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Facing New Challenges

To Bind up the Wounds

“The guns are silent in Europe.... The struggle for enduring peace and security for all mankind, however, must go on long after the guns cease firing... The one great obstacle in the way of *a just and durable peace* lies in unregenerated humanity.” With this clarion call for a religious revival the *Presbyterian Record* of June, 1945, heralded the end of Canada’s participation in World War II. On a more immediate level the *Record* called for genuine evidence of fellowship in welcoming “those who have survived the horrors of war” as they sought to rehabilitate themselves “in Church and society” to a world once more at peace. Thanksgiving was the keynote of the message of Moderator J. M. Macgillivray to the church — thanks for victory, for unity, for determination. “We thank God even for the Atomic Bomb which hastened the collapse of the last of the Axis powers and greatly shortened the war.”¹ The Moderator warned, however, that the discovery of the Bomb, that “new and dreadful force,” could lead to racial annihilation if used for destructive purposes. The hope of world salvation still rested with that other vital force, Christianity. “Is there any more sacred and urgent task facing us today than the propagating of that Gospel throughout the world, and the application of its principles to our social, economic, political, industrial and international life?”

Despite the official ending of the war in 1945, parts of Asia continued to be

wracked by internal hostilities as opposing ideologies struggled for control in a vacuum created by the collapse of Japanese power and the withdrawal of Japanese occupation forces. The most vital of these conflicts occurred in China and therefore concerned the Presbyterian Church in Canada because of its tradition of heavy missionary commitment there. Writing of the total missionary prospect, the Rev. Hugh MacMillan, veteran worker in the field, said in 1946, "Never were the prospects of harvest greater than today, and never were labourers so few for the harvest in-gathering."² The churches in China and Formosa were asking for Canadian missionaries — within two years, however, the communist victory in China would virtually close that vast and populous land to all Christian influences. The full implications of changed conditions in the postwar world were recognized only slowly by all the churches.

The postwar situation, both abroad and in Canada, posed major problems for the church. On the national scene there was much "catching up" to do in connection with services and buildings which had of necessity been neglected during the war. Some ex-service men would be coming back to families, jobs, and a way of life they had not known for years, and strains would be inevitable. Many younger men who had gone to war directly from school would doubtless be returning to seek employment, to marry and establish homes. The chaotic social and economic conditions in Europe would certainly encourage many war refugees and others to seek a new life in Canada. Abroad, missions would have to be re-established where they had been destroyed by the war, and strengthened in other areas where wartime demands for manpower and money had left them understaffed and physically undermaintained. In addition, sister churches in war-ravaged Europe would need support from those who had been spared the terrible destruction wrought by six years of bombing and battle. Nevertheless, the spirit of the church was one of optimistic response to all these challenges. A new day was dawning and Canadian Presbyterians greeted it enthusiastically. As World War II ended in 1945, the Treasurer announced that the church had never been in better shape since 1925, but warned that this was 'no warrant to get extravagant.'³

As events proved, the treasurer had little need even for this mild caution. Total amounts raised for all purposes in the postwar years increased at a phenomenal rate that reflected both the prosperity of Canada and the inflation that beset the national economy. The total amount raised in 1945 had been \$3.2 millions — just four years later it had risen to \$4.8 millions. By the mid-fifties this figure had skyrocketed to over \$7.6 millions and by 1959 it stood at \$11.3 millions. Much of this financial success was due to the leadership of Dr. A. Neil Miller, first secretary of the Budget and Stewardship Committee until his death in 1959. At the same time, as a result of studies

made between 1958 and 1960, the office of comptroller was created to maintain a closer watch on church expenditures, and the Board of Administration became the Administrative Council. Financial success and structural reorganization were not, however, matched by growth of church membership. From 173,000 in 1944 the number of communicants grew by only two thousand in the next five years, rose to 183,000 in 1954 and to 198,000 in 1959. This was an increase of about seventeen hundred per year, yet the population of Canada grew from eleven million to eighteen million during the same period, thanks largely to the flood of immigrants of whom the church seemed to be attracting an insignificant proportion.

The continuing movement of Canada's population from rural to urban areas in the postwar years had a double effect on the Presbyterian Church. On the one hand many rural churches were now unused and derelict; on the other the mushrooming growth of suburbia across the country created a need for new churches which would inevitably have to begin as mission charges. Many of the newly formed congregations, largely composed of young married couples in the process of buying homes and raising families, began modestly in rented quarters such as school auditoria, but land was soon bought and church buildings planned for future erection. The situation was in some ways similar to 1925 when the "minority" congregations were faced with the task of replacing properties that had passed into union. At that time the Church Extension Fund had been established as a permanent rotating source of loans which, when repaid, would provide the capital to assist other congregations to erect places of worship. Since 1927, ninety-seven loans had been made but less than half had been repaid in full. Similarly forty-nine loans had been made from the manse fund of which slightly less than half were still outstanding.

In view of the urgent need for building capital in the burgeoning postwar church expansion, the General Assembly of 1947 decided to put pressure on those congregations so long in arrears.⁴ A list of debtor congregations would be published in the minutes of the next Assembly. A year later this threat had produced "negligible" results.⁵ Forty-six churches that had received loans from the Church Extension Fund before 1947 were still in arrears for a total of \$152,000 — one had paid no interest on its loan since 1929, seven others had paid nothing since 1939, and for thirty-three more no record was given of when the last payment, if any, had been made. Another thirty-five congregations had obtained loans from the Church and Manse Fund, on which one had paid nothing since 1927. Meanwhile \$37,000 had been loaned in 1947 from the two funds whose combined bank balances had shrunk to \$140,000. During 1949 a further \$63,000 was given in loans and in 1950 the

amount was almost identical. In all one hundred and eleven new congregations were started in the 1950s but it is not certain how many of these obtained financial aid towards church and manse building.

Faced with an apparently endless demand and very limited resources for this work, the Board of Administration appointed a committee in 1956 to recommend to the next General Assembly “a sound, practical method of financing church extension and building that would provide sufficient capital funds for future as well as present needs.”⁶ The committee’s successful solution — the creation of synod corporations — was based on the experience of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States. These corporations, approved by the Assembly in 1957 and formed by seven synods and one presbytery in the next seven years, were empowered to raise and disperse funds for church extension and building, while a national committee coordinated their work.

The end of hostilities and the demobilization freed the chaplains once more for “civilian” service in the church. Many returned to the charges they had held before enlisting; others accepted new calls; and some who had entered the armed forces immediately on ordination were now available to fill vacant pulpits. In the postwar years the number of students in the two Presbyterian theological colleges fell slightly, while at the same time the number of communicants continued to rise. A partial solution to this shortage of ministerial candidates was provided by the reception of ministers from outside Canada; one major source of such help was the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Although the number of Irish ministers entering the Presbyterian Church in Canada was small relative to the total number of clergy, the majority of these newcomers were already ordained, and theologically they stood midway between conservatism and liberalism.

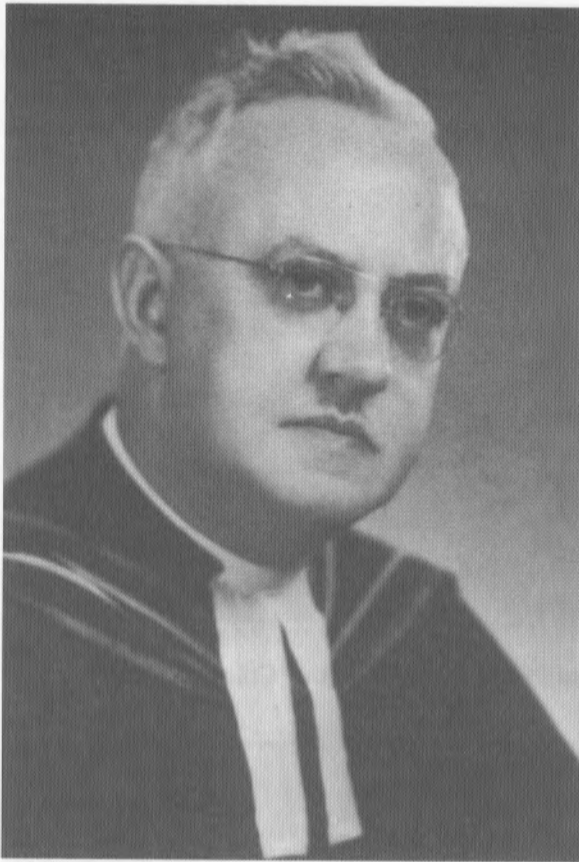
The format and content of the *Record* had not undergone any drastic change in decades but in 1946 the *Record* Committee decided to make a modest break with tradition. A larger page was introduced in 1947, providing one-third more space, along with larger, more modern type faces and a more attractive layout including more illustrations. “A few may not like any change but across the Church voices have appealed for a change,” the editor explained. The *Record* was to continue as a monthly because of the special group subscriptions prices. “Besides, one change at a time is best...”⁷ Nevertheless, more contributed articles were now included and some proved to be more controversial than the previous fare offered by the *Record*. The editors complained that local news from the congregations still only “trickled in” and all presbyteries were asked to appoint reporters. Above all, what the *Record* needed at this time was an increase of its circulation, which had

dropped during the Depression and war years to barely half of what it had been in 1926.

