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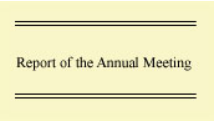

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RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION AND THE RISE OF THE CANADIAN NATION, 1850-85

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IN 1824 the Canada Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed. In 1924 the United Church of Canada came into being. The story of Methodist development in Canada within this one-hundred year period appears at first glance to be very largely a story of successful efforts to bring about the independence of the church of outside controls, and the union within one body of the different Methodist groups in the country. That was particularly true of developments within the period from 1850 to 1885. In 1850 there were five distinct Methodist churches in Canada and only a few less in the Maritime Provinces, most of them owing some attachment to outside ecclesiastical bodies. By 1885 these various churches had become united within one self-governing religious denomination—the Methodist Church of Canada.

Developments within the other leading Protestant denominations were not unlike those which took place within Methodism. With them, also, the movement seemed to have been one of increasing union within the national community, and, again, this was particularly true of the period from 1850 to 1885. Though the Church of England faced no problem of disunity, except as related to the conflict between high church and evangelical elements, the need of identifying itself more closely with the Canadian national community led first to the organization of synods within the various dioceses, beginning in 1857, then to the organization of provincial synods, beginning in 1861, and eventually to the organization of a general synod for Canada in 1893. By means of these constitutional adjustments, the Church of England in Canada emerged in fact as well as in name. The achievements of Presbyterianism in the same period were even more spectacular. In 1844 there were eleven separate Presbyterian churches in Canada and the Maritime Provinces, many of them closely tied up with mother churches in Scotland. By 1875 these eleven churches had given way to the one self-governing national church—the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The development of the other Protestant denominations followed very much the same pattern. Lutherans, Baptists, and Disciples of Christ, to mention only the more important, moved steadily in the direction of a closer identification with the Canadian national community during the years from 1850 to 1885.

The conclusion, therefore, would seem to be that the period from 1850 to 1885 was one characterized by a growing national consciousness within all the churches in Canada, not excepting, indeed, the Roman Catholic Church. Religious bodies which had grown up in the country without any close relationship to the community in which they operated had come increasingly to identify themselves with that community in the form of the Canadian nation. The striking coincidences, within this period, in the development of religious, political, and economic organization appeared particularly to support the thesis that the movement in the direction of unity and national autonomy was a movement characteristic of all forms of association, including churches. Efforts of religious bodies to strengthen

denominational organization and means of self-government derived support from, and in turn provided support to, such efforts in the political and economic field.

The history of the larger denominations after 1885 seems to confirm the view that the development of religious organization has been closely related to the development of a united autonomous nation. The union of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches in 1924 might well be considered as simply another step in the direction of a complete uniting of religious forces—or, at least, of Protestant religious forces—within the national community. Strengthening of means of denominational co-operation has been accompanied by a weakening of doctrinal differences. The increasing social consciousness of the churches has led not only to a closer identification with the national community but to an increasing awareness of the fact that the differences within their teachings were of little significance in relation to their common interest in promoting the cause of Christianity. It is not very easy to determine today, from the character of the religious service, the denominational affiliation of the particular Protestant church one may find himself in. War and depression have emphasized the singleness of purpose of religious organization.

These facts have been well recognized, and their significance is not questioned here. The movement towards closer union within the national community has certainly been one of the striking characteristics of recent developments in religious organization in other countries as well as in Canada.[1] It may be questioned, however, whether this movement has proceeded in as unqualified a fashion as many church historians have assumed. The church historian has almost invariably been an historian associated with one of the large denominations; only such denominations can support schools of theology on a sufficiently high academic level to promote research in church history. The result is that a biased view of religious development has tended to prevail. Church history has been written very largely in terms of the history of those denominations which have attained a position of respectability in the community; only passing notice has been given to the role of religious movements operating on the social fringe of the community. This has been particularly true of church history in Canada. Developments of the past have been viewed in relationship to the position of the larger denominations of today; an evolutionary conception of growth has been accepted. The result, it is submitted, is a distorted picture. It would be no more unjustifiable to view religious developments in Canada as culminating in the rise of the Jehovah Witnesses, than it is to view such developments as culminating in the formation of the United Church of Canada. When religious developments in Canada are viewed as a whole, rather than as something relating simply to the larger denominations, a very different picture emerges. It becomes evident then that the movement within religious organization in the direction of a closer union within the community has almost invariably been accompanied by a movement in the opposite direction of division and separation from the community.

