Canadian Society of Presbyterian History

Papers 2018

Edited by Kate Revington

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Contents

About the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History *iv*

About the Authors of the 2018 Papers *iv*

Don MacLeod: A Tribute
W. J. Clyde Ervine *1*

Teaching Preaching in a Time of Cultural Change:
The Forgotten Story of John J. A. Proudfoot, Knox College
Robert J. Dean *3*

L. M. Montgomery and the Impact of Church Union
Kate Revington *16*

Donald Harvey MacVicar: Calvinist Educator
John Vaudry *26*

Reformed/Presbyterian Church Architecture:
Then and Now
Jack C. Whytock *35*

About the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History

Dedicated to the Study of Presbyterian and Reformed History

The Canadian Society of Presbyterian History (CSPH) is a religion-centred learned society. It meets annually on the last Saturday of September. More than 190 papers have been presented to the Society since its founding in 1975, the 100th anniversary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Each year, an edited version of presented conference papers is published. A sampling of individual papers can be found on the Society's website: **csph.ca**.

Membership is open to individuals and institutions that share an interest in and a fascination for the study of Presbyterian and Reformed history.

About the Authors of the 2018 Papers

Robert J. Dean is Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Providence Theological Seminary in Manitoba. He taught theology at Tyndale Seminary and preaching at Wycliffe College in Toronto. Robert is the author of several books. His latest is in collaboration with the famed theological ethicist Stanley Hauerwas. Robert pastored a church in Scarborough, Ontario, and was received into the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 2018.

Kate Revington edits educational books and professional titles, many on teaching and literacy. She also edits the CSPH Papers. Her Church Union paper grew out of a renewed fascination with L. M. Montgomery. She has written, directed, and presented many dramatic texts for worship services. She currently sings in a Presbyterian choir and rings English handbells in a United Church ensemble. Kate and her husband Daniel live in Aurora, Ontario.

John Vaudry, a CSPH regular, now preaches in Bristol and Fort Coulonge, Quebec, and writes a regular newspaper column. Before that, he served as minister at First Presbyterian Church, Pembroke, Ontario, retiring in spring 2018. He earlier ministered to congregations in Montreal, Quebec; southwestern Ontario; and Cape Breton Island. He has contributed to texts related to Presbyterian history, such as *Still Voices — Still Heard*.

Jack C. Whytock is extraordinary professor in the Reformed Study Unit, Faculty of Theology, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa; principal, Dumisani Theological Institute, Eastern Cape, South Africa; and director for Haddington House Trust, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. He is originally from Bruce County, Ontario, and is a minister of the Free Church of Scotland.

Don MacLeod: A Tribute*

W. J. Clyde Ervine

DONALD MacLeod, son and grandson of missionaries to China, went to China with his parents as a three-month-old baby. After schooling in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and New York, Don graduated with a BA [McGill] in 1959, an MA [Harvard] in 1960, and a BD [Westminster Seminary] in 1963. He was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1988 by Gordon-Conwell Seminary and the same degree in 2011 by Westminster Seminary.

Throughout his life, Don's chief interests have been history, theology, and mission. Ordained by the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) in 1963, he served a seven-point charge in rural Nova Scotia; he was also founding minister of Bridlewood in Toronto; associate minister at Knox, Toronto; senior minister of Newton Presbyterian Church, near Boston; and then minister of St. Andrew's Church, Trenton. Don also served as president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and as general director of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada. In other words, Don has spent a lifetime as a mover and a shaker within the church in Canada and beyond.

By birth, education, and vocation, Don is an interdenominational internationalist who, unsurprisingly, married internationally — an English Anglican Inter-Varsity soulmate. His internationalism, as well as the fact that he didn't grow up in Canada or graduate from one of the PCC colleges, has made Don more colourful than most PCC clergy and, also, more aware of our church's capacity for institutional complacency.

Along with pastoring, Don has found significant time to study, write, and teach, becoming the well-read clerical scholar to which Presbyterian clergy have been taught to aspire, but seldom reach. Among his books stands the widely reviewed *W. Stanford Reid: An Evangelical Calvinist in the Academy* (McGill-Queen's Press, 2004). It received the Donald Grant Creighton Award from the Ontario Historical Society. You can understand Don's deep interest in Stanford Reid, for Reid, too, was a colourful character, more committed to a robust version of the Reformed faith than to the realpolitik of PCC denominational affairs. Then there's Don's 2007 biography of C. Stacey Woods, *C. Stacey Woods and the Evangelical Rediscovery of the University*. It traces the life of another evangelical internationalist who was formative in developing Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in both Canada and the United States and was for a quarter of a century, general secretary of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. By the way, I love Don's books because they give him a platform to offer rigorous historical insight, as well as to indulge his delight in biographical detail, some of it quite juicy! (Folks, be careful what you tell him!)

Besides his ministering and writing, Don has for decades been a passionate leader within the PCC's Committee on History as well as the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History. It is as such that we honour him today.

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* Presented with the grateful appreciation of all CSPH members on Saturday, September 29, 2018, at the Society's 44th annual conference at Knox College, Toronto, Ontario.

Don, your love for Christ and his church is evident in all you do. You may have been a principled contrarian from time to time — what some call your prophetic quality — but you are generous to a fault: generous with your time to the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History, and so generous with your friendships. All of us here gathered sincerely honour you, in token of which we present you with this certificate. It reads:

Presented to the Rev. Dr. A. Donald MacLeod, B.A., M.A., B.D., D.D., D.D.
In recognition of his true and tireless dedication as
President of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History for 11 years,
2008–2018.

We honour his passion to encourage scholars and lay people
to study and appreciate the rich history of Canadian Presbyterianism;
his own significant study of Presbyterian history shared with succeeding generations of Canadians;
his call to contemporary Presbyterians to reflect on the sacrifices of past Christians;
and all that he has added to the record of worship and service of past generations
as they follow Christ in their own age.

Teaching Preaching in a Time of Cultural Change: The Forgotten Story of John J. A. Proudfoot, Knox College

Robert J. Dean

ON December 10, 1889, after a dispute with his congregation lasting just over six months, the Reverend Dr. John J. A. Proudfoot resigned from his post as minister at First Presbyterian Church in London, Ontario. In and of itself, there is nothing particularly noteworthy about a minister falling out of favour with his congregation. What was unique in this case was that the minister in question was the son of the renowned missionary and founding pastor of the congregation, William Proudfoot. Furthermore, for more than 20 years, the younger Proudfoot had been concurrently serving as a lecturer in homiletics, pastoral theology, and church government at Knox College. In the struggle to remove Proudfoot from his pulpit, some of the parishioners even suggested that Proudfoot's preaching threatened the continuing viability of the congregation: it was felt that his sermons no longer communicated to the young people. While his preaching was thought to be a congregational liability in London in 1889, Proudfoot would continue to teach homiletics to candidates for ministry in the Presbyterian Church in Canada for the next 12 years at Knox College.

In this paper I intend to explore this fascinating case of an esteemed homiletics professor who was removed from his pulpit in the effort to determine the role that Proudfoot's preaching proficiency, or lack thereof, contributed to the souring of his relationship with the congregation. The first part of the paper will provide a biographical sketch of John J. A. Proudfoot. The middle part will examine Proudfoot's *magnum opus*, *Systematic Homiletics*. The concluding part will return to the events surrounding Proudfoot's resignation. I will attempt to interpret the events in light of insights gleaned from the biographical and homiletical sections in the effort to determine the role that Proudfoot's preaching played in his ultimately being forced from his pulpit.

The Life and Times of John J. A. Proudfoot

John J. A. Proudfoot had a long and distinguished career as a pastor and as a professor, yet he is often relegated in the literature studying the period to a few passing sentences or, occasionally, to a brief paragraph, if mentioned at all.[1] Among his contemporaries, Proudfoot tends to be eclipsed by his fellow Divinity Hall graduate and United Secession Presbyterian churchman, William Caven. Even the chronicler of the first century of ministry at First Presbyterian in London is not immune from this tendency, telling us that William Proudfoot "trained a score or more of men for the ministry, among them his own

[1] For example, Proudfoot receives not a single mention in such works as Centennial Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Enkindled by the Word: Essays on Presbyterianism in Canada* (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1966); Neil Smith, Allan L. Farris, and H. Keith Markell, *A Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, n.d.); John Webster Grant, *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); and Michael Gauvreau, *The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

son, John J. A. Proudfoot, and William Caven, the latter becoming one of the outstanding figures in the Presbyterian Church in Canada."[2] Taken together with the way the brief chapter on Proudfoot in the same work is sandwiched between glowing reports on the ministry of both his successor and predecessor at First Presbyterian, it is clear that the author does not consider John J. A. Proudfoot to be among the outstanding figures in the history of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Perhaps one reason the homiletician has been relegated to relative obscurity is that he is not even the most prominent pastor to bear the name Proudfoot. His father was one of the most significant personalities in early Presbyterianism in Canada. William Proudfoot set out for Canada in the summer of 1832 as one of the first three missionaries commissioned by the United Associate Secession Church.[3] By the spring of 1833, he had founded a congregation in London, Ontario. The senior Proudfoot was a dedicated evangelist firmly committed to proclaiming the central reality of the cross.[4] He travelled tirelessly and wrote voluminously,[5] helped to organize and administer a presbytery,[6] was the founding editor of *The Presbyterian Magazine*,[7] and established and served as the sole professor of the Divinity Hall which trained candidates for ministry within the Secessionist United Missionary Synod.[8] Within the literature, John J. A. Proudfoot never fully escapes from the imposing shadow cast by his father.

John Proudfoot was born on August 21, 1821, in Perthshire, Scotland.[9] He was the fourth of 11 children born to William and Isobella Proudfoot.[10] He came to Canada with his father in 1832 and set to work alongside his father in clearing and tilling the 200 acre farm that would provide a vital supplement to the senior Proudfoot's meagre ministerial salary.[11] He received his theological training at his father's Divinity Hall in London and was ordained on July 19, 1848.[12] Shortly thereafter, he was inducted as the minister for the congregation of Downie and Blanchard in southwestern Ontario, near London.[13] In

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2 Fred Landon, *A History of the First Hundred Years of the First United Church, London, Ontario (Formerly the First Presbyterian Church) 1832–1932* (London: [s.n.], 1932), 15.

3 Ibid., 8.

4 Stewart D. Gill, *The Reverend William Proudfoot and the United Secession Mission in Canada* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 196.

5 John S. Moir, *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 3d ed. (Burlington: Eagle Press Printers, 2004), 85.

6 Gill, *William Proudfoot*, 72–73.

7 Ibid., 132.

8 Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 117.

9 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 19.

10 Gavin McGregor, "The Reverend William Proudfoot: An Auld Acquaintance" (2011), 21, accessed April 2017, http://www.fsaunited.com/PDFs/Miscellaneous/proudfootstory.pdf.

11 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 11, 19.

12 Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 118; Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 19. Several curiosities emerge in the literature at this point. First, Masters dates Proudfoot's ordination as occurring in 1847. See D. C. Masters, *Protestant Church Colleges in Canada: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 47. Second, Landon describes the younger Proudfoot's ordination as occurring at the hands of his father (*History of the First Hundred Years*, 19). However, I'm not sure how this description squares with Presbyterian polity or the actual practices of the day. In his lectures on church government, John Proudfoot describes the moderator of the presbytery presiding over ordinations (*Outlines of Lectures on Church Government: Delivered in Knox College* (Toronto: Press of the Canada Presbyterian, 1895), 36). However, William Proudfoot held the position of presbytery clerk for most of his life (Gill, *William Proudfoot*, 73).

13 "Finding Aid: Records of The Rev. William Proudfoot and Family," 3. Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, Toronto.

November 1850, William Proudfoot suffered a heart attack.[14] After his death on January 16, 1851, John Proudfoot published a poignant reflection upon his father's final days in *Missionary Record of the United Presbyterian Church*.[15]

Following the death of the elder Proudfoot, the Canadian Church met in Synod and decided to search for an eminent person from Scotland to occupy Proudfoot's teaching post at Divinity Hall. Only one minister in attendance recorded his dissent to the decision: John Proudfoot.[16] At this point, the younger Proudfoot may have been reflecting his father's convictions surrounding the need for the church to shed its Scottishness and become a truly Canadian church, or perhaps he simply saw himself as the logical heir to head up the theological college.[17] Whether Proudfoot desired to follow in his father's footsteps as a professor at Divinity Hall is unclear; however, he did succeed his father as the minister of the congregation in London. Proudfoot was inducted as the minister of First Presbyterian on May 28, 1851, going on to serve the congregation for 38 years.[18] Following the example of his father, he was a consummate Presbyterian churchman, acting as the clerk of the presbytery from 1851 to 1861. He was also the secretary of Home Mission work from 1851 to 1876[19] and was elected moderator of the Synod of the Canada Presbyterian Church which assembled in Toronto in June of 1867.[20]

Although Proudfoot's opponents at the end of his ministry depicted him as man out of touch with the times and his congregation, an examination of the breadth of his ministry reveals that he was, strictly speaking, neither a conservative nor a traditionalist. While little has been written about the day-to-day realities of Proudfoot's ministry among the people of First Presbyterian, several significant congregational developments during his tenure suggest that he was open to innovation. At the head of this list was the introduction of an organ into the congregation's worshipping life. Proudfoot's father, like most Presbyterian ministers of the time, was staunchly opposed to the use of musical instruments in worship and preferred the unaccompanied singing of the Psalms.[21] However, it was during the younger Proudfoot's ministry in the latter half of the 1850s that a small reed organ was first installed.

This development horrified the Secessionist Presbytery, which sent representatives to remove the organ in 1858. Proudfoot successfully appealed the matter at the following General Assembly, which granted him permission to reinstall the organ.[22] At the time of the formation of the Canada Presbyterian Church in 1861, in a concession to the Free

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14 Gill, *William Proudfoot*, 207.

15 *Missionary Record of the United Presbyterian Church*, April 1851, 52, quoted in Gill, *William Proudfoot*, 207–8.

16 Gill, *William Proudfoot*, 130.

17 For a discussion of William Proudfoot's interest in and efforts towards "Canadianization," see the chapter titled "We Are Too Scotch: Attempts at Canadianization in the 1840s," in Gill, *William Proudfoot*, 111–47.

18 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 19. Another discrepancy emerges in the records at this point, as "Finding Aid: Records of The Rev. William Proudfoot and Family" dates Proudfoot's installation as occurring in 1852.

19 Kenneth L. Draper, "Finishing Badly: Religion, Authority, and Clergy in Late-Victorian London, Ontario," in *The Churches and Social Order in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Canada*, ed. Michael Gauvreau and Ollivier Hubert (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 161.

20 *Minutes of the Seventh Session of the Synod of the Canada Presbyterian Church, Held in Toronto, June 4–13* (Toronto: Lovell and Gibson, 1867), http://presbyterianarchives.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/CPC-Minutes-1867.pdf.

21 Gill, *William Proudfoot*, 204; McGregor, "William Proudfoot," 23.

22 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 46.

Church, the United Presbyterian congregations that had installed organs agreed to abandon using them. In 1871, First Presbyterian in London petitioned the General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church to reintroduce organ music in its worship. This petition led to what Moir has termed "the moment of truth on the organ question" at the General Assembly of 1872.[23] The Assembly approved the request of Proudfoot's congregation. While individual congregations would debate the merits of organ music for several more years, the die had been cast and Presbyterian worship in Canada would never be the same.

A new church building was constructed during John Proudfoot's pastorate. This construction project was necessitated by a fire in December 1859 that destroyed the original structure. The cherished organ was saved, and Proudfoot managed to rescue his horse and buggy from his stable before flames consumed them.[24] In 1861–62, a new building was erected on a new site at the cost of about $5600. A vestry and Sunday school room were added a few years later in 1865.[25] At the suggestion of the church treasurer, First Presbyterian became one of the first congregations in its area to introduce a weekly voluntary envelope system of giving.[26] Landon, in his account of the history of the congregation, observes that "in the first three years of the weekly offering system the debt on the church was cut in half."[27]

While Proudfoot's pastorate was marked by a significant building project and innovations such as the introduction of an organ and offering envelopes, it was also a period of reorganization, as the congregation moved from being a missionary start-up into the next phase of its life. During this period, more than 200 of the geographically dispersed members left the congregation to start new congregations closer to their own homes. Although the planting of several new congregations could be viewed as a missionary success, there were undoubtedly some who looked upon the remaining congregation of 200 members and wistfully longed for the larger crowds of previous years.[28]

Proudfoot's appointment as lecturer in homiletics, pastoral theology, and church government at Knox College in 1867 would have significant implications on the shape of his ministry. From 1867 until his resignation from First Presbyterian in 1889, Proudfoot would spend the weekdays of the fall term each session lecturing in Toronto.[29] When his courses were in session, he would return to London in time for the Friday night prayer meeting, conduct weddings as needed, give an occasional public lecture, and preach twice on Sunday before returning to Toronto.[30]

Over the years, this itinerary began to place great stress on the relationship between the congregation and its pastor. Landon suggests, "The work of the church would probably have been seriously handicapped by the pastor's absence but for the fact that the women of the church organized and did much of the visiting, a faithful group serving in this way

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23 Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 133.