One immediate postwar commitment of the church was relief for war-ravaged Europe. While the primary aim was the rebuilding and rehabilitation of churches, the physical needs of the suffering populations were not forgotten. Supplies of food and medicine were dispatched, money was given towards rebuilding homes, and the plight of the untold millions of refugees was partially relieved through the efforts of Canadians. Help for Europe was channelled from the Presbyterian Church in Canada through two agencies — the Alliance of Reformed Churches which had initiated its relief program even before the war ended, and the Church World Plan of Relief of the World Council of Churches, directed by a former moderator of the Church of Scotland. No less than forty-two denominations contributed to the latter organization. The first major donation of the Presbyterian Church in Canada was \$43,000 to be used for church rebuilding, but by 1949 almost \$300,000 had been subscribed for relief and 271 tons of clothing collected.⁸ The Canadian Council of Churches reported in 1948 that Presbyterian donations to European relief were equal to the combined contributions of all other Canadian churches.⁹

One of the most ambitious programmes undertaken immediately after the war was the Advance For Christ and Peace Thankoffering Fund, the first large-scale fund-raising venture since the ill-fated Jubilee Fund of the mid-thirties. This new Offering was authorized by the General Assembly of 1945, “to mark the close of the war in Europe” (the war with Japan did not end until several weeks later), and the raising of money was to be done by a committee “in co-operation with similar committees appointed by other communions.”¹⁰ The committee, chaired by the Rev. William Barclay of Hamilton, set its objective at \$2 million — a quarter of this was to be a building fund for new churches, another quarter was to maintain the Pension Fund, another quarter was for home and foreign mission work, and smaller amounts were earmarked for the two colleges and for needy retired ministers or their dependents.¹¹ To reach the \$2 million mark the Offering would need about \$11.50 from each communicant — a considerable sum, but one based on the expectation that the economic boom started by the war would continue into peace-time and that church members would respond generously to the challenges now facing the church at home and abroad.

One year after the Offering had been approved, its machinery was in full operation and over \$700,000 — one third of the objective — had been raised. By mid-1947 \$1.3 million had been pledged (\$836,000 received) and the target date for completing the canvass was set for May, 1948. The primary purpose



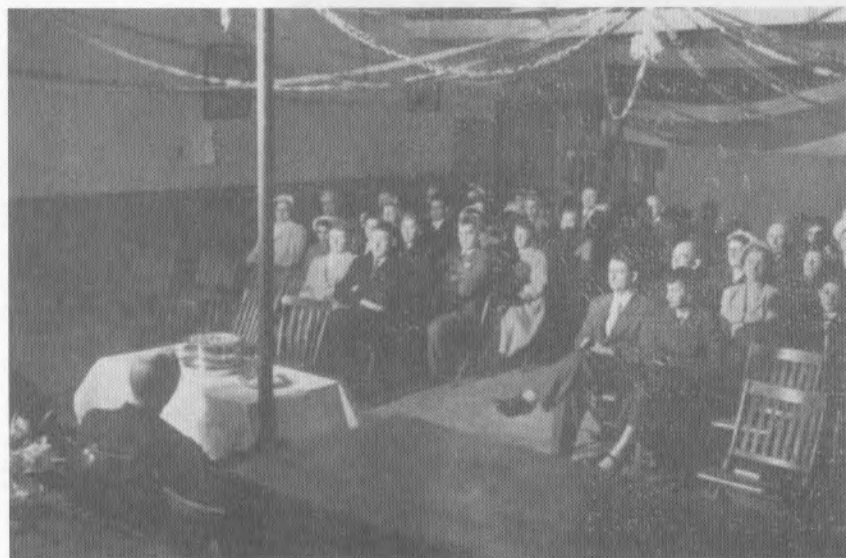
A. Neil Miller



Tyndale House



Outreach in Prince George, British Columbia



Communion in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

of the Advance-for-Christ aspect of the campaign was not forgotten; the church was reminded that the Advance was to involve “biblical doctrinal teaching, and....evangelistic outreach in Canada and other lands.”¹² The initial enthusiastic surge of subscriptions declined, however, after the first two years — in 1948 only \$275,000 was received. Although the final reckoning of the Offering in 1949 indicated that the church had achieved only three-quarters of its \$2 million objective,¹³ “this vast sum has been contributed by the rank and file of the membership of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Such giving implies deep and widespread loyalty to the church and concern for its future,” the Committee said, and pointed out that the cost of the Advance for Christ Thankoffering campaign had absorbed only 6.7 per cent of the total received.

The Silent Winds of Change

The immediate postwar years were marked by increased and deep interest in the new wave of theological thought sweeping out of Switzerland, Germany and the United States. To the earlier influence of Karl Barth and his Scripture-centred “neo-orthodoxy” which had attracted W. W. Bryden in the 1930s, there was now added the names of Emil Brunner, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Paul Tillich. The writings of these men were now appearing in English translations and challenging the postwar generation to re-assess its own religious thinking. The influence of these “post-Barthian” scholars on Canadian Presbyterian thought is difficult to estimate — the impact of their writing was felt primarily in the seminaries and among the younger generation of professors and students before being transmitted in more popular forms from the pulpit to the laity. Nevertheless, in the mid-1950s, the *Record* assumed the role of theological educator-at-large by publishing a series of articles entitled “What Presbyterians Believe,” on such central topics as the Trinity, forgiveness of sin and the life everlasting.

A related trend in this broadening concern to be an informed and witnessing church was the ecumenical movement which swept most denominations in every continent. Born of the war-time experiences of the Christian churches in both Allied and Axis countries, the search for Christian fellowship and understanding on both international and interdenominational levels obviously drew on the long tradition of co-operation already established by such agencies as the Evangelical Alliance and the Alliance of Reformed Churches. Among Canadian Presbyterians, Professor David W. Hay of Knox College became one of the leading proponents of Christian ecumenism and represented the Presbyterian Church in Canada at the Amsterdam meeting

of the World Council of Churches in 1948, when the church formally joined that organization. Six years later the Council's meeting at Evanston, Illinois, attracted even more attention among the Canadian church as evidenced by the number of articles and reports carried in the pages of the *Record*.

Such interest in the ecumenical movement was not, however, without its opponents among Canadian Presbyterians, many of whom believed that association and co-operation theologically with "liberal" denominations would undermine or compromise the traditional standards and doctrinal purity of their church. The conflict between ecumenical and confessional interests in the Canadian church was not new — it had appeared occasionally during the 1930s and could be traced in part to the reaction against theological liberalism that had been part of the anti-union movement before 1925. The task of preserving and reconstructing the church after "disunion" had occupied so much time and energy that the inherent differences of view underlying the issue of co-operation had been suppressed, or at least masked, during a generation. The new spirit of ecumenism which appeared at the close of World War II seemed, however, to force into the open these long-standing differences.

The first appearance of this issue in the General Assembly occurred when an overture from the Synod of the Maritime Provinces, moved by the Rev. A. A. Murray and seconded by the Rev. Perry F. Rockwood, was received in 1946.¹⁴ That overture charged that the church's co-operation in the Canadian Overseas Mission Council, the Foreign Missions Council of North America, the Home Mission Council of Canada, the Andean Mission project, the All-India Christian Medical College, work among Moslems, the Christian Literature Society of China and the Church of Christ in China "must ultimately result in the emasculation and obliteration of our Doctrinal Standards." The General Assembly was accused of having acted "unconstitutionally in plunging into these co-operative movements" and was requested to rescind its decisions to participate. The overture was rejected by the Assembly on a very close vote, but its mover explained his position in the *Record* of October, 1946. Pointing particularly to the Church of Christ in China, Murray stated that the basic issue was doctrinal — the new church had not taken the Westminster Standards as its basis of union. "As long as we go on voting money to outside causes whose doctrines we know nothing about, or whose doctrines are modernistic, then I for one have no heart to contribute through the Budget."