This was true of religious developments within Nova Scotia after 1760 with the growth of Protestant settlement and the establishment in the

[1]Cf. H. Paul Douglas and E. deS. Brunner, *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution* (New York, 1935).

country of Protestant churches. Congregationalism, which was carried over from New England as a part of the social structure of the village community, shortly broke up into a number of divided churches in Nova Scotia as a result of the religious revival promoted by Henry Alline. The Newlight movement involved a disintegration of the ties of church and village and the organization of religion free of any entanglements with the community; the worldliness of the church gave way to the other-worldliness of the sect. Similarly, efforts of the Church of England to secure its position as the established church of the province received a sharp check with the rise of the Methodist movement under William Black which, like the Newlight movement, disavowed temporal ties of any sort. Newlightism and Methodism represented a break away from a traditional order of political patronage and social status and a re-assertion of the purely religious message of individual salvation. It was no accident that these movements grew up during the period of the American War of Independence and the migration of United Empire Loyalists. Revolution and migration imposed heavy strains upon both the political ties of Empire and the social ties of the local village. To a population cut off from the traditional controls of a secular society, the religious message of the evangelical sect provided a new basis for fellowship and belief.

By the end of the century, the Newlight and Methodist movements had become the dominant forces in the religious life of Nova Scotia and also of New Brunswick. Striking changes, however, by then had become apparent in the character of these movements. With the shift of the Newlights to a Baptist position and the organization of a Baptist Association in 1800, and with the break of the Methodists from American sectarianism and their tie with the English Wesleyan Conference in the same year, there emerged out of the earlier Newlight and Methodist evangelical sects the Baptist and Wesleyan Methodist churches closely associated with the political-social order of the community which they served. These developments are the sort seized upon by the church historian in support of the view that a movement towards union and autonomy has characterized the growth of churches in the country. The important fact is overlooked that the establishment of Baptist and Methodist denominational organization in 1800 was followed by the emergence of new evangelical sects—the Newlights as a religious group separate from the Baptists, the Freewill Baptists, the Scotch Baptists, Bible Christians, Primitive Methodists, Methodist Protestants, Campbellites, and others. Efforts of the Baptist and Methodist churches to identify their interests more closely with the interests of the community—evident, for instance, in the support given to the establishment of educational institutions and to temperance reform—led to a strengthening of their social position, but at the price of weakening their position of religious leadership among those masses of the population standing on the social fringe of the community. The growth of the timber trade and of trade with the West Indies, and the rise of the shipbuilding industry, brought new wealth to the Maritime Provinces and supported tendencies towards a sharpening of class divisions within the colonial society, but these developments also promoted increased mobility of population and the extension of settlement into areas of the country hitherto populated only by Indians and Acadian French. It was within these areas of change of population that the newer evangelical sects gained their chief support.

The Freewill Baptist movement grew very rapidly in western Nova Scotia and in New Brunswick, the Scotch Baptists and Bible Christians exerted their greatest influence in Prince Edward Island, while such sects as the Primitive Methodists were most active in the rapidly growing town of Saint John. The principle of the sect, of separation of the religious body from the community, persisted in the religious organization of the Maritime Provinces at least until well past the end of the first half of the nineteenth century. The reason is to be found in the persistence during this period of a condition where the opening up of new areas of social life offered challenges to a traditional order of social status in the community.

If attention is directed to Canada, much the same pattern is evident in the development of religious organization. The spread of Methodist and Baptist movements from the United States into Canada followed the rapid settlement of the country with the conclusion of the American War of Independence in 1783 and the Indian War in the West in 1795. The early Methodist and Baptist preachers, notwithstanding charges by spokesmen of the traditional churches that they were foreign agitators intent on promoting Republican ideas of government, were interested in only one thing—the salvation of individual souls. They interpreted their function as one which had nothing to do with the jurisdiction of states or philosophies of political parties. Thus they challenged the political privileges and claims of the Churches of England and Scotland, not by attacking these churches, but by withdrawing themselves from the community and promoting the establishment of an order of society on a purely spiritual basis. This character of the early Methodist movement needs to be emphasized in particular because of the tendency to associate the name of the politically-minded Egerton Ryerson so closely with its development, overlooking the fact that the movement had existed for over a quarter of a century in the country before the Ryerson brothers joined its ranks. During that earlier period of Methodist growth, the movement assumed very much the character of a religious sect.

