

# The Canadianization of the Protestant Churches

John S. Moir

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[See table of contents](#)

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## THE CANADIANIZATION OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES

John S. Morr  
Scarborough College  
University of Toronto

Applying the term "Canadianization" to the development of the Christian churches in this country before Confederation is begging the question whether any demonstrable Canadianism existed in that period. Still, one can admit that nationalism did not exist in the Province of Canada before 1867 without thereby denying that some sense of Canadian identity was assuming nascent form at least from the War of 1812 onwards. The political results of that War suggest one possible interpretation of the Canadianization of the Protestant churches, namely the reconciliation of divided loyalties in the politico-religious sphere. Another interpretation may be that Canadianization in the religious sphere reflects a stage in the growth from sect to church, a form of ecclesiastical anti-colonialism.<sup>1</sup> While this latter interpretation can be applied to denominations that began in undeniably sectarian form in Canada, it is impossible to discuss the colonial position of the British national churches in these terms.

Perhaps the process of Canadianization in the Protestant churches can be formulated in this way: the churches of England and Scotland, as institutional projections of the established churches in Britain, were slow to accept Canadianization because their mission status involved such strong physical, financial and ideological dependence on the mother churches that the umbilical cord seemed almost to be made of iron. In contrast religious bodies without such dependence could indigenize rapidly provided they rejected the sectarian view that national boundaries are immaterial to His Kingdom. The Protestant sect that could think Canadian had more freedom of structure and spirit to Canadianize than the established-church-missions that were historically tied too closely to Old World nationalism for the good of their overseas development.

The process of Canadianizing the Protestant churches in Canada — effectively in Upper Canada — has three major aspects. The first is the training and employment of a native clergy — a Canadian-born or at least Canadian-resident clergy — that would understand Canadian problems and Canadian ways better than British-trained missionaries. The second aspect is the legalization of church bodies to organize church

<sup>1</sup> N. G. Smith, "Nationalism in the Canadian Churches", *Canadian Journal of Theology*, IX (2), April, 1963, pp. 112-25.

courts and hold property — the creation of jurisdiction. This involved the structuring of churches to meet specific Canadian conditions. The third major aspect can be defined as psychological Canadianism — the acquisition and manifestation of attitudes reflecting identification with the land and people of Canada and with the Canadian outlook — in a word the growth of a Canadian sentiment or identity in the life of the churches. This was marked within the churches by certain liturgical changes and increased lay participation in church government, and in the secular realm by an overt interest in the aspirations of the nation. The three interconnected aspects do not appear at the same time or in the same order within the various churches. As legally established churches in Britain, the churches of England and Scotland had legal status in Canada before dissenting bodies, and partly as a result of this preferred position, partly because of their mission connection to the mother churches, they were late in achieving Canadian identity.

The types of ecclesiastical polity had an important bearing on the rate of indigenization. Frontier conditions left many persons and families denominationally uncommitted for years. They would probably respond to the ministrations of any denomination that could reach them physically. Congregationally organized churches would seem to have a greater flexibility for adaptation to local conditions than presbyterial — or episcopal — structured churches. In the Canadas, however, the two main congregationally structured groups, the Baptists and the Congregationalists, both failed before 1867 to become significant forces for similar reasons. Jealously guarded congregational autonomy impaired any mission outreach on a significant scale. The lack of any effective organization above the individual congregation localized the influence of the Baptist and Congregational fellowships. Frontier conditions, in fact, demanded centralized control and flexibility. Not the congregational but the episcopal system — either individual or corporate episcopacy — best filled the needs of church organization to reach the uncommitted pioneer. But establishmentarianism and too rigid adherence to the European parish system blighted the policy-making powers of progressive bishops and presbyteries. Thus it fell to the Methodists to achieve the most successful combination of centralized control and local flexibility through their Conference and circuit rider system, and through their lack of establishment status.

The spirit of political loyalism resulting from the War of 1812 forced Canadian Methodism to end its tutelage under the American Methodist Church. In Lower Canada, Methodism came under direct control of the English Conference in 1820 and this mission connection that provided preachers and funds prevented any development of Canadianism. A handful of Methodists in an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic population found survival possible only through dependence on a mother church.