This overture of 1946 was only the opening shot in what soon assumed the proportions of a civil war within the church. The following spring a majority in the Presbytery of Montreal carried an overture calling on the

Assembly to repudiate the action of those responsible for the “active agitation within the Church” against “co-operative effort”—“agitation which is not only subversive of the best traditions of Presbyterianism but which is also responsible for introducing and fostering within our own Church a spirit which threatens to destroy its unity and peace.” Citing the Westminster Confession’s “acknowledgement as brethren in Christ of all who profess their faith in Him,” the duty of Christian fellowship and the “commendable fidelity” of Presbyterianism to these principles, the overture went on to insist that the Presbyterian Church in Canada was a continuing witness within the Holy Catholic Church and not a new departure resulting from the disunion of 1925.¹⁵ Two ministers, J. Marcellus Kik, later an editor of *Christianity Today*, and Dr. W. Stanford Reid, had dissented from this action of the Montreal Presbytery and it was the latter who soon assumed the role of spokesman for the anti-ecumenists.

At the General Assembly of 1947, this overture was accepted almost unanimously, and the debate was the occasion for a forceful and eloquent defence of Presbyterian catholicity by the Rev. F. Scott Mackenzie. Aware of the importance of this issue to the church in defining its relationship to other communions, Mackenzie contributed an article on “True Presbyterianism” to the *Record* of August, 1947. He denied emphatically that the events of 1925 had changed the church — “all that the crisis of 1925 did was to reduce its numbers and its material wealth.” The statement that through the union of 1925 the continuing church had entered a new phase of its history, “free from all alliances or affiliations with other ecclesiastical bodies,” he denounced as an “absurd claim” made chiefly by “men who have come into the ministry of the Church since 1925 but who nevertheless ought to have known better.” W. S. Reid, a graduate of Westminster Seminary where he had studied under J. G. Machen, replied in the *Record* of February, 1948, that Mackenzie had told “only half the story.” “Those of us who oppose some of the present co-operative movements do so, not simply because they are co-operative. We take this stand because they look towards an organic Church union...” Reid singled out the Church of Christ in China for its doctrinal indifferentism, and the World Council of Churches as the agent of union not merely of all Protestants but with the Church of Rome as well. This opposition to uncritical ecumenical involvement by the Presbyterian Church in Canada reflected the strong Presbyterian covenanting tradition of confessionalism, but Dr. Mackenzie insisted such influences were of American origin.¹⁶

A less contentious but related issue was revision of the standards which had been mentioned at the time of the Campbell “heresy” case. The Basis of Union of 1875 had of necessity been a compromise and particularly so on the question

of defining church-state relations. On that particular issue the solution had been found in the hallowed principle of “forbearance,” but the Jesuit Estates controversy of the late 1880s had called forth at the 1890 General Assembly a series of resolutions approving complete separation of church and state — “a Free Church in a Free State.” If full liberty of conscience were to be maintained, however, the church was officially prevented thereby from speaking out on politico-religious issues. That vote of the Assembly of 1890 did in fact “shackle” the Presbyterian Church in Canada in the name of religious liberty. The issue was sidestepped for the next half century, until the plight of the Christian churches in Nazi Germany led the Presbytery of Paris to submit a memorial to the General Assembly of 1942. The so-called “Paris Deliverance” stated succinctly the contradiction between the 1875 Basis of Union and the Westminster Confession, and called on the Assembly for “a clear and authoritative declaration on the doctrine of liberty of conscience and on the power and duty of the civil magistrate under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.”¹⁷

The report of an Assembly committee on the Paris Deliverance was not adopted because of what had been termed a “Munich complex.” Nevertheless, in 1942, the Rev. Gordon A. Peddie wrote and published at his own expense an incisive historical study of the issue. His call for action repeated a petition from the Presbytery of Paris to the Assembly that year, when an overture to the same effect was also received from the Synod of Hamilton and London. The next General Assembly responded by appointing a Committee on Articles of Faith to consider the issue raised by the Paris Deliverance — “Concerning the Church and Nation.” Although this Committee was appointed in 1943 its most effective work was done after the war. Over the next twenty-five years later Assemblies referred various questions from the presbyteries to the committee for answers. Statements were produced concurrently under seventeen different categories that can be summarized as theology, church and state, ordination, sacraments, eschatology, the Lord’s Day, and church government. The task of preparing draft statements, revising them, winning approval from the presbyteries and the Assembly was a long one. For instance, thirteen years of study under the guidance of the Committee preceded the adoption by the Assembly in 1955 of the text of “The Declaration of Faith concerning Church and Nation.”¹⁸ Only in 1970 did the General Assembly state that the Declaration of Faith concerning Church and Nation was one of the subordinate standards of the church.

Dissatisfaction was also expressed in the immediate postwar years with the working of the Barrier Act. Intended to prevent “any sudden alteration” in the church’s doctrine, worship, discipline and government, the Act was not fulfilling its purpose, and was frustrating the majority will of the church

because of the failure of some presbyteries to reply to remits. Between 1942 and 1944 four remits had been sent down to presbyteries and each had failed to win approval simply because a majority of presbyteries representing a minority in the church had to be counted as negative votes when they failed to respond. By totalling the results of these four remits, it was evident that seventy-four presbyteries (1,152 ministers) had expressed approval of the remits, only twelve presbyteries (107 ministers) had disapproved, yet the remits had been rejected because ninety-nine presbyteries (757 ministers) did not bother to reply. Thus a regulation intended only to prevent hasty decisions was now making positive decisions impossible, and the only democratic solution was to make the voiced opinion of the majority binding on the whole church.¹⁹

Another theological concern, the role of women in the church, still attracted little attention in the decade after the war. A committee on this subject was formed in 1953 which consulted representative women and then produced an information booklet outlining the two basic positions held in the church — that in Christ there is neither male nor female, and that equality in Christ does not imply sameness of function.²⁰ Two years later the committee circulated questionnaires regarding the ordination of women and the election of women elders. Of 549 replies received regarding ordination, 458 were opposed to the idea — the proposal for women elders was only slightly less unpopular, 391 of 562 replying in the negative.²¹ The enquiry continued in 1957 with even less encouraging results. Only two per cent of the clergy polled bothered to answer. Despite this obvious lack of interest in the subject issue, the committee recommended that deaconesses should be admitted to all church courts.²²

Considerable space was devoted by the *Record* to this subject of the role of women during these years. The discussion had begun late in 1955 and in the issue of May, 1956, no less than three articles were included — one by a woman, the other two by ministers taking opposite sides on the question and marshalling both scriptural and practical arguments to support their particular view. Up to this date the only concrete progress (beyond authorization of further studies), was the Assembly's decision in 1956 that it had the power to ordain women if it so desired, the addition of nine women to the five-man committee in 1958, and approval for the inclusion of women and laymen on presbytery standing committees in 1959. Documents from the World Council of Churches on the ordination of women were assembled, duplicated and offered free of charge to the presbyteries, but the committee reported in 1960 that only three presbyteries had asked for copies.

Even while the church was showing this lack of interest in the role of women in the church, that role itself was changing dramatically to meet

postwar conditions. Ewart College, now located on St. George St., Toronto, close to Knox College, was revamping its courses to train deaconesses for more varied service in the church. During the 1930s the main occupation of deaconesses had been in foreign mission fields. Now congregational deaconesses were in demand because of the growing postwar emphasis on Christian Education.²³ The stress in the 1950s was on specialization — young women were wanted as regional secretaries to conduct leadership training, as Port Workers to meet New Canadians, as hospital visitors, and as workers with racial groups. While still in training deaconesses were employed in summer mission fields, in church camps and vacation schools, and in visiting isolated families in remote areas where regular church services were lacking. A new challenge was presented in the form of church extension work, already heralded by the presence of deaconesses in such inner city missions as Evangel Hall, Toronto, and Tyndale House, Montreal. Special gifts and special training were the need of the hour, yet fifty years after its founding Ewart College still had only one full-time faculty member, its principal, Miss Margaret Webster, and its annual average was about seven graduates a year.