The pamphlet written by Egerton Ryerson attacking the position taken by the Rev. John Strachan in promoting the cause of the Church of England represented a fundamental shift in the Methodist viewpoint. The Methodist and Baptist movements had grown out of the social situation of the backwoods community. With overseas immigration, particularly of people with wealth, and the growth of towns, strains within the organization of these evangelical sects became evident, and adjustment involved a strengthening of ties with the community. Union of the Canadian Methodists and English Wesleyans in 1832, which gave rise to the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Canada, involved an almost complete abandonment of the sect principle of separation from the secular world. The growing importance of the Methodist religious journal—the *Christian Guardian*—, and the increasing participation of Methodist leaders in politics, brought new sources of strength to the Methodist denomination, in the political and social order of the colony. Likewise, the tie of the Canadian Baptists with the English Baptists in 1837, and the organization of the Canada Baptist Union in 1843, resulted in a considerable weakening of the sect principle of otherworldliness and in a strengthening of the social supports of the Baptist denomination. It is not insignificant that the work of the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, the most prominent of the leaders within the Wesleyan Methodist

Church, was largely associated with the towns of Toronto and Kingston, while the work of the Rev. John Gilmour, equally prominent within the Canada Baptist Union, was largely associated with the towns of Montreal and Peterborough. The Methodist and Baptist churches oriented themselves increasingly about the new centres of social and political influence.

As in the Maritime Provinces, however, such tendencies towards a greater integration within the colonial structure were offset by tendencies towards religious division and withdrawal from the secular world. The union of Canadian Methodism and English Wesleyanism in 1832 was followed almost immediately by a break of a number of local preachers from the Canadian Conference and the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada. At the same time, new Methodist sects entered the country—the Primitive Methodists in 1830, the Bible Christians in 1831, and the Methodist New Connexion in 1837. The Baptists were also faced with a problem of religious division and conflict. Organization of the Canada Baptist Union in 1843 led to schisms within a large number of the local churches and in the organization of the Regular Baptist Union of Canada in 1848 with membership confined to strict Baptist churches. The separation of the close communionists from the open communionists represented a break in Baptist ranks which reached much deeper than doctrinal differences; the intolerance of the close communionists was an intolerance of a religious sect which set itself solidly against the more worldly attitude of their open communion brethren. The multiplication in the number of Methodist and Baptist groups after 1830 was accompanied by the spread of new religious movements into the country. The Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Irvingites, Mormons, Millerites, and Davidites were some of the religious sects which came to exert a considerable influence in Canada in the years from 1830 to 1850. The shift in religious organization back to the principle of the sect indicated very clearly that the conditions which had promoted the rise of the Methodist and Baptist movements in the first place had not disappeared. The extension of backwoods settlement, and the growth of public works, had the effect of throwing up new "social masses" made up of people who lacked status within the established social order of the community. Status was attained by such people within the religious order in the separation of the "elect" from the unsaved of the world, and in the substitution of spiritual for secular standards of social worth. Thus the movement within religious organization in the direction of a closer identification with the values of the outside world could be carried only so far. The sect principle in religious organization continued with the persistence of conditions of social disequilibrium.

After 1850, again, in spite of achievements in the way of church union, tendencies towards religious division were not completely absent. The Plymouth Brethren, Christadelphians, and a number of other sects made their appearance in Canada within the period 1850-85. Nevertheless, the view that the development of religious organization in this period was characterized by an increasing movement towards unity and autonomy is substantially correct. The explanation of such a movement, however, was not to be found in any general principle of evolution but rather in conditions which were peculiar to the social situation at that time. The kind of church unity which became established was the kind associated with a social system which had no further means of expansion. After 1850