Essentially, this was the condition of all Protestant churches in Lower Canada. In Upper Canada, political loyalism was an even stronger impetus to cut the American tie, but the absence of any predominant denomination comparable to the Roman Catholic church in Lower Canada made independence a practicable alternative to connection with the English Methodist Conference.

The movement of the Upper Canadian Methodists for autonomy was begun in 1824 and completed in 1828. The Upper Canadian census of 1825 showed a total population of 158,000 and, allowing conservatively a four to one ratio of adherents to full members, the Methodist total would be almost 34,000, or more than one in five of the population. Just three years later when independence was achieved, that total had increased by 10,000, and the number of preachers had risen from thirty-three to forty-six. Obviously Methodism was reaching and winning the settlers. At exactly the same time, John Strachan's strictures, expressed in his famous sermon on Bishop Mountain's death and in his Ecclesiastical Chart of 1827, forced Methodism to clarify its Canadianism.

Strachan had attacked "the uneducated itinerant preachers" who were "almost universally Americans". The devastating reply of the young Egerton Ryerson showed that all but eight of the Methodist preachers were British-born and educated, and six of those eight were naturalized citizens.<sup>2</sup> The real issue, however, was church establishment — Strachan's demand for more effective government support of the Church of England — and here Methodism took the lead in promoting voluntarism or complete separation of church and state as a Canadian ideal. Strachan's statements had opened the Clergy Reserves controversy that was to bedevil Canadian religious and political life for the next thirty years. They also led to the establishment in 1829 of the *Christian Guardian*, the official voice of Methodism and the most influential newspaper in the province until George Brown's *Globe*. In succeeding years, the *Christian Guardian* and the Methodist Conference spoke for most dissenters when they denounced church establishment as un-Canadian.

Strachan's embroilment in the Clergy Reserves controversy and his related claim that loyalty was a peculiarly Anglican attribute have, unfortunately, veiled his own forceful Canadianism. As early as 1815 he had attempted to train a native ministry which he saw as an essential to Anglican success in Canada.<sup>3</sup> The charter of King's College that he obtained in 1827 was remarkably liberal for its day and would have been even more liberal if Strachan had had his way. The fact that the charter imposed no religious tests on students was his tacit admission of the

<sup>2</sup> Egerton Ryerson, *Canadian Methodism: its Epochs and Characteristics*. Toronto: 1882, pp. 154-5.

<sup>3</sup> George Spragge, ed., *The John Strachan Letter Book: 1812-1834*. Toronto: 1946, p. 74.

religious pluralism already existing in Upper Canada. Even in the structure of the church, Strachan was already advocating a synodical form of government with lay representation as better adapted to the Church's Canadian needs.<sup>4</sup>

The militant voluntaryism of the Methodists became quiescent in the early 1830's after the government-encouraged incursion of the English Conference into Upper Canada led the Canadians to accept union with that body on terms that sharply curtailed their autonomy and freedom of action. Despite the promise of the 1833 Articles of Union to "preserve inviolate the rights and privileges" of the Canadian Methodists, the English Conference henceforth appointed the President of the Canadian Conference, controlled all Canadian missions, and enforced English standards for ordination — this last a downgrading of the laity since it ended ordination of local preachers. The final article was the English Conference's version of the Colonial Laws Validity Act.<sup>5</sup> The conservative influence of the English preachers, more Wesleyan than Methodist in their deference towards the established church, was further enhanced in 1834 by a unanimous Conference resolution to exclude discussion of political questions from the *Christian Guardian*.<sup>6</sup> The union of 1833, though short lived, was a victory for ecclesiastical imperialism and a defeat for the Canadian experience. The Canadianism of the Methodists thereafter was more evident in the continuing Methodist Episcopal Church that had chosen separation in preference to union.