One tragic postwar event in Europe — the Hungarian uprising of 1956 and its subsequent repression by the armed forces of the U.S.S.R.— touched the Presbyterian Church in an unexpected way. A sizable portion of Hungary's population had belonged historically to the Reformed Church tradition and the Church in Canada had welcomed and assisted Hungarian settlers as early as the 1920s, especially in settlements in southern Alberta and Ontario. Early work among Hungarians in Toronto had been disappointing until, in 1932, the Rev. Charles Steinmetz, then a student at Knox College, personally reorganized the Hungarian congregation. Despite setbacks during the Depression and war years, this congregation had become self-sustaining by 1949. Congregations at Windsor and Calgary were still missions at that date, although a printed periodical, *New Life*, was being produced in the Magyar language.²⁴

As a result of the Hungarian uprising, some 27,000 refugees came to Canada, about one third of them Presbyterians who were welcomed by the Immigration Department of the Canadian church. Congregations in Montreal supplied bales of clothing for the newcomers and a service of welcome was held in Toronto at which Hungarian Bibles were presented to them. To aid the escapees, the Immigration Department staff in Britain had been increased, and Magyar-speaking ministers, translators, counsellors and others were organized in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. The Rev. Fred Metzger of Vancouver was posted to Austria to meet the refugees, and copies of *New Life* were printed and distributed there. In his address extending greetings

on behalf of the Church, the Moderator, Dr. Finlay G. Stewart, reminded his hearers, both old and new Canadians, "We are one of the greatest Protestant families with branches throughout the world. We share a great heritage and we share a common tie in the Reformation, a flame that must be kept alive."²⁵

Christianity in Ferment

The defeat of fascism and Nazism in 1945 did not remove from the minds of Presbyterians their historic fear of totalitarianism. Both communism and Roman Catholicism were generally held to be but forms of totalitarianism.²⁶ A proposal made in 1949 that Canada should have an ambassador to the Vatican was opposed in overtures to the General Assembly, whose moderator, the Rev. C. Ritchie Bell, sent an open letter to the Canadian government expressing concern that the anti-communist policies of the Church of Rome might precipitate a holy war. Diplomatic recognition of the Vatican would infringe the Canadian practice of separation of church and state and would, he said, "imperil our national unity."²⁷ The supposed threat from militant Roman Catholicism led to revived interest in the issues of the Reformation, and to discussion of the problems of freedom in the postwar world. Writing on Reformation Sunday in the *Record* of October, 1953, K. M. Glazier summarized the common Protestant view of Roman Catholicism and communism. "True, the Roman Catholic Church stands for God, and Communism stands for godlessness; but does the one really believe in freedom any more than the other? Is not one a totalitarian Church and the other a totalitarian state? Both believe in rigid 'party' discipline. Both have an infallible leader...Both have systems of thought control — the followers are told what they must think."

Almost immediately the issue of thought control took practical form in Canada when Quebec's censorship board banned the film *Martin Luther*. The *Record* praised the historical accuracy of this movie and hailed it as an answer to pro-Romanist propaganda films such as *Song of Bernadette* and *Going My Way*.²⁸ The Quebec ban on *Martin Luther* was cited as evidence that "the battle for religious freedom, and beyond that the battle for freedom of conscience in all matters, is an unceasing battle."²⁹ Eleven Protestant churches in Montreal defied the Quebec censors by showing the disputed film to overflow audiences. Each showing was opened with Scripture reading, hymns and prayer, and the *Record* warned that an aroused Protestantism is "a force with which the authorities must reckon."³⁰ Support for the Canadian Presbyterian position on relations with the Church of Rome came from the

1957 meeting in Atlanta of the North American Section of the World Presbyterian Alliance. Of the three major threats to “the freedom and dignity of man,” delegates ranked Roman Catholic domination ahead of racial conflict and communism.³¹

This increasingly open and concerned discussion of the relations — actual and ideal, between the Presbyterian Church in Canada and other denominations, led the Assembly of 1960 to adopt a Statement of Policy proposed by the Committee on Inter-Church Relations. The Assembly called on church courts and congregations to study “the distinctive Presbyterian witness to Christian unity and the catholicity of the church,” and for this purpose a working paper with discussion topics was prepared by a number of the church’s leading theologians. This pamphlet, issued in 1961 and entitled *Presbyterians and the Church Catholic*, emphasized in its study material the catholicity — “the Fellowship of the reconciled” — of the Presbyterian Church. “Unity with Christ is unity with all His people” was the guiding principle and discussion questions were searching and basic to an understanding of the nature of the church. “Can Presbyterianism,” the readers were asked, “become an occasion of idolatrous pride and vain-glory?” “Do we stand in danger by limiting our sense of inheritance to ‘trueblue’ Presbyterianism?” “Are we fellow-members with United Church people? with Plymouth Brethren? with Roman Catholics? with Russian Orthodox Christians? with racist Africaans Churches of South Africa?” “Is it possible that God may be desiring the death of the Presbyterian Church in Canada...?”

The epoch-making work of Vatican II in the early 1960s produced a new and more cordial tone in Roman Catholic-Protestant relations which influenced the attitudes of many in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Officially the church ignored that most remarkable of Roman councils, but Prof. J. C. McLelland provided a sympathetic introductory article to the *Record*, and a correspondent signing himself “a leading Italian Protestant” sent an exclusive series of reports on the proceedings of Vatican II to the *Record*. Letters to the editor, however, indicated that the winds of change blowing in Rome had not dispelled all anti-Catholic feeling among Canadian Presbyterians. Dialogue aimed at increasing mutual understanding between Catholics and Presbyterians were begun, and when Calvin Church in Toronto sponsored a series of meetings with such leading Catholic theologians as Father Gregory Baum, the *Record* voiced its approval. Such approval was not universal in the church. The Rev. R. K. Earls warned that Protestant-Catholic dialogue was no more than “a snare and a delusion,” that children of the Reformation should shun the Church of Rome “like a plague.”³² Despite such strong reservations, the rapprochement of Presbyterians and Catholics in Canada continued to grow steadily after

Vatican II, although largely on an unofficial basis.

That Council, intended in the words of Pope John XXIII to “let in a little fresh air,” spawned a hurricane that swept the Christian world into the revolutionary age of the 1960s. Like Pandora, Vatican II unwittingly unleashed from the Roman box a flood of bewildering changes — folk masses, clerical marriages, dialogue, radicalism, disobedience — which challenged established forms and traditional thinking. The spirit of renewal, in all its forms, good and bad, seemed to spread like a contagion to Protestant churches as well. Bishop John Robinson of Woolwich shook the Church of England with his book *Honest to God*; Bishop James Pike of the Episcopal Church in the United States shocked conservatives with his untraditional language when he queried some basic Christian beliefs; demonism and astrology attracted an increasing number of people while church attendance dwindled in all major denominations. Leading scholars discussed the new “God is Dead” theology, a concept little understood but much quoted by laity and clergy alike. The world, it was announced, had entered the post-Christian era, meaning that European political and religious dominance in the Third World was finished, that Christianity was now a minority religion. On all sides the world of things and the world of ideas were in ferment, and the Presbyterian Church was not immune to the unsettling influences of this search to find the relevance of the Christian message for a new age.

This vogue of self-criticism — the “identity crisis” — was epitomized in Canada by Pierre Berton’s *The Comfortable Pew*, written at the request of the Anglican Church of Canada. That book, which sold 170,000 copies in one year in Canada alone, was variously described as “an ecclesiastical *Fanny Hill*” and as the most important document since Martin Luther nailed up his ninety-five theses. Its theme — the complacency, smugness, self-satisfaction and self-righteousness of the institutional church — was directed not merely at the Anglican Church but at the Christian church at large, and the reaction of the public was a flood of comment ranging from scurrilous abuse to semi-blasphemous adulation of the author. One of the many thoughtful replies to Berton was entitled *Why the Sea is Boiling Hot*, and playing on this title Professor Joseph McLelland gave two published addresses to the Toronto-Kingston Synod in the autumn of 1965 on the subject “Why Our Pond is Lukewarm: or Forty Years in the Wilderness.” This was an outspoken and critical assessment of Presbyterianism by the acknowledged spokesman of a “ginger group” of younger ministers dissatisfied with the present condition and future prospects of the church.

Professor McLelland opened with a condemnation of the “heroic view” of “1925 and All That.” Like simplistic accounts of the Reformation which

make 1517 the watershed between absolute Roman darkness and sanctified Protestant light, a half-true version of the union story had been perpetuated by the Presbyterian Church as it retreated towards sectarianism by avoiding dialogue. Both sides were right — and both wrong — in 1925. The Presbyterian Church's self-image was a caricature, he insisted, citing the fuzzy thinking reported in an Assembly poll of opinion on inter-church relations. Commenting on the mystique of exclusive Presbyterian possession of a distinctive confessional ministry, Professor McLelland challenged the basic philosophy of the anti-ecumenicals — if spiritual unity is sufficient, “Why have a Presbyterian Church in Canada?” “I believe that we are dangerously close to loving the Presbyterian Church in Canada more than our Lord Jesus Christ.” He invited the church to prove its principle of “semper reformanda” by self-renewal.