24 McGregor, "William Proudfoot," 23.

25 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 19.

26 Ibid., 47.

27 Ibid., 20.

28 There seems to be a hint of this in Landon's presentation of this period, even though he acknowledges that the geographical dispersion of the initial congregation made such a development virtually inevitable (*History of the First Hundred Years*, 20–21).

29 Brian J. Fraser, *Church, College, and Clergy: A History of Theological Education at Knox College, Toronto, 1844–1994* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 70, 75.

30 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 21; Draper, "Finishing Badly," 161.

for many years."[31] At the time of the controversial end to his ministry, among the complaints of the disaffected parishioners published in the *London Free Press* were the charges that "the minister neglects the social duties of his office, and the distance he lives from the city renders his oversight of the flock almost impossible."[32]

Following his resignation from First Presbyterian, Proudfoot continued to teach at Knox College for 12 more years.[33] The eminent Presbyterian historian John Moir has described Proudfoot as an "outstanding scholar,"[34] and in 1871, Proudfoot received an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Monmouth College.[35] Proudfoot was one of the four faculty members when Knox College took its place in 1875 as one of six colleges of the newly formed Presbyterian Church in Canada. Brian Fraser has described Knox College as a key battleground during this period in the emerging conflict between the older confessional approach to the Reformed tradition and an emerging progressive evangelical orthodoxy. Proudfoot's colleagues William MacLaren and William Gregg were, according to Fraser, "staunch defenders of confessional orthodoxy."[36] On the other hand, Proudfoot's fellow Divinity Hall alumnus William Caven was "cautiously open to a different approach."[37] According to Fraser, Proudfoot stayed out of these debates.[38]

While that assessment may be true at the formal level, Proudfoot's participation in the Conference on Christian Unity, a gathering of leaders from the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Anglican churches to discuss church union, suggests that if forced to choose sides, he would likely lean towards that of his old friend, Caven. At the conference, Proudfoot spoke quite congenially of the possibility of church union, imagining that if union were to come about, "the moral power of the Church would be felt in the politics of the Dominion."[39] Although Proudfoot described his participation in the conference as rousing "kindlier feelings in my heart towards these sister Churches than I was ever able to feel or express before,"[40] this receptiveness did not stop him from at one point employing fiery rhetoric reminiscent of his father to express concern about the authority of prelatic bodies to proclaim binding rites and ceremonies giving rise to "Popish Saints Days."[41] When one considers that the opening section of Proudfoot's lectures on church government consisted of a polemic against prelacy, this brief outburst in the midst of otherwise convivial participation in the conference is not entirely surprising.[42]

Proudfoot's final remarks at the conference most clearly support my contention that he would be found in Caven's camp. In the dialogue surrounding "the Creeds," Proudfoot

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31 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 21.

32 Draper, "Finishing Badly," 161, quoting "First Presbyterian Church," *London Daily Free Press*, May 21, 1889.

33 John Thomas McNeill, *The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875–1925* (Toronto: General Board, Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1925), 79.

34 Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 189. From the relatively little Moir has to say about Proudfoot in the book, the basis for this compliment is not entirely clear.

35 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 21.

36 Fraser, *Church, College, and Clergy*, 71.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., 75.

39 *Report of the Conference on Christian Unity, Held in the City of Toronto, April 24th and 25th, 1889* (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1889), 18.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., 32. Gill discusses William Proudfoot's suspicions of churches ruled by hierarchies in *William Proudfoot*, 212.

42 Proudfoot, *Outlines of Lectures on Church Government*, 3–11. In the same lectures, Proudfoot does later affirm, "Visible unity should be kept in view and aimed at" (17).

acknowledged his understanding of the provisional nature of the confessions: "If you adopt a confession of such a kind that it shall be subject to no change, then, of course, you place it on a level with the Word of God, which I entirely deprecate."[43] Rather, "the Church's creeds must change, not because the Word of God changes, but because the creeds come between the Word of God and the prevailing errors both in doctrine and polity."[44]

Although stern in appearance and demanding in expectations, Proudfoot is remembered by his students for his enthusiasm for his subject and his generous heart.[45] In his lectures on church government, Proudfoot engaged in extensive biblical exegesis, alongside of measured historical reasoning, as he played the role of apologist for the superiority of the Presbyterian form of government.[46] Although lecturing on church government and pastoral theology were among his continuing responsibilities at the college, it was homiletics that captured his attention and energies.[47] It is interesting to note that the first four of Proudfoot's successors in the pulpit at First Presbyterian in London were all among his homiletics students at Knox College.[48] Proudfoot retired from his teaching responsibilities at Knox College in 1901.[49] He died in London, Ontario, on January 14, 1903.

Proudfoot's *Systematic Homiletics*

When John Proudfoot retired from Knox College in 1901, he intended to devote his remaining years to preparing his homiletics lectures for publication.[50] Ill health, followed by his death in 1903, led to this responsibility falling to his associate examiner at Knox College and his family pastor.[51] Proudfoot's *magnum opus* was posthumously published in November of 1903. McNeill has observed that Proudfoot's *Systematic Homiletics* was one of the few technical studies from the field of pastoral theology produced by Canadian Presbyterians in the nineteenth century.[52] Homiletician Stephen Farris has suggested that Proudfoot's work is the earliest Canadian textbook on preaching.[53]

The pages of *Systematic Homiletics* are filled with many eminently practical insights into the ministry of preaching that remain fresh and timely today. Included among them

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43 *Report of the Conference on Christian Unity*, 42. Proudfoot sounds a similar note in his *Outlines of Lectures on Church Government*, 56.

44 *Report of the Conference on Christian Unity*, 42.

45 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 21; A. J. MacGillivray and J. A. Turnbull, preface to J. J. A. Proudfoot, *Systematic Homiletics*, ed. J. A. Turnbull and A. J. MacGillivray (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1903), 9.

46 Proudfoot, *Outlines of Lectures on Church Government*.

47 Fraser, *Church, College, and Clergy*, 75. In an undocumented claim, Fraser suggests that Proudfoot referred to his discipline as "sacred rhetoric" (75). However, in *Systematic Homiletics*, Proudfoot is openly critical of those who refer to homiletics as "sacred rhetoric," as he believes that this perspective obscures the fact that "if rhetoric is the science of persuasion, there can only be one rhetoric" (40).

48 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 22.

49 McNeill, *Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 79; Fraser, *Church, College, and Clergy*, 103.

50 At the Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, I examined an earlier version of Proudfoot's lecture notes published for the use of his students in 1896. The structure of the lectures and, for the most part, the wording is identical with the posthumously published work. See John J. A. Proudfoot, *Substance of Lectures on Systematic Homiletics: Delivered in 1896* (Toronto: Press of the Canada Presbyterian, 1896).

51 J. A. Turnbull and A. J. MacGillivray, preface to Proudfoot, *Systematic Homiletics*, 7. Interestingly, the copy I read was a digital reproduction of the volume held in the library of the renowned Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield.

52 McNeill, *Presbyterian Church in Canada*, 193.

53 Stephen Farris, "Preaching in Canada: The Absence of Constitutive Narrative and the Problem of Identity," *Consensus* 31, no. 1 (2006): 74.

are the following: gestures should be natural and slightly precede the sentiment that is verbally expressed;[54] fear of physical suffering is to be distinguished from godly fear;[55] those who step into the pulpit would do well to remember that "the Gospel is the most interesting thing in the world";[56] preachers should consult the text in its original language;[57] "Preaching should be as full, rich and varied as the Bible itself";[58] if the place of religious experience is completely ignored, a spurious form of religious experience will find its way into the life of the congregation;[59] don't preach systematic theology, but rather discuss doctrines rhetorically as they appear in Scripture;[60] "Preaching should be suggestive, leading the people to think and study for themselves";[61] in recounting biblical narratives, the emphasis must fall upon God's action;[62] give the results of your exegetical research — don't recap the process or name commentators;[63] excessive efforts to refute an argument can further strengthen the erroneous view within the congregation;[64] great care and skill must be used in crafting transitions;[65] pastors should prepare their prayers as seriously as they prepare their sermons;[66] and, finally, pulpit announcements should be kept as short as possible.[67]

Proudfoot also introduces some evocative metaphors and elegant turns of phrase that serve to further illumine the work of preaching. The memorable analogies and sayings include these:

- Proudfoot asserted that the preacher who pays no heed to the form or organization of his sermon is akin to a host who offers a great feast for his friends, piling "in confusion on his table, fish, and great joints of meat, and vegetables of all kinds — some parts of the food burnt almost to a cinder and other parts raw — and say[s], 'there is abundance of good food for you.'"[68]
- He counselled that, just as athletes running a race must keep their eye on the goal, preachers must remain focused and not stop to gather flowers from beside the path.[69]
- He reminded preachers constructing their sermons that, "[i]n an elegant frame house

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54 Proudfoot, *Systematic Homiletics*, 48.
55 Ibid., 58.
56 Ibid., 65.
57 Ibid., 88.
58 Ibid., 108.
59 Ibid., 114.
60 Ibid., 124.
61 Ibid., 148.
62 Ibid., 206. This is a word of challenge and advice that I think contemporary preachers of all stripes would do well to heed and reflect upon. For a couple of my own efforts to address the anthropologically driven character of much of contemporary preaching and recover a truly theological vision of preaching, see Robert J. Dean, *Leaps of Faith: Sermons from the Edge* (Eugene, OR: Resource, 2017), particularly the introduction (xvii–xxi); and Robert J. Dean, "A Tale of Two Stanleys, or, Why We Need More Pointless Sermons from Hauerwas," in Stanley Hauerwas with Robert J. Dean, *Minding the Web: Making Theological Connections* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 292–309.
63 Proudfoot, *Systematic Homiletics*, 224.
64 Ibid., 244.
65 Ibid., 247.
66 Ibid., 315.
67 Ibid., 319. This emphasis on the brevity of pulpit announcements garners Stephen Farris's hearty "Amen!" Farris, "Preaching in Canada," 74.
68 Proudfoot, *Systematic Homiletics*, 82.
69 Ibid., 199.

it is not necessary to make the posts, sleeps and the joists appear."[70]

- He offered this aphorism: "He who trusts in anecdotes is the first to run out."[71]

While the twenty-first century reader will find many discrete tips that remain insightful and relevant, on the whole, the experience of entering into the pages of *Systematic Homiletics* is akin to traversing a foreign landscape. This sense of dislocation is partly attributable to Proudfoot's many dialogue partners whose influence, for the most part, remains below the surface as they are rarely named and not one footnote appears in the book. Fraser suggests, "The master rhetoricians in Proudfoot's mind were George Campbell and Hugh Blair, both prominent preachers and educators in the Moderate party in the Church of Scotland during the latter part of the eighteenth century. They sought to follow a middle way between the dogmatism and emotionalism of the evangelicals and the rationalism of the deists."[72] On top of the obscurity of Proudfoot's sources for the contemporary reader, some of his deepest homiletical convictions run against the grain of some of today's most influential homiletical understandings. Farris suggests that Proudfoot's preference for the abstract over the concrete places him squarely at odds with the "New Homiletics" which dominated homiletical theory at the end of the twentieth century.[73]

At this point, it would be helpful to briefly survey the shape of the argument of *Systematic Homiletics* before turning to some issues that are of heightened significance for our investigation into the events surrounding the end of Proudfoot's preaching ministry. Proudfoot defines *homiletics* as "*the application of its* [rhetoric's] *principles to religious discourse*."[74] Effective preaching will have a different aim and subject than public speaking, but it will embody the same rhetorical principles, for "rhetoric is a formal science, which has no matter of its own and lends itself as easily to preaching the Gospel as to the discussion of matters pertaining to the common weal and the affairs of domestic life."[75] All rhetorical discourse must have a practical aim and a definite subject; in this preaching is no different.[76] The practical aim of preaching is the conversion of the sinner and the sanctification of the believer.[77] Such an impact can be achieved only if the preacher has a proper subject which can be applied to the whole mind of the believer, informing the understanding, exciting the affections, and moving the will.[78] A sermon must be united by

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70 Ibid., 224.

71 Ibid., 279.

72 Fraser, *Church, College, and Clergy*, 76.

73 Farris, "Preaching in Canada," 74. For further comparison between the inductive turn represented in the work of the New Homileticians and the earlier deductive approach to preaching, see O. C. Edwards Jr., *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 799–802.

74 Proudfoot, *Systematic Homiletics*, 43 [italics original].

75 Ibid., 22.

76 Ibid., 18.

77 Ibid., 233.

78 Ibid., 14, 233. There is great resonance at this point with one of the earliest textbooks on preaching, *De Doctrina Christiana*, in which Augustine, reflecting the influence of Cicero, emphasizes that a truly eloquent speaker must speak so as to teach, delight, and persuade (IV.12.27). Augustine writes, "It is the duty, therefore, of the eloquent churchman, when he is trying to persuade people about something that has to be done, not only to teach, in order to instruct them; not only to delight, in order to hold them; but also to sway, in order to conquer and win them." Augustine, *Teaching Christianity: De Doctrina Christiana*, trans. Edmund Hill, O.P. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1996), IV.13.29. Proudfoot, however, never explicitly references Augustine when he is discussing how preachers must satisfy the understanding, excite emotion, and influence the will.

a single subject; it is "the germ of the discourse; the whole must come out of it as the oak tree comes out of the acorn."[79] The subject must not be confused with the scriptural text. In fact, although most sermons will have texts, a text is not, strictly speaking, necessary for a sermon.[80] When a text is utilized, "the preacher should find his subject in the specific and most important idea in his text."[81] Although Proudfoot holds the scholastic preaching-style of the Puritans in derision, his emphasis upon a single subject emerging from the text reflects an enduring Puritan influence, perhaps mediated to him through the rhetorical writings of Hugh Blair.[82]

The preacher should be able to express his subject in a terse, well-crafted single sentence.[83] Quoting Cicero, Proudfoot suggests that the process of invention involves "genius, method and diligence."[84] Having invented a subject, the preacher must now utilize method to cultivate all of its persuasive power, and rhetorical development is employed to stimulate greater depths of feeling and conviction. Proudfoot explains:

> Method indicates the manner in which the subject is presented to the understanding by explanation and proof; rhetorical development is for the purpose of excitation and persuasion. It is easy to see that these two processes must be combined in religious discourse. We have no right to excite without the instrumentality of truth presented to understanding. On the other hand, we have no right to address the understanding without exciting feeling and thus influencing the will.[85]

Rhetorical movement is achieved through the proper arrangement of parts in a natural order or in increasing strength so that the subject is kept in contact with the mind of the hearer, contributing to an increase in interest until the climax of the sermon is reached.[86] Finally, Proudfoot highlights the significance of preachers being able to adapt their messages to their audiences.[87] Commending the work of Jonathan Edwards, Proudfoot maintains that the work of adaptation requires the knowledge of the "fourteen pure moral or religious affections available for persuasion."[88] "Without a knowledge of the nature of religious affection," Proudfoot maintains, "a preacher or spiritual adviser must work in the dark."[89] Furthermore, it is essential that the preacher adapts himself to both his subject and his hearers. He must (1) "be influenced by warm affection toward his hearers,"[90] (2) "have confidence in the Gospel as the means, and only means, of saving sinners,"[91] and (3) "be affected by his subject precisely as he wishes his hearers to be affected by it."[92]

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79 Proudfoot, *Systematic Homiletics*, 32.
80 Ibid., 28.
81 Ibid., 77. When encountered by Proudfoot's use of gender-exclusive pronouns, it is important to recall that, at that time, only men were considered to be viable candidates for ordination in the Presbyterian Church in Canada.
82 W. J. Clyde Ervine and John A. Vissers, "True Preachers Preaching Truly: The Goal of Preaching in the Reformed Tradition," *Didaskalia* 15, no. 1 (September 2003): 36; Edwards, *A History of Preaching*, 596.
83 Proudfoot, *Systematic Homiletics*, 69.
84 Ibid., 144.
85 Ibid., 155–56.
86 Ibid., 236.
87 Ibid., 257–86.
88 Ibid., 261.
89 Ibid., 262–63.
90 Ibid., 287.
91 Ibid., 288.
92 Ibid., 289.