Canada was left without any real frontier; population movement was largely into the United States, to the rapidly growing industrial cities of the East and to the rapidly settling prairies of the West. What frontier areas Canada possessed, in her pioneer industrial towns stretched along the Grand Trunk Railway and in her government-sponsored agricultural settlements in Muskoka, had a population too small to support any significant movement of social or religious re-organization. Within the new mining towns of British Columbia, movements growing out of a condition of social unrest were not lacking, but the population of these mining towns was largely a male population which sought other than religious means of social expression. The emphasis in religious organization in Canada, as a result, was upon consolidation; upon efforts to control the home market. Church union, like confederation or associations of economic groups, was a protective device. Religious enterprise could no more afford the wastes of competition than economic enterprise. Both found support in the strengthening of ties with the state. Sabbath observance laws, in the same way as tariffs, were means of enlisting the support of the state in meeting what was considered unfair competition. This alliance of the churches with the secular community in promoting the interests of a moral order was one which met with little challenge from religious bodies disavowing any connection with the secular community because of the absence of conditions disturbing to an established order of social status. The sect gave way almost entirely to the church, and the cause of national solidarity was furthered by the close identification of religious organization with the organization of the national community.

That condition came to an abrupt halt about 1885. Almost the very year which witnessed the union of the Methodist churches in Canada witnessed also the rise of the Holiness Church and Salvation Army. During the thirty years from 1885 to 1914, new evangelical movements grew very rapidly in the country; abandoned Salvation Army temples in a great many small towns in Ontario today afford an idea of the strength of this religious body about 1900. In some of the larger cities, evangelical mission churches, without any denominational connection, made their appearance, and the size of their Sunday as well as week-day congregations attested to the declining influence of the traditional religious denominations. Efforts upon the part of the older churches to forestall the growth of the new evangelical sects were not lacking, in the establishment, for instance, of city missions, but these efforts for the most part were ineffectual. Among very large sections of the Canadian population after 1885—in the new and isolated prairie settlements and in the transitional areas of the growing cities—the evangelical sect crowded out the traditional church.

The instabilities of religious organization were closely related to the instabilities of the Canadian community structure after 1885. The opening of the West, the discovery of gold in the Yukon, and industrial growth in central Canada, led to new movements of population and to the emergence of social conditions unfavourable to an established order of social status. The rise of the Holiness Church and Salvation Army coincided with the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The organization of mission churches and the spread of the Pentecostal movement into Canada took place during the years which witnessed the promotion of amalgamations in Canadian industry, and industrial concentration in strategic urban centres,

and the construction of two new transcontinental railways. The evangelical preaching of the Rev. P. W. Philpott in Hamilton in the early years of the present century was a social phenomenon not unrelated to the establishment by American manufacturing enterprises of branch plants in the country. Growth of population, and increasing population mobility, reflected the expansion of economic life and, in turn, were reflected in the growth in variety of religious sects. The "closed frontier" of 1850-85 which restricted the development of new religious movements gave way to the "open frontier" of 1885-1914 which promoted the break-down of the established religious order and the emergence of new religious divisions.

Developments in religious organization since 1914 have taken place too near in time to be clearly discerned, but certain tendencies seem evident. Those evangelical religious movements which took their rise within the period 1885-1914 have moved steadily in the direction of a greater accommodation with the community in which they operate. That tendency is very obvious in the case of the Salvation Army. In spite of the controls of headquarters, the Army in Canada has become very much a Canadian Army, while, at the same time, social pressures have led to a shift away from the position of the religious sect; the Army has assumed increasingly the character of a social service agency. Such a development has not been unrelated to developments taking place within the older religious denominations; the increasing emphasis upon social service activities among them also has been evident in the emergence of the institutional church with its imposing buildings housing swimming pools, gymnasia, and facilities for club meetings and with its elaborate administrative organization. The humble origin of the Salvation Army may still be reflected in the social standing of the majority of its following, but an increasing number of wealthy patrons indicates a move in the direction of increased respectability. The other evangelical sects which took their rise before 1914 have been faced with much the same sort of problems of adjustment though social accommodation has not gone quite as far as in the case of the Salvation Army. The organization in 1919 of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada is significant as indicating an effort to relate the Pentecostal movement more closely to the Canadian national community. Further investigation would probably reveal that this change has been accompanied by fundamental changes in the social basis of the movement.