Two years after making these provocative statements, Professor McLelland elaborated his ideas in a more general context with his book *Towards a Radical Church: New Models for Ecumenical Relations*, in which he advocated a federal form of ecumenism to replace traditional episcopacy. His claim, that the ecumenical movement's pre-occupation with organic union obscured the nature of unity-in-diversity, was greeted with approval in some quarters of the Presbyterian Church, but with silence in others. His was not the only strident voice of protest. Stuart B. Coles, earlier associated with Gordon A. Peddie, the initiator of the war-time action concerning the church and nation, had become a leading figure in the Committee on Articles of Faith and in the new Board of Evangelism and Social Action. When the General Assembly decided in 1964 to authorize a Capital Needs Campaign to create a \$5.5 million contingency fund, Coles personally dissented in writing to the Assembly, charging that, “The weakness and unfruitfulness of The Presbyterian Church in Canada do not consist in a shortage of real estate, and her basic need is not for multiplication of religious institutions. Her real problem is refusal to reform, timidity of vision, pre-occupation with her own preservation and expansion as a religious organization, persistence in allocating nothing but miniscule monies from her budget toward the enlistment, nurture and sending forth of adult Christians, unwillingness to venture with the living Lord Jesus Christ into the radically changing situation of today's kind of world.”³³

Older and more traditionally-minded members were at first amused, then confused and finally angered by the words and actions of those who seemed intent on turning the church upside down in a frantic search for new relevancy. As a writer in the *Record* of May, 1966, put it, “I am weary of the whole tribe and the publicity given them. I am weary of our rebels — rebels in every line

— rebels in art, in music, in literature, rebels in religion and in morals. They have served whatever strange purpose they were intended to serve and should now retire into decent obscurity.” If conservatives reacted negatively, the rebels were too often simplistic in their belief that anything new was good and anything good was new. The church could neither ignore these challenges nor accept uncritically every proposal for change. Somehow the church must find a balance by applying old truths in new forms to the contemporary problems. The wide varieties of opinion within the church regarding the church’s purposes and the church’s methods also surfaced in connection with theology and worship services. On one side vague and liberal theology, or lack of positive confessional witness from the pulpit, was blamed by some for the decline and even the disappearance of a few of the church’s oldest congregations. On the other, efforts to prepare a “popular” confession, relevant for the postwar age, was met with charges that, however desirable or necessary new and contemporary confession may be, the Westminster Standards were being ignored and the results were theologically incomprehensible and impotent.

Yet another evidence of these divisions was the less publicized debate over the Book of Common Order. A committee had been appointed in 1953 to revise the older book, but two years later it was decided to introduce an entirely new compilation. As a result of questionnaires sent out in 1956-7 about details of existing worship practices, the committee realized that large and unexpected issues were emerging that would considerably delay its work. By 1957 the committee had prepared eleven orders of service, including one for Vespers and a “Litany of Evening Prayer.” Three years later a draft book had been circulated and although returns as yet were few, some trends were apparent. The proposed “norm of worship” of word and Sacrament together, implying weekly communion, was considered by some to be unPresbyterian or even Anglican. When more than two-thirds of the presbyteries had reported in 1961, fourteen had given approval or qualified approval for the book, thirteen had expressed disapproval and four recorded “no judgment.” To the “norm,” however, only one of nine presbyteries had said yes. Regarding various aspects of order the committee noted the wide variety of responses: “There is no particular point of controversy that has a decisive bearing upon the judgment of Presbyteries.”³⁴ In 1962 a revised draft of the new Book of Common Order was approved by the General Assembly and three years later it was in general use throughout the church.

The voice of dissent in search of an identity could not, however, be silenced. When the pre-Assembly Congress met in Kingston in June, 1967, youth and laity were present in force. Over 560 delegates attended, the majority being laymen and one-third under thirty years of age, so the *Record* of September

said. Borrowing from the Expo motif, *Man and His World*, the Congress's theme was "Man in God's World." The key-note speaker, Dr. Harold Englund, a young and dynamic minister from California, asked, "Why should we think that of all the institutions of mankind in our culture, the church should be the one institution that does not change?" Addressing himself to the total religious scene he warned, "the problems of the world are the problems of the church." Christians must begin relating their faith to the world by looking at their community instead of their church. Other speakers from other denominations followed, but the most provocative address came from Professor Joseph McLelland, who offered his blueprint for a new model church. "Ours is a reformed church which has become static so that it needs reformation, renewal in order to recover its proper dynamism." "I don't think other churches are planning to commit ecclesiastical rape. Have we nothing else to do than keep saying 'No'?"

The church, Professor McLelland believed, had failed to keep pace with a changing style of life and thought. His new model called for "buildings that are not churches," "ministers-at-large," ordained women, and church courts that were not afraid to do their job. "We have become... congregationalists.... Presbyteries do not exercise their rights, they are scared of congregations, especially the wealthier churches, or those whose ministers have loud mouths...." He then turned to the vocal right-wing conservatives, accusing them of a narrow vision which robbed the church of "the whole rich heritage of pre-1925 catholic Presbyterianism." The church must face up honestly to the facts of the present day. The new forms of ministry in the new model church must be geared to social action — but without allowing humanitarian projects to become its only business. "To sum up, we have no mission of our own." That mission must be identified because "we are committed not to the past but to the future."

Reaction to Professor McLelland's blueprint speech was immediate and overwhelmingly disapproving. One writer to the *Record* used such expressions as "diabolical," "sacrilege," and "obscene." Professor W. S. Reid felt that the message had been "largely negative," and accused Professor McLelland of encouraging not reformation but revolution and of criticizing the church in the same manner as those denounced by the Assembly of 1947.³⁵ Another correspondent charged the speaker with repeating "all the clichés of the current, fashionable post-Christian liberalism." "God may be dead in other denominations — but we ignorant 'Presbies' have Dr. McLelland."³⁶ In defence of Professor McLelland, the Rev. Charles C. Cochrane replied that his critics had essentially failed to distinguish between a revolutionary and a rebel.

As Canadian Presbyterians were swept up by this wave of Christian self — examination, one of the church's most outstanding historians, the late Neil Gregor Smith, caught the critical mood of the day in 1967 with a published address to the Synod of Toronto and Kingston entitled "Facing a Second Century." The title referred to Canada's centenary celebrations of Confederation but his theme was the challenge facing the church in the revolutionary age. He began by noting the declining state of the ministry in terms of social prestige and income. No longer has the minister a near-monopoly on higher education — a new breed of specialists, such as sociologists and psychologists, has taken over many of the clergy's former functions; and the minister's salary is now thousands of dollars below that of most blue-collar workers in his congregation. A century of secularization has eroded the influence of the church in community and national life so that today there are many and effective rivals to the church for public attention — "few sermons get news coverage... [and] few clergymen figure in the news except when they get involved in unsavoury scandals."

In 1967 Dr. Smith found little evidence of the boundless enthusiasm which had greeted Presbyterian union nearly a century earlier. On almost every side the church was beset by problems — communicant membership was dropping; inner city and rural congregations were being depopulated and the new suburban churches were barely holding their own; the shortage of ministers had become chronic and enrolment in the seminaries had fallen ten per cent in the previous three years. His proposed solutions had no sugar-coatings — the Presbyterian Church must admit its status as "a minority group in a religiously pluralistic society" and seek a spiritual and institutional renewal of witness. In an ecumenical age, "what really disturbs us now is the gnawing doubt as to the validity of the denominational witness we made such efforts to preserve....It is hardly surprising if some now wonder whether or not we made a wrong turning in 1925, and ask what future our church can have." In Neil Gregor Smith's opinion, the key to the church's second century must lie with the pastor and the parish — a dedicated and responsible ministry paid fair wages by an appreciative Christian congregation.

The Nature of Ministry

After 1960 the question of the ordination of women in the church began to excite attention once more and in 1963 the Committee on the Place of Women in the Church called for "a major step forward" in this regard. The Committee refused to define that step beyond saying that it must be "in accordance with the truth of the gospel,"³⁷ but it took measures to educate members regarding

the arguments for and against the idea by circulating widely a pamphlet with the deliberately provocative title, "Putting Woman in Her Place." The temper of the sixties was so far changed from that of the previous decade that the pamphlet was "well received both in Canada and elsewhere."³⁸ On the strength of this support, the Committee's report in 1964 called on the church to admit women "without any distinction" to all church courts, and to permit the ordination of women.

These proposals were sent down to the presbyteries and a year later the Committee announced that twenty-one of thirty-two presbyteries responding were in favour of ordaining women — seventeen presbyteries had not bothered to reply. The Committee admitted that the church had "by no means reached a common mind on these matters" but the returns did indicate such "a definite trend" that it believed the Assembly should proceed at once to act on the recommendations of 1964.³⁹ The Assembly, however, delayed for one year and not until 1966 was the desired legislation passed that finally allowed women to enter into complete "partnership" with men in the life of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. In 1968 Miss Shirley Jeffrey became the first ordained woman minister of the Church.