The title of John Proudfoot's *magnum opus*, *Systematic Homiletics*, bears the indelible imprint of modernity with its systematizing impulse. This modern impulse is particularly evident in the introductory chapter to the work. There Proudfoot criticizes crude empirical methods that simply attempt to emulate the characteristics of great preachers from the past. This, he believes, locks preachers in the past and curtails their creative power.[93] Instead, employing some of the watchwords of the modern age, Proudfoot insists that logic and psychology should be drawn upon to provide a "scientific basis" for rhetoric or homiletics, in which ministers should aspire "to acquire the greatest possible efficiency."[94] Proudfoot does seem to envision a type of universal applicability for his system, observing, "It is clear, then, that *only one rhetoric is possible*. Its principles never can become different unless a change takes place in the constitution of men's minds — in their intellectual and active powers."[95] On this basis, Proudfoot has no hesitations about criticizing the discourses of both Augustine and John Chrysostom. The sermons of these two giants — the former who was a professor of rhetoric before his conversion to the Christian faith and the latter who was given the name "golden-mouthed" on account of his eloquence — Proudfoot tells us, "are not constructed on sound rhetorical principles."[96] Along similar lines, while describing his method for logically dividing and explaining texts, he later asserts that "[s]ome may consider this a stiff method of discussion, but it is not so. It is in *perfect accord* with the laws of thought."[97]

Conclusion

Over the course of my investigation into the life and times of John J. A. Proudfoot, I came across several photographs of the preacher and professor. In observing these photos, I couldn't help but be struck by how Proudfoot appeared to be a man from a different era. In the Knox College graduating class photo of 1883, while all the other men are either clean-shaven or sporting moustaches or thick beards, Proudfoot appears with large sideburns joined to a chin-strap beard.[98] His snow white hair is as conspicuous as the fact that he is one of only a few men not looking at the camera and the only one with his arms crossed. One garners a similar impression from glancing at the photographs of the first five ministers of First Presbyterian Church in Landon's history of the congregation.[99] In both facial hair and dress, Proudfoot more closely resembles the appearance of his mid-nineteenth century missionary-pastor father than the men who come after him.

A similar sensation occurs when moving from the photos to the written page. In April 1891, one of Proudfoot's students published an essay in the *Knox College Monthly*, which appears to have been an attempt to introduce the major contours of Proudfoot's approach to homiletics to a broader audience.[100] Although the essay was published 12 years before the appearance of Proudfoot's *Systematic Homiletics*, it has a much more contemporary feel and is written in a style far more engaging and accessible to the contemporary reader.

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93 Ibid., 27–28.
94 Ibid., 35.
95 Ibid., 20.
96 Ibid., 25.
97 Ibid., 185 [italics mine].
98 The photograph appears in Fraser, *Church, College, and Clergy*, 91.
99 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 18.
100 J. A. Macdonald, "The Text, the Subject, the Sermon," *Knox College Monthly* 13, no. 6 (1891): 291–98.

In attempting to determine how the contents and convictions of *Systematic Homiletics* may have affected the closing years of Proudfoot's ministry at First Presbyterian, the historian is confronted with the significant dilemma of dating the contents of the book. After all, *Systematic Homiletics* was published some 14 years after the conclusion of Proudfoot's pastoral ministry. The printed version of his lectures that Proudfoot made available to his students in 1896 reveals that the shape and content of the posthumously published book were already in place at this time.[101] Given that Proudfoot had been teaching homiletics since 1867, it is not unreasonable to think that his material had been assembled for some time before the version of the lectures he produced for his students in 1896. The essay by his student J. A. Macdonald, published in *Knox College Monthly* in April 1891, suggests that Proudfoot's "system" was well in place by this time. However, any attempt to suggest a date before 1891 would be mere speculation on my part. As a result, when one encounters Proudfoot's criticisms of those who "put forth their utmost efforts to amuse and attract the young,"[102] it is not clear as to whether this may have been an established mindset during his ministry that led him to overlook the importance of communicating to younger generations or whether these are the words of one reacting to the charges raised against him at the end of his ministry. In a similar way, although one cannot be sure of the dating, Proudfoot's assertion, "If he [the preacher] preaches well the elders will not take any liberties with him,"[103] takes on an ironic hue in light of how his ministry came to an end at First Presbyterian.

So, was a failure to preach well a contributing factor to the misunderstandings that plagued the end of Proudfoot's pastoral ministry? Several passages in *Systematic Homiletics* suggest that Proudfoot was not completely unaware of the changing cultural tides. For example, at one point he observes that Presbyterians seem to be afraid to choose biblical texts that excite feelings;[104] at another, he criticizes preaching for being too didactic.[105] However, his own approach, while differing from that of his predecessors, remains firmly committed to the assertion that "[p]reaching is the most didactic kind of oratory."[106] As long as preaching endeavours to address the understanding, it will necessarily have some type of didactic quality. Where Proudfoot may have run into problems, though, is with the assumption that his method of proofs and explanations, which appear wooden and burdensome to the contemporary reader, are in "perfect accord with the laws of thought."[107]

The universalizing tendency in *Systematic Homiletics* may have prevented Proudfoot from recognizing and responding to the changes in rhetorical tastes bound up with the shifting tides of culture. While Proudfoot stressed the importance of adapting to one's hearers, such adaptation may be hindered if one is under the impression that he or she has discovered the timeless rules of rhetoric. A further factor emerging from the pages of *Systematic Homiletics*, which could possibly have contributed to Proudfoot's falling out with his congregation, is the repeated insistence that it is possible to re-preach sermons.[108]

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101 Proudfoot, *Substance of Lectures on Systematic Homiletics*.
102 Proudfoot, *Systematic Homiletics*, 64.
103 Ibid., 36.
104 Ibid., 102.
105 Ibid., 63.
106 Ibid., 156.
107 Ibid., 185.
108 Ibid., 307–8.

Although we have no data on how often Proudfoot re-preached sermons, such a practice could easily contribute to a sense of sermonic staleness and pulpit-fatigue amid the congregation.

Finally, Proudfoot asserts that "nothing less than intimate intercourse and acquaintance with persons can enable you to adapt the matter of discourse to them."[109] It does appear that Proudfoot was, for many years, while he was away from his congregation teaching in Toronto, drawing upon the relational reserves he had built up from his early involvement with the congregation. It is possible that he reached a point where he had both exhausted these relational reserves and was sufficiently isolated from the lives and concerns of the younger generation that he was no longer able to adapt his messages to them. It is possible, too, to see validation for this interpretation in the fact that Proudfoot's successor at First Presbyterian, William John Clark, a recent Knox College graduate, hit the ground running with his first sermon on the need for enthusiasm in the ministry.[110] Congregational historian Brandon Landon asserts that during the pastorate of Clark, "the pulpit of First Church became famous in Western Ontario."[111] A comparison of the sermons of Proudfoot and Clark would be quite revealing in this regard. Unfortunately, I am not aware of any extant sermons from Clark's ministry, while Proudfoot's surviving sermons remain undated and are written in largely illegible shorthand.[112]

Although I think it is possible, perhaps even likely, that Proudfoot's preaching contributed to the difficulties he encountered at the end of his pastorate, the matter is certainly more complex. It is interesting to note the things that Landon chooses to comment upon in characterizing Clark's successful ministry. He writes of Clark's "sympathetic nature" which "made him a welcome and inspiring guest in every home," his "breadth of view," and "his clear and sympathetic understanding of the problems which faced the individuals in his congregation."[113] This assessment lends support to Draper's argument that Proudfoot was operating from a model which understood the pastor as the learned intellectual in a time when many other pastors were moving in an activist direction. It is worth quoting Draper at length on this point:

> The expectations connected with pastoral ministry had changed during his extended pastorate, and Proudfoot had not moved with the times. This was particularly evident when his ministry was compared to that of other clergy in the city. The image of the pastor as scholarly divine delivering the Word twice on Sunday and baptizing, marrying, and burying as called upon was already out of date. The voluntarist church demanded an activist clergy involved in ministering to the poor, supporting missionaries, providing uplifting lectures and entertainment, and, perhaps most importantly, retaining the interest of the young. It was the concern that the church provide the "attractions" that would ensure the incorporation of the next generation that preoccupied church adherents more than any of the others.[114]

The preacher in Ecclesiastes tells us, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Eccles. 3:1 KJV). After 38 years in the pulpit, perhaps

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109 Ibid., 272.

110 Draper, "Finishing Badly," 164.

111 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 26.

112 Proudfoot's sermons can be found in the Proudfoot family fonds in the Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives.

113 Landon, *History of the First Hundred Years*, 26.

114 Draper, "Finishing Badly," 163–64.

John Proudfoot's time had passed. As a professor and pastor myself, who, having written a dissertation while pastoring a congregation, knows the intense and sometimes incompatible demands placed upon one by these two callings, I cannot help but empathize with Proudfoot's plight. Even though some of the seeds of the demise of his pastorate may be found scattered throughout his *Systematic Homiletics*, my heart goes out to this dedicated churchman who from all appearances sought to serve God to the best of his abilities in the local church and in the equipping of pastors for service in the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

In light of the events of 1889, Proudfoot may appear to us as a man behind the times; however, we must remember that, at other points in his long pastoral and teaching ministries, he was ahead of his time. Proudfoot served as both a pastor and professor in an important transitional stage in the life of his congregation, his college, and his country. Whether surging ahead or failing to keep up with the times, perhaps the greatest comfort for all pastors and theological educators is that Proudfoot was never outside of God's time.

L. M. Montgomery and the Impact of Church Union

Kate Revington

SINCE the age of 10, I have been acutely aware of Lucy Maud Montgomery as Presbyterian. I knew she must be Presbyterian because I searched out, read, and reread her books, especially the Anne books. When my family moved to the village of West Lorne, in southwestern Ontario, my parents switched to the United church. One block away stood Knox Presbyterian church. I chose to go there. The fact that I understood Montgomery to be Presbyterian was not the *only* reason for my choosing Knox — it had an all-youth church choir and a thriving Canadian Girls in Training — but the author's Presbyterian identity was one factor. More recently, in November 2017, I felt compelled to correct a rare error in a Newmarket Historical Society newsletter. In its account of a program on Montgomery and the First World War, the newsletter had referred to the author's husband as Anglican. My printed response read, in part: "Lucy Maud Montgomery's husband, Ewan Macdonald, was no Anglican minister. He was Presbyterian, as was Maud. Montgomery's status as a Presbyterian has always been a source of pride almost . . ."

Fifty million readers[1] may well have gained their impressions, if not their understanding, of Canadian Presbyterians from L. M. Montgomery. As a prime example, consider *Anne of Green Gables* — first published 110 years ago, in 1908, and translated into at least 36 languages.[2] There, the author presents Presbyterians in an engaging and perceptive way.

Perhaps most notable, certainly to me, is Mrs. Allan, the charming, gracious minister's wife, a "kindred spirit" to Anne, someone who would be a Christian "even if she could get to heaven without it," as Anne puts it. Mrs. Allan was my first dramatic role on the local stage — a "good" character, a bland role. Why me? I asked. I had, the director informed me, the appropriate voice for a minister's wife — Montgomery would have understood this.

The Presbyterian Milieu of L. M. Montgomery

Beyond this taster of Anne's anodyne liniment–flavoured cake[3] is the whole Avonlea community. The fictional Avonlea is based on Cavendish, the deep-rooted Scottish-Presbyterian community on the scenic north shore of Prince Edward Island. That's where Montgomery grew up, raised by her stern Macneill grandparents. Montgomery loved Cavendish. There, her most famous character — introduced as an unloved, red-haired waif — flowers into a bright-spirited, loyal young woman, ready for the next bend in the road. Like Montgomery, Anne excels in language arts and elocution. These two things would

1 CBC Books, "75 Facts You Might Not Know about Anne of Green Gables and Author Lucy Maud Montgomery," CBC.ca (June 6, 2018): Fact #15.

2 Andrew McIntosh, Chantal Gagnon, and Neil Besner, "Anne of Green Gables," *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2018): https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/anne-of-green-gables.

3 Having mistakenly flavoured a cake with anodyne liniment instead of vanilla, Anne finds it "providential" that Mrs. Allan is a kindred spirit: see Chapter 21: A New Departure in Flavourings in *Anne of Green Gables*.

have been prized by her community: a community steeped in the values of literacy and learning that the sixteenth-century Scottish reformer John Knox promoted.[4] Within the Presbyterian world of Avonlea, Anne finds a home she cherishes and a community that values her.

In 1911, three years after readers first met Anne, Lucy Maud Montgomery became a Presbyterian minister's wife. She married Rev. Ewan Macdonald, who had preached at Cavendish. The marriage was less a union of kindred spirits, more a means to start a family, which Montgomery much wanted to do. After Macdonald was "called" to Leaskdale, east of Newmarket, Ontario, Montgomery left Cavendish to join him. The manse was the first place Montgomery could call a home of her own,[5] but even then, the church owned it. Already famous for *Anne of Green Gables* and three more bestsellers, she ably fulfilled her minister's wife duties. As Jane Urquhart lists in an Extraordinary Canadians biography, Montgomery's obligations included

> Bake sales . . . Visits with the elderly and infirm. Teas with the wives of church elders. Rummage sales. Christmas bazaars. Funerals. Weddings. Listening to husband's sermons. Listening to husband's rants. Care and feeding of visiting ministers. Teaching Sunday School. Wearing the appropriate clothing, hats, footwear, hairstyle, facial expression . . .[6]

To that I would add: directing Sunday school concerts and plays, visiting the families of 16 young men killed in the First World War,[7] arranging for pulpit supply whenever her husband felt indisposed, and, of course, attending numerous worship services, two every Sunday. Montgomery fitted the writing of 11 novels around such commitments.[8] It was very much a Presbyterian milieu. And until early 1926, it was home.

The Union Movement

Impinging on life in rural Leaskdale was the prospect of Church Union. Over a quarter-century, Canadian Protestant churches explored the idea of merging. The movement was to culminate in the institution of the United Church of Canada on June 10, 1925. The new denomination encompassed Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians — but not *all* Presbyterians. Two-thirds of the Presbyterian Church folded into the United Church; one-third opted not to.[9]

So, by 1925, did the creator of *Anne of Green Gables* approve of a made-in-Canada church: a church founded on the notion that Union was best for Canada and its perceived role as a Christian nation? The author of *The Man from Glengarry*, Presbyterian minister

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4 For more on the huge influence of John Knox on Scottish character — especially the Lowland Scots, from which Montgomery descended — and on literacy, see Arthur Herman, "The New Jerusalem: Part I," in *How the Scots Invented the Modern World* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001), 15–27.

5 Caroline E. Jones presented a paper titled "Growing Independence: L. M. Montgomery in Leaskdale" on L. M. Montgomery Day (October 27, 2018) in Leaskdale, Ontario. Jones also emphasizes the importance of Leaskdale as a home for Montgomery, noting: "She [Montgomery] doesn't really have a sense of home until she comes here."

6 Jane Urquhart, *L. M. Montgomery*, Extraordinary Canadians (Toronto: Penguin, 2009),102.

7 Mary Beth Cavert, *L. M. Montgomery and World War I: The Dedication in L. M. Montgomery's Rainbow Valley 1919* (2011), 7. First published in *The Shining Scroll*, periodical of the L. M. Montgomery Literary Society (1997).

8 "About Maud," Lucy Maud Montgomery Society of Ontario website: http://lucymaudmontgomery.ca/about-maud/.

9 John Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2004), 205, 222.

Ralph Connor, certainly did.[10] And what impact did Union and the drive up to it have upon Montgomery, her family, and places she loved? I have delved into her detailed journals — her "places of protest" as editors Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston describe them — to find out what she thought and felt while diligently fulfilling her role as a minister's wife.[11]

General Assembly Decisions

In 1912, a Presbyterian referendum found that two-thirds of voters supported Union; however, since one-third did not, General Assembly felt the time was not ripe to commit fully to the concept.[12] Four years later, in 1916, General Assembly passed a resolution for the Presbyterian Church to unite with the two other denominations. With Canada heavily engaged in the First World War, though, the Assembly decided not to act on it till the war was over.[13] Montgomery wrote about the decision from the Leaskdale manse:

> The General Assembly has voted for church union. I expected they would but I feel bitterly on the subject. I have never been in favour of union, although Ewan is. But when the whole world is rent and torn, what matter another rending and tearing? Our old world is passed away forever — and I fear that those of us who have lived half our span therein will never feel wholly at home in the new.[14]

In 1921, the Presbyterian General Assembly ended its truce on Union and moved more deeply into the matter.[15] The last GA vote on Union took place in June 1923. A year earlier, Montgomery had professed not to worry about the issue. She wrote, "This 'Union' matter has been a Dweller On My Threshold for years and now I'm just going to kick it out."[16] However, when the General Assembly formally voted for Union — "in the teeth of a large minority,"[17] she noted — she expressed grief.

