won for Calvin both the praise of those, who like John Knox, spoke of Geneva as "the most perfect school of Christ that existed since the time of the apostles" and also the most vehement opposition of those who viewed the work of the Consistory as a moral reign of terror. The truth lies somewhere in between these two positions as the ongoing work of translation and publication of the Consistory registers under Robert Kingdon's editorship, show.[14]

In addition to Matthew 18, three other New Testament verses were central for Calvin's view of the eldership as the agent of discipline. The first two were Romans 12: 8 and I Corinthians 12: 28, where Paul speaks of the gift of "ruling" or "government." Calvin held that both passages refer to "elders (*seniores*) chosen from the people, who were charged with the censure of morals and the exercise of discipline along with the bishops."[15]

The third passage was 1 Timothy 5: 17: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching." Here Calvin, following the exegetical tradition, distinguished two different kinds of presbyters, those who preach and rule and those who only rule and do not preach.[16] Most medieval and reformation

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the elders (*presbyteris*) and this means not only the ministers of the Word but also those from the laity [*ex plebe*] who were joined to them as censors of morals."-- *Calvin's Commentaries*, ed. D. W. and T. F. Torrance, (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1959-1972, *Commentary on Gospel Harmony*, vol. 2, pp.228-229, 231.

[13]Robert M. Kingdon, "The Control of Morals in Calvin's Geneva" in *The Social History of the Reformation*," edited by Lawrence P. Buck and Jonathan W. Zophy (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1972), pp.4, 12-14. See also William G. Naphy, *Calvin and the Consolidation of the Genevan Reformation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994). Professor Naphy points out that in the case of the Syndic and Senatorial representatives, none served for more than three years as a member of the Consistory. Of the other nine elders, seven served for seven years (pp.76-77). From 1546-1552, the Consistory possessed a stable collection of elders (p.178). Ministerial leadership in the Consistory also became more stable after 1546.

[14]See *Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in the Time of* Calvin. Robert M. Kingdon, general editor, Thomas A. Lambert & Isabella M. Watt, editors, M. Wallace McDonald, translator (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), Vol I, pp.1542-1544. In the first 24 months it summoned almost 850 persons from a total population of less than 13,000.

[15]*Institutes* 4.8.3. See also 4.11.1 and *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. by John Owen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1955), "...elders who were the correctors of morals," p.463; and *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* translated by John Pringle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1948): "By *Governments* I understand *Elders*, who had the charge of discipline. For the primitive Church had its Senate (ou Consistoire)...," p.416. T. F. Torrance has advanced the hypothesis that Calvin obtained his model of *seniores* or *gerontes* from the North African Church referred to by Pseudo-Ambrose, Origen, Cyprian, Optatus and Augustine (See T. F. Torrance, *The Eldership in the Reformed Church* (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1984). Both Calvin and Bucer believed that they were restoring the New Testament model and they would have rejected the suggestion that they had imposed a patristic model on the text. Torrance does not ask the question where the North African Church found its model of *seniores*. In Calvin's view, this practice came from both Old Testament and New Testament practice.

[16]*Institutes* 4.11.1; *Commentaries on the* Epistles *to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, translated by William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1948), pp.138-9: "We may learn from this, that there were at that time two kinds

exegetes agreed that two different kind of presbyters were referred to in the passage but disagreed in identifying which two. What was unique, and shocking especially to Roman Catholics, was Calvin's interpretation that this second sort of presbyter was a layman and not a priest. For Roman Catholics ecclesiastical discipline was the prerogative of the clergy alone, while for Calvin it was the responsibility of pastors along with the chosen lay representatives of the people. Calvin does not speak directly of the ordination of elders but he states in the *Institutes:* "It is clear that when the apostles admitted any man to the ministry they used no other ceremony than the laying on of hands."[17] Presumably, elders since they were ecclesiastical officers, were ordained and ordination took place following the customary practice that obtained in Geneva, namely prayer by the ordained presbyters.[18]

The eldership, as instituted by Calvin, was taken over by the Scottish church. Indeed, there were elders in the "privy kirks" before John Knox returned to Scotland in 1559[19] and they evolved into the kirk sessions of the 1560s after the introduction of the *First Book of Discipline.* The hierarchical church offices from acolyte to archbishop were done away with and in their place three offices were recognized: pastors, elders and deacons.[20] Elders, whose duty it was to assist the minister in all public affairs of the Church, including discipline, were elected annually. A large number of them were re-elected. Yet the *First Book of Discipline* did not prescribe ordination either for ministers or elders. A collegial understanding of the ministry of pastors and elders was espoused, as is clear from the *Book of Common Order* in its prescription that "In assembling the people, neither they without the ministers, nor the ministers without them, may attempt anything."[21] The model was Calvin's senate or *collegium* in which minister and elders were on an equal footing and the relation of the two offices was seen along horizontal rather than on vertical or hierarchical lines.

In 1576, the Scottish General Assembly decided to abandon its experiment in episcopacy and formulated a new statement of the Church's constitution. The *Second Book of Discipline* of 1578 was the result. It represented a development of the principles enunciated in the *First Book*

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of elders; for all were not ordained to teach...there were some who "ruled well" and honourably, but who did not hold the office of teachers. And, indeed, there were chosen from among the people men of worth and of good character, who, united with the pastors in a common council and authority, administered the discipline of the Church, and were a kind of censors for the correction of morals."

[17]4.3.16.

[18]See Geddes MacGregor, *Corpus Christi* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 60-61 quoted by Eugene Heideman (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), p.185; and James L. Ainslie, *The Doctrines of Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1940), pp.155-190. Dr. Ainslie amasses considerable evidence that Calvin, Peter Martyr Vermigli and the Scottish reformers regarded the imposition of hands in ordination as normal but not necessary.

[19]See James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform: Continuity and Change in the Reformation Kirk* (Edinburgh: T.& T Clark, 1989), chapter 1, "The 'Privy Kirks' and their antecedents: The Hidden Face of Scottish Protestantism" and particularly pp.12-13 and 78; and G. D. Henderson, *The Scottish Ruling Elder* (London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1935), p.30.

[20]*First Book of Discipline*, edited by J. K. Cameron (Edinburgh: 1972), pp.168-171, 174ff.

[21]John Knox, *The Works of John Knox*, ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1846-64), iv, p.176 quoted by James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform*, p.304.

of Discipline. It distinguished between civil power and the church's power of the keys.[22] It stated that the titles, "bishop," "pastor," and "presbyter" all referred to the same office.[23] All presbyters, ministers and elders, were elected for life and ordination was common to both of them. Pastors and doctors were to be "diligent in teaching and sowing the seed of the word" while elders were "to be careful in seeking the fruit of the same in the people."[24]

The differences between the two Books of Discipline have been interpreted variously. On the one hand, some have based the two main theories of the eldership that emerged later in Scotland, "The Lay Theory" and the "Presbyter Theory" respectively on them. Supporters of the "Lay Theory", i.e., that elders are lay representatives of the people, have appealed to the *First Book of Discipline* since there the elder is elected annually, is not ordained and thus remains a lay person. Advocates of the "Presbyter Theory," in other words, that elders are presbyters, have made much of the point that minister and elder are very closely connected in the *Second Book of Discipline*, that elders are appointed for life and that along with ministers, are ordained.[25] On the other hand, it has been argued that the underlying concept of the elder's office remained substantially the same in both Books of Discipline. The new practice of appointing elders for life was simply a difference in detail and not in principle.[26] Elders, like ministers, are called by God and their vocation is more likely to be enduring rather than transitory, as was evidenced by the fact that many of the elders appointed for a year were re-elected year after year.

The next important stage in the definition of the office of the elder is found in the Westminster Assembly's *Form of Presbyterial Government* of 1645. In its discussion of polity, the eldership proved to be a sticky wicket. The general opinion of the Assembly was that Calvin's exegesis of 1 Timothy 5:17, finding there two sorts of elders, was faulty and that the passage referred only to "preaching elders."[27] Agreement on wording was finally reached by appealing to 2 Chronicles 19 chapter which stated that in the Jewish Church,

> elders of the people joined with the priests and Levites in the government of the church, so Christ, who hath instituted government and governors ecclesiastical in the Church, hath furnished some in his Church, beside the ministers of the word, with gifts for government, and with commission to execute the same when called thereunto, who are to join with the minister in the government of the church."[28]

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[22]*Second Book of Discipline*, edited by James Kirk (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1980), p.170.

[23]*Ibid.*, p.183.

[24]*Ibid.*, 193.

[25]See Professor Lee's paper "The Eldership: Its Theory and Practice" in *First Presbyterian General Council*, pp.102ff. and G. D. Henderson, *The Scottish Ruling Elder* (London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1935), pp.205ff.

[26]James Kirk, *The Second Book of Discipline*, pp.94, 90. The *SBD* asserts: "The Eldership is spiritual function, as is the ministry. Elders once lawfully called to the office, and having gifts of God meet to exercise the same may not leave it again"(vi, 2,3). That "the eldership is a spiritual function, as is the ministry" is quoted in *The Book of Forms* (Don Mills, Ontario: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1993), section 106, p. 13.

[27]See Robert S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), pp.163ff.

[28]*The Form of Presbyterial Church-Government* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons Ltd., 1959), p.174. Part of this paragraph is quoted in the "Preamble and Questions" to be put to elders before ordination in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. See *The Book of Forms*, section 412, p.73.

In support of its use of "government and governors ecclesiastical," the divines appealed to Romans 12: 7-8 and 1 Corinthians 12: 28, the two passages Calvin had emphasized. George Gillespie, a Scottish commissioner proposed that the phrase "ruling elders" be used but his motion was defeated and the following sentence was added: "Which officers reformed churches commonly call Elders."

It can be noted in passing that Calvin and the Westminster divines were agreed about the office of church governors or rulers but differed regarding whether these governors could be called "presbyters" or "elders." It was Westminster Assembly's considered judgment that the title "presbyter" should be reserved only for those who preached.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland adopted the *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government* in 1645, yet that did not settle the question. George Gillespie's view that 1 Timothy 5:17 was the mandate for preaching and teaching elders continued to have supporters. It was emphasized by the Secession churches, the Burgher and Anti-Burgher denominations of the eighteenth century, and later the United Presbyterian Church in the nineteenth century. They spoke of teaching and ruling elders and grouped them together. For the most part, the established Church of Scotland tended to follow the Westminster *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government's* position that elders are more properly called church governors and are not presbyters and so it was inclined to make a sharper distinction between ministers and elders.

The question of how elders should be seen in relation to ministers became and continues to be an issue. Are they "laymen" or are they "clergy"? James Kirk of Glasgow University, has rightly pointed out that this question arose in spite of the reformers' repudiation of this antithesis. It has led, in his view, to much muddled thinking especially in the claim that the elder of the *First Book of Discipline* was a "genuine layman" in contrast to the elder of the *Second Book of Discipline* who was considered a "clerical figure" because his office was described as "a spiritual function as is the ministry." Calvin had used similar language. "Spiritual", however, is not to be identified with "clerical," as if only "clergy" are spiritual.[29] Moreover, as James Kirk has argued, it fails to do justice to the historical evidence. The record of St. Andrews kirk session states that elders were part of "the ministry" (not "clergy"). The kirk session means minister[s] and the elders.[30]

As the different Scottish churches, the Church of Scotland and the Secession churches, were transplanted in Canada, the office of the eldership went with them. The different understandings of the eldership that prevailed in Scotland were also played out in Canadian Presbyterianism. The principles of the *Second Book of Discipline* were honoured by the different branches of Presbyterianism. When they were united in 1875 to form The Presbyterian Church in Canada, a committee on Ecclesiastical Procedure was appointed which resolved to use the procedures that were common to the four uniting churches. It produced the *Book of Forms*, which as Robert Campbell, Clerk of General Assembly 1892-1921, says, "engaged the attention

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[29]Calvin was unhappy with the title "clergy:" "I would have preferred them to be given a more proper name; for this appellation arose from error or at least from a wrong attitude, since Peter calls the whole church "the clergy," that is, the inheritance of the Lord [1 Peter 5:3]." (*Institutes* 4.4.9).

[30]*Records of St. Andrew's Kirk Session*, pp.1, 75, 131, 133, 138, 143, 147 quoted by James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform*, p.257

more or less of eight General Assemblies and was three times sent down to Presbyteries for their consideration...."[31] It was adopted by the 1890 General Assembly.

The *Second Book of Discipline* was amply referred to in this *Book of Forms* on which our present one is based. In Chapter 1, it is asserted: "The "principles and practice of Presbyterian Churches" are set forth particularly in the Second Book of Discipline, 1578...."[32] Equality or parity is a basic principle of Presbyterian church government and so section 4 quotes the words of the *Second Book of Discipline* as follows: "To take away all occasion of tyranny" our Lord wills that office-bearers in his Church "should rule with mutual consent of brethren, and equality of power, every one according to his function (Bk. of Dis, II, 4)."[33] In Chapter III on "The Session" and specifically on the eldership, the *Second Book of Discipline* is cited in three sections:

106: The eldership "is a spiritual function as is the ministry" and the qualifications for the office are those laid down in "the express word of God, and namely the Canons written by the apostle Paul" (2 Bk. of Dis. VI, 2,3).[34]

107: The number of elders in every congregation cannot well be limited, but should be according to the bounds and necessity of the people. (2 Bk. of Dis. VI, 2).[35]

108: Elders once lawfully called to the office, and having gifts of God meet to exercise the same, may not leave it again. (2 Bk. of Dis. VI, 2).[36]

It is evident that the *Second Book of Discipline* played and continues to play an important role in the theory and practice of Canadian Presbyterian polity. Not all have agreed with its principles or perhaps more accurately, since both the *Second Book of Discipline* and *The Form of Presbyterial Church Government* form the basis of our polity, different understandings of the eldership prevail in Canada as in Scotland.

This can be illustrated by referring to the Rev. Peter Colin Campbell's view of the eldership. Ordained by the Church of Scotland in 1835 he went to serve, under the auspices of the Glasgow Colonial Society, at the Presbyterian Church in Brockville and in 1840, was appointed Professor of Classical Literature at Queen's College, Kingston. He returned to Scotland and became the first Principal of the newly united University of Aberdeen. In 1866, he published an erudite book on *The Theory of Ruling Eldership*, a book which probably had its beginnings when he taught at Queen's College. In it he spoke with some disdain of the *Second Book of Discipline.* He laid stress, not as the *Second Book of Discipline* was inclined to do

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[31]Robert Campbell, *Overture re Elder Moderator in the government of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Montreal: 1918), p.6.

[32]*The Book of Forms*, section 3, p. 1.

[33]*The Book of Forms*, section 4, p. 2. James Kirk's edition, II, 6.

[34]*The Book of Forms*, p.13. Kirk, VI, 5, 10 .

[35]*The Book of Forms*, p.13. Kirk, VI, 8.

[36]*The Book of Forms*, p.13. Kirk, VI, 6.

following Calvin, on 1 Timothy 5: 17, but on Romans 12: 8, where he believed the eldership was placed on a solid biblical basis. According to Campbell, there is only one kind of elder and that is the minister of Word and Sacrament. He found support for his position in Hugo Grotius, Blondel, Vitringa and especially in Thomas Smyth's *Presbytery and not Prelacy.* He quoted with approval Smyth's statement:

> The officers now called ruling elders are still, however, to be regarded as scriptural and proper. They are spoken of in Scripture, although not under the title of presbyters. Christ...delegated all power to the body of the Church, so that every member has an equal right to participate in its government. But as all cannot be officers, and as all cannot meet to transact business, they must act by delegated officers, that is, by ruling elders, who are as our standards teach, the representatives of the people.[37]

Smyth believed that the whole burden of proof "rests on those who generalise the term presbyter as to include *Ruling Elders."*[38]

Peter Colin Campbell also objected to the term "ordination" in connection with the admission of elders. He held that the ordination of elders is "inconsistent with the true view of their position as *seniores plebis*, the representatives of the unordained members of the Church as distinct from its professional functionaries."[39] Why it is inconsistent is not clear since ministers also come from the unordained members of the Church and are ordained to their office.

Campbell's rejection of ordination for elders was at variance with the theology and practice of the Church of Scotland in both Scotland and Canada. Almost from its beginning the Church of Scotland has admitted elders to their office by prayer. Elders were required to answer the prescribed question and to sign the same formula as was signed by ministers.[40] The act of admission was customarily described as "ordination."[41] When the Church of Scotland Panel on Doctrine recommended in its 1988 Report to General Assembly that the eldership no longer be for life but for limited periods, that elders not be ordained and that their initiation into office be described by another term, these recommendations did not meet with the approval of the presbyteries.[42] Presbyteries judged that these recommendations would lead to a diminution of the office and thus firmly rejected them.

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[37]Thomas Smyth, *Presbytery and not Prelacy* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1844, p.211 quoted by Peter Colin Campbell, *The Theory of Ruling Eldership* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1866), p.54.

[38]Thomas Smyth, p.470.

[39]Peter Colin Campbell, p. 69. Campbell holds that the term "ordination" is "vulgarly employed to designate the formal installation of members of the parochial council" but thinks that "nothing can be more proper, ... than the customary solemnity of admitting them to their important duties with public prayer."

[40]See A. Herron, "The Formula" in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology*, edited by Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Downers Grove: Illinois, InterVarsity Press), 1993, p.330.

[41]See Panel on Doctrine Report in *Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 1963, pp.757-759.

[42]See Douglas Murray, "The Recent Debate on Eldership in the Church of Scotland" in Lukas Vischer, *The Ministry of the Elders in the Reformed Churches*, p.186.

Recommendations similar to those mentioned above were approved by the United Church of Canada. In 1967, in its Report on the Eldership, the Committee on Christian Faith argued that the eldership is a ministry which is exercised solely in the local congregation and is for a limited term. Therefore, it recommended that "The term "ordination" not be used to describe the service by which a person becomes an ELDER in the United Church of Canada."[43] Thus the present practice is to restrict ordination to ministers of Word and Sacrament. If anything this has led to a reduced view of the eldership.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada continues to follow the practice it inherited from Scotland and particularly from the *Second Book of Discipline*, of ordaining elders. In its discussion of the Ministry, *Living Faith* states: "Through the office of ruling elder men and women are ordained to share with the minister in the leadership, pastoral care, and oversight of the congregation."[44] They are to be ordained "in presence of the congregation and preferably upon a Lord's Day."[45] Ordination is with prayer. Since the Church has never pronounced on the imposition of hands in the case of elder's ordination,[46] the practice has varied. although increasingly, ordination of elders is by both prayer and imposition of hands. This does not necessarily mean that they occupy the same office as ministers. As their functions are distinct, so their ordinations have to be distinguished. If ordination is understood as a blessing by which a vocation to a special ministry is confirmed in front of a congregation, then elders are also ordained. "Ordain" means to "place in an order" and thus they are placed into the order of ruling elders.

The ruling eldership has supplied Presbyterian churches with a form of lay representation in church government that has rarely been equalled, apart from churches with a congregational polity, in most other branches of the Christian church. It is, of course, viewed differently today than it was in Calvin's Geneva, John Knox's Scotland or for that matter in Thomas McCulloch's Pictou, Nova Scotia. Institutions tend to retain their original name but its activities change. While it is basically true that elders still rule, discipline for which the office was principally intended and which was its main activity for many decades, is now no longer exercised regularly. The task of elders is more in pastoral care, spiritual counselling, oversight and leadership of the congregation. But this is a plus rather than a minus.

In their historical situation, John Calvin, John Knox, and the other leaders of the Swiss, French, German and Dutch reformations, were concerned with the matter of discipline and rightly so. But it may be questioned whether they gave sufficient importance to the missionary duty of the church. It is this new missionary situation that faces the church today. The congregation is by definition a missionary congregation and the task of elders, along with ministers, is that of leading the congregation in its missionary witness as was the case in the early church. In The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 2002, there were 10,884 elders and some 700 active pastoral ministers. The great and urgent challenge is for this formidable contingent of elders and ministers to lead their people in missionary outreach at home and abroad.

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[43]*The Eldership: The Report of the Committee on Christian Faith*, J. R. Hord, secretary (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967), pp.14, 10.

[44]*Living Faith* (Winfield, B. C.: Wood Lake Books Inc., 1984), 7.2.4, p.18.

[45]*Book of Forms*, 132.7, p. 22.

[46]T. Wardlaw Taylor, *The Ruling Elder* (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1947), p.30

Arguably, one of the most significant recent ecumenical statements on the ministry is the Lima World Council of Churches Faith and Order document called *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.* Yet in that convergence statement, the office of the elder is scarcely mentioned. The document begins well with a chapter on the "vocation of all the people of God" and then without expanding on what that means, goes on rather abruptly to speak of the "Church and the Ordained Ministry."[47] By "ordained ministry" *BEM* has in mind "persons who have received a charism and whom the church appoints for service by ordination through the invocation of the Spirit and the laying on of hands."[48] It speaks of a *collegium* of bishop, presbyter and deacon, but makes no reference to "elders" or "church governors." In its description of the local eucharistic community and the "need for an ordained ministry acting within a collegial body" the constitution of the *collegium* is not spelled out.[49] Presumably, it does not include elders or other lay persons. Instead *BEM* recommends that the separated churches should adopt the threefold structure of bishop, presbyter and deacon.

In its official response to the ministry portion of the *BEM* document, The Presbyterian Church in Canada stated:

> The Reformed development of the idea of threefold office of Christ is lost in the concentration on a single model of ministry. We believe that human ministers share in the offices of Christ rather than represent or substitute for him. Our doctrine of eldership reflects the shared ministry of clergy and laity which the "threefold ministry" and historic episcopate ignore.[50]

The Presbyterian Church in Canada holds, along with other reformed churches, that a session made up, as it is of minister and ruling elders and in some cases also deacons, is in its very essence a collegial ministry. It is now generally acknowledged, as *BEM* does also, that the threefold form of ministry is a later second and third century development. Why this vertical, hierarchical model should be preferred to the more horizontal, collegial form of ministry in which bishop and presbyter are inter-changeable terms, and *seniors* as representatives of the people are included, is not made clear. The hierarchical model may be justified on prudential grounds and as of long historical lineage. But it is not the earliest form of ministry and it suffers from the disadvantage of regarding lay people simply as those who "pray, pay and obey" rather than of according them a significant role in the leadership of the local and wider Christian community.

I want to conclude by referring to two recent developments by which the office of the elders has been strengthened and enhanced. The first is by the admission of women into the eldership. John T. McNeill in his *The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875-1925* mentions that

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[47] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.* Faith and Order paper No. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), pp.20- 21.

[48] *BEM,* para 7, p. 21.

[49] *BEM*, para. 26 & 27, pp. 25-26.

[50] *Churches respond to BEM.* edited by Max Thurian. Faith and Order paper 132 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), Vol. II, p.157. The clergy/laity distinction in the quotation is unfortunate.

the question of the place of women was raised at the second General Assembly in 1876.[51] It arose more specifically again in 1921 when General Assembly was asked "to take into consideration the question of the admission of women to Theological Colleges as regular students with a view to ordination.[52]" No thought appears to have been given to admitting women as elders. In 1923, a new overture regarding the ordination of women to the ministry was received from the Presbytery of Saskatoon. The Committee on Overtures recommended that this matter be sent down to presbyteries under the Barrier Act but the recommendation was defeated and instead it was agreed that the overture be sent down to presbyteries for their consideration and report.[53] Only a little more than half of the presbyteries responded in 1924. Thirteen presbyteries approved of the ordination of women, six disapproved, while the majority favoured postponement. The committee recommended that the whole question be left to a later date but it made the following statement that the Assembly

> should recognize the devoted services, the magnificent achievements and the unfailing loyalty of the women of our Church in all that pertains to the work of the Church, and ... that endeavors should be made to secure, increasingly, representation from women in the councils of the Church....[54]

Indeed, superb committee rhetoric, but no suggestions were made nor were any policies proposed. Certainly the admission of women to the eldership was not considered as a way of facilitating such representation on the part of women in church courts.

It was not until 1953 that an overture from the Synod of Manitoba, "to include women in Kirk Sessions," "to give women equal status and responsibilities in the Church" and "to take advantage of a vast potential of Christian power and leadership" brought the matter again to the attention of the Church.[55] The General Assembly responded by appointing a Committee on the Place of Women in the Church. This committee began its work in 1954 and it received permission the following year to send a questionnaire to all presbyteries of the church and to all presbyterials of the Women's Missionary Society. Of the 34 out of the 48 presbyteries that reported in 1956, only 30% were in favour of women as elders. Responses from presbyterials were more positive. While only 29 out 52 presbyterials reported, 48% of them were in favour of women as elders (only 36% were in favour of women in the ministry). The committee, therefore, recommended and Assembly agreed that specific action to ordain women as ruling elders or ministers of the Word and Sacrament be deferred.

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[51]John Thomas McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875-1925* (Toronto: General Board, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1925), p.152. McNeill noted that the *British American Presbyterian* journal advocated the admission of women "to such subordinate offices as they can fill with advantage."

[52]*The Acts and Proceedings of the Forty-Seventh General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Murray Printing Co., Ltd., 1921), p.69.

[53]*The Acts and Proceedings of the Forty-Ninth General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Murray Printing Co. Ltd., 1923), p.98.

[54]*The Acts and Proceedings of the Fiftieth General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Murray Printing Co, Ltd., 1924), p.65.

[55]*The Acts and Proceedings of the Seventy-Ninth General Assembly, The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1953), p.393.

The committee was continued and reconstituted. In 1963, it prepared a study booklet entitled *Putting Woman in her Place* that was well received and widely used in the church. A proposal to admit women "without any distinction" and to permit the ordination of women was sent down to presbyteries. Responses were encouraging indicating a "definite trend" in favour of ordaining women. After a year of inaction, Assembly sent the necessary legislation to presbyteries under the Barrier Act in 1965.[56] The results were: 31 presbyteries approved of the ordination of women to the eldership; 16 disapproved; (26 approved of the ordination of women to the ministry of Word and Sacrament; 21 disapproved). With respect to the ordination of women to the eldership the *Book of Forms* was amended whereby "women are eligible to become elders of the Church, and any reference herein or hereafter in the Book of Forms to men as elders shall refer, *mutatis mutandis*, to women where applicable."[57] Addie Forrester and Mary Whale were the first women to be commissioners to a General Assembly in 1967.

Since 1967 over four thousand women have been elected and ordained as elders in The Presbyterian Church in Canada . The most recent statistics indicate that of the congregations that reported (872 out of 974), there were 4,178 women elders.[58] This is a remarkable achievement within thirty-five years and it is safe to predict, based on the larger proportion of women to men in our congregations, that within the next decade they will increase to over fifty per cent. Women elders have revitalized many a church session and their contribution to the work of sessions, presbyteries, synods and general assemblies has been immeasurable. A recent study by S. Alastair Campbell, entitled *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity*, has provided evidence that women were among those who were called the elders, the house-church leaders in the early days of the church. Well-to-do women played a prominent role in Paul's mission and in the churches that grew from it. They opened their homes to the first house-churches both in Greece and Asia Minor. Later they were excluded.[59] By God's grace they are now included in the eldership of most reformed churches and this vast resource of Christian leadership and influence is once again being employed.

The second significant development is the eligibility of elders for the election to the office of moderator of presbytery, synod and General Assembly. As early as 1913, the Presbytery of Toronto overtured General Assembly to permit ruling elders to be eligible to be moderators arguing that the practice of the moderator being a minister was not a law but a matter of use and wont.[60] The overture was referred to the Committee on Standards which presented a report the following year arguing that it did not deem it desirable to recommend to the General Assembly that the present law be modified. The gist of the argument was that ministers

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[56]See Lois Klempa, "Ordaining Women" in *Turning Points* by Zander Dunn and Lois Klempa (Toronto: Board of Congregational Life, 1980), pp.61ff. and John S. Moir, *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Eagle Press Printers, 1987), pp.263-264.

[57]*The Acts and Proceedings of the Eighty-Second General Assembly, The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1966), p.47.

[58]*The Acts and Proceedings of the One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: 2003), p.286.

[59]S. Alastair Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), p.256.

[60]*The Acts and Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Murray Printing Co., 1913), p.333.

moderate in virtue of their ministerial character. They are educated and trained for the office of minister; elders are not. The church "has always recognized a certain distinction as existing between the office of the Minister and the office of the Elder. On account of this distinction, certain duties are attached to the one, which are not required of the other."[61] Although the 1914 General Assembly adopted the committee's recommendation the issue was raised again four years later by a similar overture from Honan Presbytery. This overture, along with the findings of the 1914, were sent down to presbyteries.

Alarmed by this development, Dr. Robert Campbell, Clerk of the General Assembly, produced an unofficial pamphlet entitled *Overture re Elder Moderator in the government of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.* In it he argued that Article 3 of the 1875 Charter of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, adopted presbyterian government, and to receive and adopt overtures in defiance of this article would mean that the church would cease to be the historic Presbyterian Church in Canada, dating from June 15, 1875. "We are precluded, "Campbell said, "from adding to the prerogatives of the office (elder), ... the doing of which would trench on the prerogative of Ministers, and derange the relation hitherto subsisting between the ministry and the eldership...."[62]

Dr. Campbell granted that George Buchanan, who was never a minister, was elected Moderator of the Church of Scotland in 1567 but dismissed this as an exception to the rule rather than what generally happened in Scotland especially after the *Second Book of Discipline* was adopted in 1638. Hierarchical, vertical language abounds in his pamphlet: ministers and elders are on "two distinct platforms in the matter of ordination," "the higher rank includes the lower ones," elders are a "lower class."[63] Campbell therefore saw the elder-as-moderator proposal as making a "semi-clerical claim" by some elders and he thought it savoured somewhat of toadyism. Civil judges were proposed to moderate in one of the presbyteries and Campbell thought they were being deferred to, whereas in Scotland "occupants of castles" were content to "take their seat in sessions alongside the occupants of cottages and think themselves honoured by being selected by the members of the Church to so high an office as that of Elder."[64] Clearly, in Campbell's view, elders who wanted to be moderators were overstepping the limits of their office. As it turned out, the overture was not acted upon.