Enrolment in the church's two theological colleges continued at a distressingly low ebb through the late 1960s but by 1970 it began to show an upward swing once more. At the same time the organization of the Toronto School of Theology within the University of Toronto and of a graduate faculty of religion at McGill offered great advantages to the faculty and students of both Knox and The Presbyterian College. The Toronto School of Theology drew on the curricular resources of all denominational seminaries connected to that university, thus giving ministerial candidates a wider choice of optional courses and allowing faculty members to do more specialized work than was possible when the full range of subjects had to be offered by a handful of professors. Although McGill lacked such a system of affiliated colleges its Faculty of Divinity offered similar benefits.

A special committee to explore the feasibility of uniting The Presbyterian College with McGill had been established in 1963 and in 1968 the College Board reported strongly in favour of such a move. A year later the Board commented enthusiastically that the hoped-for advantages "have been realized and our energies and resources are being applied in a more effective and relevant manner in a contemporary setting."⁴⁰ The faculty of The Presbyterian College was reduced to two members who (as in the case of Knox which retained its full complement of teachers) gave the denominational core courses required for future ministers of the Presbyterian Church. In 1970 Knox had fifty students and thirty-eight registered in graduate programmes, but The

Presbyterian College enrolment had dropped to twelve from a high of twenty-six ten years earlier.

Growing concern over the escalating costs of church extension and the failure of many of the new postwar congregations to develop as viable entities because of the unexpected decline in church membership, caused the General Assembly of 1962 to freeze church extension while reassessing the techniques of operation. In 1970 the report of the director of the Committee on Extension showed that the slowdown of a decade earlier had not been reversed. In the 1950s one hundred and eleven new congregations had been started as opposed to only forty-one in the 1960s. Of those established between 1950 and 1959 only forty had become self-sustaining charges and eighteen had been closed, while nine of those started in the sixties had been closed and none were as yet self-supporting. Despite this discouraging record, the Committee anticipated that sixteen congregations would commence building projects before the centennial year, 1975, and thirty-six areas showed real possibility for extension work by 1980.⁴¹

The situation regarding foreign missions was not dissimilar from that at home. Reporting to the 1960 Assembly, the General Board of Missions offered a retrospective view of the preceding five years that indicated considerable progress. A critical examination of mission policies had been carried out with the co-operation of the church's missionaries through an intensive programme of visits to the fields. As a result the workers on the missions felt a greater sense of security and satisfaction with their work, institutions whose standards had slipped seriously had now been "reclaimed for distinctive Christian ministries," and for the future a clear course had been charted which took into account the specific conditions of each mission.⁴² Emphases were now being placed on the transfer of responsibility and decision-making to the appropriate local church, on the training of native leadership, on specialization for specific tasks, and on co-operation with other churches and missionary agencies, even if this should lead to church union. In Canada new procedures for the selection and training of missionaries and the continuing education of those on furlough had been instituted. Missionary effort was still smaller than it ought to be in the opinion of the Board, but what was being accomplished provided reasons for gratification though never for complacency.

By 1960 the church's missionary work had reached a new peak — seventy-four workers were engaged in six fields as compared to only half that number in 1945. Five years later the same number of missionaries were employed but the number of fields had declined to five. In a pamphlet entitled "Looking Ahead in World Mission," the General Board of Missions responded to the

“Call to Renewed Obedience in World Mission” issued by the General Assembly in 1964. The Board pointed out that, “Today the world is accessible as never before for missionary contact.” “At such a time can we say ‘no’ to those who urgently request our help for the strengthening of Gospel witness?” The two fields in China closed by the communist government of that country were still inaccessible, but the Presbyterian Church in Canada in the twenty years since the end of the war had added the promising mission of Nigeria to its work in Japan, Formosa, India and British Guiana. To be effective, the limited resources of the church for mission work required co-operation with the mission departments of the World Council of Churches and the Canadian Council of Churches. “The day of church-directed missions” must replace the day of “mission-directed missions,” and the newly independent churches of Asia and Africa required help that had not been foreseen fifteen years earlier when the overseas mission of the western churches had seemed at an end.

Unfortunately by 1965 less than three per cent of total contributions to the Presbyterian Church in Canada went to overseas work — more than ninety-seven per cent of receipts were spent at home in Canada. Therefore, the Board called for a serious reassessment of the church’s priorities and of its avowed purpose to be a missionary and hence a Christian church. In the next five years the number of missionaries declined to sixty-six, but because the church’s overseas work was increasingly conducted in co-operation with other groups the Presbyterian Church in Canada was actually represented in ten overseas mission areas.

The history of the church’s youth work since the war has followed a similar pattern of high peaks and very low valleys. Professor David Hay of Knox College drew attention in 1946 to the lack of any specific church-wide youth programme to bridge the gap between work with children and work with adults.⁴³ One existing, active group, the Ontario-centred Presbyterian Young Peoples Society, provided a basis for a national organization several years later. Not until the Board of Christian Education reported that enrolment in existing youth programmes had fallen from twenty thousand in 1937 to less than eight thousand in 1952 was any response forthcoming from the General Assembly. Then, in 1953, a National Young People’s Society was created which within two years attracted an additional two thousand members. Encouraged by this result, the 1955 Assembly appointed a Joint Committee on Lay Training and two years later made the Rev. Stuart Coles secretary for Lay Studies and dean of the Presbyterian Training School at Medicine Hat which served as a leadership training centre. Until this time the Board produced most of its own programme materials but the budgetary restrictions

of the early sixties forced it to depend increasingly on American-made materials supplied by the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. This change was facilitated by the fact that the Rev. James D. Smart, a Canadian Presbyterian, had played a major role in their production.

The primary concern of the National Young People's Society was organizing national conferences — the bulk of the Society's on-going work was actually in the hands of the synod, presbytery and congregational Young People's organizations. Partly because of the spirit of criticism and alienation among youth in the revolutionary sixties and partly because of less effective leadership, the national Society became moribund in the late 1960s, although the lower levels of organization still operated quite effectively. Alternative forms of youth involvement — Teen and Twenty Chapel after 1965 and the presence of Young Adult Observers at Assemblies — led to a demand at the General Assembly of 1970 for a radical new approach or else a total cessation of youth programmes. That Assembly reacted positively to this challenge by appointing a Team for Youth Ministry under the Board of Christian Education and by providing \$35,000 from the National Development Fund over the next three years. Future planning of programmes now rests with the young people who form the National Co-ordinating Body appointed at the same time as the Team for Youth Ministry.

The radical changes in the 1960s had naturally led the Board of Christian Education to consider producing new Church School materials. The high cost of publishing distinctive Canadian materials for a small market without any assurance of universal adoption in the church, however, ultimately left Presbyterians dependent on American curricula, even though these sometimes embody political and religious viewpoints disagreeable to Canadians. In 1960 the General Assembly approved the *Christian Faith and Life* curriculum of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (Northern) for the lower departments of Sunday schools and in 1964 it did the same for the higher levels, with Canadian supplements for each grade of the curriculum. At the same time the Board began experimenting with the principle of congregational selection that allowed local freedom in the choice of resources. As an alternative, *The Covenant Life* curriculum of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (Southern), also was approved in 1967, and beginning in 1968 further materials from *Christian Faith and Life* became available for adult groups. A study of seven denominational and two commercial curricula, started in 1966, underlined the difficulty of obtaining Canadian content in such publications. Of the nine series examined, seven were American. Of the two Canadian, the Anglican was in the planning stage and its Prospectus indicated that its basis would be The Prayer Book. The "New Curriculum" of the United Church

issued its introductory volume for adult study in 1964 and by 1966-67 the public outcry against its so-called "liberal" theology had made it widely unacceptable among Presbyterians.⁴⁴

Concern for the relevance of the church's ministry in changing times led the Assembly's Committee on Recruitment and Vocation to begin a study of the subject in 1965. Preliminary results in turn led to a decision to seek outside advice for the sake of objectivity, a plan approved by the Assembly of 1968. A consultant company was engaged and its final report, called the Ross Report after that company, was completed by the end of 1969. Questionnaires were sent to ordained ministers, to full-time women workers and to church members and adherents, and this information was supplemented by personal interviews and group discussions. In its final form the report provided a statistical and ideological self-portrait of the Presbyterian Church in Canada as it approached its second century after a turbulent and divisive decade of introspection.