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10 Ralph Connor was the pen name of Rev. Charles W. Gordon. Among other things, the bestselling author served as an army chaplain during the First World War, a strong advocate for the war effort and for Church Union, pastor of a thriving Winnipeg church, moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1921/22, and United Church delegate to a 1927 world conference on faith — quite a contrast to Montgomery in her limited role as minister's wife. [Robert A. Kelly, "The Gospel of Success in Canada: Charles W. Gordon (Ralph Connor) as Exemplar," *Historical Papers: Canadian Society of Church History* (1998): 6–7.]

11 Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston, eds., *The Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery*, vol. 3, *1921–1929* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1992), xviii.

12 Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 205–6.

13 Phyllis D. Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 33, 39–40.

14 Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston, eds., *The Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery*, vol. 2, *1910–1921* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1987), 186. The language of Montgomery's journal entry is reflected in her 1921 title *Rilla of Ingleside*, an authentic story of life on the home front during the First World War. In a 1917 letter, Rilla writes about Susan Baker, the Blythe family's housekeeper: "She used to be so bitterly opposed to Church Union. But last night when father told her it was practically decided she said in a resigned tone, 'Well, in a world where everything is being rent and torn, what matters one more rending and tearing? Compared with Germans, even Methodists seem attractive to me'" (Chapter 27: Waiting). Mary Rubio writes that, in this speech, Montgomery catches a huge shift in society — the discussion of evil moving from the world of theology to a secular world: "L. M. Montgomery: Scottish-Presbyterian Agency in Canadian Culture," in *L. M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture,* ed. Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 100.

15 Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 33–34.

16 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 57.

17 Ibid., 132.

> From all points of view I think it is a tragic blunder. The stately Presbyterian church, with its noble history and inspiring traditions, has been forced to commit suicide . . . I feel that I have no longer a church. My Presbyterian Church has gone — I owe and feel neither love nor allegiance to its hybrid, nameless successor without atmosphere, tradition or personality.[18]

Montgomery, whose books reflect a strong sense of place, felt homeless. The notion that the new church would become the "church of Canada" did not comfort her. How could the United Church be the "church of Canada," she argued in her journal, when as far back as 1906, Baptists and Anglicans had chosen not to enter negotiations?[19]

In July 1924, the House of Commons passed what Montgomery called the "Coercion Bill"[20] — the *United Church of Canada Act*. Section 10 of the Act, however, provided for church members to take a vote within six months of the Act coming into effect: at a regularly called meeting, a congregation could confirm it would go Union or opt out by majority vote. What did this mean for the national Presbyterian Church? In 1921 at least, the Presbyterian Church in Canada had the greatest strength of the three Canadian churches moving towards Union. Of the total population of Canada, 16.4 percent called themselves "Presbyterian."[21] And what did Union mean to individual churches, such as Leaskdale? Much was to happen at the local level before and after June 10, 1925.

Union Winds at Zephyr

Montgomery's husband, Rev. Ewan Macdonald, had a two-point pastoral charge. Leaskdale, where the manse was situated, had a relatively stable and harmonious congregation. Zephyr, on the other hand, was fractious.

On May 22, 1922, Montgomery wrote, "Union is in the air at Zephyr."[22] She noted that while the Zephyr Presbyterian church seemed to favour Union in the abstract, much of the congregation was "bitterly averse," as she put it, to uniting with Zephyr's Methodist church.[23] Yet, on the local level, that was precisely what it could expect to do.

Montgomery had objected to Union (in her journal) from the start, but her husband was not so certain. On August 24, 1924, however, Macdonald announced he had decided to remain Presbyterian. "I was glad to hear him say this," Montgomery recorded. She had told him she would, of course, support whatever path he took. "As a minister's wife," she noted, "there could be nothing else for me to do."[24]

Macdonald's mental health affected his viewpoint. Since 1919, Montgomery had known that her husband had religious melancholia. This kind of depression, peculiar to Christians believing in predestination, meant that Macdonald believed that he was damned. He felt that preaching hope of salvation to others was his punishment. Whenever he lapsed into melancholia, as happened in late fall, he turned Unionist. "He never has any energy then," observed Montgomery.[25]

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18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 191.
21 Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 10.
22 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 57.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 200.
25 Ibid., 207.

Encounters with petty politicking Unionists stiffened the couple's support for the Anti-Union cause. For November 26, the Macdonalds invited a minister and his family to supper. Till then, they had quite liked the Dyers. Reverend Dyer, however, had taken a Union charge and not only "turned his coat," as Montgomery wrote, but "like all renegades," was "determined that everyone also should follow his example." Neither Montgomery nor her husband would be "herded along a road" by "brash, young ministers."[26]

Local Voting

On December 6, 1924, Montgomery predicted that Leaskdale would vote Presbyterian, but she felt less sure about Zephyr. She noted that the Zephyr Session favoured Union. These same men had blocked all efforts to strengthen and inspire the Zephyr Presbyterian congregation. They objected to prayer meetings, disapproved of the Guild, and opposed Christmas trees, concerts, and the Sunday school diplomas Montgomery had introduced.[27] Both congregations, as well as hundreds across Canada, would take a vote early in 1925.

On January 8, 1925, Montgomery confided in her journal: "I fear the Island [Prince Edward Island] will go mainly Union. They are so far away from the centre of things and do not understand the tremendous issues at stake." Montgomery understood all too well. "I could 'weep my spirit from my eyes' as I think of it."[28]

Both points of Macdonald's pastoral charge voted to remain Presbyterian. On January 13, Leaskdale voted 63 to 11.[29] On January 20, Zephyr formally opted not to go Union, too, but with a much closer count: 23 to 18.[30] Macdonald felt elated. And the couple's youngest child, Stuart, greeted the news with "Hurrah! Now we won't have to leave."

"Stuart is like me," Montgomery noted in her journal. "He gets deeply attached to his home spot and dreads the thought of being uprooted. I am sorry for it."[31] Montgomery doubted the Zephyrites would accept the results with good will. If even three families left to join the United Church, it might mean the dissolution of the small congregation. That would leave Leaskdale at loose ends, and "we," she said, "will have to move."[32]

Stresses, Accommodations, and Betrayals

A month later, on February 26, Montgomery wrote that she was

> literally obsessed by the Zephyr situation and the Union mess. My intellect tells me it is nonsense to take it so seriously and presents a score of reasons why it need not worry me at all. But this has no effect on my feelings.[33]

Two days later, another event disturbed her equilibrium. An earthquake, part of a much larger phenomenon affecting northeastern Canada, shook Leaskdale. She mused,

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26 Ibid., 208–9.
27 Ibid., 210.
28 Ibid., 216.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., 217.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 219.

"Earthquakes — eclipse of sun — disruption of the Presbyterian church — what further signs and wonders in this year of grace 1925?"[34]

Some Union-leaning ministers lost their churches when their congregations voted to remain Presbyterian. Until Union took effect, these ministers, including Reverend Dyer, still attended Presbytery meetings. They "seem determined to destroy what they cannot carry with them," reported Montgomery.[35] Rumours, suspicions, and bitterness abounded.

Fulfilling her minister's wife duties exposed Montgomery to unpleasantness. On March 18, she wrote: "This was a Zephyr date which means I am a discouraged creature tonight." She had attended a meeting of the Zephyr Women's Institute to present a paper; however, the undenominational institute was far from a haven from Union stresses. The atmosphere she described as "poisonous." She felt "surrounded and inhibited" by Methodists and sensed the resentment of the Unionists "like a tangible thing."[36]

While her husband canvassed Zephyr to assess the strength of his support, Montgomery monitored what was happening between Unionists and Presbyterians across Canada. She recorded that the Ontario legislature had ruled that the Presbyterian Church could retain Knox College, in Toronto. "This will be a bitter pill for the Unionists . . .," she observed.[37] Later, also in April 1925, she wrote:

> . . . Ewan came home from Toronto with good church news. Six hundred churches have already voted out and a strong Presbyterian church in Canada is assured. We will not belong to a mere sect. The general outlook is encouraging . . . [38]

A few weeks later, the Leaskdale women's missionary group, with Montgomery as secretary, dissolved. It then reorganized itself as an Auxiliary of the *continuing* Presbyterian Church. Montgomery called it "[a] disagreeable necessity."[39]

Meanwhile, Zephyr still brought Montgomery grief. One Unionist of long standing was Ben Armstrong, a strident supporter. Another was elder Will Lockie. Over the years, Lockie had used his generous givings to force the church not to take a business-like approach to its finances or to start groups such as prayer meetings and missionary societies.[40] By so doing, he had weakened the church's likelihood of survival. Montgomery described the two men as "our enemies simply because we have remained Presbyterian."[41] Then, on May 7, Montgomery reported that a Zephyr elder thought to be a reliable Presbyterian seemed to have gone Union. Why? Jim Lockie objected to a woman stepping in to serve as church treasurer.[42]

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34 Ibid., 220. "Uneasy feelings" due to the strong earthquake and its aftershocks were widespread: "The 1925 Magnitude 6.2 Charlevoix-Kamouraska Earthquake," Natural Resources Canada, accessed January 14, 2019, http://www.earthquakescanada.nrcan.gc.ca/historic-historique/events/19250301-en.php.

35 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 222.

36 Ibid., 223.

37 Ibid., 225. The Quebec legislature followed this precedent, enabling continuing Presbyterians in that province to hold on to Presbyterian College, Montreal: Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 221.

38 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 227. Montgomery is likely referring to a comment by D. J. Fraser, president of Presbyterian College, Montreal, and a unionist. In 1923, in the first issue of *The Presbyterian Standard*, Fraser argued that any continuing Presbyterian Church might "degenerate into a mere sect" and "cease to be a missionary institution": cited in Moir, *Enduring Witness*, 219.

39 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 231.

40 Ibid., 49–50.

41 Ibid., 234–35.

42 Ibid., 230–31.

Macdonald gave a gracious farewell to Zephyr Unionists on June 8. Although Montgomery had expected to lose a few Zephyr Presbyterians to Union, she was shocked to learn who was going. Several members who had signed her husband's paper for support in April — Janet Meyers among them — were, in fact, going Union. "Is there any such thing as honor known to anyone in Zephyr?" Montgomery railed.[43] She went on to assert:

> Not *one* of these people who are leaving are going because they sincerely believe that Union will "hasten the coming of the kingdom of God." Not one. We know the motives that have actuated everyone and in not one case is it a right motive.[44]

As for Mrs. Meyers, she returned to the Presbyterian fold once she learned there was more to saving her husband than going Union. She had "gone Union" in the mistaken belief that her husband would automatically become a member of the new church — he had attended, but never joined the Presbyterian church. Her goal was to get him to Heaven.[45] She fretted that unless he was a bona fide church member, he could not reach it. In any event, her daughter had objected vigorously to leaving the Leaskdale Sunday school.[46]

"The Fatal Date" and Beyond

Wednesday, June 10, 1925: That was what Montgomery called "the fatal date." The date when the United Church of Canada came into being was, she wrote, "[w]hen our beautiful Presbyterian church is torn asunder by those who swore to protect and cherish her."[47]

Canadian newspapers saw the event rather differently. Their accounts hailed the institution of the United Church as a great "birth." In her journal, Montgomery retorted: "No, 'tis no 'birth.' It is rather the wedding of two old churches, both of whom are too old to have offspring."[48]

Much of the impact of Church Union had yet to be felt. "It is Leaskdale I am worried over," Montgomery wrote. "What will it do now? We have built up such a good church here. It was a miserable congregation when we came here — torn by feuds and cross-purposes. Now it is harmonious and flourishing, full pews, lots of young people coming into it every year — all a church should be. But it is not strong enough to stand alone."[49]

On Sunday, June 14, the church in Leaskdale was filled to the doors, and Montgomery could report that, so far as she and her husband knew, not one person was leaving it.[50] As for ex-Presbyterian Zephyrites, by July 6 she could note that "only three" had worshipped in Zephyr United the night before. "It would seem that they are no better to go there than to their own of yore."[51] But the loss of Zephyr members undermined Leaskdale's viability.

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43 Ibid., 234.

44 Ibid., 235.

45 Indeed, Montgomery's Scottish forebears, as well as people in Cavendish, where she grew up, and in the Avonlea of her Anne books, believed that the main goal of life was to get ready for Heaven: Rubio, "Scottish-Presbyterian Agency in Canadian Culture," 100.

46 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 236, 241.

47 Ibid., 235.

48 Ibid. Interestingly, Phyllis Airhart quotes this comment with respect at the start of her 2014 book, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, page 3.

49 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 235.

50 Ibid., 236.

51 Ibid., 238.

There was talk of finding a different point in her husband's charge — perhaps Wick, maybe Mount Albert — but even if that happened, it still meant disruption. Presbyterians choose ministers based on a preach for the call. Any new church partner with Leaskdale could not have called Rev. Ewan Macdonald. It seemed clear that life in Leaskdale must soon end. "And I cannot bear the thought," wrote Montgomery.[52]

On October 16, 1925, Montgomery recorded meeting Walter W. Bryden. "Then at Woodville it was Union — Union — Union," she complained in her journal. "The subject of Union has more bite than that of missions, but I am horribly fed up with it too." Bryden was the new minister based some 26 miles away from Leaskdale. Montgomery described him: "He is a man of first rate intellect and sees very clearly. His sizing up of the situation was masterly."[53] Bryden was to play an instrumental role in providing the continuing Presbyterian Church with its theological reason for being.[54] Through the lens of twentieth-century theologian Karl Barth, he interpreted the ideas of sixteenth-century Reformed theologian John Calvin. He thereby went deeper than the Presbyterian Church's Scottish roots to where that denomination comes from: Calvin's Geneva. Bryden identified Calvin's key insights — summed up in two words as "God matters"[55] — as relevant to continuing Canadian Presbyterians and key to their post-Union identity. He served as a professor of church history at Knox College and later as the college's sixth principal.

Meanwhile, Union was harming close, long-time friendships. Montgomery's friend Margaret Stirling had joined the Union church because her husband, Rev. John Stirling, had joined the Union church.[56] Margaret used to favour the Anti-Union cause. "[N]ow, I hear, she out-Unions the Unionists," wrote Montgomery. "There will always hereafter be a subject we cannot discuss," she mourned. "I *cannot* joke to Margaret of Unionist ministers and I *will* not of Presbyterian ministers. She will be in the same predicament and half our fun will be absent."[57] Montgomery compared the change in relationship to the 1919 death of her best friend to Spanish flu. "For some reason he [the devil] could not kill Margaret as he did Frede so he just brewed up Church Union to spoil it."[58]

Snow in the Air

The Macdonalds had served Leaskdale and Zephyr Presbyterians for 15 years, something that had suited Montgomery's need to feel settled and at home. By late 1925, however, change could not be avoided. "I have long felt the coming change," Montgomery observed, "as one feels snow in the air before it comes."[59]

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52 Ibid., 263.

53 Ibid., 256–57.

54 John A. Vissers, "Calvin and Canadian Protestantism: The Thought and Influence of W. W. Bryden," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 30, Supplement 1 (2015): 5–16. DOI: 10.3138/tjt.30.suppl_1.5. See also Walter W. Bryden, *Why I Am a Presbyterian* (Belleville, ON: Essence, 1934/1977).

55 Vissers, "Calvin and Canadian Protestantism," 15.

56 The Reverend John Stirling had married Montgomery and her husband Ewan Macdonald in 1911; in 1942, he officiated at Montgomery's funeral in Cavendish. (See Kevin McCabe, "The Funeral of L. M. Montgomery," in *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album*, compiled by Kevin McCabe (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside), 325.

57 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 258.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., 260. Despite its loss of members at Union, Zephyr did survive as a Presbyterian church until 1969, at which time the congregation merged with Leaskdale: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1970 *Acts and Proceedings* of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada: 585.

At an Uxbridge anniversary service, the Anniversary preacher, Rev. Mr. McKay, talked to Montgomery and her husband about "a very nice charge" at Norval and Union, west of Toronto.[60] As interim-moderator, McKay was looking for a minister to take the newly created charge. Union church had remained Presbyterian. As for Norval church, half the congregation had left to join the United Church but half of another church, Mount Pleasant, came in when their church went Union. That left Norval as strong as ever. Macdonald agreed to preach for the call on December 20. He came home from a weekend away confident he would be invited to take the charge. By December 30, he got the call. The Macdonalds prepared to move and say good-bye to Leaskdale.

