

BAPTISTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: A STRUGGLE
TO MAINTAIN "SECTARIANISM"

by

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ABSTRACT

It is generally agreed that Baptists represent one of the largest bodies of "sectarian" opinion. The term "sectarianism" is used in a sociological rather than a polemical or derogatory sense. It serves to indicate the basic attitude of a socially exclusive or "sect-type" religious organization as differentiated from a "church-type", or socially inclusive and accommodative, religious body.

Until recently it has been an accepted procedure to explain religious diversity in purely theological terms. Since the turn of the century an effort has been made to examine the social and economic factors in religious development. The "frontier thesis" has been evoked to explain sectarianism, and sociologists have tended to place all their conclusions within the framework of environmental determinism. Such an approach appears to involve a denial of the intrinsic validity and spiritual relevance of theological ideas. It is the contention of this thesis that religious diversity among Baptists in British Columbia is to be explained both in terms of environmental influences and in terms of ideas which were "imported" from the Old World and the United States. In the Christian tradition such ideas came mediately from Western Europe, which in turn had "imported" them from Palestine. Immediately, these ideas came from the Scriptures, which were regarded by sectarians as authoritative.

While the author holds to the intrinsic validity of Biblical theological concepts, no attempt is made here to substantiate this view, this task being left to the Christian apologist. Within the scope of

this thesis it shall suffice to demonstrate that Baptists in British Columbia were strongly influenced by the "imported" ideas of Biblical theology and by the "imported" concepts of religious liberalism. The frontier environment was not the originator of these ideas, but gave an opportunity for the free interplay of these ideas. The net result of this interplay in British Columbia has been Baptist groups which bear a resemblance to Old World counterparts, and which, at the same time, bear the stamp of American influence and Canadian national characteristics.

British Columbia Baptists are what they are because of economic, social, theological and spiritual factors. None of these factors can be completely segregated and viewed in splendid isolation. Baptist sectarianism is related not only to society but also to the ideas of the New Testament. In the British Columbia context, "the struggle to maintain sectarianism" was a struggle to maintain the sectarian interpretation of New Testament principles, in spite of the challenge of other theological ideas, in the milieu of the social and economic influences of frontier and modern society.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Source material for the greater part of this thesis has not been of easy access. Secondary sources have proved to contain many errors in fact as well as inaccuracies of printing. Primary sources are available in profusion, and a significant contribution to Canadian church history has been made by "Convention" Baptists, who have collected material at the Baptist Union Office in Edmonton, in addition to the sources available in the Canadian Baptist Historical Collection at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton. The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches has inaugurated a Historical Library in Toronto. For British Columbia researchers, these collections have the disadvantage of being outside the province. In British Columbia, the more "sectarian" Baptist groups have made no concerted attempt, until recently, to collect and preserve the most pertinent and valuable documents relating to Baptist history in British Columbia. The Historical Collection of the Regular Baptist Churches of British Columbia is still in the embryo stage.

In contrast to the disorder of documents, however, the author wishes to acknowledge the genuine interest and cooperation of many persons who have loaned materials and offered helpful information in order to research upon this project.

Special acknowledgment should be given to those Baptist organizations with whose history this thesis is directly involved. The Convention of Baptist Churches of British Columbia made valuable records available to the author, and he received complete cooperation from the

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE.	1
 CHAPTER	
I. "SECTARIANISM" AMONG BAPTISTS.	4
Analysis of Statistics Relating to Religious Division. .	4
Definition of Terms Used to Describe Religious Division.	7
Explanations Which Have Been Given for	
Religious Division	12
The Factors of Leadership, Persecution, and Theology	
as They Relate to "Sectarianism"	19
"Sectarianism" in Early Christianity	24
"Sectarian" Ideas and Divisive Tensions among Baptists .	26
Summary of Events in Baptist History Which	
Illustrate these Tensions.	32
II. THE "HIDDEN BAPTISTS" OF VANCOUVER ISLAND.	38
Beginnings of the Religious Denominations in British	
Columbia, with Special Emphasis upon the Role of	
the Negro.	38
The Earliest Baptists--Negro and White	47
The Organization of First Baptist Church as a	
Negro-White Congregation	50
Tension and Controversy in First Baptist Church.	54
The Collapse of the First Baptist Congregation and	
Reorganization to Form Calvary Baptist Church.	57

CHAPTER	PAGE
Analysis of Underlying Causes for Division among Early Baptists in British Columbia	60
III. THE YOUNG CONVENTION	65
The Founding of Early Congregations.	65
Organizational Developments in the Pacific Northwest Which Led to the Establishment of an Independent Convention in British Columbia	70
The New Convention, Its Constitution and Its Boards.	80
The Early Struggles of the Mission Board	85
The Formation of the Baptist Union of Western Canada	91
Ventures in the Field of Education - Brandon College and Okanagan College	93
Rumblings of Controversy during the Pre-War Era.	96
Financial Crisis and the World War Years	100
IV. THE TROUBLED TWENTIES.	105
Post-War Optimism Followed by Disillusionment and Theological Dispute.	105
The "Modernist-Fundamentalist" Controversy, Its General History and Its Rise within the Churches of the Baptist Union of Western Canada	107
Conflict between the British Columbia Convention and the Baptist Union, Centering in a Dissatisfaction over Brandon College	115

CHAPTER

PAGE

Concessions Granted by the Union, Including the	
Appointment of Brandon College Commission.	123
The Disruptive Influence of "Interdenominationalism"	
within the "Conservative Forces"	129
The Report of Brandon College Commission	134
Repercussions of the Price Healing Campaign.	137
The Committee of Ten and Its Indecisive Report	140
The Formation of the B. C. Baptist Missionary	
Council in 1925.	145
The Final Division of the British Columbia	
Baptist Convention in 1927	149
V. SEPARATE LINES OF DEVELOPMENT.	154
The Immediate Reaction to the Division of 1927	154
Relationships between Regular and Convention	
Baptists since the Division.	156
Controversy within the Regular Convention before	
the Second World War	162
Problems of Convention Baptists during the	
Depression and Pre-War Period.	174
The Influence of the Second World War.	178
The Formation of the Baptist Federation of Canada.	181
Efforts of Regular Baptists to Move toward a	
Wider Fellowship	183

CHAPTER	PAGE
The Southern Baptist Issue	187
The Solidifying of Regular Baptist Denominational Sentiment and Organization	192
Contrasts among Baptists	195
Prospects of Continuing Struggle	198
APPENDICES	203
BIBLIOGRAPHY	209

PREFACE

Baptist work in British Columbia suffers from no lack of diversity. Quite apart from a number of independent churches and smaller Baptist groups, the majority of the Baptists in the province are divided into five bodies.

The largest of these is known as the Convention of Baptist Churches of British Columbia. Second in size is the Convention of Regular Baptist Churches of British Columbia. In addition to these two main organizations there are churches in British Columbia which are affiliated with the Washington-Oregon Southern Baptist Convention. Two other major groups are of ethnic origin. These are the North American Baptist General Conference, formed from German-speaking churches; and the Baptist General Conference, which was formerly Swedish in membership but is rapidly losing its original identity. Baptists, who seem to have a genius for unwieldy titles, have also a flair for succinct abbreviations. Thus, in common speech, the above organizations are known respectively as "Convention Baptists", "Regular Baptists", "Southern Baptists", "German Baptists", and "Conference Baptists".

It is not the purpose of this thesis to record the history of individual Baptist churches in the province, or even to trace the growth of the Baptist organizations listed above. The author wishes to focus attention upon those significant developments which have led to division in the Baptist ranks, making an analysis of the divisive influences at work. For this reason the thesis will be almost entirely concerned with Convention, Regular, and Southern Baptist groups.

German and Conference Baptists have not been directly involved in the tensions to be discussed in these pages.

The "congregational" form of church government is practiced among Baptists. From the time of its "organization" a Baptist church is an independent autonomous body. The church is "organized" when a roll of charter members is drawn up and the internal structure necessary for self-government is instituted and placed in operation. Previous to the time of organization, preaching services may have been conducted for an indefinite period by a home missionary. Thus, in the normal course of events, the date of the beginning of a Baptist cause and the date of its organization are separated by some months or years. These two dates should not be confused.

It should also be kept clearly in mind that a Baptist "Convention" or "Conference" is not a governing body. It is a group of autonomous churches in voluntary association. As such it cannot dictate the policies of an individual church. It has, of course, the right to decide the nature and extent of its associations; therefore it can receive churches and dismiss them from its fellowship.

One final observation should be made. This thesis must, by its very nature, be primarily concerned with religious conflict and discord. Space does not permit the discussion of brighter and more edifying aspects of Baptist growth in the province. It is not valid to conclude that the course of Baptist work in British Columbia has been merely or essentially a tale of tension. In the history of the Christian Church internal religious conflicts have been by no means confined to the Baptists. Neither is religious tension of necessity an evil thing. In

every era Christians have been faced with two imperatives, that of maintaining a distinctive witness to the world and, at the same time, that of making the unity of all believers a practical and continuous reality.

Does not the very nature of the Christian faith, which enjoins love, and yet emphasizes man's sin and the need of Divine Redemption, suggest the probability of continuing religious tension, both within the individual and in his association with the world at large?

CHAPTER I.

"SECTARIANISM" AMONG BAPTISTS

Particularly on this continent, one of the observed social phenomena of our present century has been the rise of a multiplicity of religious groups. Because information on some groups is very difficult to obtain and religious alignments are in a state of constant change it is virtually impossible to compile exact statistics. It has been estimated that some four hundred such groups exist in North America. Elmer T. Clark gives this approximate figure for the United States alone.¹ In addition, Canada contributes at least a few extra names to this impressive and, to some minds, scandalous list.

In recent years, this diversity of religious affiliations has given rise to a great deal of comment. Among those outside any religious group, religious fragmentation is often given as a reason, or excuse, for the individual to remain spiritually uncommitted. Among the religiously committed themselves there have been various reactions. Spokesmen of some larger religious bodies have viewed the situation as a revolt from proper authority and have called upon smaller groups to repent of their ways and "return home". Other professedly devout persons have seen in division an inevitable result of general apostasy from God, and an evidence of man's desire to hew his own independent religious path. Still others, notably those represented in the Ecumenical Movement of modern Protestantism,

¹Elmer T. Clark, The Small Sects in America, New York, Abingdon Press, 1949, p. 13.

reject the idea that division is an inevitable evil and regard the present situation as a clarion call to action upon a workable program of union for religious bodies. Then too, there are those puzzled people who "just can't understand why there are so many denominations".

Perplexing or perverse as it may appear, the situation is explicable in terms of theology, history and social structure.

Before attempting an analysis of causes, however, it might be well to point out that religious fragmentation is not as severe as statistics, or some writers, might indicate.

While divisiveness is generally laid at the door of Christendom, and particularly, Protestantism, yet it should be noted that the "four hundred" include the various divisions of Liberal and Orthodox Judaism; such religions as Buddhism and Islam; and also a group of eclectic and orientalized cults, such as Baha'i and Theosophy, which cannot with any degree of correctness be regarded as coming within the Christian tradition.

Nor is it completely fair to lay all the blame for division upon Protestantism. On this point Elmer T. Clark writes:

. . . no church anywhere has been able to avoid splits and schisms, and this is true of non-Christian religions as well as of Christian churches. It will probably remain true as long as theological convictions are regarded as important. The Roman Catholic Church, which is often supposed to possess a unity that is lacking in Protestantism, has actually experienced more divisions than any other; in fact it may be said that every other Christian group in the world represents a break from Catholicism. . . . Furthermore, among the various orders of the Catholic Church there are differences and animosities as marked as those which exist between the various Protestant denominations, but actual separation is prevented by the overhead authority of the hierarchy.²

²Elmer T. Clark, loc. cit.

This strongly-worded statement invites challenge, of course, and a more moderate view is that of S. D. Clark:

Disruption and schism have been more characteristic of the Protestant than of the Roman Catholic Church . . . but neither has escaped movements wreaking havoc upon denominational unity; the chief difference has been that the one Church has tended to cry up the other to cry down, the effects of religious division.³

While the majority of religious groups in Canadian society fall within the scope of the Protestant tradition, it should be observed that statistics which give simple totals of the number of groups are somewhat deceptive and tend to indicate greater theological divergence than is actually the case. Some groups, for example, are ethnic in origin, worshipping in languages other than English. These groups usually have almost identical theological counterparts among the English-speaking religious organizations. Other organizations are geographical units, possessing no basic doctrinal differences from similar groups in other regions. This is particularly true of the more loosely-knit organizational structure of those denominations which stress congregational forms of government. A relevant case, until recently, was that of the Convention of Regular Baptists of British Columbia, the Regular Baptist Missionary Fellowship, and the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches, three regional organizations which operate respectively in British Columbia, in the Prairies, and in Eastern Canada. These may have appeared on lists as separate groups, but at present they are in practical co-operation and it is expected that they will enter into full

³S. D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1949, p. xi.

participation in the Trans-Canada Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches which is now being organized.⁴

Furthermore, it should be noted that most of the listed religious bodies are relatively small. The major part of the religious population is to be found concentrated in the few large groups or in organizations which bear a more or less close relation to the largest bodies. In Canada, for example, the chief groupings are Roman Catholic, Anglican, United Church, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Baptist. Many of the remaining groups are related, and can be classified together. For example, the Salvation Army, the Free Methodist Church, the Church of the Nazarene, as well as many "Holiness" and "Pentecostal" bodies all find their roots in early Methodism.

In recent years informed writers have seen the futility of drawing conclusions from "padded" lists of religious organizations and have sought to identify the underlining influences which have brought about division. An attempt has been made to find some simple and yet valid means of classification for religious bodies. The chief terms which have been used in this connection are "denomination", "church", "sect", and "cult". Unfortunately, each of these terms is open to more than one interpretation; hence some definition is in order.

"Denomination" is probably the least disputed term. Meaning literally "that to which a name is given"; the word is a general term and may be used to describe any religious group, large or small. There are, of course, some religious groups which insist that they have no name and

⁴Thirty-fourth Annual Convention, [Vancouver], Convention of Regular Baptists, 1961, pp. 47-50.

"are not a denomination". One of the best known "nameless, non-denominational" denominations in British Columbia is the Plymouth Brethren, a Christian movement which is itself divided into eight "nameless" groups which, for convenience, are cited by authors as "Plymouth Brethren I" to "Plymouth Brethren VIII".⁵ It is true that the word "denomination" carries with it, in the minds of some people, connotations of "the big denomination", "the spiritually-dead institution" or "the machine". Nevertheless, the term has distinct advantages, for it is never applied to either a local assembly of Christians or to Christianity as a whole.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the word "church"--one of the most common, most abused, and most ambiguous terms used in religious circles. It is used of a building for worship, of the local congregation worshipping within the building, of a denomination, of Christendom at large, of the spiritual fellowship of true Christians of all generations, and, most recently, of the large institutionalized religious group, as contrasted with the "sect". To add further to the confusion, our English word "church" is derived from the Greek κυριακόν meaning "belonging to the Lord",⁶ and hence bears no relation whatever to the Greek word ἐκκλησία meaning "called-out assembly", which is the word

⁵Frank S. Mead, Handbook of Denominations, New York, Abingdon Press, 1961, pp. 58, 59.

⁶H. E. Dana, A Manual of Ecclesiology, Kansas City, Kansas, Central Seminary Press, 1944, p. 14. The Scottish "kirk" and German "kirche" have the same derivation.

in the New Testament commonly translated "church". In Scripture ἐκκλησία is used to describe either a pagan assembly,⁷ a local Christian assembly,⁸ or the body of Christian believers of all generations.⁹

According to the understanding of Baptists, the word "church" is never used in the singular to describe a group of local congregations.¹⁰ For this reason, Baptists are resolute in their rejection of the idea that their denomination can be properly called a "church". This explains why the word "church" in the singular never appears in the title of any Baptist convention or association. No such entity as "The Baptist Church" exists, or is likely to exist in the foreseeable future, despite the use of such terminology by otherwise well-informed persons.¹¹ The phrase "Baptist churches" is consistently used by Baptists when reference is made to more than one local congregation.

This may seem, to many people, a rather picayune differentiation, but it is vitally related to the Baptist concept of the nature of Christ's church as the society of the redeemed rather than the redeeming society. It is commonly acknowledged that "the primary principle [of Baptists] . . .

⁷Acts 19:32, 39, 41.

⁸Acts 14:23. Colossians 4:15.

⁹Ephesians 1:22, 23. Hebrews 12:23.

¹⁰Note the use of the plural in I Corinthians 16:19 and Galatians 1:2, 22 for example.

¹¹To illustrate, the term is so employed in Claris E. Silcox, Church Union in Canada, New York, Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933, p. 132, and in James Croil, Genesis of Churches, Montreal, Foster Brown, 1907, p. 266.

is that of baptism as the basis of a Church of regenerate believers".¹² Since it implies a sharp delineation between the Christian group and the "world" this principle alone commits Baptists to a position which is, from the sociological point of view, "sectarian". Furthermore, since Baptists reject the word "church" as applied to a denomination, it is also evident that Baptists must seriously question the appropriateness of the term "church" as employed by the sociologist. Nevertheless, since no better term seems to be available and since the term "church" has been given sociological significance, it seems imperative to examine this use of the term, as well as the terms "sect" and "cult".

On the subject of "church" and "sect" S. D. Clark writes:

The conflict between forces of order and separation is fundamental in religious development. It is the conflict between the church and the sect forms of religious organization. The church seeks the accommodation of religious organization to the community; the welfare of society is something for which it feels responsible. The sect emphasizes the exclusiveness of religious organization; the worldly society is something evil of no concern to the spiritually minded. While no sharp line can be drawn between the two forms of religious organization (the church always contains some of the attributes of the sect while the sect is never "pure," completely other-worldly in character), within the church the spirit of accommodation tends to dominate, within the sect the spirit of separation. It is the difference in outlook, in attitude of mind, which is so important in setting the one off from the other.¹³

While most writers recognize the conflict of "church" and "sect", they are quick to point out a process by which the "sect" tends to develop into a "church" and the "church", in turn, tends to spawn "sects".

¹²Newton H. Marshall, "Baptists", Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1951, Vol. 3, p. 87.

¹³S. D. Clark, op. cit., p. xii.

In the second generation the sect begins to lose its character. The need for indoctrination of the young in the peculiar doctrines arises, and those who are trained in the sect seldom espouse its principles with the same devotion of those who were initiated therein by personal experience. The virtues of frugality and industry bear fruit in prosperity, and when prosperity comes the reasons for the sectarian revolt disappear and the manner of life against which the fathers rebelled is embraced by their children. Thus the spiritual need and economic forces which in one generation drew the sect out of the church turn about to transform the sect into a church.¹⁴

Thus the "church" and "sect" are regarded as sociologically related groups. The "cult", on the other hand, is defined as a group which lies outside this relationship. For example, W. E. Mann maintains that

. . . whereas sects emphasize recovery of primitive, first-century Christian doctrine, cults tend to blend alien religious or psychological notions with Christian doctrine with a view to obtaining a more "adequate" or "modern" faith. For this reason they are labelled heresies by both the churches and the sects and especially denounced by the latter. . . .

Besides this syncretism, cults are found to possess a number of other common characteristics. Their services are generally lacking in stirring emotional manifestations; dramatic exhortations or preaching are consistently eschewed and new members are won by "reasoned" or speculative argument rather than by emotional appeals. Most cults accept the validity of modern science and its assumption of a rational cosmic system. In a sense, these groups are post-scientific in outlook, and professedly metaphysical, while sects and churches are prescientific. . . . Their attitude to the established churches is generally one of condescension or enlightened superiority. They consider that they have discovered new truth which the churches will eventually be forced to accept.

Cults are further distinguished from sectarian bodies by their moral outlook. Seldom do they take a strong ascetic stand or press upon their followers a programme of strict moral self-denial. . . . In membership regulations they are less rigid and exclusive than sects. The same is true of their attitude toward the Holy Scriptures. In fact, the conventional cult approach to Holy Writ, far from being literalistic and rigid, is quite speculative and

¹⁴Elmer T. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

allegorical.¹⁵

During most of the history of Christendom it has been the accepted practice to explain religious divergence in terms of conflict over doctrinal tenets. In recent years, however, efforts have been made to analyse the situation in terms other than theological. The lectures of William James on The Varieties of Religious Experience were among the first attempts at such an approach, and provoked a variety of reactions within Christendom at the turn of this century. In the opinion of James, religious diversity is to be traced to the leadership of "exceptional and eccentric" persons of "exalted emotional sensibility".¹⁶ The various religious groups find their source in the psychological differences of individuals:

. . . Ought it, indeed, to be assumed that the lives of all men should show identical religious elements? In other words, is the existence of so many religious types and sects and creeds regrettable?

To these questions I answer "No" emphatically. And my reason is that I do not see how it is possible that creatures in such different positions and with such different powers as human individuals are, should have exactly the same functions and the same duties. No two of us have identical difficulties, nor should we be expected to work out identical solutions.¹⁷

Writing as one who rejected "popular Christianity",¹⁸ James evinced his affinity for the Buddhist doctrine of Karma.¹⁹ As would be

¹⁵W. E. Mann, Sect, Cult, and Church in Alberta, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1955, p. 6.

¹⁶William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, New York, Modern Library, 1902, p. 7.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 476.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 511.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 512.

expected, he placed his conclusions within the framework of Pragmatism. Conservative Christian theologians, committed as they were to a concept of absolutes, could not accept his theories, but theological liberals began to make a fashion of interpreting Christianity in psychological terms. After a time, however, even liberals became rather concerned lest, in "explaining Christianity" they had "explained it away". In the opinion of Walter M. Horton, a prominent Baptist theological professor:

. . . If there is one thing that we miss in the liberal Christianity which more and more prevails, it is that sense of the presence of a great sustaining moral power which used to be the glory of the evangelical churches. Ethical sensitiveness is here aplenty in the liberal movement, but I am not so sure about moral power. If this diagnosis be correct, liberalism needs to recover the experience of the Living Christ.²⁰

However, upon closer examination, Horton's "Living Christ" turns out to be hardly more than a pale personification of "Psychological-factors-at-work".

What is this experience of the Living Christ, psychologically speaking? I suppose it might be described as the reinforcement of the individual will by conscious and continual submission to the influence of a personified ideal--an ideal which, moreover, the believer feels to be grounded in the nature of things and really as well as imaginatively present in power. This ideal may have little to do with the actual character of Jesus of Nazareth. Often, if not generally, the ideal is derived from elsewhere. What seizes and transforms the drunkard is the ideals he was taught in childhood. What a youth embraces when he joins the Church is the moral standard prevalent in his church--often copied from the popular morality of the district. Sometimes conversion is an even more fundamental overturn than this, a recrudescence under some favoring stimulus of the deep-lying social instincts, too long suppressed under a mass of selfish impulses and habits.²¹

²⁰Walter M. Horton, A Psychological Approach to Theology, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1931, p. 161.

²¹Ibid., p. 156.

More recently, writers on religious variation have shifted emphasis from individual psychology to social and economic factors.

Sociologically, sects are generally viewed as institutions of social and religious protest, as bulwarks of certain disadvantaged social groups in their struggle against the social power, moral conventions, and ethos of the middle classes, and against institutionalized and formalized religion. On the other hand, the church is considered to be a religious structure which has become well accommodated to the secular world, and is, for the most part, aligned with the middle and upper classes.²²

For over a quarter century such views respecting the social origins of religious groups have held a prominent place in Protestant thought. One of the earliest and most influential writers on the subject in North America was the Protestant theologian Richard Niebuhr who set forth such ideas in The Social Sources of Denominationalism. While some sociologists regard "church" and "sect" forms as socially inevitable, Niebuhr rejects such a conclusion and is sharply critical of religious "castes":

. . . one hears no word of a common Christian system of values to which all can express allegiance. Each religious group gives expression to that code which forms the morale of the political or economic class it represents. They function as political and class institutions, not as Christian churches.²³

Niebuhr concludes that the divisions of Christendom must be regarded as an evidence of ethical failure:

. . . the denominations, churches, sects, are sociological groups whose principle of differentiation is to be sought in their conformity to the order of social classes and castes. It would not be true to affirm that the denominations are not religious groups

²²Mann, op. cit., p. 5.

²³H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism, New York, Henry Holt, 1929, p. 23.

with religious purposes, but it is true that they represent the accommodation of religion to the caste system. They are emblems, therefore, of the victory of the world over the church, of the secularization of Christianity, of the church's sanction of that divisiveness which the church's gospel condemns.²⁴

Niebuhr makes extensive use of historical material and his analysis is penetrating and provocative. Possible weaknesses in Niebuhr's viewpoint are his over-emphasis on the secular nature of religious division and his assumption that Protestantism is essentially "middle-class" in outlook.²⁵ A more recent writer, Hugh T. Kerr attacks the latter opinion:

Still another common but questionable stereotype of America [sic] denominationalism is that our Protestant churches are for the most part "middle class". . . . Protestant church membership, it is said, draws most heavily from this middle-class range, with not so many from the upper or lower economic or educational levels.

.

This reproach is often magnified by setting Protestantism over against Roman Catholicism which allegedly enjoys a broader and more inclusive social structure. . . .

One reason that this impression persists is the difficulty of securing comprehensive evidence about the social structure of our churches. But in recent years some pertinent figures have been gathered and sifted, and it now seems clear that this judgment on Protestantism is a stereotype, a half-truth, an oversimplification.²⁶

Kerr makes reference to a survey conducted in 1948 by Princeton University for the Federal Council of Churches. This investigation is valid only for our present era, but it is of interest to note that it

²⁴Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 25.

²⁵Ibid., p. 77.

²⁶Hugh T. Kerr, What Divides Protestants Today, New York, Association Press, 1958, pp. 43-45.

failed to uncover an anticipated close relationship between denomination and social class. The classifications used were somewhat arbitrary, nevertheless the conclusions were indicative. On a national average, the population was adjudged to be 13.1 percent "upper class", 30.7 percent "middle class", and 56.2 percent "lower class". Based upon these criteria, the all-inclusive figures for Protestants followed the national average quite closely, with 13.8 percent in the "upper class", 32.6 percent in the "middle class", and 53.6 percent in the "lower class". Of the nine major denominations listed in the survey, Baptists had the smallest percentage of members in the "upper" and "middle" classes. The Baptists, including the large negro Baptist population of the South, were divided into 8 percent "upper class", 24 percent "middle class" and 68 percent "lower class". Curiously enough, the Roman Catholics showed an almost identical distribution. "Smaller bodies" were found to have a slightly higher percentage of membership in "upper" and "middle" class than either Baptists or Roman Catholics, while the Episcopal Church, the leading "upper class" body with 24.1 percent, nevertheless listed 42.2 percent of its membership in the "lower class".²⁷ The figures would lead one to the conclusion that economic factors, while significant, are not as important as some have supposed.

²⁷ Statistics from a survey conducted for the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America [now the National Council] in 1948 and cited in Kerr, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47. See Appendix A for details.

The statistics for Baptists would be much more valuable and conclusive if the survey had made a closer study of individual Baptist groups, both negro and white, sectarian or otherwise. Nevertheless, the figures for more centralized denominations indicate the general pattern of a spread in membership among the various economic classes.

Due consideration should be given to the relation of sectarianism to frontier society.

. . . the church has been dependent upon a condition of social stability and when such a condition has not been present it has given way to the sect form of religious organization. Thus developments in religious organization, on the one side, in the direction of greater order and union and, on the other side, in the direction of disorder and separation, have been closely related to movements of social order and disorder in the wider community. The church has grown out of the conditions of a mature society; the sect has been a product of what might be called frontier conditions of social life. Within the broad pattern of the social development of Canada, the persistent conflict between these two forms of religious organization takes on meaning.²⁸

Early settlers in British Columbia, as on other frontiers, tended to be drawn from the younger, more venturesome and more individualistic members of older communities. Furthermore, they were brought together in an association which was fluid and formative, with a minimum of social pressures. In fact, in the earliest instances, they found a condition of no "society", and set about to form one. It is understandable therefore, that frontier religious life should reflect this pioneer individualism, particularly in denominations such as the Baptists, which give considerable scope and leadership to the individual.

Such observations regarding the frontier would appear to substantiate the "frontier hypothesis" of the American historian Frederick Jackson Turner. At the close of the last century Turner put forward the theory that the most significant influence upon the history of the United States was the westward advance of pioneer settlement with its quest for cheap fertile soil, easy economic gains, and freedom from conventional society.

²⁸S. D. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. xii. It should be noted that sects are not confined to rural frontiers, however, but are urban phenomena as well.

According to Turner, the frontier was the chief factor in moulding the character of the American people and the structure of American social and political institutions. To a greater or lesser degree, most recent historians in North America have been willing to grant that Turner's views have some weight.²⁹ The "frontier hypothesis" has helped to shape the thinking of writers in the field of sociology and church history.

There appears to be a growing tendency to modify Turner's thesis, however. It has been pointed out that the frontier was a haven for racial and religious minorities. It has been suggested that the frontier could be restrictive and conservative. It has been argued that, on the frontier, "it is the primary or economic mores which undergo the greatest degree of change or variation. The secondary mores, such as government, law, religion, and social institutions change to a far less degree".³⁰ Some recent historians have taken the view that the metropolis is one of the most significant factors in North American history. It is contended that the roots of frontier culture are to be found in the metropolitan community, from which education and ideas radiate. One such historian, J. M. S. Careless, states, "True, there may be frontier religious movements, but these begin with preachers going out to the frontier and end in the focusing of the sect on the city".³¹

²⁹Morris Zaslow, "The Frontier Hypothesis in Recent Historiography", Canadian Historical Review, June, 1948, pp. 154-157.

³⁰George F. G. Stanley, "Western Canada and the Frontier Thesis", Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1940, p. 107.

³¹J. M. S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History", Canadian Historical Review, March, 1954, p. 18.

It would seem that only a modified form of the frontier theory can apply to Canada. Here the period of the "open frontier" was much shorter and more recent than in the United States. The essentials of law and order, along with the means of transportation, such as the railway, tended to be established previous to settlement. Canada never had a "Wild West". Furthermore, ties with the Old World of Britain and France were stronger among Canadians.

The very simplicity of the Turner thesis makes it suspect. It should not be concluded, however, that it has no validity. To deny any degree of environmental determinism is to assume that all developments took place in a geographical vacuum. On the other hand, due weight must be given to the formative influence of the traditions and ideals which were "imported" to the New World from the Old. This immigration of ideas was particularly valid in the case of social and religious institutions.

Recent literature on the subject of sectarianism has been careful to point out the importance of social and economic determinants in our religious life. Little stress, however, has been placed upon three other factors which have often proved to be vital in the development of sects--leadership, persecution, and theology.

A study of religious movements reveals the importance of the role of leadership. The dynamic personality of the teacher, the preacher, the theologian, the reformer, has been a potent formative influence within most, if not all, religious groups. The history of Christianity is replete with examples of this. It is difficult to conceive of Christendom without its Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, or Wesley. In fact

Christianity itself, of all the world's religions, is the example par excellence of a spiritual movement built around a great leader. In the New Testament the most stupendous and, if untrue, the most extravagant claims are made on behalf of Jesus of Nazareth--nothing less than the affirmation that he is God incarnate in human flesh and the resurrected Saviour of the World. Christian literature down through the centuries has been filled with reiterations of these claims and many of the "sects" received initial impetus from the labours of men, such as John Wesley, who sincerely believed that there existed a need to reemphasize the Person of Jesus Christ and his appeal for the allegiance of mankind.

Unlike Methodists, Lutherans, and many other groups, the Baptists can trace their history as a denomination to no prominent single personality or group of persons. Balthasar Hübmaier and Menno Simmons were significant leaders of the Anabaptists during the time of the Protestant Reformation, but the connection between Anabaptists and Baptists is one of spiritual kinship rather than organizational continuity. John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, who were instrumental in the founding of English Baptist churches during the early 1600's,³² are but names in a history book. In America, Roger Williams is noted as the founder of Rhode Island and champion of religious liberty. He was also largely responsible for the establishment in 1639 of First Baptist Church, Providence, Rhode Island, probably the first Baptist congregation in America.³³

³²Robert G. Torbet, A History of the Baptists, Philadelphia, Judson Press, 1952, pp. 62-69.

³³Ibid., pp. 220-221.

Shortly after, the individualistic and somewhat erratic Williams forfeited much of the credit for this achievement when he withdrew his membership from the church.

Despite the absence among Baptists of historically prominent leaders, the role of leadership should not be underestimated. Because of the autonomy of the Baptist congregation, the individual pastor is often more influential than he would be in a more tightly-organized denomination. In fact, he often proves to be a key influence in determining the enlistment, outlook, and associations of a local church. This is never more true than during times of distress and dissension within the group.

From time to time, fires of persecution have served to consume or to refine the sect. The sect is recognized as a protest and "other-worldly" group, but more emphasis might be given to the sociological corollary of this observation. Not only does the sect tend to reject the world, the world tends to reject the sect. The "church" form of religious institution has all too often, for good or ill, been the guardian of vested interests, dedicated to the religious, moral, social and political status quo, and openly antagonistic to the sect. The "church" has generally displayed tolerance of the sect only to the degree that the existence of the "church" is not threatened. Both Judaism and Pagan Rome persecuted early Christianity because they felt threatened by it. The medieval church exterminated the Albigenses for the same reason. The early Anabaptists and Baptists were persecuted by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. Nor does such opposition need to take the form of military force or physical torture. "Churches" have not

hesitated to mass the forces of wealth, respectability, social pressure and secular power in order to absorb or obliterate sects. Even in our present more tolerant age such antagonism may take the form of ridicule or subtle disdain. In brief, the "church" has often tended to regard the sect as a dark blot upon the bright landscape of social and religious conformity. The usual effect of this attitude has been to consolidate the sect, reinforcing its viewpoint and kindling it to aggressive propagation.

Current sociology tends to regard sectarian theology as a convenient justification for the social and economic conditions in which the sect finds itself. This view seems to be a dangerous generalization. That economics may influence one's theological position is freely granted. It is also acknowledged that the factors which determine the theological viewpoint of a religious leader may not be, and indeed usually are not, identical with the forces which bring together a group around that leader. In many cases the latter forces may be more social than theological. To take the position, however, that economics determines theology is to conclude not only that theology has no intrinsic validity, but also that "primary" religious experience is of no real significance.³⁴ As has

³⁴Walter Houston Clark, Dean of Hartford School of Religious Education, classifies religious behaviour as "primary", "secondary", and "tertiary". He defines primary behaviour as "an authentic inner experience of the divine combined with whatever efforts the individual may make to harmonize his life with the divine". He states that:

. . . a vivid conversion experience may fit the category of primary behavior. As the result of this the individual may join a church and punctiliously present himself for worship every Sunday for the rest of his days. But most of those Sundays may represent a very routine and uninspired carrying out of what he considers an obligation undertaken under very solemn circumstances. We do not

been noted above,³⁵ the anticipated high correlation between sectarianism and the "lower" classes proves to be only relative. How does the theory that theology is economically determined explain the rise of an Apostle Paul, a Francis of Assissi, or a Count Zinzendorf? Surely theology is of some validity and significance quite apart from economic considerations? On this point Niebuhr writes:

There are indications in the Christ-against-culture movement ["sectarianism"] that the difficulties the Christian faces as he deals with his dilemma are not only ethical but theological; and that ethical solutions depend quite as much on theological understanding as vice versa. Questions about divine and human nature, about God's action and man's, arise at every point, as the radical Christian undertakes to separate himself from the cultural society, and as he engages in debate with members of other Christian groups.³⁶

One seems driven to the conclusion that Christian theology is a valid factor worthy of consideration in an analysis of "chürch" and "sect". If this is acknowledged, one is logically faced with the necessity of giving consideration to what has been, historically, the main source book of Christian theology. In short, what does the New

necessarily have to hold that such is useless. There is a function for secondary religious behavior to perform, and it certainly is much more common than the primary type. But there is a quite obvious distinction between the two. . . .

Of "tertiary" religious behaviour Clark remarks:

. . . This has nothing of the primary about it . . . but is simply a matter of religious routine or convention accepted on the authority of someone else. . . . we get the impression that a rather considerable number of respectable [sic] churchgoers have never felt the remotest approach to a spiritual experience, however thorough their performance of all the literal duties that their churches enjoin.

Walter H. Clark, The Psychology of Religion, New York, Macmillan, 1958, pp. 23-25.

³⁵See p. 16.

³⁶H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1951, p. 76.

