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Vol. II/No. 1
october
1974

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STOP PRESS NEWS ... PRESBYTERIAN MODERATOR
DEFECTS TO UNITED CHURCH

TORONTO (SPECIAL TO ARC): "I like their birthday party better than ours" stated the Rt. Rev. Hugh Davidson, B.A., Etc., in a press conference to explain his dramatic march - robes flowing and lace flapping - from Wynford Drive down Toronto streets to the head office of the United Church in Canada. He denied rumours (attributed to an official named Clarkes at the Presbyterian head office) that he was joining the U.C. in order to qualify as Archbishop in a proposed merger with the Anglicans. "I have no territorial ambition" said the Rt. Rev. in a striking phrase. "Moreover, every Presbyterian minister is already a Bishop, or even a Pope, so what have I got to gain? The truth is, I'm just tired of signing Centennial Certificates and wearing this darned (expletive included) lace". Dr. Davidson, known for his leadership in stewardship circles, refused to comment on the notorious Presbyterian Psi-Cos report (see this issue somewhere below): "I only know what I read in the

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Record" he said, apparently a reference to Presbyterian's Hansard. When asked to compare the two denominations, the ex-Mod stated, "There are profound differences. The Uniteds don't drink as much, except in the Mari-times where all are one in abstinence. Also they are only fifty years old so naturally can't match the Presbies in rules and regulations. Besides, they're five times larger - think what I can do with a budget that size!" The crazed speaker was quickly ushered inside the U.C. offices by burly members of the financing department, all former employees of IBM.

WHERE IS HERE?

editorial

Northrop Frye, eminent Canadian literary critic (and theologian) suggests that Canadians suffer not so much an "identity" crisis" as a puzzlement about our environment; it's not a question of "Who am I?" so much as "Where is here?" Canada began as an "obstacle" to the Orient (*La-chine* was named from the irony of the road to China). It became a series of forts - that "garrison" mentality persists, according to Frye's thesis. We cannot identify ourselves by a settled land and centuries of proud history; we still have to face the question of a hard land and an uncertain future: where *is* "here"?

Presbyterian identity is not like that: we have transplanted the Old Country so successfully that we can't understand all this fuss about national identity, separatism, bilingualism. We identify ourselves by looking in a mirror from the past, or from somewhere else: we have moderatorial lace, kilts, "Kirk" Sessions. It may not be all bad that our apprentice theologians hie themselves off to Edinburgh or perhaps Princeton (or even Philadelphia) to finish their education. What hurts is that too often they return all finished, like our conquering forefathers.

If Canada is trying to come of age, to determine where is "here" and so to determine who we are, we need to ask where Presbyterians are in their centennial year? Are they still in Scotland rather than Canada? Still in that fighting time of Reformation and Counter-Reformation? Still in a garrison rather than a cosmopolis? If so, we need to move on, remembering the past with thanksgiving but not grudging God that he has taken it from us. We need to settle down in this time and this place as gifts of his grace, that we may love and witness in faithfulness to his call. Even the exiled Jews were exhorted by Jeremiah to "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (*Jer.* 29:7).

How much the more should Canadian identity and Presbyterian identity happen together; else our remembrance will never lead to renewal and response.