Coincident with union, the supposed coalition of voluntarist Methodists and radical reformers in Upper Canada was terminated by Egerton Ryerson's denunciation in October 1833, of Mackenzie's ungodly English associate, Joseph Hume. Mackenzie had mistakenly assumed that the Methodists were political reformers — he was equally mistaken after 1833 in believing that they had all "gone over to the enemy".<sup>7</sup> The aims of the Canadian Methodists were simply religious equality and political independence. The violent reaction of their English Conference brethren to the Rebellion of 1837 revealed the deep differences in outlook of the two groups. The English Conference dissolved the union in 1840 because the majority of the Canadian Wesleyan Methodists would not abandon voluntaryism.<sup>8</sup> In the end Governor General Lord Sydenham's magic wand achieved what the English Conference could not. By offering a modicum of state support through the Clergy Reserves Act of 1840,

<sup>4</sup> A. N. Bethune, *Memoir of the Right Reverend John Strachan, D.D., LL.D., First Bishop of Toronto*. Toronto: 1870, pp. 249-50.

<sup>5</sup> *The Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Canada, from 1824 to 1845 . . .*. Toronto: 1846, p. 66.

<sup>6</sup> *Christian Guardian*, 25 June 1834.

<sup>7</sup> *Colonial Advocate*, 30 October 1833.

<sup>8</sup> *The Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Canada . . .*, p. 251.

Sydenham and his "high priest",<sup>9</sup> Egerton Ryerson, effectively stopped the mouth if they did not destroy the voluntarism of the Canadian Wesleyan Methodists. When English and Canadian conferences were reunited in 1847 on virtually the same terms as 1833, it was on the clear understanding of "no politics" in the *Guardian* or in Conference. So, in the final phase of the Clergy Reserves controversy that was about to begin, the voice of Canadianism in the Methodist Conference was muted.

Beginning in 1834 the reform movement in Upper Canada had become secularized and when the cause of voluntarism was next taken up at the end of the forties, the torch had passed to the Free Church and its two journalistic lay spokesmen, Peter and George Brown. The hope of creating a single comprehensive Canadian Presbyterian organization was explicit in the formation of the Presbytery of the Canadas in 1818 by sixteen ministers from four different churches and three national backgrounds.<sup>10</sup> But these hopes had been destroyed by the divisive missionary work of the Church of Scotland's militant Glasgow Colonial Society in the 1820's and by the resultant 1831 creation of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland. The Church of Scotland in Canada soon challenged the Anglican monopoly of the Clergy Reserves on the basis of its claim to co-establishment in the Empire, a claim that was, of course, a rejection of voluntarism.

The retributive disruption of the Canadian Church of Scotland Synod in 1844 was unrelated to Canadian conditions—it was the work of recent Scottish immigrants in sympathy with Chalmer's opposition to intrusion. Ironically it was the Old Kirk element that evinced Canadianism in this crisis. In vain they protested Disruption in the independent Canadian Synod—the authority of the Scottish church courts did not extend beyond the quay of Greenock.<sup>11</sup> Against the divisive activities of the Free Church agents in Canada, they protested in a similar vein. "Placed as we are in a position entirely different from that of the Church of Scotland—exempted from all the grievances, either real or imaginary, which give rise to the disruption there; and possessing a full, free and unquestioned right of jurisdiction . . ." <sup>12</sup> Nevertheless Disruption shattered the Kirk in Canada with important results for the Canadianization of Presbyterianism.

In the first place, the Canadian Free Church immediately drew away about a quarter of the clergy of the old synod and thereafter increased

<sup>9</sup> Paul Knaplund, ed., *Letters from Lord Sydenham, Governor-General of Canada 1839-1841, to Lord John Russell*. London: 1931, p. 95.

<sup>10</sup> William Gregg, *Short History of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion of Canada*. 3rd. ed., rev. Toronto: 1900, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> *Draft of an Answer to the Dissent and Protest of Certain Ministers and Elders who have seceded . . .* Kingston: 1844.

<sup>12</sup> *Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in Connection with the Church of Scotland*. Toronto: 1844. XV, pp. 33-34.

its strength by leaps and bounds. The Church of Scotland needed a generation to regain its pre-Disruption numbers. In a handful of years the laity of Free Church, spurred on by its journalistic voices, the *Banner* and *Globe* of the Browns, assumed the leadership of the voluntarists in Canada even though the Free Church in Scotland still favoured the establishment principle. Equally important in the Canadianizing of Presbyterianism, the Free Church seminary, Knox College, opened in 1844 with thirteen students — by its sixth session, 1849-50, it contained fifty-six students and eleven graduates had already been licensed to preach.<sup>13</sup> Thus the stage was set for the final all-out drive against the Clergy Reserves with the Free Church donning the mantle laid down by the Methodists over a decade earlier.