Testament have to say on the subject of sectarianism? Can the attitude of the sect toward the community at large be justified on the basis of the teachings of Jesus? Is Christianity, in essence, sectarian? Was the early church a sect? These and a score of other basic questions are suggested to the mind.

The inquiry as to whether early Christianity was a sect is usually answered by the sociologist in the affirmative. Elmer T. Clark remarks:

All denominations began as sects. . . . This is true of Christianity itself, which was three hundred years old before it attracted considerable numbers of the socially well-placed.³⁷

It is evident from the Acts of the Apostles that the early church was most certainly regarded as a sect by its opponents. Jewish partisans at Caesarea referred to the Christians as "the sect of the Nazarenes",³⁸ and interested Jews in Rome sought to know more of "this sect . . . that every where [*sic*] . . . is spoken against".³⁹ In replying to his accusers, Paul spoke of himself as one who worshipped "after the way which they call heresy [*or 'a sect'*]"⁴⁰ The Greek word employed in each of these passages is *αἵρεσις*, literally a "choice" or "decision", the root of our modern word "heresy", although the term had not, at this time, developed all the connotations which are now associated with it.⁴¹ Nevertheless, this early use of the term by a majority religious group when referring to a minority group does have a

³⁷Elmer T. Clark, op. cit., p. 16.

³⁸Acts 24:5.

³⁹Acts 28:22.

⁴⁰Acts 24:14.

⁴¹Hermann Cremer, Biblio-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, (William Urwick trans.), Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1954, p. 614.

parallel in the later origin of the English term "sect", a fact which accounts for the use of the English word in the translation of the New Testament.

To recapitulate, it should be noted that, sociologically, the terms "church" and "sect" gain meaning because of the difference in attitude of these groups to the society at large. It might be argued therefore that the Jewish use of the term "sect" does not in itself prove the essential "sectarianism" of early Christianity. However one does not have to read far in the New Testament to find in the recorded teaching of Christ and his disciples doctrines which would, beyond doubt, be immediately classified by the sociologist as "sectarian". Men are admonished by Jesus that "narrow is the way . . . and few there be that find it".⁴² Christians are reminded that they are "not of the world"⁴³ and are to "love not the world".⁴⁴ A warning is given that riches may be a spiritual snare;⁴⁵ it is observed that "not many mighty, not many noble, are called";⁴⁶ and the rich self-sufficient church at Laodicea is condemned.⁴⁷ The church of Christ is depicted as a society which transcends all social and racial barriers,⁴⁸ and members of the church are not to be "conformed to this world".⁴⁹

It seems evident that a strong case can be made from the Christian Scriptures to support the idea that there is something essentially

⁴²Matthew 7:14.

⁴⁴I John 2:15.

⁴⁶I Corinthians 1:26.

⁴⁸Galatians 3:26-28.

⁴³John 15:19.

⁴⁵Matthew 19:16-30.

⁴⁷Revelation 3:14-19.

⁴⁹Romans 12:2.

"sectarian" about Christianity. This is not to say that "all sects are right" and "all churches are wrong". Nevertheless, reason is given for reflection upon the degree to which our society and our modern church life conforms to New Testament Christianity. The religious group which is conformed to its society has no vital message to give to that society.

Niebuhr comments:

The evils of denominationalism do not lie, however, in this differentiation of churches and sects. On the contrary, the rise of new sects to champion the uncompromising ethics of Jesus and "to preach the gospel to the poor" has again and again been the effective means of recalling Christendom to its mission. This phase of denominational history must be regarded as helpful, despite the break in unity which it brings about. The evil of denominationalism lies in the conditions which makes [*sic*] the rise of sects desirable and necessary: in the failure of the churches to transcend the social conditions which fashion them into caste-organizations, to sublimate their loyalties to standards and institutions only remotely relevant if not contrary to the Christian ideal, to resist the temptation of making their own self-preservation and extension the primary object of their endeavor.⁵⁰

In common with other groups within the Protestant tradition, Baptists, throughout their history, have sought to lay claim upon the principles of New Testament Christianity. How successful they have been is a matter of opinion, but the very fact that they have striven to do so has committed them to sectarianism. Baptist principles, in part, have been summarized in a "Report on . . . Church Union" issued in 1907 after Baptists were invited to join in the proposed United Church of Canada.

The Baptist people regard all truly religious affiliations as reposing, on the one hand, on God's gracious self-communication to human souls, and on the other hand, on each man's free acceptance to the Divine grace and obedience to the Divine Will. As we understand the Scriptures, only those who are the subjects of such a spiritual experience are capable of participation in Christian fellowship or

⁵⁰Niebuhr, Sources of Denominationalism, p. 21.

entitled to membership in a Christian church.

. . . Hence the practice of infant baptism and the consequences which follow it are a fatal impediment to organic union between the Baptists and Paedo-Baptist churches. Hence also the impossibility of Baptists consenting to an alteration of the original mode of baptism, because without the immersion its representation of the believer's union with Christ in His death and resurrection is lost. Further, the doctrine of the spirituality of the Christian church demands that it avoid all alliance with secular authorities.⁵¹

Commenting on this report, a United Church leader, Claris E.

Silcox, writes:

. . . an interesting sequel may perhaps be found in the fact that in its endeavor to clarify its own mind as to the distinctive principles which Baptists cherish, that denomination in Ontario and Quebec has since split into a number of groups which have engaged in bitter and severe controversy. At the present time there seems no clear agreement as to what the distinctive principles are.⁵²

Elsewhere, Silcox relates the situation in more detail:

This denomination, [Baptists] in spite of its genuine vitality, has not effected as yet a Dominion-wide inner consolidation which would provide it with an effective machinery for self-propagation. What is more, in recent years the denomination has manifested more centrifugence than centripetence, especially in Ontario and Quebec. No Canadian denomination has been more torn by the Fundamentalist-Modernist issue. The conflict arose over teaching at McMaster University, simmered between 1910 and 1926 and resulted in schism.

. . . Canadian Baptists . . . have achieved neither organizational nor temperamental unification.⁵³

The observations of Silcox, regarding the dismembering effect of the Fundamentalist-Modernist issue upon Canadian Baptists, must be acknowledged as true. Nevertheless, this same issue has given rise to repercussions throughout Christendom; why then should it have such a telling effect upon Baptists? The answer would appear to lie in the

⁵¹See Appendix B for full text of the report.

⁵²Silcox, op. cit., p. 132.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 40-41.

fact that Baptists may be regarded as the oldest and largest body of sectarian opinion within Protestantism. Niebuhr describes the Anabaptists as "the first Protestant sect, as distinct from the churches of the Reformation".⁵⁴

Baptists, rooted in the Anabaptist sentiments of the Pre-Reformation period, have grown in numbers to become the largest Protestant denomination in the United States.⁵⁵ Increasing membership, wealth, and respectability have placed great strains upon the original sectarianism of Baptists, and, as a whole, they have moved a considerable distance on the road to becoming a "church-type" organization. Nevertheless, the persistence of sectarian convictions has been a notable aspect of Baptist history, and the struggle to maintain sectarianism has given rise to a great deal of controversy in Baptist ranks. Significantly related to such controversy is the fact that Baptists, as a denomination, have failed to achieve unity of thought in at least four important areas. Other denominations are faced with the same problem areas, but, in most cases,

⁵⁴Niebuhr, Sources of Denominationalism, p. 38.

⁵⁵Baptists in the United States have a membership of some 20,500,000, including all groups. Methodism is the second largest denomination among Protestants, claiming over 13,600,000 adherents. The Methodist Church, with over 9,900,000 members was, until recently, the largest single Protestant organization. None of these figures include children. See Mead, op. cit., pp. 32, 151, 155. During 1963 the Southern Baptist Convention took the lead as the largest Protestant group. See news report in Eternity, February, 1964, p. 37.

It should be kept in mind that comparative statistics on church membership are not as indicative as they may seem. Various methods of reckoning are employed and church rolls may include a sizeable percentage of nominal members. In general, the "sects" and smaller groups inspire in their adherents a higher degree of actual support and participation.

seem to have resolved their differences in a manner more conducive to denominational unity.

The first of these areas is in the realm of theology; it embraces the vexing question of the relation of Divine sovereignty to human responsibility. On this issue Protestant theologians are divided into two main schools of thought, popularly known as Calvinism and Arminianism. Calvinism is that body of opinion which follows Augustine and Calvin in placing emphasis on the operation of God's sovereign will in history and in the lives of individuals. Arminianism takes its name from James Arminius, a Dutch theologian of the late sixteenth century, who reacted strongly against the predestinarian aspects of Calvinism and stressed man's responsibility and the freedom of the human will. The great English-speaking exponent of Arminian thought was John Wesley, whose work and influence made Arminianism the theology of the majority of Methodists.⁵⁶ There was nothing ephemeral about the clash of opinion between Calvinism and Arminianism; the controversy is still relevant today; and both sides dealt with basic issues which have profound ramifications in the field of theology. In general, Calvinism has tended to stress doctrinal reflection and Arminianism has emphasized experiential religion. While the majority of modern Baptists are moderate Calvinists, Arminian thought has had a significant influence in Baptist history, particularly among Baptists of England and the European continent.

The second problem for Baptists is in the area of church polity.

⁵⁶George Whitefield and Methodists of the "Lady Huntingdon Connection" were Calvinistic.

Of the three basic viewpoints on church government--episcopacy, presbyterianism, and congregationalism--Baptists, from their early history, have been committed to congregationalism for reasons which they have felt were in harmony with statements in the New Testament. As they grew from small beginnings, however, Baptists found, as the early Christians evidently discovered, that increased size posed organizational problems.

From time to time, agitation for a more centralized form of government arose, countered by aggressive reaction against such a tendency. Nevertheless, pressure toward centralization still persists. As a result, while in theory all Baptist churches are autonomous and thoroughly democratic, in practice they may be guided, if not directed, in their decisions by prominent leaders in the denomination. In such a situation an aggressive leader may gain great respect or, on the contrary, stir great antagonism. The same situation can develop within a local church. The leadership role of the pastor is often not too clearly defined, and members of the congregation may lack a sense of spiritual responsibility. Thus, while ideally Jesus Christ is Head over all, in reality, anarchy may rule. At its best, congregational church government can evoke a high degree of cooperation and enthusiasm among the church members. At its worst, it may be less than constructive.

A third source of tension among Baptists is related to doctrinal discipline among individual members. Baptists have no authoritative creed. Various statements of faith have been employed throughout Baptist history, but only the Scriptures are regarded as final authority.

However, as has been common in church history, there have been times when divergent interpretations of the Bible, or doctrines regarded as being contrary to the Scriptures, have been promulgated. It has been in such seasons of stress as, for example, the period of the Council of Nicea, that agitations have sprung up in favour of an authoritative creed which would be binding upon all church members. In similar situations Baptists, believing as they do in the voluntary and personal nature of the Christian faith, are torn between a desire to promote soul-freedom and a desire to preserve essential doctrine. Thus Confessions of Faith have often become bones of contention.

The last of these four interrelated issues has to do with the relationship of Baptists to other denominations. At the heart of this question lies the controversy of "open communion" versus "close communion". There is a wide scope of opinion on this question, varying on the one hand from an "open membership" such as is practiced by some Baptist churches in England which extend membership to the non-immersed, and at the other extreme including the "Landmarkers" of Southern United States who refuse communion to all but members of the church in which the communion service is held.⁵⁷ In general, however, "open communion-ists" invite members of other denominations to participate at the Lord's Supper, while "close communionists" do not give such an invitation. There has never been any agreement among Baptists on this point, and it is difficult to decide which position is more "sectarian", since many of

⁵⁷The name "Landmarker" originated from the text of Proverbs 22:28, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set".

the "churches" have been close communionistic in theory, if not in practice. In our present generation, because public sentiment is against close communion, sects are more apt to maintain its observance.

The history of Baptists illustrates the persistence of the tensions which have been mentioned above. The first known Baptist Church in England,⁵⁸ founded in 1611 or early 1612 by Thomas Helwys, was Arminian in doctrine. English Calvinistic Baptists date from c. 1638. The Arminian group came to be known as General Baptists, while the Calvinists took the name Particular Baptists. The names originate in their respective views of the Atonement of Christ as being for the world in general, or particularly for the elect.⁵⁹

Baptist sentiments flourished during the period of the Commonwealth and many Baptists embraced republican ideas. Consequently, the Protectorate and Restoration brought stress and persecution such as was typified in John Bunyan's imprisonment as a Baptist dissenter. However, when a measure of religious liberty was gained through the Act of Toleration in 1689, a period of spiritual decline followed. The General Baptists by this time had developed a more centralized type of church government than the Particular Baptists; in fact, some "presbyterian" ideas were in evidence. At the same time, General Baptists had resisted the development of definite statements of faith and hence were gravely affected by the theological speculations of late seventeenth and early

⁵⁸This church was an offshoot of an English-speaking Baptist church founded in Holland by John Smyth about 1609. Torbet, op. cit., pp. 64-66.

⁵⁹In this connection, note the two ideas expressed in I Timothy 4:10.

eighteenth century England. During this period numerous General Baptist churches defected to Unitarianism. As Torbet notes, "Having failed to face frankly a doctrinal issue, the influence of General Baptists declined".⁶⁰

Particular Baptists, in contrast, were slow in organizational development, but much more inclined to formulate statements of faith such as the London Confession of 1689. As a consequence they were much better able to weather doctrinal storms, and they became the dominant group.

During the nineteenth century there was a gradual amalgamation of General and Particular Baptist forces to form the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, a union which was completed in 1891. In the meantime, however, one of the most influential leaders of English Baptists, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, had withdrawn from the Union in 1887 because of the liberal doctrinal views held by some of its members.⁶¹

An important distinctive characteristic of most English Baptists has been the practice of open communion. This approach was typical of both General and Particular Baptists and was maintained by such leaders as Spurgeon.⁶² The predominance of open communion may be traced, in part, to the power and prestige which was enjoyed by the Established Church. Baptists found themselves in no position to compete on equal terms, and found open communion a practical approach to winning respect

⁶⁰Torbet, op. cit., p. 89.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 137. Politically, Spurgeon was a Liberal and a friend of Gladstone.

⁶²A smaller group, the "Strict Baptists" adhere to close communion.

and participation from Anglicans, particularly those of Low Church evangelical persuasion. In contrast, Scottish Baptists had to compete with the Presbyterians who held views on soteriology and democratic church government similar to Baptists. The insistence of Scottish Baptists on "plurality of elders"⁶³ and close communion was a defensive reaction against Presbyterianism.

Baptists of both General and Particular persuasion emigrated to the New World, but religious developments in New England were of such a nature that the Calvinistic strain of Baptists tended to prevail. The spiritual revival known as "The Great Awakening", which began about 1726, was predominantly Calvinistic in outlook and greatly influenced the growth of Baptists. In 1742 the Philadelphia Association, the first organization of Baptists in America, adopted the London Confession of 1689 with some minor changes.⁶⁴ This was followed in 1833, by the New Hampshire Confession which was somewhat shorter than the lengthy

⁶³In the Baptist view the New Testament "elders" were also identified as "bishops" (sometimes translated "overseers"), as in Acts 20:17, 28. The "bishops" of a local church were contrasted with "deacons" (Philippians 1:1) but not with the pastor, who himself was a bishop or elder. In the middle of the nineteenth century Dr. Alexander Carson, a prominent Scottish Baptist and a convert from Presbyterianism, was a strong advocate that each Baptist church should have a board of elders, even if only one, the pastor, were financially supported by the congregation. This would offset any claim that the Presbyterians were "more scriptural" than Baptists. See Torbet, op. cit., p. 119, and Alexander Carson, Baptism in its Mode and Subjects, London, Houlston and Stoneman, 1844, pp. 12-15.

⁶⁴E. T. Hiscox, The New Directory For Baptist Churches, Philadelphia, Judson Press, 1894, p. 537.

Philadelphia Confession, and definitely Calvinistic in tone.⁶⁵ The later Confession, in various versions, has been widely approved by Baptist churches on this continent and has given a Calvinistic direction to the Baptists of the United States.

Along with Calvinism, close communion sentiments have been typical of the Baptists of America, particularly in the Southern States. On the American frontier, Baptists were able to compete with other denominations on virtually equal terms, were individualistic and aggressive, and were not subject to the pressures which prompted the "openness" of English Baptists. The name "Particular" was dropped and the name "Regular" adopted.⁶⁶ Thus the term "Regular Baptist" came to connote regularity of doctrine, and observance of the ordinances in their "regular" order, that is, first immersion, then church membership and communion.

The history of Baptists in Canada reflects the tensions and the developments which have been noted above. The first Baptist congregation in Canada is usually recognized to have been the church at Wolfville, Nova Scotia, founded in 1763, although the church at Sackville, New Brunswick, apparently dates from the same year.⁶⁷ Soon after this time Baptist work in the Maritimes received special impetus as a result of the influence of "The Great Awakening" which spread northward from New England. The early

⁶⁵The New Hampshire Confession is by no means brief, as will be seen from the full text which is given in Hiscox, op. cit., pp. 543-563.

⁶⁶The term also came into common use without capitalization, viz. "a regular Baptist church".

⁶⁷Stuart Ivison, "Baptist Beginnings in Canada", Our Baptist Fellowship, Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, 1939, p. 17.

congregations were of the Regular, or Calvinistic type but about 1795 Free (Arminian) Baptist made their appearance. In 1906 these two groups joined to form the United Baptists.

The first Baptists in Upper and Lower Canada were evidently United Empire Loyalists. Although the Loyalists included relatively few Baptists,⁶⁸ those of Baptist faith were hardy and enthusiastic pioneers and Baptist work began to flourish along the international boundary. In 1816, Scottish Baptists settled in the Ottawa Valley.⁶⁹ There was also a gradual influx of English immigrants. Baptists of Upper and Lower Canada were slow in attaining any sort of unity, largely because of their independent spirit and the doctrinal differences between settlers of English and American stock, particularly on the subject of communion.⁷⁰ The beginnings of cooperation were finally achieved with the formation, in 1851, of the Regular Baptist Missionary Convention of Canada West. This was followed by a similar grouping of Quebec and Ottawa Valley churches in 1858. The two bodies united in 1888 to form the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. In 1873 the Baptists of Ontario sent the Rev. Alexander McDonald as the first Baptist missionary to Manitoba. The Manitoba Baptist Convention was established in 1884.

Of all the Canadian Provinces, however, it is probably British Columbia that presents the best illustration of the forces which have tended to segment Baptists. Diverse from other provinces in population,

⁶⁸Stuart Ivison and Fred Rosser, The Baptists in Upper and Lower Canada before 1820, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1956, p. 8.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 94.

⁷⁰Silcox, op cit., p. 39.

climate and topography, Canada's most Western Province exemplifies the wedding of British sentiment and American influence. In religious ideas, as in other aspects, it has been a "Meeting of the Waters". The tale of these conflicting influences and of the struggle which ensued, will occupy the following pages.

CHAPTER II

THE "HIDDEN BAPTISTS" OF VANCOUVER ISLAND

Contrary to a widely-accepted opinion,¹ John Morton was not the first Baptist to settle in what is now British Columbia. Morton came to New Westminster in the autumn of 1862 and was one of the "Three Greenhorn Englishmen" who took up a pre-emption on 550 acres of land in Granville, later to be the site of downtown Vancouver.² In the following year, Morton and his two associates built their cabin on a spot just west of the present corner of Granville and Hastings Streets. Shortly afterward, the decision was made to extend the Canadian Pacific Railway from its original terminal at Port Moody to a new location at Coal Harbour. Consequently, the city of Vancouver was incorporated in 1886 and began to make rapid growth. Morton became a man of considerable wealth, donated large sums to the Baptist cause, and became prominent as one of the Baptist pioneers in the Province of British Columbia. There is, however, no reason for believing him to be the first Baptist in the Province, for the beginnings of Baptist work are to be found, not on the Mainland, but on the southern tip of Vancouver Island in the city of Victoria.

The early history of Victoria was linked to the fortunes of the Hudson's Bay Company, which, in 1821, was granted a Royal Licence for exclusive trade with the Indians in the territory west of the Rockies.

¹See, for example, E. R. Fitch, The Baptists of Canada, Toronto, Standard Publishing Co., 1911, p. 231.

²Margaret A. Ormsby, British Columbia: a History, Toronto, Macmillan, 1958, p. 296.

Fort Vancouver, near the mouth of the Columbia River, was made the western depot of the Company, but when it became evident that the boundary between British territory and the United States would be placed further north, a decision was made to re-locate the depot on southern Vancouver Island. In the spring of 1843, under the leadership of James Douglas, work was commenced on the new fort, which was soon to be officially known as Fort Victoria.

The first missionary in the new post was the Rev. Jean-Baptiste Bolduc, a Roman Catholic priest who accompanied Douglas to Victoria in March, 1843. In the spring of 1849 an Anglican, the Rev. Robert John Staines, arrived in Victoria to act as chaplain for the Hudson's Bay Company, a position which had remained vacant for ten years. Staines proved to be unpopular, came into conflict with the officials of the Company, and was replaced by the Rev. Edward Cridge, who was an uncompromising member of the Evangelical Party within the Anglican Church. The new chaplain, who arrived from England in 1855, was favourably received by the inhabitants of Victoria³ and gained the support of James Douglas, who had become Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1845.

As part of his arrangement with the Company, Cridge was given a grant of one hundred acres of land. This fact, in addition to other actions of Douglas, gave rise to an apprehension in some minds that the

³Frank A. Peake, The Anglican Church in British Columbia, Vancouver, Mitchell Press, 1959, p. 19.

Anglican Church would become the State Church of the new colony.⁴ Until 1858, events seemed to point in that direction. At the close of 1857 Victoria, a relatively quiet trading post of some 600 to 800 inhabitants, possessed two churches; one the Roman Catholic, the other the Anglican Church of Victoria District, now known as Christ Church, of which Edward Cridge was Rector. The city gave little hint of the sweeping changes which were about to engulf it, but already there were reports of the discovery of gold on the North Thompson River.

The year 1858 was the great year of the Fraser River Gold Rush. Drawn by the lure of quick riches, hundreds of prospectors flooded into Victoria en route to the goldfields on the Thompson and Fraser Rivers. The population of Victoria mushroomed to some 20,000 inhabitants who were housed, for the most part, in tents. The first contingent of miners from San Francisco arrived in Victoria in April, aboard the paddle-wheel steamer Commodore. By a curious coincidence, the same vessel also brought a first contingent of a quite different nature--a group of sixty-five American negroes who had come to settle in Victoria. During the following years, before and during the American Civil War of 1861-1865, an estimated 300 to 400 negro adults immigrated to Victoria and vicinity.⁵ This influx had profound repercussions on the religious life of the new colony, for in the early 1860's one-half of the church-going

⁴F. W. Howay and E. O. S. Scholefield, British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present, Vancouver, S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1914, Vol. II, p. 616.

⁵Matthew MacFie, Vancouver Island and British Columbia, London, Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, 1865, p. 388.

colonists were coloured.⁶

It was not the attraction of gold which brought the negroes to Victoria. Few of the coloured population joined the gold miners. The Gold Rush, in fact, was one of the instruments which shattered the hopes and dreams of the negroes, who had come to Victoria in search of freedom and equality in a new land.

The former home of the negro immigrants had been California, to which a multitude of new settlers had come following the news of the discovery of gold in 1849. Among these newcomers were free negro families, mostly of mulatto background, from the eastern United States. These settled in San Francisco and formed a permanent coloured community, which, on occasion, was reinforced by individuals who had escaped slavery in the South. While the practice of slavery was illegal in California, the coloured population did not find themselves emancipated from prejudice or persecution and they yearned for better circumstances.

Almost a decade before the arrival of the negroes, the Hudson's Bay Company had been granted a Royal Charter, which had become effective in January 1849 and which had given to the Company the responsibility of government, protection, and colonization of Vancouver Island for a period of ten years. James Douglas, faced with the task of enforcing the Company's policy of "controlled" colonization, found that Victoria was badly in need of labourers. In hope of supplying this need, he approached Jeremiah Nagle, Captain of the steamer Commodore which plied between

⁶James W. Pilton, "Early Negro Settlement in Victoria", unpublished graduating essay in the library of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1949, p. 63.

Victoria and San Francisco.⁷ Douglas asked Nagle to invite the California negroes to move to Victoria. Nagle's presentation of the case at a meeting in Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church in San Francisco met with instant response and an advance party of sixty-five negroes left on April 20, 1858, aboard the Commodore.

The negroes were welcomed to Victoria by Douglas, who himself had the skin colouring, and perhaps the ancestry, of a mulatto. They were also befriended by the Rev. Edward Cridge, who, upon hearing of their arrival, paid them a visit and invited them to worship in Christ Church. The coloured folk readily accepted this proposal and made it clear to Cridge that their former minister in San Francisco, the Rev. J. J. Moore, of Zion Methodist Church, had announced that the emigrants would join an existing church in their adopted city.⁸ Moore had done this to offset a move on the part of some Methodist leaders in California to collect funds to build a "coloured church" in Victoria. The attitude of the negroes was clear. They did not wish to have a church of their own. They had no desire to be regarded as a "coloured sect" but wanted to be accepted by the white community on equal terms.

Social acceptance, however, was never granted to the negroes in Victoria. The responsibility for this situation seems to be mainly accreditable to white prejudice against them, rather than to the

⁷James W. Pilton, "Negro Settlement in British Columbia 1858-1871", unpublished M.A. thesis in the library of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1951, p. 30.

⁸Edward Cridge, "Diary", May 6, 1858. Original manuscript in the Provincial Archives, Victoria.

failure of the negroes themselves. They presented, as a group, a cross-section of humanity and its failings, yet they appear, on the average, to have equalled, if not excelled, their white brethren in ability and conduct. Because of the increase in the value of property during the Gold Rush, many of their number acquired considerable wealth through the resale of their land. Others became prominent in the business life of the community. Their most outstanding leader, Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, son of a Methodist minister, was a partner in the large merchant store "Lester and Gibbs" and in later life became United States Consul in the Island of Madagascar.⁹

In Victoria, among the whites of British stock, the general attitude toward the negroes ranged from open friendliness to "tolerance". However, the "Americanization" of Victoria during the Gold Rush intensified the social problems of the negroes. Americans, who were accustomed to policies of segregation, took exception to the status given negroes in Victoria. In August, 1858, one American, in a letter to the Gazette, complained about the "perspiring Ethiopians" in the congregation of Christ Church, and suggested that the negroes be confined to a special section of the church.¹⁰ The Rector, Edward Cridge, refused the suggestion, basing his argument on the fact that while people's skins might be different, their sins were very much the same colour!¹¹ When the Rev. J. J. Moore, pastor of Zion Methodist Church,

⁹Pilton, "Negro Settlement in British Columbia", pp. 48, 73, 87-88.

¹⁰Victoria Gazette, August 24, 1858.

¹¹Pilton, "Negro Settlement in Victoria", p. 62.

San Francisco, visited Victoria in September, 1858, he made contact with the former members of his flock, and established a friendly relationship with Cridge. Nevertheless, in spite of the efforts of both Moore and Cridge, the members of the negro community began to drift from their initial allegiance to Christ Church. Some, such as Mifflin Gibbs, retained their connection with the Anglican Church;¹² but others sought new affiliations.

At this juncture two factors entered into the situation and accelerated religious changes among the negroes. The first was an alteration in the structure of the coloured community itself. It has been noted that the first negroes to arrive in Victoria were of the Methodist Episcopal persuasion; soon, however, they were followed by negroes of diversified religious convictions, including, as early as 1859, negro Baptists. The second factor which affected the negro community was the arrival in Victoria of Protestant clergymen of denominations other than Anglican.

For the purpose of promoting missions in British North America, an abortive attempt was made in Montreal in 1827 to organize a Home Missionary Society, consisting chiefly of Baptists and Congregationalists.¹³ After this organization proved a failure, the Congregationalists of England and Wales formed the Colonist Missionary Society in

¹²Children of Mifflin Gibbs were baptized at Christ Church. See "Christ Church Cathedral Parish Register, Baptisms", October 24, 1860 and November 16, 1862. Transcript in the Provincial Archives, Victoria.

¹³Clariss E. Silcox, Church Union in Canada, New York, Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933, p. 43.

1836. The aim of the Society was to promote Congregational missions in the British Colonies. To this end, the Rev. William F. Clarke was sent to Victoria, where, in 1859, he established a Congregational Church and gained a following among both whites and negroes. Since Baptists and Congregationalists are similar in church polity, it is probable that colonists of Baptist sympathies attended Clarke's church.

The Rev. Matthew MacFie, who was sent to be Clarke's associate, parted company with Clarke and established his own congregation. A dispute arose between the two men on the question of racial segregation in the church services.¹⁴ MacFie, who had spent some time in the United States, favoured seating negroes separately from the whites. Clarke supported the cause of equality for negroes. The immediate result of Clarke's stand was that he lost the bulk of his white congregation to MacFie and gained the attendance of a great many negroes. However, when the coloured folk saw that Clarke's church was in danger of becoming a "Negro Church" they deserted him, for they wished to mingle with whites rather than be cut off from them. In 1860 the Colonial Missionary Society withdrew its support from Clarke and he was forced to leave Victoria. Nevertheless, he gained a moral victory, when in the following year, the Society ruled against segregation in churches.¹⁵

It was apparently at this same period that Baptists began to arrive in the new colony.¹⁶ Since no Baptist congregation was formed

¹⁴Victoria Gazette, October 22, 1859.

¹⁵British Colonist, January 11, 1861.

¹⁶See pp. 47-50.

until some years later, it would seem probable that Baptists may have attended the services of the Congregational Church, but this is conjectural.

Other events in Victoria bear evidence to the fluid state of religious organizations in this frontier community. Following William Clarke's departure his church disintegrated; but MacFie continued his ministry until 1864, at which time he went home to England. His congregation was incorporated into that of First Presbyterian Church, which had been founded by the Rev. John Hall, who had arrived in Victoria in April, 1861, as the first Presbyterian Missionary.¹⁷

This fusion of Congregational and Presbyterian elements seems to have been the chief cause of the internal strife which developed in First Presbyterian Church. Control of the church building fell into the hands of three trustees. In 1867 the minister, the Rev. Thomas Somerville, withdrew from the building, along with a major portion of the congregation, and formed St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.¹⁸ First Presbyterian was left without a regular minister until 1876, when the Rev. John Reid, a former Congregational pastor, took the pulpit.

During most of the period from 1867 to 1876 the First Church building remained closed, but was used on special occasions. In 1874 it was the scene of the ecclesiastical trial of Dean Edward Cridge, who had quarrelled with his Bishop, the Rev. George Hills. Hills, first

¹⁷Mervyn E. Kennedy, "The History of Presbyterianism in British Columbia", unpublished M.A. thesis in the library of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1938, p. 17.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 30.

Bishop of Columbia, had arrived in Victoria in 1860, had selected Christ Church as his Cathedral in 1865 and had appointed Cridge as Dean. The dispute which arose began with theological tensions--Cridge was an Evangelical, Hills, a Tractarian.¹⁹ Later, matters came to a climax when Cridge challenged the Bishop's authority. The Ecclesiastical Court suspended Cridge, who in October 1874 formed the Church of Our Lord, a Reformed Episcopal Congregation. This new group could be regarded as a type of frontier sectarianism among Anglicans.

Meanwhile, during this same era, the Methodists had been establishing churches both on Vancouver Island and the Mainland. A party of four Methodist missionaries arrived in Victoria in February 1859. Of these, the Rev. Ephraim Evans, leader of the party, remained in Victoria. The Rev. Arthur Browning went first to Nanaimo, then to Yale and Hope; the Rev. Edward White went to Queensborough, later named New Westminster. The Rev. Ebenezer Robson spent his first year at Hope and Yale; then, in May 1860, he replaced Browning in the large Nanaimo field, which included Salt Spring Island.²⁰ Just what percentage of the negro population began to attend the Methodist services is unknown, but Robson records that on one of his visits to Salt Spring Island he preached to a congregation of some twenty persons, only three of whom were white.²¹

Among those who came to Salt Spring Island was a young negro,

¹⁹Peake, op. cit., p. 78.

²⁰Ebenezer Robson, "Diary", May 24, 1860. Original manuscript in the Provincial Archives, Victoria.

²¹Ibid., February 21, 1861.

Fielding Spotts, one of the earliest Baptists to immigrate to the West Coast of British North America. Spotts, a cooper by trade, arrived in Victoria in 1859, leaving behind his wife Julia, and his infant son William, in San Francisco.²² He settled on Salt Spring Island in the summer of 1859, and was joined by his family in the following year. Early in the 1860's he moved from Salt Spring to South Saanich on Vancouver Island.²³ There on his farm of one hundred acres he built a cabin of hand-hewn logs. His pioneer home remained standing until 1936.²⁴

In the fall of 1861 an ardent Methodist, Charles Alexander, moved into South Saanich with his family. Soon after, probably in 1862 or 1863, a community church, including Methodists and Baptists, was established through the initiative of Alexander, a negro, with the co-operation of Spotts and other negro and white neighbours. This church was the forerunner of the present Shady Creek United Church.²⁵ Spotts took an active part in the affairs of the community and for some time during the 1860's he served as a school trustee in Saanich.

Other Baptist negroes from the United States arrived in Victoria about the same time as Fielding Spotts. The name of Augustus Christopher appears with that of Spotts on a list of applications for citizenship,

²²Pilton, "Negro Settlement in British Columbia", p. 67.

²³Victor E. Virgin, History of North and South Saanich Pioneers and District, Victoria, Saanich Pioneer Society, [no date] p. 32.

²⁴Pilton, loc. cit.

²⁵G. H. Glover, History of the United Church of Canada, North and South Saanich Areas, [1952], pp. 4-5.

published in December, 1861.²⁶ Included in this list is the name of Fortune Richard, who later joined the First Baptist Church in Victoria, but it is not clear if Richard was of Baptist persuasion when he first arrived. Mr. and Mrs. Madison [or Maddison] Fineas Bailey, who are known to have been Baptists, evidently arrived in the city sometime before late 1863.²⁷ Also Baptists were Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Whitney Pierre who may have arrived as early as 1860.²⁸ Pierre, well known in early Victoria, conducted a tailoring business for many years. The charter roll of First Baptist Church, Victoria, gives the name of a Mrs. Sally Page, who is listed by McLaurin as coloured,²⁹ but her identity or time of arrival cannot be established.

The identity of the first Baptist to set foot on the British Pacific Coast remains undecided. Although Fielding Spotts was certainly one of the first immigrants to declare himself as a Baptist, there is no way of knowing how many Baptists may have been absorbed into other denominations, particularly the Congregationalists. It is interesting to note that no Baptist church was formed in Victoria until after the

²⁶Colonist, December 4, 1861.

²⁷The British Columbian and Victoria Guide and Directory, Victoria, Frederick P. Howard and George Barnett, 1863, p. 54, lists U. F. Bailey [sic] but the correct initial, with the same address, is given in Guide to Province of British Columbia for 1877-8, Victoria, T. N. Hibben, 1877, p. 288.

²⁸In Shady Creek Cemetery the grave of Mary C. Spotts, daughter of T. W. Pierre, bears the dates 1860-1931. Mrs. Spotts was reported to have been brought to Victoria as a baby. Victoria Times, May 12, 1931.

²⁹C. C. McLaurin, Pioneering in Western Canada, Calgary, C. C. McLaurin, 1939, p. 245. It seems evident that all charter members of First Church were Baptists when they arrived in Victoria. No baptism by immersion was held in British Columbia until 1877.

Congregational Church had ceased to exist,³⁰ but it is difficult to determine whether this fact is significant. Curiously, none of the miners who came in the Gold Rush of 1858 appear to have been identified as Baptists. This observation might be interpreted in one of two ways--either Baptists do not participate in gold rushing; or, conversely, Baptists who rush for gold prefer to remain discreetly unidentified.

It would seem from one of the earliest accounts³¹ that a few Baptists were already meeting for worship in their homes when Alexander Clyde and his family arrived from Stratford, Ontario, in December 1874. Clyde, an earnest Baptist, immediately began to promote the formation of a Baptist church in Victoria and appealed to his former pastor, the Rev. C. Walker of Stratford, for aid in enlisting a suitable missionary pastor for the new congregation.³²

In 1875 the Rev. William Carnes of Chesley, Ontario, accompanied by a member of his congregation, John Sluggett, made an exploratory trip

³⁰See pp. 45-46.