COLLEGE LAMENTS REACTIONARY BRAS

KNOX COLLEGE, TORONTO (SPECIAL TO ARC): Among the splendid pillars of this neo-Gothic edifice stands a pathetic figure, the statue of a Presbyterian maiden, martyred while tied to a stake, and in a topless condition. On this figure, sometime during last night, has been painted a red brassiere. The Principal of the College, in addressing his students from the stairs behind the statue, lamented the reactionary mood of those who perpetrated this scandalous act. "It is obvious", the learned man stated, "who has done this deed. There are those who resent the liberal traditions of this college, especially our proposal to Principal Margaret Webster (of Ewart College, the Presbyterian home for young ladies aspiring to become Deaconesses, apparently a kind of minor order in the Presbyterian hierarchy). If she accepts, Knox will become coeducational, all those girls will move right in and we will achieve a goal long desired. Therefore male chauvinist (a Greek term was used which we are having translated by our restaurateur) cannot abide the idea of such a liaison, and make their protest in this lewd and provocative manner. We are undaunted", he continued, "and shall persevere in our dream of raising Knox College to the leadership of enlightened co-education in all its parts - classroom, chapel, even dormitory". The roar of approval from the student body caused considerable delay in the Principal's speech. At last he was able to make himself heard: "I may say that we suspect strongly that this conservative reaction comes from our rival institution, Presbyterian College, Montreal, long known for its classical Calvinism and old-fashioned lifestyle. I shall do my utmost to have our General Assembly appoint a committee to investigate the possibility of appointing a commission to sell the site and buildings to McGill University, or to do in its wisdom what seems best".

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"When you wake in the morning, Pooh", said Piglet at last, "what's the first thing you say to yourself?"

"What's for breakfast?" said Pooh. "What do you say, Piglet?"

"I say, *I wonder what's going to happen exciting today?*" said Piglet.

(Winnie-the-Pooh)

THE THREE R'S

Once there was a sacrament called Penance. Our fathers used to write about it in learned tomes entitled *De Poenitentia*. They distinguished three moments: contrition, confession and satisfaction. First you had to show a proper attitude toward the past, being contrite for its sins. Then you had to show due recognition of the present, a kind of second chance despite your shortcomings. Finally you had to aspire to holiness in the future, casting yourself on grace despite your unworthiness and wretchedness. The whole exercise was designed to promote humility, to convict of sin and lead to a deep remorse.

The threefold movement of penance stands in stark contrast to the three R's of our Presbyterian Centennial: remembrance, renewal, response. The latter seem destined to link up past, present and future not in the clear light of man's sin and God's grace, but in the warm embrace of nostalgia and rhetoric. That's not all bad, for the "rhetorical tradition" has much to do with theology and homily, not least among the children of John Calvin. One suspects, however, that we will have somewhat too much of a Good Thing, a one-sided exaltation of our folk-heroes and our group psyche, and too little of a critical and realistic look at what a contemporary *response* should be.

If we are guilty of what we might call the *heroic* view of our history and destiny (Butterfield dubbed it "the Whig interpretation of history"), perhaps we should try alternative approaches. For instance, what about a *Marxist* view? This would mean looking at the "socioeconomic substructure", the class consciousness of Canadian Presbyterians past and present. Where are we on the "vertical mosaic"? Why did our fathers emigrate in the first place? What class did they represent, what cultural expectations did they have? How far did the 1925 Union *and* anti-Union movement reflect economic necessity, cultural pressures and group mores? Why is it that so often in our history we reach agonized decisions, with all sorts of sophisticated rationalization, and they turn out to be the economically feasible thing to do (e.g. comity agreements; cooperative ventures; patterns of theological education and institutions)? This approach, of course, is a form of *socio-logical* interpretation, very unpopular among us. It reminds us, for one thing, that the Scottish Protestant tradition, at least from the nineteenth century, was highly *moralistic*. Theologically, the Ritschlian school ("through moral values to God") was a strong influence on preaching, and in turn it reinforced the so-called Protestant work-ethic. "Calvinism" means, for most people (especially novelists), a hard legalism which "provided the determined and organized men and women who could rule the mastered world" (George Grant).

Again, one might choose a *Hegelian* approach. 1875 thus represents the positive ("thesis"), a spirit reflecting the emerging nationalism of 1867. In that case, 1925 is the logical negative ("antithesis"), a spirit of separatism reflecting a search for identity combined with a withdrawal from the complexities and risks of new forms of social interaction. And so we come

to 1975, a qualified positive ("synthesis") in which the old optimism is tempered by continuing negativism, yet open to better forms: unity-in-diversity perhaps, the need to respond to the pluralism of our time positively rather than negatively.