Several other developments in the 1840's were also hastening the process of Canadianization within the Protestant churches. Tractarianism, though only mildly promoted among Canadian Anglicans, divided that Church sharply into low and high church parties that generally reflected difference in national origins — the low church element predominating among Irish settlers in western Upper Canada, the same region that had gone most solidly Free Church.<sup>14</sup> Tractarianism presented the Anglican Church in Canada for the first time with an issue involving loyalty to the parent church and to establishmentarianism. The conversion of leading English Tractarians to Roman Catholicism prevented any open disruption within the Anglican Church while strengthening the self-confidence of the low church party. Ironically, the anti-Erastianism of the Tractarians looked very much like the practical voluntarism of the Canadian low church party.

While Tractarianism was shaking the Church of England (or the United Churches of England and Ireland as the low churchmen insisted on calling it) such Romanizing trends challenged all Reformed churches to closer co-operation for mutual self-defence. With the rise of the "Papal Aggression" controversy in the early fifties, co-operation began to assume the proportions of an urgent necessity. The Protestant reaction to Papal Aggression, already foreshadowed by the reaction to Tractarianism, resulted in a sort of Protestant ecumenicism in Canada, in which Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists and Congregationalists drew together to prosecute social reforms dear to Protestant hearts, such as temperance, sabbatarianism, and Sunday School movements. Only the continuing presence of the Clergy Reserves seemed to stand in the way of a Protestant rapprochement leading to eventual church union on the basis of a commonly shared Canadianism.

The great crisis of Canadianization, especially for the semi-established churches, arrived with the Great Ministry. For the Anglican Church, the

<sup>13</sup> *Ecclesiastical and Missionary Record*, May, 1847, December, 1849.

<sup>14</sup> J. S. Moir, *Church and State in Canada West*. Toronto: 1959, p. 4.

implications of the new order were made evident in the nationalistic legislative programme of the Reform government. King's College, popular symbol of supposed Anglican privilege in education, fell before the forces of secularism despite Strachan's protest against such "opposition to Religious truth" and "striking enmity" to the Church of England. Baldwin's "impious" University Bill was but the religious twin of the Rebellion Losses Act passed two weeks earlier. Worse was to follow — by the summer of 1850, the left-wing reformers of Upper Canada, having tasted clerical blood at King's College, were in full cry for an end to the Clergy Reserves. The forces of the voluntaryists were now united in the newly-formed inter-denominational Anti-Clergy Reserves Association.<sup>15</sup> There is no need to retrace the chequered path to secularization of the Reserves. What is of more immediate interest is the remarkable reaction by the Church of England in the direction of Canadianization when faced with the possible loss of this last vestige of establishment.

In April 1850, John Strachan went to England in search of funds for Trinity College. There is no evidence that he discussed the Clergy Reserves question there but it would be surprising if he had not. His actions on his return to Canada suggest that he had discussed it with church authorities at home and discovered little willingness on their part to defend the Anglican share of the Reserves. As early as 1832, Strachan had proposed a diocesan synod as the best means to "obtain that influence on public opinion, or with the Government, or with the Bishop himself, — that we ought to possess, till we have frequent Convocations, composed of the Clergy and members from their several congregations. To such assemblies the Episcopal Church in the United States owes almost everything . . . ." <sup>16</sup>

Now, in May 1851 he initiated the first step in such a plan by inviting lay representatives to his visitation. Strachan's biographer connects this move directly to the renewed agitation against the Clergy Reserves. The assembled clergy and laity of Toronto diocese passed resolutions protesting the threatened secularization and recommending the legal creation of a diocesan synod.<sup>17</sup> Five months later, five of the seven British North American bishops met privately in Quebec to formulate a detailed plan for such synods and for an ecclesiastical province to govern the church in Canada.<sup>18</sup> This was but the fulfillment of the petition of Strachan and his *ad hoc* synod to the Archbishop of Canterbury: "The time has

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>16</sup> Bethune, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-50.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 250-52.