Yet a glance at recent developments in religious organization in Canada is sufficient to dispel any notion that there is at present an uninterrupted movement towards religious union and closer identification with the national community. Organization of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was followed by religious schisms which have given rise to a number of new Pentecostal sects under different names. Union of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches not only left in its wake a continuing Presbyterian Church more fundamentalist than the old, but a great number of unused church buildings which have been taken up by various evangelical sects or by free-lance evangelical preachers. In Alberta, union was followed by the almost complete break-down of denominationalism with the rise of the Social Credit movement. It is not sufficient to answer that these new religious movements are mere ripples in the religious current which do not affect the direction of flow of the main stream; the break of Luther from the Church of Rome or of Wesley from the Church of England might

likewise have been viewed by contemporaries as a mere ripple in the religious current. The new evangelical sects in Canada have grown out of social disturbances related to recent developments in the community. The strength of these sects in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan, in the mining towns of northern Ontario, and in the newer industrial communities of central Canada and the West suggests the close relationship between their rise and the emergence of new "social masses" on the fringe of the social order.

From this it would seem apparent that developments in religious organization in Canada today are following along lines very similar to those which have been followed in the past. Throughout, a movement towards a strengthening of the ties of church and community has been accompanied by a movement in the opposite direction of a separation of the religious from the secular order. Such a development was inevitable in the very nature of the religious institution.[2] The religious sect, the moment it was organized, came to be made up of people holding office, and the prestige attached to such office was determined very largely by the social position of the religious body in the community. Salaries could be paid, and large church edifices constructed, only if financial contributions could be secured from the wealthy or, at least, from the well-to-do. Thus, inevitably, the religious sect came increasingly to accommodate itself to the secular order. Secular values permeated its teachings; the energies of its leaders were directed into channels of community endeavour. The result was, in the end, that the status system of the religious order came to coincide with the status system of the social order. The religious sect passed from being a sect to become a church.

In doing so, it did not cease to perform its religious function, but it did cease to perform the social function of providing leadership to those foot-loose elements of the population which had no recognized place within the established social order. The person, for instance, of rural background who found himself in the rapidly growing city was essentially a person cut adrift from society. His integration into the new society could be brought about only through a re-definition of standards of social worth. Such a re-definition could be secured in the fellowship of the saloon where worth was measured in terms of the tippler's capacity to consume. It was secured very effectively in the fellowship of the religious sect where worth was associated with the convert's degree of spirituality. The insistence on the part of the sect that it was not of the temporal world derived not from any peculiarity of religious doctrine but simply from its peculiar social function. It separated itself from the traditional social order in erecting a new social order in which status was given a spiritual basis. Thus the other-worldliness of the sect sprang from social pressures which were as insistent as the pressures which determined the worldliness of the church.[3]

The effect of social influences tending towards sectarianism has been strikingly evident in the development of Protestantism in Canada. Whether it has been equally evident in the development of Roman Catholicism is a question not considered in this paper because of lack of familiarity with all the facts involved. It may be suggested, however, that the differences

[2]Cf. Ernest Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, translated by Olive Wyon (London, 1931), 2 vols.

[3]Cf. H. R. Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York, 1929).

in the development of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism are more apparent than real. In French Canada after 1760, the Roman Catholic Church developed within a closed social system, and there were as a result few pressures of a kind which threatened the close tie between church and community. Where those pressures have arisen, the Church has sought adjustment through an extension of its system of religious orders; the new religious order assumed very much the character of the new religious sect. Thus within Roman Catholicism, as within Protestantism, there has been a shifting away from, as well as a shifting towards, a worldly position in the community, the only difference being that in the case of Roman Catholicism it has usually taken place within the framework of the Church. That, however, has not invariably been the case. There have not been lacking in Canada reformation movements not greatly different from the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is only necessary here to call attention to the recent schism within the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada. Other less spectacular, but no less significant, examples could be found. Furthermore, there has probably been a greater shift of Roman Catholics to Protestant religious sects than is generally realized.

One difference has to be recognized between the development of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The Roman Catholic Church has been able to a greater degree to check or control movements of its adherents into new areas of development, and in Roman Catholic communities there has been less as a result of that unrestricted type of development, associated with frontier movements of population. This fact, however, provides no reason for qualifying the thesis set forth in this paper. To the extent that a closed social system obtained, regardless of the nature of the forces which promoted such a condition, the full identification of religious organization with the community was possible. Consequently, where a church was able to control effectively a social system in the way of preventing any development unfavourable to its position, conditions were established which stifled the free operation of processes of social expansion.