The first and most important discovery of the Ross survey indicated that "in nearly all sectors of the Presbyterian Church in Canada there exists a state of confusion as to the mission and objectives of the church."⁴⁵ There existed also a wide disparity of images of the church. In the view of many, an obsession with "tradition and past glories" made the church "conservative, stodgy, slow to change, more concerned with identity than ministry, out of touch, ingrown, in need of renewal, and unable to communicate with the younger generation." Members were equally concerned about church organization and its operation. Those under twenty-five years of age were grossly underrepresented in the church's structures; synods were not fulfilling a useful function and presbyteries failed to provide ministerial support. The most frequently criticized bodies were, however, the sessions and the eldership. Two-thirds of all session members were over fifty and of 179 elders contacted only eight were women and only two of these were under thirty years of age. "Too many Sessions are rigid and inflexible and totally inhibiting of new ideas and congregational participation and involvement."⁴⁶

Involvement, in the opinion of the investigators, was the key for a healthy church organization which could offset the existing static 'power structures' in individual congregations and the church as a whole. To achieve this involvement, new forms of ministry were needed. Church opinion was ready for new forms of ministry and the church must be prepared to accept them — "otherwise, the church will be in danger of losing its most vital resources — a significant proportion of ministers under forty years of age, many of the youth, and a growing number of reform-minded persons of all ages."⁴⁷ Church members were now oriented "towards people and community outreach, and a

de-emphasis of buildings and structures.” At the same time, there was strong support for the idea of co-operation — co-operation with other Presbyterian congregations, with other denominations and with other community groups.

The central factor in the ministry, the report continued, remained human resources. Since 1940 the church had lost some eighty ministers to secular employment, and “the danger of pastoral ministers leaving the formal ministry of the church is very great.” Eighty-three ministers (fifty-two of them under forty years of age) admitted that they were considering leaving, which would mean a loss of thirteen per cent of the church’s “working ministers.” Equally disturbing was the lack of involvement and sense of mission among the laity. Young people did not participate proportionately in church activities and the church had failed to win the allegiance of the younger age groups. In sum the recommendations were for differentiated ministries, proper personnel planning and effective utilization of the church’s human resources. The style of the Ross Report was not that of Pierre Berton but the message was essentially similar.

Towards the Second Century

In response to the search for renewal, the Assembly of 1965 had also appointed a special committee “to undertake a thorough study of the vocation, work and mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and in the changing life of Canada and other nations, and a study of the resources of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in persons, finances and institutions.”⁴⁸ This committee, later renamed the Life and Missions Projects and known from its initials as LAMP, was originally to report in 1967 but when two years proved insufficient its target date was moved to 1969. Five task groups were created to examine separately the church’s ministry, mission, congregational life, the General Assembly and its offices, the presbytery and synod, and “Canadian Presbyterians Today.” A sixth group was charged with producing the LAMP Report. That report, presented to the 1969 Assembly by the Committee’s convener, the Rev. Charles C. Cochrane, filled twenty-three closely printed pages. The themes of the report were two — participation, and institutional reform to promote participation and efficiency.

The actual recommendations embodied in the report numbered thirty-two — half were aimed at increasing member-participation at all levels in the church’s life, the remainder made tentative proposals for structural changes in the Church’s national organization. It was the committee’s belief that new committees should be elected in each congregation, that Session meetings

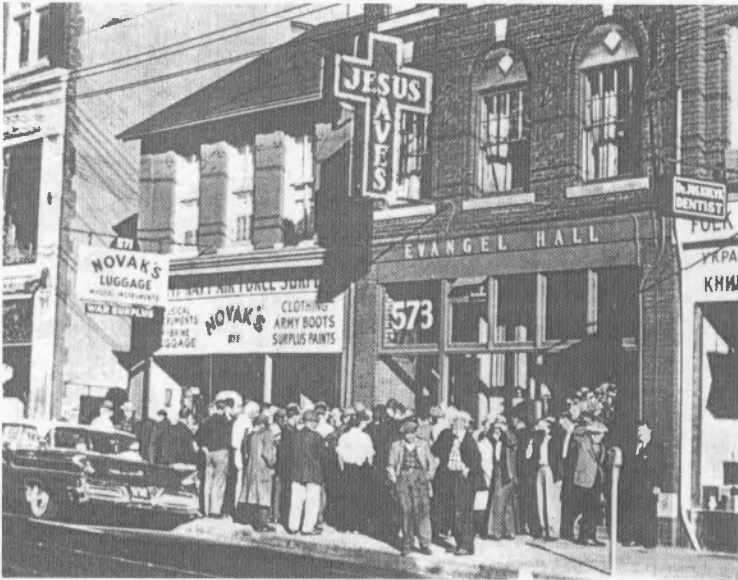
should be open, that elders should be elected for a basic five-year term, that congregations should actively seek community involvement, that better use of existing planning aids should be made and that more help should be given by church boards, that women and youth should have a much larger role in church life and that more training should be given in youth leadership. After advocating strongly a bilingual policy for the church, the report turned its attention to “on-going reform.” This meant, in terms of the recommendations, paid education leave for all professional church workers, a personnel committee to provide a variety of employment services, a study of the church’s needs in the area of national agencies and the restructuring of church administration, a committee on communications, and the creation of a church conference centre.

One year after LAMP the General Assembly received the first ‘action reports’ from its committees charged with implementing the LAMP recommendations. The most important of these reports came from Organization and Planning, a committee of the Administrative Council formed in the late fifties. Organization and Planning had added to its name the subtitle, the “Agency For Life and Mission Projects,” and had spent the past twelve months plotting its campaign and putting machinery in action. By 1971 Organization and Planning could report that its fourfold programme of investigating national organization, the functioning of presbyteries, renewal of congregational life and planning assistance, had proved so time-consuming that other areas of its responsibility had suffered. Nevertheless, the committee was examining a plan for national organization based in five agencies, namely world missions, congregational life, theological training and personnel, finance and communication. The extent of the Committee’s activities were indicated by its 1972 report which ran to nineteen pages and included specific recommendations for establishing agencies in connection with congregational life and ministry. With only two years remaining of the committee’s mandate to study and recommend, it appeared that a new organizational structure for the church might well be functioning when the church celebrates its centenary in 1975.

“Relevancy” was also the motive for the action of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action in publishing a *Manual on Christian Social Action* in 1966. Where precisely did the church stand on the wide spectrum of problems confronting present-day Canadians? This *Manual* provided a digest of the General Assembly’s pronouncements over recent years on issues ranging from family planning and medicare to nuclear weapons and bilingualism. The chronological pattern in which these statements were made is highly revealing concerning the awakened social conscience of the sixties. Through the 1940s and fifties the church’s social teaching had been infrequent and



Ontario Presbyterian Young Peoples Society 1938 Convention



Evangel Hall, downtown Toronto



Loading Boxes for Hungarian Refugees



Ted Johnson and Biafra Relief

often negative. It had pronounced, for instance, in favour of capital punishment. By the mid-sixties, however, overtures sent to the Assembly indicated that opinion in the church was far from unanimous in support of maintaining such positions on social questions.

The real flood of authoritative church statements regarding social issues began in 1960 with the condemnation of anti-semitism. The following year the Assembly spoke out in defence of senior citizens and the unemployed. In 1962 it expressed "intense dissatisfaction" with the continuing high level of unemployment while denying categorically that the Christian church could or should dissociate itself from the affairs of the nation.⁴⁹ Church and state might be legally separated but never religion and national life. At the next Assembly the Board of Evangelism and Social Action called upon the church to give "imaginative and courageous leadership and guidance to its people in these days of 'rapid social and economic change'," and the Assembly supported the liberalization of divorce laws. The Assembly of 1964 pronounced itself in favour of family planning, of censoring pornography and of compulsory treatment of drug addiction. To this it added the declaration that the church must live as well as preach social improvement; too many studies and resolutions of Assembly were popularly viewed as "missions accomplished" whereas in fact they were but the first steps towards action by "the servant people of God."

The Assembly of 1965 declared that "Christian Social Action is the Church's business...because it is God's business," and then proceed to uphold the policy of bilingualism and biculturalism for Canada, to defend interracial marriages and to denounce the soul-destroying aspects of automation and poverty. Interracial marriages were approved even more unequivocally in 1966, when the Assembly also stated its support for just treatment of Canadian Indians, for adequate housing and pension plans, and for responsible trade unionism. General Assemblies since 1966 have reiterated the church's deep concern over poverty, inadequate housing and the treatment of Canada's native races, but they have also stated the church's position on several new topics. In 1967 the Assembly supported therapeutic abortions (a policy reaffirmed in 1972) and in 1972 called for the establishment of suicide prevention centres. Another current issue — the responsibility of corporations for the social effects of their policies and actions — was taken up and approved by the General Assembly of 1971.⁵⁰ The church's view on capital punishment underwent similar changes in the 1960s. Growing support for abolition of the death penalty had led to the appointment of one committee in 1956, and another in 1965 when over a dozen presbyteries passed resolutions favouring abolition. The statement of the General Assembly in 1972 that capital

punishment was ineffective as a deterrent,⁵¹ was not necessarily the opinion of all Presbyterians, for at least one prominent clergyman publicly defined the death penalty as justifiable retribution.⁵²

Another subject of interest to Presbyterians in the 1960s was the movement for church union initiated in 1943 between the Church of England and the United Church. By 1958 so little progress had been made towards union that the General Council of the United Church called for an unequivocal statement of Anglican intentions. This challenge served to reactivate the dragging pace of discussions and by 1965 a statement of the "Principles of Union" had been formulated. Presbyterians watched this long process with mixed emotions and some bitter memories. Many older people recalled vividly the divisive events that had led to 1925 and found satisfaction in their continuing denominational witness. Some younger members were concerned that a further church union in Canada without the Presbyterian church would leave them an isolated and insignificant minority, prey to sectarian forces from within and out of touch with the mainstream of Christian life. Writing on the "Church Union Proposal" in the *Record* of July-August, 1966, Professor David Hay expressed "great alarm" at the possible effects of Presbyterian isolation and added, "I could wish...that we were implicated practically...working out a degree of commitment that may be in the meantime less than total." "Concern for the Christian good of this land is not a task that Christians can discharge in isolation from one another and we should not do things *to* one another without being involved *with* one another." Officially the church took no notice of the union movement and no steps towards involvement until 1967, when the General Assembly voted to send observers to the church union meetings.