Sixty-one years later General Assembly was bombarded by five session and presbytery overtures that elders be eligible for the position of moderator of the church courts.[65] A Special Committee was appointed by the Moderator to deal with all the overtures and it recommended that the matter be sent to presbyteries under the Barrier Act, in terms of the Presbytery of Montreal's overture, that elders be eligible in all courts above Session.[66] This was adopted.

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[61]*The Acts and Proceedings of the Fortieth General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Murray Printing C., 1914), 402- 403.

[62]Robert Campbell, pp.4-5.

[63]*Ibid.*, pp. 10,13, 14.

[64]*Ibid.*, p. 15.

[65]*The Acts and Proceedings of the Ninety-Fifth General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Thorn Press, 1969): Presbytery of Kamloops, p. 604; Presbytery of Barrie, pp. 605-606; Presbytery of Montreal, pp. 610-611; Presbytery of Guelph and Saugeen, p. 613; and Presbytery of Peterborough , p. 618.

[66]*Ibid.*, p.71.

A year later, the Committee on Remits reported that the remit had been approved by 34 presbyteries and disapproved by 9. Normally, a remit that is approved by a majority of the presbyteries is adopted and it becomes the law of the church. But not so in this case. Professor David Hay, convener of the Committee on Remits, questioned the wisdom of this action and persuaded General Assembly to defeat it. So the General Assembly witnessed the strange and unprecedented occurrence of a representative General Assembly overturning what was the will of a substantial number of presbyteries, an evident denial of democratic procedure.[67]

This matter was revisited in 1986 when an overture was received from the Presbytery of Winnipeg.[68] It was referred to the Committee on Doctrine which recommended that study papers be prepared. Finally in 1993, 34 presbyteries approved and only two disapproved to "make ruling elders and members of the Order of Diaconal Ministries eligible to moderate the presbytery, synod or general assembly of which they are a constituent member...."[69] This became church law.

While there has been no stampede in the past decade for ruling elders and members of the Order of Diaconal Ministries to be moderators, yet this action is a significant development which erases any distinction in status between so-called "laity" and "clergy." All Christians are members of the people of God (*laos*) whether they be lay people, ministers, ruling elders, or diaconal workers. It should be recalled that originally, presbyters and church governors were lay people, many of whom had to earn their own living.[70]

St. Jerome observed that "There can be no church community without a leader or a team of leaders."[71] Leadership is of primary importance whether that is embodied in a single individual or in a team. Presbyterianism has opted for "a team of leaders" in which a significant role is given to elders chosen from the people. Moreover, it is essential that the leaders of the local Christian community exercise the offices of preaching, teaching, pastoral care and discipline and diaconal service. To do so, a team of leaders, a *collegium*, is best equipped to carry out the church's manifold and differentiated ministry.[72]

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[67]Certainly, the Barrier Act procedure guards against hasty action and thus provides the safeguard that two general assemblies should approve a proposed action. Presumably, when the Barrier Act procedure was instituted it assumed a total assembly rather than a partial representative assembly. For a smaller number of ministers and elders at assembly to overturn the majority decision of ministers and elders in presbyteries, seems to be a denial of democratic procedure.

[68]*The Acts and Proceedings of the One Hundred and Twelfth General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto, 1986), pp.490-491.

[69]*The Acts and Proceedings of the One Hundred and Nineteenth General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: 1993), pp.407, 28.

[70]Alastair Campbell, p.231. In support , he refers to Eric Jay's article, "From Presbyter-Bishops to Bishops and Presbyters", *The Second Century,* I:3 (Fall 1981), pp. 125-162.

[71]St. Jerome, *Dialogue against the Luciferians* quoted by Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry: Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ* (New York: Crossroad), 1981), p.1.

[72]Karl Barth has set out admirably the manifold and differentiated ministry of the church in his discussion of the ministry of the community under two headings: ministries of speech and ministries of action. Under the former he includes: the praise of God, preaching, instruction, evangelization, mission and theology. Under the latter, he discusses: prayer cure of souls, the production and existence of definite personal examples of Christian faith and

The eldership has admirably served Presbyterian churches and the Christian cause in the past, continues to serve it well in the present, and promises to do so equally in the future. Some of the church's finest leaders have been elders. Their very existence has been a constant reminder to the people of their role in the church's ministry and to ministers of the point that they are not to pride themselves in thinking that they are the church. Without the eldership the church's work and witness would have been greatly impoverished. There can be no hesitation, therefore, in concurring with the conclusion of G. D. Henderson's fine study of the eldership when he said: "It is a great, institution, worth preserving, worth promoting, worth improving."[73]

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action, the diaconate, prophetic action and the establishment of fellowship. See *Church Dogmatics* IV/3.2, trans. by G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1962), pp.859-901.

[73]G. D. Henderson, p.312.

PERRY F. ROCKWOOD: THE "LONE RANGER" SYNDROME

by

David R. Elliott

One of the most separatist and hard-line Protestant fundamentalists in North America is Perry F. Rockwood (1917--), the "radio pastor" based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Rockwood remains the only Canadian fundamentalist with a vast international radio audience.[1] This paper examines his style of ministry as an example of intense individualism that has been called the "lone ranger syndrome."

Perry Francis Rockwood was born in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, into a family of the working poor who lived on the wrong side of the tracks. To augment their income his parents had to take in boarders; they had six children to feed and clothe. Little is known about the family dynamics but it is said that Perry's father had a violent temper.[2]

As a teenager Perry sought to rise above his humble roots and demonstrated a strong degree of independence. This was reflected in his 1936 high school valedictorian speech when he closed with the words of W.E. Henley: "I am the master of my fate; I am the Captain of My Soul."[3]

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[1]Rockwood's ministry has received little academic attention. This chapter is based on newspaper research and three interviews with the Rev. Perry F. Rockwood, two of his children, and his son-in-law. Rockwood autobiographical booklets *What God Hath Wrought* and *Triumph in God* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, c. 1967 and c.1976), his monthly magazines *The Peoples Pulpit* and *The Gospel Standard*, and about two hundred of his published booklets have provided insight into his thought. Plotting the development of his thought has been difficult because most of his booklets contained no publication date, and could only be dated approximately by internal evidence or their first mention in the monthly magazines. A historical booklet published by the missionary committee of the Peoples Church of Truro has also provided a few details about Rockwood's ministry in Truro.

[2]Interview with Rev. Paul (Rockwood) Johnston, 23 Feb. 1992.

[3]Perry F. Rockwood, "Valedictory," 1936, Paul Johnston Papers.

The year of Perry's high school graduation was also the year of his religious conversion. Both of his parents had been raised as Anglicans, but neither attended church. Perry did attend Sunday School but dropped out before his teens and it was not until 1936 when a boarder, who attended the Presbyterian Church, took him to an induction service of the new minister. Perry was greatly impressed by the new minister and was converted through his ministry.[4]

After graduating from high school Rockwood worked for the local newspaper and considered studying law. He was also struggling with what he felt was a call to the ministry. In 1937 he enrolled at Acadia University in preparation for seminary training.

With hardly any funds, Rockwood arrived at Acadia and worked his way through university waiting on tables in the university cafeteria, doing odd jobs, and occasional supply preaching. During the summer months he worked in the foundries at Trenton.

At university Rockwood was very much involved in student affairs; he was class president, treasurer and later president of the student union, vice-president of the theological club, editor the year book, and a participant in the Maritime Regional Conference. In his theological and political views he appears to have been very progressive, defending the C.I.O. labour organization.[5] The yearbook described him: "A regular good fellow in all his many and varied campus activities. He is frank, earnest, good-natured, and a tireless worker."[6]

In 1940, after graduating from Acadia, Rockwood headed for Montreal to attend Presbyterian College. He had lived on a shoe-string budget during the Acadia years and went to Montreal with no funds. Supply preaching earned him some money, but financial stress and inadequate meals soon found him ill with ulcers and he suffered a nervous breakdown.[7] After he was given financial help by a college bursary, he came to believe that God would provide for his needs. This rationalization, which justified his own lack of judgement and financial planning, became a dominating influence in his subsequent behaviour.

Rockwood did not last long at Presbyterian College. At the end of the first year his professors did not recommend his continuation in theological studies.[8] In response, he claimed the school was too "modernistic" and worldly.

Feeling that he would obtain a more conservative theology elsewhere, Rockwood switched to Knox College in Toronto. While there he became active in the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and found his spiritual fellowship in that group. In Toronto he was also exposed to the fundamentalist empire builders T.T. Shields and Oswald J. Smith. In his final year of seminary Rockwood married a dietician for whom he had worked while serving in the kitchen at Acadia. He

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[4]Rockwood, *Triumph in God*, p.1.

[5]See the coverage of Rockwood's activities in the *Acadian Athenaeum*, 21 Feb. 1939, p.1; 4 March 1939, p.4; 10 Nov. 1939, p.1; 1 Dec. 1939, p.1; 17 Feb. 1940, p.1.

[6]*The Axe*, Acadia University Yearbook, 1940, p.38. Since he was editor he may have written this statement about himself.

[7]Perry F. Rockwood, *Conquering Life's Problems* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.), p.2.

[8]*Truro Daily News*, 21 March 1947, p.1.

was able to graduate from Knox College in 1943, but he claimed that it was not much better theologically than Presbyterian College.[9]

After being ordained Rockwood accepted the two-point Presbyterian charge of Thorburn and Sutherland's River, near his hometown of New Glasgow, where he accomplished a church building renovation program. His aggressiveness in pursuing the repairs created a number of enemies in those churches.[10] He appears to have not found his position satisfying and was considering looking for a pulpit in Ontario when he was invited to preach for a call in Truro, Nova Scotia.

In the fall of 1944 Rockwood moved to St. James Presbyterian Church in Truro, a church which had existed in the community for 174 years.[11] It was in Truro that Rockwood became increasingly fundamentalistic. From the beginning of his ministry there Rockwood cut a swath of controversy that led to his break from the Presbyterian Church in 1947. Rockwood found the Truro church very little to his liking; he considered it spiritually dead. Immediately he began as series of sermons with such topics as "Carnal and Spiritual Minds" and "We Need a Revival." He remarked that "the church has become a powerless weapon and has become so worldly that it has little if anything to say to the world itself."[12]

Rockwood's controversial views soon extended beyond his own church. When a new community centre was being planning, Rockwood condemned it as an unwanted institution which would further erode the role of the church and the family.[13] Late in December 1944, when addressing the Rotary Club, Rockwood painted a very pessimistic portrait of the state of Christianity in a talk entitled, "The Church Sick Unto Death." The Reverend Ross E. Eaton of First Baptist Church, in a letter to the editor of the *Truro Daily News*, claimed that Rockwood had exaggerated the faults of the church and overlooked its strengths. The church was instead, a very "lively corpse." Rockwood responded by stating that he would defend his statements, not in the press, but in forthcoming sermons.[14]

As Rockwood condemned the institutionalized church he discovered strength and fellowship with the local Soldiers' and Airmen's Christian Association which had been created by R.V. Bingham, and began introducing their gospel choruses and less-formal worship forms into his services.

In his pursuit of a revival Rockwood sought to impose his fundamentalistic, pietistic beliefs on the congregation. He began a series of sermons condemning worldly amusements, especially

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[9]Rockwood, *Triumph in God*, pp.4 and 19.

[10]W.A. Cunningham to T.T. Shields, 19 March 1947, published in *The Gospel Witness*, 27 March 1947, p.4.

[11]*Truro Daily News*, 28 Oct. 1944, p.3; 6 Nov. 1944, p.8; and 17 Nov. 1944, p.2.

[12]*Ibid.*, 10 Nov. 1944, p.4; 18 Nov. 1944, p.4; 20 Nov. 1944, p.4.

[13]Perry F. Rockwood to the editor, *Truro Daily News*, 23 Nov. 1944, p.4. For a response to his views see Clarence B. Johnston to the editor, *ibid.*, 24 Nov. 1944, p.3.

[14]Ross C. Eaton to the editor, *Truro Daily News*, 2 Jan. 1945, p.4; Rockwood to the editor, *ibid.*, 6 Jan. 1945, p.4.

dancing and movies. Pouring on the guilt, he stated that a revival was impossible until Christians stopped dancing and participating in other "worldly" activities. Christians should put "their affections on things above, and not upon the things of the earth." He reported a number of Christian young people signified their intention to stop dancing and "to begin witnessing for Jesus Christ."[15]

As the revival continued there were a seven conversions the first week, including Rockwood's own wife, which was reported in the press.[16] After Rockwood announced that his wife was now "saved," his fellow ministers told him to keep quiet about it, for this was casting aspersions on Presbyterian church membership.[17]

Rockwood sought to heighten the atmosphere of the revival by preaching on the Second Coming of Christ. He "pointed out that the world [was] getting more unchristian each decade and must continue to do so if Scripture [were] to be fulfilled."[18] Like an Old Testament prophet he called the citizens of Truro to repentance. "The whole trouble with this community," he said, "is that very few of any of our leaders will make a definite stand for Christ as over against their business interests." He continued: "The people of this town should be concerned about the spiritual paralysis of the church and should be ashamed of themselves for their complacency."[19]

In March 1945 Rockwood's controversial views became news when he openly objected to the RCAF invitation to Pictou County young women to attend the dances at the Debert military base in order to raise the airmen's morale. Rockwood claimed that the purity of these women was being harmed, not only by the drinking that accompanied the dances, but by the dances themselves.[20] The editors of the *New Glasgow Evening News* and the *Truro Daily News*, who investigated the dances, felt that Rockwood was exaggerating the situation and casting aspersions upon the characters of the local young women. Rockwood was also ordered to the military base to explain himself before the commanders and the base chaplains. When he could not convince them of his position, he departed "rejoicing that it [was] better to stand alone with God than it [was] to receive the friendship of the worldly professors [of Christianity] of our day."[21]

As part of his revival program, and as a way of countering worldly entertainment, Rockwood began a Saturday night youth rally that soon developed into the Maritime's first Youth For Christ organization.[22] It was supported by most of the local Protestant clergy and brought in the American youth evangelist Jack Wyrtzen, whose meetings attracted over 700 young people.[23]

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[15]*Truro Daily News*, 5 Feb. 1945, p.2; 18 Feb. 1945, p.4.

[16]*Truro Daily News*, 8 Feb. 1945, p.3.

[17]Rockwood, *Triumph in God*, pp.6-7.

[18]*Truro Daily News*, 26 Feb. 1945, p.5.

[19]*Ibid.*, 19 March 1945, p.4.

[20]Perry F. Rockwood to the editor, *New Glasgow Evening News*, reprinted in *Truro Daily News*, 23 March 1945, p.5 and Perry F. Rockwood to the editor, *Truro Daily News*, 25 March 1945, p.4

[21]Rockwood, *What God as Wrought*, p.12.

[22]*Truro Daily News*, 9 April 1945, pp.1-3; 13 June 1945, p.4; 14 Feb. 1946, p.3.

[23]*Ibid.*, 30 April 1946, p.1.

Rockwood's aggressive programs attracted many people into St. James Church, but at the same time he alienated many of the older members of the congregation who objected to his departure from Presbyterian forms of worship and his stridently revivalistic, fundamentalist stance. The church's needs were to be supplied only by free-will offerings; he got rid of fundraising through teas, bazaars, and bake sales -- methods that he felt were unscriptural.[24]

Rockwood's sermons reflected fundamentalist shibboleths: the inerrant, infallible Bible, the Virgin Birth of Christ, the Second Coming of Christ, a literal hell for those who had not made a personal commitment to Christ. As a premillennialist Rockwood denounced the formation of the United Nations because it would never bring world peace.[25] He bemoaned the decline of the church and home life in modern, urban, industrialized society and believed that this would not be reversed until men became patriarchal rulers of their own homes. "Fathers and husbands," he said, "today on the whole are failures in the sight of God."[26] He called for all church members to make a complete separation from the world, and begin tithing and regular attendance at the prayer meetings.[27] Rockwood's insistence on these matters and the content of his sermons caused some of the older church members to withdraw from the public worship services.

The breach in the church's membership became very obvious in the fall of 1946. Rockwood insisted that all church office holders be "separated" Christians. He was especially concerned that the Women's Missionary Society's executive was composed of women who were not attending his services and had been supporting causes which he could not endorse. He intruded himself into their meetings and opposed the election of its officers. He disbanded the society, created a new organization with a handpicked executive; his wife was made president. The women of the former society were very angry and complained to the Presbytery about Rockwood's actions.[28]

Rockwood launched an open attack upon his detractors in sermons entitled "How the Devil Got into St. James" and "What is a Christian?"[29] Then he fired broadsides at the Presbyterian denomination in particular with such topics as "The Church Sick Unto Death Doctrinally," "The Church Sick Unto Death Educationally," and "The Church Sick Unto Death Ecumenically."[30] These themes he had raised about two years before, but now they were more blatantly fundamentalistic. He mimeographed these sermons and widely distributed them.

In these controversial sermons Rockwood claimed that the Presbyterian Church had departed from the Westminster Confession of Faith because it had allowed modernists into the pulpit and the church bureaucracy. These controversial sermons created an immediate response. Someone reportedly broke into the manse and ransacked it while Rockwood was out of town. This

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[24] *Ibid.*, 18 Jan. 1946, p.2.

[25] *Ibid.*, 29 June 1945, p.7; 20 March 1946, p.6.

[26] *Ibid.*, 5 Nov. 1945, pp.1 and 8; 5 March 1946, p.6.

[27] *Ibid.*, 18 Jan. 1946, p.2; 22 Jan. 1946, p.6; 23 Jan. 1946, p.6; 29 Jan. 1946, p.4.

[28] *Ibid.*, 15 Jan. 1947, pp.1 and 8.

[29] *Ibid.*, 19 Oct. 1946, p.4; 2 Nov. 1946, p.4.

[30] *Ibid.*, 9 Nov. 1946, p.4; 16 Nov. 1946, p.4; 23 Nov. 1946, p.4; 30 Nov. 1946, p.4.

was particular suspicious because more than 800 copies of the first of the mimeographed controversial sermons were burned in the basement furnace.[31]

Undeterred by that attack, Rockwood carried on in his attack on the denomination, posing as a martyr. He denounced modernism in Presbyterian seminaries, noting the infidelity of specific professors. He recounted his own experience at Presbyterian College. He said that one day in the library one of his professors came across him pouring over commentaries, and asked him why he was so serious. Rockwood looked up rather surprised and replied, "Your lectures." The professor said, "What is the trouble?" Rockwood replied that the general impression of the students was that the Bible was not to be believed. When the professor remarked that Rockwood should not take his comments too seriously because he was only trying to scare freshmen, Rockwood was even more disturbed. "This was his idea of a joke; tearing apart the Bible."[32] Rockwood also castigated the denomination its co-operation with the Canadian Council of Churches and its failure to attack Roman Catholicism. He condemned the ecumenicy which extended to foreign mission work.

Because of Rockwood's controversial sermons and the state of disunity in St. James Church, the Presbytery decided to investigate. Rockwood was unrepentant, claiming he would "fight for the word of God to the last knot." He compared himself to Elijah, Luther, Knox and Wesley. "Many people today are calling me a trouble-maker, but the real trouble makers in Israel today are those who are denying the Word of God; whether in colleges, pulpits or pews."[33] "Whether or not I shall eventually find myself without a pulpit would not for a moment prevent me from preaching the truth."[34]

In anticipation of the eventual outcome Rockwood appears to have made steps to ensure himself another pulpit. For some time he had held a mid-week Bible study and prayer meeting at McClure's Mills. Now he began holding Sunday afternoon services there and Sunday School at Bible Hill.

The investigators had found a divided congregation which Rockwood exacerbated and had not tried to heal. But more seriously, they found Rockwood's sermons slandering the denomination's ministers and its theological professors. It was decided to put him on trial before the church's court.

In March 1947 Rockwood was formally charged with trying to split the Presbyterian Church by creating division and thereby breaking his ordination vows. Rockwood attended the trial in Halifax, supported by 56 members of St. James Church.[35] When Rockwood was asked by the Presbytery if he was prepared to try to heal the breach in his congregation, he defiantly refused. The ecclesiastical court found Rockwood guilty of conducting 'himself in a manner unbecoming a minister of the Christian church." "Far from lucidating the Bible," the moderator remarked, "he misinterprets it and has consistently sought to break from this church and form a church of his

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[31] *Ibid*, 16 Nov. 1946, p.1; 18 Dec. 1946, pp.1 and 8.

[32] Rockwood, *What God Hath Wrought: The Life Story of Radio Pastor Perry F. Rockwood*, p.19.

[33] *Truro Daily News*, 6 Dec. 1946, pp.1 and 5; 9 Dec. 1946, p.1.

[34] *Ibid.*, 9 Jan. 1947, pp.1 and 8; 15 Jan. 1947, pp.1 and 8.

[35] *Ibid.*, 4 March 1947, p.1.

own." Presbytery was to meet again in May to formally pass sentence upon Rockwood; he might be "admonished, suspended or excommunicated."[36]

Rather than wait for the final judgement, Rockwood announced his resignation from St. James and the Presbyterian denomination. He refused to submit to the discipline of the Presbytery which ordered him to destroy the balance of his controversial sermons, produce no more of the same, "refrain from publicity in the press, [and] show due repentance and humility for what he had said against fellow ministers."[37]

The Rockwood case attracted national and even international attention. Reporters from central Canada and even *Time Magazine* covered the trial.[38] Rockwood received support from the Baptist renegades J.J. Sidey from Kingston, Nova Scotia and T.T. Shields in Toronto. Shields reprinted Rockwood's controversial sermons in the *Gospel Witness* and sent them to every Protestant minister in Canada.[39] Shields' involvement in the Rockwood case was rather hypocritical on his part for Shields had no use for most of the things Rockwood stood for: premillennialism, Keswick holiness, faith missions, and Youth for Christ revivalism.

In his final Presbyterian sermon Rockwood told an overflow crowd of 2000 that "I am leaving the Presbyterian Church in Canada because I am not permitted to preach the whole counsel of God from this pulpit." He announced that he was going to begin an independent work in Truro and the Maritimes.[40] Following a congregational meeting, mass resignations from St. James occurred. Six of the nine members of the board, all officers and teachers of the Sunday School, one elder, two auditors, and all officers of the Young People Society joined twenty-seven other members and eighteen adherents who followed Rockwood. It was also decided that since Rockwood had formed the McClure's Mills and Bible Hill missions, they would remain under Rockwood's control.[41]

As Rockwood made plans to establish his own church his actions confirmed the Presbytery's assessment that he had been all along planning the creation of his own sect. The Moderator, the Rev. Frank Lawson, commented that Rockwood suffered "from delusions of greatness," and "an itch for fame," and had "led astray some...innocent people" with his fabricated stories about his former professors.[42] "He works on the principle that if a lie is big enough and told often enough people will believe it."[43] Soon the Presbyterian Church officially defrocked Rockwood.[44]

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[36]*Ibid.*, 5 March 1947, pp.1 and 8.

[37]*Ibid.*, March 1947, pp. 1 and 6.

[38]*Ibid.*, 3 March 1947, pp.1 and 8; 7 March 1947, p.8.

[39]*Gospel Witness*, 6 March 1947, pp.3-5; 13 March 1947, pp.1-4, 13-16.

[40]*Truro Daily News*, 10 March 1947, pp.1 and 8.

[41]*Ibid.*, 13 March 1947, pp.1 and 5.

[42]*Ibid.*, 21 March 1947, pp.1 and 8.

[43]*Ibid.*, 22 March 1947, p.1.

[44]*The Peoples Pulpit* 1:11 (1952), p.2.

Rockwood travelled to New York City and Ontario to raise support for his new church, posing as a fundamentalist defender against modernism and Roman Catholicism. At Jarvis St. Baptist Church in Toronto, where almost 4000 attended the Sunday morning service, T.T. Shields donated the offerings of $4000 to Rockwood's church building program.[45] Rockwood also received support from the schismatic Bible Presbyterian Church in the United States, headed by Carl McIntire.[46]

Even though he had been asked to join Shield's Regular Baptists, Rockwood, ever an independent, refused to unite officially with either Shields, McIntire or other fundamentalist denominations. He did, however, break away from Presbyterian forms by having himself rebaptised by immersion.[47]

Rockwood called his new organization The Peoples Church, unconnected with, but modelled after Oswald J. Smith's Toronto church, including the mis-punctuated title. True to his critics' fears Rockwood sought to create a new denomination by having the Peoples Church of Nova Scotia incorporated by the Legislature. The incorporation, however, was only granted to the Peoples Church of Truro.[48] In spite of that limitation, Rockwood continued to direct services at Bible Hill and McClure's Mills, using students from the New Brunswick Bible Institute.[49]

Rockwood's new sect was built around Keswick holiness. In the fall of 1947 he commenced a series of sermons on the Devil.[50] These led into other sermons on the "Deeper Christian Life" and the "Separated Life."[51]

Like Oswald J. Smith, Rockwood began an aggressive missionary program. In October 1947 he launched a missionary conference featuring missionaries from the Sudan Interior Mission.[52] By November the church has raised enough money to support its first missionary to Africa, Doris Dye, who had been trained at the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute.[53] Miss Dye was soon joined by Miss Goldie Blackeney, a graduate of Toronto Bible College who was studying at Taccoa Bible Institute, the Christian and Missionary Alliance school in Georgia. Robert Matheson, the treasurer of Peoples Church, was on his way to Moody Bible Institute for missionary studies that would lead him to Japan.[54]

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[45]*Gospel Witness*, 24 April 1947, p.5.

[46]*Truro Daily News*, 28 July 1947, pp.1 and 8.

[47]Interview with the Rev. Perry F. Rockwood, 2 Jan. 1992.

[48]*Truro Daily News*, 7 May 1947, pp.1 and 8; 10 May 1947, p.1.

[49]*Ibid.*, 27 Sept. 1947, p.2.

[50]*Ibid.*, 6 Sept. 1947, p.4 and 13 Sept. 1947, p.4.

[51]*Ibid.*, 27 Sept. 1947, p.2 and 4 Oct. 1947, p.4.

[52]*Ibid.*, 15 Oct.1947, p.5.

[53]*A Historical Up-Date on the Missionary Program of the Peoples Church, Truro, 1947-1992* (Truro: Peoples Church, 1992), pp.3-5.

[54]*Ibid.*, pp.10 and 19; *Truro Daily News*, 15 Dec. 1947, pp.1 and 4.

Rockwood began broadcasting over three maritime stations in 1947, having been influenced by the radio broadcasts of Jack Wyrtzen, Charles E. Fuller and Alberta premier Ernest C. Manning. He also opened a Christian bookstore and planned to construct a church building to avoid the expense of rented facilities.

As Rockwood approached his second year of his new sect, he warned:

> I look forward to 1948 as a year of great trial and tribulations for The Peoples Church. I look for the Devil to work even harder to prevent this work from going ahead. I look for personal hardship for all who wish to support this work. But I look for great spiritual blessings for I believe revival is coming.[55]

Rockwood's controversial radio sermons led to efforts by other churches to have him taken off the air. Eventually the radio station in Truro forced him to submit his sermons to a clerical censor panel, composed of Anglican, Baptist and United Church of Canada ministers.[56]

Much of the opposition that Rockwood experienced was caused by his aggressive seeking of controversy. In February 1948 he attacked the sale of raffle tickets which were being used to raise funds for local charities. To the editor of the local paper he wrote "the time has come for opposition to be expressed against all clubs and organizations who seek to benefit the community through gambling methods."[57]

Rockwood claims that attempts were made by various individuals in Truro to "run him out of town." His insurance policies were cancelled, landlords would not rent homes to him and his family, most public buildings were closed to his meetings, and suppliers of building materials would not do business with him.[58]

Rockwood also proved to be "a thorn in the flesh" of the Presbyterian denomination because he still had many supporters within its churches. He was a key figure in their efforts to institute a modernist/fundamentalist controversy. In March 1948, one of Rockwood's friends, the Rev. Dr. A.A. Murray of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Sydney, brought heresy charges against the Rev. Frank Lawson, the moderator of the Halifax-Lunenburg Presbytery which had tried to discipline Rockwood. The charges were rejected because they came from hearsay evidence which had arisen from outside of the Presbyterian Church. Undaunted, Dr. Murray planned to raise the issue at the General Assembly.[59] When Dr. Murray laid the cornerstone of Rockwood's Peoples Church in July of 1948, he praised the stand that Rockwood had taken.

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[55]*Truro Daily News*, 15 Jan. 1948, p.1.

[56]The Peoples Pulpit, Sept. 1955, p.8.

[57]Perry F. Rockwood to the editor, *Truro Daily News*, 17 Feb. 1948, p.4. For a negative response to Rockwood's letter see M.B. MacKenzie to the editor, 21 Feb. 1948, p.6.