³¹[Walter Barss (?)], "Historical Sketch of the Calvary Baptist Church", [Victoria, 1886], quoted in J. C. Baker, Baptist History of the North Pacific Coast, Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society, 1912, p. 257.

³²[William Marchant], "Beacon Lights in Baptist History of British Columbia", [Victoria, 1926], p. 2. Unpublished essay in the Provincial Archives, Victoria. William Marchant was a former Mayor of Victoria and a prominent Baptist layman. A native of Bristol, England, he came to British Columbia in 1889 and was a member of Calvary Church, Victoria, for some years. In 1894 he joined Emmanuel Baptist Church, Victoria, and became one of the leading members of that congregation. In 1922 he was elected President of the Baptist Union of Western Canada. Western Baptist, May, 1922.

to the West Coast.³³ Both men returned home impressed with the possibilities of Vancouver Island. In March, 1876, Carnes arrived back in Victoria in response to a call from the Baptists of the city to be their pastor. Sluggett came with his family later in the same year and settled on a farm in Saanich. He became a prosperous landowner, acquiring over one thousand acres of property, and was well known for his leadership in community and church activities.³⁴ For some time he was superintendent of the united Sunday School which Alexander and others had founded on East Saanich Road.³⁵ Sluggett participated in the initiation of Baptist work in both Victoria and Saanich. Following his death in 1909,³⁶ a small Baptist church, the Sluggett Memorial Church at Brentwood, was built in his memory by members of his family.

The arrival of the Rev. William Carnes in Victoria seems to have stirred a good deal of enthusiasm among Baptists and immediate steps were taken to form a local church. According to the Colonist,

Rev. Mr. Carnes preached morning and evening to good congregations at Philharmonic Hall on Sunday. . . . We understand that a Baptist congregation has been formed with excellent prospects of obtaining a large membership.³⁷

³³"Mr. John Sluggett" [no date]. Unpublished manuscript in the Provincial Archives, Victoria.

³⁴Virgin, op. cit., p. 34.

³⁵"Saanich Baptist Church" [no date]. Unpublished manuscript in the Provincial Archives, Victoria. See also p. 48.

³⁶His gravestone in Shady Creek Cemetery records the dates 1829-1909. Other members of the family are buried in the same plot.

³⁷Colonist, April 4, 1876.

The First Baptist Church of Victoria was organized³⁸ in May, 1876, with a charter membership of sixteen³⁹ [or fifteen].⁴⁰

In July, 1876, the new church in Victoria was visited by the Rev. J. C. Baker of San Francisco, Pacific agent and "Sunday-school missionary" for the American Baptist Publication Society, who gave the "right hand of fellowship" to the pastor.⁴¹ Preparations were made to build a church building⁴² and in September the church was received into the Puget Sound Baptist Association. Although it is certain that Pastor Carnes, John Sluggett, and the Clydes were Canadians, no question appears to have been raised regarding the American affiliation of the church.⁴³

³⁸For use of the term "organized" see p. 2.

³⁹[Barss (?)], "Calvary Baptist Church", quoted in Baker, loc. cit.

⁴⁰[Marchant], "Beacon Lights", p. 3. Sixteen would seem to be the more likely number. These included:

Pastor William Carnes	Augustus Christopher
Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Clyde	John Sluggett
Mr. and Mrs. Fielding Spotts	Caleb Bishop
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas W. Pierre	Alfred Oldershaw
Mr. and Mrs. Madison F. Bailey	Thomas Matthews or Mathews
Mrs. Sally Page	

The name of a Mrs. Johnson appears in Fitch, op. cit., p. 244. Her identity is not clear however. Marchant lists a Miss Johnson as one of fifteen members in "Beacon Lights", p. 3.

⁴¹Colonist, July 19, 1876, and Baker, op. cit., pp. 5-6. J. C. Baker was a prominent leader among the Baptists of the Pacific Northwest. In the fall of 1877 he moved to Salem, Oregon, and became the President of the Mission Board of the North Pacific Coast Convention. From 1882 to 1887 he was Superintendent of Missions on the Pacific Coast for the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Baker, op. cit., pp. 23, 356 and 440.

⁴²Colonist, July 20, 1876.

⁴³There is no indication that any of the white members of the church were Americans.

Baker had evidently painted a favourable picture of the future, and the congregation was impressed by the prospect of fellowship and financial cooperation with their brethren across the border.

The new First Baptist Church building cost "within a trifle of \$6,000",⁴⁴ not including the volunteer labour of members of the congregation, and was dedicated on Sunday, January 21, 1877.⁴⁵ It was an imposing structure for that period and possessed at least one distinctive feature. The Colonist declared:

The church edifice is admired by all who have seen it for its neatness and comfort. We believe the seats are the best in the city for comfort.⁴⁶

This emphasis on comfortableness was a witness to the fact that Baptists shared in that Protestant tradition of worship which gives centrality to the sermon. Nothing was to be allowed to distract the hearer from attention to the Gospel message. It was expected that the worshipper would consider church-going as a delight rather than as an act of personal sacrifice involving penitential overtones. The "Wooden Gothic" style of the new church building in Victoria bore evidence to the conservative and imitative nature of frontier church architecture, a fact which argues for the carry-over of religious ideas from the Old World rather than for pioneer originality.

On February 19, 1877, the new building was crowded to capacity for the first baptism by immersion ever to be witnessed in British Columbia.⁴⁷ The Rev. J. C. Baker was guest preacher upon this occasion. During his

⁴⁴Colonist, January 26, 1877.

⁴⁵Ibid., January 23, 1877.

⁴⁶Ibid., January 26, 1877.

⁴⁷Ibid., February 23, 1877.

visit to Victoria he was impressed with the possibilities of the field.

On February 23 he wrote:

Of the more than two million Baptists of America, some have already found their way here, and many more will come. Among the people here, Baptist sentiments prevail as largely, perhaps, as in other places. Most of the school districts are without Sunday-schools; there are some Baptists in all the towns, and Baptist families scattered over all the settled portion of the country.⁴⁸

Although he did not specifically mention the fact in 1877, Baker's later statements⁴⁹ hinted that Baptists of American background in Victoria were refusing to support the work of First Baptist Church because of the negro group in the congregation.

Baker took a special interest in the infant church and dubbed it the "North Star Mission of the Baptists".⁵⁰ Through preaching and correspondence he sought to obtain financial support for the Baptists of Victoria, who, in their initial enthusiasm, had saddled themselves with a heavy mortgage at an interest rate of ten percent.⁵¹ The response was inadequate to meet the need and the Victoria church entered a period of struggle which involved financial difficulties, friction between the white and coloured members, and what McLaurin has termed "lack of sane leadership".⁵² These three problems were interrelated.

Pastor Carnes was apparently not a tactful young man, for he made himself unpopular with the members of the church, who withdrew their

⁴⁸Field notes taken by J. C. Baker in 1877, cited in Baker, op. cit., p. 259.

⁴⁹See p. 56, point 3 of Baker's comments.

⁵⁰Baker, op. cit., p. 258.

⁵¹McLaurin, op. cit., p. 245.

⁵²Loc. cit.

financial support as a result. He resigned in May 1877, after the church refused to pay his salary. At this time, one of the deacons wrote to J.

C. Baker regarding the situation:

. . . Brother Carnes had left with a threat that if he ceased to be pastor, the church would not secure the money you were collecting for them. . . . A business meeting was held, in which it developed that the pastor had charged some of the members with dishonesty, and used other expressions of like character while, at the same time, the members had been doing all they could for him.⁵³

Carnes was followed by the Rev. J. H. Teale, an American pastor from California, who served from September 1877 to the end of December 1878.⁵⁴ During his brief term, Teale initiated the second Baptist church in the province, Olivet Church in New Westminster. The next pastor was the Rev. George Everton of Woodstock, Ontario, who arrived in March 1879. Everton could not have been a man of strong Baptist convictions, for when he left the church a year later he joined the Presbyterians.⁵⁵ According to McLaurin, Everton was followed by the Rev. J. Spanswich, but nothing is recorded regarding his brief pastorate.⁵⁶

During this period of rapid turnover in pastoral leadership, the troubles of First Baptist Church deepened, and in March, 1881, J. C. Baker visited Victoria in an effort to resolve the tensions within the pastorless congregation. A meeting of the membership was called together, with J. C. Baker acting as chairman.⁵⁷ During the discussion which

⁵³Letter to J. C. Baker, dated May 7, 1877, quoted in Baker, op. cit., p. 260.

⁵⁴Loc. cit. See also personal sketch of Teale, ibid., p. 462.

⁵⁵[Marchant], "Beacon Lights", p. 4.

⁵⁶McLaurin, op. cit., p. 249.

⁵⁷Baker, op. cit., p. 262.

followed, it became evident that business management of the church was one of the sources of contention between negro and white members. The church decided to appoint a special committee of six, composed of three coloured and three white members, to investigate the situation and recommend a solution. The committee reported as follows:

Your committee, appointed to recommend a plan for the more successful prosecution of the work of the First Baptist Church of Victoria, taking all the circumstances of the case into consideration, and the present embarrassment of our work, would respectfully recommend that the entire business and management of the church be given into the hands of either the colored members or the white members as the church shall decide by vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Dea. C. Bishop,
A. Clyde,
T. W. Pierre,
A. J. Clyde,
Dea. M. F. Bailey,
F. Richard,

Victoria, B. C., March 31, 1881.

Committee.⁵⁸

Before a vote on the committee's report, J. C. Baker gave an address to the congregation in which he attributed the situation to "race prejudice on the one hand, and race sensitiveness on the other".⁵⁹ He proceeded to give his interpretation of the recommendation:

If you adopt this plan heartily, and in a Christian spirit, I think the following points will be gained:

1. It will open the way for the party taking charge of the business and management of the church to mature plans for the settlement of a pastor and the payment of the mortgage in which there could be unanimity
2. It will open the way for the other party quietly to withdraw from the church, and to organize a new church
3. Under such management the final result will be, I believe, to draw to the support of the Baptist cause the entire Baptist element in the city, both white and colored.

⁵⁸Quoted in Baker, loc. cit.

⁵⁹Sermon delivered by the Rev. J. C. Baker, March 31, 1881, quoted in Baker, op. cit., p. 263.

4. It will, I believe, secure the hearty co-operation of our Board with the party taking the management of the church, whether white or colored

5. I believe such a course would finally result in the organization of a second Baptist church.⁶⁰

When a vote was taken on the recommendation, the coloured members voted for the whites to assume the church management and the whites voted for the coloured. Marchant attributes these actions to chivalry⁶¹ but it should be remembered that the business of the burdened church involved heavy responsibilities. The result of the vote was apparently a tie which was broken by the chairman, Baker, who cast a deciding vote in favour of the whites.⁶²

Following this decision most of the coloured members, possibly some two dozen in number, withdrew from the church. The Rev. Joseph Beaven of California was called to be the new pastor. He arrived in May 1881. By this time the membership was reduced to only twenty-six.⁶³ The financial struggles continued until early in 1883, when the mortgage was foreclosed.⁶⁴ After the loss of their building the members of First Baptist, who again lacked a pastor, continued to meet in a rented hall, but after some months the discouraged congregation was finally disbanded on June 3, 1883.

Within a short space, the enthusiasm of some of the Baptists of Victoria was rekindled by Rev. D. J. Pierce, pastor of First Baptist

⁶⁰Quoted in loc. cit.

⁶¹[Marchant], "Beacon Lights", p. 5 ⁶²Loc. cit.

⁶³Report from the church to the Puget Sound and British Columbia Association, June 1881, quoted in Baker, op. cit., p. 265.

⁶⁴Colonist, January 13, 1883.

Church, Seattle, and Chairman of the Home Mission Committee of the Puget Sound Association, who happened to be visiting in the city at the time. On his suggestion, twenty-three of the former members of First Church met on June 5 and reorganized to form Calvary Baptist Church.⁶⁵ The covenant of the new church specifically condemned discrimination on the basis of race, colour or class.⁶⁶ Interest mounted, and in October a new building-site was purchased. In February, 1884, a call was extended to Walter Barss of Nova Scotia, who was then a student at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Rochester, N.Y.⁶⁷ Barss was recommended to the Victoria church by J. C. Baker, who had visited the Rochester seminary in 1882 with a view to enlisting student interest in the mission fields of the Pacific Northwest.⁶⁸

Upon completion of his studies, the Rev. Walter Barss and his bride arrived in Victoria in September 1884. Under the leadership of the new pastor the congregation of Calvary Church experienced phenomenal growth. Financial support came from the American Baptist Home Mission Society, and this, along with the generosity of the membership, enabled the church to open its new building free of debt.⁶⁹ Barss was an able and sincere man, well received by his people and by the Victoria community. After three years of strenuous pastoral labour the church

⁶⁵Baker, op. cit., p. 266

⁶⁶McLaurin, op. cit., p. 248.

⁶⁷Walter Barss, Memorial, [1891], p. 12. In the private library of his son, Dr. Alden F. Barss, Vancouver, B. C.

⁶⁸Baker, op. cit., pp. 27 and 463.

⁶⁹Colonist, December 15, 1885.

grew to 108 members.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, because of ill health, Barss was forced to leave Victoria in 1887. He died in Geneva, N.Y., on April 5, 1891, at the age of thirty-three.⁷¹

Rev. M. L. Rugg, who succeeded Barss in 1887, was also a Rochester graduate and a man with a gift for spiritual leadership. At the close of his pastorate, four years later, Calvary Church had become a well established and influential congregation.

In the meantime, the negro Baptists of Victoria made no move to found a negro church, although financial support was offered from the United States to help in such a project.⁷² Apparently a few continued to worship in Calvary Baptist Church.⁷³ Fielding Spotts was one of these and his action illustrated the triumph of religious conviction over social pressure. He maintained his interest in Baptist work throughout his life.⁷⁴ One of Spott's sons, Wendell, became a Baptist minister.⁷⁵ But, in most instances, the second generation of negroes drifted from Baptist

⁷⁰Baker, op. cit., p. 268. ⁷¹Walter Barss, Memorial, pp. 1 and 30.

⁷²Report from First Baptist Church to the Mission Board of the North Pacific Coast Convention, quoted in Baker, op. cit., p. 264.

⁷³[Barss (?)], "Calvary Baptist Church", quoted in Baker, op. cit., p. 257, states that seven of the original members of First Church are still connected with Calvary Church. Not all of these could have been white. Carnes, for example, had left.

⁷⁴On March 23, 1902, Spotts, aged 74, collapsed while attending the morning service at Calvary Baptist Church and, shortly after, died in his home of a heart attach. Victoria Times, March 24, 1902, and Registration of Death, Department of Vital Statistics, Victoria. Fielding Spotts was honoured by a special obituary in the Convention Report, 1902, p. 17., which described him as "a simple trusting consistent child of God, respected by all who knew him".

⁷⁵Interview with William H. Roberts, North Saanich pioneer, June 19, 1961.

affiliations. Many of these gave up church-going altogether.

The early struggles to establish Baptist work in Victoria illustrate some of the tensions and tendencies among Baptists which have been previously noted.

The conflict between negroes and whites in First Baptist Church apparently was not rooted in economic distinction. According to reports, the coloured members were not less prosperous than the whites.⁷⁶ Racial prejudice played its part in the conflict, yet it was not the only factor. It would seem that one of the causes of friction was a difference in the social outlook of the negroes and whites. The whites appear to have been more "sectarian" than the negroes. The negroes regarded church membership as a sign of social acceptance. The whites were more inclined to think in terms of the maintenance of a distinctive Baptist witness in the community and hence it was the whites, not the negroes, who took action to ensure the continuance of the Baptist cause.

The controversy in the Victoria church must also be linked to American views on racial segregation⁷⁷ similar to those which touched off criticism of the negroes in Christ Church, and which were the basis of division in Congregational ranks during an earlier period.⁷⁸ The importance of the influence of the Rev. J. C. Baker in this regard should not be minimized. He appears to have striven to maintain what he felt

⁷⁶Baker, op. cit., p. 260.

⁷⁷R. C. Mayne, Four Years in British Columbia and Vancouver Island, London, John Murray, 1862, p. 351.

⁷⁸See pp. 43 and 45.

was a spirit of charity, yet some of his terminology seems to indicate an underlying prejudice against negroes. Obviously, he was firmly committed to segregation. These points are illustrated in his later comments upon the First Baptist Church in Victoria:

. . . It was evident, however, that the union of the two classes in one church could not exist for many years; but it was hoped and believed that it would continue until the church had grown to such numbers and ability that, when the change did come, there would be a brotherly division, and each would be ready and able to take up a separate work marked by the color line.⁷⁹

Negro members of the church felt that Baker was prejudiced against them and sensed that racial integration was foreign to his thinking. In January 1882, Fortune Richard, one of the special committee of six,⁸⁰ published a letter in which he attacked the attitude of a Baptist leader who had written articles regarding the racial controversy among Baptists in Victoria.⁸¹ These articles had appeared in May and November of the preceding year, in issues of the Baptist Beacon, an American periodical. Although he is not named, it seems evident from the content of the letter that the author of the articles was J. C. Baker.

The objection of the negroes was not primarily a criticism directed against individuals, but was essentially a protest against the influx of American ideas. Baptist work in Victoria was instigated by white Baptists from eastern Canada, such as Clyde and Sluggett, who were able to cooperate harmoniously with the coloured Baptists from the United States. Later, when the Victoria congregation came into

⁷⁹Baker, op. cit., p. 260.

⁸⁰See p. 56.

⁸¹Colonist, January 28, 1882.

association with the Baptists of the state of Washington, white American pastors with white American concepts came into the church. "Business management" was stated to be the basic reason for division, but it is more than likely that the "business" of calling a pastor figured largely in the racial dispute. Baker hinted at this when he spoke of the need of "unanimity" in "plans for the settlement of a pastor. . . ."⁸² There is no evidence that the congregation had, at this time, any significant number of members from either British or white American backgrounds. The membership appears to have been made up almost entirely of white Canadians and coloured Americans. It would seem, therefore, that a good deal of the blame for the conflict in the Victoria Church must be laid upon the shoulders of Baker himself, because of his racial attitudes and his influence upon the choice of pastors.

The early history of Baptist work in Victoria demonstrates the importance of pastoral leadership, particularly in the fluid society of the frontier. In such a situation, people tend to be drawn to an outstanding leader, regardless of denominational loyalties.⁸³ To pioneer in the establishment of a church is a challenging task for any leader. Baptists in Victoria were plagued with leadership difficulties. Early pastors faced problems, some of which were of their own making, and having failed to find solutions, left the field. Even after the racial dispute was resolved, First Baptist Church did not prosper.

⁸²See p. 56, text of Baker's sermon.

⁸³The career of the Rev. Edward Cridge was an example of this. See p. 47.

In contrast, the success of the Rev. Walter Barss is, in a large measure, explainable in terms of his background, ability, and training. A native of Nova Scotia, he was aware of the sufferings of the negroes in that province and was sympathetic to their cause.⁸⁴ His parents were earnest Christians of Baptist persuasion. During his training at Rochester Seminary he was under the instruction of one of the spiritual and intellectual giants of the Baptist denomination, Dr. Augustus Hopkins Strong.⁸⁵ In addition, Barss possessed a winning personality, and spiritual qualities which gained the respect of the Victoria community. These assets, along with the fact that the reorganized church was able to make a "fresh start", contributed to the success of his ministry.

While the frontier tends to attract the individualist, paradoxically, as the young settlement grows, strong pressures in the direction of social conformity develop. The need for cooperation of each individual is recognized by the community, and the new society tends to become closely-knit. In such a situation, those who elsewhere held to Baptist views must choose either to "stand up and be counted" or to conform to the majority. If local opinion itself is "sectarian" or if a sizeable group of non-Baptist "sectarians" is already in existence in the community, a shift in denominational allegiance is easily made. In this way, many former Baptists have been lost from the Baptist cause. These factors were

⁸⁴Most of the negroes in the Maritimes had become Baptists. Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1943, Vol. 5, p. 28.

⁸⁵Who, incidentally, officiated at the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Barss. Walter Barss, Memorial, p. 18.

operative in early Victoria. In 1881, J. C. Baker was most concerned over the fact that only a portion of the "Baptist element" in Victoria had joined First Church, and he traced the situation to the racial disunity of that congregation.⁸⁶ This factor certainly was significant at the time, but the problem of "unenlisted" Baptists antedates the racial issue and illustrates the fluid and formative nature of frontier religious groups.

It must be concluded that "the Baptist denomination was late in establishing itself in British Columbia",⁸⁷ not because Baptists were late in arriving, but because of basic disunities within the denomination. In Victoria these disunities were expressed in congregational division. Elsewhere these disunities hindered the development of a strong home mission program. If Baptists had been able to send adequate leadership and finances to Victoria in the years immediately following the Fraser Gold Rush, the story might have been far different. As the situation stood it was a case of "too little and almost too late".

⁸⁶See p. 56.

⁸⁷Howay and Scholefield, op. cit., p. 650.

CHAPTER III

THE YOUNG CONVENTION

The period between the mid 1880's and the end of World War I was an era of rapid growth for Baptists in British Columbia. From two struggling causes in 1883, the number of congregations multiplied to over forty before the outbreak of the war. There was a "boom" in church building as congregations sought to keep pace with increased membership. To a great extent this advance was a reflection of the phenomenal increase in population and the economic enthusiasm of the pre-war years. Baptists, in fact, allowed themselves to be carried along by the spirit of the age to such an extent that they embarked upon overly-optimistic projects without a cushion of monetary reserves. Consequently, recession and war caused serious financial repercussions within the Baptist denomination.

During this same period Baptists of British Columbia severed their organizational tie with the United States and formed their own independent convention. The two opening decades of the twentieth century were characterized by organizational development. Definite strides were taken in the direction of a "church-type" denominational structure, in spite of some rumblings of opposition. No major division took place during this period, but tensions were mounting and the stage was being set for the controversies which rocked Baptists during the 1920's.

Olivet Church, the second oldest Baptist congregation in British Columbia, was organized at New Westminster in 1878 by the Rev. J. H.

Teale, pastor of First Baptist, Victoria.¹ He was assisted in this work by the Rev. J. T. Huff, general missionary of the Baptist Missionary and Educational Society. The experiences of the two men were recorded by Teale on August 13, 1878:

On Tuesday, the sixth, we went aboard the steamer Enterprise, of the Hudson Bay Company, crossed the Straits of Georgia, and proceeded up the Fraser River to the beautiful town of New Westminster. Here we found the brethren glad to welcome us, and the streets strewn with posters announcing service for the evening. There was very manifest humility and willingness to do whatever the Lord directed, so on Thursday evening the First [sic] Baptist Church of New Westminster was regularly organized with seven members. . . . Two were received for baptism, and Brother Huff administered the ordinance on Sunday. There are about a dozen more Baptists in the place, who will unite soon, and several of them by baptism.²

A recognition council³ was called in New Westminster on August 20 and the Olivet Church was recognized as a "regularly organized Baptist Church"⁴ in fellowship with the Puget Sound and British Columbia Association.⁵

¹See p. 55.

²J. H. Teale, letter to the Rev. J. C. Baker, August 13, 1878, quoted in J. C. Baker, Baptist History of the North Pacific Coast, Philadelphia, American Baptist Publication Society, 1912, p. 271.

³Before a Baptist church is received into an Association (or a Convention) it is customary for a "recognition council", composed of representatives from each of the churches in the Association (or Convention) to examine the Constitution and Statement of Faith of the church, investigate the church's aims and practices, and thus to decide upon its eligibility for membership.

⁴J. H. Teale, letter to the Baptist Beacon, August 28, 1878, quoted in Baker, op. cit., p. 272. Note the use of the term "regularly" here and in Teale's letter of August 13, 1878.

⁵See p. 52. The name of the association had been lengthened to include British Columbia.

In spite of a promising beginning, the new church languished for some years because of the lack of a pastor and a church building. Fruitless attempts were made to obtain leadership for the struggling cause.

Then, in November 1884, the New Westminster field was visited by the Rev. Robert Lennie, who had recently accepted the pastorate of First Baptist Church, Whatcom (now Bellingham), Washington Territory. Lennie was of Scottish Baptist background, a native of the Orkney Islands, and a graduate of Spurgeon's College, London, England. Before coming to the West Coast he had been a pastor in Dundas, Ontario.⁶ The prospects for Baptist work in New Westminster were attractive to Lennie. The city lacked the strong British element which had tended to make the Anglican church supreme in Victoria. The appeal of sectarianism was already evidence in the success of the Methodists. Lennie agreed to become mission pastor of the Olivet congregation, and he began his ministry in the New Westminster courthouse in February 1885. The congregation grew, and a building lot was purchased. On December 12, 1886, the original Olivet Church, a brick structure valued at \$10,000, was dedicated.⁷

In 1885 the closing of the last gap in the Canadian Pacific Railway meant the opening of new opportunities on the British Columbia Mainland. Soon after his arrival in New Westminster, Robert Lennie sensed the importance of establishing Baptist work on the site of Vancouver, the

⁶Interview with Dr. Theodore Lennie of Vancouver, son of the Rev. Robert Lennie, July 17, 1961.

⁷J. Lewis Sangster, Seventy-five Years of Service, A History of Olivet Baptist Church 1878-1953, New Westminster, Olivet Board of Management, 1953, p. 13.

projected final terminus of the railway. He purchased a horse and buggy, and the tall, lean, bearded missionary became a familiar sight each week as he drove the thirteen mile journey, in all kinds of weather, to conduct his regular week-night service. On Sunday, June 6, 1886, the first Baptist Sunday School in Vancouver was organized at a most unlikely spot-- a hall at the rear of the Blair Saloon.⁸ The following Sunday, hall, saloon, and embyro city were destroyed by the "Great Fire". The next week Lennie held a meeting in the open air and, shortly afterwards, with the cooperation of Olivet Church, he began to conduct regular Sunday services in Vancouver once a month.

In November, 1886, an elderly clergyman, the Rev. J. W. Daniels, took over the work as interim pastor. On March 16, 1887, the First Baptist Church of Vancouver was organized and a few weeks later the congregation moved from the Sullivan Hall to its own building, a small frame structure on Westminster Avenue (now Main Street).⁹

Later in that year, the Rev. J. B. Kennedy, a young graduate of Woodstock Baptist College and the University of Toronto, arrived in Vancouver as pastor of First Church. Under his ministry the congregation soon outgrew the original building and in September, 1889, a new church, seating eight hundred, was dedicated. This structure, at the corner of Hamilton and Dunsmuir Streets, was used by First Church until 1911, and remained as "Hamilton Hall", minus its original steeple, until it was torn down in 1941.¹⁰

⁸W. M. Carmichael, These Sixty Years 1887-1947, Vancouver, 1947, p. 4.

⁹Ibid., pp. 6-8.

¹⁰Province, July 26, 1941.

In August, 1887, the Rev. Robert Lennie resigned from the pastorate of Olivet Baptist because of personality frictions between himself and some of the members of the church. Lennie was an aggressive leader whose resolute opinions were not always shared by his congregation. Although he remained an ardent Baptist, for a time he and his family worshipped at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, where the pastor was a personal friend. Lennie's rift with Olivet was not permanent, and after serving two pastorates in Eastern Canada from 1894 to 1900, he returned to New Westminster and joined his former church.¹¹ He was in semi-retirement during the following years, but served as chaplain to the British Columbia Penitentiary, and was active in denominational work until his death at the age of ninety-one on November 16, 1925.

For many years the three original Baptist churches occupied a place of leadership and influence among Baptists of British Columbia. In July 1897, First Church, Vancouver, reported a membership of 312; Calvary Church, Victoria, a membership of 201; and Olivet Church, New Westminster, a membership of 191. The only other church which approached these in size was Emmanuel Church, Victoria, with 109 members. Emmanuel Church was the fifth Baptist Church to be founded in British Columbia and was organized in 1890, the year following the organization of First Baptist Church, Nanaimo. In Vancouver, Mount Pleasant Baptist Church was organized in 1891 and Jackson Avenue Baptist in 1894. First Church, Chilliwack, organized in 1895, was the eighth Baptist church in the province.¹² All

¹¹Interview with Dr. T. Lennie, July 17, 1961.

¹²British Columbia Baptist Convention, Convention Report, 1897, p.

of these churches were associated with the Baptists of Washington, but wide changes were taking place in denominational organization.

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The first organization of Baptist churches in the Pacific Northwest was the Willamette Association, founded by five churches of Oregon Territory in 1848. As the number of churches multiplied, other associations were formed, including the Puget Sound Baptist Association which was organized in 1871.¹³ During the same period attempts were made to form a more general organization, covering a larger area, but difficulties were encountered. Baptists of Northern and Southern background were divided on the issue of the Civil War. Disputes also arose over local church autonomy and the communion question. A general organization was gradually formed, however, and in 1871 it took the name of the Baptist Convention of Oregon and Washington Territory.¹⁴ Friction continued, and in 1875 the churches of the Puget Sound Association withdrew from the convention. From this time the convention became, for all practical purposes, defunct.¹⁵

In June, 1877, the convention was reorganized to form The Baptist Missionary and Educational Society of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and British Columbia.¹⁶ It was the intention that the Society should exist as a self-contained organization separate from associations and

¹³Baker, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁴Baker, loc. cit.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁶Minutes of the Baptist Missionary and Educational Society, Salem, Oregon, A. L. Stinson, 1878, p. 3. Printed copy in the Provincial Archives, Victoria.

conventions. As a Baptist Society, the new organization could solicit the interest and support of Baptist churches in the field of home missions and in a projected program for the education of pastors and missionaries. Participation and representation in the society was on a voluntary basis. Churches which did not wish to contribute to the work of the society need not do so. The aims of the society were set forth in an editorial in the Baptist Beacon of November, 1878:

. . . It is not our purpose to build up a Baptist Convention which will be subject to inevitable changes as the churches in the various parts of our field multiply, and need Conventions of their own. We have not been laboring to build up a Convention, but a Missionary Society, around which we could rally all our forces for all time. Such a society so broad in its grasp, so concise in its plans, so judicious in its management, and so effective in its work that it will grow into the heart and confidence of our people, until neither the growth of States, the increase of churches, the vicissitudes of Associations or State Conventions, the death of old men, or the coming of new, the caprice of factions or geographical jealousies, will any more change the purpose of the society's labor than you could change the current of the Columbia . . . Such a society, and such only, will draw to its support the resources of our denomination.¹⁷

It was hoped that the frictions which had plagued previous organizations could be avoided by the "society method", but the plan itself became a source of friction. The Rev. J. C. Baker was a strong supporter of the new Society and had a part in drafting its constitution.¹⁸ Opponents of the "society method" argued that the Society and its leadership were too independent of the control of the local churches. More direct control through a convention was presented as the alternative.

In 1878, after one year of operation, the name of the Society was changed to The Baptist Convention of the North Pacific Coast. In the

¹⁷Baker, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 5.

opinion of J. C. Baker, and some other Baptist leaders, this move changed the purpose of the organization to some extent.¹⁹ Baker had evidently visualized the Society as an auxiliary to the American Baptist Home Mission Society, under which he served as Superintendent of Missions for the West Coast. In 1880 a plan of cooperation between the North Pacific Coast Convention and the Home Mission Society was adopted, by which the convention was to supply one-third of the funds for home mission work in its territory. The remaining finances were to be raised by the Home Mission Society, which was supported by the Baptist churches of Northern United States.²⁰

Discord within the North Pacific Coast Convention continued. There were strong Southern Baptist and "Landmarker"²¹ sentiments within the Convention, particularly in Oregon. Those who were of this persuasion opposed the "society method" and became critical of the leadership of J. C. Baker. Finally, in October 1886, the Convention was dissolved. A State Convention was formed in Oregon, and in addition, the "Landmarkers" formed a convention of their own. Until the present day, Baptists of the North and of the South are divided on the question of missionary methods; the North favouring the "society method" and the South the "convention method".²² Both sides have had their advocates in British Columbia.

After the dissolution of the North Pacific Coast Convention the

¹⁹Baker, op. cit., p. 11.

²⁰Ibid., p. 16

²¹See p. 31.

²²Robert G. Torbet, A History of the Baptists, Philadelphia, Judson Press, 1952, p. 310.

churches of Western Washington and British Columbia still retained their organizational framework within the Puget Sound Association. In June, 1888, this association was reorganized to form the Northwest Baptist Convention. By its constitution the new body was pledged "to co-operate with the great American Baptist Home Mission Society".²³

From the very inception of the Northwest Convention there was a conscious effort to promote harmony between the Canadian and American churches within its membership. At the convention's first meeting it was stressed that "no national boundaries" were to be recognized.²⁴ The Canadian churches were much in the minority, and by 1895 the British Columbia Baptists comprised only one-fifth of the total convention membership of 4,712.²⁵ Nevertheless, it became a practice for the convention to meet in Canada more frequently than the remote location and relative strength of the British Columbia churches would appear to have warranted. In 1890 the third session of the convention was held in Calvary Church, Victoria. In 1892 the convention met in New Westminster at Olivet Church, whose building had been renovated and enlarged the previous year. Calvary Church, Victoria, was again the site of the convention sessions in 1895. In 1896 the Rev. J. H. Best, pastor of Olivet Church, was elected president of the convention.

The above facts might be taken to indicate an effort on the part of the American Baptists to promote American nationalism on the West Coast. Such an interpretation is conjectural, however. It may have been

²³Convention Proceedings, cited in Baker, op. cit., p. 71.

²⁴Proceedings, in ibid., p. 70. ²⁵Colonist, October 11, 1895.

that the Americans sought to maintain an international organization in order that it might serve in the event that annexation of British Columbia to the United States were to occur. If this were true, they failed to understand the thinking of British Columbians, the majority of whom had never seriously entertained the idea of annexation.²⁶ Anti-Confederationism north of the border did not mean political Pro-Americanism. In the minds of British Columbians, there was always the possibility of reversion to British colonial status as an alternative to the link with Canada. It is important to note, however, that talk of annexation was always taken much more seriously in the United States than in British Columbia. As late as 1883, the imminent annexation of British Columbia was being proclaimed by American newspapers.²⁷

In spite of the amiable relations which existed between Canadian and American Baptists, there was a growing desire in British Columbia for some sort of provincial organization. The political and social concepts of Eastern Canada had been brought to the West by Canadian settlers.²⁸ Among the religious groups in British Columbia, Methodists and Roman Catholics had developed strong links with the East.²⁹ Since the majority

²⁶There has been a tendency to overestimate the political influence of the Fraser River Gold Rush. Many of the miners were not native Americans, and those who were American-born could be classified as adventurers, not American nationalists. See Willard E. Ireland "British Columbia's American Heritage", Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1948, p. 67.

²⁷Ibid., p. 72.

²⁸Margaret A. Ormsby, "Canada and the New British Columbia", Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1948, p. 74.

²⁹Ibid., p. 84.

of Baptists in the province appear to have been of Canadian background, it was only natural that they too should begin to think of some organization suitable to the context of Confederation. It was also natural that the churches tended to call pastors of Canadian background. A division of the Northwest Baptist Convention along the lines of nationalism was indicated. By the 1890's, the leadership in the Baptist churches of British Columbia was predominantly Canadian, and the pastors willingly promoted such a division. In addition to their own sentiments, they saw that there were practical values in local administration.

The final independence of the British Columbia Baptists was furthered by the financial recession which prevailed within the territory of the Northwest Convention after 1893. The progress of the churches was seriously affected, particularly in Washington. The lack of advance was also attributed to the "disturbed state of pastoral relations"³⁰ but no details regarding this were made public. Because of economic conditions, the American Baptist Home Mission Society was unable to increase its grants to the British Columbia field. There was a growing conviction among British Columbia Baptist leaders that more should be done to promote home mission work in the province. The Rev. W. T. Stackhouse, pastor of First Baptist Church, Vancouver, a "tall, rangy" native of Nova Scotia,³¹ summarized this opinion:

. . . We had no organized relation as Baptist Churches in this

³⁰Colonist, June 8, 1894.

³¹Carmichael, op. cit., p. 17. Stackhouse, a graduate of Acadia University, became a popular preacher and leader in the West. See C. C. McLaurin, Pioneering in Western Canada, Calgary, C. C. McLaurin, 1939, p. 143.

Province. The limited number of delegates who could spare the time and money attended the annual meetings of the North Western Association and the Northwest Convention of Washington and British Columbia. But conventions as a rule are to [sic] large, and general business too pressing to admit of a discussion of the particular functions essential to the greater unification of the work in any one section of the Convention field.