So, as Elizabeth Waterston observes, the Macdonalds benefited from Church Union. In her article "Lucy Maud Montgomery: 'Mistress of the Manse,'" Waterston notes that the departure of so many Presbyterian ministers for the United Church meant that "the 'continuing' Presbyterians were short of incumbents. The call to the Norval Presbyterian Church . . . was a step up, to a bigger congregation and a handsome manse."[61] Montgomery might not have welcomed the change, but from about February 28, 1926, till 1935, the well-designed, attractive red-brick manse — complete with electric lights — was the family's home. She wrote five books at Norval. Over time she came to say, "I have never loved anyplace so well save Cavendish."[62]

Loss in Cavendish

After Church Union, however, the Presbyterian identity of Cavendish was no more. On Sunday, July 17, 1927, Montgomery attended the "United Church" — the term set in double quotation marks — in Cavendish. That building used to be the Presbyterian church. Montgomery's ancestors had provided the land for the church, which stood right beside the Macneill family farm. Her grandfather and an uncle had served as elders there. As the Cavendish United Church website notes, that was Montgomery's home church and where Anne of Green Gables would have attended. In an article about Montgomery and Scottish-Presbyterian agency in Canadian culture, Mary Rubio wrote, "The Presbyterian Church was the measure of her personal world."[63]

"It is a bitter thing to me," Montgomery told her journal, "that there is no longer a Presbyterian church in the old historic congregation of Cavendish. Many of the people are bitterly discontented. They voted early for 'Union' having been told by their minister that there would be no Presbyterian church for them to belong to! Some of them have left the United Church altogether . . . And the old manse is gone . . ."[64]

The Presbyterian Worldview as a Countervail to Church Union

In Ontario, though, the two Presbyterian manses where Montgomery lived and wrote have become National Historic Sites that draw people engaged, entertained, and empowered by L. M. Montgomery's writing. In March 2017, the Norval manse made Smithsonian

60 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 263.
61 Elizabeth Waterston, "Lucy Maud Montgomery: Mistress of the Manse," *Touchstone* (January 2009): 39–45.
62 Nancy Wigston, "Fans of Anne Make Pilgrimage to Tiny Village of Norval," *Toronto Star*, August 7, 2008.
63 Rubio, "Scottish-Presbyterian Agency in Canadian Culture," 100.
64 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 343.

Institute news with the announcement it was now a museum.[65] The Leaskdale manse and historic church are the base of the Lucy Maud Montgomery Society of Ontario, which offers tours, teas, and programs. Other continuing Presbyterian churches related to Montgomery — Leaskdale, Norval, and Union — remain active.

But for Montgomery, the Union movement had posed a threat to a key part of herself: her religious identity as a member of a church of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation — indeed, the Scottish Reformation — founded on the vision of the Scot John Knox and the theology of Genevan John Calvin. Church Union had diminished the Presbyterian Church in Canada as an institution while offering, in Montgomery's critical analysis, only a faulty new premise. As she experienced it, the movement's success owed more to local foibles and false news than on any rallying to embrace a spiritual or national vision. Union undermined her need to be deeply rooted in her home and community. On October 30, 1925, she reflected: "It has been my misfortune to be a born conservative, hater of change, and to live my life in a period when everything has been, or is being turned topsy turvey, from the old religions down."[66]

In some sense, though, I think that Montgomery held the impact of Union at bay. Even as the movement was gathering steam, Montgomery — the epitome of a literate, eloquent, critical thinking Presbyterian — was creating books infused with the Presbyterian worldview.[67] As Mary Rubio puts it, "The Scottish-Presbyterian legacy still lives. It is encoded in Montgomery's texts, which themselves have travelled all over the world, wielding their own influence."[68] For more than 50 million readers over the past 110 years, Avonlea is Presbyterian, and Anne of Green Gables, quoting poet Robert Browning, has the last word:

"God's in his heaven, . . . all's right with the world."

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65 Brigit Katz, "L. M. Montgomery's Ontario Home Will Open as a Museum," *Smithsonian.com* (March 17, 2017). See also Nancy Russell, "Ontario Manse Where Montgomery Lived to Become Museum," *CBC News* (March 14, 2017).

66 Rubio and Waterston, *Selected Journals*, vol. 3, 259.

67 "She's such a can-do kind of girl, that's why I'm crazy about her," said Aretha Franklin in a 2014 interview: CBC News, "Why Aretha Franklin Found a Kindred Spirit in Anne of Green Gables," CBC.com, August 17, 2018, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-aretha-franklin-anne-of-green-gables-1.4789516. I believe this comment reflects an appreciation of the sense of agency, of empowerment, reflected in Anne, something much a part of the Scottish-Presbyterian character.

68 Rubio, "Scottish-Presbyterian Agency in Canadian Culture," 101.

Donald H. MacVicar: Calvinist Educator

John P. Vaudry

DONALD Harvey MacVicar never retired. On Monday, December 15, 1902, at the age of 70, he attended a meeting of the Executive of the Board of French Evangelization — a cause dear to his heart — at Knox Church in downtown Montreal; he then hurried up McTavish Street to meet a class in Pedagogics at Presbyterian College. The students waited several minutes for their professor. It was unusual for him to be late; in fact, "punctuality was one of his minor virtues."[1] Finally, after 20 minutes had passed, some of them went to his study where they found him slumped over the lecture notes on his desk. He had died "with his boots on," still at the helm of the institution to which he had given much of his life.

Who was this man who died respected and loved by people of all denominations in the city of Montreal and, indeed, throughout the Dominion of Canada? What did he accomplish? What motivated him in his ministry and mission?

The purpose of this paper is to address these questions, and, in particular, to explore some aspects of MacVicar's work as a Presbyterian educator. As we commemorate this year the sesquicentennial of his induction as professor of theology at Presbyterian College, Montreal, we may perhaps gain a bit of insight into the man and his times and be better able to appreciate why he was so widely admired.

His Early Life and Ministry

Donald MacVicar was a Scot, born in Argyllshire in 1831, the seventh of 12 children, his parents being John MacVicar and Janet McTavish. When he was only four years of age, the family immigrated to Canada and settled near Chatham, Ontario. Sensing a call to the ministry, MacVicar attended Toronto Academy and the University of Toronto before entering the divinity course at Knox College.

In 1859, MacVicar accepted a call to Knox Church, Guelph, and began his ordained ministry. During his brief pastorate, the declining congregation doubled in membership. While in Guelph, MacVicar met and married Eleanor Goulding of Toronto, with whom he would eventually have three sons and two daughters.[2]

After only one year in Guelph, however, MacVicar was called to the Coté Street Church in Montreal, one of the largest congregations in the Free Church, attended by some of the country's leading business and professional men, among them members of the Redpath family. At Coté Street, MacVicar, whose first language was Gaelic, established a reputation as an able, even eloquent preacher in English.[3] MacVicar was invited to be one of two ministers on what appears to have been an ad hoc committee to discuss the possibility of a founding a theological college. The role of the college would be to equip ministers of the

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1 John H. MacVicar, *Life and Work of Donald Harvey MacVicar, D.D., LL.D.* (Toronto: The Westminster Company, 1904), 341.

2 He added "Harvey" as a middle name to please his wife-to-be who was fond of a character of that name in a novel she had read.

3 MacVicar was guest preacher in several American pulpits and was offered calls to churches in Brooklyn and San Francisco. Despite tempting stipends, he chose to remain in Quebec where he felt his duty lay.

Gospel to serve the Province of Quebec, Central Canada, the Ottawa Valley, and "regions beyond." The group met in the home of John Redpath.[4]

The Founding of Presbyterian College, Montreal

This group, which included Principal William Dawson of McGill University, wrestled with the various obstacles in the way of creating such a college, particularly the financial challenges. At first, MacVicar was among those most skeptical of the project's viability, but in time the committee presented the project to the Presbytery of Montreal for approval. The presbytery, in turn, recommended the founding of the college to the Synod of the Canada Presbyterian Church, and, in 1865, a charter was granted to Presbyterian College, Montreal.

No classes were held until 1867, largely because none of those approached to become professor of divinity would accept the position. These included George Paxton Young, the distinguished Canadian philosopher; A. B. Bruce of Scotland; and James McCosh of Princeton. As the search for a permanent professor continued, classes began in the basement ("the cellar") of Erskine Church, led by William Gregg of Toronto, who served for three months, and then William Aiken of Smith's Falls, who lectured for a similar period.

Finally, the college board decided to ask MacVicar to take on the task of teaching theology at the new college. At a synod meeting in June 1868, after much debate, MacVicar was appointed to the post, and he reluctantly accepted.

Donald MacVicar was inducted as professor of divinity at Presbyterian College on October 7, 1868.

In those early days of the college, Arts courses were provided as well as theology courses, and MacVicar, who had always had a passion for mathematics, was as likely to be found explaining the binomial theorem as the doctrine of justification. He was virtually alone at first, but a year later theologian Daniel Coussirat joined him, and in 1873, the eccentric but bilingual John Campbell was given the chair of Apologetics and Church History. That same year, General Assembly appointed MacVicar as principal.

Mention of two teachers who were fluent in French[5] leads us to note that one of the main reasons for the existence of a college in Montreal was the expectation that it would serve as a centre for evangelizing French Canada. As Principal Dawson of McGill put it in 1863, having the college "would make this city a more powerful centre of influence for the Presbyterian Church in Lower Canada, and would enable more missionary and aggressive effort to be put forth."[6]

We must remember that, in the minds of the majority of Protestants in Canada in the nineteenth century, French-speaking Roman Catholics were in the grip of a highly controlling, ultramontane hierarchy; their lives were characterized by ignorance and superstition; and they were being deprived of a free and simple Gospel. Presbyterians felt

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4 John H. MacVicar, *Life and Work of Donald Harvey MacVicar*, 63.

5 We are not certain how fluent MacVicar himself was in French. Was the "French boy" to whom he explained the Gospel able to understand English or did MacVicar speak to him in French? Ibid., 149, 150. MacVicar also belonged to two learned societies based in Paris: the Société Ethnographique and the Athenée Oriental. Ibid., 302.

6 Quoted in ibid., 75.

it their Christian duty to make known the Gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ to a people "living in a state of prolonged childhood under Romanism."[7]

Charles Chiniquy, a former Roman Catholic priest who had been honoured by the pope for leading a successful temperance crusade in Quebec, was perhaps the most prominent of the evangelists and colporteurs who sought to convert their compatriots. Chiniquy was supported and defended by MacVicar and his colleagues. In the early days of the college when MacVicar was viewed by some as a man of "unquenchable ambition" aiming at building an institution that was unnecessary, Chiniquy remarked,

> If there is a thing that is needed in Montreal to-day it is a college where our Christian young men will be prepared to spread the Gospel among the French population of this Province of Quebec, as well as among the English-speaking people . . . The ambition of the Rev Mr MacVicar is a noble one. It is the grand ambition of a true Christian . . . I would give up this very day the blessed evangelistic work in which I am engaged among my Roman Catholic countrymen, if I had not in my heart the hope that, before long, there will be a Protestant College where the more intelligent of the young men whom we bring to Christ will be trained to preach the Gospel.[8]

The great need of the college in the early 1870s was an adequate building, and through fund-raising efforts on the part of the presbytery and donations by members of Coté Street Church, an impressive edifice was erected on McTavish Street, next to the McGill campus, and dedicated in 1873. This facility was soon outgrown, however, and another set of buildings was added in the early 1880s through the generosity of David Morrice, a wealthy textile manufacturer and member of the college board.

MacVicar served as professor of theology for 33 years, 28 of which were spent as principal. In the opinion of John Scrimger, his successor, "Whatever credit must be given to others for the college's present prominent position, its existence and prosperity are due to him more than to anyone else."

MacVicar as a Calvinist

Donald MacVicar was a Calvinist. He was committed to the teachings of the Reformed and Presbyterian faith as classically formulated in the Westminster Confession. Under his leadership, Presbyterian College gained a reputation for confessional orthodoxy, even being dubbed "the Princeton of the North," an allusion to the seminary in New Jersey made famous by the uncompromising confessionalism of the Alexanders, the Hodges, and Benjamin B. Warfield.[9]

Some idea not only of the orthodoxy of the teaching but also of the rigorous demands placed on students academically can be seen in the following questions from the Sessional Examinations of 1896–97:

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7 Joseph Cook, quoted in ibid., 154. Examples of superstition abound. In 1885, one response to the smallpox epidemic was the printing on thin pieces of paper — "curative images of the Virgin Mary" — that were to be swallowed with water before meals. People also believed that pilgrimage to the tomb of Archbishop Bourget whose bones "had become celebrated for miraculous efficacy" would help them. Ibid., 151–53.

8 Ibid., 74.

9 A good case might be made for giving Knox College a similar epithet. William MacLaren, who used A. A. Hodge's *Outlines of Theology* as a textbook, was every bit as orthodox as MacVicar.

> Show that Christ's sufferings were strictly and definitely vicarious.
>
> Establish the *usus loquendi* of the Hebrew and Greek terms which denote imputation.
>
> (a) Distinguish between mere pardon and Justification. (b) Dispose of the objection that the Calvinistic doctrine of Atonement excludes grace.
>
> What objections are urged against the Moral Influence theory?[10]

MacVicar faced challenges to his orthodoxy — some from faculty colleagues — and was well aware of the objections and prejudices of many both within the denomination and without on the subject of Calvinism. Some had, for example, been led to think

> that we hold a doctrine of Predestination, equivalent to fatalism, and which makes God a cruel, heartless despot; that we believe in a doctrine of reprobation which represents God as creating countless millions of men for the very purpose of dooming them to eternal torments; that we sincerely believe in the everlasting perdition of innumerable myriads of infants who die before they are able to discern the right hand from the left; that we delight to limit the Gospel call, the offer of mercy, and the operations of grace exclusively to the elect, and actually teach that these favoured few are infallibly destined to unending glory, no matter how they behave themselves in the world; that we ignore the necessity of regeneration and conversion, and openly deny man's free agency, and thus annihilate his responsibility and the very basis of all human morality.[11]

All of this he saw as a distortion of the Reformed faith, and he took it as his mission to expound a positive evangelical Calvinism.

In the late nineteenth century, Calvinism was fast becoming a minority position among Presbyterians in Canada. In Scotland and North America, there were calls for credal revision and a "modified Calvinism" to soften the faith's perceived sharp edges.

More generally, the "acids of modernity" had been at work since the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Brian Fraser has pointed out that by the 1870s, many of the students who arrived at Knox College and Presbyterian College had been influenced by the shift from the Scottish Common Sense philosophy to Idealism and so had a different worldview from their professors. "The older confessional orthodoxy was seen by the new generation as dry and arid in its emphasis on the intellect and propositional truth."[12] A transition was taking place from confessional orthodoxy to what Fraser calls "progressive orthodoxy."[13]

It was the heyday of Darwinism and the higher criticism of the Bible. It was also an age when not a few English-speaking ministers and scholars were coming under the influence of Ritschlianism during postgraduate studies in Germany. Doctrines such as the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Bodily Resurrection of Christ were being denied outright or reinterpreted.

MacVicar set himself as an apologist to counter these trends. In a paper titled "Dogma and Current Thought," he addressed "the present unrest regarding dogma," responding to those who felt that the Church ought to adopt a minimalist creed or even abolish creeds and confessions altogether.[14]

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10 *The Calendar of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, for the Session MDCCCXCVII–MDCCCXCVIII*, 50, 51.

11 *Hindrances and Helps to the Spread of Presbyterianism* (Toronto: C. B. Robinson, 1879), 5.

12 Brian J. Fraser, *Church, College, and Clergy: A History of Theological Education at Knox College, Toronto, 1844–1994* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 92, 94.

13 Ibid., 94.

14 Quoted in John H. MacVicar, *Life and Work of Donald Harvey MacVicar*, 202ff. In 1891, several leading ministers, including MacVicar's colleagues John Campbell and John Scrimger, participated in a symposium on confessional

Theological controversy affected the recently formed Presbyterian Church in Canada as early as 1876 when the Reverend D. J. Macdonnell of Toronto voiced from the pulpit his doubts about the eternity of future punishment. At General Assembly, MacVicar refused to rush to judgment and moved that a committee be formed to meet with Macdonnell in the hope that they could persuade him to affirm the doctrine of the Westminster Confession. The following year's Assembly accepted Macdonnell's signed statement that he did adhere to the Confession's teaching on the matter, "notwithstanding doubts or difficulties which perplex my mind."[15]

MacVicar was again called to deal with questions about adhering to the Confession when his colleague, Professor John Campbell, was accused of heresy. As in the Macdonnell case, MacVicar found himself once more torn between personal regard for a colleague and concern for the Church's doctrinal integrity. In the end, the Presbyterian Church in Canada's only heresy trial concluded when Campbell produced a statement that was satisfactory to all parties.