<sup>18</sup> A. W. Mountain, *A Memoir of G. J. Mountain, D.D., D.C.L., Late Bishop of Quebec*. Montreal: 1866, pp. 292-99.



arrived when we must look to our local resources for the maintenance of the Clergy and the extension of the Church.”<sup>19</sup>

Before legal stature was obtained for synods, the Clergy Reserves had passed into history. The Church in Canada had not really expected the imperial House of Commons to save the Reserves, but it did place “the fullest reliance” in the House of Lords.<sup>20</sup> Yet even the peers proved to have feet of clay. “What could we expect”, lamented Strachan, “when nine Bishops out of nineteen voted for the total confiscation of the Church Property in Canada.”<sup>21</sup> By separating church and state, the Canadian Clergy Reserves Act of 1854 imposed voluntarism on all denominations. Equally as important as the final settlement of that long-festering sore were the resultant advances towards Canadianization made by the Protestant churches. The impact can be seen first as affecting the churches collectively. The major obstacle to Protestant co-operation was now gone and expression of approval for intra-denominational and even for inter-denominational unions began to be heard. No doubt the destruction of the Clergy Reserves road block also consolidated the latent anti-Romanism so recently awakened by the “papal aggression” controversy.

For the Protestant churches, the remaining decade before Confederation marked a continuation and intensification of the Canadianizing process begun years before. But this intensification was also the result of developments other than the ending of the Reserves.

Of the mass of interwoven revolutionary changes that began about 1850, probably the most pervasive, if subtle, were the revolutions in communications and transportation. The same telegraph that provided rapid news service for the new daily newspapers increased the Canadian churches’ awareness of things Canadian and global. The same railway that carried goods and people rapidly from one part of Canada to another increased by an equal degree the mobility of the clergy. The age of iron and steam would later present the churches with complex challenges in an urbanized and industrialized society but its first impact on the Protestant churches was to heighten their search for identity with the new and more secular Canada, and to create internal pressures in favour of laicization, decentralization and democratization.

Since the shadow of church establishment ended with the Reserves just as these physical and psychological revolutions were occurring, it is not surprising that the Churches of England and Scotland were the

<sup>19</sup> Parliamentary Papers, 1852, [355] II, 9. J. Strachan to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 7 June 1851. From England Bethune wrote in 1852 and 1853 of the SPG’s incompetence to manage the Canadian Church. OA, Strachan Papers, A.N. Bethune to J. Strachan, 18 November 1852, 11 March 1853.

<sup>20</sup> Bethune, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

<sup>21</sup> OA, Strachan Papers, Letter Book 1854-62, p. 141, J. Strachan to Bishop Skinner, 5 July 1856.

most obviously affected by the change of intellectual climate. Their church-state connection and mission status had been a form of ecclesiastical mercantilism. Their preferred position in the colony had depended on an imperial concept of the church and, as long as benefits — financial and other — flowed from that connection, their loyalty to the mother churches and the Empire for which they stood was entirely understandable. But just as the adoption of free trade and responsible government had caused the violent reaction of those Montreal Tories who burned the Parliament buildings and promoted annexation in 1849, the indifference of the established mother churches to the plight of their Canadian offspring led to measures of Canadianization in the Churches of England and Scotland.

Since the reduction of the imperial parliamentary grant to the SPG in the 1830's, Canadian Anglican leaders had clung the more desperately to the Clergy Reserves. At the same time they had tried to enlist the laity in more extensive voluntary giving through the organization of diocesan societies that included laymen. Addressing the Archdeaconry of York in 1852, A. N. Bethune had emphasized this obligation to self-help in conjunction with a government "provision for the maintenance of religion which shall be beyond... the capriciousness and risk of the voluntary system".<sup>22</sup> Anglicans generally failed to respond to such appeals and church finances continued to pose a serious problem. By contrast, the Church of England was embarrassed by a surplus of clergy and had to turn away applicants from outside of Canada.