Such was our case. While we were loyal supporters of all the schemes of our Northwest Convention, and were doing our best to help to carry forward the work in general, we did not feel that the highest possibilities of our churches were being utilized. We felt the need of a Provincial nucleus around which our people could rally . . .³²

In March, 1896, a conference of Baptist leaders was held in Vancouver to discuss the possibility of forming a local organization which would assist the work of the Northwest Convention. The meeting was informed that the Home Mission Board of the Convention was favourable to receiving such assistance.³³ Consequently, a convention of the British Columbia churches was called in First Baptist Church, Vancouver, and on April 14, 1896, the British Columbia Baptist Church Extension Society was organized.³⁴ The Rev. J. H. Best was elected President; the Rev. W. T. Stackhouse, Secretary; and the Rev. R. W. Trotter, pastor of Calvary Church, Victoria, was made Financial Agent. Treasurer of the new body was William Marchant, a prominent Victoria layman. It would seem to be more than mere coincidence that Best was also elected President of the Northwest Convention later in the same year, while both Stackhouse and Trotter were made members of the Convention Board. The American churches were evidently willing to go out of their way in order

³²W. T. Stackhouse, "A Brief History of the British Columbia Baptist Church Extension Society", in Convention Report, 1897, p. 39.

³³Ibid., p. 40.

³⁴Ibid., p. 38.

to retain the British Columbia churches within their ranks.

In its first year of operation the Church Extension Society met with initial success. New churches were organized in Trail, Rossland, and Chemainus. The Rev. R. W. Trotter toured the Baptist churches of Eastern Canada in the interests of home missions and was able to raise over \$4,800 for the cause.³⁵ The Rev. D. D. Proper, General Missionary of the Northwest Convention, showed a great interest in the British Columbia field and made an extensive tour of the Kootenays. Proper addressed the Annual Convention of the Church Extension Society in April, 1897, and "in a manner that would wake the dead, he outlined the work to be done in east B.C."³⁶

Proper appealed to the American Baptist Home Mission Society for further aid, but the Society was forced to refuse the request because of financial stringency. Shortly after this, the Board of the Society, meeting in New York, informed Proper that all aid to British Columbia churches would be discontinued after October 1, 1897.³⁷

To meet the financial crisis, a convention of the British Columbia churches was called in July 1897. At this meeting the relationship to the Northwest Convention in the United States was severed, the British Columbia Church Extension Society was dissolved, and an indigenous organization, the British Columbia Baptist Convention was formed, with the Rev. P. H. McEwen as its President.

³⁵Stackhouse, op. cit., p. 42.

³⁶Ibid., p. 44.

³⁷Convention Report, 1897, p. 16.

While financial conditions were given as the reason for the new convention, it seems evident that they provided the occasion rather than the cause for the change. Feelings of national distinctiveness lay at the heart of the situation. The link with the United States must have been a source of some embarrassment to British Columbia Baptists. Those who did not understand the nature of a Baptist convention interpreted the existence of the Northwest Convention as an evidence of American domination. In June, 1897, an article in the Colonist newspaper understandably, but erroneously, concluded that the proposed British Columbia Convention was an indication of coming "home rule" for Baptists in the province.³⁸ In reality, the Baptists of Washington had given every evidence of a willingness to "go the second mile" in order to give their British Columbia brethren a fair share in the activities and leadership of the Northwest Convention. In contrast, when a need arose for economy within the American Baptist Home Mission Society, the New York Board decided the question of a cut-back of grants on the basis of national distinctions. The British Columbia churches, in turn, were willing, if not anxious, to make the decision of the New York Board the occasion for founding an independent convention. There was really no economic urgency for such a move on the part of British Columbia. By 1897 the financial condition of the Pacific Northwest had begun to improve. The churches of Eastern Canada were already sending aid to British Columbia under the existing organizational structure. At the British Columbia Convention of July, 1897, there were some who cautioned

³⁸Colonist, June 2, 1897.

against hasty action. Yet when the vote was taken on the question of the immediate formation of an indigenous convention, fifty-four delegates were favourable, and six opposed. When it was moved that "the vote be unanimous" the motion was "carried enthusiastically".³⁹ According to reports given at the time, however, the most significant thing about the formation of the British Columbia Baptist Convention was not the national distinctiveness involved, but rather the ease and cordial understanding with which the division was accomplished. The Rev. D. D. Proper was present at the founding of the new convention and gave friendly advice and support.⁴⁰ During the following year, the American Baptist Home Mission Society gave token grants to British Columbia missionaries.⁴¹ Thus fraternal relations with the American churches were maintained. Consequently, Baptist churches in British Columbia were more open to American ideas and influences than were the churches of the Canadian prairies, which had originally been established as a result of the home missionary program of Baptists in Eastern Canada.

Over the years since 1897 the influence of the United States upon British Columbia Baptists has continued and only recently does it appear to be diminishing. Along with the rest of the population of the province, Baptists are exposed to American ideas as a result of American media of mass communication and the mutual proximity of some of the larger centres of population on the West Coast. But, in addition to these factors, Baptists in British Columbia have some particular

³⁹Convention Report, 1897, p. 23.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 21ff.

⁴¹Convention Report, 1898, p. 11.

affinities with their brethren "across the line". The fact that the United States contains the largest Baptist population in the world has contributed to the strength of American influence. Through the years, the British Columbia Baptist churches have made extensive use of American publications and Sunday School material.⁴² Some American Baptist pastors have been called to British Columbia churches, while other Canadian-born pastors have received their training in the United States. Americans have often been guest speakers at Baptist Conventions. Furthermore, the accidents of geography and the subtle influences of political separatism have tended to cut off the British Columbia Baptists from their brethren in the rest of Canada.

The original constitution of the British Columbia Baptist Convention made provision for an annual convention to which "each regular Baptist church"⁴³ was entitled to send two or more delegates, depending upon the size of the congregation. A Convention Executive of four members was elected annually and appointments were made to five boards: a Home Mission Board, a Foreign Mission Board, a Publication Board, a Board of Education, and a Women's Missionary Board.⁴⁴ The Convention was

⁴²This has been true of all groups, including Convention Baptists. The Convention Baptist churches in Ontario and Quebec make considerable use of Sunday School material which is published in cooperation with the United Church, but this material has never been popular in the West. At present, the Convention churches of both the West and the Maritimes are finalizing plans to use Canadian-edited material from the Judson Press, Philadelphia, publishing house of the American (formerly, the Northern) Baptist Convention.

⁴³Convention Report, 1897, p. 8. Note the use of "regular" without capitalization.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 9.

incorporated in the name of the Executive in 1901.⁴⁵

Soon after the founding of the Convention a number of important constitutional changes took place. In 1898 the idea of a British Columbia Foreign Mission Board was dropped⁴⁶ and a practice was adopted by which twenty percent of Convention receipts were forwarded to the Baptist Foreign Mission Board of Ontario and Quebec. Consequently, the Home Mission Board came to be known, simply, as "the Mission Board". In 1899 the Convention Executive was increased to six members and these also were made ex-officio members of the Mission Board.⁴⁷ In 1900 the members of the Mission Board, the home missionaries appointed by the Board, and the Superintendent of Missions, were all granted the right to vote at Annual Conventions.⁴⁸ Thus none of these personnel need be appointed as delegates by the churches in order to exercise the franchise. This gave the delegates less control upon the actions of the Board, and weakened the Board's responsibility to the local churches. In 1902 the incorporation of the Convention was transferred to the "Board of Baptist Missions for British Columbia" and the Board was given title to all property of the Convention.⁴⁹ The purpose of this transfer was to enable the Mission Board to borrow money for home mission work.

⁴⁵Baptist Convention of British Columbia, Minutes of Executive Committee of the Mission Board, [hereafter referred to as Mission Board Minutes], October 26, 1901.

⁴⁶Convention Report, 1898, p. 39.

⁴⁷Convention Report, 1899, pp. 14, 18.

⁴⁸Convention Report, 1900, pp. 7, 11.

⁴⁹Mission Board Minutes, April 16, 1902.

As a result of the constitutional changes which took place following 1897, the Mission Board gained much more authority than was envisaged at the time of the formation of the Convention. Since, in the early years, most of the churches were not self-sustaining, the Mission Board exercised a good deal of influence in the supervision of churches and appointment of mission pastors. Furthermore, the Board apportioned to all the churches set amounts of money which were to be raised for home mission purposes. As long as the Convention remained a relatively small organization, the members of the Board maintained close contact with the people and enjoyed their confidence. As the Convention grew, much of this personal contact was lost and "the Board" became an object of criticism. Because the Board and its appointees had the right to vote at the annual convention meetings, the Mission Board attained a certain degree of power to perpetuate its own ideas and personnel. This control was regarded by critics as a contravention of local church autonomy and, hence, "un-Baptistic". These sentiments were later to come to the fore, particularly during the controversy of the 1920's. In fact, it became a common quip that the only "boards" which had any scriptural warrant were those mentioned in connection with the shipwreck of the Apostle Paul-- "some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship . . . they escaped all safe to land".⁵⁰

But Boards there were. It became a practice, after 1899, to elect the President of the Women's Board as Third Vice-President of the Convention. In November, 1899, the first issue of the Western Baptist was

⁵⁰Acts 27:44.

published by the Publication Board.⁵¹ Because this monthly periodical did not receive the subscription support which was expected, it became involved in financial difficulties. At the 1903 Annual Convention there was talk of discontinuing the paper.⁵² In early 1904, publication was suspended for a time.⁵³ At the Convention meeting in July, 1904, it was decided to resume publication and to give the Mission Board the responsibility of financing the paper.⁵⁴ Behind this decision was the conviction that, while it might never be a "paying proposition", yet the Western Baptist was a most useful medium through which denominational interest and loyalty might be fostered.

The early history of the Education Board was a tale of grand, but frustrated, ambitions. At the first Annual Convention of 1897, A. J. Pineo, a Victoria high school teacher, presented an Educational Committee report in which he outlined a plan for a Baptist University in British Columbia. The report cited the example of the two existing Baptist institutions in Eastern Canada--Acadia University, which had been founded in Nova Scotia in 1840; and Toronto Baptist College, which had been established at Toronto in 1880, and which, in 1887, had united with Woodstock College to form McMaster University. The committee recommended "a bold, vigorous, and progressive educational policy" in spite of the

⁵¹Convention Report, 1900, p. 35. The Rev. W. B. Hinson of First Baptist Church, Vancouver, was the first editor of the Western Baptist.

⁵²F. W. Auvache, Secretary's notes taken at Annual Convention, July, 1903.

⁵³Mission Board Minutes, February 17, 1904.

⁵⁴Convention Report, 1904, p. 32.

recent "lamented failure of the two denominational schools--Grace Seminary [at Centralia, Washington] and the University of Seattle" with which British Columbia and Washington Baptists were connected.⁵⁵ The project was received with enthusiasm and Pineo was appointed chairman of the new Education Board.

The University scheme proved to be too ambitious for the limited resources of the Convention. In 1898 the Education Board reported "but little tangible progress".⁵⁶ In 1899 the Board recommended "immediate action, upon a somewhat subdued scale" and suggested correspondence courses and night classes under the supervision of pastors.⁵⁷ In the same year, the formation of Brandon College in Manitoba diverted some attention from educational work in British Columbia but, in 1900, the Education Board appealed to the members of the British Columbia churches to "join heart and hand and pocket in the great work of building a Baptist University in British Columbia, and thus complete the chain of Baptist educational fortresses from the Atlantic to the Pacific".⁵⁸ The appeal failed, the pastors found themselves too busy to continue night classes, and the chain was left dangling until 1906.⁵⁹

⁵⁵Convention Report, 1897, p. 34.

⁵⁶Convention Report, 1898, p. 17.

⁵⁷Convention Report, 1899, pp. 34-35.

⁵⁸Convention Report, 1900, p. 31.

⁵⁹A. J. Pineo, a teacher at Victoria High School, was evidently frustrated by the failure of the Education Board's plans. He left the Baptist denomination and, in 1909, he founded the First Unitarian Church, Vancouver. Pineo established a similar congregation in Victoria in 1910 and for some time commuted on Sundays between the two cities.

In the meantime, the Mission Board struggled to cope with a heavy home mission program. Efforts were made to reach as many fields as possible on a limited budget, which, in 1899, stood at only \$6,000.⁶⁰ To further this objective, the Board sought for an experienced leader to act as Superintendent of Missions. In September, 1899, the Rev. Dr. D. Spencer was appointed to this post, but after three and one-half months he resigned and "advised against the appointment of a successor",⁶¹ presumably because of the Convention's limited resources. The Board disagreed with the suggestion and, early in 1899, the Rev. J. E. Coombs of Colfax, Washington, assumed the office.⁶² Coombs resigned the following year and was replaced by the Rev. P. H. McEwen.

The difficulties which McEwen faced during his five years of office were a reflection of general economic and social developments in British Columbia. In the years following the South African War of 1899-1902, there was a great increase of immigration into the Canadian West. The general influx of new settlers into British Columbia⁶³ presented all religious groups in the province with a challenging opportunity for home mission work. During this period, many immigrants of British stock were attracted to the West Coast. These were a new type of Britisher, in contrast to the older British colonists of Vancouver Island. Since they were drawn chiefly from the working classes, they brought with them trade-union sympathies and

⁶⁰Mission Board Minutes, July 11, 1899.

⁶¹Convention Report, 1899, p. 32.

⁶²Loc. cit.

⁶³See population statistics, Appendix C.

left-wing political ideas.⁶⁴ A portion of these new settlers were of Baptist persuasion and their reception into the Baptist churches of the province meant the strengthening of Pro-British sentiment in the churches, as well as the reinforcement of those theological views which were typical of British Baptists.

During the incumbency of McEwen, the economy of the province was in an unsettled condition, marked by social unrest and a series of labour strikes. In 1901 a six-month work stoppage among the miners of Rossland had a noticeable effect upon the finances of the infant Baptist congregation which had been organized there in 1896. The results of adverse economic conditions were manifest throughout the Convention.

In addition to lack of money, McEwen was faced with a lack of mission pastors. In October, 1900, the Executive Committee of the Mission Board voted to contact a number of men regarding mission work in British Columbia and offered "a maximum [annual] salary of \$800 and a minimum of \$700 according to location".⁶⁵ These new recruits were sought in Manitoba and Eastern Canada. Since there was little response, in December it was moved "that the Superintendent be authorized to procure as many young men for our work as possible".⁶⁶

The economic situation hit hard at the self-sustaining churches as well as at mission work. In January, 1901, Emmanuel Church, Victoria, was

⁶⁴Margaret A. Ormsby, British Columbia: a History, Toronto, Macmillan, 1958, p. 329.

⁶⁵Mission Board Minutes, October 5, 1900.

⁶⁶Ibid., December 28, 1900.

forced to apply to the Mission Board for help, which was granted because of the "existing conditions".⁶⁷ Later in that year, hope of financial aid rose as a result of developments in Manitoba. The Rev. A. J. Vining, Superintendent of Home Missions for the Baptist Convention of Manitoba and Northwest Territories, resigned his post and was replaced by the Rev. W. M. Stackhouse, who had relinquished his pastorate at Rossland. Vining, by reputation a good "money-raiser", was planning a tour of Great Britain in order to raise funds for the Baptists of Western Canada. In May, 1901, the British Columbia Mission Board offered to pay one-third of the expenses of the trip on condition that one-third of the donations collected in Britain would be forwarded to the British Columbia field. Apparently the plan was never carried through, but the overture to the Manitoba Convention was one of the first of a series of negotiations which led to the formation of the Baptist Union of Western Canada.

The financial state of the British Columbia Convention grew steadily worse. The Seventh Annual Convention in July, 1903, dropped the practice of giving to foreign missions a twenty percent share of the income received from the Convention's churches. The churches were left to give independently to foreign missions, and a committee was formed to collect and forward these donations.⁶⁸ In the same year, only \$2,855 of the home mission budget was expected to come from the British Columbia churches, which were urged "to put forth strenuous efforts to raise the

⁶⁷Mission Board Minutes, January 8, 1901.

⁶⁸Western Baptist, August 1903.

amount assigned them".⁶⁹ No real advance could be made in home mission work and some existing pastorates were vacant. The state of the churches mirrored the demoralized state of the province in 1903, a situation which brought Richard McBride to power as Premier of British Columbia in October of that year.⁷⁰

The leadership problem in home mission churches became acute. The work was such as would challenge the abilities of the most experienced pastor; the available remuneration was such as would be discouraging to the most inexperienced young man. Early in 1903, as a result of a building loan, the pastorless church at Rossland faced a grave financial crisis. The Rev. M. V. Vansickle, an experienced leader and former pastor of the Nanaimo Church, went to Rossland to aid the church and report to the Mission Board. In September, 1903, Vansickle received a succinct telegram: "Board will assume loan if you assume pastorate. Letter coming".⁷¹ Vansickle declined the position, but the Board assumed the debt. Later, in July 1904, Superintendent McEwen was offered the Rossland post and also declined.⁷²

Records of the period bear testimony to the hardships of home mission work. In the fall of 1903 the Rev. A. W. Gazeley came to Saanich Church, from Strathcona, [presumably Strathcona, Ontario] but after five months he resigned. In a letter to the Mission Board he "recounted his

⁶⁹Mission Board Minutes, July 13, 1903.

⁷⁰Ormsby, British Columbia, p. 336.

⁷¹Mission Board Minutes, September 14, 1903.

⁷²Ibid., August 31, 1904.

disappointments and discouragements as a Missionary since coming to the Coast" and requested \$150 to enable him to return home. After prolonged discussion, the Board granted him \$100 "in view of his apparent need, on fraternal grounds".⁷³

The stringency of finances gave rise to a debate within the Convention with regard to the office of the Superintendent of Missions. Some wished to abolish the post. Others felt that instead of an itinerant superintendency there was more need for a "general missionary", a man of experience, who could not only initiate new churches, but who could also, in turn, act as temporary pastor of each newly-established church, in order to strengthen and instruct the congregation. At the 1903 Annual Convention sessions this matter was thoroughly discussed and the delegates voted 42 to 12 in favour of retaining the office of Superintendent, with the understanding that he was to act as a general missionary.⁷⁴ This issue was revived at the 1904 Convention, and after a "keen debate" the vote was 32 to 29 in favour of continuing the post of Superintendent.⁷⁵

By this time the financial condition of the British Columbia Convention had become critical. The fiscal policy of the Mission Board apparently ruled out any idea of accumulating cash reserves to cover emergencies. This attitude may have indicated a lack of foresight, but, more probably, it may have stemmed from a desire to promote church giving

⁷³Mission Board Minutes, April 5, 1904.

⁷⁴Auvache, Secretary's notes of Annual Convention, 1903.

⁷⁵Colonist, July 12, 1904.

by fostering a sense of urgent need. Concepts of loyalty to denominational objectives, of systematic budgeting, and of proportionate giving had not yet taken firm hold upon the minds of Baptists. The individualism of frontier sectarianism was manifest. Consequently, the Convention was financially vulnerable. During periods of economic depression, the self-sustaining churches first sought to meet their own local needs, thus reducing their donations to Convention projects. At the same time, home mission churches tended to apply to the Mission Board for additional grants. In 1904 the Board's solution was rigid economy and a bank overdraft.⁷⁶

Austerity continued in 1905. In January, a grant was refused to the church at Summerland because of lack of funds.⁷⁷ In February, arrangements were made to assure the new home missionary at Grand Forks a total salary "of Eighty Three & 33/100 Dollars per month".⁷⁸ Superintendent McEwen resigned his position to assume the pastorate at Ladner.⁷⁹ Some months later, he became the Pastor of Fairview Church in Vancouver. The Mission Board entered into negotiations with the Manitoba Convention to arrange for a joint superintendency of home mission fields in the four western provinces.⁸⁰

Toward the end of 1905 the economic situation in British Columbia began to improve. An added encouragement was the favourable response of Manitoba to the idea of a Joint Superintendent. It was agreed that

⁷⁶Mission Board Minutes, October 7, 1904.

⁷⁷Ibid., January 11, 1905.

⁷⁹Loc. cit.

⁷⁸Ibid., April 7, 1905.

⁸⁰Loc. cit.

British Columbia pay one-quarter of the Superintendent's salary, plus travel expenses, in return for the use of his services for three months of each year. It was also agreed that the two conventions cooperate on a similar basis in sending a representative to Eastern Canada in order to raise funds for missions in the West. British Columbia's share of such funds was to be one-quarter of all undesignated gifts. A further provision was made for the appointment of a Missionary Evangelist to assist the Joint Superintendent, each convention agreeing to pay one-half of the Evangelist's salary.⁸¹ The Rev. W. M. Stackhouse⁸² was made Joint Superintendent, and the Rev. D. E. Hatt was appointed Missionary Evangelist.

The period from 1906 to 1912 was one of rapid progress for Baptists in British Columbia as well as on the Prairies. In June, 1907, Superintendent Stackhouse presented an ambitious plan to the Executive of the Mission Board. He said that he had discovered "1000 openings" for Baptist work in Western Canada. In 1906 about 172,000 people had settled in the West, including "about 20,000 Baptists not identified with our churches", while "our present membership is but 8,500". Stackhouse proposed to establish 200 new congregations and set as a financial objective the raising of \$100,000 a year for three years. To accomplish this, he recommended the amalgamation of the British Columbia and Manitoba Conventions. "All the Brethren present expressed their admiration of the plan as outlined. . . ."⁸³

⁸¹Copies of the agreements are preserved in Mission Board Minutes, November 18, 1905.

⁸²See p. 87.

⁸³Mission Board Minutes, June 7, 1907.

Later in June the Convention of Manitoba and the North-West, meeting in Edmonton, approved the plan for a united organization. Similar action was taken, in July 1907, by British Columbia Baptists, meeting in a memorable Annual Convention at Summerland, site of the newly-established Okanagan College.⁸⁴ In November, 1907, delegates from all the Baptist churches of the West met at Calgary and organized the Baptist Convention of Western Canada.⁸⁵ The two periodicals, the Western Baptist, of British Columbia, and the North-West Baptist, published in Manitoba, were amalgamated as the Western Outlook on January 1, 1908. The name was changed, in March 1916, to the Western Baptist.

The constitution of the united convention called for direct representation from each local church.⁸⁶ This arrangement had its supporters, but others, such as William Marchant, felt that one large convention "was unwieldy in operation, and difficult to administer".⁸⁷ The constitution also made provision for associations in each of the four provinces. The churches in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta formed such lesser units of organization, but the British Columbia Convention refused to reconstitute itself as an association. Some years afterward, the British

⁸⁴See p. 94.

⁸⁵Baptist Convention of Western Canada, Year Book - 1907, p. 5. [Later published by the Baptist Union of Western Canada, and hereafter referred to as BUYB - plus date. The date refers to the year covered by the reports, not the date of publication, which is not given.]

⁸⁶BUYB - 1907, p. 9.

⁸⁷[William Marchant], "Beacon Lights in Baptist History of British Columbia", Victoria, 1926 ; p. 26.

Columbia Baptists took some pride in the fact that their organization was "the oldest convention in the West, for it has never yielded the whole of its powers or identity to any other body".⁸⁸

In November, 1908, the Baptist Convention of Western Canada met in First Baptist Church, Vancouver. Because of the dissatisfaction which was evident, a new type of organization was proposed, to be known as the Baptist Union of Western Canada. Instead of four associations, there were to be four Provincial Conventions, which would meet annually. Each of these, in proportion to its total membership, would appoint representatives to the Baptist Union.⁸⁹ The plan met with general approval, and in November, 1909, the Convention of Western Canada was re-organized at Moose Jaw to form the Baptist Union.⁹⁰ The new arrangement proved to be more efficient, but, because it involved "indirect representation" of the churches, there were some delegates at the 1910 British Columbia Convention who felt that the new constitution "implied a departure from the principles of democracy".⁹¹

The years following the formation of the Baptist Union were years of advance for the two existing Baptist colleges in Western Canada, Brandon College and Okanagan College, which were left under the control of their respective boards. Brandon College in Manitoba was the fulfillment of a dream which dated as far back as the early 1880's, when a small institution known as Prairie College was initiated at Rapid City,

⁸⁸[Marchant], "Beacon Lights", p. 15.

⁸⁹BUYB - 1908, p. 24.

⁹⁰BUYB - 1909, p. 9ff.

⁹¹Auvache, Secretary's notes of Annual Convention, July, 1910.

north of Brandon.⁹² Plans for the future of Rapid City did not materialize and Prairie College did not survive. Nevertheless, early anticipations came to fruition with the establishment of a Baptist college at Brandon in 1899.⁹³

Okanagan College at Summerland was also an outgrowth of previous visions.⁹⁴ These began to assume tangible form in January, 1906, when a joint meeting of convention Boards was held in Victoria for the purpose of discussing a proposal by the Rev. A. J. Saunders to found a college at Summerland.⁹⁵ This was the era when the Okanagan Valley fruitlands were being ambitiously developed and the idea of a college in that area had an appeal to the majority of Baptists. The plan was approved and, in March, 1907, the Educational Board of the Baptist Convention of British Columbia was incorporated under the Benevolent Societies Act.⁹⁶ Some objection was raised to a location so far from centres of population, but it was argued that the college would be free from "the excitement, the feverish unrest, the atmosphere of soulless commercialism that belongs to the city".⁹⁷ Such arguments manifested a sectarian attitude and were no doubt calculated to appeal to those of sectarian spirit within the Convention, but the chief factor in the choice of the site had been the financial support which had been given the project by the Ritchie family of Summerland. By July, 1907,

⁹²Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, Baptist Year Book - 1882, p. 108.

⁹³Special College Edition of Brandon Daily Sun, February 2, 1960.

⁹⁴See pp. 83-84.

⁹⁵Colonist, January 20, 1906.

⁹⁶Ibid., March 6, 1907.

⁹⁷BUYB - 1907, p. 66.

the first of two main buildings was in the process of erection on "College Hill".⁹⁸ The college opened that fall with the Rev. E. W. Sawyer, formerly of Acadia University, as its Principal.

During the following year, Premier Richard McBride, while on a political tour of the province, promoted the idea of a provincial university.⁹⁹ It became evident that the new Baptist college would soon be faced with a formidable contender, located at Vancouver, the population centre of the province. It was the intention that Okanagan College offer a full selection of first and second year Arts courses, as well as high school work. However, the school was plagued by academic and financial problems. According to the 1910 Report of Okanagan College, there were "internal difficulties" in connection with staff and curriculum re-organization. Listed among "external difficulties" was the hesitation of McMaster University to give recognition to Okanagan College,¹⁰⁰ a fact which "nearly wrecked" the Arts courses. It was further noted that "the desire for big things and large accomplishments swings many of our people toward the provincial university".¹⁰¹

⁹⁸Vernon News, July 25, 1907. ⁹⁹Ormsby, British Columbia, p. 353.

¹⁰⁰This hesitation was apparently based upon doubts regarding the standard of courses and the future of the school.

¹⁰¹BUYB - 1910, p. 55. The site for U.B.C. was chosen in 1910. It was expected that the majority of denominational schools would affiliate with the proposed provincial university. A secular source stated, "The Baptist denomination alone has evinced a desire to retain an independent attitude, and the future of their college at Summerland is not yet finally determined". A. G. Brown (editor), British Columbia, Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources, London, Sells Ltd., 1912, p. 128.

The "independent attitude" of Baptists was no doubt traceable, in part, to Baptist views on separation of Church and State, but it was also

During the period before World War I, the reports of Brandon College and Okanagan College contained little foreshadowing of the theological upheavals which were to rend Baptists in the years following the war. Nevertheless, liberalism was beginning to make a definite impact upon Protestants, and significant events were taking place in Baptist circles. This was the era during which Walter Rauschenbusch was teaching the "Social Gospel" to his students in Rochester Theological Seminary. Dr. Shailer Mathews was Dean of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, which had been so richly endowed through the munificence of the Baptist industrialist, John D. Rockefeller.¹⁰² Yet no hint of future events was to be found in the announcement that Mr. Harry L. MacNeill had been added to the staff of Brandon College in 1903,¹⁰³ nor was any apparent significance seen in the fact that Mr. MacNeill was granted leave of absence, in 1906, in order that he might spend three years in advanced study at the University of Chicago.¹⁰⁴ Mr. MacNeill, who was later to become the center of a storm of controversy, obtained his Doctor of Philosophy Degree from Chicago in 1910.¹⁰⁵

motivated by hard economic realities. Having made a considerable investment in Okanagan College, Baptists were in no position to consider moving the institution to the new university site.

¹⁰²Rockefeller gave ten million dollars to the University, including \$1,500,00 for the construction of a chapel. Western Outlook, January 16, 1911.

¹⁰³BUYB - 1904, p. 216.

¹⁰⁴BUYB - 1909, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵When asked if his sojourn in Chicago had altered his previous theological outlook Dr. MacNeill wrote that "It increased my knowledge, liberalism, and faith". Letter of Dr. MacNeill to the author, March 26, 1963.

There was some discussion of liberal theological trends in the Western Baptist. In May, 1907, an article on "The New Theology" of Rev. R. J. Campbell, pastor of City Temple, London, quoted Campbell's statement that "the starting point in the New Theology is belief in the immanence of God and the essential oneness of God and Man".¹⁰⁶ The article proceeded to criticize Campbell's views. A further article, published in November of the same year, gave the gist of an address by G. B. Smith of the University of Chicago, omitting critical comment. Smith was quoted as saying: "The strength of the new theology is in the fact that it enables multitudes of noble men with the new world-view to be Christmas [sic]. Its weakness is the peril of degeneration into an intellectual cult".¹⁰⁷

The Rev. A. A. Shaw, pastor of First Baptist Church, Winnipeg, was guest preacher at the 1908 Baptist Convention of Western Canada, held in Vancouver. It is somewhat astonishing, in view of later events, that his sermons on "The Social Ministry of the Church" did not cause any apparent repercussions.¹⁰⁸ His three Convention sermons were fully recorded in the Baptist Union Year Book. They reveal him as an ardent exponent of the "Social Gospel". They also express his "anti-sectarian" outlook, as in the following:

I am sure there is much in Dr. [W. J.] Dawson's picture of the

¹⁰⁶Western Baptist, May 1907.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., November 1907.

¹⁰⁸Shaw may not have been popular with everyone in his own congregation. During his pastorate from 1907 to 1911, First Church, Winnipeg, lost 200 members. The rise of suburban churches was given as the reason. Ibid., March 1925.

church of the future that should be realized and might be realized in the church of today: "It will have neither creeds, nor forms, nor subscriptions. Its law will be freedom; its condition, service It will attract everybody, for it will include everybody".¹⁰⁹

The general absence of doctrinal controversy during the pre-war years can be explained in terms of a number of factors. Liberal theological trends did not reach the Canadian West as quickly as some other parts of the world. British Columbia Baptists were slow to recognize the full impact of the trends. Furthermore, the developing denominational loyalties of many Baptists made them hesitate to initiate division.

During this period only two significant cases of local church division can be identified. One involved Jackson Avenue Church in Vancouver, whose pastor, the Rev. George Fair, left the church in July, 1898 and, with a portion of his former flock, organized a "non-denomination" group,¹¹⁰ which apparently held to a "Pentecostal" variety of doctrine. The other local division occurred at Calvary Baptist Church, Victoria, in 1907. The trouble seemed to centre in personality differences and particularly implicated the pastor of the church, the Rev. F. T. Tapscott. Some sixty members began a new church,¹¹¹ but the Calvary building was destroyed by the "Victoria Fire" some months later,¹¹² and Tapscott resigned in the following year. In July, 1908, most of the

¹⁰⁹BUYB -- 1908, p. 126.

¹¹⁰Convention Report, 1898, p. 25.

¹¹¹Victoria Times, April 5, 1907.

¹¹²Colonist, July 25, 1907. It is of interest to note that while the news article gives a history of the church, no mention is made of the negro question. This seems to indicate that Baptists considered it best that the matter be forgotten.

discordant elements were reunited to form a new congregation, which took the older name of First Baptist Church, Victoria.¹¹³

Open doctrinal controversy was noticeably absent, yet toward the end of the period there were some indications of undercurrents of unrest. Discussion arose regarding the nature of Baptist doctrinal distinctiveness. The Rev. G. Kiersted, in an address to the Baptist Union at Regina in 1914, stressed the point that Baptists "cling to the New Testament because we cling to the only experience that makes it real to us. Other denominations have established creedal tests. The danger is a doctrine of salvation [that is] external and formal and consequently false".¹¹⁴ However, on the subject of creeds, the Western Outlook printed the following:

But have Baptists made no written creeds? Yes, they have formulated several that have become historic, and each Baptist church has "articles of faith" setting forth its beliefs. Baptists have never hesitated to tell the world what they believe; but they have never consented to tell the world, nor have the world tell them, what they must believe.¹¹⁵

Particularly in British Columbia, misgivings with regard to organizational, doctrinal, and spiritual developments were in evidence. In the British Columbia Convention there were expressions of dissatisfaction over the conduct of affairs within the Baptist Union. At the 1917 Annual Convention, a British Columbia pastor used the term "domineering" to describe past actions of the Union, but he admitted that this

¹¹³Victoria Times, July 18, 1908.

¹¹⁴BUYB - 1913, p. 181. At this time the Union meeting was held early in the year and the account of its sessions was customarily printed in the Year Book for the previous year, hence the seeming discrepancy of dates.

¹¹⁵Western Outlook, March 1, 1915.

attitude "had been removed of late".¹¹⁶ To this remark, another responded "we have too much independence and not enough interdependence".¹¹⁷

British Columbia Baptists were concerned over the possibility of serious spiritual decline within their ranks. In 1913 the Committee on the State of Religion reported that the average number of worshippers at morning congregations in the churches was somewhat below the number on the church membership rolls, but evening congregations were "somewhat larger".¹¹⁸ It had also been distressing to learn that more than half the churches reported "no deep concern among the members for the salvation of the lost" but that "a large proportion" were "concerned for a better citizenship and social justice".¹¹⁹

In addition to such spiritual problems, the British Columbia Convention was faced in 1913 with a serious financial crisis, brought on by economic depression. "A very trying year", was the comment in the British Columbia Report to the Baptist Union in February 1915; "Until the tide of depression turns we can only mark time".¹²⁰ Actually the situation was even more serious than "marking time".

The Convention's failure to accumulate adequate financial reserves proved to be disastrous.¹²¹ Even before the depression of 1913 the Convention had been faced with a shortage of funds and, in some locations, as

¹¹⁶Auvache, Secretary's notes of Annual Convention, 1917.

¹¹⁷Loc. cit.

¹¹⁸BUYB - 1913, p. 126.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 128.

¹²⁰BUYB - 1914, pp. 20-21.

¹²¹See p. 89.

an economy measure, home mission churches were grouped under one pastor. Furthermore, many local churches had incurred large building debts. Following the crisis, in the years 1913 to 1915, five churches closed completely.

Severe measures were taken to meet the critical financial situation. The Mission Superintendent, the Rev. H. G. Estabrook, resigned and a layman, J. J. Wallace, took over some of his responsibilities. Home mission grants were cut in half.¹²² The Convention office was closed,¹²³ and eventually even the typewriter was sold because "it was not being used".¹²⁴

The greatest disaster of the period was the loss of Okanagan College. For some years it had been in debt and appeared to be a dying cause. The outbreak of war administered a "coup de grâce". The operating deficit for the year ending September 20, 1914, was over \$5,000 and almost \$10,000 was owing teachers for back salaries.¹²⁵ Student enrollment, which was 91 for the year 1913-14, dropped to 59 in the fall of 1914.¹²⁶ This decrease meant a crucial loss of income. In 1915 the College permanently closed its doors and eventually its assets were placed in the hands of its creditors.

The remaining war years were occupied with hopeful planning for post-war advance. Since financial conditions began to improve, by the end

¹²²BUYB - 1914, p. 117.

¹²³Mission Board Minutes, February 6, 1914.

¹²⁴Ibid., May 20, 1914.

¹²⁵BUYB - 1914, p. 50.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 49. In its first year of operation, 1907-8, the College registered 72 students. Enrollment apparently reached a peak of 120 students in the year 1912-13. McLaurin, op. cit., pp. 319-320.

of 1917 the British Columbia Convention was out of debt. The Baptist Union was particularly encouraged by a contribution of \$10,000 which was given by John D. Rockefeller to aid missions in Western Canada.¹²⁷ On January 1, 1917, a Five Year Program for future development was introduced.¹²⁸ It was with an air of genuine optimism that British Columbia Baptists looked forward to the close of the war and the return of their young men from overseas.