Although the term *rigid* has been applied to MacVicar by those of a different theological bent, he had an irenic spirit. He felt that holding strong convictions was not incompatible with being broad-minded, and thus he had Roman Catholic and High Anglican friends and cooperated with people of all Protestant denominations.[16]

It would be a misrepresentation to view MacVicar as an icy dogmatist or to think of his Calvinism as merely theoretical. When he was a student at Knox College in 1854, he wrote what he called a "Balancing Sheet with My Own Soul." Here he speaks of Christian experience with an introspection typical of many Calvinists. It is worth quoting at length.

> Am I a Christian?
>
> The question is an awful one. Let me, however, assume that I can answer it in the affirmative.
>
> I am.
>
> When did I become one? For I was not born one.
>
> I have some difficulty in giving a precise date. I remember many seasons in which I had humbling views of myself, and bright and pleasing views of Christ. I continually have a strong desire to be saved.
>
> Do I desire salvation because of the fearful consequences of the want of it, or because of the glorious things which it secures?
>
> Partly on both accounts. I often tremble at the thought of the consequences of sin, and often am enraptured at the thought of heaven, and of the company of the redeemed there.
>
> But what evidence have I that I am converted, that I have passed from death to life?
>
> I very often am tempted to believe that I am not; but still feel that I can appropriate to

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revision in the Presbyterian College *Journal.* Campbell vehemently opposed predestination and said of the Confession, "Put the venerable document on the shelf among historic relics, a weapon of the past." P C *Journal* (December 1890), 94. Scrimger, thinking of possible union with other denominations, wrote, "The Presbyterian churches will never be truly Catholic until they frankly admit standing room for Arminianism in their creed as well as in their membership." P C *Journal* (January 1891), 170. MacVicar's contribution was a careful statement of the conservative confessionalist position. P C *Journal* (November 1890).

15 John H. MacVicar, *Life and Work of Donald Harvey MacVicar*, 187. In a letter to Principal Dawson, written in Toronto on June 23, 1876, MacVicar comments on the politics of General Assembly: "The Macdonnell case consumed five days. The friends of Queen's Col. & the Presbytery of Toronto conspired against us." Dawson Papers, 2211/52, ref. 31, McGill University Archives.

16 Cf. John H. MacVicar, *Life and Work of Donald Harvey MacVicar*, 94, 174.

> myself St. John's test, "I know that I have passed from death to life, because I love the brethren." I feel entirely resigned to God's will and ready to serve Him, so far as the exerting of my bodily or mental powers is concerned; but still I am often tempted to wish that the service of God could be relaxed somewhat, or that sinful pleasures were not as sinful as God has declared them to be.
>
> But is this love for the brethren a sectarian thing? That is, do I love them because they are Presbyterians?
>
> No. I have many faults to find with you Presbyterians. Your coldness I often cannot endure. I know brethren of the Methodist and Baptist connection whom I can love as much as any Presbyterian I ever saw.'
>
> He goes on to write of his temptations and besetting sins such as pride, 'a passion for vain-glory,' selfishness and forgetfulness of God and heaven.' Then he asks, 'Can I obtain any balance in favor of myself?
>
> No. I am a debtor to Divine Grace for whatever good I have, and still it is only because of the death and sufferings of Christ that I can hope to be delivered from the pains of hell. O God, pardon mine iniquity, for it is very great…
>
> But have I any assurance of acceptance with God?
>
> Yes. "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." I come, Lord. Heal me of my backsliding. Cleanse me from iniquity, and perfect holiness in me in the fear of the Lord. Make me to walk in the path of the righteous.'[17]

In 1862, through the preaching of an evangelist named Hammond, revival came to the Protestant community of Montreal and MacVicar was affected by it. Here is his account:

> That night I experienced more of the grace of God than ever before. If I was before converted, I was living and preaching in a very lapsed and improper state. But that night, I know, God gave me His Holy Spirit, and since I have continued, these two weeks, sensibly to enjoy His Presence. I see truth in new and surprising relations. The Bible is a new book to me . . .[18]

MacVicar as an Educator

It remains to say something about MacVicar as an educator. Along with his brother, Malcolm, who became chancellor of McMaster University, he possessed a definite gift of teaching. While still a student at Knox College, he assisted in his brother's private academy in Toronto, teaching classics and English.[19] Malcolm tried to persuade him to pursue education as a career, but his heart was set on the ministry.

He had a strong desire to see people well informed and adequately equipped for their vocations and their service in the Church. Moreover, intellectual development, in his view, should not be divorced from spiritual and moral concerns. For example, in an address given to the Provincial Sunday School Convention in Montreal in January 1890, titled *The Teacher Reproduced in the Pupil*, he stresses the importance of educational psychology in the service of the Gospel. The teacher

> has one strong over-mastering desire in his heart that through this truth and the ministry of the Holy Spirit the members of his class may be led to trust in Jesus Christ for pardon and eternal life. This feeling is so constant and vehement in his heart that he cannot conceal it.

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17 Ibid., 26ff.

18 Ibid., 52.

19 John Moir describes him as "an effective and inspiring teacher." "MacVicar, Donald Harvey," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 13. Permalink: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/macvicar_donald_harvey_13E.html.

> It is seen in his countenance, heard in his voice, breathed in his prayers . . . in various ways which it may be impossible to define, he convinces his pupils of the existence and intensity of the desire. The feeling spreads among them, pervades their minds, or in other words, they respond to his dominant desire . . .[20]

MacVicar believed that the best Sunday school would not only insist on the highest spiritual qualifications for teachers but would also seek to familiarize them with the essentials of "the science of education." "We should therefore urge godly young men and young women to aspire to become distinguished by the thorough mastery of the laws and best methods of teaching."[21] He was a little ahead of his time in advocating the "Normal class" concept for Sunday schools.

In the college, MacVicar's passion was to uphold the tradition of the "learned and godly ministry." More than once he declined to accept students whom he deemed ill suited to the demanding course of study required for ordination.

The curriculum presupposed a knowledge of Latin and emphasized Hebrew and Greek. If the list of textbooks used can tell us anything, the theology taught by MacVicar at Presbyterian College was decidedly conservative. Calvin, Turretin, Dick, Hodge, Thornwell, and Shedd are prominent. Yet, we also find the Danish Lutheran Hans Lassen Martensen and the German Protestant Julius Műller in the list. MacVicar didn't want his students simply to parrot a party line. As he once put it, "Whether dealing with secular or sacred subjects the teacher should rouse his pupils to the repeated exercise of active mental states and train them to think for themselves."[22]

MacVicar was also a leader in the field of public education. John Moir gives a good summary of his achievements.

> In Guelph he had been a school trustee, and in Montreal, where he was secretary of the Protestant Educational Association, the provincial government appointed him to the Protestant Board of School Commissioners in 1865, removed him in 1876, and reappointed him in 1878. He was chairman of the commission when he resigned in 1881, but the government reappointed him again in 1884 and he served as chairman for another 15 years before his death. In 1870 MacVicar had received an honorary LLD from McGill College, the following year he taught logic there, and later he was made a fellow of the university. For seven years he served on the McGill Normal School committee.[23]

MacVicar was likely removed in 1876 because of his outspokenness on behalf of the rights of Protestant ratepayers. The Roman Catholic Church received not only tithes from its own adherents for the support of its schools, but also appropriated "a considerable revenue to which Protestants considered themselves justly entitled."[24] He worked unsuccessfully to ensure that Protestant taxes would go to support Protestant schools.[25]

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20 D. H. MacVicar, *The Teacher Reproduced in the Pupil* (Montreal: W. Drysdale, 1890), 13.

21 Ibid., 17.

22 Ibid., 15. However, John Webster Grant, presumably giving the recollections of George C. Pidgeon, claims that MacVicar "lined out the Calvinistic system with deliberation so that students could enter it in their notebooks, and he expected to read his words unaltered on examination papers." *George Pidgeon: A Biography* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), 22. Of course, learning some things by rote is not necessarily incompatible with learning to think for oneself, as MacVicar himself affirms: John H. MacVicar, *Life and Work of Donald Harvey MacVicar*, 308.

23 Moir, "MacVicar, Donald Harvey."

24 John H. MacVicar, *Life and Work of Donald Harvey MacVicar*, 276.

25 MacVicar was considered "an extreme dogmatist" by the government and ran afoul of the Mercier administration due to his opposition to the *Jesuit Estates Bill*. Ibid., 280.

MacVicar was also president of the Quebec Teachers' Association in the late 1870s and published two textbooks on arithmetic.[26] Significantly, like Sir William Dawson, the McGill principal, MacVicar believed in the higher education of women. In 1876, he gave 20 lectures on applied logic to the Ladies' Educational Association of Montreal, and in 1878, he lectured to the same group on ethics.[27]

MacVicar's paramount concerns were spiritual and moral. Living in a time when it was still largely taken for granted that Christianity was the basis for government and education, and in a province where schools were divided along confessional lines, MacVicar could assume majority support for his views on the integration of religion and education.[28]

In an address to the Ontario Teachers' Association in Toronto on August 14, 1879, he spoke on moral culture in public education.[29] In this address he insists that "ethical subjects" be seen by educators as of real importance and that to refuse to deal with moral issues will provide only "a one-sided and pernicious education."[30] Ethical questions "cannot be ignored or even lightly treated in our national system of education, because they lie at the very foundation of society; and our citizens, if left ignorant of them, cannot rightly fill their places in the great social compact."[31]

MacVicar realized that these views were coming under fire through the influence of a materialistic philosophy, but was confident that his hearers would agree with him that

> [i]t cannot be denied that the Bible contains the highest philosophy and the purest morals — that the life and lessons of Jesus are the clearest exhibition, the very incarnation, of the morality we need in our schools and in the whole community. And I have yet to learn that our civil and educational institutions can exist without the Bible. Our civil law, our criminal law, our Sabbath law, our marriage law — the great bulwark of domestic and social purity and happiness — our laws against blasphemy and perjury, are all drawn from the Bible.[32]

MacVicar as an Orthodox Christian in an Age of Moral Relativism

Donald Harvey MacVicar was an influential figure in his day, not only in the Presbyterian Church in Canada but also in the public square. He was a remarkable man: pastor, preacher, churchman, theologian, apologist, and leader in missions and education.

However, even in the late nineteenth century, he was fighting a rearguard action against the spirit of the age. Many of his students came to accept a more liberal theology, and eventually confessional Presbyterianism became a minority position in the Church to which

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26 Revisions of books written originally by Malcolm MacVicar and published in the United States. They were used in schools in Ontario and Quebec.

27 *Presbyterian College Journal* I, no.1 (January 1881), 4.

28 Though this was beginning to change. In *The Teacher in the Study and in the Classroom*, his address to the Quebec Teachers' Association in 1879, he says: "The very mention of the subject [Ethics] at present in certain quarters excites feelings of alarm, and the thought of introducing the Bible in any sense as a text-book is deemed almost a crime, as if the teaching of God's truth would be certain to do mischief." (See page 4.)

29 *Moral Culture: An Essential Factor in Public Education*, https://archive.org/stream/cihm_09625#page/n9/mode/2up.

30 Ibid., 1.

31 Ibid., 12.

32 Ibid.,18. George Pidgeon, one of MacVicar's outstanding students, took up the cause of promoting religious instruction in Canada's schools when he was in his late 70s. He did not feel that the schools should instruct in Christian doctrine, but he believed that "in a country shaped by the Bible the state cannot afford to let its citizens be ignorant of its contents." J. W. Grant, *George Pidgeon*, 150.

he had given his life. During this period, evangelicalism declined in all mainstream Protestant churches. English-speaking schools in Quebec were to remain "Protestant" until the province's schools were reorganized along linguistic lines in the mid-1990s but were eviscerated of any real Christian content long before they ceased to bear the name "Protestant."[33] In today's pluralistic society, even the biblical morality whose authority MacVicar took to be incontrovertible has been replaced by moral relativism.

Perhaps if he were living today, MacVicar would be dismayed and discouraged by the state of the nation in general and of its secular education system, in particular. I venture to think, however, that his Calvinism would keep him from despair and spur him on to defend and promote the Christian message. As he put it in his Hymn of Dedication, used at the opening of the new buildings of Presbyterian College,

Here may Thy Truth be held supreme,
And fill each soul with might,
To pray, to toil, to wrestle hard,
And conquer in the fight.

33 Cf. Nathan H. Mair, *Protestant Education in Quebec: Notes on the History of Education in the Protestant Public Schools of Québec* (Quebec City: Gouvernement du Québec, Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1981).

Reformed/Presbyterian Church Architecture: Then and Now

Jack C. Whytock

THIS paper is about "visible/visual Christian culture" (or "material Christian culture"), a subject that has been attracting scholarly interest over the last 20 years, for example, by William Dyrness, in *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture: The Protestant Imagination from Calvin to Edwards*.[1] My focus will be one area of that visible Christian culture, namely, church architecture, a large-scale aspect of our material Christian culture.[2]

Today's talk is a continuation of a paper which I did earlier this year for a South African journal, *In die Skrifling/In Luce Verbi*, under the title "The Reformation of Space for Public Worship."[3] This paper today moves on from that and will provide a wider survey of the Reformed/Presbyterian churches of the Reformation period, touching upon examples in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Scotland, and England. Next, we will proceed to the early colonial period (pre-1860) in British North America and a select group of examples of colonial period Reformed/Presbyterian church architecture. We then move into the late nineteenth century (post-1860) and survey changes in Reformed/Presbyterian church architecture in the second half of that century. Finally, we move into the last third of the twentieth century and survey changes in Reformed/Presbyterian church architecture then.

A few caveats: First, I am painting with a wide brush today so not every exception will be noted, and second, always recall that the way you find a building today may not be the way it was built, and the interior layout may have been radically altered. *My thesis will develop as we come near the end of this paper that Reformed/Presbyterian church architecture has not been a static template but has been undergoing significant developments during the last 450 years in virtually all branches of the Reformed/Presbyterian family.* I will offer my reflections as we conclude. Finally, although the word *architecture* appears prominently in my title, this is very much an interdisciplinary paper: church history, theology, liturgics, aesthetics, architecture, ministry, social cultural issues, and stewardship are all intertwined.

A Selective Literature Survey

Before proceeding with a survey of early architecture, however, I want to briefly give a selective survey of some of the key literature essential to this subject at present for the European context. I will limit this to three authors.

First, the late **Nigel Yates** and his three books are seminal studies on this subject:

- *Preaching, Word and Sacrament: Scottish Church Interiors, 1560–1860* (2009);[4]
- *Liturgical Space: Christian Worship and Church Buildings in Western Europe, 1500–2000* (2008);[5] and

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1 William Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture: The Protestant Imagination from Calvin to Edwards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Another worthy work is Paul Corby Finney, ed., *Seeing beyond the Word: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999).

2 I wish to give thanks to those who engaged through questions and conversation at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History in September 2018 at Knox College, Toronto, when this paper was presented. You have been most helpful.

3 Jack C. Whytock, "The Reformation of Space for Public Worship: Past and Present — Continuing the Discussion," *In die Skrifling/In Luce Verbi* 52, no. 3 (2018): a2307.

4 Nigel Yates, *Preaching, Word and Sacrament: Scottish Church Interiors 1560–1860* (London: T & T Clark, 2009).

5 Nigel Yates, *Liturgical Space: Christian Worship and Church Buildings in Western Europe 1500–2000* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2008).

- *Buildings, Faith and Worship: The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches 1600–1900*, *Revised Edition* (2000); Original 1991.[6]

Next, there is the prolific author **Andrew Spicer**, currently at Oxford Brookes University:

- *Calvinist Churches in Early Modern Europe* (2007);[7]
- *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, co-edited with Will Coster (2005);[8] and
- "Scotland and the Reformation of Church Architecture," a chapter in *A Companion to the Scottish Reformation* (2019).[9]

In addition, Spicer has done many scholarly articles that I will not mention here.