The church's active concern with world problems in the 1960s was reflected in the activities and declarations of its Committee on International Affairs. A statement of that Committee in 1965 calling upon the Canadian government to promote peace in Vietnam and to refuse all aid to the American war effort was sent to every congregation. A year later the Committee reiterated this position and condemned the American bombing of North Vietnam. At the same time it issued a statement on the Arab-Israeli six-day war which expressed sympathy for sufferers on both sides in the conflict and urged Canada and the United Nations to seek a "just settlement" of the Middle East Conflict.⁵³ In the midst of the tragic Biafran civil war in Nigeria the General Assembly approved an immediate donation of \$50,000 for relief work and appealed to members for an additional \$75,000. The church responded by raising over \$141,000 in the next six months and a Canadian relief team sent to Nigeria included three Presbyterians. Public concern for the plight of these famine stricken refugees was maintained by the regular reports carried in the *Record* and by a special

Record supplement in September-October 1969 containing articles by Stanley Burke and E. H. Johnson.⁵⁴

One by-product of the Ross Report on ministry was a statistical profile of church members as of 1968.⁵⁵ The findings confirmed most of the popular impressions about the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Central and southern Ontario now contained almost two-thirds of all Presbyterians. In relation to national averages, Presbyterians were disproportionately more numerous in the over-forty-five age group and strikingly low among those under fifteen years. Two-thirds of all Presbyterians had been raised in the church but almost half the remainder were formerly attached to the United Church. Statistically, Presbyterians had higher incomes than the Canadian average although in some regions the church contained a higher proportion of the working class than the regional average, based on family incomes. Three times as many Presbyterians had a university education compared to the national average — in the Montreal and Ottawa Synod that figure rose to five and a half times. Church adherents under thirty with high incomes and university education were the least active in church affairs, but church attendance by Presbyterians of all categories was at a surprisingly high level. Comparisons for the ministry were obviously more difficult, but again some provocative figures did emerge. Nearly all ministers had served one charge for fifteen years or more; forty per cent were over the age of fifty, fifty-five per cent received incomes under \$7,500 and only ten per cent received more than \$9,500 — these figures did not include the house and car allowances.

The total number of communicants, which had risen annually since the end of the war, reached a peak of 202,500 in 1965 and then began to descend. In 1966 and again in 1967 the number dropped by some 2,300; in 1968 this loss increased to 3,400; and in 1969, 1970 and 1971 an average of 4,000 left the church each year. This decline — almost 20,000 members in just six years — brought the number of communicants back to the level of 1953 and, understandably, excited grave concern within the church. A report of the Board of Evangelism and Social Action in 1971 blamed the trend on several factors — rapid cultural change, affluence, mobility, erosion of belief, ignorance of Christianity, and indifferentism.⁵⁶ Corroborative statistics came from the 1971 census of Canada — Presbyterians numbered only 872,000 (exactly the same as in 1931), but now were only four per cent of the nation's population compared to 8.4 per cent forty years earlier. In the decade of the sixties Canada's population had grown by more than three million but the Presbyterians by only 54,000. It was small consolation to know that other denominations were also suffering similar if less severe loss of support. The remedy proposed by the Presbyterian Church was "visitation evangelism,"

with particular attention to youth.

“Visitation evangelism” might have a new sound, and a more personal approach, but mass evangelism was already creating tensions within the church. As part of the postwar religious boom, there had appeared a new generation of popular evangelists using radio, mass meetings and later television to foster personal conversion experiences. In the United States Billy Graham and Oral Roberts were the earliest and most successful of such revivalists — in Canada Charles Templeton was the best known practitioner of “show-biz” religion. Many Presbyterians were sympathetic to the aims of this revivalism if not entirely approving of the methods, and a small number of young Presbyterians were from time to time active participants in the Youth for Christ and similar movements. Billy Graham’s influence in Canada was no doubt enhanced by the association with his brother-in-law, Leighton Ford, a Canadian who conducted several Canadian missions, including a two-week crusade at Toronto in 1960 under Presbyterian auspices. Some fundamentalist ministers such as Perry F. Rockwood found the traditions and attitudes within the Presbyterian Church in Canada too restrictive and left its ministry, but others such as William Fitch of Knox Church, Toronto, had little difficulty in working within an institutional framework historically wedded to the principle of forbearance.

When Key 73, a plan for evangelism on an interdenominational and continent-wide scale, was proposed by its American initiators in 1968, the Presbyterian Church in Canada joined along with most major Canadian denominations in the programme of prayer, persuasion and publicity. Some Presbyterians and others were, however, concerned about certain techniques and objectives of Key 73 — for instance, reference to conversion of Jews aroused resentment and vocal opposition within North American Judaism. Key 73 had set itself the impossible goal of reaching every person on the continent, but its limited success in Canada was also due to what one prominent Canadian Presbyterian called “razzle dazzle Americanism,” and to inadequate leadership support.

Key 73 came at a time when subculture movements, such as the Jesus Freaks and the Children of God, were challenging the traditional churches, and when abuses by faith healers and pseudo-scientific cults were the centre of critical attention. One of the most widespread of the new religious forces was charismatic renewal, closely paralleling Pentacostalism in its emphases on glossalalia, on the role of the Holy Spirit in personal conversion experiences and group relations, and in the informality of its worship services. Charismatic renewal did not develop as an organized movement; rather it was a generalized technique that influenced all the major Christian denom-

inations, including the Roman Catholic Church. Among Canadian Presbyterians, however, the impact of charismatic renewal in some cases tended to be a divisive factor in congregational life.

Even while Key 73 was creating ripples on the luke-warm pond, and LAMP's recommendations were producing new structures for a numerically shrinking denomination, the Presbyterian Church in Canada was rapidly approaching another milestone in its history. Before the centennial celebrations of Confederation in 1967 the church had already begun planning for its own one hundredth birthday in 1975 with the theme of "Remembrance, Renewal and Response." Three books on Presbyterian history were produced for 1967 — a collection of sermons, a volume of biographical studies, and a brief history of Presbyterianism in Canada, this last to be preliminary to a more definitive history for 1975. No less than seventy-five suggestions for celebrating the church's centenary were received by the General Assembly's Committee on History. Those projects adopted included a short popular history, a pictorial record of Presbyterian history in Canada, a series of studies on such topics as the union of 1875, and biographies, synod, presbytery and mission histories.

Although not in itself a "centennial project," the opening at Knox College in 1972 of commodious, air-conditioned new quarters for the church's archives was a major achievement which will bring increasing benefits from scholarly research into Canada's Presbyterian past as collections of both private papers and official records are assembled and made available to a history-conscious church. The year 1972 also witnessed the publication of the revised *Book of Praise* which had been eight years in preparation. This was only the second revision undertaken since 1897, and the new book, which included a significant number of new hymns, was such an instant success that the first 130,000 copies were sold in less than a year and a half, and a third printing was required within two years.

As the centenary approached a contagious enthusiasm seized the church. A year of celebration began at the General Assembly of 1974 when eighteen hundred persons met in two Kitchener churches after a centennial parade complete with bagpipes and a Conestoga wagon. A centennial choir toured Canada and made a recording of its music. From three hundred church banners submitted in competition a panel of judges chose the best to be displayed at the next General Assembly. Prizes were awarded for two of the numerous hymns composed for the occasion. Canada Post issued a stamp depicting the Rev. John Cook as Moderator of the First General Assembly in 1875. Probably Canadian Presbyterians had never been so united as they were on the eve of the centenary of their church's enduring witness.⁵⁷