This optimism was not just a by-product of better economic circumstances. Baptists felt a sense of buoyancy because of a number of successful sallies into the field of political and social reform. They were able to play a significant part, along with other churches, in winning the franchise for women and in the introduction of Prohibition.¹²⁹ Both of these matters were settled by plebiscites in September, 1916, on the same day that the provincial election swept the Liberal Party into power with British Columbia's first and only Baptist Premier, Harlan Carey Brewster, as its leader.

The defeat of the Conservative Party at the polls was to some extent attributable to the political activity of the Protestant churches in British Columbia. In April, 1915, the Ministerial Union of the Lower Mainland issued a pamphlet, The Crisis in British Columbia, which charged the government of Sir Richard McBride with corruption and the exercise of political patronage. At this time the Rev. Nelson A. Harkness, a

¹²⁷BUYB - 1915, pp. 18, 41.

¹²⁸Western Baptist, February 1917.

¹²⁹BUYB - 1917, pp. 136, 145.

Baptist, was President of the Ministerial Union, and the Rev. A. E. Cooke, a Congregationalist, was its Secretary.¹³⁰ The controversy which followed resulted in the overthrow of the government of McBride's successor, W. J. Bowser, in the 1916 election.¹³¹

At least four Baptists were elected to the Provincial Legislature in 1916. Of these, three were Liberals.¹³² It would appear that there was considerable support for Brewster and for the Liberal Party among Baptists of this period. It would be wrong to suppose that such support came only from those who displayed liberal theological tendencies. There were staunch political Liberals among the fundamentalists as well.

The rise of Liberal political sentiments can be traced to the influx of British working-class immigrants in the era before the First World War. The influence of this group, along with the new emphasis on the "social gospel", was beginning to have a definite effect upon the social outlook of Baptists. At the same time British Baptist elements in the churches were reinforced. It was evident that British Columbia

¹³⁰J. Castell Hopkins, Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1915, Toronto, Annual Review Publishing Co., 1916, pp. 729-730.

¹³¹For election details see the Vancouver Province, September 15, 1916.

¹³²Walter E. W. Ellis, "Some Aspects of Religion in British Columbia Politics", unpublished M.A. thesis in the library of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 1959, pp. 182-183.

Baptists were first represented in the Legislature at the turn of the century. During most of the period since that time, an average of one or two members have been Baptist. However, Baptists have not had as large a representation as they had in the Brewster administration until the Social Credit victory of 1952, when five Baptists, including four Social Credit candidates and one Liberal, were elected. See ibid., pp. 170-189.

Baptists were moving away from a sectarian viewpoint and were gaining a considerable degree of social recognition. Premier Brewster's untimely death from pneumonia in March, 1918,¹³³ signalled the beginning of a period of gradual political disillusionment for Baptists and the stage was set for the reaction against social accommodation. This reaction began at the close of the war.

¹³³See Province, March 4 and 5, 1918, for biographical sketch of Brewster and accounts of his funeral.

CHAPTER IV

THE TROUBLED TWENTIES

The end of the First World War ushered in a period of anticipation among British Columbia Baptists. On the surface at least, it appeared that the separatist and sectarian spirit of Baptists had declined. Peace, it was hoped, would bring the end of war-time problems and the beginning of an era of united denominational advance. These hopes, however, were doomed to frustration, for the early 1920's proved to be years of internal conflict, which culminated in the final division of Baptist ranks in 1927.

Shortage of finances and shortage of manpower were two major difficulties of the war years. At the end of the war the financial problem was already well on the way to solution; and under the leadership of the Rev. F. W. Patterson, who was appointed General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Western Canada in 1919, the churches united in the "Forward Movement".¹ This movement was an interdenominational project in which Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans, Congregationalists and Baptists pooled their resources in a joint promotional campaign. Each individual denomination, however, raised its own funds and expended them according to its own objectives.² Baptists of the West, through the success of the "Forward Movement", were able to pay off some of the debts

¹C. C. McLaurin, Pioneering in Western Canada, Calgary, C. C. McLaurin, 1939, p. 196.

²Western Baptist, January 1, 1920.

of home mission churches and promote the general advance of denominational work.

Lack of manpower proved to be a more difficult problem than lack of finances. Over one-tenth of the population of British Columbia had joined the armed forces. The war had taken some of the churches' best young men and left congregations without pastoral recruits and adequate lay leadership. At the provincial convention in June, 1917, it was reported that twelve churches in British Columbia were without pastors.³

Not all the Baptist men who left for the Front returned to the churches at the close of the war. Apart from the tragic loss of life, the war had its moral and spiritual casualties. Experience in the armed services fostered the interchange of religious and irreligious ideas, exposed men to the brutalities of battle, and confronted men with the challenge of indifferent moral conduct. The telling effect of these influences upon some servicemen was related in the Report of the Mission Board to the Annual British Columbia Convention in June, 1920:

. . . we cannot see that post-war conditions are more favorable to Christian work than pre-war conditions were. We have been disillusioned. We were assured that the returning men would bring such a whole-hearted devotion to Christ as would compel a lukewarm church to become very enthusiastic. We have not found it so.⁴

However, among Baptists of Western Canada, the most disturbing feature of the post-war years was the rise of a theological controversy which tended to overshadow all other events for some seven years. This

³BUYB -- 1917, p. 138. This situation was not caused by the enlistment of the settled pastors, but by a shortage of new pastors to man the smaller churches.

⁴BUYB -- 1920, p. 117.

dispute was not merely a matter of personality differences, although conflict of personalities figured in the dispute. Neither was the disturbance primarily a matter of differences of opinion over administration and finances. The controversy was confined neither to the Baptist denomination nor to the locale of Western Canada.⁵ It must be understood as an extension of the so-called "modernist-fundamentalist" controversy which involved most Protestant denominations and which, in North America, was particularly in evidence during the third decade of the twentieth century.

Modernism, as a school of thought, was rooted in an effort to reconcile Christian theology to the rationalistic philosophical ideas of the "Age of Enlightenment". The new movement became prominent among the theologians of Germany, where it displayed considerable variation. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), for example, stressed subjective experience and intuition, rather than "rational arguments". Schleiermacher believed that the essence of religion was a feeling of dependence upon the universe and one's fellow men. Ferdinand Baur (1792-1860), a

⁵In the pre-war era, for example, the "Jackson Case" provoked considerable stir among the Methodists of Canada. In 1909 the Rev. George Jackson, professor at Victoria University, Toronto, a man described by C. B. Sissons as "evangelical" in his method, was attacked from within his own denomination when he suggested that the first chapters of Genesis need not be taken literally. Members of other denominations, including Baptists, took sides in the ensuing controversy, which was finally resolved during the General Conference at Victoria, British Columbia, in August, 1910. Jackson was allowed to retain his post, but eventually returned home to Britain. See C. B. Sissons, A History of Victoria University, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1952, pp. 233-240, and H. H. Walsh, The Christian Church in Canada, Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1956, pp. 291-292, 318.

disciple of Hegel, saw a thesis-antithesis relationship between the Jesus of Judaism and the Universal Saviour proclaimed by the Apostle Paul. The Catholic Church was regarded as the resultant synthesis. Baur held radical views on the authenticity of the New Testament and gave second-century dates to most of the New Testament books. Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) had little patience with metaphysics, stressed practicality in religion, and regarded the Church as a value-creating community. David Strauss, a student of Baur, wrote his Life of Jesus in 1835, in which he cast doubts upon the historicity of the New Testament narratives, including the accounts of Christ's virgin birth and resurrection. Later in life, Strauss completely repudiated his profession of Christianity.⁶

In general, the theologians of the new movement embraced the ideas of the so-called "Wellhausen" school of higher criticism.⁷ Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) taught the post-Mosaic and composite authorship of the Pentateuch. The publication of Darwin's On the Origin of Species in 1859 reinforced the tendency to apply an evolutionary philosophy, not only to the history of religion within Israel, but also to the general moral development of man. Thus little room was left for the traditional ideas of Christian soteriology.

In the United States, as in other parts of the world, theologians began seriously to question many of the accepted Christian ideas. Horace Bushnell, a Congregationalist, was a notable critic of the substitutionary

⁶Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1953, pp. 1121-1128.

⁷A term applied to the historical-literary analysis of Scripture, as distinguished from "lower" or textual criticism.

view of Christ's atonement. As the author of Christian Nurture, published in 1846, he also opposed revivalism and rejected the idea of the necessity for a conversion experience.⁸ Toward the end of the nineteenth century, evolutionary ideas of human perfectability were typical within the school of liberal thought which later came to be identified as "modernism".

"Modernism", as a term, was apparently first applied to the neo-scholastic movement which arose during the pontificate of Leo XIII and which was condemned by his successor, Pius X, in 1907.⁹ In the following decade the term began to be used in England to describe the Broad Church Movement¹⁰ and following the First World War the designation was commonly applied to indicate "liberal" theology. By the middle 1920's the "liberals" were making general use of the term to describe their own position.¹¹

As early as 1909, a movement to combat "liberal" theology was organized in the United States when two wealthy California laymen, Lyman and Milton Stewart, contributed \$300,000 toward the publication of twelve booklets.¹² These began to appear the following year under the title, The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth. From this title the term

⁸Latourette, op. cit., pp. 1262-1263.

⁹Henry D. A. Major, "Modernism", Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1951, Vol. 15, p. 637.

¹⁰Loc. cit.

¹¹Note, for example, the article of J. A. Lindsay, "A Layman's View of Modernism", Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, November - December, 1926, pp. 444-450.

¹²Earle E. Cairns, Christianity Through the Centuries, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1954, p. 481.

"fundamentalist" was later derived. The booklets contained articles on theological subjects by notable conservative leaders,¹³ and served to crystalize conservative thinking. In order to further this same end, the World's Christian Fundamentals Association was formed in 1919.¹⁴

The Rev. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick has been given credit for popularizing the term "fundamentalist", to denote a person holding "conservative" or "evangelical" views.¹⁵ Dr. Fosdick, a Baptist, was appointed supply pastor of First Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y. One Sunday morning in May 1922 he preached to his congregation on the topic "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" Without his instigation or permission, the sermon was printed in pamphlet form. A prominent Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Clarence E. Macartney, countered with a sermon entitled "Shall Unbelief Win?" which was also printed and circulated.¹⁶ The resultant controversy forced Dr. Fosdick's return to his own denomination and he became pastor of Riverside Baptist Church, New York. Through his sermons and books he became one of the best known "modernists" in Baptist circles.

While the terms "modernist" and "fundamentalist" are useful categories, it should be observed that there was considerable variation

¹³Canadian contributors included Canon Dyson Hague and Dr. W. Griffith Thomas, both of Wycliffe College, Toronto, and the Rev. John McNicol of Toronto Bible College.

¹⁴Latourette, op. cit., p. 1421.

¹⁵Clarence E. Macartney, The Making of a Minister, Great Neck, N.Y., Channel Press, 1961, p. 183.

¹⁶Loc. cit.

of thought and attitude within each group. In the 1920's, during the heat of controversy, quite distinct lines tended to be drawn between two hostile camps. Because of this, some writers have made rather incautious generalizations. Norman Furniss, for example, in The Fundamentalist Controversy, has described the "Characterististics of the Fundamentalists" as "vaguely defined fear", "longing for certainty", "violence of thought and language", "ignorance", "egotism", and "sentimentality" regarding children.¹⁷ Admittedly, examples of these characteristics can be readily found among fundamentalists, but the picture painted by Furniss is, at best, a stereotype. The same sort of stereotyped thinking is often evident when the doctrinal views of fundamentalists are described as including "pre-millennialism", "mechanical" inspiration, or "literal interpretation". Pre-millennialism is common, but by no means universal, among fundamentalists. With respect to inspiration, the Rev. James Gray, Dean of Moody Bible Institute, expressed the typical fundamentalist position when he wrote:

But we are insisting upon no theory--not even the verbal theory--if it altogether excludes the human element in the transmission of the sacred word. As Dr. Henry B. Smith says, "God speaks through the personality as well as the lips of His messengers," and we may pour into that word "personality" everything that goes to make it--the age in which the person lived, his environment, his degree of culture, his temperament and all the rest.¹⁸

In view of the furor engendered by the famous Scopes Trial in 1925, it is all the more surprising to read in The Fundamentals the statement of

¹⁷Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931, Hamden, Connecticut, Archon Books, 1963, pp. 35-45.

¹⁸The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth, Chicago, Testimony Publishing Co., [no date], vol. 3, p. 14.

Dr. James Orr, a professor at United Free Church College, Glasgow:

. . . few are disquieted in reading their Bibles because it is made certain that the world is immensely older than the 6,000 years which the older chronology gave it. Geology is felt only to have expanded our ideas of the vastness and marvel of the Creator's operations through the aeons of time during which the world, with its teeming populations of fishes, birds, reptiles, mammals, was preparing for man's abode¹⁹

Orr was hardly a "literalist" and, in fact, his ideas involved a type of theistic evolution.

Some fundamentalist leaders, such as J. Gresham Machen, a professor at Princeton Seminary, heartily disliked the term "fundamentalist":

The term fundamentalism is distasteful to the present writer and to many persons who hold views similar to his. It seems to suggest that we are adherents of some strange new sect, whereas in point of fact we are conscious simply of maintaining the historic Christian faith and of moving in the great central current of Christian life.²⁰

The fundamentalists offered nothing novel in the realm of theology. Their position was basically that of the ancient creeds and of orthodox Protestant theology. What was new was

. . . the widespread character of the movement, the missionary enthusiasm which [was] . . . brought to it by its advocates and the consciousness on their part of interests transcending denominational lines and calling for a new alignment, with the Fundamentalists of all denominations on one side and the liberals on the other.²¹

It is significant that the "modernist-fundamentalist" controversy reached its peak in the decade following World War I. The war had caused

¹⁹The Fundamentals, vol. 4, pp. 100-101.

²⁰J. Gresham Machen, quoted in Ned B. Stonehouse, J. Gresham Machen, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1954, p. 337.

²¹William Adams Brown, "Fundamentalism and Modernism", Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1951, vol. 9, p. 921.

many people to become sceptical of all religion; others had become critical of the "shibboleths" of organized Christianity. Furthermore, the war had undermined previous standards of conduct. Fundamentalists were strongly opposed to the "worldliness" of the post-war era while, at the same time, the prosperity of the 1920's fostered "worldly" tendencies. Many young men had made direct contact with Europe during the war; hence the importation of European theological ideas became more likely. On the other hand, the deliberate racial propaganda of the Canadian government during the war years seemed to intensify the reaction of some fundamentalists to "liberalism", which was described as "The Menace of German Theology".²² Quite apart from the direct influence of the war, however, the post-war decade in North America was the era when both modernists and fundamentalists were struggling for final control of the major denominations. The modernists were in the minority during the pre-war years; hence they were often on the defensive. By the late 1920's, in Canada and the Northern United States, the tide had turned and fundamentalists were either in the defensive position or had already left the older denominations. On this point William Hordern comments:

As time passed, liberals began to win more and more of the battles. The leading seminaries became the centers of liberalism, and fundamentalists either withdrew in discomfort or, upon retirement, were replaced by liberals. In a sense, if you want a date for the end of the fundamentalist-liberal controversy, it came in 1929. In that year Machen [J. Gresham Machen] failed in his opposition to a re-organization of Princeton Seminary, where he taught. As a result, he resigned and helped to found Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. . . . by the thirties it was the fundamentalists, not the liberals, who were finding it necessary to leave Churches and seminaries.

²²W. Arnold Bennett, Facts Concerning Brandon College, Vancouver, 1922, p. 14.

When one speaks of the end of the fundamentalist-liberal controversy, it does not mean that the fundamentalists disappeared. It does mean that the active battle died away. By the end of the thirties the liberals, as we shall see, were fighting for their lives on another front and had no time for continuing the battle with the fundamentalists. The pattern had been set so that liberals were found in one congregation and fundamentalists in another. Frequently, separate seminaries, one liberal and one fundamentalist, supplied ministers to the congregations even when they were of the same denomination. A large number of fundamentalists found their spiritual home among the smaller sects where, unrestrained by scholarship, they became lost in a maze of esoteric emotional extravagances. . . .

The end of the controversy may be called a truce rather than a peace. Theologians of the two groups ignore each other. It is the parish minister, rather than the theologian, who must carry on the struggle today.²³

In Canada the earliest open manifestation of the "liberal-conservative" struggle among Baptists occurred in Ontario. In 1910, Dr. Elmore Harris of Toronto Bible College objected to Professor I. G. Matthews of McMaster University on the ground of his "liberal" tendencies. No action was taken however, but after the voluntary resignation of Matthews in 1919 his place was taken by a conservative.²⁴ In the following years further exception was taken to other McMaster teachers, including Professor L. H. Marshall. The objecting conservatives were led by the Rev. Dr. T. T. Shields, pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto. In many respects the course of the controversy paralleled events in British Columbia. The struggle ended with the division of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec in 1927.

A similar controversy also developed on the Canadian Prairie. In

²³William Hordern, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology, New York, Macmillan, 1955, p. 73. The author, who is not a fundamentalist, gives a very fair appraisal of both fundamentalism and liberalism.

²⁴Gospel Witness, January 31, 1924.

this case the chief centre of events was Westbourne Baptist Church in Calgary, where William Aberhart, later premier of Alberta, was a leading personality. Here, however, developments took a quite different turn, largely because of the distinctive doctrinal views of Aberhart, who divided the conservative Baptist ranks and organized the Prophetic Bible Institute. The chief events in the Alberta controversy occurred after 1927.

Unquestionably the "modernist-fundamentalist" struggle in British Columbia was influenced both by similar events in Eastern Canada and the Northern United States, as well as by the polemical literature which was published in these areas. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to conclude that developments in British Columbia were merely echoes of events which took place elsewhere. In fact, the debate followed its own distinctive lines and the "conservative forces"²⁵ in British Columbia formed their own distinctive organization in 1925, some time before similar action was taken in Ontario,²⁶ and still later, in the Northern Baptist Convention of United States.

²⁵Following the example of Poucett, the term "conservative forces" is used to denote the group which later came to be known as "Regular Baptists". The use of the term is not meant to imply that there were no others within the British Columbia Baptist Convention who held to conservative theology. See Gordon H. Poucett, "The History of the Regular Baptists of British Columbia", unpublished B.D. thesis in the library of McMaster University, Hamilton, 1956, p. 52, footnote 50.

²⁶In January, 1927, a fundamentalist organization, the Regular Baptist Missionary and Educational Society, was formed within the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. Gospel Witness, January 13, 1927. After the final division of the Convention in October, 1927, this fundamentalist group formed the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. Ibid., October 20, 1927.

Both sides in the British Columbia controversy were undoubtedly sincere and both were motivated by a desire, not to divide the Convention, but to control it, shaping its policies and future according to principles which they considered to be of vital importance. This struggle for ascendancy manifested itself in numerous ways. Since issues were decided by popular vote, both sides were eager to muster as many votes as possible in the British Columbia Convention and in the Baptist Union. Each party desired to elect its own partisans to Convention and Union offices. The conservatives sought to use economic pressure by withholding funds, and both parties attempted to control the expenditure of funds. The final and key issues proved to be the educational policies both of the individual church Sunday Schools and, more particularly, of the denominational college at Brandon.²⁷ Linked to the latter issue was the determination of the "conservative forces" to require definite creedal tests of professors.

During the course of the struggle it appeared, for a time, that the final result would be the severance of the whole British Columbia Convention from the Baptist Union of Western Canada. However, the Union made definite concessions to British Columbia and, in the process of a number of years, was able to enlist considerable support within the British Columbia Convention. Thus the final outcome was the division of the "conservative forces" within British Columbia from both the Convention and the Union. Similar divisions took place in Alberta, and in Ontario and Quebec. These events will be traced in some detail.

²⁷Brandon was basically an Arts College, but also had a Department of Theology.

In spite of the discordant political and economic condition of the province, the general situation among British Columbia Baptists during 1920 was encouraging. Contributions to the budget were up-to-date and receipts for the Forward Movement were "coming in very well".²⁸ For some months efforts were made to secure a new Superintendent of Missions for the province. Finally, in November, 1920, Dr. J. Willard Litch, pastor of Ruth Morton Church, a popular personality and a definite conservative in theological outlook, was persuaded to undertake the task.²⁹

There had been some rumours of unorthodox teaching at Brandon College. However, when the Rev. H. H. Bingham, pastor of First Baptist Church, Calgary, visited the school in February, 1920, he reported, "I must confess I came away from Brandon College with greatly increased faith in the institution, in the professors, and in the character of work being done".³⁰ It was therefore a surprise to some, when, later in the year, at a meeting of the Baptist Ministerial Association of Greater Vancouver, the Rev. W. Arnold Bennett, the young pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Vancouver, and a former student of Brandon, charged that Dr. Harris (Harry) L. MacNeill,³¹ Brandon's professor of New Testament Interpretation and Greek, was heretical in some of his views.

The Ministerial Association referred this matter to the British Columbia Mission Board, requesting that Brandon College Board of

²⁸Mission Board Minutes, October 12, 1920.

²⁹Ibid., November 4, 1920.

³⁰Western Baptist, June 1, 1920.

³¹See p. 96.

Governors be asked to investigate.³² In response,³³ the Brandon Board submitted the following four questions to Dr. MacNeill on behalf of the Vancouver Baptist Ministerial Association:

1. (a) Do you believe that the Scriptures teach that Christ was born of a Virgin?
(b) If so, do you accept the teaching?
2. (a) Do you believe that the Scriptures teach that Christ's body was raised from the dead?
(b) If so, do you receive and teach the same?
3. Do you believe the shedding of Christ's blood to be essential for salvation?
4. Do you believe and teach that God holds men responsible for strict obedience to the teaching of the whole Bible, when properly interpreted. In other words, do you believe that the whole Bible is the final authority, and binding as to what one shall believe and practice.³⁴

In March, 1921, Dr. MacNeill gave the following replies to the Brandon Board:

1. (a) Yes.
(b) Yes, I accept it and present it as the teaching of Scripture. Personally, however, I find difficulty in thinking through, satisfactorily to my mind, this question. I, therefore, emphasize the Incarnation. I firmly and positively believe and teach that the word [sic, without capitalization] became flesh and dwelt among us. I believe in the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ.
2. (a) Yes.
(b) Yes, I receive and teach it as the teaching of the Scripture. I find difficulty, however, from the teaching of

³²Mission Board Minutes, January 18, 1921.

³³The action was immediate. Bennett, op. cit., p. 1, suggests that there was a lengthy delay. This is incorrect.

³⁴Report of the Brandon College Commission, [hereafter referred to as Brandon Commission], 1923, p. 18.

the Scriptures themselves, in forming a satisfactory conception of the nature of Christ's Resurrection body. Luke 24:39, and John 20:20, 25; 21,13 [sic] emphasize the material aspects, while Paul in an earlier account (I Cor. ch. 15) says it was a "Spiritual body" not "the body that was" (I Cor. 15:44), not "the image of the earthly" but "the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:49). That He was a body of some form is clear enough. Here again, however, the important thing is not the body but the life and personality. I believe that Jesus is a living, active personality, triumphant over death and the grave and so I believe in the Resurrection.

3. Yes.

4. Yes, when properly interpreted.

May I add briefly that through either misrepresentation or misunderstanding or both, the Vancouver Baptist Ministerial Association seems to have been placing me in a wrong category, viz., in the number of those destructive critics who either deliberately or through religious indifference seek to undermine the fundamentals of Christianity. Doubtless there are some such critics but I refuse to be associated with them.³⁵

On March 21, 1921, the Baptist Ministerial Association of Greater Vancouver expressed its unanimous satisfaction with Dr. MacNeill's answers,³⁶ and on April 12, 1921, Dr. Gabriel Reid Maguire, pastor of First Baptist Church, Vancouver, reported to the Mission Board that "satisfactory replies had been given".³⁷ Later, however, the claim was made that the Ministerial Association only accepted Dr. MacNeill's statements "on definite understanding that MacNeill was 'leaving anyway at the end of the year' and Van. M. Assn. did not wish him to leave 'under a cloud'".³⁸ In the light of subsequent events, it would appear

³⁵Brandon Commission, pp. 18-19

³⁶Ibid., p. 19.

³⁷Mission Board Minutes, April 12, 1921.

³⁸Interview with Mr. G. R. S. Blackaby, Vancouver, July 29, 1961. The quotation is from a pencilled remark on the margin of Mr. Blackaby's copy of the Brandon Commission, p. 12.

that the "unanimity" of the Association's decision must not be taken too seriously. Nevertheless, at the time, the pastors officially expressed their approval of Dr. MacNeill's replies:

Having heard the answers to the questions . . . we . . . hereby express our satisfaction with the same, and, in view of the assurance they give us, declare our purpose to do what we can to restore the full confidence of our people in our work at Brandon, and to lead them to its hearty and generous support.³⁹

Around this same time, the Baptist Union budget, which included Brandon College within its scope, became an object of open criticism. Mrs. A. A. McLeod, wife of a returned Baptist missionary, in an undated pamphlet entitled Western Baptists and Foreign Missions, charged that provision should be made to permit extra contributions to be given to foreign missions quite apart from the regular budget allotment for foreign mission work.⁴⁰ She also criticized the "high administration expense of the Union".⁴¹ Such a provision as Mrs. McLeod suggested would have made it possible for fundamentalists, such as herself, to direct their donations to foreign missions and by-pass those Union objectives with which she disapproved. Her proposal was an expression of what she considered to be her individualistic Baptist right, and was an effort to exert financial pressure. At the Annual British Columbia Convention in June, 1921, the budget "called forth much discussion" but a motion "That this Convention express its confidence in the Baptist Union of Western

³⁹Brandon Commission, p. 19.

⁴⁰F. S. McLeod, Western Baptists and Foreign Missions, pp. 3-4.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 10.

Canada" was adopted unanimously.⁴²

Criticism of the Baptist Union continued, however, and in November, 1921, an anonymous group who called themselves "Interested Laymen" published a pamphlet in which they attacked Union financial policies.⁴³ It was claimed that British Columbia was not receiving a fair share of budget allotments, that administrative costs of the Union were too high, and that Brandon College was heretical. The pamphlet suggested that British Columbia withdraw its financial support from the Union until matters were corrected.⁴⁴ In December, 1921, a second pamphlet by "Interested Laymen" protested against modernistic trends in religious education. The Religious Education Committee of the British Columbia Convention was criticized for its association with the Religious Education Council of British Columbia, which was deemed, in part, to be liberalistic. Superintendent J. Willard Litch, who had recently been asked to act as Religious Education Secretary of the Convention,⁴⁵ was involved in the criticism contained in the pamphlet. Both pamphlets caused considerable stir.

Events moved rapidly in the month of January, 1922, as the various segments of opinion in British Columbia prepared for a "showdown" with the Baptist Union at the projected annual meeting of the Union in

⁴²BUYB -- 1921, p. 137.

⁴³Mission Board Minutes, December 19, 1921. The "Interested Laymen" included members of First Baptist Church, Vancouver, and Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Vancouver. Mr. R. W. Sharpe of Mount Pleasant Church was one of them.

⁴⁴Poucett, op. cit., p. 47.

⁴⁵Convention Report, 1921, p. 26.

February. On January 4, the British Columbia Mission Board Executive prepared a resolution which would recommend to the Union that all designated gifts be considered "specials" and not part of the Union budget.⁴⁶ On January 6, at a gathering of pastors and deacons held in First Baptist Church, Vancouver, a request was made for a special meeting of the British Columbia Convention in March "to consider charges against Brandon College and our relation to the Union".⁴⁷ Superintendent Litch, evidently distressed by the course of events and by criticism of his leadership, tendered his resignation at the Quarterly Meeting of the Mission Board on January 10. It was not accepted, and the Board declared its "absolute and complete confidence in our Brother".⁴⁸

Some days after, on January 28, a pamphlet entitled Facts Concerning Brandon College was issued by the Rev. W. Arnold Bennett, of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Vancouver. In this pamphlet Bennett related his student impressions regarding the teaching of Dr. Harris MacNeill. He also recorded the impressions of some other former students of Brandon, including those of the Rev. James B. Rowell and the Rev. John Linton. Each testified that Dr. MacNeill was modernistic in many of his viewpoints. The argument of the pamphlet was weakened by Linton's supposed verbatim report of a classroom conversation which he had with Dr. MacNeill some six years before.⁴⁹ Nevertheless the pamphlet displayed the fact

⁴⁶Mission Board Minutes, January 4, 1922.

⁴⁷Ibid., January 10, 1922.

⁴⁸Loc. cit.

⁴⁹Bennett, op. cit., p. 9.

that some former students of Brandon were obviously disturbed over recent trends in Dr. MacNeill's teaching. Reference was made to the opinion of one layman "that the Doctor was alright until he went to Chicago University⁵⁰ to complete his studies".⁵¹ In addition to the criticisms of Dr. MacNeill, the Facts also challenged another Brandon professor, C. H. Lager, for his use of a modernistic text-book, The Hebrew Prophets, written by Georgia L. Chamberlin and published by the University of Chicago.⁵²

Even before this time, it was obvious to the leaders of the Baptist Union that there was considerable support in the British Columbia Convention for the views which were being expressed by Bennett and by the "Interested Laymen". As a move to restore confidence, arrangements were made for a special meeting of the British Columbia Mission Board and the Executive of the Baptist Union. This joint meeting was convened at First Baptist Church, Vancouver, on January 31, 1922. "Difficulties between B. C. and Brandon College" were "discussed quite freely";⁵³ and a committee of eight was appointed to report that evening. The committee recommended that a commission be appointed "to review the whole work of Brandon College".⁵⁴ A second recommendation suggested substantial changes in the financial arrangements between the Union and the British Columbia Convention. British Columbia was to contribute \$12,000 to the foreign

⁵⁰See p. 96.

⁵¹Bennett, op. cit., p. 13.

⁵²Ibid., p. 4.

⁵³Mission Board Minutes, January 31, 1922.

⁵⁴Loc. cit.

mission budget of the Union, but all funds raised in British Columbia for the Union's home mission budget were to be returned to the British Columbia Convention to be administered by it.⁵⁵ This meant that the Convention was to be given a large measure of control over its own finances and could withhold support from Brandon College if it so desired. In return for these concessions, the British Columbia Mission Board withdrew its previous motion regarding designated gifts.⁵⁶ The recommendations of the committee of eight were passed on to the Union, to be considered at its annual meeting.

The following morning, February 1, the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Baptist Union of Western Canada opened its sessions at First Baptist Church, Vancouver. In his report to the Union, Superintendent Litch spoke of "serious problems" in British Columbia, but added that the year had been "one of the most encouraging in our history".⁵⁷ The British Columbia Convention had attempted the largest Union budget in its history and had exceeded it by \$932.69. In addition, over \$4,000 had been given to the Forward Movement and over \$16,000 had been spent on home mission causes in British Columbia. The individual churches had reduced their building debts by some \$21,000 and had spent \$18,000 on new buildings.⁵⁸ Dr. Litch ended his report with a plea for unity, stating that "'A Long pull, a Strong pull and a pull Altogether' is demanded to carry out the Great commission [sic] of Christ in British Columbia".⁵⁹

⁵⁵Mission Board Minutes, January 31, 1922.

⁵⁶See p. 122.

⁵⁷BUYB - 1921, p. 32.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 32-33.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 35.

The General Secretary of the Union, Dr. F. W. Patterson, introduced the following resolution:

Whereas it has come to the knowledge of this Union that certain leaflets attacking the financial policies of the Union and the work and affiliations of the Board of Religious Education of the Union have been prepared and circulated by certain unnamed "Interested Laymen;"

And Whereas, an effort has been made to influence the decisions of this Union by distributing among its members a leaflet attacking, not only Brandon College, but the personal integrity of honored leaders of the denomination in Western Canada;

Therefore be it resolved, That this Baptist Union of Western Canada do now condemn as despicable, unchristian and immoral, all such methods of propaganda; and that this Union do further express the conviction that such methods adopted professedly in the interests of spiritual religion and of truth are the grossest caricature of both; and, further, that such methods are a direct contradiction of fundamental Baptist principles, and that those using them have no rightful place in any Baptist church.⁶⁰

According to the printed report, the resolution was "adopted unanimously by a standing vote".⁶¹ Whether this comment truly expressed the feelings of all representatives at the meeting is a difficult question to determine.⁶² Certainly the resolution did not express the feelings of many British Columbia Baptist "conservatives" in the local churches, and was interpreted by them as an attempt on the part of the

⁶⁰BUYB - 1921, p. 56.

⁶¹Loc. cit.

⁶²A so-called "unanimous" opinion may simply indicate that there was no contrary vote. It was not the usual practice to record the number of delegates who abstained from voting, unless that number were large.

Another unfortunate Baptist practice was that of re-voting on an issue, if the opposition on the first vote was small, in order that the meeting might be "declared unanimous". This neither contributed to historical accuracy, nor did it, in reality, resolve all dissident opinions. However, there is no reason to believe that this procedure was followed on the occasion recorded above.

Union to squelch all opposition. Others, equally "conservative" in doctrine, considered the leaflets to be too drastic an approach to what were, in their opinion, modernistic tendencies within the Union. Still other "conservatives" felt that no such tendencies existed and that the pamphlets were most unjust.

The Baptist Union Meeting of February, 1922, gave its approval both to the proposed financial changes regarding British Columbia,⁶³ and to the recommendation respecting the appointment of a Brandon College commission. Such a commission was established, and its task was set forth by the Executive Board of the Union:

Your Board, after consultation with the Board of the B. C. Convention, and with its hearty approval, would recommend, therefore, that the Union appoint a special committee to co-operate with the Senate of Brandon College in making a thorough review of the curriculum and methods of instruction in its theological department and to consider and recommend ways and means of enabling the College to attain an increasingly influential place in the work of the Baptist churches of Western Canada.⁶⁴

The commission consisted of eleven members, including the General Secretary of the Union and representatives from each of the four western provinces. The three British Columbia members were Dr. L. N. Wolverton, a missionary on leave from India, Dr. Gabriel R. Maguire, pastor of First Church, Vancouver, and Mr. Charles Bentall, a highly-respected layman and a wealthy Vancouver businessman. Mr. Bentall found himself unable to attend the last of three sittings of the commission and was replaced by the Rev. A. F. Baker, pastor of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church,

⁶³See pp. 123-124.

⁶⁴BUYB -- 1921, p. 21.

Vancouver.⁶⁵ During the year in which the Brandon College Commission conducted its investigation there were some other changes in Union and Commission personnel, including the departure of Dr. Patterson, the Union General Secretary, who became President of Acadia University.⁶⁶ Complaints were registered in British Columbia that some of the remaining seven commissioners from the prairie provinces were also Directors of Brandon College, and hence could not be considered as disinterested parties. A Vancouver layman, Mr. R. E. Knight, expressed his apprehension over the reports:

A rumor is current in some quarters that is giving friends of the College, who are not in possession of the facts, serious concern. There are those who insist that some of the members of this Commission are also members of the College Board[.]

This rumor surely cannot be true⁶⁷

According to the Year Book of the Baptist Union, six prairie members of the original Brandon College Commission were also members of the Board of Directors of Brandon College.⁶⁸ Of these, two members, Dr. Patterson and Rev. A. S. Lewis, resigned during the year 1922, the latter being replaced by Rev. A. Ward.⁶⁹

Since he was the acknowledged author of one of the condemned

⁶⁵Brandon Commission, p. 3.

⁶⁶Loc. cit.

⁶⁷R. E. Knight in a letter to the editors of the Baptist Herald, November 1922.

⁶⁸From a comparison made between the personnel of each body, as listed in BUYB - 1921, p. 5. The "Board of Directors" apparently was also called the "Board of Governors". Note the interchange of terms in Brandon Commission, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁹Brandon Commission, p. 3.

pamphlets, the Rev. Arnold Bennett had, in particular, been censured by the Union's motion regarding "leaflets".⁷⁰ He lost no time in formulating a reply, and in March, 1922, Bennett published another leaflet, Jesuit Methods Used by Baptist Union of Western Canada. In this missive he accused the Baptist Union leaders of political intrigue, of modernistic tendencies, and of attempting to whitewash the situation at Brandon College.⁷¹ So strong was the language of Bennett's leaflet that it became a source of concern to more moderate "conservatives". Evidently efforts were made to direct the enthusiasm of the young pastor of Emmanuel Church into more positive channels. In June, 1922, the first issue of a new monthly periodical, the Baptist Herald, appeared in Vancouver, co-edited by the Rev. Arnold Bennett, Dr. G. R. Maguire, and the Rev. H. L. Kempton. The avowed objective of this magazine was to serve "the cause of Evangelical Christianity and Orthodox Theology".⁷² It contained articles and reprints from leading Baptist fundamentalists of the time, as well as some comments on the Baptist situation in Western Canada. By these, and other means, the Herald sought to educate members of the Baptist congregations in British Columbia regarding the "modernist-fundamentalist" controversy, and thus definitely to enlist them on the side of "conservative" leaders.