[58]*The Peoples Pulpit*, 1:11 (March 1952), p.3.

[59]*Truro Daily News*, 3 March 1948, p.1 and 4 March 1948, pp.1 and 8.

> The church stands for the preaching and teaching of the entire Word of God for the purpose of saving souls. It does not believe its mission is to deodorize the world's sink of iniquity. It does not believe its prime purpose is to take soup and soap to the prodigal to make him happy and comfortable. It believes in sin and preaches sin.[60]

The church which Rockwood built was also controversial. He had purchased a twenty-two room boarding house on Prince Street, one of the major streets in downtown Truro, and moved the old mansion to the back of the property. It would serve as the manse and church offices. Along Prince Street Rockwood began construction of what he called a "basement church." The basement was poured and a roof placed over it. Services were conducted for some years in the basement until funds were available for the walls and a proper roof. Rockwood advertised his building as a "gospel workshop" and stated that "no money is being spent on style and decoration."[61]

Although Rockwood's church remained ecclesiastically un-attached, he maintained active links with the fundamentalist and neo-fundamentalist movement. He continued his association with Youth For Christ,[62] conducted evangelistic campaigns for the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in New Brunswick,[63] organized a chapter of T.T. Shields' Protestant League in Truro,[64] and had students from Bob Jones College in Tennessee and Wheaton College serve his branch churches.[65]

Rockwood's branch churches stretched across the Maritimes. He opened Peoples Churches and Sunday Schools in Halifax and New Glasgow. In New Brunswick he had churches in Fredericton, Hartland and Chipman.[66]

Over the years Rockwood expanded his radio ministry across Canada. In 1952 Rockwood decided that in order to devote more funds to the expansion of the broadcasts he would not accept a regular salary from the church, but adopt the "faith" principles of George Mueller. Rockwood and his family and the other fourteen full-time workers would live communally in the large house at the back of the property, "trusting the Lord to supply our daily food." They would "all receive the same living allowance--$25 per month."[67] He believed that he could not expect foreign missionaries to live on a "faith" principle if he could not.

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[60]*Ibid.*, 12 July 1948, pp.1 and 4. The quotation is taken from a larger news item in the *Gospel Witness*, 9 Sept. 1948, p.12.

[61]*The Peoples Pulpit*, 2:11 (March 1953), p.3.

[62]*Truro Daily News*, 13 Feb. 1948, p.1.

[63]*Ibid.*, 19 Feb. 1948, p.4.

[64]*Gospel Witness*, 22 April 1948, p.12.

[65]*Truro Daily News*, 22 April, 1948, p.8; 31 July 1948, p.4.

[66]*The Peoples Pulpit*, 1:11 (March 1952), pp.9 and 14.

[67]*Ibid.*, 2:11 (March 1953), p.6 and 3:11 (March 1954), p.6.

In 1953 Rockwood expanded his radio ministry, the Peoples Gospel Hour, into the United States, beginning in Los Angeles.[68] By 1954 he was broadcasting on fifteen Canadian stations, two American stations, "one station in Mexico and on three short-wave bands of HCJB" in Quito, Ecuador. He also opened a mail-box "office" in Detroit.[69]

Another of Rockwood's enterprises was the establishment of the Nova Scotia Bible Institute in the fall of 1953.[70] It operated out of the Peoples Church and Rockwood did most of the teaching.

As Rockwood carried on his radio broadcasts, publishing program, Christian book store, the Bible Institute and preaching in New Brunswick and the United States,[71] the day-to-day ministry of Peoples Church suffered. Rockwood did not have the time to do pastoral care and when he did it, it was not very effective because he had difficulty establishing personal relationships with people. His ever-expanding radio empire and his grand plans for the Bible Institute could not be supported by the congregation. In February 1955 he hired Miss Stella Jarema, a recent graduate of L.E. Maxwell's Prairie Bible Institute in Alberta to manage his bookstore and sing on his radio programs.[72]

However, in May 1955, the unrest in the congregation came to a head, causing Rockwood to resign.[73] A settlement was reached by which Rockwood would leave with his various enterprises: the radio ministry, printing plant, Bible Institute and the responsibility for the support of nine of the church's missionaries.[74]

After Rockwood's departure Peoples Church carried on under the direction of LeRoy Bickel, a graduate of Bob Jones University who had served as Rockwood's assistant.[75] In 1960 the church joined the Association of Gospel Churches which had been founded by P.W. Philpott.[76]

Rockwood moved his religious empire to Hubbards, a resort town about thirty miles south of Halifax, where he had purchased the old Gainsborough Hotel to house the Missionary Bible Institute which he had just incorporated.[77] The Missionary Bible Institute offered a three-year training program, but by September 1957 it was decided to accept no new students and close down the Institute in 1958. Rockwood had been unable to attract sufficient staff and students.[78]

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[68] *Ibid.*, 5:3 (Sept. 1955), p.9.

[69] *Ibid.*, 3:11 (March 1954), pp.6, 10 and 16.

[70] *Ibid.*, pp.9 and 13.

[71] *Truro Daily News*, 26 Jan. 1955, p.4 and 3 March 1955, p.5.

[72] *Ibid.*, 12 Feb. 1955, p.4.

[73] *Ibid.*, 24 May 1955, pp.1 and 4.

[74] *Ibid.*, 9 June 1955, pp. 1 and 2.

[75] *Ibid.*, 29 Jan. 1955, p.4.

[76] *A Historical Up-Date*, p.28.

[77] *Truro Daily News*, 24 May 1955, pp.1 and 4.

[78] *The Peoples Pulpit,* 7:4 (Sept. 1957), p.14.

Rockwood planned to devote his time to radio broadcasting and publishing religious literature, but the Hubbards' location proved to be inconvenient. He did not have the staff to keep up the buildings, the local postal facilities were inadequate for his needs, and he was spending too much time commuting back and forth to Halifax. In 1958 he decided to move his operations to Halifax where he would find some Christian fellowship. He summed up his experience at Hubbards by saying, "Here in Hubbards there is no such fellowship for in our three years we have yet to find one Christian."[79]

With the move to Halifax Rockwood disbanded his communal living situation. For a time his staff had to find their own accommodations, until a building was purchased for a staff residence.[80] The Rockwood family, for the first time in five or six years, now lived on their own, in the building used as the ministry headquarters.

In Halifax Rockwood opened a Christian bookstore, continued to print and mail out his sermons, conducted evangelistic services throughout the Maritimes, New England and Ontario, and expanded his radio broadcasts, opening a postal box "office" in Boston to handle the American side of his ministry. As he appealed for money to support the broadcasts, he noted:

> It saddens my heart to see so much money being given to charities and educational centres where Christ is not honoured and which do not proclaim the Gospel. We must have thousands of dollars this month to attack the Devil and to win another victory for our Lord.[81]

Controversy continued as Rockwood pursued his ministry. In June 1962 he attracted widespread attention when he started a campaign to remove pornography, crime magazines, comic books and other literature from the newsstands. After he laid a complaint with the police, the distributer of magazines in Nova Scotia "voluntarily" withdrew 80 magazines from about 500 newsstands.[82]

Reaction was mixed to Rockwood's "censorship" campaign. The Baptist president of the Halifax-Dartmouth ministerial association could not agree with Rockwood's tactics, while the minister of West End Baptist Church stated, "Our civilization is sick because the recognized standards of Christian decency are being disregarded by so many."[83] A doctor from Shubenacadie complained that the "head of this vigilante committee is a man whom many of us consider the leader of a religious cult."[84] On the other hand, another writer commented, "I thank God someone has enough courage to come out and take a stand against Satan and worldly lusts."[85]

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[79]*Ibid.*, 8:3 (Sept. 1958), p.4.

[80]*Ibid.*, p.3 and Insert, *The Peoples Pulpit* 10:3 (Sept. 1960).

[81]*Ibid.* 10:3 (Sept. 1960), p.5.

[82]Bill Bees, "Unofficial Censorship in High Gear," *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 2 June 1962, p.36.

[83]Dal Warrington, "Eighty publications removed from stands," *ibid.*, 16 June 1962, p.3 and "Rev. Ronald C. MacCormack to the editor, *ibid.*, 12 July 1962, p.4.

[84]Dr. D.R. MacInnis to the editor, *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 30 June 1962, p.4.

[85]R.A. Lewis to the editor, *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 10 July 1962, p.4.

Rockwood personally carried the censorship campaign to New Brunswick; in Newfoundland magazines were also seized and the courts declared them obscene.[86] The end result of Rockwood's campaign was that the number of outlets selling pornography was greatly reduced.

The July 1962 Rockwood attacked the Nova Scotia government as it sought to liberalize its liquor laws. He tried to influence the election in dramatic ways by placing two crashed cars on a flat-bed trailer to simulate a head-on crash, with a sign warning of increased cases of drunken driving if the law were changed.

When Rockwood could not obtain the support of the ministerial association in these campaigns he became even more reactionary and separatist.[87] Over the past few years Rockwood's theology had drifted more to the right as he was influenced by Carl McIntire's anti-Catholic, anti-Communistic and anti-ecumenical thought.[88] Rockwood joined in the attack on the Revised Standard Version of the Bible,[89] eventually rejecting all versions but the King James Version which he claimed was alone divinely inspired. After adopting this stance, he withdrew from the shelves of his bookstore all other versions of the Bible and books which cited any other version than the King James Version.[90] *The Scofield Reference Bible* was one of his big sellers. Foreign language Bibles were rejected unless based on the *Textus Receptus* of Erasmus.[91] This greatly reduced the stock in his store which had at one time been the largest Christian bookstore east of Toronto.

Because Rockwood was finding his circle of fellowship in Halifax constantly shrinking he decided to form his own church. In 1963 Rockwood opened a Sunday School which developed into the Missionary Bible Church which can be described as independent, "baptistic," fundamentalistic, dispensational, and fostering Keswick holiness.

By 1964 Rockwood had broken most of his American evangelical connections and aligned himself with the radical right fundamentalists: Bob Jones, Carl McIntire, Ian Paisley[92] and John R. Rice who denounced Billy Graham for his co-operation with Catholics and "liberals." Rockwood called for complete separation from Graham and the "new evangelicals."[93]

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[86]*Ibid.*, 23 June 1962, p.3, 26 June 1962, p.18, 27 June 1962, p.3, 28 June 1962, p.3, and 3 Oct. 1962.

[87]*The Peoples Pulpit* 12:3 (Sept. 1962), pp.3, 12-15, 22-23.

[88]*Ibid.* 10:3 (Sept. 1960), pp.10-11.

[89]*Ibid.* 9:3 (Sept. 1959), p.3. See Perry F. Rockwood, *The Revised Standard Version* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, c.1959.)

[90]Perry F. Rockwood, *Is the KJV God's Word for Today?* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.), p.13.

[91]Perry F. Rockwood, ed. *God's Miracle Book: The King James Version Bible* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.), p.6.

[92]Rockwood has published some of Paisley's sermons; Ian Paisley, *Seven Reasons Why I Believe in the Virgin Birth of Christ* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.).

[93]*The Gospel Standard*, 14:3 (Sept. 1964), pp. 20-24. See also Perry F. Rockwood, *New Evangelical Dreamers* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.)

One of the few local fundamentalists with whom Rockwood had anything to do was the Rev. John J. Sidey, the Baptist schismatic who operated the Kingston Bible College in the Annapolis Valley. Sidey had been one of the first local fundamentalists to support Rockwood when he left the Presbyterians in 1947. In 1966 Rockwood was the speaker at the anniversary of Sidey's church; during that service Sidey died in the pulpit. Rockwood returned several days later and conducted the funeral.[94]

Rockwood's theology was influenced by the writings of H.A. Ironside of Moody Church and the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary, but as he moved further to the right, even the dispensational theologians at Dallas became too "liberal" for him.[95] He even broke from the ultra-fundamentalist Bob Jones University because it used other versions of the Bible.[96]

Rockwood, however, remained a convinced dispensationalist,[97] teaching a pre-tribulation, premillennial "rapture" of the "Church,"[98] a body which according to his definition and practice, would be rather small.[99] "Probably twenty-five percent of the world's population is spoken of as being Christian, but the truth is that probably ninety-five percent of these have never been born again."[100] Again he stated,

> ...we of THE PEOPLES GOSPEL HOUR remain as old-fashioned fundamentalists, unashamed of Jesus, seeking fully to stand by His Word and to remain as a little flock in the midst of the growing apostate church of our day.[101]

This thinking was informed by a manichaean dualism which dominated his intellectual world; he saw a cosmic struggle between Satan and Christ going on all around him.[102]

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[94]Gertrude Palmer, *The Combatant: Biography of John J. Sidey (Founder of Kingston Bible College)* (Middleton, N.S.: Black Printing Company, Ltd., 1976), p.7.

[95]Interview with the Rev. Perry F. Rockwood, 2 Jan., 1992.

[96]Perry F. Rockwood, *Official Position of Bob Jones University* (Halifax: Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.). For his attitudes on other versions see, Perry F. Rockwood, ed. *God's Inspired Preserved Bible: King James Version* (Halifax: Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.) and *A Review of the NIV and NASV of the Bible* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.)

[97]Perry F. Rockwood, *God's Plan of the Ages: A Dispensational Study* (Halifax: God's Plan of the Ages, n.d.).

[98]Perry F. Rockwood, *The Rapture* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.).

[99]Perry F. Rockwood, *Bible Separation* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.).

[100]Perry F. Rockwood, *How to Put the World Right* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.), p.9.

[101]Perry F. Rockwood, *The Ecumenical Church in the Light of God's Inspired Word* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.), p.15.

[102]Perry F. Rockwood, *Satan is Alive and Well* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.); *Babylon the Great and Antichrist* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.).

A major part of Rockwood's ministry, besides his radio broadcasts, was the publishing and distribution of tracts and pamphlets, mostly written by himself, which thundered against non-K.J.V. versions of the Bible, modernism, false cults, evolution,[103] all television watching,[104] rock and roll,[105] disco dancing,[106] gambling,[107] women wearing shorts or slacks, uni-sex fashions, homosexuality,[108] abortion[109], sex education[110] and other modern trends. Rockwood had no use for any form of pentecostalism, "new evangelicalism," hyper-Calvinism,[111] ecumenism[112] and was especially condemnatory of Roman Catholicism.[113] His bookstore carried salacious anti-Roman Catholic literature by Father Chiniquy and Alberto Rivera.

On a more positive note Rockwood also published booklets which tried to provide pastoral comfort and an evangelical message, albeit bound by the parameters of fundamentalism.[114] Many of his booklets were aimed at the elderly and printed in large type.[115]

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[103]Perry F. Rockwood, *The Myth of Evolution* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.).

[104]Perry F. Rockwood, *Satan's Snares* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.), pp.9-13; *Believers and Television* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.).

[105]Perry F. Rockwood, *Rock Music or Rock of Ages* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.).

[106]Perry F. Rockwood, *Enemies of the Nation* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, c. 1980), pp.9-12.

[107]Perry F. Rockwood, *Gambling: The Winner is the Devil* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.).

[108]Perry F. Rockwood, *The Shadow of Sodom Over Today's Civilization* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.); *Homosexuals and Aids* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.).

[109]Perry F. Rockwood, *Abortion is Murder* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.).

[110]Perry F. Rockwood, *Sex Education in the Schools* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, c. 1987).

[111]Perry F. Rockwood, *Election and Free Will* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, c.1976).

[112]Perry F. Rockwood, *Rebuilding the Tower of Babel* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, c.1983).

[113]Perry F. Rockwood, *Romanism and the Bible* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, c.1984).

[114]See Perry F. Rockwood, *Life Beyond the Grave* (c.1961), *Someone Cares*, *Treasures for Today*, *Poems to Comfort and Cheer*, *The Book of Ruth: The Story of Redemption, Rest, and Riches*, *The Gospel in a Nutshell*, *The Living Way*, *Treasures from the Bible*, *The Light of the World*, *Apples of Gold*, *Strength for Today*, *God's Comfort in Sorrow*, *The Shepherd's Psalm*, *Gems of Inspiration*, *How to be a Happy Christian*, and *Conquering Life's Problems*.

[115]Perry F. Rockwood, *The Golden Years: A Tribute to Seniors*, *The Two Roads*, and *Adventures in Faith* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.)

In one of his booklets, *How to Have a Happy Home*, Rockwood set forth his philosophy of domestic bliss. He presented a rigid and unrealistic view of marriage and recognized no grounds for divorce.[116] All problems could be solved by being "saved." Wives were to be submissive. "There is no such things as the woman being equal with man and the whole teaching of the Women's Liberation Movement is anti-Bible and of the Devil."[117] Very little was said about child-rearing, other than

> children must be taught to obey...the rod is to be used to inflict pain on the willful child. Sentimental kindness to the children in their disobedience is a great sin that will plague their lives forever.[118]

Rockwood's pursuit of these methods had devastating results on his family life that was extremely dysfunctional. One of the features of Rockwood's personality was his inability to establish normal emotional relationships with those around him. Even when his own mother died, he did not attend the funeral because he was conducting an evangelistic campaign. He is reported to have said, "Let the dead bury the dead."[119] His closest relationship was with his wife Ena and he was very devoted and dependant upon her for emotional strength. He stifled her personality and cultural background, and she became very submissive to his will.

When it came to raising and nurturing his four children, Rockwood was far from an ideal father. He was a workaholic and his "mission" came first. During the years that the Rockwood lived communally with the staff in Truro and Hubbards, the children had little parental contact and were left to fend for themselves among the many adults who lived with them. Their childhood has been described by two of them as one of emotional neglect, economic deprivation and physical abuse. Rockwood "spared not the rod" and beat his children. Coupled with this, the children were ostracized by their playmates because of their father's eccentric reputation.

In 1989 Rockwood's wife died after a lingering fight with cancer. Her funeral was performed by the Rev. M.H. Reynolds of California, one of few people with whom Rockwood still fellowshipped.[120] Sometime later Rockwood married one of his employees, who was three or four decades younger than himself.

In 1992 Rockwood celebrated his forty-fifth anniversary in radio broadcasting with his programs airing about 600 times a week. His weekly Peoples Gospel Hour and daily Prophecy for Today broadcasts were heard across Canada, United States, South America, Europe, Africa, Israel, Asia and Russia.[121] The weekly budget for those broadcasts and other aspects of the ministry was almost $60,000 per week, amounting to over $3 million annually.[122]

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[116]Perry F. Rockwood, *How to Have a Happy Home* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.), pp.3-4 and *Divorce and the Bible* (Halifax: The Peoples Gospel Hour, n.d.), pp.10-11.

[117]Rockwood, *How to Have a Happy Home*, p.7.

[118]*Ibid.*, p.16.

[119]Interview with the Rev. Paul (Rockwood) Johnston, 23 Feb. 1992.

[120]*The Gospel Standard* 39:3 (Sept. 1989), p.2; interview with Perry F. Rockwood, 21 April 1991.

[121]The Peoples Gospel Hour radio log, Jan. 1992

[122]*The Gospel Standard* 41:7 (Jan. 1992), p.14.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Extension Work, 1945 – 1985: Initial Findings

by

Stuart Macdonald

The building of new congregations by Canadian Presbyterians in the period after World War II was appropriate and important, even crucial to the evolution of the denomination. Without these new congregations the denomination would be much different.

To phrase these statements in the positive today is to go against our common wisdom as to how new church development or, as it is known in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 'church extension,' was done in the post-war period. Negatives have tended to dominate the discussions that take place in the classrooms, in presbyteries, and in the few comments written about church extension. For example, the cautious optimism of John Moir's initial comments is replaced by later words which speak of, among other things, a "discouraging record" in terms of church extension.[1] There are reasons for this – good reasons. But the first and only issue for us to consider is not "what went wrong?" It is important to begin to see church extension on its own terms – as one aspect of a denomination's response to the rapidly changing context in which it found itself during the course of World War II, and even more dramatically at the end of that war. Only then, should we turn to and consider these larger questions.

This attitude is very different from the one with which I began plans for this research. It is worthwhile to begin with a brief narrative about this change in my own attitude. After this, I want to make a few comments on the challenges in researching church extension, in particular discussing the literature on church extension in Canada and the United States. Then this paper will address two key issues which we need to discuss if we are to understand church extension: a) what happened in the Canadian Protestant church in the period 1945-1985; and, b) the shape and changes within the Presbyterian Church in Canada within that same period. Finally, I want to propose

[1] John Moir, *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada,* 2nd edition (Burlington: Eagle Press, 1987), p.265; initial comments, pp.248-249. Among the very insightful comments by John Moir is his comment on the "unexpected decline in church membership."

Over the years Rockwood continued to live a very simple lifestyle, receiving the same small honoraria as the rest of the staff of fifteen or sixteen. His workaholic pace had not altered over the years; while over seventy-five years of age, he worked from dawn to dusk, often in his radio studio by 5 A.M., recording his sermons for international distribution.[123] Rockwood seldom took holidays and his only diversion was reading biographies on the captains of industry and commerce, and following baseball games through the newspapers and radio, although he refused to watch those games on television-- the Devil's tool.[124]

While Rockwood's thinking became increasingly reactionary, seeing things in black and white, with no shades of grey, he was open to new technologies, except television. He added a computer system to track responses and offerings in order to determine the viability of staying on various radio stations. Some people found spiritual help and conversion through Rockwood's radio ministry, but for the most part it was divisive; even its positive aspects duplicated existing ministries.

Rockwood has not able to groom a successor for his religious empire. His son Paul, who worked for the ministry at one time, became alienated from his father, and was ordained a minister of the United Church of Canada, even changing his name to avoid the Rockwood connection.[125] When questioned about the future of his ministry, Perry Rockwood stated unrealistically that the ministry could survive his death by having his radio broadcasts recycled.

Rockwood's personality and ministry reflect the extremes of individualism which was so common to fundamentalism. It became cultic; Rockwood's circle of fellowship continued to narrow as his religious empire grew. His persistence in pursuing his mission exacted a heavy toll on his family. While Rockwood may not have had much influence over the wider fundamentalist movement, his narrow, separatist views have been quite popular at the grass-roots level, enough at least to generate enough offerings to keep his radio broadcasts beaming across the world.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been very wary of the "lone ranger" types in the ministry and with good reason. Yet, we must consider that most of the biblical prophets were "lone rangers," "voices crying in the wilderness." Do those ancient and modern lone rangers have anything to teach us? On the other hand, most of us remember the Lone Ranger television show. The Lone Ranger had only his faithful native side-kick at his side to help him, who answered his every command with, "Yes, Kemosabe." The Lone Ranger felt honoured by such a splendid title. We often miss the satire that the show voiced. I am told that the expression "kemosabe," was the Spanish word for "fool!"

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[123]Tom McDougall, "Preaching over the airwaves," *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 5 Dec. 1992, p.B.12.

[124]Interview with Judy (Rockwood) Thompson, 1 Oct. 1993.

[125]Interview with the Rev. Paul (Rockwood) Johnston, 23 Feb. 1992.

quickly three distinct phases of church extension within the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

My interest in the topic of church extension arose from the experience of teaching Presbyterian Church history at Knox College and coming to the post-war period and not being sure what to say beyond discussing selections from *Enduring Witness*.[2] It was evident that despite John Moir's efforts, the period following World War II was difficult to discuss because very little had been written about these more than fifty-five years. As we stumbled through these classes another reality we faced was that many of the students now at Knox College are from extension congregations. Some had quite clear impressions of what had gone wrong in church extension. It was also clear that as students graduated and went out to minister, they were being called to some of these congregations which had been established in the years after WWII, but were now in serious decline. What had happened? Who had made the mistakes? (I noted a few moments ago that we always seem to begin with the negatives. I was no exception. This was one of the ways I framed the issue.) An initial survey of the *Acts and Proceedings* was done with the assistance of a senior student, Mark Godin, and the conclusion was reached that there was an historical article in this material. Thus this became one of the projects undertaken during a sabbatical leave from Knox College.[3] The project began with a clear idea that the key question would be "what had gone wrong?" I hoped that the historical literature on new church development in other denominations in Canada and in the United States would provide some clues to this question which might be tested within the situation of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The search through the literature on church extension in other denominations and in the United States proved disappointing for a surprising reason, namely there does not seem to have been much published on this subject. Colleagues were kind enough to suggest various articles and I stumbled across one myself, but the lack of significant discussion on this issue remains startling.[4] It was also clear that there was no one method

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[2] John Moir, *Enduring Witness* (2nd edition) has some good discussions. The scarcity of work done in the post-war period is evident in Brian Clarke, "English Speaking Canada from 1840," in *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*, ed. Terence Murphy and Roberto Perin (Toronto: Oxford University, 1996), pp.354-359. Two good articles are: Ian S. Rennie, "Conservatism in the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1925 and Beyond: An Introductory Examination," in *CSPH Papers* 1982, pp.29-60; and Donald A. MacLeod, "From Reaction to Renewal: Presbyterian Renewal Fellowship, 1979-1987," *Studies in Canadian Evangelical Renewal: Essays in honour of Ian S. Rennie*, ed. Kevin Quast and John Vissers (Scarborough: FT Publications, 1996).

[3] Deep appreciation for the sabbatical need to be extended to Principal Dorcas Gordon and to the Board of Governors of Knox College for making this time (January to August, 2003) possible.

[4] I would like to extend thanks to Peter Bush for directing me to Robert H. Bullock, Jr. "Twentieth-Century Presbyterian New Church Development: A Critical Period, 1940-1980," in *The Diversity of Discipleship: The Presbyterians and Twentieth-Century Christian Witness,* ed. Milton J. Coalter, John M. Mulder, and Louis B. Weeks (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), pp.55-82; and to Phyllis Airhart for directing me to the chapter by Noelle Boughton, "Church Extension 1939 to 1968," *Meeting the Challenge of the Future: A History of the Toronto United Church Council* (Toronto: Toronto United Church Council/The Centre for the Study of Religion in Canada, Emmanuel College, 1988). I stumbled across Jerrold Lee Brooks, "Reaching Out: A Study of Church Extension Activity in Mecklenburg Presbytery, North Carolina, 1920-1980," in *The Mainstream Protestant "Decline": The Presbyterian Pattern*, ed. Milton J. Coalter, John M. Mulder, and Louis B. Weeks (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), pp.177-197. I would

or approach to the subject which had been adopted elsewhere. In smaller fields of historical study (Scottish studies, Canadian Christian history) this is unusual. We have come to expect that approaches, methods and fundamental questions have already been addressed elsewhere. When one comes to a large topic the truth is that it is normal that a literature has already developed in another context such as American church history where there are many more scholars doing research. One gets very skilful at adapting these methods, approaches, arguments, and theories to the situation in another country or context. As the Presbyterian Church in Canada was not the only denomination to build new churches in the suburbs one automatically anticipates that someone somewhere else will already have developed an approach to the study of the topic. This has not proven to be the case.

There is thus no clear method or thesis which we can take and adapt in our study of how the Presbyterian Church in Canada built new congregations in the suburbs. The two articles on the American Presbyterian experience are both part of a much larger, much different debate. Both articles appeared as part of the 1990 - 1992 series *The Presbyterian Predicament* and both are concerned with the relationship between denominational membership decline and church extension, or more precisely how the halt to the building of new churches contributed to membership decline. In his study of extension work in Mecklenburg presbytery (North Carolina) Jerrold Lee Brooks writes that the failure to continue emphasising new church development led to dramatic results: "This shift of focus coincided not by accident with membership decline… ."[5] The relationship is thus, at a certain level causal, with the lack of a focus on mission, including new church planning, leading to membership losses. The article is in one sense not really about church extension, but about its absence; about what happens when you do not do it. Similarly, Robert H. Bullock's look at the different Presbyterian denominations' experience of church extension in the period from 1940 to 1980 focuses as much on what happens when one does not do extension, as on church extension itself. Bullock carefully chronicles the methods and approaches to new church development in the different denominations, but one of the major themes is still the impact on membership when one stops establishing new churches. As he writes in the introduction:

> Some have argued that the reason for today's membership decline was the diversion of denominational funding away from evangelism and new church development into experimental ministries in the 1960s. The unintended consequences of neglecting the task of building up the base is at least in part responsible for the membership decline that continues at the present time.
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> The findings of this study lend general support to this hypothesis, although the slowdown in new church development between 1960 and 1980 can

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like to note the many others who have given clues and suggestions and offered wonderful advice. Particular thanks go to Kim Arnold and Bob Anger at the PCC Archives, Don MacLeod, Bill Adamson, and Mel Bailey.

[5] Brooks, "Reaching Out," p.178.

> hardly be the only cause for the UPCUSA/PCUS combined membership losses....[6]

In his conclusion, as well as here, Bullock does not lay the entire blame for church decline on the slow-down in new church development; nevertheless, it is key to note that it is the relationship of new churches to overall membership that seems more important than a look at church development on its own, or within another kind of perspective. Neither of these two studies of the American Presbyterian situation, as interesting as they are, help to give us a template or an approach or a clear method or even a thesis that is useful in studying church extension in the PCC.

While offering no clear approach, both American studies do highlight one of the key problems facing anyone interested in studying new church development in the period following World War II. These four decades witnessed a dramatic shift in membership patterns among many denominations, the Presbyterian Church in Canada among them. We are not talking about any forty year period, but a specific forty year period in which something happened. Exactly what happened and why it happened is the subject of a vast and continually expanding literature. Indeed, while little has been written about the new congregations built in the period after 1945 in Canada and the United States, a great deal has been written about church membership and decline (or change).[7] The issue of denominational membership decline can easily take over any discussion of initiatives in the post-war period. The chapter on the Toronto presbytery of the United Church of Canada's work in church extension raises a question early in the discussion which seems to come out of thin air: did we build too many churches?[8] Why would one pose that question unless ones focus was to some extent or other shaped by the issues related to membership decline?