Still again, a *liberation* approach would prove fruitful - our heritage is so largely masculine, the manly virtues of taming the frontiers and standing firm at Assemblies and what-not. But what about the faith of our *Mothers*? Do we betray - despite or even through our magnanimous ordaining of women - traces of male chauvinism? The charge of "paternalism" or patronism may appear a cliché to Head Office personnel but it may nevertheless represent the perennial temptation to those in authority. How do we "handle" our mission fields, our ethnic congregations, our theological students? The plight of the Deaconess Order is too blatant an example to require more than mention. Even more alluring is the re-writing of church history that may be necessary if we are to do justice to the charge of male chauvinism. Think of the irony of male priesthood dedicated to virginity! Think of how clergymen dress (transvestites?) and what they are trained to do (female roles?) - did the Reformers succeed in breaking from the old philosophy of celibacy and its background in Greek asceticism in order to recover good Jewish earthiness and sexuality? Or do the Greeks bear their gifts unannounced even still?

Finally, one crying need is for an authentic *Canadian* approach to our past, present and future. Is it not time we stopped hiding behind the pre-position *in*? We may pride ourselves on being 'The Presbyterian Church in Canada' but if that means that we do not really see ourselves *of* Canada it slanders incarnational Christianity. We are ecclesiastical docetists: like those heretics who thought that Christ only "seemed" to be truly human, we only appear to be Canadian; our loyalty and priorities belong elsewhere. For many, we are 'The Church of Scotland in Canada' ... And so we resent those strident voices calling us to realistic appraisal of what it means to be just *here* and just *now*. But that here-and-now is precisely the context for Christ's vocation. One aspect of that context is separatism: our style of churchly separatism, and styles of political separatism both West and East as well as Québécois.

The Québec situation is one we plan to treat in a later issue: it will be before our church this year in preparation for the 1975 Assembly to be held in Montreal. Louis Frechette, nineteenth century poet *Canadian* once wrote, "Notre histoire cet écrin de perles ignorées". If we are to understand this "casket of unknown pearls" it will be a truly *Canadian* enterprise and a truly *Christian* one. And if the two turn out to be so close together, that might even reflect the motions of grace, the surprise of Gospel.

J.C. McLeod

INTERVIEW WITH A FAMOUS PRESBYTERIAN

(For obvious reasons, this person cannot be identified since he was a very prominent Canadian and resident of Ottawa. He will be identified only by the initials "M.K.". Because he is no longer with us, the services of a medium and crystal ball were required. The following is a transcript of the conversation during a séance.)

ARC: Can you tell us, Sir, what is it really like over there?

MK: Well, as a matter of fact, it is very Presbyterian. We have long services both morning and night. We sing hymns from the new book of praise (that must surprise you) and the former clergy take turns in preaching long sermons. We have a rather large choir which sings twice or three times each service. There is no offering, of course. No money here, you know. Nothing to spend it on.

ARC: Well, Sir, what do you do during the day?

MK: Oh, that is all very strictly regulated. Every morning, we must read four back issues of the *Presbyterian Record*. Then, in the afternoon, we each have to let a clergyman make a pastoral call, during which we must drink up a pot of tea.

ARC: But doesn't this get a bit tiresome?

MK: Oh, yes, it does indeed. The only break we get is a weekend each fall and spring, as well as a week in the summer, but then these are retreats. At least on these you get to do crafts. Last summer, I collected a lot of old stones and made a ruin. That was fun until I got caught and had to put the stones back. I had taken them from chapels.

ARC: This certainly does sound strange. We certainly did not expect heaven to be like that.

MK: Heaven? Who said anything about heaven? This is purgatory, and Presbyterian Sunday School lessons told me it didn't exist.

But he who flees from the earth to find God does not find God; he finds only another world, his own lovely, peaceful, 'other' world ... Likewise he who flees from God to find the earth does not find the earth, as God's earth ... He who truly loves God, loves him as Lord of the earth; he who truly loves the earth, loves it as God's earth.