By the summer of 1922 it seemed that the "conservative forces" were not only holding their own in British Columbia but were gaining

⁷⁰See p. 125.

⁷¹Poucett, op. cit., p. 50.

⁷²Baptist Herald, June 1922.

ground within the Convention and the Union. The Union had conceded to the British Columbia Convention on many of the issues which had been raised by the fundamentalists. During the provincial Convention of June, 1922, the name of the Religious Education Committee was changed to "The Christian Education Committee",⁷³ in response to "conservative" objections. However, the fundamentalists continued to criticize the committee because of its interdenominational connection with the Religious Educational Council of British Columbia.

At this time, plans for a United Church of Canada were already well developed. Among British Columbia Baptists there was also some discussion of greater cooperation with other denominations. At the 1921 Convention a "Motion on Church Union" was introduced, to be considered the following year.⁷⁴ However, at the 1922 Convention, consideration of the motion was postponed⁷⁵ and evidently the matter was dropped completely.

In their determination to avoid all compromise with liberalism, fundamentalists reacted strongly against projects for organic unity, and against Protestant ecumenicalism in general. At the same time, however, a new type of interdenominationalism was developing among fundamentalists. One of the phenomena associated with this movement was the rise of interdenominational, or so-called "non-denominational" Bible Schools and Institutes.

The first Bible-school type of institution in North America was

⁷³BUYB - 1922, p. 142.

⁷⁴Convention Report, 1921, p. 13.

⁷⁵Ibid., 1922, p. 14.

Nyack Missionary College, Nyack, N. Y., established in 1882 by the Rev. A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination. This was closely followed, in 1886, by the founding of an interdenominational school, Moody Bible Institute, in Chicago.⁷⁶ In 1894, Dr. Elmore Harris,⁷⁷ a critic of the denominational outlook of McMaster University, established Canada's first Bible School, Toronto Bible College, along lines similar to Moody Institute. Until 1898, classes of the institution were held in Walmer Road Baptist Church, of which Dr. Harris was pastor.⁷⁸

The first Bible School in the Canadian West was the interdenominational Prairie Bible Institute, begun in 1922 at Three Hills, Alberta. It has since become the largest institution of its kind in the Dominion, with an enrollment of over 1,000 students in Bible School and High School courses.⁷⁹ Its founder, the Rev. L. E. Maxwell, was reputed to be an ordained Baptist minister, but he had received his training at the Christian and Missionary Alliance school in Kansas City, Kansas, and in the early years of his ministry was favourable to that denomination. Three Hills helped to supply the prairie Alliance Churches with pastors until the Alliance opened its own school, Canadian Bible Institute, Regina, in 1948. From its inception, Prairie Bible Institute regarded

⁷⁶S. A. Witmer, The Bible College Story: Education with Dimension, Manhasset, N.Y., Channel Press, 1962, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁷See p. 114.

⁷⁸Witmer, op. cit., p. 38.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 87.

itself as "an unsectarian institution",⁸⁰ but it was, from the sociological standpoint, a decidedly sectarian organization. Many similar schools were established on the Canadian prairies, particularly during the following two decades. In 1962, according to Witmer, of the fifty-four known Bible Institutes in Canada, twelve were located in Alberta, twelve in Saskatchewan, eight in Manitoba, and five in British Columbia.⁸¹ Many of these schools, particularly the larger ones, are "non-denominational" institutions.

The rise of the interdenominational Bible Schools strengthened the fundamentalist movement, and yet, at the same time, divided it. Some fundamentalists were influenced to take an "interdenominational" stand, which tended, in some cases, to become an "anti-denominational" viewpoint. To such people "denominationalism" was equated with liberalism and "big-churchism". Other fundamentalists regarded themselves as "denominational" conservatives and interpreted "denominationalism" as adherence to historic views which had been held by their respective denominations prior to the introduction of liberal ideas. Such "denominational" conservatives were themselves divided over the question of how to deal with the new liberalism within their own denominational organizations. Should they fight it, seek to persuade it, tolerate it, seek to contain it, or withdraw from it? Such was the dilemma of "denominational" conservatives within the British Columbia Baptist

⁸⁰It was so described on the masthead of the Institute's periodical The Prairie Pastor and Overcomer.

⁸¹Witmer, op. cit., p. 49.

Convention. In 1922 the most usual answer of fundamentalists appeared to be both to fight and to seek to persuade, but by all means to control and to conquer liberalism.

In this era the British Columbia Baptist Convention had its liberals and its "non-denominational" fundamentalists, but more significant was the apparent presence of a larger percentage of "denominational" fundamentalists than was the case within the prairie conventions. The prairie churches were more directly under the influence of the Baptist Union, Brandon College, and liberal ideas from Eastern Canada. Baptists on the Prairies, particularly in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, had moved toward a "church-type" organization. "Sectarian" reaction to this tendency developed within the local churches and usually followed non-denominational lines. In the urban centres, where prairie Baptists were strongest, much of the sectarian strength was lost to independent "undenominational" movements. For example, in the city of Winnipeg, during 1922, a total of 397 members left four Baptist congregations without asking for letters of transfer.⁸² This exodus coincided with the growth of non-denominational causes in Winnipeg.

Developments followed a different course in the rural centres. Here Baptists found it difficult to compete with Methodists, Presbyterians and, after 1925, with the United Church. In the period from 1914 to 1944 over eighty Baptist Union churches on the Prairies were forced to close. Most of these were in the smaller centres. As a

⁸²BUYB - 1922, p. 181.

result, in 1944 there were only half as many rural congregations as in 1914.⁸³ Baptist churches in rural areas were usually able to survive only when they succeeded in enlisting the "sectarian" elements of the community. If a rural Baptist church was the first sectarian group to be established in a locality it had a good chance of becoming a strong congregation, provided that it maintained its sectarian appeal. Liberal Baptists in rural areas tended to support the chief Protestant church of the district, which, after the Union of 1925, was usually a United Church congregation. The net result of these trends was a cleavage within the Baptist Union between the city congregations and more fundamentalist rural churches.

British Columbia was more urban than the Prairies, but, in spite of this, Baptist sectarianism tended to be strong in the cities. This was partly due to the influence of American ideas. It could also be traced to the industrialization of the province and the population movement from the rural areas of the Prairies to the urban centres in British Columbia. This resulted in masses of uprooted people who were open to the sect's message. Once a sect was established in the city, it was easier for it to compete with the churches, and with other sects, than would be the case in a rural area where the sect had only a very limited population to draw upon and where the social pressures tended to promote conformity. Because of these factors, British Columbia Baptists had

⁸³L. M. Wenham, "The Baptist Home Mission Problem in Western Canada", unpublished B.D. thesis in the library of McMaster University, Hamilton, 1947, pp. 40-41, cited in W. E. Mann, Sect, Cult, and Church in Alberta, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1955, p. 93.

greater numerical strength, in relation to the total population of their area, than did the Baptists of the three Prairie Provinces.

Throughout 1922 the Baptists of Western Canada looked forward to the publication of the report of the Brandon College Commission. In May, the Western Baptist pleaded that the Commission be given time to do its work, and that continued support be given to Baptist Union objects.⁸⁴ In June, when discussion was raised on the Convention floor regarding Bennett's pamphlet Jesuit Methods, a motion was passed requesting that "all propaganda on this question cease" until the next Convention.⁸⁵ That autumn the Baptist Herald lost an editor and Brandon College lost a critic when the Rev. Arnold Bennett moved to Portland.⁸⁶

The Report of the Brandon College Commission was presented to the annual Baptist Union meeting at Calgary in January 1923. In its printed form the Report covered twenty-two pages. The commission's procedure had been to obtain comparative information from McMaster and from seven other Baptist theological institutions in the United States, to send questionnaires to Brandon graduates, to contact Brandon's critics, and to interview Brandon professors, particularly Dr. Harry MacNeill.

The commission reported that other colleges, without exception, gave full and frank classroom consideration to "the results of modern investigations".⁸⁷ Other institutions considered text books to be "of small importance in comparison with the beliefs and personality of the

⁸⁴Western Baptist, May 1922. ⁸⁵Convention Report, 1922, p. 15.

⁸⁶Baptist Herald, October 1922.

⁸⁷Brandon Commission, p. 5.

man who stands before the students".⁸⁸

Out of a total of one hundred and twenty living Arts graduates, forty-two returned the questionnaires which had been sent to them. From a total of twenty-five graduates in Theology, fifteen replies were received. Of those graduates who responded, the vast majority gave a favourable evaluation of their Alma Mater.⁸⁹

With respect to the pamphlets which had criticized Brandon College, the Report condemned the methods of the pamphleteers and judged the accusations to be "both false and unchristian".⁹⁰

Concerning Dr. MacNeill, the commission reported:

1. He believes in the great fact of the Inspiration of the Scriptures And while he does not hold to the traditional verbal theory, he holds most profoundly to the great throbbing, vitalizing fact of inspiration.

2. . . . Concerning the Virgin Birth as the method of realizing the incarnation, he frankly states his uncertainty He emphatically states that he does not deny the Virgin Birth, and thinks of it as possibly the method of the incarnation, and holds in his mind the hope that some day he may see it clearly.

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5. . . . He believes in the resurrection of the living Christ,

⁸⁸Loc. cit. This was obviously a defence of Professor Lager, (see p. 123 of this thesis). Lager had already dropped The Hebrew Prophets as a text.

⁸⁹The Report makes an effort to explain the reasons why more replies were not received. "Many were not returned--some . . . being of other denominations did not care to reply--and some . . . had graduated so long ago they were unable to make any contribution of value to the question under discussion". Eight graduates living outside Canada failed to reply. "About fifteen" letters were returned through the Dead Letter Office. Brandon Commission, pp. 6-11.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 5.

distinguishing between the great fact of the resurrection and the nature of the bodily form in which He appeared.

6. In the last place he believes in and trusts the gracious hope of the Lord's return, making, however, a clear distinction between the essential fact and hope and the manner in which He may appear.⁹¹

It was the recommendation of the Report that "the splendid asset we have in the remarkable personality, the consecration, the evangelistic fervour . . . of Dr. MacNeill be conserved to the denomination and the Master's work in this West".⁹² However, it was suggested that Dr. MacNeill's lectures to Arts students be assigned to a new professor of practical theology and that the lectures be of an expositional nature, "rather than a critical study".⁹³

The commissioners were unanimous in their conclusions, except for two of the British Columbia representatives, Dr. G. R. Maguire and the Rev. A. F. Baker, who dissented from some of Dr. MacNeill's views and refused to recommend that he be retained at Brandon.⁹⁴ It was later reported that the third British Columbia representative, Dr. L. N. Wolverton, "stated that he might not have signed the report if he had not known that Dr. MacNeill intended to resign in order to pursue further studies in England"⁹⁵ at the end of the year.

In the opinion of the Baptist Union President, Mr. William Marchant, Brandon College was clearly vindicated by the Report.⁹⁶ "There

⁹¹Brandon Commission, p. 20.

⁹²Ibid., p. 22.

⁹³Loc. cit.

⁹⁴Loc. cit.

⁹⁵Gospel Witness, March 27, 1924. Dr. MacNeill did not carry out this intention.

⁹⁶Colonist, February 2, 1923.

was a sigh of relief that Brandon was cleared of all accusations of false teaching".⁹⁷ Not everyone joined in.

The practice of indirect or "secondary" representation in the Union had been under attack by the conservatives.⁹⁸ Consequently, to allay criticism, it was decided at the 1923 Baptist Union meeting to change the constitution in order to give each church the right to send its own delegates directly to the Union.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, criticism of voting arrangements continued, due to the fact that a sizeable number of Union officials, in addition to church delegates, had voting powers in the Union meetings.

Among fundamentalist Baptists in British Columbia there was a great deal of dissatisfaction with the Brandon College Commission's report. Just as opposition was mounting, however, the "conservative forces" received a set-back which seriously weakened their ranks.

In the spring of 1923 the Rev. Charles S. Price, an "unattached" Congregational clergyman and an exponent of "faith healing",¹⁰⁰ came from the United States to hold mass rallies in Victoria and Vancouver. The Vancouver meetings in May drew large crowds¹⁰¹ and enlisted the support of conservatives from all denominations. Dr. Maguire of First Baptist Church and the Rev. Andrew Grieve of Ruth Morton Memorial Baptist Church

⁹⁷McLaurin, op. cit., p. 201. ⁹⁸Baptist Herald, January 1923.

⁹⁹BUYB - 1922, p. 42.

¹⁰⁰H. P. Plumptre, "Spiritual Healing", Canadian Journal of Religious Thought, January - February, 1925.

¹⁰¹Province, May 19, 1923.

were, at the first of the Price campaign, strongly favourable and expressed their opinions to their respective congregations. However, in the course of the meetings, both pastors began to reach other conclusions, and came to regard Dr. Price's claims as fraudulent. Opinions on Price became sharply delineated and, at the end of May, Dr. Maguire left Vancouver, rather hurriedly, to take a new pastorate in Eastern Canada, leaving behind a divided church. The Rev. Andrew Grieve chose to weather the storm and some sixty members of Ruth Morton Memorial Church left to begin a "Pentecostal" cause.¹⁰² As a result of Dr. Maguire's departure, the Baptist Herald ceased publication. During the following year, First Baptist Church, Vancouver, lost 164 members in addition to those who asked for letters of transfer.¹⁰³ These "untransferred" losses apparently represented gains for the Pentecostal congregations of Vancouver. Dr. Maguire was succeeded by Dr. J. J. Ross, a conservative, but not a supporter of the "conservative forces".

The defection of Baptists to the Pentecostal movement was related to the modernist-fundamentalist issue in Baptist ranks. The controversy had sapped the spiritual vitality of the churches and left many individuals open to a more emotionally gratifying type of religious expression. To such persons, Pentecostalism was not only soul-satisfying; its "manifestations" were considered to be a conclusive apology against the modernists.

¹⁰²Telephone interview with the Rev. Andrew Grieve, August 3, 1962.

¹⁰³Convention Report, 1924, p. 47.

The controversy over Dr. Price continued through the remainder of 1923 and undermined the resources of Baptist fundamentalists. The General Ministerial Association of Vancouver appointed a committee to investigate some 350 alleged cases of healing. The findings of the committee were most unfavourable to Price,¹⁰⁴ but this fact did not deter his supporters. From this time there was a tendency for more radical Baptist fundamentalists to gravitate toward the Pentecostal churches. As a result of the Price episode, in addition to this loss of numerical support, the "conservative forces" had lost the leadership and influence of the pastor of British Columbia's largest Baptist congregation, First Church in Vancouver.

There was evidence that the churches, particularly in British Columbia, were withholding funds from the Baptist Union because of the inclusion of Brandon College in the Union budget. Consequently, at the annual meeting of the Union in January, 1924, Brandon College was put on a separate budget of \$25,000 for Western Canada. When Dr. T. T. Shields suggested that this action could be interpreted as Union rejection of Brandon, Union officials replied that the Baptist Union was "solidly behind Brandon College".¹⁰⁵ About the same time, six British Columbia pastors declared their opposition to Brandon in a letter to Dr. Shield's periodical, The Gospel Witness.¹⁰⁶

During the Annual British Columbia Baptist Convention in July,

¹⁰⁴Vancouver Sun, December 22, 1923.

¹⁰⁵Gospel Witness, March 27, 1924.

¹⁰⁶Loc. cit.

1924, the Christian Education Committee announced that its membership in the Religious Education Council of British Columbia had been the reason for "the evident lack of readiness on the part of many pastors, churches, and schools . . . to co-operate with the committee".¹⁰⁷ In the opinion of Baptist fundamentalists the Council was predominantly liberal in its theological complexion. "After considerable discussion" it was decided that the Committee should sever relations with the interdenominational Council.¹⁰⁸

At the 1924 Annual Convention the Rev. Andrew Grieve presented a resolution that:

. . . We, the delegates to the Baptist Convention of British Columbia . . . do hereby place ourselves on record as supporting our Commissioners in their dissent, and also as disapproving the action of the Baptist Union of Western Canada in the endorsation of, and fellowship with, the unscriptural teaching of Brandon College.¹⁰⁹

After prolonged debate the resolution was tabled for one year, and a committee of ten members was appointed to "take into consideration the whole question of the relation of this convention to the Baptist Union of Western Canada"¹¹⁰

The Convention session also took action to give Life Members power to vote.¹¹¹ It is doubtful, however, if this move made any difference in the relative voting strength of any particular segment of opinion.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷Convention Report, 1924, p. 16. See also p. 129 of this thesis.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 9.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 10.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹²In 1924 there were only seven life members, including the Rev. R. Lennie, William Marchant, the Rev. F. W. Auvache, and Mrs. Ruth Morton, widow of John Morton. Ibid., p. 6. Although "Life Membership" was

The Committee of Ten brought its findings to the 1925 British Columbia Convention but announced that it had been unable to reach agreement on the major issue, Brandon College. This failure had necessitated a major and a minority report. The majority report suggested that Brandon follow the requirements of the Charter of McMaster University which specified that every instructor in the University must be a member of "an Evangelical Christian Church"; and that every Governor, and every teacher in the faculty of theology, must be "a member in good standing of a Regular Baptist Church".¹¹³ The minority report gave a detailed Statement of Faith, to which all Governors and teachers at Brandon were to subscribe.¹¹⁴ The minority report had the support of the "conservative forces". Opponents of the minority report objected to it on the ground that it set up a "Baptist creed". After a great deal of discussion, an amendment to the majority report was introduced as a compromise gesture. This amendment gave a definition of a "regular"¹¹⁵ Baptist Church", which was understood to be:

. . . a church composed of persons who have been baptized on a personal confession of their faith in Christ, holding and maintaining substantially the following doctrines:

intended to honour worthy individuals, the practice weakened Baptist polity, since Life Members were given the same voting powers as church delegates. The policy of "Life Membership" was carried over into the constitution of the Regular Baptists, but was dropped when the constitution was revised in 1956.

¹¹³Charter of McMaster University, as cited in Convention Report, 1925, pp. 9-10.

¹¹⁴Convention Report, 1925, p. 11.

¹¹⁵There was no consistency in the use of the capital letter "R". The majority report had used it.

(1) The Bible as being given by inspiration of God, and hence its integrity and authority in all matters that pertain to Christian faith and conduct.

(2) The Pre-Existence and the conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit into human nature; His natural birth through Mary the Virgin into the human family; His Deity, Atoning Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Session [sic] at the right hand of the Father, and His visible coming again in glory.

(3) The Personality, Deity and Work of the Holy Spirit in Regeneration and Sanctification.

(4) The creation and fall of man; the universal depravity of mankind by nature and hence the necessity for the work of grace leading to salvation; the eternal happiness of the righteous and the everlasting punishment of the wicked.

(5) The resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

(6) The immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as the only Biblical baptism, and the Lord's Supper a privilege peculiar to baptized believers.

(7) The complete autonomy, independence and sovereignty of the local church.

(8) The separation of Church and State, a free church within a free state being the scriptural ideal.

(9) The competency and freedom of the individual soul through Christ to serve God, when, where and how enlightened conscience may dictate.

(10) Our supreme obligation to give the Gospel of Jesus Christ unto the whole world.¹¹⁶

The amendment was virtually a statement of faith, without actually being identified as such. Its whole tone was distinctly "conservative" and it even favoured "close communion", for it referred to the Lord's Supper as "a privilege peculiar to baptized believers".¹¹⁷ Nonetheless,

¹¹⁶Convention Report, 1925, p. 12.

¹¹⁷Loc. cit.

the "conservative forces" felt that it did not bear directly on the problem of Brandon College since it merely defined a Regular Baptist Church without requiring Brandon faculty, or anyone else, to subscribe to the definition.

According to the printed record, the discussion occupied most of the morning and afternoon Convention sessions on June 24, 1925. The meeting approached what was to be a crucial vote.

The majority report was moved by Rev. Geo. Reynolds and W. C. Kelly; the minority report by Rev. A. Grieve and Rev. F. W. Auvache; the amendment by Rev. G. Reynolds and Rev. J. J. Ross.

The result of the voting was: For the amendment, 63; against, 80. For the minority report, 49; against, 88. For the majority report, 89; against, 54. Session closed with prayer by the Rev. P. C. Parker.¹¹⁸

No further information is given by the report; therefore any analysis of the voting must be conjectural, but fascinating. There is every indication that few of the delegates abstained from voting on the issues. Since a total of 143 votes were cast on both the first and the third ballot it seems probable that this was the total number of delegates present. The results indicate that the Convention was split into three groups: liberals, the militant "conservative forces", and a party of "moderates" who were basically conservative in theology. The personalities involved in the motions bear out this conclusion. Andrew Grieve and F. W. Auvache were leaders of the "conservative forces", G. Reynolds and Dr. Ross were known to be "moderates", while W. C. Kelly was a layman of acknowledged liberal convictions.¹¹⁹ From the second

¹¹⁸Convention Report, p. 13.

¹¹⁹Interview with Mr. G. R. S. Blackaby, June 29, 1961.

ballot, it seems quite obvious that 49 delegates voted on the side of the militant conservatives. If all of these voted against the proposal of the "moderates" on the first ballot, who then were the 31 who also opposed the "moderates"? It would appear that they were liberals who could not, in all conscience, subscribe to the views set forth in the "moderates" amendment. On the second ballot, at least six delegates abstained from voting against the "conservative forces". The general pattern of opinion seems to be verified by the last ballot, when most of the "moderates" joined the liberals, but five voted on the conservative side. These observations, if valid, would lead to the deduction that the "conservative forces" comprised about one-third of the British Columbia Convention. Later developments seemed to substantiate this conclusion.

The vote on the report of the Committee of Ten sharply delineated the division of opinion within the British Columbia Convention. During the remainder of the sessions the Convention was "a house divided" into two camps. During the election of officers each group proposed its own candidates and, in each case, the "conservative forces" were defeated by close to a two-thirds majority. The conservatives' candidates were Dr. Arthur I. Brown,¹²⁰ a Vancouver physician and a member of First Baptist Church, for President; Rev. Andrew Grieve for First Vice-President; and Rev. F. W. Auvache for Secretary-Treasurer.¹²¹ A particular blow to conservatives was the defeat of Auvache, who had been Secretary of the

¹²⁰See Furniss, op. cit., pp. 31, 54.

¹²¹Convention Report, 1925, p. 21.

Convention for some twenty-three years.¹²² Dr. J. J. Ross, a "moderate", was elected Convention President.

It became obvious to the "conservative forces" that they were in the minority and that they could not count on the support of other conservatives within the Convention. Consequently they decided to form their own distinct organization, and on July 17, 1925, the "B. C. Baptist Missionary Council" was organized. It was the purpose of the Council to act within the framework of the British Columbia Convention, or perhaps a bit to one side of the framework, and to receive and dispense the missionary funds of those churches and individuals who supported the "conservative forces". It was also to be an agency for the propagation of fundamentalist views. Its literature stated:

. . . We are blamed for trying to split the Denomination. That is untrue. The split is already there. It has been for some time. It has been caused by the inroads of Modernism into our ranks and the failure of brethren in our midst to stand against it. The B. C. Baptist Missionary Council is not organized to divide the body, but because the body is divided.¹²³

From the time of its inception the Council had the support of twelve churches, most of which were situated in or near Vancouver.¹²⁴ In addition, the Council could count on the cooperation of laymen in other churches.¹²⁵ The Council also formed its own distinctive organization for

¹²²B. C. Baptist, March 1928.

¹²³The B. C. Baptist Missionary Council, [1925], p. 3. A four-page folder of information published and circulated by the Council.

¹²⁴The notable exception was First Baptist, Kamloops, where Rev. J. B. Rowell (see p. 122) was pastor.

¹²⁵Four of the seventeen members of the Council's Board were also members of First Church, Vancouver. B. C. Baptist Missionary Council, p. 2.

women as well as another for young people. In November, 1925, the Council began to publish its own periodical, the British Columbia Baptist, later known simply as the B. C. Baptist.¹²⁶ Its first issue attacked the policy of ex-officio membership, as followed by both the British Columbia Convention and the Western Baptist Union. It was charged that the officials and board members who had been given ex-officio voting powers could control both Convention and Union in spite of the opposition of church delegates. The case against the Union was succinctly put:

. . . it is practically impossible under the Constitution of the Baptist Union of Western Canada for the churches to register their will. The Union is an unrepresentative and undemocratic machine under whose pitiless wheels true Baptist principles in the West will be ground to powder. . . . This so-called 'Baptist' Union is not Baptist at all; and Baptist interests in the West can never be served until the constitution of the Baptist Union of Western Canada is scrapped and utterly abandoned, and a new constitution, founded upon representative Baptist principles, takes its place.¹²⁷

By this time the controversy had reached major proportions. Convention income had dropped and personal feelings were running high. Late in 1925 the British Columbia Convention Home Mission Board, deeply concerned with the loss of support from the "Council" churches, published a leaflet entitled Information for British Columbia Baptists, in which the Council was denounced.

The Council claims that its object is not to disrupt the denomination or the Convention, yet they are doing that very thing to the full strength of their influence. . . . The Council misrepresents all who do not join them in this movement. They insinuate that all

¹²⁶And, still later, known as the "Beastly Baptist", when the financing of its publication became a constant problem during the depression of the 1930's.

¹²⁷British Columbia Baptist, November 1925.

who do not join the Bible Union and the Council are, at least, tainted with modernism.

The movement, resulting in the organization of the Council, is an importation from the United States. It is not for Canadians to judge whether there is or is not justification for it "over the line," but it certainly is not justified in B. C.¹²⁸

The "Bible Union" mentioned in the leaflet was the Baptist Bible Union of America, a continent-wide organization of Baptist fundamentalists, which had many members in British Columbia. The B. C. Baptist Missionary Council was a separate organization, but in sympathy with the Bible Union.

During this time Dr. J. J. Ross came under personal attack. In the Gospel Witness he was held to be partly responsible for the "deplorable state of part of B. C. Baptists".¹²⁹ In an anonymous pamphlet Dr. Ross was also charged with having falsified his academic degrees.¹³⁰ In the spring of 1926 Dr. Ross and a number of other pastors left the Vancouver Baptist Ministerial Association, of which the Rev. F. W. Auvache was President, and formed "The Baptist Ministerial Brotherhood of Vancouver and Vicinity".¹³¹

Dr. Ross presided at the British Columbia Convention in June 1926. Since preparations were made for changes in the constitution, "Council"

¹²⁸Charles Bentall and J. J. Wallace, Information for British Columbia Baptists, [Vancouver, 1925], p. 2.

¹²⁹Gospel Witness, September 5, 1925.

¹³⁰Statement of Facts Relative to J. J. Ross, D.D. A leaflet critical of Ross, published sometime after April, 1926.

¹³¹B. C. Baptist, June 1926, and March 1928. This move left "Council" pastors in control of the Ministerial Association.

delegates presented a statement of faith which, they proposed, should be included in the new constitution. Later in the sessions, in order to allay any question regarding his orthodoxy, Dr. Ross read his own personal statement of faith. Sensing the strategic moment, "Council" delegate Mr. G. R. S. Blackaby moved "That this Convention place itself on record as heartily endorsing the statement of faith as read by Dr. Ross as his own".¹³² The motion placed those conservatives who were outside the Missionary Council in a very awkward position. In the midst of the confusion the Vice-President took the chair and the resolution was ruled out of order as not being "in the interests of the Baptist churches of this province", a ruling based upon Article 3 of the Convention constitution.¹³³ The meeting sustained the ruling.

Earlier in the 1926 Convention, a much-debated and much-amended motion was passed by the Convention delegates:

That Brandon College should be re-organized in the Department of Theology and . . . equipped with scholarly men . . . who believe and stand loyally by the Bible and its teachings as interpreted by regular Baptists, and who are willing to pledge themselves accordingly;

And, further, that the Baptist Union of Western Canada is hereby requested to take steps immediately to effect such reorganization.¹³⁴

Upon this action, Poucett comments:

It seemed that although B.C. Baptists could not agree on the extent of the test of faith to be applied to the College and its faculty, they had finally agreed on this one thing -- that it was in the interests of everyone that Dr. MacNeill should move on and the theological department be reorganized. But the Baptist Union took

¹³²Convention Report, 1926, p. 34.

¹³³Ibid., p. 3.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 24.

no action upon this recommendation, and before another Convention came, the controversy had taken a new turn.¹³⁵

Following the 1926 Convention the members of the Baptist Missionary Council began to despair of ever turning the tide of Convention affairs in their direction. Few of their leaders had been elected to Convention offices and the motion to introduce a statement of faith into the revised constitution¹³⁶ appeared to be a lost cause. There were some rays of hope, for the work of the individual "Council" churches prospered and other congregations were added to their number, which totalled sixteen at the end of 1926. There was, however, no joyful anticipation of the forthcoming Convention.

. . . There exists the same unfortunate division in the ranks, that has existed for years. As the years have passed, the breach has been widened and deepened rather than otherwise. With the widening of the breach, feelings have been intensified, so that brother does not meet brother with the same brotherliness that used to obtain.¹³⁷

The 1927 Convention was held in Grandview Baptist Church, Vancouver, from June 27 to June 30. After a "free full discussion" the motion for a Creedal Statement was defeated "by a large majority vote".¹³⁸ The new constitution was adopted, to become operative on July 1, 1927. In it, the incorporation of the Convention was changed from the Mission Board to the "Convention of Baptist Churches of British Columbia".¹³⁹ The revised constitution contained a clause to the effect that:

. . . The Convention may from time to time at any annual or special

¹³⁵Poucett, op. cit., p. 57.

¹³⁶Convention Report, 1926, p. 25.

¹³⁷B. C. Baptist, June 1927.

¹³⁸Convention Report, 1927, p. 17.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 16.

meeting, by resolution passed by a vote of three-fifths of the delegates present and voting, declare [that] any Church, the conduct or attitude of which, in the opinion of the said Convention, is not in harmony and co-operation with the work and objects of the said Convention, shall cease to be entitled to send any delegates¹⁴⁰

The clause was never invoked. The delegates of "Council" churches rose from the Convention floor and withdrew. The breach was complete. The Missionary Council was incorporated under the name "The Convention of Regular Baptists of British Columbia" on July 6, 1927.¹⁴¹

The split in Baptist ranks followed an interesting pattern. Most of the Regular Baptist churches were located in Vancouver and the north side of the Lower Fraser Valley. First Baptist Church, Vancouver, the largest Baptist Church in British Columbia, remained with the older convention, but lost a considerable bloc of members, particularly to Mount Pleasant Church, Vancouver.¹⁴² The latter, in terms of active membership, was the second largest Baptist Church in the province, and it joined the Regular Baptists. In general, the Regular Baptists in Vancouver were strongest in working-class areas. There was no Regular Baptist cause west of Granville Street, with the exception of the Broadway West Baptist Church, and a mission in Dunbar Heights which had been opened by the Missionary Council in 1926.¹⁴³

In the interior of British Columbia the distribution of the Regular

¹⁴⁰Convention Report, 1927, p. 4.

¹⁴¹Photostat of the Certificate of Incorporation in the author's possession.

¹⁴²Note statistics in Convention Report, 1927, p. 63.

¹⁴³B. C. Baptist, November 1926.

Baptist Churches gave evidence of the importance of pastoral influence in determining the stand of individual congregations. First Baptist, Kamloops, where the Rev. J. B. Rowell was pastor, joined the Regular Convention, along with the churches at Salmon Arm, Armstrong, and Enderby. In the Okanagan Valley, no church turned to the Regular Baptists, but, at a later date, divisions developed in local congregations and Regular Baptist churches were formed at Vernon and Kelowna.

On Vancouver Island no church joined the Regular Baptist Convention in July 1927. This situation was changed when, later in that year, the Rev. J. B. Rowell moved to Victoria and founded Central Baptist Church. As a result of Dr. Rowell's able leadership this congregation became one of the largest in the Regular Convention and a "mother-church" to a number of Vancouver Island home mission causes.

The published statistics¹⁴⁴ record that there were 6,244 members in British Columbia Convention churches before the division of 1927. Of these, however, 1,074 were non-resident. Three churches which remained in the "old convention" reported a combined total of 586 non-resident members. Of these churches, Fairview Baptist, by reputation the most "liberal" of Baptist Churches in the province, reported 212 non-resident and 295 resident members. Thus, before June, 1927, the total active membership in British Columbia stood at about 5,000 or less, making allowances for the fact that "resident" members are not always "active". In all, some 1600 members left to form the Regular Baptist Convention.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴Convention Report, 1927, pp. 62-63.

¹⁴⁵B. C. Baptist, May 1926, and July 1928.

The division of 1927 brought a measure of peace into Baptist circles. The loss of the Regular Baptists from the "old convention" reconstituted the latter body along theological lines which were more in accord with the Baptist Union churches on the Prairies, and this promoted more harmonious relationships within the Union. However, this was not the end of the struggle, for each of the two conventions still had their own internal tensions.

During the ensuing years it became evident that the struggle over sectarianism was by no means resolved by the division of Baptists into two groups. The "old convention" still contained liberal and conservative elements, united around a common allegiance to "denomination". The conservative elements within the "old convention" perpetuated the sectarian spirit.¹⁴⁶

Among the Regular Baptists, a common fundamental theology was the rallying-point¹⁴⁷ but the inner tensions created by "denominational" and "non-denominational" viewpoints had yet to be resolved. In this case, both schools of thought were sectarian in outlook, but with the passage of time it became evident that those of the "denominational" persuasion were moving in the direction of a "church-type" organization. This tendency created tension within this school of thought, and eventually led to the schism from Regular Baptist ranks of those who felt they could "hurry" the movement toward greater denominationalism by joining

¹⁴⁶For a discussion of continuing tension within the Baptist Union see BUYB - 1959, pp. 108-111.

¹⁴⁷Regular Baptists had a Statement of Faith.

the Southern Baptists of the United States. Those who held to the "non-denominational" viewpoint among Regular Baptists were generally highly individualistic. As the major portion of Regular Baptists gradually moved away from extreme and separatistic sectarianism toward a more denominational viewpoint, these individualists either became reconciled to the trend or lost sympathy with the movement and left the Regular Baptist fold.

CHAPTER V

SEPARATE LINES OF DEVELOPMENT

In general, the immediate reaction of Baptist Union leaders to the split in British Columbia Baptist ranks was an attempt to dismiss the division as a mere "bad dream", of no lasting significance. The report of the 1927 British Columbia Convention, as published in the September issue of the Western Baptist, contained no mention whatever of the division, but it was admitted that the report had been "considerably shortened".¹ On the other hand, an effort was made to bolster confidence in Brandon College. In June 1927, the Western Baptist referred to Brandon as "a Dominant Spiritual Force in the West"² and the Rev. A. J. Brace reported that he "found Dr. MacNeill enthroned in the affections of the students"³ The next issue of the Western Baptist evidently alluded to the controversy when it mentioned that Dr. MacNeill had been given a year's leave of absence "in order that he may recuperate from the strain of the past year".⁴ There was, however, a notable lack of discussion of the British Columbia schism within the pages of the Baptist Union's official organ.

Such reticence could not disguise the fact that the fundamentalist-modernist controversy had seriously disrupted the growth and influence of

¹Western Baptist, September 1927.

²Ibid., June 1927.

³Loc. cit.

⁴Ibid., August 1927. In 1929 Dr. MacNeill was ordained, and accepted the pastorate of Fairview Baptist Church, Vancouver. In 1932 he was appointed to the faculty of McMaster University as Professor of New Testament. Canadian Baptist, July 14, 1932.

Baptists across Canada. In British Columbia, for example, census figures reveal that Baptists increased from 20,225 to 23,577 in the period from 1921 to 1931, a rate of growth which neither kept pace with the population increase nor with the general progress of the other denominations.⁵ During the same decade, the Pentecostal movement in British Columbia made outstanding gains, increasing from 247 to 2,298 adherents.⁶

In addition to its effect on numerical growth the controversy had disrupted the local programs of many churches, divided old friends, and created a general atmosphere of criticism. In fact, in some Baptists, the habit of "heresy-hunting" had become almost an "occupational disease".