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[6] Bulloch, "Presbyterian New Church Development," p.56.

[7] These works would include the work of Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby. Bibby's work includes articles written with colleagues, such as Reginald Bibby and Merlin B. Brinkerhoff, "The Circulation of the Saints: A Study of People Who Join Conservative Churches," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 12 (1973): pp.273-283 and solo articles such as "The Persistence of Christian Religious identification in Canada," *Canadian Social Trends* (Spring 1997): pp.24-28, and "The State of Collective Religiosity in Canada: An Empirical Analysis," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 16:1 (1979): pp.105-116, among many others and his books *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Irwin, 1987), *Unknown Gods: The Ongoing Story of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1993) and *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 2002). Another Canadian article is John G. Stackhouse, "The Protestant Experience in Canada since 1945," in *The Canadian Protestant Experience 1560 to 1990,* ed. G. A. Rawlyk (Burlington, Welch): pp.198-239. Works on the United States and Europe include: Wade Clarke Roof and William McKinney, *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987); Dear R. Hoge, Benton Johnson and Donald A. Luidens, *Vanishing Boundaries: The Religion of Mainline Protestant Baby Boomers* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994); C. Kirk Haddaway and David A. Roozen, *Rerouting the Protestant Mainstream: Sources of Growth and Opportunities for Change* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995); Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of American 1776-1990* (New Brunswick, N. J., Rutgers: 1992); Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002); and many other books and articles. This list is intended to be illustrative, not comprehensive.

[8] Bougton, "Church Extension," p.25.

One of the most powerful commentators on this subject in Canada has been Reginald Bibby. Bibby's perspective, first published in *Fragmented Gods* in 1987, is that membership as a percentage of population for denominations such as the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Anglican Church, and the United Church of Canada was in decline prior to World War II and continued throughout the post-war period. Growth as the church moved into the suburbs in the post-war period was thus, illusory. To quote Bibby:

> The statistical truth of the matter is that most of Canada's religious groups were essentially standing still when they thought they were enjoying tremendous growth.[9]

And again:

> Even during the time of the alleged peak expansion in the mid-1950s and early 1960s, Canada's dominant religious groups saw their membership proportions shrink. No group – including the Pentecostals – increased their proportional share of the nation population during religion's alleged golden era.[10]

New congregations were thus built even though overall denominations were in decline. No wonder the question comes in the article on the United Church of Canada or in the classroom at Knox College: "Did we build too many?" "What went wrong?"

As prominent as this theme of Bibby's may have been over the last several decades, recent research challenges whether it adequately reflect the situation in post-war Canada.[11] This is one of the two contextual situations which I suggested we needed to grapple with if we are to understand church extension: the situation of Protestant churches in the post-war period. Contrary to the position advanced by Reginald Bibby, a re-examination of the data suggests there was a growth of religious membership in the post-war period. To what extent that may have simply been an aspect of suburbanization or merely a desire to 'join,' is something to consider at a later time. In the 1950s the data demonstrates that more people were interested in belonging to churches, both in terms of absolute numbers, and in terms of those individuals as a percentage of those claiming that religious tradition within Canada.[12] Did building new congregations lead to more people being members? Or, did more people interested in being members lead to more new churches being developed? Sorting out the causal relationships is not an easy task but it does seem clear that when a new congregation was started it was expected that people would come and they did. Growth was what had become the norm and the sudden shift to

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[9] Bibby, *Fragmented Gods,* p.13.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[11] This research will appear in a forthcoming article by the current author with the tentative title "Illusion of Growth? Revisiting *Fragmented Gods.*"

[12] Macdonald, "Illusion of Growth", forthcoming.

losing members was unexpected. The PCC began losing members in 1965.[13] Interestingly, Sunday School numbers began to decline three years prior to this, in 1962. Both the Sunday school and congregational membership numbers plummeted until by 1971, the church had a smaller membership than it had been in 1945.[14] It is important to recognize that the period from 1945 to 1985 breaks into two distinct periods of religiosity within Canadian society.

Understanding the general religiosity of the early post-war period is one aspect that we need to grasp if we are to understand the impetus for as well as the impact of church extension. It is also important to consider the expansion and change within the Presbyterian Church in Canada as a whole in this period. In *Enduring Witness* John Moir notes that the denomination built 111 extension congregations in the 1950s, and another 41 in the 1960s.[15] Is that a significant number of congregations? To answer this question one has to consider how many congregations there were in 1945 or even 1950. If we are to consider the impact of church extension on the Presbyterian Church in Canada we need to have a clear point of comparison. Recent research on the shape of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in the post-war period has argued that there were 714 charges in the denomination, a far more meaningful number than the 1193 preaching stations noted in denominational statistics.[16] At the same time, national totals obscure the regional differences. As John Moir noted:

> The continuing movement of Canada's population from rural to urban areas in the postwar years had a double effect on the Presbyterian Church. On the one hand many rural churches were now unused and derelict; on the other the mushrooming growth of suburbia across the country created a need for new churches which would inevitably have to begin as mission charges.[17]

Church extension, thus has to be seen in terms of the overall developments of the church, as one aspect of what was going on. Its impact varied dramatically from region to region. In central Canada new churches were a major feature of religious life in this period. Quite the opposite was happening in the Pictou presbytery, where amalgamations, clergy shortages, and closed congregations were more the order of the day. What would have happened to the Presbyterian Church in Canada had no new congregations been built? That might seem a strange question, but it is one worth considering. To do this, we need to develop a clearer picture of all of the changes occurring in the Presbyterian Church in Canada in this period.

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[13] This research can be found in Stuart Macdonald "The Shape of the PCC – 1945-1985: Working Paper" at http://www.utoronto.ca/knox/macdonald/research/snapshotsproject.

[14] Macdonald, "Shape of the PCC."

[15] Moir, *Enduring Witness,* 265. John Moir's source for this information is the Church Extension Report to the 1970 General Assembly, *A&P*, 1970, pp.259-260.

[16] Macdonald, "Shape of the PCC."

[17] Moir, *Enduring Witness*, p.248.

II

This paper has focused to this point on the background to church extension. Now, it is time to turn to church extension itself. There are certain periods of church extension which I want to propose: the first, from c.1945-c.1955 was local & entrepreneurial; a second from c. 1956 to 1963 involved growing issues of coordination which led to the third phase; and, a third phase of centralized control which could be broken into two stages (1964-1976, and 1976-1985) with the defining feature of the second of these stages being the church growth movement. We need to consider each of these phases in turn, noting the specific features of the period.

The initial stage of church extension developed naturally. As the Presbyterian Church in Canada moved through World War II into the post-war society, the idea of building new congregations was not at all a distant one. The Presbyterian Church in Canada had experience doing this, indeed a recent dramatic experience of building new churches. This arose out of the divisions at the time of church union in 1925 when in many circumstances Presbyterians who wished to remain outside of the United Church of Canada found that the congregation to which they belonged had moved into the United Church. They were thus left without a building in which to worship.[18] And so throughout Canada many churches and manses were financed and built. This dramatic experience was on top of the normal kinds of expansion that naturally occurred as the Canadian cities grew or as new communities were established. For example, the presbytery of Hamilton established St. Enoch's in 1925, John Calvin Hungarian in 1926, St. James in 1927 and, during World War II, St. Columba in 1940.[19]

Building new churches was thus not outside of the experience of the local presbyteries or the national church. The downside, however, was in the area of finances. There were still debts owing from the construction which went on in this period. Given the fact that the 1930s experienced both a very serious economic depression and drought conditions on the Canadian prairies, which was then followed by a World War which clearly dominated the early 1940s, this seems understandable. The Trustees of the Church Extension and Church and Manse Fund reported in 1946 on two overtures received during World War II requesting that the committee provide very specific information on the outstanding loans: the name of the congregation, the original amount of the loan, the amount of principal that remained, the interest rate, "and the date to which interest has been paid." This information was to be published in the *Acts and Proceedings*. The committee's response was not to do as the overture requested but instead to write in 1944 and again in 1945 to those owing money and ask them to make a special effort to repay their loans. The response seems to have been mixed: some made a special effort; others wrote back, explaining their particular circumstances and difficulties; and, some did not reply. The Trustees reported to the Assembly that they forwarded information on this latter group to the local presbytery. The report ends by indicating that the special effort made by those who responded "so far has enabled the Board to deal with any urgent

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[18] *Ibid*, pp.228-229, 248.

[19] Thomas Melville Bailey, ed. *Wee Kirks and Stately Steeples: A History of the Presbytery of Hamilton: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1800-1990* (Burlington: Eagle Press, 1990), pp. 144-152.

appeals for loans that came before them during the past year."[20] The church had experience in church extension, had a fund in place to assist with such work, but the amount of outstanding loans carried into the post-war period is one reality of which we need to be aware. What the impact was on future events remains unclear.

Church extension was an ongoing project of the church, not one which suddenly emerged in the post-war period. Indeed, we see evidence of extension work already being undertaken in the mission reports made to Assembly in 1946. The Synod of Toronto and Kingston reported on its mission work by noting, among other things, that under the direction of the "Extension department" a building and property had been purchased for the Kingsway congregation. The committee also reported "[s]plendid progress has been made in the new Leaside Church under the ministry of Charles Hay, and St. Matthews under J.K. MacDonald, has also marched forward."[21] In Manitoba, a survey done in the summer of 1945 by a Deaconess, Helen Scott, encouraged the synod missions committee to begin "aggressive work" in an area of the presbytery of Brandon.[22] The work of deaconesses in doing surveys and playing a key role in the early establishment of new congregations is a key theme in this period. What is also clear is how localized and entrepreneurial this work was. The Presbyterian Church in Canada did not have a national strategy for church extension, nor did it believe that it should have one. It remains unclear which church court was responsible – if any – for strategy. In some parts of the country synods clearly played a crucial role, but in other parts of the country the key players seem to have been the presbyteries, and even congregations themselves which were supported in this work by presbyteries. The function of the national church was considered to be to deal with the key problem which seems to have been considered most serious in this period – the lack of men [sic] and money.

The decentralized nature of church extension in this phase needs to be recognized. Rather than having a given template or method of doing extension, which was followed in every community, in this early period a variety of approaches and models were used. Not all may have been successful. The challenge for an historian attempting to reconstruct what was happening is that there was no one central source to which everyone reported. There is not even a list of all of the congregations established and when they were established.[23] The best source we have readily available for study are the reports made by the synod mission convenors to each years General Assembly. Yet, not every synod chose to report every year. Indeed, there are no reports from the Synod of Toronto and Kingston for the years 1948 through 1950, and again in 1959.[24] Those reports that do exist give us a clear indication of some of the key issues facing the church in this period.

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[20] *A&P*, 1946, p.96.

[21] *A&P*, 1946, p.8.

[22] *A&P*, 1946, p.10.

[23] This is not to say that we couldn't reconstruct one, but we would have to make that list – no ne at the time felt it was necessary to do this. The one exception might be in the records of the church and manse fund; however, if funds were obtained elsewhere – for example from a sponsoring church in the presbytery – we might miss a congregation. There are summary statistics for the 1950s and 1960s, as already noted, but while these are helpful, they do not answer all questions. *A&P*, 1970, pp.159-160.

[24] *A&P*, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1959.

The demand for more "men" – i.e. clergy – rings out in the reports of the synods, and in the overall introduction provided by the General Board of Mission. In its overview in 1948, the Board of Missions spoke of the problem of vacant congregations in the Maritimes, the need for "more men" in Western Canada, as well as highlighting the particular challenge of British Columbia with the growth of the population of Vancouver. In all areas, there was considered to be a need for more "men."[25] The Synod of Montreal and Ottawa spoke that same year of the challenges faced:

> In the City and District of Montreal there are four or five localities where we ought to initiate mission work if our Church is to keep pace with the development of the City. There are certain industrial centres throughout the Province where we would be justified in opening new work. The question is how can we expand unless we have more men and more money.[26]

The challenge thrown to the national church was to somehow deal with these two very serious problems. In the meantime, the local synods and presbyteries kept focused on starting any new congregation as soon as they were able.

Given this variety, it is helpful at this point to consider one specific instance of church extension in the early post-war period. In June 1951 the student minister at Musquodoboit Harbour was directed by the presbytery of Halifax-Lunenburg to do a survey of particular areas of Tuft's Cove, to "assess the possibilities of our starting some work there." Reading between the lines one imagines the growth of suburban development in this area. The first response of the presbytery to the results was mixed: the convenor of the committee was negative, but others were not so sure. The matter was tabled until in December when the matter was reconsidered and an application was made for the services of a deaconess. Miss Estelle McCausland was appointed to the task and with the help of a student deaconess, Miss Beryl Miller, appointed the next spring, continued to develop the project: "These two girls[sic] made a grand team; new families were found as soon as they entered the district and the work progressed by leaps and bounds." A grant of $500 was obtained by the presbytery to help with this survey work. After the successful work in the summer, an advisory committee was established and two further grants were sought – one for a lot, another for a Sunday school. Two Sunday schools were established one in the Odd-Fellows hall and a second in a local home. Attempts were made to find a building in which to hold services, and eventually they received permission to use the "newly completed Odd-Fellows Hall." The first service was held just prior to Christmas, 1952. After this, the former interim-moderator relates, things "progressed at a more rapid rate." The first women's group met in early January. Presbytery gave recognition to the new congregation in March. An assessor session was formed. The first "Pantry sale" happened. The first preparatory service was held with 31 members placing their names on the communion roll and on the next Sunday 51 individuals took communion. The first congregational meeting was held May 8th, and Managers were elected. A student minister was appointed (one assumes for the summer).

[25] *A&P*, 1948, p.3.

[26] *A&P*, 1948, p.7.

In October presbytery formed a planning committee "to oversee the Extension work in the Halifax and Dartmouth area," and the question was not if the congregation would build a church but where. The lot chosen by the congregation was accepted by presbytery in November and permission was given to purchase it and seek a grant to build a new church. By the next May [1954] plans for the church were in hand, and permission was given to borrow $25,000 (later increased to $62,000). That September Estelle McCausland, the deaconess who did so much work and seems to have been the constant presence on the ground, was given permission to be transferred. The congregation was named in June 1955 – St. Andrew's, Dartmouth – the cornerstone was laid in September, and the new building was dedicated on 22 January 1956.[27] A new congregation was established and a building constructed in under five years.

Similar and very different details could be told about other congregations established in this period. St. Andrew's, Dartmouth was chosen for a few reasons. One reason is the excellent historical sketch which was given at the dedication of the new building in 1955 which allows one to see the course of events. Another reason is that a picture attributed to this congregation appeared in the book *The Covenant in Canada* in 1975.[28] The situation varied from community to community. St. Andrew's, Dartmouth was a congregation where a diaconal minister was the key player in its early life. In other congregations it might be a student minister, or a recent graduate. There were portable churches which existed and were moved from site to site at various times. New congregations might meet in a portable, or in a new school, or in any other community building.[29] This was very much locally driven expansion. People looked to the national church to provide at key times money and staffing. Even the extant resources come from the later period. For example, the church published a book on establishing new churches around 1960.[30] One could argue for the clear benefits of this local initiative. Local areas – one could argue – did know best what they needed to do in their area. From an historian's point of view it is very frustrating because one can not easily get at what was happening across the country. For example, we do not even know how many congregations were started in the period 1945 to 1949. At the same time, not all local decisions were wise. Not all of the church plantings necessarily made sense. Equally interesting are those situations where an existing, small town or rural church found itself surrounded by expanding suburbs. For example, Thornhill Presbyterian Church and

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[27] All of this information comes from the historical sketch delivered at the dedication of the Sanctuary. The sketch was written by the first interim-moderator and presbytery clerk, Rev. J.J. Edmiston. Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives (hereafter PCC Archives)1973-2005-1-6.

[28] Thomas Melville Bailey, ed. *The Covenant in Canada* (Hamilton: MacNab, 1975).

[29] Detailed examination of these differences has yet to be done. Rexdale Presbyterian began in a public school, but then moved to a portable church which was donated by Wychwood Presbyterian church, PCC Archives 1977-3012-35-45. Bloordale Gardens Presbyterian Church (the name of this congregation in 1956) rented space in a Baptist church, met in local homes, and then in a public school. PCC Archives 1977-3012-35-44.

[30] D. McCulloch, "A Manual for Church Extension: The New Congregation – Church Building: The Basic Principles" (Toronto: General Board of Missions, c.1960). As with many pamphlets and publications published by the PCC there is no publication date. PCC Archives, Administrative Records of the General Board of Missions, 1988-1003-91-2.1.

Knox, Agincourt are congregations which existed prior to 1945. If we were to visit the congregation today we might assume that these are new congregations established in the post-war period. In the Toronto area initial research suggests that in the 1950s there were older city congregations at the centre, rural congregations on the fringe (many of which were transformed) and the new congregations were built in between the city and rural congregations. As well, decisions were made to relocate older, poorly placed congregations to the new growing areas and build new facilities, a reality that particularly describes what happened in Calgary.[31] All of this goes to demonstrate the incredible transformation which occurred in the church at this time as well as the challenge of studying it. This was a time of excitement, of experimentation, of failures and remarkable successes.

The challenges of this early period are caught well in the reports made by the various synod committees to General Assembly in 1952. Despite the (by now frequent) complaint from the Synod of the Maritimes on its shortage of ordained ministers, this Synod noted the possibilities of extension work in at least two situations: North Dartmouth (North Halifax), and in developing areas around Saint John, New Brunswick.[32] Allan Reid, Synodical Missionary for the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa, painted a picture of great opportunity and listed the obstacles. He noted six sites within the presbytery of Montreal which are promising, only one of which it would seem was able to be developed. In the presbytery of Quebec, Reid suggested mission work could be undertaken in Three Rivers [Trois Rivieres], Shawinigan Falls, Grand Mere, and other areas of expanding industrial or resource development. He pointed out three obstacles, two of which we are already familiar with. The new obstacle which he discussed is the emerging problem of obtaining suitable land:

> In the district of Montreal one of the great difficulties is in securing a site where a Church building of some description might be erected. Almost all the land in these new sections is held by large real estate companies, and it is very difficult for a Church to buy a site. In fact, it seems to be the settled policy of some of these land-owning companies that they will not sell a site for a Protestant Church. They evidently think that the erection of a Church in a community is liable to depreciate the value of the surrounding property.[33]

Reid was hopeful that the current denomination financial appeal – Christian Outreach – would help alleviate the problem of money. He was less assured as to what to do about the issue of the shortage of ministers, as he argued student ministers could not do the task: "experience seems to show us that there is no purpose in trying to develop these places by student supply, and the only way in which the work can be done is by an ordained minister who is fitted for such mission work."[34]

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[31] "Growth: A History and Anthology of the Synod of Alberta of the Presbyterian Church in Canada" (Synod History Committee, 1968), 118-130. PCC Archives, 1973-2001-3-4.

[32] *A&P*, 1952, pp.7-8.

[33] *A&P*, 1952, p.9.

[34] *Ibid.*

Similar themes emerge in the report from the Synod of Toronto and Kingston. The growth of suburbs around Toronto and the attempts to meet the challenge have, the report states, placed a "very real strain" on the resources of the two Toronto presbyteries. The amount of 2 million dollars is projected as the requirement for the work of the Toronto area itself, and it is believed that with this they could establish at least "fifteen new self-sustaining congregations within the next five to ten years."[35] The report goes on to discuss the other areas in the Synod which also need mission work. Of particular note is the reference to a new extension congregation being planted in the suburbs of Kitchener, very much under the direction of the Session of St. Andrew's, Kitchener. The report notes: "It has been found that the older congregations which are well established can best assist in the establishment, direction and oversight of new congregations in new areas. This policy should be encouraged wherever possible."[36]

The Synod of Manitoba, the Synod of Saskatchewan, the Synod of Alberta, and the Synod of British Columbia all discussed their present and projected extension work.[37] The perceived problem was captured in the report of the Synod of British Columbia, as was the perceived solution - "God send us men."[38] One can see in these calls a desire to meet the needs of growing suburbs. There is also, at times, an element of denominational pride evident, a desire for the PCC to validate its existence and increase its size.[39] William Stanford Reid was an aggressive and skilful proponent of church extension in the Montreal area, one not afraid to challenge Presbyterians to give more by comparing what they were doing to what was being done by the United Church of Canada in the same areas.[40]

The decentralized phase of church extension lasted from approximately 1945 to 1955. After 1955 the challenges facing the church in its extension work came to a head, in particular the financial issues. While on the whole 'successful' the Christian Outreach campaign did not meet its goal. However, even if it had, the demands being made for funding would have outstripped the requirements. The reason for the financial crisis which overtook the Presbyterian Church in Canada at this time is not clear. Was the church crippled moving into the post-war period by the debts incurred in the expansion following Union? Were church extension congregations slow in repaying their loans? These are certainly possibilities but until detailed work in church finances in this period is

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[35] *Ibid*, p.11.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] *Ibid*, pp.12-17.

[38] *Ibid*, p.16.

[39] To give but one example, the Synod of British Columbia in 1952 noted in its report the growth of population in BC, and called on the denomination to respond to the need. Included in the report was the question posed by J. Lewis W. McLean, "And shall we, then, forever live at this poor dying rate?" which he then noted he asked himself often. *ibid*, p.16.

[40] I am indebted to Don MacLeod for this information and for providing me with the discussion of William Stanford Reid's activity both in extension work and the key role he played on the committee looking into the denominations financial crisis in the late 1950s. This information will be in Don's forthcoming biography of William Stanford Reid.

completed they will remain open questions. In this period the denomination's financial position began to raise serious concern.

Awareness of the financial difficulties and its impact on church extension came gradually. In 1955 the Presbytery of West Toronto overtured Assembly to consider the possibility of the issuing of bonds as one way of raising the money necessary to build new congregations.[41] The first clear indication of the crisis was an emergency action taken after the 1957 Assembly to reduce minimum stipends which resulted in a flurry of overtures to the 1958 Assembly related to the finances of the church. Some of the overtures related to the specific issue of the alteration made to the basic stipend, but others called for more dramatic action.[42] The Presbytery of Westminster requested that management consultants be hired to look at the situation related to finances and administration.[43] Three other overtures specifically asked that the overall financial situation of the church be investigated.[44] Assembly responded by forwarding the most important of the overtures to a special committee which was to look into the finances of the church. That committee – the Special Committee on the Financial Structure Organization and Procedures of the Presbyterian Church in Canada – met over the next several years and the proposals eventually made to the 1960 General Assembly represented dramatic changes. [45] In the meantime, in the face of a situation where it had become impossible to borrow money to build new churches, the presbytery of Calgary had investigated the solution followed by some American Presbyterians in the Synod of Washington, and the result was the foundation in 1957 of the Synod Corporation. This body immediately undertook to finance projects that had been stalled because of lack of finances.[46]

The problem of finances came to a head in the late 1950s. The result was more centralized control over the various projects that were proposed. If synods were going to be lending money and if costs had increased for things such as land (which seems to have happened), then it was obvious that greater care needed to be taken in establishing new projects. Similarly, as national finances become more restricted, the ability to give grants to any and every project was no longer there. There is a 'bureaucratization' of the church which happened in this period. This needs to be recognized without prejudging whether or not this was a good direction in which to move. It seems reasonable to suggest that the rapid growth and expansion of congregations in the first decade after World War II and the continuing demand to start more congregations was one of the factors which strained the churches' finances and led to a reorganization of the structures and the finances of the denomination.

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[41] *A&P*, 1955, p.337.

[42] *A&P*, 1958. Includes Overture 6, 15, 20, 24, 25, 28, 30, and 32.

[43] *A&P*, 1958. Overture # 8.

[44] *A&P*, 1958 – Overtures 17, 18, and 31.

[45] *A&P*, 1960, pp.416-422, 627-629.

[46] Synod of Alberta History Committee, *Growth: A History and Anthology of the Synod of Alberta of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 1968, PCC Archives 1973-2001-3-4, p.26.

Reflecting back on the previous decade, the Synod of Toronto and Kingston noted in its 1961 report that the two Toronto presbyteries managed to establish 32 new congregations, build 36 new buildings and 23 new church halls, before turning to the establishment of five new congregations in 1960. The report also lists six congregations which it anticipated would become self-supporting during that year. The longest (Rexdale) took 7.5 years, while the fastest King and Nobleton, took only 2 years and 3 months.[47] Such good news did little to brighten the fact that at the next year's Assembly (1962) the General Board of Missions spoke of 1961 as a year of "adjustment and of difficulty" and noted that the work of missions in the church had had to be "frozen at existing levels or reduced in order to meet the financial decisions made by the General Assembly."[48] The next year's report noted that the "freeze" on extension work continued, noting this was in many ways a result of "concerted effort on the part of all Boards to increase the basic stipend." It was felt this freeze would continue until the end of 1963.[49] Overtures to the 1963 Assembly called for a renewal of work in terms of church extension, and the Assembly approved "the undertaking, as soon as possible, of a well-planned programme of Church Extension through the General Board of Missions and the Presbyteries of the Church."[50]

The phrasing of the recommendation was very crucial, and this ushered in what I would suggest is the third and longest phase of extension work in the PCC in the post-war period. Extension work was now centralized and carefully planned. In 1963 J.C. Cooper was appointed to serve as the national director for church extension.[51] The freeze on new projects was lifted. As is clear from reports produced by J.C. Cooper, the approach taken was very careful and methodical.[52] There were steps which needed to be taken, and various expectations that had to be met. Church extension became much more scientific and careful in its approach. The church continued to build new churches, but in a more selective way. It needs to be remembered that in the 1960s 41 new congregations were established. More detailed research needs to be undertaken to determine to what extent the ratio of successes to failures in this period differs from that in the two previous stages of church extension.

At the same time, we need to be remember that it was in this period as the church rationalized and centralized its approach to new church development that a major cultural

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[47] *A&P*, 1961, pp.215-216.

[48] *A&P*, 1962, p.201.

[49] *A&P*, 1963, pp.205.

[50] *A&P*, 1962, p.70-71.

[51] *A&P*, 1964, p.206. The 1964 report speaks of the appointment beginning the previous September.

[52] Examples include "Report to the Presbytery of Assinibioia: on the congregations of Calvin, Northside, and Walter Martin, Regina" (Oct. 1967) and "Report to the Presbytery of Westminster based on a study of eleven Vancouver Churches" (Dec. 1966). PCC Archives, AR-GBM 1988-1003-74-11; AR-GBM 1988-1003-74-13.

shift occurred in the place of religion within Canadian and Western society.[53] All arguments about church extension need to take this change in the 1960s into consideration. It is possible to make the argument that it was the failure of the church to continue building new extension congregations in the early 1960s which led to the membership losses and a change in fortune for the Presbyterian Church in Canada. While a possible argument, this is not necessarily one which the evidence supports. We need to consider the effect that the previous, rapid expansion had on finances. Such levels of growth simply might not have been affordable. At the same time, we need to recognize that similar losses of membership across denominational lines, and throughout Western society – Great Britain, Europe, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada – suggest that the ultimate issues were not a result of any one denominational policy.

This paper has concluded by suggesting specific phases for understanding new church development in the Canadian Presbyterian Church in Canada. These phases are:

Phase 1 c.1945-c.1955 – local & entrepreneurial
Phase 2 c. 1956 to 1963 – growing issues and coordination
Phase 3 1964 – 1976 – centralized control (stage 1)
1976-1985 – centralized control (stage 2 – church growth)

Research into church extension is only beginning, yet these periods seem helpful. I have spent the most time discussing the first phase as it has tended to be assumed to be similar to the later phases, when in fact it was quite different. Clearly, a great deal more research needs to be done. These are only tentative findings. A list of all church extension congregations established in the post-war period needs to be created, noting not only those who continued, but also those situations where a congregation was tried, but later abandoned or was amalgamated. The experience of what had been rural or small town congregations which suddenly saw themselves transformed by the exploding population needs also to be remembered. Church extension work needs to be considered carefully on its own merits, as well as being placed into the larger history of the denomination in the post-war period.

This paper began with a series of statements. The building of new congregations in the period after World War II was appropriate. The building of new congregations was crucial. If, as has been suggested, religiosity was expanding in the post-war period one can see that meeting that need by building congregations in expanding areas was an appropriate response. We do need to do more work to understand why some projects were more successful than others. We have just begun to do research in this area and as the broader historical literature provides no clear thesis to test or method to adopt, not all of our questions will be easy to formulate let alone answer. What does seem clear is that without church extension the Presbyterian Church in Canada would be a very different denomination.

[53] Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularization 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001).