D. Bonhoeffer, *Der Herr Reich Komme*

(NOTE: *The editors firmly state that they must dissociate themselves from the following communication from M. McLennan. Were it not that this journal would collapse without the financial support of M. McLennan, a truly generous patron and sponsor, this communication would under no circumstances be published.*)

Dear Readers of ARC:

What a pleasure it is to speak to you again, even from the pages of this miserable journal with its narrow-minded and carping editors. And what exciting news I have to announce! McLennan Advertising (a small company of mine) has done it again. We have won the contract to plan the Centennial celebrations for the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The fee we will receive for this is, of course, small but my new company needs the practice.

And what is more. Think of the challenge. Who really cares that this miserable little sect has survived a hundred years? But, I, Jean Philippe McLennan, III, will make "Presbyterian" a household word and the centennial one of the great events of the century.

Thus, it is my distinct pleasure to present to you a preview of our campaign soon to be launched. Now, of course, in any campaign one must get a slogan. It must be catchy and up-to-date. Considering what we were trying to sell—Canadian Presbyterians—this was an exceedingly tough nut to crack, if you will pardon the expression. For this job I pulled in a professional advertising man from the United States, "PR man" is the term, I believe. His name is Bob Harlequin and he worked on election campaigns for a recent president of the United States. This may shock many of you, my dear readers, but look at it my way—if he once had the job of trying to make a certain president look good to the American public, he will certainly understand the proportions of the task of commending the Presbyterian Church in Canada to the Canadian public. However this may be, I called in Bob, the PR man, and we got to work on a slogan. We thought of the burning bush. Not consumed. Suddenly, the light dawned in PR Bob's face. "Unconsumed", he cried, "That's it." And so we have our slogan:

Canadian Presbyterians

Unconsumed for 100 years

Hard to swallow and even harder to stomach

Next, the McLennan Advertising Agency is planning a certificate. This will be for those deemed to be extra good Presbyterians. Frankly, I have no idea what kind of person this would be, and care less, except that I devoutly hope never to meet one. But this is truly beside the point. What really matters is that I know from experience that this sort of thing "goes over big" (if you will permit me to use this kind of jargon—I have to talk to PR Bob in this kind of language or he fails to get my meaning at all). Yes, there is nothing like the old pat-on-the-back, or slopping on the whipcream. PR Bob calls this stroking, and he agrees that it works wonders. We decided to call these "Proven, Tried, and True-Blue Presbyterian Certificates."

There will be space for the person's name; the certificate will be signed by the Clerk of Assembly, and if requested, the Moderator. I strongly recommended that they get the Pope to sign it (just in case) but the church officials rejected this with the comment: "What can the Pope do that the Clerk cannot do and does not do?" The cost will be \$3 per certificate. Now, as a special added attraction we will suggest in an accompanying letter that possessors of these certificates will find their access into the realms above greatly eased—no delays, no waiting. One might even say it in verse (if you will allow me the indulgence):

As soon as the coin in the coffer rings,
The soul from purgatory springs.

Admittedly, neither I nor my admirable associate, PR Bob, know for certain that this is true. In fact, it is a matter of some indifference to us both. Nevertheless, while the Church officials at first objected to such a claim, the more they thought about it the more they came to think that it made perfectly good sense, and therefore must be true.

The next item we are working on is a Presbyterian Quarter. We are trying to persuade the mint to put out a special twenty-five cent piece in honour of the Centennial. We have written to the Government pointing out that Presbyterians are as worthy of being honoured as the present beast with antlers, for who honour money more than Presbyterians? Now, my friends, the special feature of this proposed Presbyterian quarter is that it will have a hole in the middle so that people can attach a fine black thread to it thereby being able to retrieve it unobtrusively from the collection plate (and, I might add, gum, and other vending machines).

