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Boundless Dominion: Providence, Politics and the Early Canadian Worldview by Denis McKay

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male youth.

This did not stop Canadian youth from hitting the road, and accumulating experiences from which they crafted stories. Mahood argues that storytelling was a means of establishing a sense of community with fellow hitchhikers, and passing time. Some of these stories were second-hand and possibly apocryphal (e.g., the tale of the hitchhiker who was stranded in Wawa, Ontario for so long that he got married), but most of them were firsthand accounts. In a chapter centred on these stories, Mahood conveys her interviewees' experiences of life on the road, and "what hitchhiking meant to travellers" (175).

Thumbing a Ride is an engaging work, based on impressive primary research. It will be of interest to many readers with firsthand memories of adventures on Ontario roads. It should also interest present-day hitchhikers. Mahood claims that Canada's era of hitchhiking concluded by the late 1970s, due to police enforcement of provincial laws, as well as new municipal bylaws prohibiting the practice in cities and towns. Yet a cursory internet search reveals that young Canadians still hitchhike—even in Wawa. Sites like Couchsurfing.com are thriving, thanks to adventurous young travellers. Clearly, the "rucksack revolution" is not over yet.

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Boundless Dominion

Providence, Politics and the Early Canadian Worldview

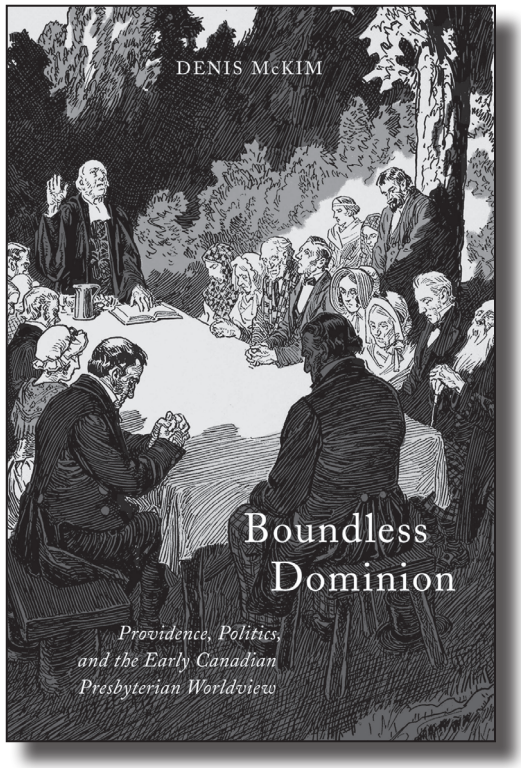
By Denis McKay

Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. 384 pages. $34.95 paperback. ISBN 978-0-7735-5107-7 (www.mqup.ca)

Presbyterians are a people who take time seriously. They are the Christian church with the deepest sense of history. This extraordinarily comprehensive volume guides us through three centuries of that history, initially in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scotland, but essentially in nineteenth- century Canada, mostly in Upper Canada and the Maritimes. This is not a chronicle of personalities and institutions, but a work, as author Dennis McKim early affirms, written with a "conviction that ideas matter," (p. 14); it is thus "mainly a work of intellectual history"(15).

McKim's clear intent—to merge the traditional with the secular—is reflected in his choice of epigraphs: two for each of eleven chapters. One is Biblical (King James Version)—five Old Testament and six New Testament (three of these from Matthew, the Gospel with the strongest sense of history). The secular quotations are modern—two nineteenth century, five twentieth, four twenty-first—all are influential social historians, writers or philosophers.

Boundless Dominion is thus not a church history. It is not a parade of prominent Presbyterian divines or institutions. Nor is it an exposition on the tenets of Calvinism, though it often immerses (almost drowns) the reader in theology. It does describe the Presbyterian proclivity to multiply by dividing, especially in eight-



eenth- and early nineteenth-century Scotland, splashing over into Canada. But these divisions were more about the primacy of the church in relation to the state than they were disputes over basic doctrines. Among Presbyterians the authority of the Westminster Confession continued unchallenged.