Pictou 1803: Setting the Scene

by

Allan Dunlop

I wish first of all to thank the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History for extending an invitation to me to be part of this gathering celebrating the 200th anniversary of the arrival of Thomas McCulloch in Pictou. Indeed, I suspect that the author *of Popery Condemned* (1808) and *Popery Again Condemned* (1810), some 814 pages in all, would take impish delight in the fact that the celebrations fall so closely upon the Silver Jubilee of John Paul II's election as Pope. My assignment as first speaker is to attempt to set the stage without impinging unduly upon the subject areas which will be addressed by the four distinguished speakers who will follow me. My mind goes back to a story the Rt. Rev. Malcolm A. MacLellan, President of Saint Francis Xavier University, related at a St. Andrew's Day Dinner, many years ago. As the fourth speaker at the Cape Breton Highland Society gathering, he recalled the Scottish minister who had introduced the speakers as a group and who said, "May the Lord give light to the first one, and may He give strength to the second one, and may He have mercy on the last one."[1]

In the Alumni Magazine of Dalhousie University in the Winter of 2003 a small piece appeared announcing that a plaque had been unveiled in the library of the small community of Neilston, honouring one of its native sons, Thomas McCulloch. The local newspaper in commenting upon the ceremony noted. "It is a great tragedy that he was recognized in Nova Scotia but nobody here knows anything about him."[2]

Who then was this unknown actor who appeared unintentionally and unexpectedly upon the Nova Scotia stage, a stage already strewn with economic, educational, ecclesiastical and political props which would dictate McCulloch's role in what many might consider became a theatre of the absurd. He was born 1776 in Ferenze, Parish of Neilston, Renfrewshire, near Paisley, west of Glasgow, second son of six

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[1] M. Elizabeth MacDonald, ed., *To the Old and New Scotland* (Sydney, NS, 1981), p. 41.

[2] Dalhousie University, The Alumni Magazine, 19:3 (Winter, 2003), p. 6.

children of Michael and Elizabeth (Neilson) McCulloch, master block-maker.[3] From a family of certainly middle class means, he graduated from the University of Glasgow in 1792 and was licensed to preach on 13 June1799 and called to Stewarton.[4] Six weeks later, on 27 June 1799 he married Isabella, daughter of Rev. David Walker.[5] Four years after accepting the call to Stewarton, he resigned due to "inadequate support."[6] Shortly thereafter he accepted a call to Prince Edward Island and in August 1803 set sail from the Clyde with his wife and three infant children. He would have been most welcome on Prince Edward Island. As a contemporary writer noted, "When any dissenting minister has happened to visit the Island from the Continent many of the inhabitants have attended with an apparent desire to be instructed."[7]

The family arrived aboard a timbership at Pictou on 3 November 1803, "...a bleak November Morning..." according to one writer.[8] Bleak, indeed, for McCulloch, as ice had settled into the Northumberland Strait and a voyage in an open boat was deemed too dangerous. The family was forced to winter in Pictou. As he disembarked, in the words of one writer "...clutching in his arms two educational globes, one geographical and one astronomical..."[9] (One might for a moment wonder who was helping Mrs. McCulloch with her brood.) He attracted the attention of the leading citizens of the area.[10] The family "...had to live and shiver in a small shanty or hut..."[11] located on "D.P's wharf."[12] Over the winter McCulloch was persuaded to accept a call from "The Harbour" congregation and he was duly inducted on 6 June 1804.[13] The stage was set but how the play would unfold was a function of events which preceded McCulloch's arrival at Pictou.

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[3] Gwendolyn Davies, ed., *Thomas McCulloch: The Mephibosheth Stepsure Letters* (Ottawa, 1990), p. xvii.

[4] William Gregg, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion of Canada* (Toronto, 1885), p. 109.

[5] Susan Buggey & Gwendolyn Davies, "Thomas McCulloch," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Volume VII, 1836-1850 (Toronto, 1988), pp. 529-541.

[6] Rev. Frank Baird, ed., *The MacGregor Celebration Addresses* (Toronto, 1937), p. 162.

[7] John Cambridge, *A Description of Prince Edward Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, North America, etc.* (London, 1805), p. 7.

[8] Baird, p. 146.

[9] Donald McKay, *Scotland* Farewell: The People *of the Hector* (Toronto, 1980), p. 201.

[10] For other versions of the globe incident see Davies, *The Stepsure Letters*, p. xviii ; Baird, p. 146 and Marjory Whitelaw, "That Sweet Inheritance," CBC Radio script, nd, p. 44.

[11] Frank H. Patterson, *John Patterson: the Founder of Pictou* (Truro, 1955), p. 59.

[12] Baird, p. 163.

[13] Rev. J.P. MacPhie, *Pictonians At Home and Abroad* (Boston, 1914), p. 41.

The area known as Pictou, from the Micmac "Piktook" meaning "an explosion of gas,"[14] saw its first white settlers as a result of land speculation. On 10 June 1767, six families sent out by the Philadelphia Company arrived in Pictou harbour. These arrivals were an attempt to satisfy the terms of the 200,000 acre grant the Company had received on 31 October 1765.[15] The net result of the grant was that all harbour and water frontage was held by the Company. Thus, when the more renowned *Hector* passengers arrived in Pictou harbour on 15 September 1773,[16] the lands most accessible to water were already granted. This became a long standing complaint and grievance as immigration continued over the decades and the new arrivals were forced to settle, or as one contemporary suggested were banished, "...into the society of bears and foxes..."[17] Further, it should be noted that the rural areas became dominated by the Church of Scotland while the denser settlements tended to be Anti-Burgher a situation which only heightened the conflicts which would follow.

If discontent about land grants helped to inflame the local stage, the development of the timber trade brought yet another schism on the local scene between those who would vigorously pursue the trade and those who saw the trade as detrimental to the agricultural development of the area. Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk who visited the Pictou area just forty-five days prior to McCulloch's arrival took note of the conflict. "Many of the Settlers are tempted by the lumber business to neglect their farms."[18] If white pine and oak were to be the cornerstone of the economy, then rum was the engine of same. A gallon of rum cost 8 shillings and represented one third the cost of getting timber to the shore. Five years after the arrival of McCulloch at Pictou, the harbour averaged 120 timber ships a year carrying a total of 40,000 tons of lumber at two pounds per ton.[19] Marjory Whitelaw, in a CBC radio script, has Mrs. MacGregor advising Mrs. McCulloch as follows: "The only cheap thing in the whole of the parish is rum, and you'll not be needing much of that."[20]

If the seeds of disagreement on how the economy of the area should develop had been sewn, so too was the political scene one of conflict. Until 1799, Pictou area had always been represented by someone from Halifax. In that year, Edward Mortimer, one of the most influential persons in the Pictou area and who would become one of McCulloch's firmest supporters in the Legislature, was elected. Mortimer, an Anti-

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[14] C. Bruce Fergusson, "The Boundaries of Nova Scotia and Its Counties," Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Bulletin No. 22, Halifax, 1966, p. 47.

[15] Henry R. Beer, *The Pictou Plantation* (n.p., 1767) offers a concise overview of the activities of the Philadelphia Company.

[16] MacPhie, p. 7.

[17] National Archives of Canada, Dalhousie Papers, MG 24, A12, Vol. 2, pp. 208-210, Judge Stewart to the Earl of Dalhousie, Pictou, 29th May 1818.

[18] Patrick C.T. White, ed., *Lord Selkirk's Diary 1803-1804* (Toronto:Champlain Society, 1958), p. 44.

[19] Frank Patterson, pp. 23-28.

[20] Whitelaw, CBC Radio Script, p. 46.

Burgher defeated Michael Wallace, a Kirk man.[21] Wallace was elected in another seat but he never forgave nor forgot his defeat. Characterized by his biographer as "...the embodiment of oligarchy in Nova Scotia..."[22] when those who had voted against him came seeking land grants he would tell them to "...go to Mortimer and let him get them land."[23] Something not likely to happen quickly as Wallace was a powerful influence. Thus even before the educational issue appeared upon the stage, a political/religious opposition was fomenting.

On the religious scene McCulloch would come to lead the dissenters against the exclusive educational system dominated by the Church of England.[24] But there would not be unity among the Presbyterians as he strove to establish a school/college with the aim of producing a native born ministry. The Kirk view saw education as "...a frivolous luxury in a pioneer society..."[25] and such was the opposition to Pictou Academy. "No true Kirkman could see his son enter that institution."[26] In contrast, Rev. James MacGregor, who would become a firm supporter of McCulloch's educational ambitions, wrote the Gaelic poem entitled "Education," which in part translates:

"Now Highlanders will lift up their heads,
They will no more in bondage remain;
They shall have the high learning of the English,
with intelligence without stint,
Industries will spring up in the land,
Bringing wealth in abundance therewith.
The abject shall valiant be,
The poor shall no more be in want."[27]

But much of that lay in the future as McCulloch stood on the deck and surveyed his surroundings. His reaction might have been the same as Rev. James MacGregor, who arriving as Pictou in 1786 asked his guide, Hugh Fraser, " 'Where is the town.' He replied, 'There is no town but what you see.'"[28] The Pictou of 1803 contained less than twenty structures, a jail, but no church. Years later McCulloch would write from the

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[21] On the 1799 election see Brian Cuthbertson, *Johnny Bluenose at the Polls* (Halifax, 1994), pp. 37-41.

[22] David Sutherland, "Michael Wallace," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Volume VI, 1821 to 1835 (Toronto, 1987), pp. 798-801.

[23] J.M. Back, *The Government of Nova Scotia* (Toronto, 1957), p. 39.

[24] On McCulloch and his clash with the Anglican Church see Judy Fingard, *The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, 1783-1816* (London, 1972).

[25] Harold L. Scammell, "The Rise and Fall of a College," *Dalhousie Review*, 32:1 (Spring, 1952), p. 21.

[26] Rev. Alexander Maclean, *The Story of the Kirk in Nova Scotia* (Pictou, 1911), p. 44.

[27] J.D. Logan, *Pictou Poets. A Treasury of Verse in Gaelic and English* (Pictou, 1923), p. 17. (English translation by Rev. Malcolm Campbell).

[28] George Patterson, *Memoir of the Rev, James MacGregor, D.D.* (Philadelphia, 1859), p. 96.

and almost uniformly feel the pangs of disappointed expectations. I speak from experience."[29] As he recalled those first years he would candidly admit, "I have borrowed the loaf which was to feed my little family on Sabbath."[30] Rev. Frank Baird paints a most gloomy picture. "Intemperance and profanity, superstition, poverty and ignorance, the difficulty of obtaining even the plainest necessities of life, the length and severity of the winters, the scarcity of food, the apathy of the people, the presence in the community of a number of ungodly and violent men, some of them old soldiers and some American adventurers who were openly opposed to religion and morality - these and many other problems had to be met and reckoned with by Dr. McCulloch from the beginning."[31] But a review of the Court of Quarter Session records reveals that the supporting cast which McCulloch was joining were very human. A jail had been built in 1797 and the following year stocks ordered. In 1800 "...the conduct of Miss X for keeping a House of bad fame..." was brought to notice. Three years later Dr. Upham of Truro was refused payment "for the curing of Miss Y of the venereal disease as the cure was not performed." It would be interesting to know how the Sessions came to that conclusion. A month after McCulloch was inducted into his charge Court ordered two "...young men in this place who lead an immoral and scandalous lives such as getting drunk, cursing, blaspheming the name of God, fighting and insulting sober people, be bound over to keep the peace for one year..."[32]

It was onto this stage that McCulloch inadvertently strolled. One suspects he wouldn't use the same travel agent next time.

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[29] Nova Scotia Archives & Record Management, Fergusson papers, MG 1, Vol. 1845, F2/35, McCulloch to Rev. Culbertson, Pictou, 10 July 1816.

[30] James Robertson, *History of the Mission of the Secession Church to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island from its commencement in 1765* (Edinburgh, 1847), p. 218.

[31] Frank Baird, "A Missionary Educator: Dr. Thomas McCulloch," *Dalhousie Review*, 52:4 (Winter, 1973), p. 612.

[32] Nova Scotia Archives & Records Management, Pictou County, Quarter Session Minutes, RG 34, Vol. 31.

Thomas McCulloch and the Birth and Rebirth of Presbyterianism in Halifax

by

Barry Cahill

"He rests from his labors and his works do follow him" (Rev. 14:13)

- Thomas McCulloch centenary (1904) memorial plaque, First Church, Pictou, NS

When the Reverend Thomas McCulloch arrived in Pictou in November 1803, the first Presbyterian congregation in Halifax was already in process of formation. Perhaps no aspect of McCulloch's ministerial career is more integral - though less familiar - than his long connection with Halifax's original Presbyterian church. None of its records survive, however, so its history and the part McCulloch played in it are largely unknown. Though intermittent, McCulloch's role was at times central and continued throughout his entire career in Nova Scotia. His involvement in this ill-fated congregation both frames and periodizes McCulloch's several extra-ecclesiastical lives as higher educator, natural scientist, political reformer, journalist and satirical and polemical writer. It also suggests that McCulloch's thirty-year exile from Halifax adversely affected the growth of Presbyterianism in Nova Scotia and undermined his ability to capitalize on his gifts and vision. McCulloch's career did not develop with the same momentum as it would otherwise have done, because he operated at too great a distance from Halifax, too far removed from the centre of action and influence. Hence his desperation, his alleged egotism, his frustration and his inflexibility.

An even larger measure of ignorance looms over the origins of Presbyterianism in Halifax. On the eve of the 1970 meeting of the General Assembly at the Presbyterian Church of Saint David, the *Presbyterian Record* observed, "[t]he origins of the

Presbyterian church there are uncertain."[1] For sound historical reasons the post-1925 Presbyterian Church in Canada rejects as false the claims to priority of today's St. Matthew's United. Old St Matthew's Congregational Church did not become a kirk until 1840, more than thirty years after the first Presbyterian congregation was founded.[2] The site of Halifax's original Presbyterian house of worship lies on a strip of Argyle Street now underneath Scotia Square.[3] Constructed in 1786, the building served initially as the Methodist meeting house and then as the Garrison Chapel. In 1806 it was purchased by a body of Anti-burgher Seceders for whom the Presbyterian veneer of Mather's Congregational was Arminian rather than Calvinist.

These Seceders were under the care of the Anti-burgher Presbytery of Pictou, to which Thomas McCulloch belonged;[4] and he was regularly sent there to preach to them. He must have made a good impression, for sometime around March 1807 a call on his behalf was presented to Presbytery. In their own words, the Seceders

> gave a call to the Revd Thomas McCulloch, one of the members of the presbetary [sic], as we Supposed he was not so agreeably Settled as he could wish (where he was) and likewise having some encouragement from that presbetary. But the Congregation [having] set their faces against it to retain him, the presbetary we believe could not with any propriety remove him from his charge.[5]

For both minister and people, and ultimately the Church, it was a one-off opportunity lost. The Seceders then applied directly to the Antiburgher Synod in Scotland for a minister. John Keir offered himself, but that too was vetoed by Presbytery,

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[1] *Presbyterian Record*, June 1970, p. 3 (sidebar).

[2] See generally R.M. Hattie, "Old-Time Halifax Churches," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* 26 (1945), pp. 56-67. Robert McConnell Hattie (1876-1953), a long-time elder of St Matthew's Presbyterian and United, was the first historian to recognize this basic fact: "Accordingly the Burgher and Anti-Burgher Church of 1806 and previous years was a Presbyterian Church in a strict sense at least thirty-six years ahead of St. Matthew's" (p. 66).

[3] E. Arthur Betts, "Places of Worship on the Halifax Scotia Square Site," *Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly* 9 (3) September 1979, pp. 216-7 and sources cited, p. 223. The building, at or near the northeast corner of Argyle Street and Bell Lane, may have existed as recently as 1962.

[4] "Anti-burghers" were those members of the original (1733) Secession Church of Scotland who opposed the burgess oath as implying recognition of and conformity to the Kirk as the established church of Scotland. "Burghers" were those whose consciences were not offended by the religious 'test' of the burgess oath, considering it to be one's civic duty to subscribe. The Secession split on the issue in 1747 and the split was duly replicated in Nova Scotia. The issue there, however, was slaveholding by ministers, not church-state relations. The Burgher Presbytery of Truro was founded in 1786, while the Anti-burgher Presbytery of Pictou in 1795.

[5] Copy of petition, 18 January 1811, in Court of Chancery case files, RG 36 A box 115 file no. 585, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management. (hereafter NSARM). See also History of Saint John's United Church, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1793-1975 [Halifax, 1975], p. 12. William McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch, D.D. Pictou* [Truro, 1920], p. 31.

who sent him instead to Prince Edward Island - McCulloch's original destination.[6] Halifax had to wait until 1811 and was then a third time unlucky.

There is so much of "Parson Drone" in the Reverend James Robson, whom McCulloch knew intimately, that one wonders whether the very first character introduced in the *Stepsure Letters* is not based on him. Born in Kelso in 1774, two years before McCulloch, James Robson attended Edinburgh University and began his theological studies at the Divinity Hall of the Associate (Burgher) Synod in 1797.[7] He was licensed at Coldstream in March 1802 and inducted as minister at Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire thirteen months later. The congregation was divided as to the merits of the call, however, and misunderstandings became so prevalent that Robson resigned. From 1809 to 1811 he was without charge. Then, at the meeting of Synod in May 1811, a petition was presented from Halifax for a minister.

For four years local Presbyterians, while applying repeatedly and unsuccessfully to the Antiburgher (General Associate) Synod, had continued to receive from the Presbytery of Pictou such ministerial assistance as was available. In desperation they finally decided to apply to the other Seccession Synod, and apparently did so with the tacit approval of the Presbytery of Pictou. Synod appointed a committee to confer with Robson, who was then without charge. They did so and reported that he was willing to go. Robson was duly appointed and sailed from Greenock in September 1811, landing at Halifax in October. In May 1812 the Burgher Presbytery of Truro inducted him minister of the Associate Church, Halifax.

For five years everything appeared to go well enough. Robson consolidated his position by marrying a daughter of the leading member of his congregation, Alexander Izat, a prosperous merchant who died shortly after Robson's induction. Robson allowed himself to be drawn into congregational disputes that would otherwise have involved his late father-in-law. By February 1817 a difference of opinion over waiving the rental on the minister's pew[8] became the straw which broke the camel's back; the congregation split into two unequal factions, pro- and anti-minister. The Presbytery of Truro met in Halifax that month to deal with the situation. Though not a member of Truro Presbytery, McCulloch had known the Halifax Antiburghers longer and better than Robson or anyone else, and so was invited to sit with the Burgher ministers. This led to an attempt on his part to mediate. The result was *Words of Peace: Being an Address Delivered to the*

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[6]Susan Buggey, "Keir, John," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Volume VIII: 1851 to 1860 (Toronto, 1985), p. 451.

[7]For Robson's career see George Patterson, "Pioneers of Presbyterianism in the Maritime Provinces of Canada" (unpublished ms., [after 1859]), George Patterson papers, MG 1 vol. 742, NSARM. Patterson's account of Robson is largely based, without acknowledgement, on James Robertson, *History of the Mission of the Secession Church to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island from its Commencement in 1765* (Edinburgh, 1847), pp. 66-73. Robertson, a minister of the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, had toured Nova Scotia and been given access to Robson's papers.

[8] Pew rent was "money paid annually to a church to reserve a pew for the exclusive use of an individual, family or other group. The practice of renting pews was common in Canadian Presbyterian churches until the mid-Victorian period when it was abandoned in favour of a general free-will offering": John S. Moir, comp., *Handbook for Canadian Presbyterians* (Toronto, 1996), p. 97. Robson felt he should have a free pew, rents being contrary to Secession Church custom. Some of the congregation disagreed, pew rents being the chief source of revenue out of which the ministerial stipend was paid.

Congregation of Halifax in Connexion with the Presbyterian Church of Nova-Scotia, In Consequence of Some Congregational Disputes which Required the Interference of Presbytery.[9] The sermon was published in April 1817 by Halifax newspaper proprietor Edmund Ward, on behalf of "a member of the congregation" - probably one Thomas Dobson.

"You know, brethren," McCulloch began,

> that I have long felt an interest in your congregational affairs. By occasional intercourse, our acquaintance has grown into friendship; and till this time, I have been always glad to meet you in the house of God, to join with you in acts of devotion, and to assist your preparation for the eternal state. When at a distance also, your condition afforded me many pleasing reflections. I had seen you surmount those difficulties which new congregations usually experience; and, by encrease [sic] of numbers you seemed to have acquired a stability, which promised much good to yourselves and to the Church at large.[10]

McCulloch warned that because of the congregation's "peculiar" situation - as the only Presbyterian church in the provincial capital - the dispute was an occasion of scandal both within the Church and outside it. "The existence of this congregation," he observed,

> was conceived to be important to the general interests of the Presbyterian Church. We looked to you as a society of Christians with whom the members of our congregations, occasionally resorting to this place, could associate in acts of devotion, according to the doctrine and order maintained in the church at large. We expected also that your Christian deportment would gain to the church many who might be unacquainted with the doctrine which we preach. For these purposes, you became a congregation, received a minister of the gospel, and have had all the ordinances of religion dispensed among you; and what are the consequences? There is scarcely a congregation of the Presbyterian church in which your dissension is not known and deplored; and you must all be satisfied that you are giving to the world, an ill recommendation of those principles which we profess to maintain.[11]

McCulloch's exhortation, pleas and warnings went unheeded. In the words of his son William - who well remembered Robson's Halifax pastorate and who was probably present when his father spoke - "he used every effort by private visitation to quiet the

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[9] CIHM 64428 (microfiche); see generally Patricia Lockhart Fleming, *Atlantic Canadian Imprints, 1801-1820: A Bibliography* (Toronto, 1991), pp. 115-6 McCulloch's text was 1 Corinthians 1:10 ("Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.")

[10] McCulloch, *Words of Peace*, [3].

[11] *Ibid.*, 12.

storm, but all in vain, as there was an element of discord beyond his reach."[12] McCulloch eventually complained to Synod that he had been "calumniated as guilty of a breach of confidence, in delivering up to...Presbytery a letter transmitted to him by one of the dissatisfied members of the Congregation of Halifax, in which their secret designs were disclosed."[13]

McCulloch's positive view of Robson and the majority of the congregation who adhered to him was generally shared by the ministers of both presbyteries, though opinion divided somewhat along Burgher/Antiburgher lines. Robson's congregation was of mixed provenance - Antiburger in origin and composition, but with a Burgher minister; and first under the care of the Antiburgher presbytery, then the Burgher one. Perhaps an Antiburgher minister like McCulloch would have fared better from the start. In any case, by the spring of 1817 the damage had been done and could not be undone. The question was whether removing Robson from his pulpit for the sake of peace and reconciliation would undermine his authority and usefulness as a minister. It was after all the dissidents, not the minister, who were pursuing a divisive course; the minister, and more especially his wife's family, were the focus of the dissent -- not the cause of it. After an investigation and report Presbytery excommunicated the anti-Robsonites - thirty in number - who went on to form what is now St. Andrew's United. Only one member of Presbytery - the Kirk minister at Windsor - broke ranks and preached to the dissenting minority, an act for which he was censured.

The worst of the crisis had passed when, on 3 July 1817, the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia was formed at Truro. James Robson was appointed moderator of the new Presbytery of Halifax, which comprised four ministers and five congregations: Cornwallis (Kentville), Shelburne,[14] Halifax, Windsor and Rawdon.[15] As a compliment to the Burgher presbytery to which Robson and his congregation had formerly belonged, McCulloch helped procure for him the clerkship of the new Church, the first united synod in Canada. Robson held the post until his death in December 1838.

Throughout the affair and afterwards, Robson's ministerial colleagues supported him and he continued to preach to a congregation 60 per cent its former size. But matters went from bad to worse. In order to compel payment of arrears of salary, Robson took the very unwise step of suing those dissidents who had signed the bond for his stipend. He obtained judgment against them in the Supreme Court,[16] but they appealed to the Court of Chancery to have the bond cancelled and obtained a decree to that effect.[17] McCulloch

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[12] McCulloch, *Thomas McCulloch*, p.53.

[13] Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, minutes of meeting, Truro, 29 June 1819; Maritime Conference Archives, United Church of Canada (Sackville NB). McCulloch was petitioning "for a review of the Halifax business" which Synod declined to undertake.

[14]Loyalist Shelburne was home to the first Kirk minister (Hugh Fraser) and Kirk congregation (1784) in Nova Scotia and Canada.

[15]The only Presbyterian minister in Nova Scotia not to join the Church was the Kirk minister at Mather's Congregational.

[16]*Robson v. Scott*, RG 39 "C" (HX) box 147 (1818); box 155 (1819), NSARM.

thereafter took the lead in having the practice of asking for congregational bonds to guarantee payment of the stipend abolished by the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia - in 1824.[18]

Nor was 1817 the only occasion on which McCulloch found reason to come to Robson's assistance. The dissenters' marriage license controversy, which raged from 1818 to 1821, arose when one of Robson's domestics, wanting to be married by him, sought a licence from the civil authorities and was refused. "Mr McCulloch," writes his son, "being in the city at the time, at once took up the matter."[19] Robson had put his money where his mouth was back in 1812, when he himself was married by license by the Kirk minister at Mather's Congregational.

The minister's ill-advised legal proceedings sounded the deathknell of Halifax's first Presbyterian church. Robson resigned in July 1820, also ceasing to be moderator of Presbytery. He moved to Pictou in May 1824, apparently in hopes of succeeding McCulloch when he himself resigned his pulpit in August of that year; but Robson's reputation for living in hot water had preceded him and the congregation settled for the devil they knew - John Mackinlay - McCulloch's successor as principal of the grammar school. The Halifax congregation dissolved and its large church building was sold at auction. It was soon to be occupied by neo-Baptist seceders from St. Paul's (Church of England) - which explains the warm welcome McCulloch subsequently received in Granville Street Baptist, the pulpit of which he supplied from time to time.

Why did James Robson fail where Thomas McCulloch would almost certainly have succeeded? They were as fire and ice. According to the Reverend John Sprott, who knew him well, Robson

> was a minister of retired and studious habits, and lacked that spirit of adventure and enterprise so necessary in a young country, and that pliancy of mind suited to all variety of character. In some congregations he would have been a treasure, but the infelicity of the times defeated his faithful and pious labors. His people listened to the song of some evil bird, who, under the pretence of promoting good feeling, scattered the sheep and destroyed the pasture.[20]

The Robson affair had a chilling effect on the development of Presbyterianism in Halifax. The next generation of ministers in the Church saw Robson's resignation and the consequent breakup of his congregation as the chief reason for the disintegration of the Presbytery of Halifax. The *status quo ante* 1817 was restored; Halifax presbytery was

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[17] *Scott v. Robson*, file no. 585 (RG 36 "A" vol. 115, NSARM). The records of this case, which appear complete, are among the chief sources of information about Robson's church. For the text of the decree (final judgment), see "Important to Dissenters," *Halifax Journal*, 29 September 1823.

[18] The practice endured longer in the Kirk; see generally N.V. Hope, "Ministerial Stipends in the Church of Scotland, 1560 to 1833" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1944).

[19] McCulloch, *Thomas McCulloch*, 61; Susan Buggey and Gwendolyn Davies, "McCulloch, Thomas," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Volume VII: 1836 to 1850 (Toronto, 1988), p. 531.

[20] "The Presbyterian Fathers," *Presbyterian Witness*, 9 June 1906. Sprott (1780-1869) was a clergyman in the Relief Church who spent most of his ministry in the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia.

suspended annually from 1826, discontinued in 1832 and its territory re-annexed to Truro.[21] The Robson affair also led to the province's enacting in 1828 a law *concerning Religious Congregations and Societies*, which among other things regulated employment contracts with ministers other than those of the established Church of England.[22] Fundamentally unchanged, the act remains in force today.

Despite the demise of the Seceder presbytery and the birth of the Kirk presbytery the following year,[23] the Secession did not completely disappear from Halifax. The faithful remnant of Robson's congregation continued to meet in the old Baptist Church in the city's north suburbs, while the Presbytery of Truro provided supply preachers, usually licentiates. In 1838, the year of Robson's death, Thomas McCulloch arrived in Halifax to assume the presidency of Dalhousie College. He brought with him the Church's divinity students, who shared his zeal to re-establish the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia in Halifax. For the next five years, to the very end of his life, McCulloch strove to resurrect the congregation which he had tried but failed to preserve in 1817. Unlike Robson, he lived to see it done.

McCulloch's long exile from the capital retarded the development of the Presbyterian Church in Halifax - thirty years during which the Kirk established and consolidated its position. By 1838 McCulloch could have reflected that, had the Presbytery of Pictou allowed him to accept the call proffered in 1807, the outcome for Presbyterianism in Halifax might have been very different. Had McCulloch been ministering there from 1807, he would not have had occasion afterwards to complain that he came to Halifax so often on business that he was ashamed to show his face in town while the Legislature was in session.[24] If, as Susan Buggey and Gwen Davies have argued, McCulloch's "Halifax years were not prosperous ones," [25] it was at least in part because he had come too late to serve or save the Church there, much less to pre-empt the unfettered development of the Kirk. There was no presbytery, no congregation and no minister; but there were Seceders loyal to the Church; and - better late than never - there was Thomas McCulloch himself: alpha and omega. McCulloch was the visible manifestation of absolute continuity, the most important link to a prelapsarian past which might still be re-created. Writing to the Reverend Thomas Trotter at Antigonish in December 1840, trying to lure him to Halifax, McCulloch analysed the local situation thus:

> The establishment of a Church in our connection in this City has an important bearing not only upon the diffusion of the gospel, but also upon the respectability of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia. To a certain

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[21] See, for example, Peter Gordon MacGregor's annotations on his transcript of the early Presbytery minutes, which have not otherwise survived; Maritime Conference Archives, United Church of Canada (Sackville NB). MacGregor was first clerk of the restored (1851) Presbytery of Halifax.