Finally, a more recent contributor to this field is **Randal Carter Working** and his now published Ph.D. thesis: *The Visual Theology of the Huguenots: Towards an Architectural Iconology of Early Modern French Protestantism, 1536 to 1623* (2016).[10]

All current readers of historic Reformed church architecture must engage with these three authors as a starting point. Mention could be made of others, but this list will suffice to begin.

Pre-Reformation Churches in Europe: Characteristics

Before doing a selective survey of early Reformed church buildings, let us begin with a summary of the general interior layout of the late medieval Catholic Church at the eve of the Reformation.[11] Doing so will help accentuate the change that occurred in visual Church culture during the Reformation.

It can be said that, generally, the interiors of church buildings in Europe at the time leading up to the Reformation focused on the high altar, situated at the short wall. This was the focus — for the drama of the Eucharistic Mass. The lines were clear — the chancel for the priests and the nave for the people — hence, the expression "the two-room church." The clergy kept their back to the nave while conducting the ritual of the Mass. Generally, long preaching times were not the focus; thus, seating was not consistently patterned in the interiors. It would appear, though, that gender segregation was quite common as was social segregation.

The church buildings were generally open at least daily if not permanently. They were places to go and worship privately, whether to pray, to meditate, to confess — whether in the main nave or in side chapels. Thus, the interior of the buildings was much more than limited to public Sunday worship venues.

A clearly defined theology emerges from looking at these church interiors: the visual drama of the Mass was the focus and the ministry was priestly. There was clearly an almost universal de-emphasis upon preaching and the auditory. Related to this was often the lack of organized seating — such seating just was not always necessary. Singing had come to have designated space and thus limitations developed with this. Because the auditory was not the primary focus, the visual took a larger role through the development of

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6 Nigel Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship: The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches 1600–1900, Revised Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

7 Andrew Spicer, *Calvinist Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

8 Will Coster and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

9 Andrew Spicer, "Scotland and the Reformation of Church Architecture," in *A Companion to the Scottish Reformation*, ed. Ian Hazlett (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

10 Randal Carter Working, *The Visual Theology of the Huguenots: Towards an Architectural Iconology of Early Modern French Protestantism 1535 to 1623* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016).

11 Summarized from Whytock, "The Reformation of Space for Public Worship: Past and Present — Continuing the Discussion," *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verb*, 52, no. 3 (2018): a2307, http://www.indiesriflig.org.za.

iconography. The overall result was to see the church building as sacred space,[12] and even within it there was a *more* sacred space — the chancel versus the nave.

Aesthetically, a sense of beauty emerged: one that was complex. At least in the larger structures, there was elaborate ornamentation combined often with impressive soaring bulk. Definitions of what constituted beauty in church buildings were not always uniform, however. Sometimes, there were attempts to move to a much plainer or minimalist approach, but this was generally a minority approach.

A Survey of Early Reformed/Presbyterian Churches in Europe

There was an incredible variety in adapting medieval Catholic parish churches, cathedrals, monastic chapels, and abbeys into new Protestant places for worship. It must be noted that the building of new purpose-built Protestant worship buildings took time and did not happen immediately after 1517. Many believe that the first purpose-built Protestant church was not erected until 1544 in Torgau at Hartenfels Castle.[13] (Some argue for the Neuburg Castle Chapel, 1543, to hold this title.[14]) Some of this response whereby new walls were constructed in some medieval cathedrals or abbey churches was more pronounced. Where the screen had been now a wall might appear so that the congregation could be in the nave and a new school in the former chancel or vice versa. In some cases, even a portion of the building was abandoned.[15]

For the Reformed branch of the Reformation, the focal point of the interior moved now from the high altar to the high pulpit located either on the short wall or on a side long wall. This is illustrated in the one example that has been selected in this paper of adapting a medieval church building, namely, St. Peter's (St. Pierre), Geneva.

The changes to this building can be dated to 1541. The pulpit was moved to a side long wall by an aisle column before the north transept. It appears to have been a pulpit that was already present in the cathedral and was repositioned and modified. The screen, altar, and chancel stalls were all removed.[16] Galleries were then added in the two transepts and the chancel to facilitate the closeness of the people gathered around the Word.[17] The result was the congregation were now around the pulpit in the shape of a star design, at the front of the nave, and in the two transepts and in the former chancel. (Note: This is not exactly what one will find at St. Peter's today.) The pulpit spoke of the importance of the Scriptures and of providing a desk for the preacher to have freedom for preaching.[18] These high pulpits were massive and could display remarkable craftsmanship. The Protestants were not the first to construct such massive ones. There was precedence before and during the Reformation whether in a cathedral or by Jesuits, who also were constructing such pulpits in some places in the sixteenth century.[19]

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12 Daniel W. Hardy, "Calvinism and the Visual Arts: A Theological Introduction," in *Seeing beyond the Word*, ed. Paul Corby Finney (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 9.

13 Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape Our Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009), 15–16.

14 "Neuburg Castle, Bavaria," accessed January 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuburg_Castle_(Bavaria).

15 Spicer, "'What Kinde of House a Kirk Is: Conventicles, Consecration and the Concept of Sacred Space in Post-Reformation Scotland," in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, 84–85; James F. White*, Introduction to Christian Worship,* 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 103.

16 J. G. Davies, "Architectural Setting, 'Nave,'" in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. J. G. Davies (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 34.

17 R. S. Brightman, "Church Architecture as an Approach to the Study of Religion," *Horizons: The Journal of the College Theology Society* 3, no. 1 (1976): 78.

18 White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 96.

19 Ibid., 102.

The raised pulpit allowed the preacher to make better eye contact and was thought to aid audibility. To help further with the audibility, a sounding board was often constructed above the pulpit. The point is clear: the Word was to be read and preached with effect to be heard by all in the interior or meeting space and was focal and central for the worshipping community. Clearly, changes reflected theological principles.[20]

Going together with the pulpit was seating. A move to universal seating in Protestant churches became the norm. Before it was haphazard, but now it was to become universal. Thus, movable benches or fixed pews began to appear with much more regularity; the use of stools, however, was still also encouraged in many congregations where benches or pews had not been completely provided.[21] Pews usually are fixed and do not allow as much flexibility; thus, aisles or space near the pulpit was provided for communion tables. The sermons were now longer, and hence, the practical need for seating arose. The emphasis was upon learning together as a community the truth of God's Word.

In terms of seating gender, segregation appears to have been quite universally practised in the early Reformed churches whether in Switzerland or Scotland. Partly, it may have been custom from the pre-Reformation period and partly, it may have been an effort to imitate the Early Church, but separation was also thought to be a way to lessen the risk of having men and women be distracted by one another.[22]

The next major change was the space to be provided for the communion table or tables, especially for many within the Reformed faith. These tables were to be constructed of plain wood. They had to look like tables and not, in any way, like altars. Hence, no box tables were made. This was a matter of deep theological conviction and not a legalistic issue. The rationale here was most significant — there was nothing of the sacrifice of the Mass with a table, and it was making a statement of the familial aspect of the sacrament.[23]

Space was to be made for people to come in relays to the table(s) and either stand or be seated — again by gender. These tables were mobile. Hence, some were made according to a collapsible trestle style (often plain boards placed on trestles for the ease of assembling and dismantling) and often were not seen or kept in the interior if communion was not being observed on that specific Sunday.[24]

There is no evidence in the Reformed branch of the Reformation that eating meals or serving beverages after or before the services of public worship ever took place in the church interior space. The evidence is not conclusive that the Reformers were reacting against some medieval churches where, in the nave, dances, eating, drinking, and plays were conducted.[25] In many ways, this was something that would develop later with more pietistic groups through the agape love feast or with Anabaptists, but not with the Magisterial Reformers. This raises the question of whether eating was viewed as an important aspect of the use of church interior space. The answer is no. Provision for eating and drinking was not in the church interior and, therefore, there was no need for kitchens either. Thus, non-movable seating (fixed pews) was slowly to become the norm as the only space needed for some movement was around the communion tables.

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20 Donald J. Bruggink and C. H. Droppers, *Christ and Architecture: Building Presbyterian/Reformed Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 80–81.

21 Andrew Spicer, "'Accommodating of Thame Selfis to Heir the Worde': Preaching, Pews and Reformed Worship in Scotland, 1560–1638," *History* 88 (2003): 411–14, 421.

22 Ibid., 415, 421.

23 George G. Burnet, *The Holy Communion in the Reformed Church of Scotland, 1560–1960* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd,1960), 25–27.

24 Brightman, "Church Architecture," 78; Akira Demura, "Calvin and à Lasco: A Comparative Study of Two Ecclesiastical Ordinances," in *Calvinus sacrarum literarum interpres: Papers of the International Congress on Calvin Research*, ed. H. J. Selderhuis (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2008), 177–78, 183.

25 Davies, *New Westminster Dictionary*, 388.

Baptismal fonts remained in the buildings, but sometimes their locations changed, perhaps from the entrance door closer to the pulpit area. This, too, was making the point that the sacrament was not a private family matter, but something for the whole congregation to witness. Special fonts for holy water were destroyed or abandoned. Baptismal fonts also generally became less elaborate, and many were "basins or bowls" placed near the pulpit or attached to the side of the pulpit with a bracket.[26]

What did the Reformers do with the chancel or choir stalls? Again, the answer varies. Some removed them altogether, as in the case of St. Peter's Geneva. (The stalls that are there today come from another building and were relocated there later.) Others kept them, but basically made the chancel an unused space. Others walled the chancel off;[27] others retained it for the leading singers. The change was more in the direction of full congregational singing. However, the school boys often sat in front of the pulpit and they became the leaders of congregational praise (as at St. Peter's, Geneva). Some Scottish churches also had designated space for pupils who helped with the singing.[28] Therefore, in some respects, the chancel choir moved into the nave whereby all sat together to praise the Lord as one congregation.

The story is well known concerning colour, imagery, and containers. Iconoclasm occurred, and again various forms of the reformation of interiors of imagery occurred. The relics of the saints were removed, the walls were often coloured white, and many stained-glass windows were destroyed or removed. Some churches had texts of Scripture painted upon the walls or upon boards in the main meeting area. The move, especially by the Reformed branch, was towards simplicity and plainness. It has often been said that there was no longer an aesthetic of beauty. This assessment is misleading as any interior designer today will confirm that minimalism has its own aesthetic of beauty. If you think of the contemporary world of design, you can quickly see this. Beauty should not be limited here to the visual, as it may be argued that there was also a beauty in the new manner of singing; the artistry of this would also need to be properly considered.

Immediately after the Reformation, in many Reformed areas, the church buildings were locked outside of public worship times. This was a change from the pre-Reformation period. It was to break with the past about the space being used for private worship practices — many of which were viewed as non-biblical.[29] The point was perhaps needed due to immaturity of development, but often one reaction can lead to another problem. Could it be that from this a conviction developed inadvertently that the building was sacred or holy and only for worship, and not to be used for any other purpose such as eating or drinking in the worship space? This question is worthy of consideration.

Finally, although the Reformers were not necessarily of one opinion or conviction, clearly there was a move towards seeing the space where the congregation gathers as a "place" and not as "sacred" space. It is their space to meet, but it is not sacred.

The Reformation would work through stages in its developmental history. The Puritans began to use the term *meeting house* for the place they met. This clearly is to make the point that the church is the people of God, not a building. Hence, it does not fit to describe a Reformed building as a sacred space for many within the Reformation context.[30] The Anglican branch may have various streams of thought within it on this as may the Presbyterians currently or even historically. In France the worship space after the

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26 D. J. Bruggink, "Architecture, Church," in *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith*, ed. D. K. McKim (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 10; Davies, 369.

27 Yates, *Preaching, Word and Sacrament*, 30.

28 Spicer, "Accommodating of Thame Selfis to Heir the Worde," 416.

29 Spicer, "'What Kinde of House a Kirk Is,'" 88.

30 David Gobel, "Reforming Church Architecture," *New Horizons* (February 2011): 6–7.

Reformation was extremely varied: barns, houses, outdoors, and sometimes new purpose-built places, generally in a Classical style. These purpose-built churches were referred to as "temples," the new temple of the Lord's people wherein the Holy Spirit dwells — this is the community of the Lord's people. There is also this underlying matter of attempting to be distinct and to make a break with the Roman past.

I have included descriptors of five significant Reformation buildings. They come from five different European countries and have been selected to show the range of Reformed influence. As already stated, the first is an adaptation, and the other four are purpose-built.[31]

1. **St. Peter's, Geneva, Switzerland (1160, 1541f)**
   As described above, St. Peter's, Geneva, was the reorientation of a modestly appointed Romanesque-Gothic building to the new Protestant faith. Note that the Classical west portico was not there during Calvin's time and was added later as was the spire/lantern.[32] In the interior, many changes more reflective of nineteenth century liturgical ideas have been made.

2. **Koepelkerk, Willemstad, North Brabant, Netherlands (1596f)**
   This is a significant Dutch Reformed purpose-built church and one of the earliest of such to be built in the Netherlands. It is a domed and octagonal structure with a high pulpit placed on one of the walls. The patron's intent was to make a clear break with Roman Catholic cruciform churches. The floor plan design included room for communion tables. The patron insisted that the pulpit must be seen by all and that the building have good acoustics for preaching. The exterior is topped by a rooster, not a cross.[33]

3. **The Second Temple of Charenton, near Paris, France (1621f)**
   This was to be one of the most significant Reformed churches/temples to be built in France. In the Classical style, it was modelled after Vitruvius and Roman basilicas. The windows were both round-headed and flat, and the interior possessed amazing light. The roof had window dormers. Later, architect Augustus Pugin and others would describe such designs, along with most post-Reformation churches, as pagan[34] The Second Temple had a rectilinear footprint. Doric columns were in the interior with double galleries and a central high pulpit — one-third into the space. The stairs were all in the interior and in the four corners of the building. There was ample space for communion tables. The building included benches for an auditory experience. It had a hipped roof and a copula without a cross or rooster. The Ten Commandments were on the one wall, high at the ceiling in gold and blue. The temple could seat 4,000, thus making it one of the largest such Reformed church buildings in France. It also had an organ. The architect was Salomon de Brosse. The temple was destroyed in 1685 with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (also called the "Edict of Fontainebleau").[35]

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31 This text will be limited to prose descriptions. The actual presentation of the paper in Toronto included images. See the link to the website *Church Architecture Worldwide* for full images of numbers 1 through 5 Look under the main tab Continents and then the sub-tab Europe: https://www.churcharchitectureworldwide.com/europe.

32 Karin Maag, *Lifting Hearts to the Lord: Worship with John Calvin in Sixteenth-Century Geneva* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 42–43.

33 "Koepelkerk," https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koepelkerk_(Willemstad); C. van Mastrigt, "Heemkundekringdewillemstad," http://heemkundekringdewillemstad.nl/gebouwen/koepelkerk.htm; and "The Reformation and Its Influence on Church Architecture," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/. Church_architecture#The_Reformation_and_its_influence_on_church_architecture. All sites were accessed in September 2018.

34 Anthony Garvan, "The Protestant Plain Style before 1630," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 9, no. 3 (1950): 5.

35 Working, *Visual Theology of the Huguenots*, 174–84.

4. **Burntisland, Fifeshire, Scotland (1592)**
   Burntisland is one of the best surviving purpose-built Reformation churches in Scotland. The footprint is that of a square — again, a distinction from the medieval past. There is not consistent harmonization of window fenestration. Galleries were added in stages with exterior stairs originally and then interior stairs, except for one gallery, later. The walls were increased in height. There was a central high pulpit with bracket for the font and space for original movable communion tables. Slowly, in the seventeenth century, a variety of benches, stools, and designated seating was added. Post-1860 changes included the boxed and arcaded communion table and a new high pulpit.[36]

5. **Toxteth, Liverpool, England**
   (The building has been dated as early as 1604 as a schoolhouse, but it is usually dated 1618 as a chapel extension.) Today this remains as one of the earlier examples in England of a Reformed church. Its notoriety is often more associated with Richard Mather its first minister than the building itself. Mather went to New England from here and the Mather dynasty followed. As we find the building today, it has a rectilinear footprint and an interior with a three-sided gallery with interior stairs. The gallery may have originally been at the two ends and the cross/bridge gallery added later when the walls were increased in height. On the long wall is the high pulpit and two sets of round-headed windows flanking each side of the pulpit. There are box pews, some of which date to 1650. It does appear that the building has undergone various renovations. Originally, the gallery stairs were on the exterior, but they are now in the interior — a common change in many such buildings. There is some indication that there may have once been a chancel as there is an arch in the northeast wall. However, this can be interpreted in different ways and is not necessarily the case. The church building was Puritan, Presbyterian, and Congregational; it is now Unitarian.[37]

An analysis of these five Reformed Reformation buildings shows many common features. The importance of the pulpit and the centrality of the Word are all at the heart of the interior space. Secondary placement seems to be given for the sacraments. Audibility and unity are much more critical; and a two-room interior of priest and people is not evident. It is interesting that shape (cruciform, octagon, square, rectangle) could vary, but interior special orientation really did not vary.