This is simply another way of saying that religious systems are dynamic only so long as social systems are. There is no intention in this paper to suggest that tendencies towards division and sectarianism are at all times characteristic of religious development. Such tendencies obviously are not characteristic of religious development in isolated primitive societies nor were they of religious development under feudalism. In a primitive society the conditions of a closed social system are maintained through the heavy weight of what Bagehot called the "cake of custom," and in feudal society they were maintained through the authoritarian controls of a rigid institutional order. Furthermore, for very much the same reasons, a tendency towards division and sectarianism has been less evident in the religious development of Canada than of the United States. Forces of expansion in American national life have been a great deal stronger than such forces in Canadian national life; the American frontier developed unchecked by political and cultural influences of traditional authority which operated so powerfully within the Canadian frontier.[4] The result has been that established religious systems have found even less support within the social

[4]Cf. Peter G. Mode, *The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity* (New York, 1923).

order. Union of churches and their identification with the national community have proceeded much more slowly than in Canada; division and separation of religious organization from the community have assumed a great deal more prominence. Religious sectarianism, indeed, had its principles written into the formal constitution of the Republic!

These considerations suggest that the sectarian religious movements with which we are familiar have been movements closely related to the commercial and industrial expansion of the western world during the past three or four centuries. It is true, of course, that very similar movements emerged much earlier in the development of Christianity and were particularly evident during the eleventh and twelfth centuries,[5] but there was a period in between, associated with the high-water mark in feudal development, when a condition of stability in religious organization tended to prevail. It was with the break-down of the feudal order that there were unleased forces of expansion in economic and social life which resulted in an upsetting of established religious systems. The conflict which emerged, centred about the issue of church and state, was very largely a conflict between the church and sect ideas of religious organization, and, as such, it was not essentially different from the conflict in religious organization in more recent times, even though what has been known as the state church has ceased to exist. The long struggle of the Baptists, for instance, to free religion from the control of the state was simply an expression of the sect principle that the spiritual and temporal belonged to separate worlds. The struggle in this instance took the form of challenging vested interests of land and office because the church which was attacked was a church which clung to feudal types of relationship within the community. When attention is directed to the efforts of Pentecostal sects in Canada to purify religious teachings, the point of attack is not greatly different; it is the relationship of the church to the community which is challenged. That relationship, over the years, has changed somewhat in character—financial contributions from wealthy citizens (many of them, in fact, not belonging to the church to which they contribute), and propaganda and lobbying, have taken the place of grants of public land and prerogatives of public office—but it still rests upon a body of vested interests in the community.

With the rise of nationalism in the western world, the identification of the church with the community has come very largely to be an identification with that particular form of community which is known as the nation. One of the fullest expressions of such identification is to be found in one of our own churches, the United Church of Canada, but this tendency has been characteristic of the development of religious organization generally. Even churches which have claimed to be universal have found it necessary to exploit national sentiment in the interests of solidarity. It is not without reason, therefore, that considerable emphasis has been placed by church historians upon the close relationship between religious and nationalist movements. What is so often overlooked, however, is the fact that nation-building, like empire-building, involved a very considerable upsetting of traditional social relationships; nationalism was closely associated with rapid economic expansion in terms of metropolitan centres and free enterprise, and the folk cultures of the local community disintegrated in face of

[5]Cf. Troeltsch, *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches.*

the intrusion of the pecuniary conventions of the national community. Thus tendencies in religious organization towards a closer identification with the national community resulting from the rise of nationalism have been offset by tendencies towards religious division growing out of conditions of social disequilibrium produced by economic expansion through free enterprise. National unity in the past has depended upon the operation of forces making for disunity as well as unity in the social structure of the community.[6]

It may be that movements of sectarianism will be much less evident in the future development of religious organization. Nationalism in recent years has come increasingly to depend upon the control of economic enterprise, and the nation-state, like the earlier feudal-state, may very well succeed as a result in erecting about itself a closed social system. The almost complete identification of religious organization with the nation under such circumstances would be inevitable. Economic forces which check any easy rise in the individual's social position in the community lend support to a movement in the direction of a rigid organization of religious life. Thus, while many Methodists and Baptists in Canada in the nineteenth century became rich and the change in their social status carried with it changes in the social position of the churches to which they belonged, the Jehovah Witnesses and Four Square Gospellers of today may remain forever poor with the result that the religious sect of today may be the religious sect of tomorrow. If that should be the case the stratifications within the religious structure would assume much more of a feudal character. Present religious divisions would be perpetuated, and the historic role of the religious sect in forcing adjustment within religious organization would be brought to an end.