[22] *Statutes of Nova Scotia*, 1828, c. 6.

[23] Established in 1833, by 1840 the Kirk presbytery had two congregations in Halifax and one in Dartmouth.

[24] Buggey and Davies, "McCulloch, Thomas," p.532.

[25] *Ibid.*,p. 536.

> extent it would also prove a safeguard to religion in every section. The city is the resort of individuals from all our congregations, and though those individuals not infrequently return home with accounts of the irreligion of Halifax, they do not always reflect upon the tarnish which they themselves may have received from the profanity of boarding houses on the Lord's day, not counteracted by the labors of a faithful minister of their own connection, with whom they could associate for the public worship of God. ...Since you cannot visit us, I must again place before you a view of our situation here.[26]

McCulloch declared that he himself was willing to go beyond his ability for the sake of the Gospel, but that his taking charge of the congregation, which Trotter had suggested, would be going too far beyond it - at what McCulloch termed "the frosty season of life."

The year following McCulloch's arrival in Halifax, the original Burgher synod in Scotland rejoined the Kirk and union discussions between the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia and the Kirk synod commenced. The issue was deeply divisive to the Seceder synod, and McCulloch was especially opposed. His hostility to the Kirk, not to mention the Kirk's loathing of him, prevented unionists in both synods from making any progress.[27] The Seceders had not forgotten that the first of the three Kirk congregations in Halifax-Dartmouth had been founded by the dissenting minority from Robson's church; nor that the dissidents had flourished while the official congregation had perished.

By the winter of 1842, when McCulloch was preparing to leave on what proved to be his last visit to Scotland, the Kirk presbytery had decided to take advantage of his impending absence in order to form a third congregation, in Halifax's North Suburbs.[28] Allied with the Kirkmen in this effort was a small body of Seceders, most likely the survivors of Robson's congregation. The Seceder presbytery having disappeared ten years earlier, it was agreed that application for a minister should be made in the first instance to the Kirk presbytery. If the congregation could not agree, then they were to be free to invite a minister from the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia to preach for a call. The would-be congregation met in a building formerly occupied by a body of independent Methodists ("Ebenezer Church").[29] As Kirkmen and Seceders predictably could not agree on a call, a motion was made to apply to the Presbyterian Church. The chair of the special congregational meeting, a Kirkman, refused to allow the motion, so its supporters - the Seceders - withdrew.

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[26] McCulloch to Trotter, 22 December 1840; reproduced in McCulloch, *Thomas McCulloch*, pp.184-185.

[27] The Great Disruption of the Kirk in Scotland in May 1843, the arrival of a Free minister in Halifax shortly afterwards, and the disruption of the Kirk synod in Nova Scotia in 1844 scuttled the negotiations for thirty years.

[28] This and what follows is based on Peter Gordon MacGregor, "Historical Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Poplar Grove Church," in Park Street Church (Halifax, N.S.), *Congregational Reports for the Year 1884* (Halifax, 1885), pp. 18-20.

[29] See generally E. Arthur Betts, "Ebenezer Church, College Hall, Halifax," *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society* 35 (1966), pp. 109-24.

McCulloch's return from Scotland in the autumn of 1842 set the cat among the pigeons. The inevitable result was two weak congregations instead of a single strong one. The Kirkmen continued to meet in Ebenezer, which was purchased by the Kirk presbytery and became St. John's.[30] The Seceders met in the Argyle Street academy of the Reverend Alexander Romans, Kirk minister at Dartmouth, whose sister was married to McCulloch's eldest son Michael, and with whom McCulloch was on excellent terms.[31] Writing shortly after his father's death, Thomas McCulloch Jr. stated,

> For some months past our church had been endeavouring to reestablish the Secession Congregation here, and in this my father took the deepest interest. At this time from a variety of circumstances...the attendance had become very small; consequently he felt more anxious about the success of the attempt. With the young preacher too, Mr. John Cameron, the last licensed of his students, who was officiating here at the time, he was much pleased.[32]

Among the supply preachers to the new Presbyterian congregation was McCulloch's son William, moderator of Synod in 1842-3, who became interim moderator of the provisional session. On Sunday 3 September 1843 McCulloch worshipped - morning and evening - with the fledgling congregation; the following Saturday he was dead. It was barely two weeks before the induction of the first settled minister, the Reverend Peter Gordon MacGregor, the call to whom McCulloch had signed in July. His remains were carried by steamer to Pictou, where they lie close to those of his friend Robson.

As *de facto* leader of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia over the quarter-century from its founding to his death, Thomas McCulloch needed and wanted to be in Halifax, where the other religious leaders were. Indeed he had always wanted and needed to be in Halifax; as much is clear from McCulloch family tradition descending to us through William's ironically revealing biography of his father.[33] Halifax, not Pictou, was the real focus of <u>all</u> McCulloch's most distinctive activities *except* his 20-year pastorate at Harbour church - which was, to put it mildly, a bed of nails in a field where McCulloch did not flourish. The very existence of Pictou Academy was an accident of McCulloch's presence there. The reason why he came too late to Halifax was that he was first and foremost a dedicated minister of the gospel, loyal to his Church and its mission and willing to lie under its discipline, whatever the personal cost.

McCulloch's influence was less, and less earlier felt, than it would have been had he been enabled to make Halifax his base of operations from 1807 onwards. Moreover, it is not too speculative to suggest that the Church in Halifax would not only have survived but also flourished under his leadership. As Arthur Betts pointed out with great insight,

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[30] Afterwards St. John's Free Presbyterian Church, then Chalmers; disbanded in 1904.

[31] The building afterwards served as home to the Presbyterian Church's divinity school. It was thanks to McCulloch's friendship that Romans had been appointed professor of classics at Dalhousie.

[32] Thomas McCulloch to John Mitchell, 12 October 1843; in McCulloch, *Thomas McCulloch*, pp. 191-192.

[33] See especially McCulloch, *Thomas McCulloch*, pp.31-32. ("Though it is useless to speculate upon the results of a translation....")

"The Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, one of the most influential bodies in the province, seemed to have a hard time gaining a foothold in Halifax."[34] The protracted absence of Thomas McCulloch is the key to explaining that failure.

Elijah's mantle descended on McCulloch's chief protégé, Peter Gordon MacGregor, whom he was instrumental in securing as minister of the re-established Halifax church. It was his last and greatest service, erasing the failure of 1817. MacGregor, youngest son of the patriarch James, was typical of the students through whom McCulloch made his "ultimate impact." The *crème de la crème* of the 'race of evangelical preachers' with which McCulloch was determined to fill British North America,[35] MacGregor was a chip off the old block. Born the same month the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia came into existence, MacGregor was named for his mother's first husband, the Antiburgher Reverend Peter Gordon - who, on his arrival in Nova Scotia in 1806, preached for six weeks to the Antiburghers of Halifax.

A liberal who became more progressive with age, MacGregor would figure prominently in the three denominational unions of 1860, 1866 and 1875 and, forty years before it happened, would prophesy and predict an ecumenical union of Presbyterians and Methodists. Peter Gordon MacGregor proved to be the right man for Halifax in 1843 just as McCulloch would have been in 1807 - and Robson was not in 1812. He ministered there with outstanding success for 25 years and lived to see old Poplar Grove - the church McCulloch founded - erect a magnificent Gothic cathedral and become the leading Presbyterian congregation in the city.[36]

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[34] Betts, "Places of Worship on the Halifax Scotia Square Site," pp.218-9.

[35] Buggey and Davies, "McCulloch, Thomas," pp.540.

[36] Afterwards Park Street; merged with new St. John's (now United). Sadly and ironically, it was destroyed by the 1925 Disruption in the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Thomas McCulloch, Education and Political Reform

by

William Hamilton

When the words "Nova Scotia" and "Responsible Government" are mentioned, most people automatically recall the long shadow of the great reformer Joseph Howe. His important contributions to this struggle are well documented and need no repetition. All too frequently overlooked, is the fact that Howe actually began his public life, not as a "radical" reformer, but as a "mild" Tory. During the 1820s Howe was highly critical of the House of Assembly and more than once assailed Dr. Thomas McCulloch, then struggling to obtain a permanent annual grant for Pictou Academy.

This paper will place the spotlight on the earlier years of the movement for political reform in Nova Scotia, to the decade between 1828 and 1838. During this period, an un-elected Legislative Council exercised veto power over money bills regularly passed by the Legislative Assembly. Because of this, Pictou Academy was prevented from achieving its full destiny. Accordingly, within the suppression of Pictou Academy lies the beginning of the movement for political reform in Nova Scotia. In this conflict, Dr. Thomas McCulloch (1777-1843) and one of his many gifted students, Jotham Blanchard (1800-1839), were destined to play lead roles.

The Beginning of the Battle

Joseph Howe's early opinion of what he once called the "Pictou Scribblers" was given in his well-known *Western and Eastern Rambles: Travel Sketches of Nova Scotia*, first published in the *Acadian Recorder* between 1828 and 1831. This sketch, dripping with sarcasm, is dated 1830:

> Here we are, gentle reader right opposite the door of the Pictou Academy, and what say you, shall we take a peep in? After all the hot blood it has created and all the hot words it has occasioned, a man might well be excused for pausing on the threshold of the place -- for who knows, the very air of it might be impregnated with the spirit of discord... Who knows but that we may come out a fierce and uncompromising

> seceder, ready to quarrel with our best friend, should he venture to hint that the institution is susceptible of any improvement... [The kirkman is] ready to maintain that because His Majesty's Legislative Council have opposed the perpetual grant to Pictou Academy, they can never do anything wrong, impolitic or absurd.

Later Howe concludes: "Next to the old fort at Annapolis [Pictou Academy] has caused more battles than any building in the country."[1]

The Battle Becomes Joined:

Before we take Joseph Howe's advice and put on a suit of armour and dare to enter the battle that swirled around Pictou Academy, it is necessary to know something of the educational philosophy of the man behind it all, and the one whom we honour today. His was a new approach to higher education, and one that clashed with much of contemporary thinking on the subject. McCulloch's views are found in his outstanding address entitled *The Nature and Uses of a Liberal Education*, delivered at the official opening of Pictou Academy and later published in 1818 for general circulation.

The main points in this address are easily summarized. To Dr. Thomas McCulloch, a liberal education was essential not only for those in the learned professions, but for everyone with appropriate academic qualifications. This doctrine was not calculated to win him friends in His Majesty's Legislative Council. As a master of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, he did not overlook the classical curriculum, but wanted to go well beyond it. McCulloch asserted the claim of philosophy, mathematics and the natural sciences as subjects "best calculated to enable the student to understand man, nature and society."[2]

The second foundation of McCulloch's approach to higher education was a direct by-product of his Scottish heritage and his years of study at the University of Glasgow.[3] Simply put, higher education should be open to all of those who possessed the academic qualifications for entry, regardless of their religious background. Any educational institution with which McCulloch was associated would never impose religious barriers on entrance. This point was made crystal clear in the first regulations adopted for Pictou Academy. One of these read: "The design shall be... to provide the means of a liberal education for persons of every religious denomination who wished to improve their minds by literary studies."[4]

Contrast this with the restrictive statutes that had been adopted in 1802 for Nova Scotia's only other institution of higher education, King's College, Windsor. Among these, was one requiring all matriculants to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles, as set forth in 1571 during the reign of Elizabeth I. To this was added the equally rigid rule that no student at King's shall "frequent the Romish mass or the meeting houses of Presbyterians, Baptists or Methodists, or the

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[1]M. G. Parks (ed.), *Western and Eastern Rambles in Nova Scotia* (Toronto, 1973), p. 154. Also pp. 155-159.

[2]Thomas McCulloch, *The Nature And Uses of A Liberal Education* (Halifax, 1819), pp. 1-24.

[3]See George Davie, *The Democratic Intellect – Scotland and Her Universities* (Edinburgh, 1961). Also James Scotland, *The History of Scottish Education.* (London, 1969), I.

[4]NSARM (Formerly PANS), McCulloch Papers VI, *Regulations Regarding Pictou Academy.*

conventicles or places of worship of any other dissenters from the Church of England, or be present at any seditious or rebellious meeting."[5] For the next quarter century, and until all these conditions were waived, (excepting for students in Divinity), King's College was to be an irritant inciting the forces of educational reform. At one stroke, these restrictive measures relegated more than half the population of Nova Scotia "out of bounds," so far as higher education was concerned.

The smoldering political situation became even more controversial when the generous financial grants awarded to King's College are factored in. This institution had already received an initial grant of £5,000 from the British Government, supplemented by a yearly grant of £1,250. In addition, it received £500 annually from the Province; while Pictou Academy might or might not receive a small annual subsidy. Jotham Blanchard once summarized what he called the "naked parliamentary history" of financial grants to Pictou Academy:

> The House of Assembly passed *eight resolutions* granting money to the Institution which were negated in the Council; also *eight bills* which were either negated or destroyed by amendments. During fifteen years there were *four General Assemblies* and in each of these was always a very large majority in favour of the Institution. The Bills and Votes for annual allowances passed without a division, sometimes against minorities of four or five and on the last occasion unanimously.[6]

While it is common today for members of the clergy to participate directly in politics and to seek public office, this was not true in the nineteenth century. Even if it were conceivable, it is doubtful if Dr. Thomas McCulloch would have had any interest in leaving the pulpit, lecture hall and laboratory for the rough and tumble of colonial politics. Furthermore, if he were so tempted, McCulloch would be aware of the precedent that took place in 1818, in neighboring New Brunswick, just two years following the founding of Pictou Academy. Rev. Joseph Crandall (c.1761-1858), a prominent New Brunswick Baptist minister, uncharacteristically decided to "dabble in politics." Since it was assumed that he would not be elected, his nomination passed virtually unnoticed. Then the unthinkable happened, Crandall was elected as one of four MLAs to represent Westmorland in the House of Assembly. Thereupon, New Brunswick's sleepy Loyalist establishment was roused into action. The legislature was convened and an act hastily passed declaring "all clergymen ineligible for election to the House."[7]

Instead of direct intervention, McCulloch utilized sympathetic members of the House of Assembly to further the cause of Pictou Academy. At the time, the township of Pictou was part of Halifax County that covered most of eastern mainland Nova Scotia. Usually there was a member from the Pictou area, one of the largest centers of population. The first was Edward Mortimer (1768-1819), wealthy Pictou merchant, and a native of Banffshire. He was a friend of McCulloch and very supportive of Pictou Academy. Mortimer might well have played an

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[5]NSARM, Statutes of King's College. Even within the Church of England there was debate on this issue. See: Judith Fingard, *The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia* (London, 1972), pp. 152-154.

[6]PAC, MG11 A275, "Petition of Jotham Blanchard, Agent of the Trustees of Pictou Academy", p. 325. Hereafter cited as Blanchard Petition.

[7]J. M. Bumstead, "Joseph Crandall," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, VIII, pp. 179-180.

important role in the political battles ahead; however, he died in 1819. Throughout the 1820s McCulloch enjoyed strong support in the Assembly as the numerous votes referred to earlier indicate. Among the heavyweights on his side were the Speaker S. G. W. Archibald and Thomas Chandler Haliburton. Unfortunately, Haliburton's term as a member was cut short by his appointment as justice of the Court of Common Pleas in 1829.

McCulloch's major problems were to be found within the closed confines of the un-elected Legislative Council or "Council of Twelve" as it was popularly known. Political scientist Dr. Murray Beck, once laid bare the intertwined relationship among members of the Council:

> Its most distinguished member, Brenton Halliburton [not to be confused with T. C. Haliburton] belonged to a Council in which his father, two uncles, two brothers-in-law, his father-in-law, son-in-law, aunt's brother-in-law, brother-in-law's father-in-law, and the latter's brother-in-law, all held seats at one time or another, and five of whom were members at the same time.[8]

Not much more need be said about His Majesty's Legislative Council during this era.

The *Canadian Spectator* Question:

So far as the embryonic reform movement in Nova Scotia was concerned, 1828 was a pivotal year, for it marked the founding of a newspaper in Pictou, the *Colonial Patriot*. During the 1820s Pictou had acquired importance as port of entry for the thousands of Scottish emigrants entering Eastern Nova Scotia. In addition, local shipping interests were actively participating in the timber trade with Britain. However, the chief motivating force behind the newspaper was political and educational rather than economic.

Although the *Colonial Patriot* was sometimes outspoken in its support of Pictou Academy, its editorials, articles and letters went beyond the cause of a single institution. The newspaper became a rallying point for the emerging reform movement in the province. Lastly, the Colonial Patriot was very much the creation of its ambitious and energetic editor, Jotham Blanchard. Of New England origin, he was born in Peterboro, New Hampshire on 15 March 1800. A few months later the family moved to Nova Scotia and eventually settled in Pictou. Blanchard, a member of the first graduating class of Pictou Academy, was a disciple and ally of its now embattled Principal, Dr. Thomas McCulloch. Along the way, Blanchard had absorbed the liberal educational philosophy and political outlook of his mentor. Over time, critics leveled the charge that McCulloch was the "guiding spirit," if not the actual editor, of the *Colonial Patriot*. It seems evident that although a close liaison existed between the two men, Blanchard was *the* editor. In any event, he was a thorough master of acid prose and did not require any coaching when it came to journalistic jousting. Ambitious, despite the physical handicap of lameness, he was, at age 21, admitted to the Bar of Nova Scotia and later served as a MLA (from 1830-1836) before his premature death in 1839.[9]

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[8]J. Murray Beck, *The Government of Nova Scotia* (Toronto, 1957), p. 21.

[9]Blanchard was elected in the famous "Brandy Election" of 1830 and served as one of the MLAs for Halifax County until 1836.

At first it was not Blanchard's support for Pictou Academy that excited outside interest; but rather his comments on the prevailing political situation in Lower Canada. This colony was, in 1828, embroiled in controversy over the dismissal of Louis Joseph Papineau as Speaker of the Assembly.

> Whether governors have legal right or not according to former precedents to reject a speaker we willingly leave to the decision of lawyers," [Blanchard wrote], but we are forced to say that they ought not to possess any such right... If precedents are on the side of the Governor, it is high time a new precedent was established. The antiquity of a bad custom is a poor argument in its favor.[10]

Blanchard was in touch with leading Reformers in Lower Canada and in particular James Leslie (1786-1873), a member of the more radical wing of the party. One of his letters to Leslie was published anonymously in the *Canadian Spectator* and caught the eye of Joseph Howe, editor of the *Novascotian*.[11] This letter condemned Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General of British North America, for twice rejecting the Lower Canadian Assembly's choice of Papineau as its speaker. At the same time it gave assurance that notwithstanding the "enslaved press" of Nova Scotia [exception - the *Colonial Patriot*], the great majority of its people supported the principles and actions of the Lower Canadian Reformers. Blanchard concluded his letter by expressing the hope that "a little of your spirit will creep our way... I hope you gain your point before matters get too far for adjustment. There is a party [in Nova Scotia] violently in favor of Lord Dalhousie because he is a patron of a society in Glasgow connected with the Kirk." [The Glasgow Colonial Society].[12]

Howe angrily denounced the letter and asked:

> Might this be a forgery? We cannot believe that Mr. Waller [editor of the *Canadian Spectator*] is guilty of such a forgery and we are therefore reduced to the mortifying conviction that the writer of this letter crawls about on our soil; that this shameless defamer of his country's institutions is still enjoying as far as his discontented spirit will allow him, the happiness and security which are found beneath their shade.

After a lengthy denunciation of the main thesis of the letter and a defense of the *status quo* in Nova Scotia, Howe concluded: "We look upon Canada as we do upon Jamaica as a place which has seldom enjoyed repose; and if we think of it at all it is certainly with a stronger feeling of pity than of dread."[13]

For the next two months the editorial skirmishes continued with Howe heaping scorn upon "newly fledged students and unemployed attorneys." He also found kind words for the

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[10]*Colonial Patriot*, 7 December 1827.

[11]The text of the letter to the *Canadian Spectator* is quoted in: *Novascotian*, 17 April 1828.

[12]*Ibid.*

[13]*Ibid.*

Council of Twelve: "No man will dispute; our Council taken as a body, comprises no ordinary share of talent; some of its members are as able men as are to be found in any of the colonies, and we cannot but add our testimony to the general purity of their intentions."[14]

There was more to the *Canadian Spectator* controversy than a difference of opinion between Blanchard and Howe. Beneath the haughty prose of both men there was a deeper rift. Howe was appalled by the revolutionary tone of the *Colonial Patriot*. He once described Pictou as "that seat of disaffection and bad government--that abode of patriots and den of radicalism, that nook where the spirit of party sits nursing her wrath to keep it warm during ten months of the year in order to disturb the legislature the other two."[15] Blanchard, as time went on, became more outspoken and defiant. Laudatory references to William Lyon Mackenzie, Louis Joseph Papineau, Joseph Hume and Arthur Roebuck found their place in the *Colonial Patriot*[16] -- all of which Howe found most disquieting.

At this stage it was Blanchard not Howe who was the "Tribune of the People." Furthermore, it was Blanchard who reduced to one sentence the plight of the reform movement in Nova Scotia. "Both the Canadas have well organized parties in and out of Parliament to withstand misrule. We will never get on in this province until we reach the same desirable part."[17] Although the "*Canadian Spectator* controversy" (as it became known in the columns of the *Novascotian* and the *Colonial Patriot*) soon blew over, the reformist stance of Jotham Blanchard was firmly established.

During the legislative session of 1828 the question of financial aid to Pictou Academy was, predictably, a dominant issue. In many respects, the debates mirrored those of previous years; however in 1828, there was one difference. Previously the "Pictou Academy Bill" had passed the Assembly with a minimum of debate. This time, Alexander Stewart (1794-1865) MLA for Cumberland moved its rejection. Such action was sufficient to provoke the leading supporter of Pictou Academy, T. C. Haliburton (1796-1865), MLA for Annapolis, to full oratorical heights.[18] Leading with an attack on the Council of Twelve and Bishop John Inglis (for Haliburton suspected the latter had inspired the Stewart motion), he declared, "There are a few individuals in Halifax who direct public opinion and who not only influence but control all public measures. Seated in the Capital, they govern the movement of all the different parts; as they touch the springs, the wires move, and simultaneously arise the puppets."[19]

For the next hour Haliburton held the house spellbound as he defended Pictou Academy, lauded the sacrifices of Thomas McCulloch and demolished the "spurious" arguments of those

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[14]*Novascotian*, 15 May 1828.

[15]M. G. Parks (ed.), *Western and Eastern Rambles: Travel Sketches by Joseph Howe* (Toronto, 1974), p. 146.

[16]By 1830 Blanchard was reprinting articles lauding the revolution of the same year in France. He wrote: "Such news should start the Lords of Nova Scotia shaking in their shoes," *Colonial Patriot*, 17 September 1830.

[17]*Ibid.*, 16 January 1830.

[18]Haliburton was still smarting from his censure before the Bar of the House in 1827. On this occasion he had described the Council as "twelve old ladies – one in lawn sleeves." *Novascotian*, 29 March 1827. In 1828 his language while more temperate was still cutting.

[19]*Novascotian*, 6 March 1828.

opposed to the spread of education. His most telling thrusts were saved for Inglis and he challenged the Bishop to let his clergy enter into "honorable competition with the ministers of dissenters... seek not to be established by law but be established in the affection and hearts of the people."[20]

Yet Haliburton knew and forcefully stated the underlying reason for the attempt to destroy Pictou Academy. It was more fundamental than the loyalty cry; it was Inglis' desire to retain control of higher education. Thomas McCulloch echoed the same theme in a letter to the Rev. John Mitchell: "the Bishop and his friends are perfectly aware that our Academy is the only thing which prevents the former from having the education of the whole under his and the church's management, and they are employing every means within doors and out of doors, fair or foul, to put us down."[21] It was left to Haliburton to state the issue plainly in the House:

> By a stroke of policy which betrays the hand of a master, and which none but a man long practiced in intrigue could have conceived–a plan was concocted here, to set up a few of the high Kirk People at Pictou to aspire to the government of the Academy and to split these people into two parties... and now that the Christian tempter has succeeded in promoting dissensions, both parties are met by the same craftiness and told with scorn–'Gentlemen, you quarrel among yourselves, you are divided... we cannot support your institution any longer.'[22]

Haliburton carried the House, Stewart's motion was defeated and the bill calling for a permanent endowment passed, only to receive the usual veto in the Council.[23] The following day another bill calling for the same thing passed the House and was sent to the Council. This time it was amended and returned as "a very voluminous bill of a quite different nature."[24] The amendments called for the exclusion of Dr. McCulloch from the Board, that all trustees be removed and others appointed in their place. Furthermore, Pictou Academy was to be reduced to the status of a grammar school. Not surprisingly, the amendments were rejected and the Bill was lost. Still persistent, the House next voted £500 to be placed at "the discretionary disposal" of the Governor. The motion was passed with four "nays" only to be rejected by the Council.[25]

Before the session was over a fourth attempt was made to provide aid for Pictou Academy. The new bill "resolved that if His Excellency the Governor should judge proper to aid the Trustees of Pictou Academy to the extent of £500 toward the payment of their debts," the House should provide for it at the next session.[26] In this way it was hoped that the Council veto

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[20]*Ibid.*

[21]NSRAM, McCulloch Papers, VII, McCulloch to Rev. John Mitchell, 31 March 1828.

[22]*Novascotian*, 6 March 1828.

[23]*JHA*, 26 February 1828.

[24]PAC, MG11 A275, "Blanchard Petition," p. 335.

[25]*JHA*, 28 March 1829.

[26]*Ibid.*

might be circumvented. During the prolonged debate McCulloch was in Halifax attempting to rally his legislative supporters. However, he was daily growing more dejected and he wrote Dr. John Mitchell: "Today the House passed a resolution. I have no expectation that it will be granted. For the sake of Lord Dalhousie's College he [Kempt] is not our friend and every accusation of disloyalty and anti-burgherism etc., which could be derived has been instilled in him."[27] McCulloch was right in predicting the final outcome, but it was the timidity of his friends rather than the policy of Kempt which was responsible. Unfortunately for Pictou Academy, following passage of the above-mentioned bill in the Assembly, some of its supporters had second thoughts and moved insertion of the clause "with the advice of His Majesty's Council."[28]

Predictably, the Council advised the Governor to withhold the money and for the next year Pictou Academy existed without any legislative grants. Once again, a House Committee searched the Council Journals to ascertain details of the vote and once again it was found that the veto was carried by one vote. (That of Bishop John Inglis). The House also learned that sixteen petitions from various parts of the province had been presented to the Council "praying for their assent to a permanent endowment for Pictou Academy" with only four against.[29] Beyond the protracted Pictou Academy debate, the fiery polemics of Haliburton, and the reasoned editorials of the *Colonial Patriot*, lay a more profound question. Did the Council in its capacity as an Upper House or Legislative Council have the right to veto money bills passed by the Assembly? In the *Novascotian* Joseph Howe argued that the power was needed as a brake upon the extravagant tastes of assemblymen, else "hundreds of pounds might be granted to clear a few sticks or stumps from a rivulet or to make a road."[30] A more weighty defense of the position of the Council was mounted by one of its own members, Brenton Halliburton. He admitted that the House of Lords enjoyed no such power or privilege as the Council "had been in the habit of exercising."[31] Beyond this, Halliburton refused to accept the argument that governor, Council and Assembly in Nova Scotia were comparable to King, Lords and Commons in England. Furthermore, there were many instances which required Nova Scotia law to be modified to "our juvenile and peculiar situation."[32] He documented his case by references to many constitutional authorities such as Blackstone and Hatsell, capping his argument by emphasizing that the principles of cabinet responsibility was not in effect in Nova Scotia.

Therefore, in his view, comparison between Nova Scotia and Britain was invalid. For this reason the power to reject money bills "must be safely lodged" in the Upper House.

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[27]NSARM, McCulloch Papers, VII, McCulloch to Rev. John Mitchell, 31 March 1828.

[28]PAC MG11 A275, "Blanchard Petition," p. 337.

[29]*Ibid.*, p. 339. Petitions are to be found in NSARM, School Papers. "Petitions Regarding Pictou Academy."

[30]*Novascotian*, 15 May 1828.

[31]Brenton Halliburton, *Observations Upon The Doctrine Lately Advanced That His Majesty's Council Have No Constitutional Power To Control Individual Appropriations With A Few Remarks Upon The Conduct Of That Body On The Question Of Granting Encouragement To Common Schools And A Permanent Grant To Pictou Academy.* (Halifax, 1828), p. 7.

[32]*Ibid.*, p. 9.

> In every popular Assembly there is too profound a devotion... for its members to possess, consistently with the safety and well being of the state, and undivided control over public expenditure."[33]

Blanchard's answer to both Howe and Halliburton was direct and to the point: "If the Upper House does in fact possess that right, it ought not to possess it."[34]

During the legislative sessions of 1829 and 1830 a repeat performance of the "Pictou Academy Question" was enacted. In retrospect it seems clear that by the early 1830s, despite the "naked parliamentary history," alluded to by Blanchard, the political significance (but *not* the constitutional import) of the "Pictou Academy Question" was being overtaken by both time and events. The infighting between Kirkmen and Seceders was now at a fever pitch. Thus, McCulloch and his supporters were forced to spend more and more time putting out "local fires" and in rebutting charges and countercharges. These ranged all the way from obtuse theological squabbles to the allegation that McCulloch tried to "divert" funds destined for Miramichi Fire victims to aid Pictou Academy.[35]

By now, T. C. Haliburton, one of the chief spokesmen for the cause of the Academy was silenced through his appointment to the Bench in 1829. The Baptists had founded an "institution of higher learning" at Horton that would become Acadia University in 1838; accordingly it was becoming more and more difficult for reform minded Nova Scotians to coalesce around educational issues. All the while, multi-denominationalism and regional jealousies continued to be carefully exploited by the governing elite. It was becoming increasingly obvious that Blanchard's original analysis was correct. A political part *per se* was required to carry forward the message of reform. Regrettably, Blanchard was personally unable to be an active participant in this next phase of the struggle. Financial problems, coupled with his indifferent health saw the end of the *Colonial Patriot* in 1833. It was left for others to carry the battle.