Nevertheless, it must not be concluded that the controversy was itself an unmitigated evil. The dispute was based upon very real issues and the acuteness of the debate was, in part, an expression of the vitality of Baptist work in British Columbia. Even during the disruption, some individual churches made progress under the leadership of capable pastors. Paradoxically, in the years since the division, Baptist

⁵See Appendix C for census details. Note that Methodist and Presbyterian statistics for this period are somewhat complicated by the formation of the United Church of Canada in 1925.

⁶It should be borne in mind that census statistics on religious affiliations are only indicative of general trends. Particularly in the case of larger denominations, census figures are customarily in considerable excess of the actual membership figures published by the denominations themselves. Such membership figures, in turn, do not usually indicate the number of active and participating members. However, in the case of the smaller sects, which tend to have a high degree of membership participation, the census figures give a fairly accurate picture of actual strength.

work has made greater progress in British Columbia and Alberta, the two western provinces most involved in the controversy of the 1920's, than in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, where the local churches were less effected. In the latter provinces, particularly in Manitoba, Baptists, under the influence of liberalism, tended to drift into a middle-of-the-road position in which they lost their distinctiveness. Too conservative to be good liberals and too liberal to be good conservatives, they failed to appeal to either side. In British Columbia, the struggle to maintain sectarianism revealed the more sectarian bias of the Baptist witness in that province, and the resultant division had a chastening effect upon liberal elements within Convention Baptists. After an initial period of friction, the two conventions settled into separate courses of development and the general situation became much more stable than in the 1920's. In spite of depression, in spite of the outbreak of war, and in spite of the internal divisions which beset the Regular Baptists, the total Baptist population of British Columbia grew to 29,860 in 1941, a rate of increase which outstripped the rate of increase in population.⁷

In the initial period following the breach of 1927 there were a number of important matters left to be resolved. These centred around the question of legal rights to names and to property. The necessary discussion of these issues perpetuated open antagonism between the two Baptist conventions for a period of some months.

The most pressing of these matters, which began to develop even before the final split in June 1927, involved the property titles of

⁷See census figures in Appendix C.

some of the churches which joined the Missionary Council and, later, the Regular Baptists. In a number of cases, the deeds of the church property were held by the Convention, not by the local congregations. In view of previous home mission investment in these causes, the Convention leaders were reluctant to release the properties and only after much persuasion were the deeds given to the churches concerned.⁸

A second source of continuing antagonism was the incorporated name of the Regular Baptist Convention.⁹ The speedy action of Regular Baptists had secured their incorporation some three months before the registration of the new name of the "Convention of Baptist Churches of British Columbia".¹⁰ On October 11, 1927, the Convention Board of Trustees resolved to protest the use of the name "Convention of Regular Baptists".¹¹ On December 20 a petition was lodged with the Lieutenant Governor in Council asking for the dissolution of the incorporation of Regular Baptists.¹² In January, 1928, representatives of both conventions appeared in Victoria before the Attorney General, the Hon. A. M. Manson.¹³ The

⁸Mission Board Minutes, April 14, 1925, et seqq., and Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Convention of Baptist Churches of British Columbia, [hereafter referred to as Convention Board Minutes], August 4, 1927, et seqq. Under the revised constitution of the Convention, in 1927 the Board of Trustees took over the functions of the former Mission Board.

⁹See p. 150. In 1963 the incorporated name was officially changed to "Convention of Regular Baptist Churches of British Columbia".

¹⁰See p. 149. ¹¹Convention Board Minutes, October 11, 1927.

¹²B. C. Baptist, February 1928.

¹³Colonist, January 19, 20, and 21, 1928. In the press reports the conventions were identified respectively as "modernist" and "fundamentalist" groups.

Convention of Baptist Churches, through its lawyer, objected to the use of "Convention" and "Regular" by the Regular Baptists, claiming a priority on the use of these terms. Following a discussion by the legal counsel of both groups, the Rev. J. B. Rowell presented the theological aspects of the Regular Baptist case. The dispute centred around the word "Regular", a term which had been in common use some decades before,¹⁴ but which had been officially dropped from the constitution of British Columbia Baptists in 1911.¹⁵ The Rev. J. B. Rowell recorded his arguments in the B. C. Baptist:

. . . there has been a drift from the position then [in 1897] recognized among Baptists, so much so that within the denomination today there are those who deny the fundamentals of the faith and those who remain loyal to the old-time fundamentals, while others try to occupy a "middle-of-the-road" position. Therefore, it was our contention before the Attorney General, that those who maintain their stand on the old ground are still "Regular," and consequently have the right to the name and principles which have never been surrendered.

.

Emphasis was given to the fact that our convention does hold to the old ground whereas the other convention has forsaken the historic Baptist position

. . . We hold to the position of the absolute autonomy of the local church, for which "Regular" Baptists have always stood.

. . . we remain absolutely "Regular" in our desire to have a statement of faith which openly declares our attitude toward the Bible and toward outstanding doctrines. Before the division came in the Convention, we repeatedly asked the Convention to declare itself in a statement of faith as a basis of fellowship, but such statement of faith was every time rejected.

¹⁴Note pp. 35, 66, 80.

¹⁵B. C. Baptist, July 1928. Note, however, that the term had continued in use. See p. 141 of this thesis.

Our own statement of faith was produced before the Attorney General as evidence. On the other hand, the other convention has no statement of faith leaving the element of uncertainty in this day of embarrassing compromise. . . . As "Regular" Baptists we teach in relation to the Lord's Supper that the Scriptural order is (1) Regeneration, (2) Baptism, and (3) the Lord's Supper: Whereas the drift inclines to an open invitation to all, and this finds its logical outcome in open membership as is the case in the Northern Baptist Convention.

. . . loyalty to the original position, involved in the word "Regular," is the ground on which we base our rightful claim to the use of the distinctive word "Regular." Consequently, those who have drifted from that original position have forfeited their right to that word. The principles involved in such word have been forsaken and therefore they have become the seceders and have gradually but perhaps unwittingly, developed into a new Baptist body.¹⁶

Pastor Rowell compared the position of Regular Baptists to that of the "continuing" Presbyterians. Attorney General Manson, an earnest Presbyterian, grasped this point and refused to take action against the Regular Baptists.¹⁷

The decision of the Attorney General was a distinct "victory" for the Regular Baptists, for by it they gained the right to official and legal recognition as "Baptists". At first the Convention Baptists were loathe to concede such recognition and sought to speak on behalf of all Baptists in the province, but the years have brought a gradual change of attitude, tempered at present by the realization that the Convention Baptists, while still the largest single group, represent only about one-half of the total Baptist membership and one-third of the total of Baptist congregations in the province.

¹⁶B. C. Baptist, February 1928.

¹⁷Loc. cit., also interview with Dr. J. B. Rowell, August 17, 1957.

From time to time another legal matter forced the two conventions into mutual discussion and negotiation. On occasion, the wills of individuals granted bequests to "Baptists" in British Columbia, without any indication of a particular group to whom the bequest was to be given. In such circumstances, representatives of both conventions, and of the smaller Baptist groups, met together to decide upon an amicable and proportionate division of such bequests; usually on the basis of total membership. To the credit of all concerned, it must be said that such decisions were made with a minimum of friction. It would appear that the first of these occasions occurred in 1935 and involved the estate of James Howard.¹⁸ The most outstanding case of this nature was the John Morton Estate.

At his death in 1913, John Morton¹⁹ bequeathed a sum of \$100,000 to the educational and religious work of Baptists in British Columbia. This gift took the form of a Trust Fund, to be distributed upon the death of his widow, Mrs. Ruth Morton. The Mortons had no children, and at her death on December 4, 1939²⁰ Mrs. Morton left additional sums to the Regular Baptists, particularly to Ruth Morton Memorial Baptist Church and to the Regular Baptist Women's Missionary Society. The Wills of the Mortons were contested by relatives, who after prolonged litigation, lost their case. When the John Morton Estate was finally

¹⁸Convention Board Minutes, April 2, 1935. ¹⁹See p. 38.

²⁰Personal diary of the Rev. H. C. Phillips, pastor of Marpole Baptist Church, Vancouver. In 1939, Mr. Phillips was pastor of Ruth Morton Memorial Baptist Church, Vancouver, where Mrs. Morton was a member.

settled in 1942, taxes, succession duties, and legal fees had pared down the Trust Fund to \$75,381.67. This sum was distributed on the basis of proportionate total membership--\$47,490.45 to Convention Baptists, \$21,106.86 to Regular Baptists, and \$6,784.36 to independent Baptist churches.²¹

A number of other contacts were made between the two conventions. During the depression there was some interchange of home mission stations in the interests of economy. It was also agreed to avoid, if possible, the overlapping of Baptist effort, particularly in the smaller centres of British Columbia.²² A move was made by Convention Baptists in October, 1930, to obtain the cooperation of all Baptist groups in the preparation of a History of the British Columbia Baptists,²³ but apparently nothing came of the venture. Earlier that same year, when Mr. William Marchant raised the question of a reconciliation with the Regular Baptists, "a unanimous desire was expressed that it might be so, but it was felt that the time was not yet".²⁴ Through the years, there has generally been very little communication between the two Baptist Conventions on the official level²⁵ and each group has gone its separate way, though always

²¹Minutes of the Executive Council of the Regular Baptist Churches of British Columbia, [hereafter referred to as Regular Baptist Council Minutes], February 13, 1942.

²²Convention Board Minutes, November 11, 1930, and January 13, 1931. The groups did not always adhere to this tacit agreement.

²³Ibid., October 14, 1930.

²⁴Ibid., January 13, 1930.

²⁵There have been numerous unofficial contacts and personal friendships between the pastors and the laymen of each group.

with a wary eye upon "what the competition was doing".

While relationships between the two conventions were reaching a fair degree of equilibrium, the Regular Baptists, in particular, were torn by internal division. It has already been noted²⁶ that tension existed between "denominational" and "non-denominational" elements within the Regular Baptist Convention. Now that the modernist foe was no longer in the camp, internecine strife began to manifest itself. The largest Regular Baptist congregation, Mount Pleasant Church in Vancouver, became one of the first battlefields.

Beginning as early as the spring of 1926, members of First Baptist Church, Vancouver, began to gravitate toward Mount Pleasant Church. By June of that year, some thirty-five members of First Church had joined Mount Pleasant.²⁷ During the following year the total increased to about one hundred. These new recruits were fundamentalist in doctrine, but had joined Mount Pleasant for a variety of reasons. Some appreciated the gentle pastoral manner and forceful preaching of the pastor of Mount Pleasant, the Rev. A. F. Baker. Others joined because they liked a "big church" and yet had become unpopular at First Baptist. Among the latter there were those who began to agitate in favour of a new pastor at Mount Pleasant. The harmony of the congregation was so upset that Baker tendered his resignation in January, 1927,²⁸ but remained at his post until September, when he became "Pastor-at-large" for the Regular Convention.

²⁶See pp. 131 and 152.

²⁷B. C. Baptist, June 1926.

²⁸Ibid., January 1927.

He was succeeded by the Rev. W. M. Robertson, formerly of Toxteth Tabernacle in Liverpool, England, who had been recommended to the church by Dr. T. T. Shields.²⁹ A note of high optimism was sounded at the first Regular Baptist Convention, held in Mount Pleasant Church during June, 1928, but behind the scenes all was not well. In the following month a news item from Mount Pleasant Church announced that, "after a stormy pastorate", Robertson had resigned his pulpit and begun an "undenominational" work "of a nondescript character".³⁰ The account in the B. C. Baptist was most outspoken:

. . . We looked for great things . . . and have been terribly disappointed. We are saddened also when we consider that the division was not due to difference of opinion on the great doctrines of the faith, but to suspicions engendered by faulty leadership in the management of the church.³¹

Robertson took with him approximately one-half of the 510 members of Mount Pleasant, including many of the recent additions to the congregation. The new cause was named "Metropolitan Tabernacle" after the famous church of Mr. Charles H. Spurgeon in London, England.

In October, 1928, the Rev. Charles Fisher became the new pastor of Mount Pleasant Church.³² A former Anglican clergyman from England, Fisher was also recommended to the church by Dr. Shields. While apparently capable, scholarly, and popular with his congregation, Fisher found difficulty in adjusting to Canadian life, and in June, 1929, he resigned in order to return to England.³³ He was succeeded in October,

²⁹B. C. Baptist, September 1927.

³⁰Ibid., July 1928.

³¹Loc. cit.

³²Ibid., October 1928.

³³Ibid., July 1929.

1929, by Dr. R. E. Neighbour, an American who was very active in the work of the Baptist Bible Union, too active, in fact, to properly care for his flock at home. He was followed in February, 1932, by another American, the Rev. Arno Q. Weniger,³⁴ whose youth and inexperience proved inadequate to prevent a further division in the church.³⁵

In the short space of five years, Mount Pleasant had tried dynamism, scholarship, flamboyancy, and youthful energy, but, like Queen Anne, had failed to find a permanently fruitful formula.

In addition to the unsettled state of the pastorate of its chief church, the Regular Baptist Convention suffered loss through the deaths of some of the prominent leaders in the movement. The Rev. F. W. Auvache,³⁶ the first Secretary of the Regular Baptist Convention, died in February 1928. The Rev. D. G. MacDonald, a strong denominationalist who was first President of the new Convention, died in December 1931.³⁷ In the same month the death of Mrs. A. A. McLeod³⁸ also occurred. Mrs. McLeod had been most active and influential in the Regular Baptist Women's Missionary Society.

The growing need for enlistment of new pastors was obvious. In their struggle to maintain sectarianism Regular Baptists had cut themselves off from the Canadian denominational centres of training, with

³⁴B. C. Baptist, June - July 1932.

³⁵This division was the result of the controversy over North West Kiangsi Mission, for an account of which, see infra, pp. 170-171.

³⁶See pp. 143-145, 147.

³⁷B. C. Baptist, December 1931, and January 1932. ³⁸See p. 120.

whose liberal tendencies they could not agree. They were therefore forced to turn to interdenominational schools for pastoral recruits, or else to rely upon "imports" from Britain or the United States. The situation proved to be most unsatisfactory. Such new pastors had little understanding of local needs, no background of denominational experience in British Columbia and, in many cases, no concept of denominational loyalty. Although there was much talk of "adherence to principles", by the middle of the 1930's it seemed apparent, by the actions of some pastors, that individuality, self-interest, and even opportunism, were taking precedent over concern for the flock and for the future of the Regular Baptist cause. The necessity of a local institution for the training of pastors became obvious.

From the very beginning of the Regular Baptist Convention far-sighted leaders realized that the founding of a Regular Baptist College was "an item of no small importance".³⁹ This need had been a matter of concern in the days of the Missionary Council.⁴⁰ The Vancouver Bible Institute, founded by a Presbyterian, Dr. Walter Ellis, in 1919, had received generous support from Mr. R. W. Sharpe, a wealthy member of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church and one of the "Interested Laymen".⁴¹ Although some Regular Baptists supported this school, its interdenominational approach was not completely satisfactory to many in the Regular Convention. In order to provide fully suitable instruction, Regular

³⁹B. C. Baptist, July 1928.

⁴⁰Ibid., June 1927.

⁴¹See p. 121.

Baptists opened the Regular Baptist Bible Institute in the fall of 1929.⁴² The school began its operations with night classes, which were conducted in Mount Pleasant Church. The project did not continue long and after 1930 nothing more was heard of it, but similar night classes were taught for a time in Broadway West Church, Vancouver,⁴³ and Central Baptist Church, Victoria. It was not until the close of the Second World War that the question of an educational institution for Regular Baptists was again given serious consideration.⁴⁴

In the 1930's, a controversy over foreign missions brought to the fore the latent disunities within the Regular Baptist Convention. As a result of the formation of the B. C. Missionary Council in 1925, the Regular Baptists had been cut off from their denominational foreign mission fields. This created a major problem for the new Convention, which must now find new outlets for foreign mission work. A possible solution was the support of "non-denominational" fundamentalist missions, which were then being established all over the world. Such a course could hardly commend itself to the denominational elements within the Regular Convention. Even before the split of June 1927, the B. C. Baptist stated the case:

. . . Another real need is that of a definite Foreign Mission work large enough to utilize every gift of God's people for the spreading of the Gospel in other lands. Since the refusal of the Canadian Foreign Mission Board to take any money from the B. C. Missionary Council, we have been without a definite field of service in foreign parts. . . .

⁴²B. C. Baptist, August 1929. ⁴³Ibid., October 1930.

⁴⁴Note that the events recorded above were similar to events in the early 1900's. See p. 84.

As Baptists who are Baptists because of convictions concerning the teaching of the Scriptures, we hope to be supporting to a man the great Baptist mission work in the world to-day. And we have prospects which we hope will materialize in the near future and provide for God's people in fellowship with the Missionary Council a field abroad that will demand all that can be given out of their full consecration to God for the great work in other lands.⁴⁵

The Regular Baptists of British Columbia hoped to join forces with the Regular Baptists of Ontario and Quebec in establishing a mission field in Liberia, but the plan did not materialize. The Rev. A. A. McLeod, a retired missionary from India,⁴⁶ and the first Treasurer of the Regular Convention, was a strong supporter of denominational missions and impatient to see action on the matter. In July, 1929, McLeod reported to the Regular Baptist Executive Council that the Rev. E. J. Blandford, director of an independent mission in Central China, was about to retire and wished to place the work in other hands.⁴⁷ Since Blandford was then visiting Vancouver, it was arranged that he meet with a special session of the Executive Council on August 22, 1929, to discuss details. Blandford informed the Council that the field, known as North West Kiangsi Mission, involved property worth \$5,000 in Canadian funds, and a total of ten mission workers, including himself and Mrs. Blandford. It was moved that the Regular Baptist Convention take over the mission, with Blandford as director. The missionaries were to endorse the Regular Baptist Statement of Faith,⁴⁸ and were to retain their present sources of support, but all new missionaries were

⁴⁵B. C. Baptist, June 1927. ⁴⁶See pp. 120 and 164.

⁴⁷Regular Baptist Council Minutes, July 11, 1929.

⁴⁸Ibid., August 22, 1929.

to be appointed by the Regular Convention.⁴⁹ The Rev. L. G. Baker and his wife, were sent out as missionaries in the spring of 1930.⁵⁰ They were greeted by a dismaying situation. According to their reports from the field, Blandford had misrepresented the mission and was not a man to be trusted. He had formerly been associated with the "Plymouth Brethren" and had received much financial support from them, but had eventually been dismissed from their fellowship.⁵¹ Much of the mission property was owned personally by various missionaries. The character of the mission was "strongly undenominational" and some of the workers had not understood that they must sign the Regular Baptist Statement of Faith.⁵² Furthermore, the Regular Baptists did not have full control of the field, but only of their missionaries, the Bakers, and Miss Esther Peacock, who had been sent out in May 1931.

The reports from the Bakers caused a storm of controversy and confusion at home. Opinion among Regular Baptists was divided at least four ways. Some of those who were ardent supporters of denominational missions, including the Rev. A. A. McLeod, discounted the statements of the Rev. L. G. Baker and refused to admit that a grave error had been made. Other denominationalists agreed with the Bakers, were appalled by the developments, and saw the Convention saddled with an "inter-

⁴⁹B. C. Baptist, September 1929.

⁵⁰Ibid., April 1930.

⁵¹Letters from L. G. Baker to Executive Council, January 12, 1931 and February 5, 1932. These, along with other files of the mission are to be found in the Regular Baptist Historical Collection, Vancouver.

⁵²Questionnaires received from Hilda M. Holms and Victoria A. Holms. In files of the North West Kiangsi Mission, Regular Baptist Historical Collection.

denominational" mission. Those who sympathized with "interdenominationalism" gleaned from the controversy arguments against any further attempts to establish a denominational mission, but they, in turn, were divided among themselves in their evaluation of the situation in China, depending upon how they interpreted Mr. Baker's reports and the subsequent actions of the Executive Council. Furthermore, personal loyalties and antipathies were involved, since L. G. Baker was the son of the Rev. A. F. Baker.

In the spring of 1932 the Executive Council appointed a committee to investigate the charges which had been made concerning Kiangsi Mission. The committee's conclusion was indecisive, a majority report favoured continuing in Kiangsi while a minority report recommended that the Convention abandon the project and seek a new field. The Council did not adopt either report, but referred the matter to another committee, which recommended "That the work in North West Kiangsi be continued with boldness and vigour in accordance with the plans in mind at the commencement of the work"⁵³ The Executive Council adopted the recommendation, but by this time the Regular Baptist missionaries in China were facing a most dissatisfying personal situation, which the Council had done nothing to alter. Unrest continued, and in February, 1933, the Council voted to call a Special Convention in March to consider the issue.⁵⁴ The decisions of this convention supported the actions of the Council.

⁵³B. C. Baptist, November 1932.

⁵⁴B. C. Baptist Bulletin, February 1933. The B. C. Baptist Bulletin was the new name of the B. C. Baptist. As an economy measure, a mimeographed form was used until March 1936.

For the missionaries, decisions at home could not change realities abroad and, in the spring of 1933, the Bakers and Miss Peacock left Kiangsi for the city of Harbin in North Manchuria. There they began a new mission work with the friendship and assistance of Southern Baptist missionaries, Dr. and Mrs. Charles Leonard. This action resulted in fresh criticism at home, for the move had been made without approval of the Executive Council. Furthermore, the Regular Convention still had financial obligations to Blandford. At the Annual Convention in June, 1933, it was decided to give support to the missionaries in Manchuria only to the extent that the local churches designated funds for the purpose. The same policy of specific designation was to be used to honour the remaining financial obligations connected with Kiangsi Mission.⁵⁵ Such a financial plan differed but little from a policy of individual churches supporting independent missions and was a far cry from the original proposal for a united denominational effort. In fact, the proposal bore the seeds of further dissension, for each local church must now rejudge the whole issue.

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church was seriously divided on the foreign missionary question and, after a series of stormy church meetings, a large group of members, with most of the officials of the church, withdrew from the building. They began immediately to conduct services in the Cambrian Hall which was located near the church edifice. This group retained the name of the church and voiced its approval of the Bakers and the North Manchuria Baptist Mission. The remaining members and

⁵⁵Minutes of the Sixth Annual Convention, 1933.

their pastor, the Rev. Arno Q. Weniger,⁵⁶ continued to worship in the Mount Pleasant Church building. For three years both groups claimed to be the true Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. In 1935 Weniger resigned and was succeeded by the Rev. W. Arnold Bennett in the spring of 1936.⁵⁷ In 1937 the Cambrian Hall group dropped the Mount Pleasant name to become Douglas Park Baptist Church, which was later renamed Oakridge Baptist Church.

In March, 1936, the North Manchuria Mission was officially adopted as the Regular Baptist Convention foreign mission field. This action followed a favourable vote, 597 to 101, on a referendum which was submitted to the membership of the churches.⁵⁸

By this time, chiefly as a result of the missionary upheaval, a number of congregations had ceased to support the Regular Baptist Convention. In August, 1936, Sapperton Baptist Church in New Westminster withdrew from the Convention, followed by Broadway West Church in January 1937. Both became independent churches. In May, 1937, Maple Ridge Church in Haney divided on a number of issues, including the matter of foreign mission policy. One group remained in the Regular Convention; the other became independent in 1942. In October, 1938, Mount Pleasant Church also withdrew from the Regular Baptists. At this period the sense of denominational identity was so blunted that the Regular Baptist

⁵⁶See p. 164.

⁵⁷See p. 134. From the United States, Bennett had gone to England and then, in 1935, returned to become pastor of Broadway West Baptist Church, Vancouver.

⁵⁸B. C. Baptist Bulletin, March 1936.

Ministerial Association retained the Rev. Arnold Bennett as its President until January, 1939, even though Bennett himself had offered to resign because his church had left the Regular Convention.⁵⁹

Bennett had not yet come to the end of his spiritual pilgrimage. Another division of Mount Pleasant Church occurred in 1946 when Bennett left to form a nondenominational "community" church of sectarian outlook. This group was later disbanded. In 1954 Mount Pleasant Church joined the Baptist General Conference.

In less than three decades the wheel had come almost to full circle. Bennett, who had been a leading figure among the fundamentalists of the 1920's, was by the 1940's, completely out of sympathy with Regular Baptists. It was not that his viewpoints had essentially changed. It was rather that the Regular Baptist Convention, in moving toward a more integrated type of denominational organization, had left Bennett, the individualist and rugged separatist, behind. Similar, though not absolutely identical, forces were involved in 1949 when Dr. T. T. Shields, along with Jarvis Street Church and a number of other churches, left the Union of Regular Baptists of Ontario and Quebec. But, in contrast to Bennett, Shields rejected any thought of nondenominationalism, and maintained friendly contacts with churches of like persuasion in the United States.

By the late 1930's, the foreign mission controversy among Regular Baptists of British Columbia had extended over almost a decade and had

⁵⁹Minutes of the Regular Baptist Ministerial Association, October 17, 1938.

sapped the spiritual resources of the denomination during a period of financial difficulty. The losses were such that the total membership of the Convention had dropped from close to 2,000 in 1932 to about 1,400 in 1939. A more serious consequence was the lack of solidarity and direction which was manifest among those who remained. Furthermore, the controversy had cast the whole foreign mission effort of the Regular Convention into a mold which was difficult to break. It was true that the North Manchuria Mission proved a success, and that the furlough itinerary of the Bakers in 1938 did much to promote support of the mission, both in British Columbia and Alberta.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, much missionary interest and support had been diverted into interdenominational and independent channels during the period of the controversy, both as a result of the dispute itself, and because of the influence of some of the pastors in the Convention.⁶¹ Dedicated young people from the churches had been enlisted as missionaries in non-Baptist missions and their home churches felt a sense of responsibility for their financial support. Thus it became difficult to alter the situation and, up to the present, the Regular Baptists have found no solution. In 1962, a total of approximately \$38,000 was given to foreign missions by Regular Baptists. Of this sum, only about \$10,000 went to the Regular Baptist mission field in Japan,⁶² which, in 1952, replaced the Manchurian field, when the latter was closed because of war and

⁶⁰B. C. Baptist Bulletin, September 18, 1938. ⁶¹See p. 165.

⁶²Thirty-fifth Annual Convention, Vancouver, Convention of Regular Baptists, 1962, pp. 27 and 31. Note that out of a total of over \$16,000 given to the Japan field, over \$6,000 came from outside British Columbia.

Communist occupation. The remaining \$28,000 of this total was given directly by the churches to other missions.

During the period since 1927 the Baptist Convention of British Columbia also faced difficulties, but experienced a higher degree of denominational solidarity, as a Convention, than the Regular Baptists. At the same time the Convention Baptists of British Columbia always remained somewhat distinct from the remainder of Baptist Union churches on the Prairies, and, in general, pursued an independent line of thought and action.

In June, 1925, the University of British Columbia offered Baptists a site for a theological school on U.B.C. campus.⁶³ Following the division of 1927, the Convention Baptists discussed a proposal for the incorporation of a British Columbia Baptist Divinity School, but the following resolution was adopted: "Resolved that we most heartily approve the work being done by the Baptist Bible Institute of Vancouver, but we do not think the time opportune for the incorporation of a school".⁶⁴

This decision, however, was not an indication that the Convention Baptists were whole-heartedly in support of Brandon College as the alternative to a local seminary. Brandon had not fared well on an independent budget⁶⁵ and was at this time in "special need of funds".⁶⁶ The Con-

⁶³Mission Board Minutes, June 23, 1925.

⁶⁴Convention Board Minutes, October 11, 1927. The Baptist Bible Institute was an embryo school conducted for a number of years with the aid of some of the Baptist pastors, apparently those of "moderate" conservative viewpoint. It should not be confused with the Vancouver Bible Institute mentioned on p. 165.

⁶⁵See p. 139. ⁶⁶Convention Board Minutes, April 10, 1928.

vention Board of Trustees formulated a plan for the promotion of Brandon College,⁶⁷ but the proposal met with some opposition in the churches and was dropped. The representative of Brandon was left to make his own promotional arrangements with individual congregations.⁶⁸

In the years from 1927 to the Second World War the Baptists in the Convention of British Columbia, and in the Baptist Union, were faced with financial difficulties. Initially these problems were caused by the loss of fundamentalist churches, coupled with the fact that the overhead of both organizations was rather high because of salaried officers and the financial requirements of a college of the size and with the equipment of Brandon. The depression of the 1930's forced some retrenchment. In British Columbia some mission churches were closed, while others were combined under the leadership of one pastor.⁶⁹ In October, 1931, as an economy measure, the Convention Baptists offered the Rayagadda Mission field in India to the Regular Baptists,⁷⁰ but nothing came of the matter.

After 1930 the Theological Department of Brandon College virtually ceased to exist, although some theological lectures were given on occasion.⁷¹ In the following years the financial position of Brandon grew steadily worse, until, in 1938, the Baptist Union was forced to relinquish all connection with the college, which passed into the control of

⁶⁷Convention Board Minutes, April 10, 1928. ⁶⁸Ibid., June 4, 1928.

⁶⁹Ibid., September 16, 1931.

⁷⁰Ibid., October 13, 1931.

⁷¹C. C. McLaurin, Pioneering in Western Canada, Calgary, C. C. McLaurin, 1939, pp. 310-311.

the University of Manitoba. The loss of Brandon College was, in the opinion of G. C. McLaurin, "the sorest experience in the history of Western Baptists".⁷² While "lack of funds" was given as the reason for the disaster,⁷³ this could hardly be the basic explanation. During this same period the Bible Schools on the Canadian Prairies had begun to thrive. Brandon fell behind because it had failed to commend itself to the constituency which it had been called to serve. The College had little attraction for fundamentalists either within or outside the Baptist Union; the liberal Baptists could muster neither the recruits nor the resources necessary to keep Brandon in operation as a Baptist school; and the general public was not interested in maintaining a denominational institution.

Other changes were taking place within the Baptist Union. In Manitoba the total membership in Union churches dropped from 3,749 in 1921 to 2,539 in 1959. In the same period, membership in the Union churches of British Columbia rose from 4,929 to 6,165 and in Alberta from 3,930 to 5,995 in spite of controversy and withdrawal of members during the late 1920's. Figures for Saskatchewan were 2,647 members in 1921 and 3,336 in 1959.⁷⁴ Because of this pattern of development, Winnipeg gradually became less important. In 1928 the British Columbia Board of Trustees suggested a "more central location" for the Union Office.⁷⁵

⁷²McLaurin, op. cit., p. 231. ⁷³Province, July 15, 1938.

⁷⁴All statistics are from BUYB - 1922, pp. 181-195, and BUYB - 1959, p. 235.

⁷⁵Convention Board Minutes, April 10, 1928.

Since Alberta was rapidly becoming the Union's "centre of gravity" the office was re-located at Edmonton in 1930.⁷⁶

A need was also felt for a reorganization of the structure of the Union, dispensing with the provincial conventions and creating in their place two associations in each province. Such a procedure would strengthen the Union itself and, at the same time, foster the closer fellowship of the churches within the smaller units. In 1938 this plan was put into operation in the three prairie provinces and six associations were organized.⁷⁷ The British Columbia Convention, however, refused to implement the plan and has remained to the present a decided "big brother" in the Union family.

In 1938 the First Baptist Church, Winnipeg,⁷⁸ which had been the leading Baptist Church in Manitoba in earlier years, was forced to close its doors. McLaurin, who regarded this event as a "disaster", gave his explanation for the closure of the church:

. . . the city's rapid growth did not favor its continuance, as families moved out into residential districts. New churches were organized that absorbed many of the members. The men and women who had been the leaders during the days of its great strength . . . had departed this life, and the down-town population did not contribute towards the congregation. To maintain such an institution, under these conditions, became an impossibility. This experience is duplicated in many cities in America and the old land.⁷⁹

McLaurin's comments failed to take cognisance of the fact that First Baptist building was sold to a Pentecostal assembly and immediately

⁷⁶McLaurin, op. cit., p. 221

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 234.

⁷⁸See p. 97. Note also that First Baptist was one of the four Winnipeg congregations mentioned on p. 132.

⁷⁹McLaurin, op. cit., p. 231.

occupied by a large and enthusiastic congregation who renamed the building Calvary Temple. First Church had lost a sizeable portion of its membership as a result of the modernist-fundamentalist controversy. Many conservatives had withdrawn from the church and the remaining congregation had failed to evangelize the community.

In the opinion of Baptist conservatives, the loss of First Church was an object lesson to all the Baptists of Manitoba. Liberalism was blamed for the disaster.⁸⁰ If Baptists were to retain their spiritual vitality and their denominational identity they must eschew modernism and return to the conservative theology of the historic Baptist Faith.

By the opening of the Second World War, reflective liberals were themselves beginning to question the modernistic approach. The events of the war fostered their misgivings. Ideas of the inherent goodness of Man and the ability of Man to progress through the use of science did not seem to square with grim facts of mutual human destructiveness. If God were essentially an Immanent Being, if Man's natural relation to God was one of sonship and intimacy, then why the war and its horrors? Such inquiries were related to the growing influence of the views of Karl Barth upon Protestant theology in general. Barth, a Swiss theologian and a former liberal had, in turn, been influenced strongly by the writings of the Danish existentialist Søren Kierkegaard. During the years following World War I, Barth had begun to expound his new theological outlook, which stressed Divine transcendency, human sinfulness, and the priority of

⁸⁰Telephone interview with the Rev. Leslie Tarr, pastor of East Kildonan Baptist Church, Winnipeg, September 4, 1962.

personal religious experience over philosophical vapourings. The basic approach of Barth, though not all his personal conclusions, received widespread approval from theologians. Virtually every Protestant theologian has been influenced by Barth, if only to react against him. The "Barthian" movement began to transform the face of liberalism and, particularly after the Second World War, spread to America, where the new view has become known as "neo-orthodoxy", with Reinhold Niebuhr of Union Seminary, New York, as one of its leading exponents. Some fundamentalists refer to "Barthianism" as "the new modernism".⁸¹ Other fundamentalists classify neo-orthodoxy in a category by itself. Some churchmen of ecumenical spirit have sought to make use of neo-orthodox ideas in order to mediate between modernists and fundamentalists.

In Canada the trend toward neo-orthodoxy seems most pronounced in the United and Presbyterian Churches with the theological schools of these denominations setting the course. Among Convention Baptists, most of the liberals have been wittingly or unwittingly influenced in the direction of neo-orthodoxy and this, along with the apparently growing influence of the evangelicals, has made the Convention Baptists more conservative in the general tone of their theology. A corresponding swing to conservatism has not taken place in the general ethical outlook of Convention Baptists, however, and there are signs of a definite weakening

⁸¹The term was evidently coined by Dr. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Seminary, (see p. 95) who published an appraisal of Barthianism entitled The New Modernism, in 1946. Not all evangelicals agree with Van Til's appraisal, and Barth has said that the work presents an incorrect picture of himself.

of traditional Baptist asceticisms. To a lesser extent, the same is true of Regular Baptists and other Baptist groups. Opposition to the use of tobacco remains a Baptist "hallmark", especially among those of evangelical persuasion, and "total abstinence" from alcoholic beverages is the usual position of English-speaking Baptists.

In other areas of conduct, alterations in social attitude are evident. This is particularly true with respect to the motion picture and the theatre. The advent of television, coupled with increasing economic prosperity among Baptists, has been a most potent force effecting this change. Among "sectarian" Baptists there is a rising interest in education, art, music, travel, Canadian politics, and world affairs. These shifts of attitude in the present generation provide a fresh demonstration of the forces which tend to move the sect away from its separatist position in society.⁸² Furthermore, it must be noted that similar social changes are taking place within other sectarian groups, whose members share in the general economic prosperity of British Columbia. While some voices are heard to rise in protest, a widespread revolt against the tendencies does not seem too probable.

The Second World War did not appear to have the debilitating effect upon Baptist youth which was a result of World War I.⁸³ The churches made a definite effort to keep in touch with their own young people in uniform and, at the same time, sought to contact service personnel in nearby military camps and stations. The Soldiers' and Airmens'

⁸²See pp. 10-11.

⁸³See p. 106.

Christian Association, an interdenominational organization, evangelical in doctrinal persuasion, was one of the agencies which acted as a co-ordinating force in these efforts, and it received the support of many Baptist churches. This, and other organizations, such as the Salvation Army, brought together young people of various denominations, favoured the interchange of ideas, promoted personal evangelism, and, in general, sought to strengthen the witness of Christians in the Forces, as well as to challenge them to earnestly consider the pastorate or the mission field as a vocation. At the close of the war many young people, including both Regular and Convention Baptists, sought to prepare for full-time Christian service.