One purpose of diocesan synods was to take over financial aspects of administration, including supervision of the commuted Clergy Reserves Fund. Strachan had called his episcopal visitation of 1853 a synod even though legislation for Anglican self-government was not obtained until 1857. The Toronto Synod of 1856 foreshadowed the new order with a canon for the election of bishops by clergy and laity.

The unseemly race for the mitres of Huron and Ontario, however, caused Whitaker, the high church provost of Trinity College, to advocate synod delegation of its electoral power to the authorities of the Church in England. Strachan's Canadianism showed in his reply that Whitaker's proposal "ignores the claims of the whole Canadian Clergy and neutralizes the very powers of self-government which the Church in the colonies has been so anxious to possess...".<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> A. N. Bethune, *A Charge Delivered at the Visitation of the Clergy and Churchwardens of the Archdeaconry of York...*, 1852. Toronto: 1852, p. 19. Six years later Strachan believed the voluntary system had failed. OA, Strachan Letter Book 1854-62, p. 245, J. Strachan to S. Biggs, 18 March 1858.

<sup>23</sup> Strachan papers, Memorial of Whitaker *et al* and reply of J. Strachan, 9 Sept. 1864.

In 1860 the Church in Canada achieved autonomy and territorial integration a full seven years before Confederation with the appointment of a metropolitan and erection of a provincial synod. Preaching before the Toronto synod in 1865, H. C. Cooper emphasized the peacefulness of this evolution to church self-government, achieved "without any rupture, or even weakening, of those ties of loyalty and affection" that bind Anglicans to the mother church and to the Crown. Royal supremacy remained unimpaired by acceptance of the principle of the religiously divisible Crown. The fact that the Church in Canada was both "self-acting and self-reliant" exemplified the spirit of the commonwealth, namely self-government without separation. Within the Anglican communion the problem of divided loyalties had been solved by the same methods and on the same principles that achieved political self-government for Canada. Finally, as Cooper noted, voluntarism had left the Church unrepresented in the provincial legislature and, therefore, the presence of the laity in synods was a necessity for the Canadianized Church.<sup>24</sup>

The last legal tie between Canadian Anglicanism and the mother church — the royal recognition of bishops — was destroyed, not by Canadian anticolonials or secularists, but by the 1864 decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the case of Bishop Colenso of Natal. The validity of royal patents for colonial bishops was now denied. The granting of responsible government, it was held, ended royal authority over the colonial Church.<sup>25</sup>

After the initial period of confusion caused by the Colenso case, the Canadian Church reacted to its new separated status at its third triennial provincial synod with a unanimous resolution requesting the Archbishop of Canterbury to form a General council for the Anglican communion.<sup>26</sup> This proposal was not accepted by the Archbishop but the action of the Canadian synod did lead directly to the calling of the less formal first Lambeth Conference.

The results of nationalizing the Clergy Reserves were not as painful for the Church of Scotland as for the Church of England. The reversion to the Church of Scotland of Reserves stipends previously paid to ministers who joined the Free Church at Disruption had increased the per capita share of the Church of Scotland. Since the Church of Scotland did not grow at anything like the rate of the Free Church or even the Church of England, the loss of the Reserves in 1854 did not have the same quantitative impact on that Church as on its sister establishment, but equally it did free the Kirk from the main obstacle to Canadianization. A correspondent to *The Presbyterian* struck the note of Canadianism for the Kirk.

<sup>24</sup> H. C. Cooper, *The United Church of England and Ireland in Canada. A Sermon preached before the Synod of the Diocese of Toronto . . .* Toronto: 1865.