Meanwhile, other events of political significance were taking place. Joseph Howe had been gradually transformed into a Reforming Assemblyman"[36] and was now a member of the House of Assembly. Equally important, his newspaper the *Novascotian* was firmly established as a forum for political debate and discussion. Howe, slowly but surely, was emerging as the leader of the developing reform movement. His speeches in the Assembly and on the hustings combined with the fiery editorials in the *Novascotian* were providing a sense of direction and focus for reform. This was particularly evident in the Twelve Resolutions which he moved in the House of Assembly on 11 February 1837. It is significant that Number three stated "That among the many proofs that might be adduced of the evils arising from [the] imperfect structure of the [Legislative Council] it is only necessary to refer... to the difficulties thrown in the way of a just and liberal education."

He then went on to point specifically to "... the appointments to the Council [being]

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[34] *Colonial Patriot*, 7 December 1827.

[35] *cf. Colonial Patriot*, 12 January 1833 and *Pictou Observer*, 14 January 1833.

[36] The conversion of Howe can be traced in: J. Murray Beck, *Joseph Howe: Voice of Nova Scotia* (Toronto, 1964), pp. 19-63 and J. Murray Beck, *Conservative Reformer* (Montreal, 1982).

always studiously arranged so as to secure to the members of the Church of England, embracing but one fifth of the population, a clear and decided majority at the board."[37] In a speech following the introduction of these resolutions Howe pointed to an "essential flaw" in the political system. It was the attempt "...by which members of the Council have sought to strengthen their own power and influence...by monopolizing the education of the country."[38] With the memory of the tedious Pictou Academy debates still in their minds, members of the Assembly were quick to grasp the point. However, another decade was to pass before public opinion had jelled sufficiently to see the election of a true reform administration.

McCulloch's Twilight Years:

In 1838, a novel approach to the long festering debate concerning Pictou Academy was put forward by S. G. W. Archibald and his son Charles, an Academy graduate and close confidant of McCulloch. A new bill concerning Pictou Academy was introduced in the Legislature. This transferred part of the Academy grant (awarded in 1832) to Dalhousie and named Thomas McCulloch first President of the latter institution. Predictable criticism came from McCulloch's Kirk opponents in Pictou. However, little other opposition developed, for even McCulloch's detractors, outside the Kirk, were willing to concede his qualifications for the post. Thus, in the end he was able to establish, that which was denied him in Pictou, a university without religious tests upon entrance, and espousing the ideals of a liberal education. Perhaps then, McCulloch may be forgiven his proud boast conveyed in a letter to a friend in Scotland:

> Lord Dalhousie, who for the sake of his college, hated me, built it for me. Our bishop, in the expectation of making it his own, was the principal means of preventing it from going into operation till I had need of it....As long as there was the least prospect that Pictou Academy could be carried on, I hung by it...[39]

Considering the tempestuous nature of his early life, McCulloch's five years as President of Dalhousie were comparatively quiet. He was always happiest when in the classroom and his students were, as always, appreciative of his excellence as a teacher. Beyond his duties at Dalhousie, he was content to do supply preaching on Sundays and concentrate any spare time on scientific pursuits. During the summer months he made frequent trips to various parts of Nova Scotia to gather specimens for his many botanical, zoological and geological collections. One such expedition was to Sable Island, no mean feat for a man whose health was at best precarious. In early September 1843, after returning from one such visit to western Nova Scotia, he fell ill with influenza and died on September 9th of that year.[40]

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[37]Sir Joseph Chisholm (ed.), *The Speeches and Public Letters of Joseph Howe* (1909), I, p. 113.

[38]*Ibid.* p. 119.

[39]NSARM, McCulloch Papers, VIII, McCulloch to Rev. John Mitchell, 30 October 1838.

[40]For McCulloch's last years at Dalhousie see P. B. Waite, *The Lives of Dalhousie University*, II (Montreal, 1984), pp. 54-55, pp. 64-67. An intimate family portrait is found in *The Life of Thomas McCulloch*, written by his son, William McCulloch, (Truro, 1920).

How can a many-sided individual such as Dr. Thomas McCulloch be objectively assessed? For certain, he had his share of critics both during his lifetime and later. One of the latter concluded in a fit of pique: "You could sum up McCulloch as a learned, frustrated, waspish little man in whom an enlarged ego was continuously assailed by a strong instinct of self preservation."[41] In rebuttal, this scathing comment conveniently overlooks McCulloch's many significant accomplishments in such diverse fields as Education, Literature, and Science. Ignored was the great affection and loyalty in which he was held by his students. A "waspish little man with an enlarged ego" could never survive in the classroom. The critique is also oblivious to McCulloch's contribution to educational and political reform.

McCulloch had his fair share of foibles and quirks; he lacked political finesse in handling the antagonistic Kirk faction, and would never, ever, back away from a fight. But in the final analysis, anyone who could write the *Stepsure Letters* in his spare time, and poke fun at himself in the bargain, deserves a closer look.[42] One outcome of the years when Pictou Academy functioned as a college should not be forgotten. It was during this period that Dr. Thomas McCulloch and his followers helped lay the foundation for political and educational reform in Nova Scotia.

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[41]H. L. Scammell, "Why Did Thomas McCulloch Come To Dalhousie?" *Collections Nova Scotia Historical Society*, XXXI (1957) p. 64.

[42]For a balanced assessment see two essays in the 1960 edition of *The Stepsure Letters* (Toronto, 1960): "The Introduction" by Northrop Frye pp. iii-ix, and John A. Irving, "The Achievement of Thomas McCulloch," pp. 150-156.

The Gospel According to Mephibosheth Stepsure

by

Geoffrey Johnston

Mephibosheth Stepsure was the creation of Thomas McCulloch, one of the pioneers of education and Presbyterianism in Nova Scotia. He arrived in Pictou in November 1803, so it is the 200th anniversary of his appearance that we remember this year. Mephibosheth was the fictional author of *The Stepsure Letters*, a series of satirical articles published in a Halifax newspaper, *The Acadian Recorder* between December 1821 and May 1822. In this series McCulloch established himself as one of the founders of Canadian humour, as well as Nova Scotian education and the Presbyterian Church.

The original Mephibosheth, as I am sure you all remember, has a cameo part in Second Samuel. He was the son of David's friend Jonathon, who was turned up in David's hunt for any of Saul's heirs who might prove troublesome. (The Bible says David wanted to show "the kindness of the Lord," or "kindness for Jonathon's sake," but I suspect the editors were being kind to the great king.) David pensioned him off, or as the King James puts it somewhat more picturesquely, he ate bread at the king's table. He also got what was left of Saul's property.

Now Mephibosheth ben Jonathon was lame in both feet, and so was Mephibosheth Stepsure, which makes the name something of joke, for Mephibosheth's steps were anything but sure. A condition which as we will soon see was a blessing in disguise.

When Glen asked me to make this presentation he asked me to say something about McCulloch, and also, if I could manage, something about spirituality, the Flames theme for this year. Hence the title of this address.

The inspiration for this morning comes from the late Northrop Frye, who wrote the introduction to the New Canadian Library edition of the *Stepsure Letters*. Frye suggested that the Stepsure letters were an example of the fable of the industrious apprentice, a literary figure so common, he assured us, that everybody, however limited their reading, would have met. The industrious apprentice is the young man who works hard, minds his business, saves his money, and does not seek a social status he cannot

sustain. In the same way he avoids drinking, gambling and wenching as a waste of time and money. He thus ends his days as a self-made man, with a comfortable, but probably not extensive income. His more interesting counterpart, the idle apprentice, lives a life of wine, women and song, avoiding the virtues of sober industry and in due course comes to an unfortunate end.

This fable, Frye went on, first appeared in English literature in Elizabethan times and reached its zenith in the reign of the second great queen, Victoria. But it was in North America that the theme had its greatest popularity, represented especially by Benjamin Franklin and Samuel Smiles, author of an extremely popular volume called *Self Help*.

What caught my attention in Frye's introduction was the date. The industrious apprentice first appeared in English literature in Elizabethan times, at the same time as the first Puritans, the much maligned inventors of the Puritan work ethic. Since the industrious apprentice is a representative of the same ethic, I thought I would ask what remained in Stepsure of the original, which in the Puritans was less an ethic than a calling.

The Puritan style derived ultimately from medieval thinking, if not from Proverbs, but immediately from Calvin. Today Calvin would be described as a workaholic, and it seems he managed to transform his addiction into a Christian calling. He lived what he preached, a sober, frugal, honest, industrious life a life which I would call Protestant asceticism.

Although Calvin sometimes spoke as if this world were but a preparation for the next, he did not consistently deny himself or any one else the pleasures of the flesh. But he insisted on moderation, a sober and frugal tasting of good food, good wine and marriage, although sex was not an activity in which he seemed particularly interested. But these things were sidelines, apart from the main business of living, which was to work for the glory of God.

Calvin made that point more through his life than through his writings. He got through a prodigious amount of work. His collected works run to fifty-nine volumes. I do not consider myself a slacker, but my collected works will not run to more than three or four, and that only if you count the stuff that is not worth reading. What we find in Calvin is not so much exhortations to industry as warnings about its consequences. In an expanding commercial society, the virtues he recommended, sobriety, frugality, honesty and hard work, were likely to produce riches, and riches produce greed and pride, two of the deadliest of the seven sins. Making money is an unfortunate by-product of the Christian life.

Calvin's approach to the Christian life found a particularly responsive audience in the rising entreprenurial class of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In England it was the yeoman, the small farmers, the professionals, and the entrepreneurs who took to Calvinism. What these people all have in common is control of their own tools. They were farmers who owned and worked their own land, they were lawyers, doctors and ministers who lived by their knowledge, and the kind of businessman we would today call artisan entrepreneurs. They might have been in manufacturing, but they combined the skills of brewers or shipbuilders with their own capital. They were like the electricians and plumbers who run their own businesses in our time.

The Puritans put a bit of a spin on Calvin's thinking. In Geneva the stress on individual responsibility was balanced by the moral supervision of a relatively small city

state. In England the regulatory attempts of the crown, especially in the seventeenth century were singularly inept. Calvin's heritage was narrowed to the individual's calling. And a calling it was; work was not something you did to pay the rent. Work was a vocation, a God given calling, to be carried out *sub specium aeternitatis*.

The exercise of one's calling was a consequence of salvation. In the words of that most attractive of Puritans, Richard Baxter:

> Be wholly taken up in diligent business of your lawful callings, when you are not exercised in the more immediate service of God

The seriousness with which the better spirits regarded their calling can be seen in the diaries of the Puritan squires, written when they retired to their studies after supper and reviewed the day's work with a moral intensity that makes us ashamed. Or it can be seen in Baxter's own *Christian Directory* , a work derived from conversations with his parishioners, trying to settle the vexing ethical questions that arose in their professional and business lives .

This kind of spirituality, a devout life lived not apart from, nor even in the middle of, but through one's daily life is extremely hard to maintain. By the end of the seventeenth century the attempt had been pretty-well abandoned. The market place acquired a moral, or amoral, autonomy of its own, an autonomy which is still unquestioned. I went to the *Stepsure Letters* asking whether this child of Scottish Puritanism retained any of the moral earnestness of his ancestors. Mephibosheth was not an apprentice but a pioneer farmer. But was he in the spirit of Richard Baxter or Samuel Smiles?

I did not find what I expected. I found the quintessential Protestant ascetic. Mephibosheth was lame in both feet. Since he found it hard to get around, he early learned the art of doing a job right the first time, because, as he observed, it was easier to get it right the first time than to walk out again and fix his mistakes. Because it was hard to get around he was not tempted by "strolling," going down to the village to hang out with the neighbours at Tipples, the local pub, or at the smithy or the mill. His disability meant that he had to concentrate on his farm, his work. His life then stood in sharp contrast to most of the other characters in the stories, of which we may take Mr Soakem as an example. Soakem began life well:

> Like the rest of us he began the world by settling upon a farm. At first he was a hard-working man, and soon made himself comfortable . But he was very eager to be rich, and he would frequently compare his hard labour with his little gains, as he called them. At last, one day, passing Mr Tipple's, and observing the great number of horses which were fastened to the fence, it occurred to him that a large proportion of the township passed by his, he might as well keep tavern as not. He would mind business of the farm, and Mrs Soakem would attend to the travellers. Accordingly, he applied for license in the usual way.

Parson Drone tried to persuade first Soakem and then the magistrates not to do it, but he got his license and was soon running a prosperous business, With prosperity came

social pretensions and visits to Halifax. He left the farm to his children, and they did not run it well. Soon his off-farm activities took him away from the pub as well, and his children were no better publicans than they were farmers. They neglected the business, people stopped coming in and soon Mr Soakem fell upon hard times. Ere long he was enjoying the hospitality of the sheriff, Mr Catchem.

Soakem is but one of the many characters who ended up as the sheriff's guests, most of them because they were tempted by the delights of a gentle life and turned their backs on the drudgery of subsistence farming. They are McCulloch's version of the idle apprentice. Stepsure , on the other hand kept his nose to the grindstone, limited his visits to town to essential business and called on no one but the widow Scant, who became his mother-in-law, and Saunders Scantocreesh, whose conversation was, unlike Stepsure's, full of quotations from the more vitriolic parts of the Old Testament. But he was, in his devotion to hard work, a man after Mephibosheth's own heart.

Towards the end of the series Mephibosheth provided a kind of statement of his philosophy of life

> Thus, by getting on in my own way, I own a snug farm. I have bought a good property for Abner [his son]; and I can tell you a long and feasible story about where the cash has been going to in these hard times. Let no person, however, suppose that I am one of the great folks in our town, On the contrary neither Mr Cribbage nor any of the Sippit family would demean themselves so far as to ask the likes of me to visit them. Still, among our folks, I pass for a remarkable kind of man. *I have a pair of lame legs – I stay at home - I mind my own affairs - I wear homespun, and I have become wealthy by farming.*

"I have become wealthy by farming." This is the voice of Benjamin Franklin rather than Richard Baxter. But McCulloch was not altogether consistent. Earlier in the series we find one of Parson Drone's better speeches.

[If you will permit me a small diversion, Parson Drone's best speeches come from the beginning of his ministry, around the time that Stepsure married Dorothy, the daughter of widow Scant. By the end of the series, when Mephibosheth could speak in the past tense of buying a farm for his son Abner, the Parson's sermons had been reduced to variations on a single theme "What can't be cured must be endured." It seems that, despite the respect in which the parson was held, most of the townsfolk were in debt to the merchants as well as the parson, and since the merchants were more impatient than the parson, they got paid first. A lifetime of living on the edge of destitution had driven the parson to a state of Stoic resignation. McCulloch's early experience in Pictou had been similar, but he escaped the fate of Parson Drone by becoming a school master on the side, and eventually, getting a government grant.]

Parson Drone, in his younger days, was more in the true Puritan spirit:

> The Deity has endowed man with activity. He has placed him in circumstances, in which activity expended upon industrious pursuits

> acquires property; and property enables him to enjoy the comforts of life, and to be the friend of every good and benevolent design. Entrusting the human race with all this beneficence, He has also said to them "occupy till I come." Can he then, who has disregarded the injunction of his Master, say at his appearance "I have been glorifying thee upon earth; I have been finishing the works which thou gavest me to do"? It is the industrious and benevolent Christian whom the Lord esteems: the man who combines religious principle and worship with activity, industry and diffusive benevolence.

Work then, it is a gift. It provides the comforts of life, but also enables people to be the "friend of every good and benevolent design." It is all right to make money, as long as you give it away.

McCulloch did not lose all touch with his Puritan ancestors, but the main thrust of the letters is the message of Benjamin Franklin. As Mephibosheth himself said, "I grew wealthy by farming." *The Stepsure Letters* thus illustrate the dilemma of Calvinist spirituality. It is extremely difficult to build one's spiritual life on working to the glory of God. The mundane details of any occupation, apart from the by-products of diligence, like prosperity or recognition, soon dim the original vision. Benjamin Franklin is a kind of pale ghost of Richard Baxter.

The degeneration of Puritan spirituality is part of the process we know as the Enlightenment, and the reaction to the Enlightenment was the evangelical revival, a movement which has profoundly influenced the Presbyterian Church in Canada, probably more than the Reformation itself. But McCulloch can be as hard on the evangelical revival as on the frivolity of frontier Nova Scotia. Consider the story of the conversion of Saunders Scantocreesh.

> Mrs Sham and Miss Clippit, were two very religious ladies, who spent most of their time testifying to their conversion and what a difference it had made in their lives. They determined to convert Saunders and agreed with him to come to his house for the exercise. The process began in the kitchen, where Scantocreesh said that since he would be hard to convert, so they had best eat first. He then suggested that since conversion involved a good deal of "tumbling and roaring," they had best go outside. Once outside Saunders gave the two women a piece of his mind.
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> He told Mrs Sham that, before running about the country, pretending to convert sober industrious folks, she had better show a little Christianity at home, by lessening that misery in which her idleness, ill management and ill nature had involved her family. As for Sister Clippit he advised her to find a husband for herself and get children as the Bible bid her. This he assured her would be more to her credit than tattling through the town about her experience and marks of grace, when everybody could see nothing about her but marks of corruption. . . .

So much for the conversion of Saunders Scantocreesh. McCulloch was not unique in his critique of revivalism. One can find the same sort of thing in William Proudfoot, a contemporary of McCulloch's in south-western Ontario. Presbyterians were not against conversion, simply skeptical about its more demonstrative manifestations. For as Parson Drone, he remarked:

> Besides in the human constitution, a principle of curiosity or desire of knowledge, as philosophers term it, is an ingredient of powerful operation. When the mind is not adding to its stock of information, it becomes dissatisfied.

> Human beings are rational, and in good Presbyterian fashion I spent better than half my working life in theological education, dealing with the rational side of the Christian faith. I find Parson Drone immensely verbose, but I think his heart was in the right place.

Therein lies the point of this little talk. McCulloch, as he appears in *the Stepsure Letters*, does not suggest a solution to our problem, but the problem itself. Mephibosheth represents the collapse of Puritan spirituality, of engagement in the world to the glory of God. Scantocreesh represents the rejection of the historical alternative, experiential religion, a profound and life changing encounter with the living God. In McCulloch neither of these "no's" is absolute nor is it with us. At its best our faith is like McCulloch's, sober rational, less this worldly than it might be, in which one's heart is strangely but discreetly warmed .

And it rings few bells in the modern world. Mephibosheth is not altogether a lost cause. I have suggested that he was the quintessential Protestant ascetic. For our time, he was right for the wrong reasons. In 1821 the task was wresting a living out of the forests of Pictou County, a task formidable enough to demand plain living. But now the farms are established, most people live in cities, and even a modest income provides a standard of living undreamt of in McCulloch's time. One of the major problems of our time is over consumption, not because we cannot afford it, but because the earth cannot. We consume as if there were no tomorrow, and if the environmentalists are right, there won't be. A return to Protestant asceticism is called for because God gave us this garden to be tended, and we are making a royal mess of our calling.

The virtues that Calvin inherited and lived, sobriety, honesty, frugality and industry are the virtues we need to tend God's garden. The glory of God is a land at peace, providing enough for us all and luxury for none. I do not pretend that this approach to glorifying God through our daily lives will be easy to sustain. Calvin saw the temptation for his time and spent a great deal of time warning against the ruin of riches. I do not even know what the temptations will be. But I suggest to you that those of us who claim to be Calvin's children, however wandering, would do well to look not just at the mystical experience by which many of us came to the faith, but to the life that faith calls us to live, a life that sees the glory of God in a redeemed creation.

Thomas McCulloch and the Rhetoric of Piety

by

Jack C. Whytock

Thomas McCulloch (1776-1843) was a multi-sided individual and the very meetings here today bear evidence of this reality. In my own studies on McCulloch I have explored his contributions in literature, museum collections, liberal education, learned societies, systematic theology and theological education. [1] Today I want to focus upon McCulloch and his use of rhetoric for the purposes of Christian piety. This is one theme which has virtually been neglected in McCulloch studies and I hope this paper will "open" another field.

In recent scholarly works the interaction of rhetoric and piety have become an avenue for academic exploration. I cite here, Serene Jones of Yale Divinity School, and her book *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety* in the "Columbia Series in Reformed Theology." Here she has demonstrated yet another layer in John Calvin, that is, to see how Calvin combined the classic art of rhetoric for the ends of Christian piety.[2] In essence it allows us to see Calvin, the Christian Humanist, labouring for the Reformation cause.

On a much smaller scale, I will explore this theme as it relates to Thomas McCulloch as a practitioner of rhetoric for the ends of Christian piety. First, I will set out the terms and the limits placed upon this study as follows: an analysis of two long overshadowed

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[1] These themes may be found in the following:
Jack C. Whytock, "Thomas McCulloch and William McGavin: A Neglected Transatlantic Literary/Religious Connection" in *Historical Papers 1999: Canadian Society of Church History*, pp. 167-185.
Jack C. Whytock, "Thomas McCulloch's Quest to Educate: Societies, Collections and Degrees" in *The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History: Papers 1999,* pp. 28-48.
Jack C. Whytock, "A Case Study of Presbyterian Theological Education in British North America 1820-1843" in *The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History: Papers 2002*, pp. 43-66.

[2] Serene Jones, *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999).

McCulloch works: specifically, his published address *Words of Peace* (1817)[3] and the Associate Presbytery of Pictou's booklet on baptism – *The Subjects and Mode of Baptism* (1810).[4] Both works also represent the earlier period of McCulloch's life in Pictou before his commencement in Divinity teaching. They also provide a picture of McCulloch the churchman and the active presbyter.

The Parameters: Terms and Works

I am using the term "rhetoric" in its most classical form; that is, the art of persuasion employed both in the spoken word or in the written word. The *Oxford English Dictionary* sets rhetoric forth as "the art of using language so as to persuade or influence others...."[5] Throughout the Middle Ages rhetoric was one of the subjects of the seven liberal arts subjects, the *quidrivium,* yet was linked with grammar and logic as the *trivium* subjects. Going back to an early period in the ancient church, we find that six of the most noteworthy church fathers were trained in rhetoric; Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, Ambrose and Augustine.[6] Thus the study of rhetoric has had a long-standing tradition in the Christian Church and has shaped many of her preachers and theologians in their skills of communication. Augustine of Hippo helped the ancient church take classical rhetoric and use it for a Christian end, as in the rhetoric of preaching and Christian discourse. Augustine, writes Richard Lischer, worked from a principle of the "church's ownership of all truth and beauty, wherever they are found." Thus Augustine reworked Cicero's principles and adapted them to the first articulated Christian rhetoric manual in *On Christian Doctrine*.[7]

In essence, McCulloch is in this tradition and as a teacher of rhetoric we can apply an analyses to McCulloch's written material. McCulloch, as a student at Glasgow University in the 1790s, followed a curriculum still heavily arranged around the *trivium* despite the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment. The arts course shaped the theological curriculum of the period such that when McCulloch attended the Seceder Divinity Hall in Whitburn there was not a syllabus of lectures in homiletics as the students were already

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[3] Thomas McCulloch, *Words of Peace: being an address, delivered to the congregation of Halifax in connexion with the Presbyterian Church in Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Ward, 1817).

[4] Committee of the Associate Presbytery of Pictou, *The Subjects and Mode of Baptism Ascertained from Scripture, being a Conversation between a Private Christian and a Minister in which the Truth is illustrated, and the sentiments of the Baptists upon these points reviewed* (Edinburgh: J. Pillans and Sons, 1810).

[5] *Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), Volume XIII, p. 857.

[6] Edwin C. Dargan, *A History of Preaching*, Volume I (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), p. 65.

[7] Richard Lischer, ed. *The Company of Preachers: Wisdom of Preaching, Augustine to the Present* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 277.

acquainted with logic, grammar and rhetoric.[8] The students were assigned a constant round of discourses and, on occasion, a homily and a sermon; but it was not the Divinity Professor's task to lecture on "homiletics," that had been done in the *trivium*; rather, the Divinity Professor critiqued the student discourses, etc. The point here is that in the recent modern era of communication studies there is a change in the seminary to the syllabus of homiletics. Thomas McCulloch represents a continuum with an older tradition, a more classical rhetorical tradition and this must set the context for interpreting McCulloch as a rhetorician. Furthermore, McCulloch used rhetoric in that classical definition of persuasion and did not limit it to style alone; hence my keeping with the traditional understanding of rhetoric.

One other very simple fact must be acknowledged to set the context for McCulloch's two texts we will examine; namely, the fact that he taught logic, moral philosophy and rhetoric during his five years at Dalhousie College. This was a continuation of what he had also taught at Pictou Academy (college division) where in year two the students studied logic, grammar, and rhetoric.[9] In lecture notes from lectures at the Academy (college division) we find McCulloch outlining the eleven classical types of argument and Bacon's four types of illogical judgments.[10] All this is clear evidence not only of a man trained in rhetoric but also of one who shaped his lectures around rhetoric and the related subject matters of the *trivium*. His training, together with his labours in the classroom in Pictou and Dalhousie should keep us from being surprised from finding his use of rhetoric in his published sermons or tracts. His divinity students knew well that he was the rhetorician, as they delivered their discourses from memory before their Professor who was ready to offer the rhetorician's critical thoughts.[11] Thus, McCulloch's writings make for an excellent study to see how he employed rhetorical skills of persuasion for the end of Christian piety.

The next key term "piety" generally today has a negative connotation about it. No doubt this is in part because it is seen by many as the same as "pietism." The two words need to be carefully distinguished. "Piety," put simply, refers to the life of Christian devotion, virtue and duty flowing from a certain knowledge or acquaintance. Again, the *Oxford English Dictionary* is plain here, "Habitual reverence and obedience to God...devotion to religious duties and observances; godliness, devoutness, religiousness."[12] In the older tradition piety as understood by Phillips in 1696 was "a Moral vertue which causes us to have an affection and esteem for God and Holy Things."

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[8] See chapter twelve "The General Associate Hall (1786-1820)" in my "The History and Development of Scottish Theological Education and Training, Kirk and Secession (c.1560-c.1850)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wales, 2001), pp. 329-351.

[9] B. Anne Wood, *Pictou Academy in the Nineteenth Century* (Pictou, N.S.: Pictou County Geneology and Heritage Society, 1997), p. 20.

[10] Wood, *Pictou Academy*, p. 27.

[11] Wood, *Pictou Academy,* p. 84.

[12] *OED*, Volume XI, p. 804.

It is to be distinguished from the mystical strains of German "Pietism." Again piety must be applied to Thomas McCulloch in the Calvinian usage where John Calvin laid great stress on *pietas* as is evidenced in his most famous work *The Institutes of the Christian Religion.*[13] Interesting that over the centuries one section of *The Institutes* has been printed as a separate small work, usually referred to as *The Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*, with the latest being a new Hungarian translation in 1999.[14] It has a very straightforward theme, the development of Christian piety. McCulloch was a child of the Calvinist tradition and never lost sight of this aspect of piety, as we will see. Thus our study here will focus upon McCulloch the churchman trained in rhetoric, yet also the Reformed Calvinian student of piety. I hope this will reveal a deeper understanding of McCulloch and his contributions to the history of Christianity in Canada.

The Two Works

The first work, *The Subjects and Mode of Baptism* has often been ignored in its connection to McCulloch, no doubt due in part to its title page stating that it was written by a Presbytery Committee. However, in the copy in the New College Library, Edinburgh the following is written:

> (By Special Desire)
> To the Rev. Mr. James Robertson, Kilmarnock,
> from Mr. McCulloch, one of the Committee,
> Edinburgh, 6th April, 1810.

The Rev. Robertson, the man to whom Thomas McCulloch gave a copy, was a very prominent Antiburgher minister in Kilmarnock, only a few miles from Thomas McCulloch's former charge in Stewarton, Ayrshire. Both McCulloch and Robertson were in the same Presbytery, prior to McCulloch's 1803 departure.[15] This clearly affirms Thomas McCulloch's involvement and as one looks more closely at the actual text it forces one to conclude that the committee was dominated by one man, namely, Thomas McCulloch. Furthermore his son William and his granddaughters Isabella and Jean all make reference to this book as authored by Thomas McCulloch. Furthermore, it has more a story line and is done in the form of a dialogue – all reminiscent of the author of the *Stepsure Letters* or *Colonial Gleanings.* If a second author must be identified, I

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[13] See, "To the Reader" and the "Index" under the word "piety" for this thesis in John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, two volumes, in "The Library of Christian Classics", ed. J. T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 3-5. Also, Richard Stauffer, *The Humanness of John Calvin*, trans. George H. Shriver (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971); Jones, *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety,* pp. 129-132.