The war also gave impetus to proposals for more widespread fellowship of Baptist groups. An all-Canadian organization of Baptists had been the dream of many years. As early as 1880 the "Baptist Union of Canada" had been formed with the Hon. William McMaster as its first president. Despite the name, this organization never included Maritime or British Columbia Baptists, and Manitoba was included for only a brief period. Consequently, the "Baptist Union" was reorganized in 1888 to form the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec.⁸⁴

In 1900 a "National Baptist Convention" met in Winnipeg, and included representatives from all of Canada, but no permanent organization was initiated. A similar meeting took place at Ottawa in 1908, but the formation of a Canada-wide organization was opposed by Jarvis Street

⁸⁴Watson Kirkconnell, "Seven Years of Federation", Minutes of the Council of the Baptist Federation of Canada, 1951, p. 3.

Baptist Church in Toronto⁸⁵ and a number of McMaster University leaders, including C. J. Holman, a prominent Toronto lawyer.⁸⁶ Those in opposition to the plan felt that such a Union was premature.⁸⁷

Understandably, the matter of an all-Canadian Baptist fellowship lay dormant during the controversy of the 1920's. Nothing further was done to promote a nation-wide Baptist organization until September, 1943, when a committee of fourteen Convention Baptists met in Toronto to discuss the subject. This committee, with Dr. Watson Kirkconnell of McMaster University as chairman, was composed of representatives from three groups: the Baptist Union of Western Canada, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, and the United Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces. Dr. J. R. Sloat, the pastor of Olivet Church, New Westminster, represented British Columbia. As a result of these deliberations the Baptist Federation of Canada was formed in 1944.⁸⁸ In 1951 the Western Baptist was merged with the Canadian Baptist, which was published in Toronto.

The Baptist Federation has sought to operate with a minimum of organizational machinery and overhead. By nature, it involves the voluntary cooperation of three autonomous bodies in such matters as standards

⁸⁵See p. 114. At this time Jarvis Street Church was giving heavy financial support to Canadian Baptist work.

⁸⁶Holman was a member of Jarvis Street Church and figured largely in the modernist-fundamentalist controversy of the 1920's. He was the author of a number of pamphlets on the controversy and a supporter of Dr. Shields.

⁸⁷Letter from the Rev. H. F. Laflamme to Dr. Watson Kirkconnell, June 9, 1944, cited in Kirkconnell, op. cit., p. 4.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 10.

for ordination of ministers, ministerial superannuation, missions, ecumenical fellowship, education, and the publication of denominational literature. The Federation is, to some degree, a loosely-knit religious counterpart of Canadian political Confederation, and it shares many of Canada's regional separatistic tendencies.

The Federation participates in the fellowship of the Baptist World Alliance and is a member of the Canadian Council of Churches. Many Baptist leaders in the Federation feel that it should join the World Council of Churches.⁸⁹ The Ontario and Quebec Convention is favourable to this idea, but opposition of theologically conservative elements in both the Western Baptist Union and the Maritime Convention has blocked such a move.

The desire of British Columbia Convention Baptists for a wider fellowship found its expression in the Baptist Federation. In recent years a similar desire for some type of wider fellowship made itself manifest among Regular Baptists of the province. In their case, however, the goal was none too clear, and the path, thorny.

In the first years of its organization the Convention of Regular Baptists remained somewhat isolated, but sustained unofficial relationships with Baptist conservatives in United States and in Eastern Canada. In June, 1930, three Alberta churches formed the Regular Baptist Missionary Fellowship, but this modest group appears to have attracted little attention in British Columbia until the following year, when a brief

⁸⁹Kirkconnell, op. cit., p. 10.

account of the organization appeared in the B. C. Baptist Bulletin.⁹⁰ In 1934 the Alberta group founded the Western Baptist Bible College in Calgary, a small school which began to gain the support of some of the Regular Baptist churches in British Columbia.

There were, however, some differences between the Regular Baptists in British Columbia and those in Alberta. The latter were, in general, less "dispensational" in theology and more denominational in outlook. These characteristics were a result of the reaction of the Alberta group against the speculative prophetic teachings of William Aberhart. Aberhart was representative of the most extreme and individualistic type of sectarianism to be found among prairie Baptists and he had gathered such elements around him in his Prophetic Bible Institute.

The Regular Baptists of Alberta were at least one step removed from extreme sectarianism. Their anti-dispensational tendencies were strengthened by the influence of Toronto Baptist Seminary and its President, Dr. T. T. Shields, who was strongly denominational in viewpoint. Shield's doctrinal position was essentially that of a Reformed theologian, and in the pages of his weekly periodical, the Gospel Witness, he was most outspoken in his opposition to the dispensational views set forth in the Scofield Reference Bible. During this period two Regular Baptist leaders in Alberta, teachers at Western Baptist Bible College, both experienced a dramatic change from a dispensational to an anti-dispensational theological position. This reversal of view came largely as a result of their study

⁹⁰B. C. Baptist Bulletin, February 1931.

of the Scriptures and the Reformed Theology in preparation for their lectures.⁹¹

In 1941 the college in Calgary closed because of the war and, in 1945, the British Columbia Regular Baptists opened the Northwest Baptist Bible College with the support of the Alberta Fellowship. This school was first located in Port Coquitlam, but was moved to a new location in Vancouver in 1958. In 1959 the College received a Provincial Charter giving it power to grant theological degrees, and its name was changed to the Northwest Baptist Theological College. When the College was begun, not every Regular Baptist was an enthusiastic supporter, but the institution has proved to be a major influence in bringing a sense of direction and denominational identity to Regular Baptists. At present, almost one-half of the Regular Baptist pastors in British Columbia are graduates of the school.

Up to the 1940's there was a strong dispensational element within the Convention of Regular Baptists of British Columbia. Many of the pastors in the Regular Convention had closer affinities with their dispensationally-minded brethren in the United States than with Alberta. In 1944 Dr. R. L. Powell, the pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Tacoma, was guest speaker at the Annual Convention of Regular Baptists, held in Vancouver. On this occasion Dr. Powell suggested closer fellowship between Regular Baptists of British Columbia and the General Association

⁹¹Their new viewpoints were expressed in pamphlet form. See Morley R. Hall, The Blessed Hope versus A Sentimental Hope, [Calgary, no date] and G. R. Dawe, Christ Returning--When?, Calgary, 1938. Mr. Hall was the first to change his theological position.

of Regular Baptists, with which he was connected.⁹² The suggestion met with approval and in March, 1945, the Northwest Baptist Fellowship, later known as the International Baptist Fellowship, was organized. The new group was to meet semi-annually for conference and for inspirational fellowship. At first the venture appeared promising. Enthusiasm reached a high point in June, 1949, when a large number of American pastors were present at an International Fellowship Meeting in Mount Pleasant Church, Vancouver.⁹³ Soon after this, however, the organization began to lose its impetus and after a few years failed to function completely, although friendly personal relations continued to be maintained between some of the Canadian and American pastors. The reasons for the failure of the International Baptist Fellowship lay in the fact that the American group was almost solidly "dispensational" in theology and favoured a more loosely-knit type of denominational organization than their British Columbia brethren, who, in their theology, were moving away from dispensationalism. Furthermore, some of the British Columbia Regular Baptists had begun to advocate fellowship with a "rival" American organization, the Southern Baptists.

⁹²B. C. Baptist Bulletin, January 1945. The B. C. Baptist Bulletin became the Western Regular Baptist, in January, 1949, and from that time, until 1956, was published jointly by the British Columbia and the Alberta Regular Baptists. In July, 1956, this arrangement was dropped, at the request of Alberta, but the Regular Baptists of British Columbia continued to issue the periodical under the new name.

⁹³Western Regular Baptist, May-June 1949. Mount Pleasant Church was at that time an independent Baptist congregation. The Rev. Arnold Bennett had ceased to be pastor of the church. The fact that the International Fellowship Meeting was invited to Mount Pleasant was an evidence that the church was moving back in the direction of some denominational connection. See p. 172 of this thesis.

The Southern Baptists had made rapid progress in the Pacific Northwest States during the post-war period and had organized the Baptist General Convention of Oregon, with the Rev. Dr. R. E. Milam as its Executive Secretary-Treasurer. This organization was soon extended to include the State of Washington. In the spring of 1951, Dr. Milam was invited to speak at a conference of British Columbia Regular Baptist pastors which was held at the Northwest Baptist Bible College. His account of Southern Baptist success attracted wide interest. On May 15, 1951, the Regular Baptist Executive Council appointed three of the pastors to attend, as unofficial "observers", at the Southern Baptist Regional Conference in Portland during August.⁹⁴ Those appointed were the Rev. L. G. Baker, Convention President; the Rev. H. C. Phillips, of Ruth Morton Memorial Church; and the Rev. Ross MacPherson, of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Vancouver. Of these, only the Rev. Ross MacPherson was able to attend, and he returned to Vancouver with a very favourable report.⁹⁵ This was the beginning of a number of contacts between the two Conventions.

In June, 1952, Dr. J. D. Grey, President of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Dr. R. E. Milam were guest speakers at the annual Regular Baptist Convention in Vancouver.⁹⁶ As a result of their visit, many Regular Baptists caught a glimpse of the electrifying possibilities of

⁹⁴Regular Baptist Council Minutes, May 15, 1951.

⁹⁵Western Regular Baptist, October 1951.

⁹⁶Ibid., September 1952.

further fellowship with Southern Baptists. The Convention President, the Rev. L. G. Baker, had pleasant memories of past kindnesses bestowed upon Canadian missionaries in Manchuria.⁹⁷ Many of the pastors were impressed with Southern Baptist methods, which involved visitation evangelism, extensive use of literature, and a "pupil-centred" approach to Sunday School teaching. Some pastors, especially the Rev. Ross MacPherson, pressed for immediate affiliation with Southern Baptists. On the other hand, there were other pastors, particularly those who were more "dispensational" in outlook, who began vigorously to oppose any such action. Among this latter group were most of the older men who had participated in the controversies of the 1920's. There was personal resentment against MacPherson, who was from a Pentecostal background, who had no personal knowledge of past Baptist history in British Columbia, and who was, by nature, impetuous. It was further charged that Southern Baptists contained modernistic elements, that they practised "close communion", that they were "worldly" in attitude, and that, in some tobacco-growing areas of the South, they sanctioned the use of tobacco.⁹⁸ There was some weight to all of these charges, but objectors tended to lose sight of the

⁹⁷See p. 170.

⁹⁸Those opposed to Southern Baptists made use of the arguments found in Noel Smith, Should a Bible Believing Baptist Support the Co-operative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention?, Springfield, Missouri, Baptist Bible Tribune, 1952. The question of the Southern Baptist position on racial segregation does not seem to have figured in the controversy among Regular Baptists. Most British Columbians had very little first-hand knowledge regarding the issue, and official statements of Southern Baptists implied that the racial problem was gradually being solved.

fact that Southern Baptists were by no means monolithic. The Oregon-Washington Convention was, in general, more sectarian in outlook than most Southern Baptists, and displayed strong "Landmarker" tendencies.⁹⁹

Social Credit was becoming a byword in British Columbia during the period between the indecisive provincial election of June, 1952, and the Social Credit victory of June 1953. In an action reminiscent of the days of H. C. Brewster,¹⁰⁰ the Rev. Ross MacPherson openly declared himself to be a Social Credit supporter. He may have been encouraged to do this by the fact that in the United States, Baptists tended to make somewhat public political commitments. A number of the other pastors followed MacPherson's lead. The majority of his fellow pastors tended to regard his action with some degree of dismay. Even those who were privately favourable to Social Credit felt that MacPherson was being unwise as a minister of the Gospel and that he should seek to manifest political neutrality.¹⁰¹ MacPherson began to take on the image of a

⁹⁹Note the persistence of "Landmarker" doctrine in Oregon. See p. 72.

¹⁰⁰See pp. 102-104.

¹⁰¹It would appear that the Social Credit Party has a good deal of support among the sects of British Columbia, but a positive correlation between theological conservatism and political conservatism cannot be conclusively demonstrated. There is a need for greater research in this area, but such research may not be fruitful. The investigator meets with a high degree of resistance and a deliberate absence of statistics. Neither churches nor political parties consider such research to be in their own best interests. Churches do not wish to be identified with any political party and political parties do not wish to be identified with any particular church. The history of Canadian Baptists would seem to indicate that they are quick to rebel against political corruption and respond at the polls to a political leader who has an image of personal integrity, particularly if such a leader is one of their own denomination. These factors make it simple for some Baptists to cross party lines. This

"young man in too big a hurry".

In 1953, MacPherson precipitated a strong surge of opposition to himself by leading Emmanuel Church into affiliation with the Baptist General Convention of Oregon-Washington. The name of the church was changed to Kingcrest Southern Baptist Church and the congregation retained its membership in the Regular Baptist Convention.¹⁰² This so-called "dual affiliation" was a cause for much criticism. Since the action was reminiscent of the days of the B. C. Missionary Council,¹⁰³ it was interpreted as a move in opposition to the Regular Baptists.¹⁰⁴

Kingcrest Church, after the "Landmarker" fashion, began to restrict its communion service to members of the local congregation. MacPherson defended this position on the ground that the Regular Baptist Statement of Faith specified "close communion".¹⁰⁵ The Statement did not really specify this sort of "close communion" however,¹⁰⁶ and MacPherson's opponents were quick to point this out. The Pastor of Kingcrest

is understandable, since a man will change his vote quicker than he will change his religious convictions. This principle seems to be born out in the apparent popularity among Baptists of H. C. Brewster, William Aberhart, E. C. Manning, T. C. Douglas, and John Diefenbaker. Conversely, President Truman lacked this image and was not particularly popular among those of his own denomination in the United States.

¹⁰²Regular Baptist Council Minutes, January 19, 1954.

¹⁰³See p. 145.

¹⁰⁴Regular Baptist Council Minutes, February 16, 1954.

¹⁰⁵MacPherson stated his case in a discussion on the floor of the 1954 Annual Convention.

¹⁰⁶See p. 159, comments of Dr. J. B. Rowell upon the Statement of Faith.

had, nevertheless, touched a "sore spot", for no great stress had been placed upon "close communion" for many years and some of the Regular Baptist churches were virtually "open communion" in practice.

As a result of the controversy, Kingcrest Church ceased to support the Regular Baptists. Eventually, in 1955, it withdrew from the Regular Baptist Convention,¹⁰⁷ and was joined by two other smaller churches in Burnaby and Whalley. The Southern Baptist issue was also the cause of a division in the First Baptist Church, Kamloops. Another Southern Baptist cause, King's Road Church in North Vancouver, was organized in 1954 around a nucleus of Regular Baptists, but never joined the Regular Convention.

For some time after the controversy there were fears among Regular Baptists and Convention Baptists that the Southern Baptists in British Columbia might become a formidable "third force". Up to the present, however, the Southern Baptist movement has failed to "catch fire", and while there has been progress in Southern Baptist churches, there has been no spectacular growth. In 1956 Mr. MacPherson resigned from the Kingcrest Church and, until early in 1964, was secularly employed.

The Southern Baptists of Canada expected whole-hearted moral and financial support from the Southern Baptist Convention. This support has only partly materialized. Some financial aid has been given, but the Southern Baptist Convention has refused to seat "messengers" from Canada

¹⁰⁷Regular Baptist Council Minutes, November 15, 1955.

at its Annual Convention.¹⁰⁸ This refusal was a result of negotiations between the Baptist Federation of Canada and the Southern Baptist Convention. The Federation was opposed to such recognition being given to Canadian Southern Baptist churches, and the Southern Convention did not wish to jeopardize its friendly relationship to the Federation within the Baptist World Alliance.¹⁰⁹ In 1963 the Southern Baptists in British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan formed their own organization, the Canadian Southern Baptist Conference. It is not entirely clear as to what may be the future relation of the churches in this organization to Southern Baptists of the United States.

The Southern Baptist movement arose as a protest against inter-denominationalism within the Regular Baptist Convention. It is significant that it gained the support of a number of students from the denominational school at Port Coquitlam. In essence, it was an attempt to gain a denominational outlook by "importing" it. The movement failed to properly assess the strength of Canadian national feeling. Even in British Columbia it is now evident that an American organizational connection is more of a hinderance than a help to a Baptist group. The effect of the Southern Baptist issue upon Regular Baptists has been to reinforce their determination to maintain their denominational identity and the Regular Baptist Convention now appears to have gained a fair degree of solidarity.

¹⁰⁸Canadian messengers have been seated at the Oregon-Washington General Convention meetings however.

¹⁰⁹Minutes and Reports of the Annual Meeting of the Council of the Baptist Federation of Canada, 1958, pp. 12-13, 25.

In recent years centripetal rather than centrifugal forces have been evident among Regular Baptists. Former animosities have died away. In 1961 the Maple Ridge Baptist Church in Haney¹¹⁰ rejoined the Regular Baptist Convention. In 1963 a graduate of the Northwest Baptist Theological College, Mr. William Clayton, became pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in Vancouver.¹¹¹ Over the years cordial links have been established between Regular Baptists and other groups of similar doctrinal position, particularly the German Baptists and the Mennonite Brethren. There are young people from both of the latter groups in the student body of the Northwest Baptist Theological College in Vancouver.

The Southern Baptist controversy has caused Regular Baptists to cease any attempt to find fellowship with American churches. At present, plans for a Trans-Canada Fellowship are well advanced,¹¹² and even now are beginning to reflect the social and political pattern of the nation.

In 1933, the dominating personality of Dr. T. T. Shields had been the chief reason for the separation of the Fellowship of Independent Baptist Churches from the ranks of Regular Baptists in Eastern Canada. When Dr. Shields left the Regular Baptist Union of Ontario and Quebec in 1949, the chief obstacle to re-union with the Independent Fellowship was removed. In 1953 this merger took place under the name of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists in Canada.

¹¹⁰See p. 171.

¹¹¹See p. 163. Mr. Clayton was formerly the pastor of Parksville Regular Baptist Church, Parksville, B. C.

¹¹²See pp. 6-7.

The new Fellowship made overtures to the two Regular Baptist groups in Alberta and in British Columbia regarding national cooperation.¹¹³ The Baptists of the West responded to the plan with considerable enthusiasm. No significant theological differences existed which might preclude such a merger and there appeared to be definite practical advantages to the proposal. Home and foreign mission work would be strengthened. The larger number of churches would make the publication of Canadian periodicals and Sunday School literature financially feasible. Furthermore, a Canada-wide organization would be a means of united witness to the nation. This did not mean that the three Baptist groups felt there was any theological imperative which demanded organizational unity. A unity of doctrine and purpose was already assumed to exist and the external organization would testify to the world regarding this unity.

In 1961 the Trans-Canada Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches was launched in the form of a flexible cooperation between the three bodies and involved some 320 churches. A more concrete organization was to be set up later as the circumstances demanded. In the autumn of 1963 the Alberta Fellowship joined as one closely-knit convention with the Evangelical Baptists in the East.¹¹⁴ There are no indications at present that British Columbia will follow in similar course. On the contrary, in keeping with the typical separatist spirit of the province, it seems more likely that British Columbia Baptists will seek to hold out for "Better

¹¹³Regular Baptist Council Minutes, December 20, 1955.

¹¹⁴The Alberta churches plan to continue their provincial organizational structure however.

Terms" and a fairly high degree of autonomy within the framework of the Trans-Canada Fellowship.

In recent years there have been some attempts to promote fellowship between the Regular Baptists and the Convention Baptists. Friendly relationships do exist, and over the years there has been some interchange of members by letters of transfer between the two groups. There are some who have suggested that a liaison between the two groups is a possibility. However there would seem to be little likelihood of such a move. Each group has developed independently upon national lines and each organization has become, for all intents and purposes, a distinct denomination.

The difference between Baptists in the Baptist Federation of Canada and Baptists in the Trans-Canada Fellowship is based upon something more than the crystalization of their respective organizations and institutions. Each group expresses some of the distinctions which have been inherent in Baptists from the beginning of their history.

In comparison to "Fellowship" Baptists, "Federation" Baptists resemble the General Baptists of an earlier era and have closer affinities with the English Baptists of today. In general, their theology is more experiential in outlook and less Calvinistic in tone. Rejecting the idea of creedal tests, the Federation includes within its scope those of liberal, neo-orthodox, and evangelical persuasion. There is a definite tendency toward "open communion" and, in some cases, toward "open membership".¹¹⁵ In matters of church government, pure congregationalism has

¹¹⁵This term describes the practice, not uncommon in England, of admitting to membership in a Baptist church those who have not been baptized by immersion.

given way to a system which may be described as a form of "modified presbyterianism". It will be remembered that a similar development took place among General Baptists in England.¹¹⁶

In contrast, the Baptists in the Trans-Canada Fellowship are in many respects the spiritual successors of the Particular Baptists of England, the school of thought which tended to predominate in the United States. In the early years of Baptist development in Canada this view was introduced by American missionaries and immigrants. It is understandable, therefore, that Fellowship Baptists are more receptive to American than to English Baptist influences. Contrasted with that of Federation Baptists, the theology of Fellowship Baptists is more confessional in emphasis, with evangelical creedal tests. Ideas of "open membership" are rejected and the principle of "close communion" continues to gain considerable support. The autonomy of the local church is stressed.

While the contrasts described above are valid, in a general way, for the whole of Canada, it should be noted that the western wing of each national organization differs from the eastern wing. Furthermore, from east to west, these differences seem to heighten, and are particularly evident in the province of British Columbia. Collectively, the Baptists of British Columbia appear to be more individualistic in mental attitude, more "sectarian" in social outlook, more American in their affinities, and, in the case of Convention Baptists, more conservative in theology

¹¹⁶See p. 32.

than Baptists in the East. This independent spirit of their brethren beyond the "barrier of the Rockies" has sometimes proved to be frustrating and enigmatic to Baptists of Eastern Canada, and even of the Prairies. That this "separatism" of British Columbians has a counterpart in the political life of the province is demonstrated by the success of the Social Credit Party.¹¹⁷

The "peculiarities" of British Columbia Baptists manifest themselves in various ways. Although part of the Baptist Union of Western Canada, Convention Baptists still maintain their own provincial organization,¹¹⁸ to which, in practice, they give their basic allegiance.¹¹⁹ Regular Baptists, with a foreign mission field and a theological college which are directly responsible to their Convention, have a more fully-developed denominational program than the rest of their brethren within the Trans-Canada Fellowship. Another manifestation of "peculiarity" is the fact that, in all of Canada, the only organized body

¹¹⁷It would seem that the present strength of Social Credit in British Columbia is based on a number of factors. It began as the party of "protest" and still continues as such in the eyes of many people. Social Credit has evidently been successful in wedding together the elements of economic and social conservatism in the province. It has gained the image of the party of progress and upward social mobility, the "only practical alternative" to socialism. Social Credit is also an expression of British Columbia's provincialism and distrust of the Federal Government.

¹¹⁸One significant reason for this is the "competition" of the Regular Baptists. If Convention Baptists were to dissolve the provincial unit of organization, Regular Baptists would automatically become the "largest Convention" in British Columbia.

¹¹⁹It is significant that they are known as "Convention Baptists", not "Union Baptists".

which holds to "Landmarker" views is the recently-formed Canadian Southern Baptist Conference, whose membership is confined almost entirely to British Columbia and Alberta. It should also be observed that Convention and Regular Baptists in British Columbia hold more in common, in terms of doctrine and outlook, than do their respective counterparts in Eastern Canada. All of these traits of British Columbia Baptists are explainable in terms of the general historical development of the province and the struggle of Baptists to maintain themselves as a "sect-type" of religious expression.

The question arises as to whether further struggle is indicated. The present situation among Regular Baptists seems to have reached a degree of stability but is by no means static. Among Regular Baptists there are forces at work which tend to favour movement toward a "church-type" structure, while other forces favour the maintenance of "sectarianism". Continuing prosperity and social mobility are altering the complexion of the Regular Baptist churches. The churches are gaining some members from the "upper-middle" class. Professional men are more in evidence.¹²⁰ There are manifestations of "second-generation" Christianity¹²¹ and, chiefly because of this, Regular Baptists have lost members to other sects.

¹²⁰An interesting illustration of this is to be found in the fact that the only two doctors in the South Delta area of the Lower Mainland are active members in the congregation of South Delta Regular Baptist Church, and the only two doctors at Enderby, B. C. are prominent leaders in the local Regular Baptist Church.

¹²¹See p. 11, cited comments of S. D. Clark.

The forces do not work in one direction only, however, and Regular Baptist losses to other sects tend to be offset by membership gains, through evangelism, from among the socially uprooted. At the other end of the social spectrum, membership gains are, to some degree, offset by losses to the secular world or to churches of liberal persuasion. It should be remembered that a Baptist church is not a "closed" organization basically confined to its membership and their descendents. Rejection of infant baptism, along with stress upon evangelism, "primary religious experience",¹²² and adult commitment, have made Baptists much more socially "open" than any of the other major denominations. An apparent failure to realize this is the basic fallacy of all sociological approaches which contend that theology is economically determined. The observations of S. D. Clark, for example, display this weakness. Not all the "second generation" are brought into the membership of Baptist churches and many members are gained from "outside" the church families. In such a situation the theology of the sect becomes the rallying-point around which the structure group is organized and the doctrinal convictions of the sect's leadership become a key to the future structure of the organization.¹²³ Those holding views which are fundamentally divergent from the leadership tend to drop out of the group, regardless of their social and economic class.

¹²²See p. 22, footnote 34, for comments of Walter H. Clark regarding "primary religious experience".

¹²³Note the observations which were made regarding the role of leadership, pp. 19-21, 30.

For Regular Baptists, the very principles of Christianity are at stake in the "sect" versus "social accommodation" issue. Regular Baptists can envisage no rapprochement between Christianity and our Post-Christian society. Nor do they regard the present ecumenical movement to be the answer to Christianity's lack of influence upon the present age. Baptists in the Trans-Canada Fellowship have taken a strong stand against current ecumenism, which they regard as a drift toward Roman Catholicism.¹²⁴

In contrast, many leaders among Convention Baptists, particularly in Eastern Canada, have become strong supporters of the ecumenical movement.¹²⁵ This has resulted in a definite cleavage of opinion between Baptists within the Baptist Federation.

In British Columbia, the Rev. Dr. J. Gordon Jones, a prominent Convention Baptist and former pastor of First Baptist Church, Vancouver, was the Protestant speaker at a mass rally of Roman Catholics and Protestants held in Vancouver on January 26, 1964.¹²⁶ The announcement of Dr. Jones' participation in this rally brought the public opposition of

¹²⁴The Trans-Canada Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists is associated with other Baptists of like persuasion in the newly-organized Fundamental Baptist Congress of North America. The first sessions of the Congress were held in the large Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, from September 30 to October 3, 1963, with over 5,000 present, including over 2,000 pastors from the major fundamentalist Baptist groups in North America. Dr. J. H. Pickford, Dean of the Northwest Baptist Theological College, Vancouver, was one of the principal speakers. The Congress declared itself to be "unalterably opposed to the present ecumenical movement". The Biblical Faith of Baptists, Detroit, Fundamental Baptist Congress of North America, 1964, p. 8.

¹²⁵Canadian Baptist, March 1, 1964, p. 9.

¹²⁶Province, January 27, 1964.

another Convention Baptist, the Rev. David Forbes of Reidville Baptist Church, North Surrey, who stated that "any Baptist taking part in the ecumenical movement can only represent himself, but not the churches of the convention".¹²⁷ Mr. Forbes also wrote an article in the Canadian Baptist which delineated his position.¹²⁸ At present, division within the ranks of Convention Baptists is becoming quite evident, with the sectarian and theologically conservative forces within the Federation arraying themselves against the supporters of the ecumenical movement. The issue has yet to be resolved.

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that, in general, Baptists in British Columbia are moving in the direction of the "middle class". The situation seems to indicate an upward social mobility rather than a broadening of the social appeal of Baptists. Post-war prosperity has had a definite impact on the churches and many attractive church buildings have been erected since the Second World War. In theology there has been a noticeable shift in eschatology, that realm of doctrine which is most susceptible to modification on the basis of change in social outlook. Dispensationalism appears to be definitely on the wane in Baptist circles and millennial expectations tend to be regarded as matters for academic discussion rather than "truths that grip the soul". Nor is there any sign of a chiliastic upsurge, a reactionary movement which would initiate an additional group of Baptists in the province. The Pentecostal

¹²⁷Vancouver Sun, January 18, 1964.

¹²⁸Canadian Baptist, March 1, 1964, pp. 8-9.

churches and other smaller sects have occupied social areas vacated by Baptists.

It is possible that the present tendencies among Baptists may be arrested. The economic opportunities of frontier British Columbia were of such a nature that a premium was placed upon physical strength and endurance. At the physical level the capabilities of most men are, at least to some extent, relatively equal. The demands of modern technology are placing a high premium on academic and technical performance. In future, upward social mobility may be possible only for those who have intellectual competence and educational opportunity. Thus the social structure of Canada may become more and more stratified. A stratified social structure could lead to greater stratification in the religious life of British Columbia and the nation. It may be, as S. D. Clark suggests, "that the religious sect of today may be the religious sect of tomorrow",¹²⁹ and that sectarian Baptists may maintain a place in Canadian society similar to that which they have at present. For those who accept the idea of the inevitability of a religious "caste" system, such a situation is to be expected. For those who insist that the essence of the Gospel of Christ calls for some wider concept, the present lessening of the Baptists' historic contact with the lower economic groups is a source of concern, and the future possibility that the Baptist faith may become, predominantly, a "middle-class religion" is a disquieting prospect.

¹²⁹S. D. Clark, "Religious Organization and the Rise of the Canadian Nation, 1850-85", Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1944, p. 96.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DISTRIBUTION OF DENOMINATIONS BY CLASS¹

Statistics for the United States, given in percentages.

	<u>Upper</u>	<u>Middle</u>	<u>Lower</u>
National sample	13.1	30.7	56.2
All Protestant groups	13.8	32.6	53.6
Episcopal	24.1	33.7	42.2
Congregational	23.9	42.6	33.5
Presbyterian	21.9	40.0	38.1
Reformed	19.1	31.3	49.6
Methodist	12.7	35.6	51.7
Lutheran	10.9	36.1	53.0
Christian (Disciples)	10.0	35.4	54.6
Roman Catholic	8.7	24.7	66.6
Baptist	8.0	24.0	68.0
Smaller bodies	10.0	27.3	62.7
Undesignated	12.4	24.1	63.5

¹Statistics from a survey conducted for the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America [now the National Council] in 1948 and cited in Hugh T. Kerr, What Divides Protestants Today, New York, Association Press, 1958, pp. 46-47.

APPENDIX B /

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE BAPTIST CONVENTION OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC ON CHURCH UNION²

On behalf of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec we desire to express to the united Committees of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational bodies our deep appreciation of the Christian courtesy in inviting us to conference with a special Committee on the question of the union of Protestant Christian bodies in Canada. We also desire to congratulate them on the substantial progress which appears to have been made toward such a union by the three bodies which have hitherto been engaged in these negotiations. In regard to our relation to this movement permit us to present the following statement as expressive of the position which we feel compelled to take:-

The Baptist people rejoice in all the manifestations of mutual love among the followers of Jesus Christ and seek on their own part to cultivate a holy fellowship with all Christians. They recognize with thankfulness the gracious operation of the Spirit of God among their brethren of other denominations and feel themselves to be one with them in many of those things which concern the progress of the Kingdom of God on earth. At the same time they do not admit that the organic union of all Christians is an essential condition of Christian unity or even necessarily promotive of it. For Christians who differ on questions which some of them hold to be of vital importance it is surely better to admit the impracticability of corporate union than to seek to compass such a Union at the cost of sacrificing cherished convictions.

In their organization of independent local churches and in their associational gatherings and conventions Baptists have not infrequently made use of brief statements of doctrines which they hold to be Christian, as a basis of mutual co-operation, but do not seek to establish a uniform confession for all their churches, nor do they regard assent to any fixed confessional statement as a pre-requisite to membership in a Baptist church or to a place in the Baptist ministry. They feel that the free and independent interpretation of the Scriptures by each man for himself, combined with the spirit of love and obedience, is not only promotive of earnest reflection on divine things and strength of personal conviction, but is a surer and more enduring way of securing unity among Christians. They oppose any tendency to erect a human

²As quoted, in its entirety, in Claris E. Silcox, Church Union in Canada, New York, Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933, pp. 471-472.

standard of authority over the conscience, to lessen the sense of direct personal responsibility to God, or to obscure the consciousness of immediate relationships with Him. Accordingly, while they entertain a deep respect for various historic Christian creeds they are not solicitous to identify themselves with these creeds or to claim any organic relation with the churches that established them as standards of belief.

The Baptist people regard all truly religious affiliations as reposing, on the one hand, on God's gracious self-communication to human souls, and on the other hand, on each man's free acceptance to the Divine grace and obedience to the Divine Will. As we understand the Scriptures, only those who are the subjects of such a spiritual experience are capable of participation in Christian fellowship or entitled to membership in a Christian church. Believing, therefore, in the spirituality of the Christian church, that is, that a Christian church is constituted by voluntary union of those alone who by personal repentance and faith,--not by natural birth, nor by proxy, nor by ceremony, nor by any overt act of the Church,--have come into fellowship with God in Christ, they do not regard the claim to ecclesiastical succession in any of its forms as a matter of concern to them. They acknowledge an historical succession from Christ and his apostles; but its nature is spiritual, not ecclesiastical; coming through personal influence and the proclamation of the Gospel, not by means of forms, rites, or ceremonies.

The same principle prevents them from admitting knowingly to Church membership any except those who have been spiritually renewed. Thus they cannot regard the children of Christian parents as entitled by birth or membership in a Christian household to a place in a Christian church or as proper subjects of its ordinances. It cannot be granted that the Christian ordinances of Baptism or the Lord's Supper convey in any sense to their recipients the spiritual grace which they symbolize, for they have meaning and value, only as they express the faith and grace already possessed by those who in these acts of obedience confess their relation to Christ. Hence the practice of infant baptism and the consequences which follow it are a fatal impediment to organic union between the Baptists and Paedo-Baptist churches. Hence also the impossibility of Baptists consenting to an alteration of the original mode of baptism, because without the immersion its representation of the believer's union with Christ in His death and resurrection is lost. Further, the doctrine of the spirituality of the Christian church demands that it avoid all alliance with secular authorities. Such alliances have been fruitful of evil.

The Baptist belief in the immediacy of each man's relations with God and in the necessity of personal faith in Christ in order to salvation carries with it the rejection of all forms of church polity, which admit the spiritual distinction of clergy and laity or the

subjection of the individual Christian to any spiritual authority but Christ himself. This does not exclude the necessary disciplinary function of the local church, but in reality, carries with it the dignity and autonomy of that organization and its freedom from all subjection to a higher authority.

It is because of these principles which represent to them the Divine Will that the Baptists find it necessary to maintain a separate organized existence. In relation to these matters, they can feel themselves under a Divinely imposed obligation to propagate their views throughout the world.

APPENDIX C

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS FOR THE MAJOR DENOMINATIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA³

Year	Total Population	Baptist	Anglican	Lutheran	Mennonite	Pentecostal	Presbyterian	Roman Catholic	United Church
1961	1,629,082	49,481	367,096	100,393	19,932	19,998	90,093	285,184	504,317
1951	1,165,210	39,445	315,469	60,641	15,387	11,781	97,151	168,016	341,914
1941	817,861	29,860	246,191	41,884	5,119	5,249	94,554	109,929	201,357
1931	694,263	23,577	206,867	36,938	1,095	2,298	84,941	88,106	166,233
1921	524,582	20,225	161,494	17,709	173	247	123,419	64,180	<u>Methodist</u> 65,019
1911	392,480	17,325	101,582	19,483	191	2	82,735	58,760	52,463
1901	178,657	6,586	41,457	5,395	11	-	34,478	34,020	25,329
1891	98,173	3,167	24,196	2,129	-	-	15,655	21,350	14,646
1881	49,459	575	10,913	632	-	-	5,752	14,141	4,938

³Statistics for 1881-1951 from Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1951, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1953, vol. 10, Table 36. Figures for 1961 are found in Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1961, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1962, vol. 1, part 2, Table 44.

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