<sup>25</sup> *Journals of the Proceedings of the Provincial Synod of the United Church of England and Ireland in Canada, Third Session.* Montreal: 1865, p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

"Let us as British North Americans feel that this is our country, that our interests are here, that its institutions are our institutions. Let us have a British North American Presbyterian Church, that will extend from Newfoundland to Vancouver's Island: and only one Presbyterian Church."<sup>27</sup>

William Proudfoot, Secessionist church missionary, had spoken for all Canadian Presbyterians when he wrote in 1846 in favour of a native ministry, "We are too Scotch — our habits, our brogue, our mode of sermonizing are all too Scotch. The thistle is everywhere seen . . . our mission is a foreign affair. And so it will be until we employ the country born, divest it of its Scotch character, and make it Canadian . . ."<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, the Free Church magazine, the *Canadian Presbyterian*, favoured Canadianization. Canadian Presbyterianism should not "follow in a slavish spirit the forms and customs of older churches". Like their immigrant members, the colonial churches must learn new lessons.<sup>29</sup> Months later the same editor, complaining of lack of support for Knox College, remarked, "We are in fact a Missionary Church". "It is obvious that we Presbyterians in Canada have to make progress at least in one direction, and that is the direction of Union."<sup>30</sup>

Union talks between the Free Church and the smaller United Presbyterian Church synod had in fact begun coincidental with Disruption. Noting that the six Presbyterian bodies in Canada together had 300 ordained clergy, the Free Church magazine called for an end to racial, national and sectional prejudices. "Our Church must open her doors and bid all Canadians enter . . ."<sup>31</sup> For a new, comprehensive Canadian Presbyterian communion, the editor proposed the title, "The United Church of Canada".<sup>32</sup> Union of Free Church and United Presbyterian as the Canada Presbyterian Church was consummated, in 1861, on the neutral ground of the Montreal Wesleyan Methodist Church.

The new Presbyterian body had nearly two hundred thousand members. The Synod of the Church of Scotland with only 108,000 was increasingly unable to finance church extension and meet the demand for ministers.<sup>33</sup> In 1865 the average weekly contribution of members was less than one cent. Since eleven of one hundred and sixty-six congregations gave almost half of the total collection, the remainder were

<sup>27</sup> *The Presbyterian*, May 1860.

<sup>28</sup> Proudfoot Papers, Knox College; William Proudfoot to David Anderson, 13 July 1846.

<sup>29</sup> *Canadian Presbyterian*, February, 1857.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, July, August, 1857.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, April, 1858.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Census of Canada*, 1871, IV.

putting one half cent per head on the collection plate.<sup>34</sup> "We need not try to hide the truth, *ours* is a Voluntary Church", noted the Report.<sup>35</sup> Despite the establishment of Queen's College in 1841 to train Canadians for the ministry, of one hundred and twenty-five ministers and licentiates active in Canada in 1867 only twenty-two were Canadian-born. In a quarter century, Queen's had granted only fifteen degrees in Theology.<sup>36</sup>

The revival of the Clergy Reserves Question in the early 1850's reawakened briefly the old tensions within the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The Conference of 1851 reacted to popular pressure with resolutions condemning the Reserves as "wholly at variance with the sentiments and feelings of the Canadian people, and most unjust to the Wesleyan and several other religious denominations".<sup>37</sup> But the Conference would not join in the public agitation of what it now considered to be a purely political question, and the *Christian Guardian* was at some pains to disclaim any rift between the laity and Conference over the Clergy Reserves Question.<sup>38</sup> Thereafter the *Guardian* remained editorially silent to the chagrin of all voluntaryists. An attempt by John Ryerson to force the Conference of 1854 to support secularization was defeated by the conservative forces.<sup>39</sup> That same Conference, however, assumed responsibility from the English Conference for the work in Lower Canada and for the Western missions (Hudson Bay and Rocky Mountain), evidence that Canadian Methodists were awakening to Canada's manifest destiny in the west.<sup>40</sup>

One year later the Wesleyan Conference gave laymen an equal voice with clergy in the management of church funds<sup>41</sup> — certainly a small measure of democratization in the church, but as far as the Wesleyan Methodists were prepared to go in the period before Confederation. Active Canadianism had passed from the Wesleyans to the smaller Methodist Episcopal and New Connexion churches, just as the Church of Scotland had lost its initiative in Canadianization to the Free Church.

The Baptists comprising, in 1861, less than five per cent of the population and the Congregationalists, comprising less than one per cent, expressed their Canadianism mainly in opposition to the Clergy Reserves and separate schools. Congregational home missions had been placed under Canadian control in 1853 but two thirds of the churches still

<sup>34</sup> *A Historical and Statistical Report of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland, for the Year 1866.* Montreal: 1867, pp. 137-38.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 165-72.