[14] Kalvin Janos, *Keresztyen elet* (Kolozsvar: Koinonia, 2001); John Calvin, *The Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952).

[15] Robert Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church from 1733 to 1900* (Edinburgh: David M. Small, 1904), pp. 288-289.

would suggest that Rev. James MacGregor was the close collaborator. The style of the 1810 work is that of McCulloch. MacGregor's *A Guide to Baptism* written about 1826 and contained in *A Few Remains* is more the reasoned tract rather than the literary tract for persuasion. (The nineteenth century Maritime Presbyterian works on Baptism constitute an amazing body of material for comparison – the Committee [McCulloch], MacGregor, Sommerville and MacDonald).[16] My conclusion is that McCulloch was the author and the Committee simply served as a "final" editing group.

The reason the Associate Presbytery of Pictou published the work was to defend its theological and ecclesiastical position in the colonies. I can only conjecture at this point, but I am not convinced that *Subjects and Modes of Baptism* was really against the New Lights and their emergence as a Baptist grouping (which in 1809 had reached its decision to "withdraw fellowship from all the churches who admit unbaptized persons [immersed, that is] to what is called occasional communion.")[17] The immediate context, I believe, lies elsewhere; namely, with the arrival of the "Scotch Baptists" to Pictou County, specifically to River John and also to Prince Edward Island. These folk, many who were recent immigrants represent the Haldane tradition from Scotland. In 1808 James Haldane moved from being an Independent Congregationalist to being a Baptist and in 1808 saw to print, *Reasons for a Change of Sentiment and Practice on the Subject of Baptism.*[18] The Secession Presbyterians, though similar in some theological aspects to the Haldanes, were adamantly opposed to their Independency and Baptist views. The father of the famous missionary John Geddie was influenced by the Haldanes.[19] I believe that the Haldane influence in Pictou County, though not large by comparison to the Presbyterian immigrant presence, was the motivating factor for this 1810 book, *Subjects and Modes of Baptism;* it was defensive and promotional. There is only one direct reference in the text to a Baptist writer; that is, Abraham Booth (1734-1806), England's noteworthy Calvinistic Baptist preacher and author of the famed work *Paedobaptism*

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[16] James MacGregor, *A Guide to Baptism* in *A Few Remains of the Rev. James MacGregor*, ed. George Patterson (Edinburgh: William Oliphant, 1859), pp. 137-165.

Donald MacDonald, *A Treatise on the Holy Ordinance of Baptism* (Charlottetown: Hazzard and Moore, The Sunnyside Press, 1898. Note MacDonald died in 1867.

William Sommerville, *Baptismal Immersion Not of God. Arguments Pro and Con* (Saint John: McKillop and Johnston, 1876). Thomas McCulloch was a close friend of Sommerville and in fact preached in Sommerville's church the Sunday before McCulloch died.

[17] John Moir, *The Church in the British Era* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972), p. 138. Russell Prime, "Background" (2) (unpublished paper) received, May, 2003, Halifax, N.S.

[18] Nigel M. de S. Cameron, org. ed. *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1993), pp. 385-386.

[19] R. S. Miller, *Misi Gede: John Geddie Pioneer Missionary to the New Hebrides* (Launceston, Tasmania: Presbyterian Church of Tasmania, 1975), p. 9.

Examined (1784).[20] There are no allusions to the New Lights of Nova Scotia, nor directly to the Haldanes; yet I see Pictou County with its recent Scottish immigrants as providing the seed bed for this tract.

I will not now give an extensive background to the historical context for *Words of Peace* published in 1817 but summarize the context.[21] McCulloch had been called by the Associate Anti-Burgher congregation in Halifax in 1808 but declined, yet maintained an interest in the work there. In 1811 this congregation, now Burgher, received Rev. James Robson as their minister who was inducted there on 13 May, 1812. Robson originally from Kelso, Scotland, was formerly the minister of the Burgher congregation in Lochwinnoch, of the Presbytery of Paisley, having served there from 1803 to 1810. It appears that Rev. Robson had a "stormy" relationship with the Lochwinnoch church. He then spent two years as an itinerant preacher before going to Nova Scotia where he pastored the Halifax Associate church from 1812 to 1820 "when, owing to dispeace in the congregation, he resigned his charge". From Halifax he went to Pictou where he served from 1824 until his death in 1838.[22] Thus the Halifax congregation was one of the Burgher congregations that entered the 1817 union, the year that McCulloch gave his *Words of Peace* to the congregation. Robson was an aggressive supporter of the 1817 union as was McCulloch, so this was not the source of conflict. Robson served as Clerk to the Synod of Nova Scotia from 1817 to 1838.[23]

The Rhetoric and Piety of *Words of Peace*

In typical rhetorical fashion Thomas McCulloch frames the opening of this address in such a way as to gain first the audience's sympathy – "You know, brethren, that I have long felt an interest in your congregational affairs. By occasional intercourse, our acquaintance has grown into friendship...."[24] (In many ways this was similar to what has been argued for Paul's epistles, written in the rhetorical style.) Then follows McCulloch's stated thesis, the divisions which have arisen in the Halifax congregation must be stopped. He immediately nuances his argument to qualify it by realizing that

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[20] Donald M. Lewis, ed. *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860*, I (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 120.

[21] See, Barry Cahill's paper in these 2003 papers for a full contextualization. Also, William McCulloch, *Life of Thomas McCulloch, D.D. Pictou*, editors Isabella and Jean McCulloch (Truro, 1920), pp. 52-53.

[22] Robert Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church from 1733 to 1900*, vol. II (Edinburgh: David M. Small, 1904), p. 538; A.E. Betts, *Our Fathers in the Faith: Being an account of Presbyterian Ministers ordained before 1875* (Halifax: Maritime Conference Archives, 1983), p. 111.

[23] W. Gregg, *History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Co., 1885), pp. 90-91, 137.

[24] *Words of Peace*, p. 3. I express my thanks to my son Ian Whytock for retyping *Words of Peace* to facilitate a much easier read. However, I have retained in the footnotes the page numbers to the original printed text.

yes, there is a place for proper dispute in the church and "It is possible for even the peace of the church to be too dearly purchased." Contention and debate must be carefully handled, "When dissension occurs, it must then be an enquiry of prudence, will the gain of quarrelling counterbalance the loss?"[25] "...That strife which will receive the approbation of the God of peace, must be supported by very weighty reasons indeed; and let us all remember, that his decisions do not always accord with the views of those who are quarrelling. What such persons conceive to be of vast importance, God may very lightly esteem." This is followed by a summary statement that "all who think of offenses will increase them in magnitude until the very grounds of the offense are removed from mind". Having stated the nuances and qualifications the argument proceeds with full force. There are no subheadings in the text yet I summarize the development of his argument under eight reasons. In good rhetorical fashion there is a clear progressive advance towards the climax of the argumentation. I provide the following flow of the argument against contention:

1. To think often about Christian charity;
2. Consider how contention affects social discussion;
3. Test your contentions by asking if this is for God's honour and in accord with His will;
4. Go beyond an individual religion to see the family of God as better;
5. Contention is injurious to personal piety;
6. Contention affects the wider church negatively;
7. Now ask yourself, "How do these disputes benefit you as a congregation?";
8. And contention affects death's preparation and you need to consider the coming judgement.[26]

Following these eight arguments that McCulloch makes to convict this Halifax church of the dangers and problems of contention, the ultimate goal is reconciliation and the restoration of peace in this congregation. He concludes with a long paragraph of summary application in which one can identify six applicatory exhortations or "calls to action" for the members of this Halifax congregation to do:

1. First review your present conduct;
2. Each accept your share of the blame and make allowance for others;
3. Think upon the good qualities in each other – "This is an important step to reconciliation;"
4. Be followers of Christ – forgiveness and grace are demanded of you;

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[25] *Words of Peace*, p. 5.

[26] *Words of Peace,* pp. 6-15.

5. Consider the hour of your death and how you should be right for that hour; and
6. Finally, your consciences and affections must be right "for your own sakes, then, for the sake of religion, for Christ's sake...."[27]

It is to be noted in both the eight arguments in the body of the address and in the six concluding applications that there is a similar order, always leading to the climactic point concerning death and the judgement of all. This is an evidence of a writer and speaker trained in the classical rhetorical style and is reflective of one who also taught the subject of rhetoric. The end in view for this was not rhetoric for rhetoric's sake but rather as a tool and servant of Christian piety. Rhetoric was but the tool and servant in McCulloch's hand.

McCulloch's use of rhetorical figures of speech or the elements of speech in this address were not of an allegorical nature but were comparison, *interrogatio*, and *gradatio*. Several comparisons were made between the members of the church and the character and attributes of God the Father and the example of Jesus Christ, thereby eliciting the "if" "then" comparison. The other chief rhetorical element of speech McCulloch employed in this address was the *interrogatio*, or the rhetorical question posed for argumentative effect. One expects such in a homily or sermon and since this is a "congregational address" it comes close to a sermon in several aspects. Usually he used one rhetorical question then proceeded with a statement but on occasion he will group several together, for example, "Does God command quarrelling? Does his grace set every man against his brother? Did Christ strive with his friends?" and nearing the end of his eighth argument there are six rhetorical questions strung together – again at the climax of the final argument –

> Are you, brethren, in a state of preparation for the judgement seat of Christ? ...Have you embraced the gospel of peace? Have you been diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless? Where are those talents which you have gained for Christ? When the judgement is set and the books are opened, will they contain a detail of your love to the brethren? To you he entrusted the peace of his church; and what have you done with it? ..."[28]

In terms of the goal, the development of Christian piety in the church in Halifax, the stress on piety is perhaps the most striking in this composition, more so than anything else from the pen of McCulloch. The *Mephibosheth Stepsure Letters* present a different accent on piety – industry, morality, virtue, etc. and *Colonial Gleanings* a piety of evangelical allegory. But here in *Words of Peace* we find Thomas McCulloch serving us the fullest development of Christian spirituality and piety. We are actually able to dissect and see beyond the erudite Calvinistic lectures to the heartbeat of his faith to that of the

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[27] *Words of Peace*, pp. 14-16.
[28] *Words of Peace*, p. 15.

experimental evangelical pastor/theologian. His language is reflective of that Secession evangelicalism of which he belonged – "Did you only consider your present situation, you would easily perceive, you would all feel, how pernicious to improvement in personal religion your contention is, how injurious to the exercise of every Christian grace" and "Religion in secret is sweet; but a day in the family of God, is better than a thousand." McCulloch here is the pious evangelist – "Have you embraced the gospel of peace?" He is the pious evangelical confronting them with "affection for the brethren," "peace of mind," appeals to "consciences and affections: and calls to "fervent prayer and meditation" this is all reflective of McCulloch's goal to heal the division and see pious Christianity grow and prosper.

The Rhetoric and Piety of *The Subjects and Mode of Baptism*

With *Words of Peace* McCulloch used a rhetorical style of reasoned argumentation, whereas with *The Subjects and Mode of Baptism* the arguments are woven into story and dialogue. The use of metaphor and allegory are common figures of speech employed in rhetoric also. The dialogue begins on the first page not by the Minister but by Christian asking time of the Minister to have a conversation and to ask for information. In essence it is a warm beginning – not confrontational – more a kind invitation to drop in at "a fire-side chat". (The tract is mildly reminiscent of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The Minister is a type of Evangelist.[29] Christian is the Pilgrim.) The Minister's response is naturally agreeable and stresses friendship, love, conversation and a real spirit of gentleness. Again, there is all absence of an asorbic tone or style but clearly there is a desire to draw the reader gently into the subject. The Minister's statement to Christian, "Were the friends of Christ to enter more frequently in social intercourse, the truths and consolations of religion would be better known, and more highly appreciated,"[30] is virtually what McCulloch wrote seven years later to the Halifax congregation. This sets the tone for a topic which could be highly controversial. It also establishes a spirit of Christian piety breathing through well-written rhetoric. The next page continues this introductory dialogue whereby sympathy is further aroused by the reader as the Christian is in a pitiable state because he wants Christian fellowship but he is confused by the different churches. The Minister then asks him to tell him what principles specifically he finds difficulty with in the Minister's church. Christian freely does this on the third page – he has a problem with the baptism of infants by sprinkling. At last the subject of the book is clearly uncovered! Christian is becoming convinced that the practice of the Baptists is correct. Again the Minister does not respond with direct hard-hitting confrontation but a question:

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[29] The minister has many characteristics of the Reverend James MacGregor. However, I think it is too early to argue for a full portrait of MacGregor here, and this will come later in *Colonial Gleanings*.

[30] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, p. 1.

> **M** – Did you derive your present views from the scriptures, or from books written by Baptists upon these points? [then the answer]
> **Chr** – A conversation, some time ago, with a friend who is a Baptist, first induced me to consider the subject; and afterward an attentive perusal of books supporting his sentiments, convinced me of their truth.[31]

Unfortunately, the specific books are not named. The Minister then ascertains that the Christian had actually never considered the arguments which a Presbyterian would use but rather he had only considered the arguments used by the Baptists. So the minister only proceeds to offer arguments after Christian has graciously asked him – "Your strongest argument, I presume, is custom; but if you have any others, I am ready to hear them."[32]

The Minister before proceeding to outline his arguments lays before Christian the principles on baptism as found in the Westminster Shorter Catechism by quoting question and answer 95 together with all the scripture proofs. In essence the Minister has now a "text" to deal with and the five scriptural proofs in reality are the outlines for the arguments to follow. The Minister elicits Christian's response and the author records Christian's shock that the scriptures which the Presbyterian minister used were all the texts he had thought supported only the Baptist position. The dialogue now begins in earnest with the first argument being the premise that inference and analogical reasoning from Scripture are permitted in the Christian life. The very words are reflective of classical rhetoric, but again the form is Christianized for a pious end. The Minister first argues that analogical reasoning is permissive and not just express command. He reasons from Acts 10:46,47 that Peter baptized Cornelius and his friends on the basis of analogical reasoning. Christian concedes this point because they received the Holy Spirit, therefore baptism was to be dispensed. Thus analogical reasoning was critical to the first argument.[33] The Minister further buttresses his case with the matter of females taking Communion, yet there is no express command in Scripture for this; rather it is by analogical reasoning.[34]

The second argument centres around the Baptist assertion that only adults can believe and repent and thus be baptized. The Minister here presents the case that if this Baptist argument is true, then infants are excluded from the mercy of God.[35]

Argument number three, is that infants along with their parents were admitted into the church. Presuppositions stated here are these:

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[31] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, p. 3.
[32] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, p. 4.

[33] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, pp. 8-10. [Argument #1 – Analogical Reasoning, example 1]

[34] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, p. 10. [example 2]

[35] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, p. 11 [Argument #2 – Faith + Repentance Prerequisite for Baptism means Infants are excluded God's mercy.]

(a) the Old Testament Church is a continuation into the New Testament Church, and
(b) proselytes in the Jewish economy were brought in by circumcision.
(c) Circumcision was not a cardinal ordinance.[36]

Argument number four concerns the mode of admission into the church since the time of Abraham. Here the Minister brings Christian to see that formerly it was by circumcision, and latterly by baptism. Here is their similarity.[37] Then he quickly moved to the argument of household baptism as in continuity with the Old Testament dispensation yet carefully showing aspects of discontinuity due to the new dispensation.[38]

Argument number six is in the form of a rhetorical question posed by the minister: "Whether do you suppose them [infants] to be Christians or Heathen?" Christian responds with great humility: "I am really at a loss to answer you at present; I shall be glad to hear your own sentiments."[39] The Minister seizes this open door and walks Christian through the answer in a general fashion but avoiding major controversies.

In another major argument, namely the attack upon infant baptism due to "abuse" of the practice, Christian challenges the Minister: "But many baptized infants are never interested in the righteousness of faith."[40] This discussion on this point was clearly expected and is found in all baptism booklets of the time.

The final discussion or argument on the matter of subjects is I Corinthians 7:14 "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife...else were your children unclean...". Here McCulloch, for the Committee, enters into his most protracted of word studies and exhibits his scholarly knowledge of the various interpretations of the text at hand.[41]

Next follows the arguments for the mode of baptism as pouring or sprinkling and not immersion. I summarize these as follows:

1. *Baptizo* does not always mean immersion.[42]

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[36] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, pp. 12-13.

[37] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism,* pp. 14-15.

[38] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism,* pp. 15-16. Page 19-20 deals with discontinuity aspects.

[39] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, p. 17. The Minister's answer starts on page 17, then he is diverted by debate, and returns to his main line of argumentation on pages 23-25.

[40] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, p. 22.

[41] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, pp. 28-31. See McCulloch's discussion on "legitimate" and "consecrated."

[42] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, pp. 32-33.

THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY:

Minutes of the Annual Meeting 27 September 2003:

The meeting was Called to Order by the President, Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Johnston at 2:05pm. The Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Michael Millar, acted as Secretary for the meeting. Sixteen members were present.

The President opened the meeting by welcoming all who were present.

Regrets from Rev. Peter Bush, Rev. Dr. John Johnston, Dr. John Moir and Dr. Marilyn Whiteley were noted as being received by the Secretary-Treasurer.

The agenda was presented. No additions or deletions were made. On motion of the Secretary-Treasurer, seconded by Father Edward Jackman, the agenda as presented was the agenda for the meeting.

On motion of the Secretary-Treasurer, seconded by Dr. Zander Dunn, the Minutes of the 2002 Annual Meeting, as printed in the 2002 Papers, were approved, no errors or omissions having been noted.

Business Arising from the Minutes:

(1) The Best of the Society Papers proposal was discussed. Dr. Paul Laverdure informed the meeting of the preliminary work he had done with a view to this proposal becoming volume 3 of his series on Presbyterianism in Canada. This work is being done in conjunction with Dr. John Moir. Dr. Laverdure's suggestion is to take a group of the Society's Papers that deal with The Presbyterian Church in Canada in the post-1925 period. Following discussion, during which possible funding sources were explored, it was moved by Dr. Dunn, seconded by Mr. Al Clarkson "That we proceed with this proposal." Carried. It was agreed that Dr. Laverdure, Rev. Dr. John A. Johnston and the President would be the committee to work on the proposal.

(2) The Secretary-Treasurer gave a progress report on the Pictou '03 meeting. Thirty-two people, including the presenters, are signed up.

(3) Our advertisement in the Presbyterian Record was discussed. The Secretary-Treasurer informed the meeting that the ad. – in the July-August issue as agreed at the 2002 Annual Meeting – had resulted in no enquiries. He pointed out that the motion from last year contained the phrase "each year" which meant that if no action was taken the ad would appear each year in the July-August issue. If the timing is to be changed or the ad discontinued a motion to that effect will be required at this meeting. Following discussion, during which additional advertising venues were explored, it was moved by Dr. Laverdure, seconded by Ms. Kim Arnold "That our advertisement be placed in the May issue of the Presbyterian Record." Carried.

Conclusion

When *Subjects and Mode of Baptism* is combined with *Words of Peace* we see an author who knew and practised well the art of rhetoric for the ends of Christian piety. Both works show Thomas McCulloch`s ability in a light beyond that of the educator, here is the churchman at work – the rhetorician for piety. Furthermore, here is a Scot who was well trained in the homiletics of the eigthteenth century, namely rhetoric, logic, grammar and elocution. As with Augustine, so with the Scottish professors in the eigtheenth century; rhetoric was used for pious ends. McCulloch embraced well his own tradition, the Seceders, and his use of rhetoric was to this pious end. His was not the "flowery" style of some Moderates; it was plain, direct, forceful, and persuasive, yet imaginative and with affection.

In these two tracts we see Thomas McCulloch, the pious churchman, as one steeped in the great rhetorical tradition stretching back to Cicero, the Church Fathers, the Scottish Divinity Professors, and to his own generation. The art of communication was classical rhetoric for a pious end. *Words of Peace* reveals in McCulloch a sensitive soul and a pious churchman, not just the figure of a stern theologian or polemical educator. Likewise, *Subjects and Mode of Baptism* presents McCulloch in a gentler way, a kinder portrait. When both are taken together, we uncover more of Thomas McCulloch, the churchman and rhetorician of piety.

The President then gave his report indicating that he had the offer of one paper 2004, that he had enjoyed his first year in the office, and looked forward both to Pictou '03 and 2004.

The Editor gave his report. He noted the process had been streamlined, that presenters were now giving him their papers on disk as well as in hard-copy form and this made his work so much easier. The Editor was commended for the work that he has done with the papers with a round of applause.

The Secretary-Treasurer circulated his printed report. Moved by the Secretary-Treasurer, seconded by Dr. William Klempa "That the report of the Secretary-Treasurer be received and its recommendations be considered seriatim." Carried.

(1) The financial statement was circulated and discussed. Following amplification of certain items in the statement, the financial statement was approved on motion of the Secretary-Treasurer, duly seconded.
(2) The G. I. C. presently held by the Bank of Montreal, due to mature on the 6th of November 2003, was discussed. Questions were asked about other financial instruments in other financial institutions, such as ING Bank and Presidents Choice Financial that might have better rates of interest than the 1.5% currently in effect at the Bank of Montreal. The Secretary-Treasurer pointed out that his recommendation simply indicated the G. I. C. be renewed for another year at the best obtainable rate of interest without reference to any particular financial institution. He agreed to check around and see what could be done, but that as an unincorporated non-profit organisation without charitable donation status, our options are limited. Recommendation 2 was moved by the Secretary-Treasurer, seconded by Dr. Donald Smith "That when this G. I. C. matures that it be re-invested in another one year G. I. C. at the best obtainable rate of interest." Carried.

(3) A summary of the membership drive initiated last year by Ms. Arnold and the Secretary-Treasurer was reported on. In connection with Pictou'03 a mailing had been sent to every church worker in the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces listed in the 2002 Acts & Proceedings. In addition a similar mailing had gone out to every United Church of Canada minister in those Maritime Conference Presbyteries that border on Pictou County. A mailing had also been sent to the faculty at the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax and to the Secretaries (Clerks) of the other Presbyteries in the Maritime Conference. Ms. Arnold has sent a letter regarding our Society to every university library in Canada that is not already one of our corporate supporters. She very generously covered the cost of this mailing from The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives & Records Office budget. Recommendation 3 – amended wording underlined – "That a vote of thanks be given to Ms. Arnold for generously covering the cost of the universities libraries mailing <u>out of the Archives & Records Office budget</u>." Carried.

On motion of the Secretary-Treasurer, duly seconded, the report as a whole was approved.

New Business:

(1) The Editor will be required to do a great deal of extra work with the 2003 papers. An honourarium was suggested. Moved by Dr. Dunn, seconded by Dr. Smith "That the Editor, Dr. Elliott, be given an honourarium of two hundred and fifty dollars ($250.00) by way of compensation for the additional work that will be entailed with the 2003 papers." Carried.

(2) Microfilming the Society Papers: A proposal worked up by Mr. Bob Anger, Assistant Archivist for The Presbyterian Church in Canada indicated that the Society papers up to and including 1986 have been microfilmed. It is proposed that the balance of the papers up to and including 2002 be done. Mr. Anger noted that the Archives appears to be missing the papers for 1990 and 1996. It was suggested that either Dr. John Johnston or Dr. Mel Bailey be approached to see if they would have a spare copy. Two scenarios were advanced by Mr. Anger. The first would have the papers from 1987 to 1995 done at an approximate cost of one hundred and fifty dollars ($150.00). The second would have all of the papers from 1987 to 2002 done at an approximate cost of two hundred dollars ($200.00). Mr. Anger indicated that if all of the papers in the second scenario would not go on the one film that a second film at a cost of twenty-six dollars ($26.00) would be required. Following discussion it was moved by Dr. A. D. MacLeod, seconded by Dr. Dunn "That microfilming of the Society's papers from 1987 to 2002 be done through The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives & Records Office at a cost not to exceed two hundred and twenty-five dollars ($225.00)." Carried.

(3) The subject of a donation to First Presbyterian Church in Pictou, Nova Scotia from this Society to express our thanks for the use of its facilities for Pictou '03 was discussed. Moved by the Secretary-Treasurer, seconded by Ms. Olive Anstice "That a donation of one hundred dollars ($100.00) be given to First Presbyterian Church, Pictou, Nova Scotia." Carried.

Election of Officers:

All of the current Committee members have indicated a willingness to continue in office for 2004.

Moved by Ms. Arnold, duly seconded, "That the Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Johnston be continued as President for 2004." Carried.

Moved by Dr. Dunn, duly seconded, "That Mr. Michael Millar, be continued as Secretary-Treasurer for 2004." Carried.

Moved by the Secretary-Treasurer, duly seconded, "That Dr. David Elliott, be continued as Editor, for 2004." Carried.

The President thanked the meeting for its expression of confidence in the current Committee.

Any Other Business:

The date of the next regular was set for Saturday the 25th of September 2004 at Knox College at 9:30am.

Adjournment:

On motion of Mr. Clarkson the 2003 Annual General Meeting was adjourned and the regular business of the Society resumed.

Geoffrey Johnston, BA, BD, M.Th, Th.D., President

Michael Millar, FRPSC.
Secretary-Treasurer.

THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY:

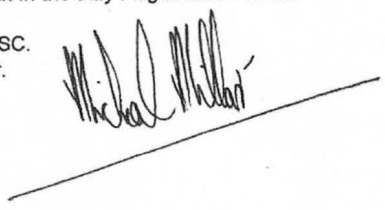
FINANCIAL REPORT - 26 September 2003:

Item:	Income:	Expenses:	Balance:
Brought forward 28 September 2002:			**1245.98**
Memberships 2002 and 2003.	945.00		
Memberships 2004 paid in advance	35.00		
Memberships 2005 paid in advance	15.00		
Corporate memberships 2002 and 2003.	121.05		
Sale of papers.	190.00		
Donations.	50.00		
Bank Interest.	0.87		
G. I. C. matured	1,000.00		
G. I. C. Interest	13.02		
Pictou '03 Registrations	264.00		
Total Income.	**2,633.94**		2,633.94
Sub-total.			**3,879.92**
G.I.C. maturing 6 November 2003. (1)		1,000.00	
Knox College Catering, 2002 meeting.		71.30	
Printing costs - 2002 papers.		409.40	
Office supplies - Editor.		95.07	
Office supplies - Secretary-Treasurer.		68.99	
Postage.		423.71	
Bus parcel charges - 2002 papers.		26.33	
Mileage - Editor.		81.00	
Expenses - President.		22.41	
Photocopying.		24.40	
Advertising - Presbyterian Record. (2)		235.40	
Total Expenses.		**2,458.01**	**2,458.01**
Balance Forward 26 September 2003:			**1,421.91**
ASSET: G.I.C. maturing 6 November 2003.			1,000.00
Total - Bank balance plus GIC.			**$2,421.91**

Notes:

1. GIC is with the Bank of Montreal, Barrie. Interest is at 1.5%.
2. The meeting last year agreed to spend up to $250.00 on an advertisement in the Record. The advertisement ran in the July-August 2003 issue.

Michael Millar, FRPSC.
Secretary-Treasurer.



2. The argument of analogical reasoning – by noting where the baptisms occurred, eg "in Jordan", "in the wilderness", etc.[43]
3. The full understanding of the terms "out of" and "from" as denoting "motion to a place".[44]
4. By refuting the Baptist argument that Rom. 6:4 and Col. 2:12 are clear references to mode. Here the argument is that these references refer to meaning and not mode.[45]
5. Next, the argument of the Old Testament foundations for the mode of baptism as pouring or sprinkling is presented.[46]
6. Old Testament prophecy is brought forward in support of the mode.[47]
7. Finally the Minister argues for a parallel between Pentecost and the mode of baptism.[48]

Then the conclusion, which the reader has been expecting. There is a triumph of the Minister`s persuasiveness and Christian responds:

> **Chr** - The evidence which you have already brought forward is convincing. Our conversation has afforded me much pleasure; and I trust I shall always remember it with gratitude. It has shown me the truth, and will enable me to take sweet fellowship with those around me, and to walk with them into the house of the Lord. I ought to apologize for troubling you so long. May the Lord reward you with the consolations of his covenant!
> **M** - My dear Sir, there is no need for apology. The benefits of our conversation are not all your own. Already I enjoy the satisfaction of gaining you to the truth; I shall also reap the benefit of your fellowship in the church...."[49]

Here was the triumph of Christian piety for Presbyterians. The method employed was nothing other than the art of persuasion, or classical rhetoric. This later booklet shows the clear emphasis on the author`s skills in reasoning, logic and grammar.

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[43] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, pp. 33-34.

[44] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, pp. 35-36.

[45] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, pp. 37-40.

[46] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, pp. 41-45. See on «divers washings."

[47] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism,* pp. 46-47.

[48] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism*, pp. 47-48.

[49] *Subjects and Mode of Baptism,* p.49.

Conclusion

When *Subjects and Mode of Baptism* is combined with *Words of Peace* we see an author who knew and practised well the art of rhetoric for the ends of Christian piety. Both works show Thomas McCulloch`s ability in a light beyond that of the educator, here is the churchman at work – the rhetorician for piety. Furthermore, here is a Scot who was well trained in the homiletics of the eigthteenth century, namely rhetoric, logic, grammar and elocution. As with Augustine, so with the Scottish professors in the eigtheenth century; rhetoric was used for pious ends. McCulloch embraced well his own tradition, the Seceders, and his use of rhetoric was to this pious end. His was not the "flowery" style of some Moderates; it was plain, direct, forceful, and persuasive, yet imaginative and with affection.

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