The Colonial Period in British North America, pre-1860

I will do a selective survey of some of the finest preserved pre-1860 Reformed/Presbyterian Church buildings remaining in Maritime Canada and use limited descriptors to help us here. (Time today does not allow sojourns to Quebec and Ontario.) These three buildings exhibit the best connectors with the historic European models of Reformed/Presbyterian post-Reformation church architecture. The three examples are (1) Covenanter Church, Grand Pré, Nova Scotia;[38] (2) Greenock Presbyterian Church, St. Andrews by-the-Sea,

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36 Yates, *Preaching, Word and Sacrament*, 36–37.

37 Valentine D. Davis, *Some Account of the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth Park, Liverpool, from the Year 1618–1883* (Liverpool: Henry Young, 1884), 5; and "Toxteth Unitarian Chapel," accessed August 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toxteth_Unitarian_Chapel.

38 A helpful overview can be found in Robert Tuck, *Churches of Nova Scotia* (Toronto: Dundurn Group, 2004), 38–39. Images of these three churches can be found on the website *Church Architecture Worldwide* under the sub-tab North America: https://www.churcharchitectureworldwide.com/north-america.

New Brunswick;[39] and (3) Desable Free Church of Scotland, Prince Edward Island.[40] The basic uniqueness of these church buildings from the three Maritime provinces is the fact that the original high pulpits have been retained without alteration.

Greenock is centred around the high pulpit on the *short* wall, and the other two churches are centred around the pulpit on the *long* wall. Both Covenanter and Greenock have retained their original box pews, and Desable has replacement pews on the main floor level but originally had a basic bench style with open backs. These original open-back benches remain in the galleries. All three church buildings have three-sided galleries. Desable retains the portable communion tables, and the other two lack such, yet evidence appears to suggest that both once used long narrow trestle-style communion tables. Two (Covenanter and Greenock) are Classical styled and one (Desable) is a combination of Classical style and modest Gothic Revival style elements. Some have said that these church buildings are like New England meeting houses and there are clear parallels, but the chief precedent is rooted back in Europe and the Reformed/Presbyterian liturgical, theological, and architectural traditions that developed after 1560.

To date, I have identified nine remaining high-pulpit church buildings in Maritime Canada.[41] The above three were all Presbyterian, but some of the other six were shared buildings on occasion. Some of these other six have undergone minor to major alterations of either the high pulpit or the overall configuration of the seating. (There is one church building in Maritime Canada, St. James's Presbyterian Church, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, which was built a little later than my cut-off period yet originally was configured with the pulpit on the long wall; however, it was a different high pulpit style than was the norm — that will be for another time.)

The above three examples all exhibit continuity with their theological and liturgical heritage. They used building materials at hand, but the design and purposes were, in essence, the same as the heritage from which they came, namely, Reformed Reformation, as to special orientation. In summation:

1. **Covenanter, Grand Pré, Nova Scotia (c. 1804):** long wall, high pulpit, two tiered, three-sided galleries, box pews, likely outdoor communions originally, Congregational, Covenanter Presbyterian
2. **Greenock, St. Andrew's by-the-Sea, New Brunswick (1822f):** short wall, high pulpit, two tiered, box pews, Classical, fine craftsmanship, space for tables or outdoor communion, Church of Scotland
3. **Desable, Desable, Prince Edward lsland (1852f):** long-wall, high pulpit, one tier, but designated space for the elders/precentor, bench-style pews originally, long communion table still present and well preserved, Church of Scotland

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39 John Leroux and Thaddeus Holownia, *St. Andrews Architecture, 1604–1966* (Kentville, NS: Gaspereau, 2010), number 64; Gregg Finley and Lynn Wigginton, *On Earth as It Is in Heaven: Gothic Revival Churches of Victorian New Brunswick* (Fredericton: Goose Lane, 1995), 50–51, 53–54, 76. Even though the latter book is on Gothic Revival, there are comments about the Greenock church, a neoclassical Revival building; and good illustrations.

40 H. M. Smith, *The Historic Churches of Prince Edward Island* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1986), 78–79; and Jack C. Whytock, "Scottish Liturgics and Church Architecture: A Study of a Transplanted Kirk on Prince Edward Island," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* 39, no. 2 (2014): 53–64.

41 Other high pulpits include those in the Meeting Place in Barrington, NS; Union Presbyterian, Albert Bridge, NS; Churchill Presbyterian, PE; Moncton Meeting House, NB; St. James Anglican, Long Reach, NB; and St. Matthew's United, Halifax, NS. Two of these — Moncton Meeting House and St. Matthew's — are fairly modest high pulpits, but the design overall conforms to the high pulpit variety. Churchill Presbyterian has been modified. On Union Presbyterian, see Susan Hyde and Michael Bird, *Hallowed Timbers: The Wooden Churches of Cape Breton* (Toronto: Boston Mills/Stoddart, 1995), 30–31, 40–41, 122. More study is needed about the interior of the New London Church (Geddie Memorial), PE.

These three pre-1860 colonial examples in British North America exhibit remarkable continuity with their European cousins. Their shapes are all rectangular and there are no squares or octagons, but interior orientation conforms to their European roots. It may sound obvious, but originally, all three churches had no basement; however, this does have implications in many regards for church life and ministry of a holistic nature. Post-1860 is when we will see the many changes in spatial orientation, design, liturgy, and ministry.

Post-1860 to 2000: Liturgical and Ecclesiological Developments and Church Architecture — A General Survey

I will divide the period post-1860 into two basic divisions: the late nineteenth century and the late twentieth century. Both periods had significant liturgical shifts that have affected church architecture.

The first period, post-1860, saw many liturgical influences coming together. The first change, which began earlier in the nineteenth century, is often forgotten yet was extremely significant. The chief name associated with this major development is Thomas Chalmers. *The change was from sitting at tables to sitting in the pews for communion.* Especially for Scottish Presbyterians in the mid-nineteenth century, this was the first major liturgical change since the Revolutionary Settlement of 1690 or in almost 200 years; in many ways, if one excluded the Anglican attempts that the Presbyterians rejected, it could be argued that the last really significant change was almost 300 years earlier. Finally, the General Assembly conceded that this was acceptable and that it was not a censurable offence to have pew communion. The result was to begin a century of liturgical and architectural changes. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, there was a move towards a permanent communion table; however, it was clearly a four-legged table with totally open sides under the tabletop.

Following this we usually move to organs and hymns as the next major liturgical change. With the introduction of organs, many interiors underwent modifications, especially for the placement of pipes, between 1870 and 1900. Once this began to occur, choir stalls or a designated choir area were built in many Presbyterian church interiors. Over time, apses, or semicircular, recessed areas, were added or built at the front of a church to accommodate a choir and organ, clergy seating, an altar, or a communion table.

As the century moved along, the communion tables went from being four-legged to box-styled, and these were repositioned in the centre of the front short wall with a pulpit and lectern on either side. We are now at a new trend which has various strains but is often loosely grouped as the "Scoto-Catholic liturgical tradition." Some colloquially call it "high Reformed and Presbyterian" or a little more precisely, the "ecclesiological tradition of worship."[42] Robert Lee and G. W. Sprott are two Scottish Presbyterians often associated with leading this trend, but there were others.[43]

By 1900 in both Europe and Canada, a diversity of liturgical and architectural features had been introduced and often without consistency of application. In a general sense, we can say that worship elements were being stationed in specific locations: the pulpit for the preaching of the Word, the lectern for reading and conducting of worship, the box table for the sacraments and offerings and sometimes the benediction, the choir for new praise items by an assigned group, the organ area for the new precentor, and a crafted baptismal font,

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42 Yates, *Liturgical Space*, 113–34.

43 Ibid., 128–29. Other individuals include James Cooper, John Macleod of Duns and Govan, and H. J. Wotherspoon. The Scottish Church Society is significant as are renovators and designers such as P. M. Chalmers.

not just a bracket or a simple bowl. These changes reflect a liturgical movement in orientation. There is also a question to ask here: Was this trend towards the liturgical high church movement also a reflection of economic advancement and of a desire to become more like the other churches — in particular, the Anglican establishment? It is difficult to categorically answer this question with firmness.

The range of design plans by 1900 varied greatly and often a new liturgical and architectural tension emerged between interior designs. There was the more high church design with a chancel; there was the more revival-style auditorium, or Akron-style, plan; and there was also a hybrid of the two with a new mixture of a wooden four-legged, not a box, communion table, in front of the pulpit and no lectern but a choir behind the pulpit (which was to become very much the model in many rural and town churches), and yes, the basements were appearing. By the early 1900s clearly the old pre-1860 liturgical and architectural models had undergone major changes.

In the early twentieth century, things basically carried on as in the late nineteenth century. Canadian Presbyterian churches took on a great variety of configurations: these ranged from the neo-Gothic, quasi-Anglican arrangements to modified plans to facilitate pew communion and house organs and choirs to adoption of the Akron style, a more theatre-like auditorium style, also common for Baptist, Congregationalist, and Methodist churches. The lines of distinction were being blurred.

The church building boom of the late 1950s, the 1960s in Canada, and into the early 1970s saw many new building techniques employed, but again the special orientations really followed the patterns of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Neo-Gothic may have been replaced by new tent-style churches, and further liturgical colours and vestments may have been added, but special orientation did not radically change.[44] The other boom — post 1925 — also saw a similar variety of churches being built. The only exceptions to all this were some of the Reformed churches built by immigrants in the late 1950s and through to the 1980s, such as in Canadian Reformed churches, where the high pulpit and portable table tradition have continued. The result has been that, by the 1970s, there was much variety in Reformed/Presbyterian church architecture within Canada.

The last 30 years of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century have seen the next major shift liturgically and spatially in Reformed/Presbyterian church buildings.

In this period, many church buildings have witnessed the demise of the organ and the move towards praise bands. Often going with this has been the demise of the choir and its replacement by the worship, or praise, team. When this happens, older buildings might see the former organ and choir space reconfigured into a plain platform space with no pews or formal row seating either chancel style or not. In new buildings — more like a hall or a theatre — a large platform is the norm.[45] The emphasis is on variety of musical instruments, with "banks of songs" being sung together under the worship team's command.

The introduction of other technologies, such as the PowerPoint projector, came next, leading to the demise of the printed praise book. The fronts of many interiors now have large white screens, some of which roll up, installed; other places use the wall itself as the projection area. This change has affected where the person often behind the pulpit stands: an awkwardness has arisen during the singing of praise selections.

Matters of financial practicability have also given rise to a new concept of the worship space as a multi-purpose space to be used for meals, cafés, fitness groups, and outreach

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44 Readers interested in post-Second World War liturgical changes of the ecumenical era can see Yates, *Liturgical Space*, 147ff.

45 What should we call this new liturgical movement? Is it the "Hillsong style," named after the influence of Hillsong Church in Australia? See John Stackhouse, "Worship Leaders, Raise Your Eyes," *Faith Today* (September/October 2018): 62. Regardless of the name, the reality is worship, and architecture is the discussion.

activities to the community as well as formal worship. A fascinating article by Erica Cottrill, "Top Church Design Trends of 2018," highlights this design element of multi-functionality. The language is clear: "multi-purpose identity for our church space," "mixed-use developments," "mixed-use campus is shared with the community . . ." [often to help provide income as well as community engagement], "transforming the commons areas into an everyday gathering place . . . cafés . . .," " architectural elements encourage parishioners and visitors to gather and mingle after services, thriving in building campus-like communities rather than a single church building."[46]

This development raises interesting questions beyond the financial constraints of many congregations where two spaces — one for worship and one for other activities — cannot be afforded; it also shows a major shift in ministry practices and thought from the Reformation period of Reformed/Presbyterian churches. The issue of "sacred space" — something theologically denied by most of the Reformers during the Reformation — arises, but how do we see this today when someone from the Reformed tradition, for example, tells me that "serving coffee in the place where worship is conducted is not acceptable"? This view appears to support a view of sacred space! And how does that match John 4?[47] How space is used crosses the theological and biblical, the liturgical, the ministerial, and the stewardship[48] aspects all at once, not to mention the aesthetical and social aspects.

In the 1980s, an article identified the shift of recent years in Reformed/Presbyterian circles as that of the welcoming, or hospitable, church, or the church as engager of a post-Christian culture through making its space multi-purpose.[49] Cottrill, writing in 2018 and using language that is much more developed, conveys how this trend has worked itself out.[50] Rarely has there been theological reflection and writing in theology about this.

Recently I toured the reconfigured St. George's Tron Church of Scotland (1808, neoclassical Revival style) in Glasgow.[51] The organ, the high pulpit, and the downstairs pews are gone; instead, I found a platform for the worship team, a portable stand for the pulpit, chairs for seats in the main common area, and a kitchen for a café, which sees the church building used seven days a week by hundreds of people passing through its doors (but not necessarily on a Sunday). The space underneath the building was excavated, with rooms and washrooms added.[52] The reconfigured church exhibits the trend towards holism and multi-functionality. It was like visually reading Erica Cottrill's article.[53]

Conclusions

We have surveyed Reformation church architecture in Europe and in early colonial British North America before 1860. Our survey has been highly selective, yet, I believe, also

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46 Erica Cottrill, "Top Church Design Trends of 2018," *Church.Design* (March 5, 2018), accessed September 2019, https://church.design/cover_stories/multipurpose-design-elements-redefine-churches.

47 See the discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:20–24, which marks the contrast between the Old Covenant idea of a designated sacred worship space and the New Covenant understanding conveyed by Jesus. This text was popular among many Reformers.

48 John Starke, "Should Churches Spend Money on Nice Buildings?" accessed in September 2018, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/should-churches-spend-money-on-nice-buildings.

49 Dirk J. Hart, "The Architecture of Hospitality," *Reformed Worship* 6 (December 1987).

50 An excellent further article by Cottrill is "Top Church Design Trends for 2019," *Church.Design* (January 1, 2019), accessed January 2019, https://church.design/cover_stories/top-church-design-trends-for-2019/.

51 September 2018.

52 The firm CRGP Architects & Surveyors has a most helpful case study on St. George's Tron and the twentieth-century renovations. See http://www.crgp.co.uk/case-studies/st-georges-tron-church-glasgow/. The main website is https://www.sgt.church/. The café inside the church is the Wild Olive Tree; here is the link: http://www.wildolivetree.co.uk/about.html. (Sites were accessed in September 2018 and January 2019.)

53 Cottrill, "Top Church Design Trends of 2018."

instructive; it allows for contrast to the many changes of the late nineteenth through early twenty-first centuries architecturally, liturgically, theologically, socially, financially, and technologically. In conclusion, we see that Reformed/Presbyterian church architecture has not remained static.

I hope that this paper will help us to sketch out and tease the subject further. The broad story needs to be seen first; then from there, we can engage more deeply. I also hope that we will become more conscious of reading our visible Reformed/ Presbyterian built culture. I now offer some specific conclusions *to continue the discussion*:

1. Reformed/Presbyterian church architecture in Canada is rooted in the European Reformation, and in the colonial period before 1860, it mirrors many aspects of that tradition. It is insufficient to always compare it to the American meeting house tradition.
2. The post-1860 liturgical changes in the United Kingdom, in particular, are reflected in Canada's Reformed/Presbyterian church architecture.
3. A noticeable shift towards wholistic use of the public space for worship can now be found in many Reformed/Presbyterian church buildings.
4. How deeply have we really engaged with the study of theology, worship principles, liturgical practices, aesthetics, and functionality, and stewardship in this tradition? Publications in Canada suggest that we have yet to do so.
5. Not all Reformed/Presbyterian churches responded to the liturgical changes of the nineteenth century; some remained committed in some fashion to the continuation of a former tradition. Others embraced these changes, but a whole variety of manifestations of how the changes were implemented can be found in the Reformed/Presbyterian Canadian scene. This comment can likewise be made about the changes of the late twentieth century.
6. Extensive inventory work on Reformed/Presbyterian churches in Canada has not been carried out. This lack is cause for concern as the built landscape of church buildings is undergoing major changes with numerous closures, amalgamations, retooling, and so forth. There is pressing need for the visual Christian culture of Reformed/Presbyterian church buildings in Canada to be documented and analyzed for posterity and further research. Maybe one solution is a virtual museum of this visual architectural tradition(s).