<sup>37</sup> *The Minutes of the Twelve Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, from 1846 to 1857 . . .* Toronto: 1863, p. 159.

<sup>38</sup> *Christian Guardian*, 2 July 1851.

<sup>39</sup> C. B. Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson, His Life and Letters*, Toronto: 1937, 1947, II, p. 295.

<sup>40</sup> *Minutes of the Twelve Annual Conferences . . .*, p. 269.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.

depended on outside help.<sup>42</sup> The announcement that in 1861 the Colonial Missionary Society would reduce its support of Canadian missions elicited bitter comments about desertion by the mother country. Congregationalism faced the financially bleak future with the same despair that the Church of England had greeted the decline of SPG support decades earlier, yet the columns of the *Canadian Independent* reflected no sentiment of Canadianism. Perhaps the silver trowel shaped like a maple leaf used to lay the cornerstone of a Toronto Congregational Church in 1863 indicated some covert psychological Canadianization, but the financial crisis of the missions suggested that Congregationalism was not yet physically ready for Canadianization.

At Confederation, the smallest Protestant churches — Lutheran, Mennonite, Tunker and others — together contained, at most five per cent of the Upper Canadian population. Being ethic churches, their Canadianization has been the more difficult because of Old World national and language traditions that were deemed essential to their existence. The story of their accommodation to the Canadian environment belongs to the post-Confederation era, or even to the present day.

Reviewing the incomplete Canadianization of the Protestant churches before Confederation, it is obvious that the Clergy Reserves acted as a catalyst in the process. For the churches of England and Scotland, the loss of the Reserves had imposed the unavoidable necessity of self-reliance. For the voluntaryist churches, these Reserves had symbolized an old world conception of church-state relations for which, they sincerely believed, there was no room in Canada. For them Canadianization — psychological and legal — was a reaction against evidences of an establishmentarianism that claimed a monopoly of loyalty and of true Christianity. For the supposedly established churches of England and Scotland, the existence of the Reserves was a block to Canadianization. For the voluntaryist churches, nationalization of the Reserves inaugurated a second phase of Canadianization that was less obvious if no less real than its earlier expression. Within a generation after Confederation, all Canadian Presbyterians were joined in one nation-wide church, the Methodist bodies had been similarly united, and Principal Grant of Queen's was prophesying a future union of all Christians of this country in a single national church.<sup>43</sup>

A second factor was undoubtedly the achievement of responsible government. If a double political loyalty to colony and mother country was possible, why could there not be self-government for colonial churches? This realization added to the apparent indifference of the parent church of England towards its colonial branch proved decisive in Canadianizing the Anglican Church.

<sup>42</sup> *Canadian Independent*, June 1859.

<sup>43</sup> W. L. Grant and F. Hamilton, *George Monro Grant*. Toronto: 1905, pp. 155-156.

The contribution of the "Papal Aggression" issue to the Canadianization of the Protestant churches is more difficult to assess. Canadian echoes of the Papal Aggression controversy were more usually expressed in political rather than religious terms, as being connected with separate schools, "rep by pop" and sectional deadlock.<sup>44</sup> Religious reactions to the controversy were expressed simply within the framework of traditional Protestant-Roman Catholic antagonism. Polarization between Canadianism and ultramontanism had only just begun to appear by 1867. Before Confederation, only the Free Church had felt any compulsive duty to make the French better Canadians by making them Protestants. Only after the Protestant churches had themselves achieved a measurable degree of Canadianization did they see ultramontanism as a supra-national and unCanadian loyalty. Undoubtedly, the most potent force in their own Canadianization before 1867 was the spirit and practice of voluntaryism. It required political Confederation to create the geographical setting and breadth of vision that enabled the Protestant churches to make the first step towards church union by forming ecclesiastical organizations that were denominationally unified and nation-wide in jurisdiction.

<sup>44</sup> F. A. Walker, "Protestant Reaction in Upper Canada to the Popish Threat", *Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report*, 1951, p. 107.