And there is much, much more. PR Bob has hardly warmed up. There will be Topless Martyr posters, a colour photograph of the statue in the foyer of Knox College (learn why more students go to Knox). There are bumper stickers with the slogan: "Proud to be a Presbyterian—When it comes to humility we're tops." Get a piece of the true wooden leg of John Knox for your very own. Our research department has discovered that John Knox actually had a wooden leg for the last part of his life, and this wooden leg has been found. Order a small splinter while the supply lasts and be the first in your congregation to own one. Then, there is a special drink in honour of Centennial. You may have heard of the Bloody Mary but there is the Puritain Revenge: a triple prune juice with a dash of lemon (1 ounce of whiskey optional). This will really make Louis and Joseph run.

Get our order forms and price lists right away.

Alas, dear reader, I fear that I have been carried away by the infectious enthusiasm of PR Bob and have been talking more like an advertising man than the kindly man of wealth, patron of lost causes that I am. Accept my apologies—but send in lots of orders. What is good for the Presbyterian Church is good for Jean Philippe McLennan, III.

PRESBYTERIAN PSI-COS REPORT - *special from CUP*

DON MILLS, ONT: The release of the long-awaited document, "Presbyterian Psychological Consciousness in Stewardship" has stirred excitement and controversy in this staid head office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Police called to 50 Wynford Drive report that order has been restored, especially once the psychologists responsible for the Report (Levi Strauss and Helmut Waltz) admitted that they may have been guilty of anti-Scotism. "Our statistics", Strauss said, "have been interpreted in terms of the oral-anal distinction drawn by Freud. We only tried to help Presbyterians analyse their stewardship program in objective terms". The report was commissioned by the new Board of Congregational Life, whose chairperson Ms Margaret Taylor began the brawl today by throwing bound copies of *Acts and Proceedings* (apparently the Apocrypha of Presbyterians) at the Strauss-Waltz team. It seems there have been reports in recent years - on recruitment and on the degree of illumination in churches (LAMP) - but they have been laid to rest without the battles which "Presbyterian Psi-Cos" promises to create.

The report itself, couched in psychological jargon, seems to rely on Freud's theory that anal personalities (those whose toilet training was defective) develop habits of parsimony or stinginess. Analyzing the budgetary givings of random Presbyterians, the Strauss-Waltz survey concluded that stewardship habits varied in direct relationship to traditional methods of raising babies, the habit of giving being reinforced at an early age by the mother. The pattern is described as "striking" in certain Synods; details are not yet available, although the Assembly Clerks have already made educated guesses, while A.M. Deans of the stewardship office said, "I told you so". The report is to be translated into French for the benefit of the Presbytery of Montreal, and a Toronto schoolteacher has been hired to do the translation. Further developments are expected hourly, once the Moderator, the Right Rev. Hugh F. Davidson, B.A., Etc., returns from an official junket to Bermuda. He is reported to have telephoned long distance (direct dialing, according to the Clerks) and engaged a Knox College team of students with psychology majors to prepare a refutation of the thesis. Whether this will show that Presbyterians are really oral personalities remains to be seen. A United Church spokesman commented, "They have always had a lot to say, anyway". He declined to be named.

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WORKSHOP

What's a Centennial Sermon? Presumably we look back, and out of the past we try to look ahead, and, in the process, we seek to give some kind of challenge for the present. But in what way is the past a guide to the future? And do we see ourselves as prophets able to speak, with authority, a clear word for the future? It will, of course, be easiest to follow the suggested outline of a three point sermon with three r's - remembrance, renewal and response (isn't it easier for people to remember a sermon if you use alliteration?). Now the three point sermon is a thing that certainly arises out of the past - that's the classical form! But do we still have classical listeners? Is that form still relevant for today? Is it psychologically the most suitable? On the other hand is it the best one for the particular text or texts that we have chosen for this particular sermon?

Let's raise another parallel issue. Is it best to prepare a Centennial Sermon beginning with a text from scripture? or starting with tradition? or starting with our contemporary situation? Once we have decided that we want to preach a Centennial Sermon aren't we already inclined to start at some point other than with scripture? And is this not a departure from our reformed heritage which has emphasized the biblical exegetical sermon more than any other? Or perhaps we will nationalize by trying to play both ends against the middle. We start with what we feel is relevant for today. We start with the given of the three r's and then look for a suitable text, and call the result a textual sermon! But will it be? Can we impose a structure on a text and expect that text to speak? Or is there the possibility that the text will suggest the structure for the sermon?