This comprehensive consideration of the early Canadian Presbyterian worldview" is carefully structured. An introductory chapter, "Seeing Things the Presbyterian Way," describes the intention or purpose of the work. "Becoming a Presbyterian," the next chapter, traces the faith's Scottish origins—theological and institutional—and thereby provides a useful, indeed essential, base for what follows. Readers are then escorted on a journey through four ideological/theological worlds.

"Providence" reviews the central Presbyterian affirmation that God, as creator, exercises sovereignty over his creation through time. Presbyterians saw themselves as inheritors of the original covenant between God and the nation of Israel. This Scottish conviction took root in Canada: a chosen people affirming God's sovereignty in the New World. It soon melded with the notion of a divinely favoured British Empire. As a result, the church proclaimed God's judgment, vigorously anti-Catholic and passionately opposed to slavery.

"Politics" considers the saga of Presbyterian fragmentation over issues of church and state in Scotland and, in due course, imported into Canada. The Upper Canada conflict over the Clergy Reserves aroused theological as well as political passions. Not only did Presbyterians clash with Anglican assertions of primacy, they battled each other over the relationship between Christian and civil authority, about rendering unto both God and Caesar. Although adherents to each of the three main strands of Presbyterianism—the Church of Scotland, the Secessionists, and the Free Church—might differ with each other, yet they were surprisingly united on issues of public morality such as Sabbath desecration or alcohol consumption.

"Nature" discusses Presbyterian views of the "wilderness" as a harsh, even hostile environment. Their missionary spirit sought to tame the wilds of early Canada. Such an attitude had profound repercussions during the steady transformation of forests into farms. Occupation and cultivation transformed open land into private property. Ownership affected attitudes toward Indigenous societies. The untamed natural environment was viewed as a moral wilderness. The back woods were backward locales—to be tamed and transformed into God's garden.

"History" examines the conviction that Presbyterians are a people of God,

guided by God, carrying out God's purpose through history. Theirs was a singularly righteous inheritance. It was a story of progress through time. It blended with the British "Whiggish" interpretation of history. Presbyterians believed they had an inherited responsibility for the advancing of God's plan. Their Reformation narrative was populated with heroes and martyrs whose stories were invoked as inspiration for their current efforts to purify the world. History was alive. They might quarrel constantly about interpretations of the past, but they agreed that history provided both direction and purpose.

When they faced nineteenth-century millenarian controversies about the Second Coming of Christ, Presbyterians tended to be "post-millenial." That is, they believed that Christ would come again *after* a thousand-year period of peace and prosperity, rather than *before.* At issue: the apocalypse is almost immediately at hand—to be saved we must make public declaration of our personal conversion to Christ. Or: God's purposes are long term—as God's people we must continue to obey God's laws and work collectively in the world.

Such concerns seem strange today. Our apocalyptic fears are man-made: imminent environmental collapse or world nuclear disaster. Eschatology and teleology may not be terms in common language, but our collective hopes and fears, about the future of our world and about the purpose of our lives, persist. McKim aptly quotes William Faulkner: "the past is never dead. It's not even past" (260).

Boundless Dominion is thus a detailed—at times even dense—discursion through Presbyterian church thought, attitude and action. I was reminded of the advice of an eminent divine to an about-to-be ordained theological student: "Don't try to put *all* your ideas into your first sermon—you might succeed!" However, I look forward with eagerness to Denis McKim's future work. Thoughtful commentary, indeed guidance, from deeply devoted disciples is, I think, desperately needed. In our third millennium secular society—self centered, media-connected, emotion-prompted—it is difficult to take any organized religion seriously, even one that affirms the worth of this world and necessity for ethical activity. But if we cannot, we lose yet another anchor in the midst of a mindless typhoon.

Chris Raible, Creemore, Ontario.

The Bruce

By Robin R. Hilborn, Southampton, Ontario.

Bruce County Historical Society, 2018. 236 pages. $35.00 hardcover ISBN 978-1-928192-05-3, (www.brucecountyhistory.on.ca)

Which came first, the films or the book? I know this is a strange way to begin a book review but bear with me, the question is very relevant. The answer is provided below.

In May of 2016, a group of interested individuals came together to begin work on an idea to create a film dealing with the history of Bruce County and the Saugeen Ojibway Territory. Initiated by the late Audrey Underwood, soon local interest began to grow in support of the concept.