

in a denomination drifting from its standards, a minister who defended lay rights against all forms of clericalism.

This is an exemplary sympathetic biography. MacLeod not only shares common ordination vows with Stanford Reid, he was also a good friend. Indeed, he describes this book as a “labour of love” (xiii). Sympathetic biography is difficult to write and MacLeod succeeds in avoiding the dangers of the genre, namely, a hagiographical style or, in method, such reliance upon personal anecdotes as to appear gossipy. Reid was often cantankerous and stubborn, and not always likeable, and MacLeod frankly presents him as such. On the other hand, as a friend, the author accesses privileged documentary and verbal information that complements the ample archival research. Only a few points in the book ask for reconsideration or correction. Sir William Dawson, late nineteenth-century principal of McGill, is described as ardently anti-evolutionist (326 *fn*7) and, at another point, not opposed to evolution (34). Chapter 15, which is concerned with bitter infighting over a point of doctrine at Reid’s *alma mater* of Westminster Seminary among faculty, students and trustees—a squabble in which Reid played an ugly part—sidetracks readers with somewhat tedious detail and does not deserve the space allotted. Overall, this is a high quality biography that succeeds in establishing Reid as an important figure in twentieth-century Canadian Presbyterianism and North American evangelicalism.

Admittedly, a book about an academic-minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada is a provincial theme, the borders of which are narrowed further by the subject’s evangelical leanings. It would be regrettable, however, if only Presbyterian pastors or historians of evangelicalism read this book. Granted, the former would find much to interest them and could be challenged to ponder what the almost total absence of confessionalist and evangelical voices like Reid’s bodes for their denomination. Those who have an interest in recent Montreal or McGill University history will find much to interest them in this book, as will anyone working in twentieth-century Canadian religious history.

Todd Statham, *McGill University*

***The Transforming Power of a Century: Mennonite Central Committee and Its Evolution in Ontario.* By Lucille Marr. Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2003. ISBN 1-8947-1041-X. Pp. 407.**

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is a relief service and peace agency of the North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. *The Transforming Power of a Century* tells the story of MCC in Ontario from the first Mennonite relief organizations that appeared during the First World War until the present day. Non-resistance has been a central tenet of the Mennonite faith since its origins in the Reformation, and in the twentieth

century MCC has been the institution through which Mennonites from Canada and the United States have been best able to express this belief. However, the Mennonite understanding of non-resistance has changed significantly in the last hundred years. Thus a history of MCC is more than just the history of a specific organization. To follow the history of MCC is to follow the transformation of Mennonites' own understanding of their peace mission and their role in the world as Christians. The main task of Marr's book is to chart this evolution of the Mennonite conception of non-resistance as it has manifested itself in the work of MCC and other Mennonite service organizations in Ontario. As Marr shows clearly, many Ontario Mennonites have gradually left behind their traditional, passive, largely segregated mode of Christian living, and have replaced it with a form of peacemaking that has become increasingly active and engaged with the world.

The Transforming Power of a Century is divided into three parts. Its story begins before the arrival of MCC in Canada. In the first part, Marr discusses the Mennonite relief and alternative service organizations that were founded in Ontario during the period of the two world wars. These organizations were developed primarily in response to two key issues. First, during both wars Mennonite men sought ways to safeguard their historic exemption from military duty. For example, during the Second World War, Mennonites formed the Conference of Historic Peace Churches (CHPC) to promote an alternative form of service that would allow conscientious objectors to do peaceful work in Canada rather than fighting in the war overseas. This type of community work was a precursor to the kind of volunteer service that MCC would later promote in Ontario. Second, Mennonite organizations were established to provide relief and assistance to some of the many people in need during this period of immense conflict. At first, the recipients of this aid were fellow Mennonites fleeing persecution in Russia during the early 1920s. However, by the Second World War, Mennonites were sending homemade clothing and other supplies outside of Mennonite circles to war victims in England. Since men were occupied during the wars mainly with the issue of conscription, the great bulk of Mennonite relief work was done by women in organizations like the Sewing Circles.

The second part of the book begins with the decision in 1943 to establish an MCC branch office in Kitchener and covers the two decades following the war. After WWII there was no longer the immediate need for relief and volunteer services. Instead of withdrawing once again from the world, however, Ontario Mennonites began to look for opportunities to promote Christ's peace and love in the greater Canadian community. This reflected a shift among Mennonites towards the view that the Kingdom of God should "be established on earth in the here and now" (69). During these years, MCC volunteers served as mental health workers in Ontario psychiatric hospitals, as teachers and nurses in remote parts of Newfoundland, and as staff on a farm for troubled boys. Marr also describes the establishment of an independent Canadian MCC in 1964, which coincided with the rise of Canadian Mennonite nationalism. Although the process of founding MCC Canada was at times tense, it illustrated the ability of various Mennonite groups to work together for the greater good in spite of conflicting views and interests.

The last part of the book focuses on MCC Ontario as an entity within MCC Canada and considers its history from inception until the end of the century. During this period the Mennonite understanding of non-resistance took on a political dimension by expanding to include issues of justice. Having become aware that peace-making ultimately requires more than service and giving of self, Mennonites accepted that peace can only be brought to the world if issues of justice and inequality are addressed. No longer remaining passive when faced with wrong-doing, MCC at the turn of the century focussed its efforts on non-violent solutions to issues of justice. In so doing, Ontario Mennonites became even more integrated into Canadian society, adding their voices to the public debate on issues such as world peace, capital punishment and aboriginal issues. Moreover, Ontario Mennonites also came to see themselves as members of a global village. Many MCC volunteers served around the world and their experiences overseas in turn influenced programs in Canada such as Self-Help Crafts, Thrift Shops and refugee assistance. MCC's activities during this period show that the traditional Mennonite view of the state also continued to be transformed. Once viewed as a military power to be avoided, the government became an active partner of MCC and a source of its funding.

In her book Marr deals with many interesting sub-themes, but her discussion of the role of women within MCC Ontario deserves particular attention. While organizational histories tend to focus primarily on the stories of the organization's leaders, Marr maintains that the role of MCC Ontario's many volunteers has been equally important and should be given a voice. Since most of these volunteers were women, Marr is thus also attempting to avoid a gender imbalance in her account. Her book illustrates the individual and collective contributions that women have made to MCC Ontario's work and shows that the nature of service experience for female volunteers has occasionally been very different than that of their male counterparts. For example, during the Second World War, men were obliged to do alternative service, while women served out of a sense of calling. We also see how voluntary service itself played a part in women's emancipation. Marr points to the barriers that restricted the role of women within MCC and reveals that in spite of its increasing focus on justice, MCC was slow to address issues of gender inequality within its own organization.

The Transforming Power of a Century is well-written and engaging. Its special features include sidebars that provide portraits of individuals, as well as an appendix listing MCC Ontario board members and workers who served from the 1960s until the present day. The book is sure to prove valuable to anyone interested in Canadian Mennonite history.

Pierre Chetelat, *McGill University*