What are we really trying to do in preaching? Is it a human word or is it God's word? Are we the vehicles for the message of Christ or are we, in all honesty, speaking a very human word and hoping that the *language* of the Gospel will add some kind of authority.

Let's also admit that the "remembrance, renewal, response," theme is so vague that the preacher is tempted to say whatever he wants or whatever he feels pressured by denominational literature to say. One can get into the conclusions of the sermon before even having chosen a text! And what is the real difference between "renewal" and "response"? Is the "response" not part of the "renewal" itself? What is the logical difference between these two, and what are the psychological dimensions of "remembering" within the context of remembering Presbyterian tradition? Will we be led to respond with an inward as well as an outward renewal? Perhaps we should not prejudge what the recollection of the past should lead to until we have done some study of what "remembrance" is all about from a biblical perspective.

In reflecting the remembered past we might also note the way in which it is used in the biblical material as a challenge to each writer's present, and, by extension, to our present. One thinks of the creedal summaries in the Old and New Testaments. These are historical statements about what God had done in the past for his people and their responses in a variety of ways.

The classic (a kind of Apostles Creed of the Old Testament) is Deuteronomy 26:5-10. Of equal importance is the covenant renewal ceremony with its historical summary in Joshua 24. Other interesting passages that could be surveyed are 1 Samuel 12:5-10; Nehemiah 9:5-38; Jeremiah 2:5-13; Ezekiel 20; Hosea 12; Psalms 78, 104 and 105. And in the New Testament one thinks of Acts 7 and 13; 1 Corinthians 10 and Hebrews 11. When these are reviewed one sees how many times the word for the present is a severe and a negative word out of the past - a call to repentance, a word of warning. But there is also the positive thrust as seen especially in the opening verses of Hebrews 12, with its focus on faith in Jesus Christ from start to finish (but don't stop at verse 3 - the rest of the chapter works out the implications of such faith first negatively then positively, triumphantly). Perhaps it isn't enough just to talk about the Centennial theme, or possible texts etcetera. There is the further question of whether people really change through preaching today. Are they the same as the Puritans and others whose lives were apparently really affected and changed as they listened to sermons? Are people that way today? Or is there a greater need for the congregation to be involved in the development of sermons, and in wrestling with the questions raised by the Scriptures, Christian heritage and the world in which we live? What preacher can do this by himself? Yes, the power of the Gospel and the Spirit of Christ are still as effective today as they ever were. But what form shall preaching take in our present context? How can it be the vehicle which God uses not only in our Centennial Year but for our future? Perhaps this means not preaching a *centennial* sermon?

EDITORIAL NOTES

Volume Two of *ARC* begins with a *mélange* of Centennial musings. We trust the lighter tone of this issue will not affect the return of our renewal stubs! This sort of "renewal" may not constitute one of the Centennial three R's but it is vital to the continuation of this volume. Your remembrance of Volume I, we hope, will inspire you to a response which will be our renewal! For Volume II we plan the next issue on Ministry, including a report on that topic as handled at the Presbyterian College retreat. Then an issue on the politics of presbyterians. Then a final issue of Québec: reality and symbol. As the scene of the Centennial Assembly, this province is still a subject of bewilderment or offence to most Canadians. We hope that our coverage will prove of value to all. If it sounds at all interesting, you can vote for us by your subscription price or donation. We need donors as well as regular subscribers.

Peter Richardson's name has gone from our masthead, as he has gone from our city to Toronto, where he is now chairman of humanities at Scarborough College, U. of T. We wish him well and will miss his cheerful and critical presence.

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ARC is published four times yearly by
Colomban Enterprises. An annual sub-
scription is two dollars which may be
sent to:

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