The very existence, indeed, of the religious sect would be jeopardized in face of the powerful combination of church and state. The legal ban placed upon the Jehovah Witnesses in Canada may be considered an act justified in terms of the present crisis, but it has a significance which reaches far beyond the problem growing out of the situation produced by war. There is much in the character of the Jehovah Witnesses which is a painful reminder of the Anabaptist sects in Europe at the time of the Protestant Reformation. Religious sects by their very nature are at war with society, but where conditions are such that eventual accommodation is possible, this act of war assumes the form of a withdrawal into a spiritual world.[7] Where, however, eventual accommodation is denied, the sect's reaction may be one of militant aggressiveness in an effort to make over society to its liking. Thus a strengthening of the ties of church and community through the support of the state results almost inevitably in forcing deviant religious movements into a revolutionary position, and the acceptance of such a position brings about in the end their extinction through the action of the state. Out of such a development state and church would emerge as one.

[6]Cf. Harold A. Innis, "Political Economy in the Modern State" (*Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, LXXXVII, no. 4, January, 1944, 336-7).

[7]Troeltsch, *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*.

DISCUSSION

Professor Rothney protested that it was probably not because of a closed social system that no sects had developed in French Canada but because the Roman Catholic Church was a symbol of a minority cultural group and a means of cultural survival. He suggested that conflict between the English and Scottish established churches had helped to prevent the establishment of a state church in Canada. He thought that growing nationalism in Canada is having an effect upon religious development. New sects based on Britain, the United States, or elsewhere, are less likely to appear and cause strife as we become more Canadian and think less of other countries as our homelands. They become increasingly in danger of being accused of disloyalty to the state. "Continuing Presbyterians," he suggested, were nothing new but only a conservative force which had refused to move. They were hardly a new "sect."

Mr. Reid stated that the break in the Presbyterian ranks in the 1840's was not the result of the Scottish issue but a conflict between evangelicanism and moderatism. He objected to Professor Clark's exclusive emphasis upon social background and aspects. This may be all right for sociologists but such a presentation can hardly be called a fair treatment of the subject as it neglects the purely religious aspect which is of prime importance. The case of the founding of the new Wesleyan Methodist Church, for example, was certainly not a matter of class stratification as both rich and poor participated in it.

Professor Saunders stated that the author appeared to say that religious sects arise when groups appear that do not fit into the existing social organization, and that such sects are either protests against or escapes from existing conditions; that, consequently, "another world" is emphasized by these sects, because in such a framework the non-fitters can create an artificial social status for themselves more to their liking. But if in time they manage to rise in importance and social position in this world, then they set about creating a co-ordination between their religious position and their new social position. Since they now "fit," the other worldly emphasis disappears in such co-ordination and gives way to a new "worldly" emphasis upon community and social services. If the society becomes a "closed society" the linking of state and church becomes inevitable. At present, there is in Canada a tendency towards a co-ordination of churches and the nation-state.

It appears thus to be the author's opinion that religious beliefs, religions in fact, are merely aspects of social conditions, created by men for ephemeral social purposes alone, i.e., as props for the *status quo,* as protests or escapes from existing conditions, and so have no permanent reality, or, indeed, any intrinsic validity. This seems a one-sided and untenable view, concluded Professor Saunders.

Professor Adair stated that Christianity has resulted in various alterations in society, and has itself been affected by social changes but these reciprocal influences do not involve any challenge to religious beliefs. The previous speaker, he contended, has not deduced the right ideas from the paper.

Professor Lower felt the line of investigation used in the paper to be a fruitful one. He suggested a study of the connection between people's places of origin, ideas of religion, and politics. Such studies, he suggested, would reveal much about both individuals and communities and their likely reactions to any given set of circumstances.